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Istanbul Meet Calls for a Just World Order

Scholars urge urgent action on Gaza





Al-Ummah Takes Its Global Vision to Ankara

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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- It must be original and unpublished.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.
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- Submissions should be sent to: info@al-ummah.org.

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Between Flare-Ups and Being Hopeful

In the backdrop of global geopolitical upheavals, including a new war front unfolding in the Arabian Peninsula—as we see the Iranian-backed Houthi tribal guerrillas launching aerial attacks on Saudi Arabia, including the cities housing the Two Holy Mosques—we have nevertheless shifted our focus this edition to developments that are constructive and promise a golden future.

Al-Ummah Foundation Chairman Mohammad Zakir Hossain had a hectic month. With the aim of further shaping and strengthening the ambitions of the Foundation, Zakir met with several scholars and high-ranking public figures during the 13th International Bediuzzaman Symposium, held in Istanbul on October 4–6 under the theme "Qur'anic Solutions to Global Crises," which is also the cover story of the journal this month.

This was followed by Zakir's visit to Ankara, where he had key meetings with two prominent persons: Professor Dr. Selim Argun, President of the Yunus Emre Institute; and Professor Dr. Yasin Aktay, a distinguished Turkish scholar, writer, and public intellectual.

The meetings turned out to be highly productive, as both the Turkish luminaries showed keen interest in the Foundation's initiatives. They agreed with Zakir to preserve historical knowledge and cultural traditions while making them accessible to younger generations and international audiences. They also discussed the role of educational, academic, and media institutions in promoting research, cultural awareness, and dialogue across societies. This edition has a detailed story on the visit, titled "Al-Ummah Takes Its Global Vision to Ankara."

Elsewhere, in keeping with the spirit of the above-stated Istanbul conference, we have focused on issues in the light of the Qur'anic teachings that study things from a completely different perspective.

In the meantime, we are keeping a close watch on the geopolitical developments unfolding in the Middle Eastern region and hope to come back in the next edition again with a rigorous and deeper analysis to make sense of the disruption.

Thank you.



Editor-in-Chief

AL-UMMAH

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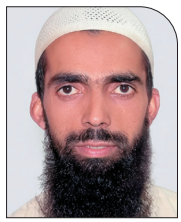

By Gowhar Quadir Wani

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Istanbul Meet Calls for a Just World Order

Scholars urge urgent action on Gaza

By Al-Ummah Desk

An international symposium in Istanbul has called for a global order founded on justice rather than power, and urged an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza while proposing faith-informed responses to economic, environmental, social and technological crises.

The calls were given at the concluding session of the 13th Internation-

al Bediuzzaman Symposium, held on October 4–6 under the theme "Qur'anic Solutions to Global Crises."

More than 330 scholars and leaders representing 60 countries and 448 institutions across the world took part in the global event, which was organized by the Istanbul Science and Culture Foundation. In all, 668 paper proposals were submitted, out of which 262 papers were selected for presentation in Turkish, Arabic, English, and Russian. The symposium series has been held since 1991.

The gathering examined contemporary challenges through the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the teachings of Muslim scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, particularly his Risale-i Nur collection.

Some of the most well-known personalities who attended the event included Cevdet Yılmaz, the Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye; Dr. Muhammed Ebulhayr Şükrü, the Syrian Minister of Awqaf; Prof. Dr. Safi Arpaguş, the President of Religious Affairs, Türkiye; Said Yüce, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture (İİKV); and Lauren Booth, the British Broadcaster and Journalist.

Saudi scholar Prof. Dr. Abdullah Ibn

> "Scholars at the 13th International Bediuzzaman Symposium draw on Qur'anic principles to address war, environmental destruction, and the challenges of artificial intelligence"

Abdulaziz Al-Muslih, Syrian Mufti Dr. Usame er-Rifâî, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Leader Mavlana Fazlurrahman from Pakistan, and Al-Ummah Foundation Chairman Mohammad Zakir Hossain were other luminaries who participated in the event.

Speaking about his experience of the event, Al-Ummah Foundation Chairman Mohammad Zakir Hossain said: "The symposium's distinctive contribution lies in drawing on the Qur'an to explore solutions to pressing global challenges. It offers a constructive, forward-looking understanding of Islam and its relevance to the problems facing humanity."

The symposium discussed a range of subjects facing humanity in light of the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Topics of some of the presentations included "Quranic Solutions



Luminaries from across the world attend the three-day international Bediuzzaman Symposium to discuss "Qur'anic Solutions to Global Crises," held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 4-6 October. (Photo by Al-Ummah)

to Global Crises," "The Conception of Civilization in the New World Order," "Society and Family," "The Vision of Civilization in the New World Order," "From Crisis to Responsibility: Qur'an-Based Moral Revival and the Building of Civilisation in the Thought of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi," "Solutions to Modern Social Issues Based on the Quran and Sunnah," "Beyond the Political: The Primacy of Spiritual Succession to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ," and "The Transformative Impact of Faith on Society, Based on the Quran and Sunnah."

Global Issues

The symposium addressed wars, displacement, injustice, ecological destruction, weakening family structures, young people's search for meaning, and challenges to faith and morality arising from the digital age.

Its concluding statement argued that political, economic and envi-

ronmental crises have an underlying spiritual dimension: humanity's disconnection from the purpose and meaning of existence. Without moral direction, it said, advances in knowledge, technology and power risk expanding the capacity for destruction.

Drawing on Nursi's understanding of creation as pointing beyond itself to its Creator, participants advocated a civilization grounded in belief in the oneness of God, justice, compassion, responsibility and human dignity.

Gaza and global justice

The statement strongly condemned Israel's attacks on civilians, hospitals, schools and places of worship in Gaza, together with restrictions on humanitarian assistance, describing these actions as genocide.

It urged Muslims to speak more firmly against the suffering of Palestinians and called for an immediate end to the attacks, a permanent ceasefire, unrestricted humanitarian access and accountability under international law. It also demanded protection of the Palestinian people's right to live freely and independently on their own land.

More broadly, the symposium criticized a global system in which power overrides rights, double standards prevail and international law fails to restrain powerful actors.



States and international organizations, it said, should protect every person's life, intellect, family lineage, property and faith, regardless of race, religion or language. Participants advocated virtue over self-interest, mutual assistance over conflict, and brotherhood over racial or ethnic superiority.

The statement identified consultation, freedom, the rule of law, and equality before the law as essential foundations of sound governance. It also endorsed Nursi's principle of "positive action," emphasizing cooperation, persuasion and service as means of resolving conflicts and building peace.



Al-Ummah Foundation Chairman Mr Muhammad Zakir Hossain (left) meets with Said Yüce, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture (İİKV), on the sidelines of the 13th International Bediuzzaman Symposium, held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 4–6 October.

Participants called for greater Muslim unity and an approach to disagreement that prevents differences from becoming hostility. They also supported cooperation with the People of the Book and other faith communities around shared human values.

Moral Crisis

The symposium described ecological destruction as a moral crisis rooted in treating nature as an unlimited resource for consumption. It urged greater public awareness of responsibilities to reduce consumption, eliminate waste, and prevent food loss. Nursi's portrayal of the universe as a book to be read, the statement suggested, encourages respect for creation and responsible stewardship.

On economic issues, participants identified greed and excessive accumulation as drivers of instability. They recommended frugality, contentment, gratitude and lawful earnings as principles for tackling poverty, hoarding and corruption, while supporting halal finance and sustainable consumption.

Saving the Family Institution

Strengthening the family was another major recommendation. The statement called for protective legislation, educational programs and counseling services, alongside moral and spiritual development and greater respect and care for older people.

Education, it argued, should develop both intellectual understanding and moral character. Drawing on Nursi's Madrasa al-Zahra project, participants proposed integrating natural and religious sciences through values-based learning from preschool to higher education.

The symposium also emphasized helping young people navigate questions of identity, meaning and belonging, drawing on the principles of faith, integrity and moral restraint outlined in Nursi's A Guide for Youth.

On migration, it called for humane responses to people displaced by war and other crises. It invoked the Qur'anic principle of the sanctity of human life and the Prophet's model of solidarity between the Ansar and Muhajirun—the host and migrant communities.

AI and Digital Life

Addressing artificial intelligence and digital life, participants said technology should serve human well-being and remain guided by moral values.

They warned about digital addiction, the attention economy and the effects of social media on psychological health and moral development, recommending reflection and moderation as safeguards for families and young people.

The statement also proposed holistic approaches to anxiety, depression and trauma that integrate modern psychotherapy with spiritual values, including faith, patience, gratitude and trust in God.

Participants maintained that science and faith can be harmonious, interpreting the natural world as revealing divine order and artistry. They also highlighted reasoned inquiry, evidence, literary expression and art as ways to strengthen understanding and communicate faith in an age of uncertainty about truth.

The organizing committee thanked President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, supporting ministries, TİKA, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, partner universities and other contributors. Turkish Airlines supported transportation, while TRT and Anadolu Agency served as communication sponsors.

The committee expressed hope that the symposium's conclusions would contribute to peace, intellectual renewal in the Islamic world and the transmission of the Risale-i Nur's message to future generations.



Mr. Muhammad Zakir Hossain, Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation (left), meets with Professor Dr. Selim Argun, President of the Yunus Emre Institute, at the latter's headquarters in Ankara.

Al-Ummah Takes Its Global Vision to Ankara

By Al-Ummah Desk

ANKARA — Mr Muhammad Zakir Hossain, Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation, visited Ankara and met with top figures to boost the Foundation's vision of establishing a multilingual media platform dedicated to journalism, intellectual exchange, cultural heritage and issues affecting Muslim communities worldwide.

The meetings with Professor Dr. Selim Argun, President of the Yunus Emre Institute, and Professor Dr. Yasin Aktay,

a distinguished Turkish scholar, writer and public intellectual, focused on cultural heritage, contemporary challenges facing Muslim societies, the development of the Foundation's international media initiative and opportunities for future cooperation between institutions in Bangladesh and Türkiye.

A Visit to Yunus Emre Institute

The Foundation chairman met with Professor Dr. Selim Argun at the Yunus Emre Institute headquarters in Ankara. The meeting was vitally important as the discussions centred on the preservation of Islamic and Muslim cultural heritage, historical awareness, intellectual development and opportunities for cooperation between the Yunus Emre Institute and the Al-Ummah Foundation.

Zakir briefed Professor Argun about his Foundation's website and journal and the mission to promote journalism, knowledge-sharing, and informed discussion of issues affecting Muslim communities around the world.

While Argun appreciated the initiative and its potential contribution to intellectual engagement, the two sides explored possible areas of future cooperation in those areas of common interest.

Zakir invited Professor Argun to visit Bangladesh, which he cordially accepted and expressed his willingness to visit at a mutually convenient time.

> “Al-Ummah Foundation chief Mohammad Zakir Hossain's meetings with leading Turkish cultural and intellectual figures in Ankara explore cooperation in heritage, scholarship and the Foundation's expanding multilingual media platform”

A Bridge for Cultural Understanding

The Yunus Emre Institute, one of Türkiye's principal institutions for global cultural engagement, plays an important role in the country's cultural diplomacy. Named after Yunus Emre, the celebrated Anatolian poet whose writings are associated with humanity, compassion and spiritual reflection, the Institute promotes Turkish language, culture, history and arts internationally.

Founded on 5 May 2007, the Institute has developed an international network of cultural centres and educational programmes intended to introduce Turkish language and culture to audiences around the world.

Its activities include Turkish-language education, cultural and artistic events, support for Turkish studies at overseas educational institutions, and programmes that encourage academ-



Mr. Muhammad Zakir Hossain, Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation (left), meets with Professor Dr. Yasin Aktay, a prominent Turkish academic and public intellectual, at his Office in Ankara.

ic exchange and intercultural understanding.

While the Institute focuses on promoting Turkish culture and language, the Foundation seeks to develop a multilingual media platform highlighting the heritage, intellectual contributions and contemporary concerns of Muslim communities. These complementary areas of activity may provide a basis for future dialogue and potential cooperation, subject to further discussion and agreement between the institutions.

Meeting Professor Yasin Aktay

Zakir Hossain also met Professor Dr. Yasin Aktay, a prominent Turkish academic, writer and public intellectual whose work encompasses scholarship, political thought and public affairs.

Professor Aktay previously served as a chief adviser to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and as a deputy chairman of Türkiye's Justice and Development Party (AK Party). He has contributed to public discussions on political,

social and intellectual issues affecting Türkiye and the wider Muslim world.

Their meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on the contemporary international situation, the political and social landscape in Bangladesh and Türkiye, and the challenges confronting Muslim communities across different regions.

A central theme of the discussion was the importance of strengthening communication among scholars, intellectuals, researchers and institutions working on issues relevant to the Muslim world. The participants considered how informed debate, intellectual cooperation and constructive dialogue could contribute to a deeper understanding of shared challenges.

Zakir briefed Professor Aktay on the development of the Al-Ummah Foundation's website and journal, explaining the initiative's ambition to establish an international media platform connecting Muslim communities across national, linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Professor Aktay was already familiar with the initiative, having attended the inaugural event for the Foundation's website and journal during a previous visit to Bangladesh, where he delivered a speech highlighting the significance of the project.

During their subsequent meeting in Ankara, Professor Aktay expressed interest in the platform's development and offered suggestions regarding its future direction. The discussion highlighted the importance of informed analysis, professional journalism and international intellectual participation in building a credible media institution.

According to the Foundation, the meeting also included discussions about continuing engagement and exploring opportunities for further cooperation. These included a proposed gathering in Istanbul in early December, subject to further planning and mutual agreement.

Building Stronger Connections

The meetings in Ankara reflect opportunities to deepen intellectual and cultural engagement between Bangladesh and Türkiye, two countries with substantial Muslim populations and distinct historical experiences.

Academic exchanges, cultural programmes, publications and professional media initiatives can provide channels for exploring shared interests while encouraging a more comprehensive understanding of each country's history, society and contemporary circumstances.

For Bangladesh, engagement with Turkish scholars and cultural institutions may help broaden academic networks, introduce new perspectives on cultural and historical research, and encourage

international discussion of issues relevant to younger generations.

For Turkish institutions and intellectuals, a dialogue with Bangladeshi organizations can create opportunities to engage with Bangladesh's cultural heritage, academic community, public discourse and developing media environment.

Engaging the Next Generation

An important theme emerging from the discussions in Ankara was the value of connecting younger generations with their historical, cultural and intellectual heritage.

For Muslim communities worldwide, access to reliable historical resources, educational opportunities and informed discussion can help young people understand the experiences that have shaped their societies. Such engagement can also encourage critical thinking and a more informed response to contemporary social, political and cultural challenges.

The Al-Ummah Foundation aims to contribute to this process through its website and journal while exploring opportunities to engage with academic and cultural institutions.

Potential areas for future initiatives include expert interviews, historical and cultural features, contributions from researchers, educational publications and exchanges between scholars in Bangladesh and Türkiye. These remain prospective areas of development rather than confirmed joint programmes.

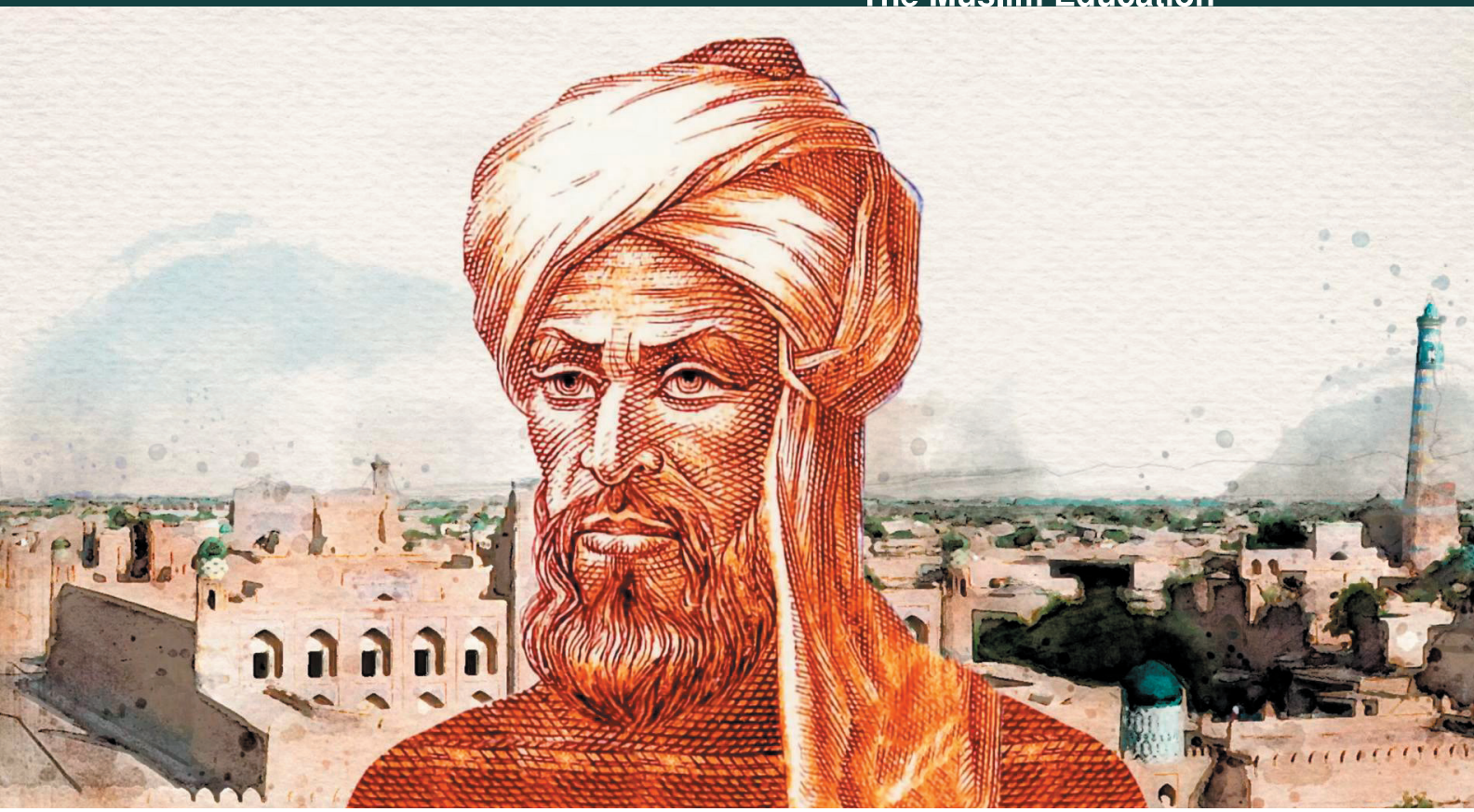
By giving greater attention to younger audiences, the Foundation hopes to connect its international media ambitions with educational objectives, making cultural knowledge and informed perspectives more accessible across countries and languages.

The meetings in Ankara represent an important stage in the Al-Ummah Foundation's international outreach. Engagement with Professor Dr. Selim Argun and Professor Dr. Yasin Aktay has provided opportunities to present the Foundation's objectives, exchange views on issues affecting Muslim societies and explore potential areas of cultural and intellectual cooperation.

The Foundation aims to translate these discussions into clearly defined activities, where appropriate, through continued communication, agreed programmes and mutually beneficial partnerships.

The proposed Istanbul gathering and the possibility of future engagement with the Yunus Emre Institute will require further planning and agreement before specific outcomes can be established.

For the Foundation, the broader challenge is to combine international networking with the consistent production of reliable journalism, meaningful intellectual exchange and professionally managed multilingual publishing.



Education is Key to Muslim Renaissance

By Basheer Ahmed M.D.
Ex-Professor of Psychiatry, the Southwestern Medical School, Dallas, US



The Qur'an started with the word "Iqra," which means "Read." It teaches us to say: "Rabbi zidni 'Ilmaa" (O Lord, increase me in knowledge. (20-114) Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "A scholar's ink is more sacred than the blood of the martyr." Allah created humans to be superior to all other creations. The major use of knowledge and aql (intelligence) is to develop critical thinking, necessary to make rational, sustainable decisions.

During the early period of Islam, between the 7th and 15th centuries, Muslims acquired knowledge in fields of architecture, astronomy, the sciences, mathematics, medicine, and philosophy. In the 9th century, the House of Wisdom (Bait Al-Hikma) was established, which attracted scholars from many parts of the world.

> “ Islamic Golden Age thrived through a powerful network of madrasas and scholarly institutions ”

The work of great scholars like Aristotle, Euclid, Galen, Ptolemy, Socrates, and more was collected, preserved, and translated into Arabic. By the 11th century, all major Muslim cities (Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba) had major institutions like universities, hospitals, and scientific laboratories.

Muslims became leaders of knowledge, and people from all over the world would go to Muslim cities for higher education. Muslim physicians performed complicated eye surgeries 600 years before Europeans began to do so. They measured the circumference of the earth and values for specific gravities correct to three decimal places 1,000 years ago. Muslim scientists got the concept of zero from India, and substituted it for the Roman numeral, resulting in a more manageable decimal system in use today. There is no field of knowledge where Muslims did not explore, investigate, research, think, or invent exemplary innovations.

Some of the noted Muslim scholars of the medieval period were: Ibn Al-Baitar, Ibn Al-Nafis, Nasir Al-Din Al-Tusi, Al-Battani, Omar Khayyam, Al-Kindi, Al-Biruni, Thabit Ibn, Al-Zahrawi, Jabir ibn Hayyan, Al-Khwarizmi, Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi, Ibn Al-Haytham, Ibne Khaldun, Ibne Rushd, Ibne Batuta,

Al-Idrisi, and Ibn-Sina (Avicenna), whose medical encyclopedia, “The Canon of Medicine,” became a standard medical reference in universities for 500 years.

Just Google it, and you will find their contributions aplenty. Mainstream Western history acknowledges the work was done by Greek and Roman scholars up to 300 CE and then mysteriously jumps to 1500 CE, i.e., the European Renaissance. It left nearly 800 years—from the 7th to the 15th centuries—of social, political, or scientific developments out of discussion.

H.J. Morowitz, a historian, described this phenomenon as ‘History’s Black Hole,’ stating: “The impression (is) given that the Renaissance arose phoenix-like from the ashes–smoldering for a millennium–of the classical age of Greece and Rome.” It is, in fact, the Muslim contributions in that prior time that led to the European Renaissance of the Elizabethan period, and ultimately inspired the democratic ideals of our constitution, as well as the current cross-cultural climate of the U.S.

Decline of the Muslim Ummah

In the 11th century, the separation of the revealed (“Qur’anic”) sources from

the rational sources of knowledge was raised by distinguished Muslim scholars.

They insisted on the supremacy of the revealed source, which was of divine origin, insisting that it should not be complemented or supplemented with rational sources of knowledge, which they believed to be inferior and would bring a corrupting influence on the revealed knowledge. Consequently, the madrasas in the Islamic realm abandoned research in and the teaching of scientific themes. The schools and universities were engaged in reading the Qur'an without teaching its meaning, and teaching Fiqh (religious jurisprudence) – which is important for Muslim – to extreme detail, but taught it without the freedom of expression and critical thinking.

The great Renaissance Movement, which transformed Europe into a dynamic and progressive civilization, did not reach neighboring Islamic countries because orthodox, dogmatic Muslim jurists continued to promote only the revealed sources.

Post-colonial Muslim countries were more preoccupied with consolidating their own political power than with advancing knowledge. As a consequence, Muslims have been suffering from this ignorance. There are no contributions by Muslim scientists in Muslim countries in the technological revolution of the



20th century that has radically changed the world.

The State of Muslims Today

A 2020 study estimated that the 57 OIC member countries had approximately 2,900 universities. Yet in terms of rankings, only 25 OIC universities appeared in the Times Higher Education top 500.

On the other hand, the US alone had approximately 3,800 degree-granting colleges and universities in 2024–25, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. It had 102 universities among the world's top 500 in the Times Higher Education World Uni-

> “Muslims need an education system which can produce Muslim experts in all fields of knowledge to reconstruct the social order and justice”

versity Rankings 2026—approximately one-fifth of the total. Thus, the United States had roughly four times as many top-500 universities as the OIC countries combined.

Besides, adult literacy of 77.9% across OIC countries for 2024 is much behind the global literacy rate of 87.7%, according to SESRIC's 2026 Pocketbook reports.

SESRIC, a subsidiary organ of the OIC, cites in a June 2024 statement approximately 700 researchers per million people across OIC countries, while the US had approximately 4,937 R&D researchers per million people in 2022 (Source: UNESCO data).

Population-wise, globally Muslims number around 2.0 billion, according to Pew Research Center's global estimates published in June 2025. Jews are roughly 14.8 million in 2020, according to the same Pew study. Yet, there are 222 Jewish Nobel Laureates as of 2026, far ahead of Muslims with 17 Nobel Prize winners.

In the US, Muslims are preoccupied with the Islamization of science and medicine. Muslim scientists in medieval times impartially acquired knowledge from earlier scholars and then contributed their own original work to it. Ibn Sina's medical work was not Islamic because he was a Muslim, just as Einstein's theory of relativity is not Jewish physics because he happens to be Jewish, and Isaac Newton's theory of gravity is not Christian theory because Newton was a Christian.

Scientific methods are based on objectivity and rationality, not on the religion of the scientist. There are rich Muslim countries, endowed with natural resources in abundance. However, they spend little to build universities and produce scientists, engineers, and technocrats.

Finally

We need an education system which can produce Muslim experts in all fields of knowledge who can reconstruct the social order and justice. By having good educational programs, future generations will become the torchbearers of Islamic values and play an effective role in the world. Education of women is the key to the success of a society. We need to develop and effectively apply critical thinking skills to the complex problems that we face, and to the critical choices we will be forced to make as a result of the information explosion and other rapid technological changes.

Why Admonition Lies at the Heart of the Qur'an



By Gowhar Quadir Wani
Doctoral Candidate, Dept. of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, UP, India

The Qur'anic concept of tadhkīr—admonition or reminding—derives from the Arabic root letters dh, k, r. This root appears in 19 different forms across the Qur'an, totalling 292 occurrences. Words like dhakara (73 times), dhukira (11 times), dhakkara (8 times), dhukkira (10 times), and dhikrun (76 times) all stem from the same source. Such linguistic abundance alone testifies to the profound significance of admonition in the Qur'anic worldview.

Even more tellingly, several names of the Qur'an itself-including dhikr, tadhkirah, and dhikrā-are derived from this very root. This makes it clear that the Qur'an does not merely contain admonitions; it is, in its entirety, a book of admonition. Every teaching within it is designed to awaken, remind, and guide humanity.

Selected Verses

The following verses explicitly label the Qur'an as an admonition:

- "Nay, this surely is an admonition." (74:54)
- "This is naught but an Admonition unto the worlds." (81:27)
- "This which We recite unto thee is of the signs and of the wise admonition." (3:58)
- "This is an exposition for mankind, and a guidance, and an admonition unto the God-fearing." (3:138)
- "Sad. By the Qur'an full of admonition." (38:1)
- "It is naught but an admonition unto the worlds." (38:87)
- "We have put forth for men, in this Qur'an, every kind of parable, in order that they may receive admonition."

> “Only a good education system can turn the tide and change the fortunes of Muslims”

(39:27)

• “But We have indeed made the Qur’an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?” (54:17, 22, 32, 40)

• “Ta. Ha. We have not sent down the Qur’an to thee that thou shouldst be distressed, but only as an admonition unto him who feareth.” (20:1-3)

• “And verily it is an Admonition unto the God-fearing.” (69:48)

• “And this is a blessed Admonition which We have sent down! Will ye then be rejecters thereof?” (21:50)

Beyond verses containing the root dh, k, r, many others reinforce the necessity of admonition. For instance, the Prophetic mission of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is described through four key functions: Tilāwat Āyāt (reciting the signs), Ta›līm al-Kitāb (teaching the Book), Ta›līm al-Ḥikmah (teaching wisdom), and Tazkiyah (purification). All of these ultimately serve to admonish humanity about the truth of their existence and reform their conduct.

Even the method of delivering the Divine message is meant to serve the cause of admonition. Allah advises the Prophet: “Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom, goodly exhortation [admonition], and best argument” (16:125). He is also instructed to convey the message in a way that touches the hearts of the listeners (4:63).

The Purpose of Admonition

Thus, the Qur’an stands as an embodiment of reminders, designed to awaken human beings to the purpose of their existence. It reveals the “creation plan of God” and calls upon people to live in accordance with their Creator›s approval. Prophets were sent to deliver this message—giving glad tidings (tabshīr) to those who submit and warning (indhār) the rejecters of eternal consequences.

Believers, in turn, are called to strive in conveying this message to all humanity, leaving no one with any excuse against Allah. This conveying is known as Da›wah, and the utmost struggle for it is jihad. Together, these elements form the apparatus through which the Qur’anic mission of admonition is realized—so that people may turn to their Lord in repentance.

Inspired by this Qur’anic directive, Muslims have produced an extraordinary corpus of tadhkīr literature (also known as mawā›iẓ). This body of work plays a vital role in the purification of the self and the reformation of human conduct.



Freedom remains incomplete without meaning and purpose

"And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect." (Al-Quran, 30:21).

"So, be steadfast in faith in all uprightness — the natural Way of Allah which He has instilled in all people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah. That is the Straight Way, but most people do not know." (Al-Quran, 30:30).



Dr. Asrar Talukder
Marine Geologist and Social Activist,
Perth, Australia

Human relationships, as the above verses suggest, are not merely social arrangements shaped by our choices



and wills, but part of a naturally ordered, layered reality — one that gives direction, purpose, and meaning to human life. To understand this complex matrix of relationships, consider the layered network of human relationships.

Biology

Human reproduction requires different biological investments from males and females. Biology assigns different reproductive roles to the two sexes.

The female reproductive system is cyclic, discrete, and largely involuntary. Women have no conscious control over ovulation or menstruation; the monthly process is physiological. Conception itself does not depend upon female sexual desire. Pregnancy can occur regardless of whether sexual attraction is present.

Female reproductive potential is also limited by age and requires a long biological investment through pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare. From a purely biological perspective, female reproductive success is therefore more strongly linked to selectivity and parental investment.

The male reproductive role is different. The male reproductive system is characterized by continuous sperm production and voluntary ejaculation, combined with strong sexual incentives and drives.

Biologically speaking, male reproduction is less constrained. A single male can theoretically father children with multiple women at the same time. Although male fertility also declines with age, it is not limited in the same way as female fertility. Male reproductive success has therefore been more associated with reproductive opportunity.

Human offspring require years of care, protection, and provision. Biology makes reproduction possible, but by itself it does not organise the responsibilities that follow. The continuation of life therefore creates social



demands that biology alone cannot fully address.

Socio-economy

The traditional family appears to have been a form of social adaptation — an institutional arrangement, structured through marriage, that aligned with and advanced our reproductive realities. In its conventional form, it created a division of roles: women as primary caregivers and men as providers. Women bore and nurtured the progeny, while men ensured provision and protection. At its core, it was a relationship of interdependency and complementarity. Biology made reproduction possible; the family helped make it sustainable.

However, it is not accurate to say that women were absent from economic activity. Rather, economic life itself was largely centred around the home, which began to change with the Industrial Revolution. The economic centre shifted away from the home and into factories and external workplaces. In doing so, it physically and structurally separated production from reproduction, and, in many ways, redefined roles that had previously been integrated within the household.

Yet economic cooperation alone cannot fully stabilise family life. Questions of sexuality, parenthood, inheri-

tance, loyalty, and obligation inevitably emerge. Sustaining life requires not only resources and cooperation but also norms and expectations.

Religion

Religion appears as an overlay, reinforcing and regulating family structures in ways that align with reproductive outcomes. It builds upon biological realities and socio-economic arrangements by formalising boundaries and norms around relationships, sexuality, and family life.

For example, in Islam, sexual relationships outside of marriage are prohibited, and legitimate sexual relations are confined within the institution of marriage. The framework is heterosexual, and certain biological conditions are explicitly recognised, such as the prohibition of sexual intercourse during menstruation. Within marriage, sexual relations are structured and regulated rather than left entirely to individual discretion.

In this sense, religion introduces constraints that shape reproductive behaviour. It reduces uncertainty, regulates access, and channels sexual relations into stable family units. Polygamy, where and when permitted, can also be a reproductive multiplier within certain social contexts, particularly where demographic or economic conditions allow it.

Religion therefore transforms practical arrangements into obligations and prohibitions and provides a framework through which family life can be stabilised across generations. Yet human beings do not seek only stability and order. They also seek meaning.

Spirituality

In the Quran, Allah says that spouses are garments for one another. Garments are a means of protection, dignity, adornment, and comfort. The best garment is the garment of righteousness. The Arabic word 'haya' carries a dual meaning: life and a sense of modesty, dignity, and shame. In the Quran, nudity is described as ugly as dead corpses, and nakedness is associated with exposure and vulnerability.

Garments are a primary form of protection; without them, we are both naked and exposed. The Quranic analogy of spouses as garments captures the complex relationship between strength and vulnerability. Spouses are undressed before one another; they are vulnerable and mutually dependent within the relationship. Yet they are also garments for one another. Together they provide protection, comfort, dignity, and beauty to themselves and to society.

The spiritual goal of marriage is to find tranquillity through mutual affection, love, and mercy. In this way, the family

becomes more than a biological mechanism, a social institution, or a religious obligation. It becomes the place where these realities find their fulfilment.

Technological disruption

Two developments were particularly transformative: the industrial revolution and the invention of the contraceptive pill.

The Industrial Revolution accelerated a process already discussed in the socio-economic layer. Economic life became increasingly detached from family life. At the same time, mechanisation reduced the importance of physical strength in many forms of labour. Machines increasingly replaced muscle, enabling women to participate in economic life in ways that had previously been more difficult.

The contraceptive pill introduced another transformation. For the first time in history, women gained an unprecedented degree of control over their reproductive cycles and the timing of pregnancy. Many of the biological constraints that had historically shaped family structures were reduced, altered, or postponed through technology.

Yet technological progress does not merely solve problems; it also creates trade off. This transformation has produced extraordinary opportunities, particularly in personal autonomy. At the same time, it has introduced new challenges. Many societies now face declining fertility rates, increasing social isolation, and growing uncertainty regarding relationships and family life.

> “Without a shared understanding of meaning and purpose, our biological, economic, and political freedom remains fundamentally incomplete”

From romantic autonomy to liberal choices

Historically, marriage was primarily a social and economic institution. It was structured around necessity — organizing reproduction, inheritance, labor, and survival. Choice played a limited role. Family life was embedded in obligation, kinship, and economic interdependence.

Romantic marriage emerges later, as both biological and economic constraints are gradually loosened. Affection, attraction, and personal compatibility increasingly become central to partner selection.

This shift in personal life is mirrored by a broader expansion of individual au-

tonomy in society. As people become less bound by traditional roles, they can more easily choose where to live, what to work, how to organise their daily lives and even having a choice of not to choose any religion.

In earlier systems, ordinary people were subjects rather than participants in the selection of authority. In most historical arrangements, the question of who would govern them was not open to them. Power and authority were inherited, assigned, or determined through lineage, conquest, or elite political settlement.

In modern liberal systems, this condition is fundamentally altered. The individual is also participating in the selection and replacement of authority itself. This raises a question: once choice extends even to the selection of authority itself, what more can be asked for in the name of freedom?

However, there is a growing sense of discontent with liberalism across the West. Choices are running out of options to meet expectations.

Final note

Japan and South Korea have often been seen as poster cases of late 20th-century development and economic progress. Yet both now face persistently low birth rates, and their populations have been in decline for some time.

In response, immigration increasingly becomes part of the discussion around sustaining labour forces and demographic balance. This introduces a new tension. What appears necessary from the perspective of labour and productivity can feel more complex when viewed through questions of cultural continuity and national identity. Similar debates are emerging across all Western societies.

So, the question returns in a more fundamental form. If biology makes continuation possible, society makes it workable, religion makes it stable, and spirituality makes it meaningful, what happens when the structures that once carried these functions begin to loosen? What remains when life is no longer organised primarily by necessity, but by choice?

One thing seems certain: without a shared understanding of meaning and purpose, our biological, economic, and political freedom remains fundamentally incomplete. The natural Way of Allah is not a limitation upon freedom, but the orientation that gives freedom its direction, meaning, and purpose, allowing human life, family, and society to flourish sustainably.

Disclaimer: I read the Quran in the light of science, philosophy, ethics, and public policy. This is not a theological discussion, but some rational thinking shaped by the Quran.



Offending religious symbols violates international law

By Dr. Al-Mahjoob bin Saeed
Rabat – Morocco

The phenomenon of offending religions is not newly born, rather it is rooted in history, so it is not objective to link it to what has been happening in the developments of the West's relationship with Muslims and Islam since the events of September 11, 2001, to this day.

Prejudice against religions has existed for a long time, but it strengthened dramatically after the European Renaissance. It was a remarkable moment in the deepening of this offense through the literary writings, which became widespread with the spread of the printing press, then later through cinema and radio, and finally television and social media.

The issue of defamation of religions is among the issues that continue to haunt some of the United Nations organs for more than a decade. Decisions have been issued regarding it aimed at condemning its practitioners, but unfortunately, these decisions are not legally binding despite their moral and

ethical influence. Interest in religious issues has begun in recent years within the United Nations, especially within two important organs, namely the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. There are three basic trends about the importance of religion in international human rights law, and its place in the United Nations organs concerned with the subject, which are:

- The first trend is that religion should not have any normative role in the international law, and this approach is adopted and defended by most Western jurists who argue that the international law must remain neutral.

- The second trend recognizes the actual and fundamental role of the religious factor in the international law, without demanding any important role of religion in the public sphere. This trend believes that religion plays a prominent and important role in the development of the international law, and in the direction of maintaining international peace and security.

- The third trend believes that religion should play a central role in the international law, not only as a source, but also as a standard tool. This trend is described as conciliatory, and a number of jurists who consider that religion is very important and essential in international life supports it.

It is noted that the third trend has dominated the practices of the United Nations organs that seek to take moderate positions, as they have taken in recent years relatively supportive stances to criminalize offending and insulting religions and religious symbols, and international documents seem to distinguish between defamation and insulting of religions, and calling and inciting religious hatred.

Unrestricted freedom of opinion and expression in all its manifestations, including satirical caricatures, was followed by intense discussions and violent criticism aimed at preventing contempt and insulting of religions. This led to the formation of strong pressure groups pushing towards the need to develop national legislation, as well as international legislation that prevent criticism and insulting of religions, and despising them. These initiatives find their legitimacy in their relentless pursuit of reducing crimes resulting from both racial and religious hatred. The goal behind this is not to limit the exercise of human rights, or to work to restrict them, as much as the goal is to take measures to reduce exaggeration in insulting them by one party or another.

Reconciling human rights with freedom of opinion and expression, and especially religious freedom, is very difficult, and cannot be achieved unless a law is put in place that protects these

from that. Otherwise, religious freedom and human rights will be anarchically violated punctuated by the tyranny of freedom of opinion and expression and the domination of the media.

The Human Rights Council witnessed a sharp debate among its members about the concept of offending religions and its relationship to freedom of expression in 2008, especially after the publication of caricatures insulting Prophet Mohammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in some Danish and French newspapers, when discussing a report on the subject prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur on aspects of racial discrimination in it, in which he proposed replacing the concept of «insulting religions» with the concept of «incitement to hatred». The Council members were divided, those who see the need to place a law protecting religions, and those who reject it with a justification that it will undermine the freedom of expression.

On April 11, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly approved Resolution 65/224. The resolution evoked the various efforts that were made in this context since the inception of the United Nations to the moment of its issuance, reviewing the various international agreements, declarations and resolutions related to issues of non-discrimination in all its forms, especially religious discrimination and hatred

> “Prejudice against religions has existed for long, but it strengthened dramatically after the European Renaissance”

against Islam and Muslims in the first place, then Judaism and Christianity.

This resolution affirmed in its ninth paragraph that the United Nations General Assembly expresses its dissatisfaction with the use of print, audiovisual, and electronic media to incite acts of violence and xenophobia, and the related intolerance and discrimination against any religion, and against the targeting of holy books, places of worship, and the religious symbols and violate their sanctities. This resolution also reaffirms the general recommendation No. 15 issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which stipulates the prohibition of publishing all ideas based on racial superiority or racial hatred in a manner consistent with freedom of opinion and expression, and without falling into incitement to religious hatred. Based on the text of this resolution, the United Nations General Assembly calls on all states to implement the provisions of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on

> “ The MWL affirmed that the human rights principle of «freedom of expression» must be framed by human values that are based on respect for the feelings of others ”

Religion or Belief. At the same time, it urges its member states to work within the framework of their legal and constitutional systems to provide adequate protection from all acts of hatred, discrimination, intimidation and coercion resulting from the degradation of religions and their status.

Some UN member states have taken some steps to protect religious freedom and respect for religions, by enacting laws to prevent insulting of religions, and to prevent negative stereotypes from displaying followers of religions. Nevertheless, these stereotypes are still spreading strongly in some Western countries under the justification of opinion and expression freedom, and freedom of media. These countries have also remained reluctant to issue national legislation, in line with the rules of international human rights law, in order to punish whoever violates the sanctity of religions even if under the pretext of the freedom of opinion and expression that contradicts with religious hatred and discrimination.

In light of these data, a set of questions arises. How to prevent insulting religions? What are the mechanisms for the practical implementation of the United Nations resolution? Have the effects of some legislation that prevent this started to appear? On the other hand, is the matter still as it was, in light of the events taking place in many regions in the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa that are characterized by the spread of extremist religious movements that threaten global peace and security and escalated Islamophobia? Is it time for developing a binding international agreement for respecting religions and distinguishing between freedom of opinion and expression and the issue of insulting religions, considering this as a violation of human rights at a time when the wave of discrimination, hatred and racism on the basis of race and religion has increased in Europe?

The questions continue: How to do this? Is it by imposing restrictions on the freedom of the media, and thus on the freedom of opinion and expression, or by unleashing it uncontrollably, or by making the right to respect religions and their freedoms equal to freedom of expression? The tyranny of one of them over the other may lead to the violation of two ancient principles inherent in



the human rights system, one of which cannot be sacrificed in order to preserve the other. Working on these issues and reaching objective and comprehensive answers regarding them will undoubtedly be a qualitative addition to regional and international efforts exerted to promote dialogue between followers of religions and coexistence among people in order to confront movements and currents that resort to violence and terrorism in the name of religion and threaten global peace and security.

The Muslim World League, as an umbrella for the Islamic people, is one of the most qualified Islamic and international organizations to contribute to this mission. The Makkah Declaration affirmed, «Enacting legislation that deter hate propagandists and instigators of violence, terrorism and civilized clash is sufficient to dry up the causes of religious and ethnic conflict». Moreover, the justification for the MWL›s eligibility for this mission is based in our opinion on two basic considerations:

- First: It is represented in the great and continuous efforts made by the SG of MWL, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, in order to spread goodness, peace and harmony. In addition to promote dialogue with the followers of religions, introduce correct and noble Islamic values in their hu-

> “Reconciling human rights with freedom of opinion and expression, and especially religious freedom, is very difficult, and cannot be achieved unless a law is put in place that protects these from that ”

man and civilizational dimension. Promote the concept of one human family that is based on love and cooperation in building a civilized society, fight any form of abuse against this family in its harmony, rapprochement, cooperation and favoritism in its various religions, ethnicities, cultures and countries. Invite followers of religions and cultures to enhance their human communication and cooperation within the framework of common and interests.

- Second: it is represented in the MWL›s objectives, calling for removing the factors of conflict and discord, strengthening cohesion between people and nations, caring for civilized communication, and spreading the culture of dialogue. The MWL has become at the forefront of civilizational, cultural, and religious institutions around the world because it was able to present a civilized discourse that preserved the values of Islamic identity and constants, and opened positively for shared human values. It also concluded cooperation and partnership agreements with a number of Islamic and international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - ISESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO - the World Council of Religious Leaders, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and the Call of Conscience Foundation of America, to promote the values of harmony and fight extremism.

In addition, the MWL concerning the French arena in October 2020 issued a statement condemning the methods of insulting the followers of religions, including the «religious symbols» of any religion, and clarifying that Islam forbids this. The MWL affirmed that the human rights principle of «freedom of expression» must be framed by human values that are based on respect for the feelings of others. The freedom of opinion, when it deviates from those values, undermines the moral meaning of freedoms and harms the purposes of the constitutional and legal legislation that ensured the freedom of expression in any legitimate manner. This was not intended to incite hatred and racism under the pretext of freedom of opinion, nor to fabricate cultural and civilizational conflict between nations and people.



Living the Qur'an: From Recitation to Transformation



Asmaa Mufid Kamel
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Never before in the history of the Islamic Ummah have Qur'an memorization circles been so widespread or opportunities to learn the Qur'an so accessible. Yet anyone who reflects on the condition of Muslims today will notice a striking paradox: although the number of those memorizing the Qur'an continues to grow, this progress is not equally reflected in individual conduct or public life.

Addressing the problems and challenges facing the Islamic world requires a return to the noble teachings of the Qur'an. This means not only reciting and memorizing the Book, but also following its guidance in the details of daily life. The Qur'an itself explains the purpose of its revelation: "[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded» (Sa'ad: 29)".

In Zad al-Ma"ad, Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) emphasizes that the Qur'an"s true benefit comes through understanding and action.

> “The Qur’an must be present in one’s daily life, for Allah revealed it as guidance for humanity”

Recitation and memorization are means of discovering its meanings, while the true «people of the Qur’an» are those who understand and live by its teachings—even if they have not memorized it in full. He likened a person who memorizes the Qur’an without understanding or applying it to someone who crafts an arrow with great precision but never uses it. He also preferred measured recitation (tartil), accompanied by reflection and deep understanding, over hurried reading intended merely to cover more pages. Even a small amount, read thoughtfully, can deepen faith and draw a servant closer to Allah.

This understanding was central to the first generation of Muslims. They received the Qur’an as a framework for transformation before treating it as material for memorization. It is reported that Abdullah ibn Mas”ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Companions would learn ten verses and not move on until they had understood and acted upon them. Knowledge and action thus went hand in hand. Their measure of virtue was not simply how much a person had memorized, but how deeply the Qur’an shaped the person”s soul, character, and dealings with others. Today, we urgently need to restore this educational approach, which brings together memorization, understanding, and practice.

A comparison between the practice of the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and our present reality helps explain this paradox. Many Muslims approach the Qur’an primarily as material to memorize and recite perfectly, rather than as a guide for purifying the soul and reforming behavior. Some educational methods have unintentionally reinforced this tendency by measuring achievement according to the number of chapters memorized rather than the effect of the verses on character and conduct. Amid the hurried pace of modern life, the dominance of screens, and the decline of gatherings devoted to reflection, many people read the Qur’an mainly to earn reward. This is undoubtedly a noble intention, but equal attention must be given to the Qur’an”s ultimate purpose: guidance and transformation.

Can the Qur’an Be Integrated into Daily Life?

Can the Qur’an truly transform human behavior? The answer is an emphatic yes. It illuminates the heart, mind, and soul. It serves as a compass, helping a person understand their true identity,



the purpose of existence, their duties before Allah, and the way to live a life that earns His pleasure.

When believers recognize their true identity as servants of the Almighty, their hearts overflow with gratitude for this miraculous Book. The Qur'an fills life with beautiful and illuminating meanings and brings spiritual tranquility in proportion to the depth with which it is understood.

There are several ways Muslims can build a sound relationship with the Qur'an, allowing divine revelation to guide both word and deed. These practices can transform a person from a mere memorizer of words into a conscious believer who understands the purpose of what they read:

Reciting Correctly: Reciting the Qur'an according to the rules of tajweed brings reassurance to the heart, tranquility to the soul, and blessings to one"s surroundings. It nurtures a sense of closeness to Allah, eases sorrow and distress, and helps keep the believer firmly anchored on the path of truth.

Learning the Meanings and Tafsir: Recitation alone is not enough. Sound understanding requires learning the meanings of Qur'anic words and studying reliable interpretations with qualified scholars. Tafsir reveals layers of meaning in the Qur'an and helps move the reader from recitation to comprehension, and from comprehension to action.

Listening Attentively: Listening care-

> “Addressing the problems and challenges facing the Islamic world requires a return to the noble teachings of the Qur’an”

fully to Qur’anic recitation or to a knowledgeable scholar explaining its meanings—online, in a mosque, or at an institute—is among the most effective means of reflection. Seekers of knowledge often experience the profound spiritual effect of such gatherings and the peace they leave in the heart.

Practising Daily Self-Accountability: Simple habits can turn reflection into daily conduct. After reading the Qur’an, a Muslim can pause for a few minutes and ask: What message do these verses carry for me today? What virtue are they calling me to embody? What behavior should I change? Such self-examination keeps one”s relationship with the Qur’an alive, transforming reading from a routine into an ongoing journey of spiritual growth. Over time, the reader begins to approach the Qur’an expecting to be addressed and changed by it—not merely to add more verses to memory. This is when the Qur’an begins to fulfil its true role in building character.

The Role and Importance of Memorization

Committing the words of Allah to one”s heart is a great blessing. Memorization allows believers to recall and repeat verses in times of hardship and during the night prayer (Qiyam al-Layl), one of the most intimate forms of connection between a servant and the Lord.

Memorization also enables believers to live with the Qur’an throughout daily life. In countless situations, a person may recall a verse suited to the moment—one that offers comfort, guidance, or steadfastness and deepens their understanding of worldly life. Here the true fruit of memorization becomes visible: verses cease to be words stored in the mind and become a light that guides conduct and directs action.

Applying Qur’anic Teachings in Daily Life

The Qur’an must be present in the details of daily life, for Allah revealed it as guidance for humanity. Reading, memorization, tajweed, and other related acts of worship do not bear their full fruit unless they are accompanied by obedience to its commands and avoidance of its prohibitions. Knowledge without action may even become evidence against the person who possesses it.

The Qur’an is not concerned only with

purifying the spirit and strengthening faith; it provides comprehensive guidance for life. Its teachings address the fulfilment of promises, commercial dealings, loans, inheritance, responding to evil with good, family life, marriage, zakat, calling others to Allah (da"wah), raising children, and social relationships.

Nor should Muslims stop at learning, understanding, memorizing, and practising the Qur'an; they should also share its teachings with others. The words "I teach the Qur'an" may sound daunting, but the effort can begin simply: invite friends or relatives to a weekly gathering to read a few verses, explain or translate their meanings, and discuss how they can be applied in everyday life. Such small gatherings can powerfully revive our connection with the Qur'an because they link knowledge with action and turn reflection into practice.

The bond formed when Muslims study the Qur'an together is difficult to describe. It is a bond of sincere love and shared spirituality for the sake of Allah, rising above worldly motives and gains.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing Muslims today is that the Qur'an is prominently present on formal and religious occasions yet absent from many everyday decisions. We listen to it in mosques, memorize it in study circles, and display it with reverence in our homes; yet we may fail to consult its guidance during disputes, financial dealings, parenting, or interactions with neighbors, colleagues, and those with whom we disagree. The Qur'an is not meant to accompany a Muslim for only a few hours each week. It should be a constant companion and the standard by which words, actions, and decisions are judged.

> "The Qur'an illuminates the heart, mind, and soul, and serves as a compass to guide a person in his daily life"

In conclusion, the Holy Qur'an carries noble meanings and profound guidance. It nourishes the soul with beneficial knowledge, fills the heart with peace, and leads human beings toward a life pleasing to Allah. The Ummah will not restore the Qur'an"s transformative influence merely by increasing the number of memorizers, however impressive that number may be. Real change will come when a generation emerges that reflects upon the Qur'an as it memorizes it, acts upon it as it recites it, and makes it the ultimate reference for its character, conduct, and decisions. Only then will the true purpose of revelation be fulfilled, and the Book of Allah become a living guide for life rather than merely a text to be recited or memorized.

The Enemy Within: Man Versus Satan in the Qur'an



Dr. Abdul Mannan &
Engr Nafis Iskander

Abstract

The Qur'ān presents Satan (Iblīs) as the declared enemy of humankind, yet his role is carefully defined within the framework of divine sovereignty and human moral responsibility. This article examines the Qur'ānic portrayal of Satan through a thematic analysis of his rebellion, identity, methods of deception, and the limits of his authority. It argues that the Qur'ān does not depict

> By emphasizing both divine authority and human accountability, the Qurʾān situates evil within the context of moral testing rather than cosmic dualism

Satan as an autonomous force of evil competing with God but as a morally accountable creature whose influence depends upon human choice and divine permission. By emphasizing both divine authority and human accountability, the Qurʾān situates evil within the context of moral testing rather than cosmic dualism.

Introduction

Satan occupies an important place in Qurʾānic theology, particularly in discussions of obedience, rebellion, and moral accountability. The Qurʾān consistently identifies him as a manifest enemy of humanity while simultaneously emphasizing that his power is limited and subordinate to God's will. This portrayal differs from dualistic conceptions of good and evil in which opposing forces compete for control of the world. Instead, the Qurʾān presents Satan as a created being whose actions serve as part of the divine test of human life.

A thematic reading of the Qurʾān reveals that Satan's significance lies not in independent power but in his role as a tempter who seeks to mislead human beings. His rebellion, methods of deception, and ultimate failure highlight central theological themes concerning free will, accountability, and reliance upon God. The Qurʾānic narrative therefore uses Satan as a means of illustrating the consequences of pride and disobedience while reaffirming God's absolute sovereignty.

The Rebellion of Iblīs

The origins of Satan's enmity toward humanity are rooted in the creation of Adam. According to the Qurʾān, God commanded the angels to prostrate before Adam, and all obeyed except Iblīs (Qurʾān 7:11–12). His refusal stemmed from arrogance, as he considered himself superior because he was created from fire while Adam was created from clay.

This episode is significant because it portrays Satan's fall as a moral failure rather than a deficiency of knowledge. Iblīs recognized God's authority yet deliberately chose disobedience. His rebellion was therefore an act of pride (kibr), making arrogance the primary cause of his downfall. After his refusal, he requested respite until the Day of Resurrection and vowed to mislead humanity (Qurʾān 7:14–17). His hostility toward

human beings thus emerges from resentment and self-exaltation rather than from any flaw in human nature.

The narrative establishes an enduring theological lesson: disobedience originates from moral corruption and pride. Satan becomes the archetype of rebellion against divine command, while Adam's story demonstrates the possibility of repentance and divine forgiveness.

Identity and Ontological Status

The Qurʾān explicitly identifies Iblīs as one of the jinn (Qurʾān 18:50). This distinction is important because jinn, unlike angels, possess free will and are capable of both obedience and disobedience. Satan's rebellion is therefore consistent with his nature as a morally responsible creature.

The Qurʾān frequently describes Satan as a "manifest enemy" of humankind (Qurʾān 2:36; 36:60). This designation underscores the transparency of his hostility and serves as a warning against complacency. The term shayṭān itself conveys meanings associated with rebellion and estrangement from divine guidance. In some passages, the term is applied not only to jinn but also to human beings who actively promote evil and corruption, suggesting that satanic behavior can be reflected in human conduct as well.

This characterization reinforces the Qurʾānic view that evil is not an independent cosmic force. Rather, it is expressed through choices and actions that oppose divine guidance.

Strategies of Deception

A central feature of Satan's activity in the Qurʾān is deception. His influence operates through suggestion, whispering (waswasa), and the beautification of falsehood rather than through coercion. The Qurʾān repeatedly portrays him as one who makes wrongdoing appear attractive and encourages individuals to disregard divine guidance (Qurʾān 7:20; 16:63).

The deception of Adam and his spouse serves as the foundational example. Satan persuaded them by presenting disobedience as a path to permanence and elevation. Importantly, he did not force them to act; rather, he exploited human vulnerability and desire. This pattern becomes a model for understanding temptation throughout the Qurʾān.

The Qurʾān also links Satanic influence to practices that damage spiritual and social well-being, including intoxicants, gambling, and the cultivation of hostility among people (Qurʾān 5:90–91). Such actions are condemned because they distract individuals from the remembrance of God and weaken moral discipline.

Yet the Qurʾān consistently emphasizes that temptation does not remove human responsibility. Individuals remain capable of resisting deception, particularly through faith and reliance upon God.

Limits of Satan's Authority

One of the most important theological themes concerning Satan is the limitation of his power. The Qurʾān repeatedly rejects the notion that Satan possesses independent authority over human beings. This principle reaches its clearest expression in Qurʾān 14:22, where Satan admits on the Day of Judgment that he merely invited people to disobedience and that they chose to respond.

This acknowledgment establishes a direct connection between free will and accountability. Human beings cannot attribute their actions solely to Satan because his influence remains confined to suggestion. Ultimate authority belongs to God alone, and sincere believers are promised protection from Satan's domination (Qurʾān 16:99).

The Qurʾānic perspective therefore avoids both determinism and dualism. Satan functions as a tester rather than a rival to divine power, and moral responsibility remains firmly with the individual.

Spiritual Protection and Conclusion

The Qurʾān prescribes practical means of resisting Satanic influence, most notably remembrance of God and seeking refuge in Him (istiʿādha) (Qurʾān 16:98). These practices cultivate spiritual awareness and strengthen the believer's ability to resist temptation. Rather than promoting fear, the Qurʾān encourages vigilance, moral discipline, and trust in divine guidance.

The Qurʾānic portrayal of Satan ultimately serves a theological purpose. Iblīs is presented not as an autonomous source of evil but as a created being whose rebellion originated in pride and whose influence depends upon human consent. His role highlights the reality of moral testing while reaffirming God's sovereignty and humanity's freedom to choose obedience or disobedience.

By situating Satan within the broader framework of divine authority and human accountability, the Qurʾān transforms the struggle against evil into an ethical and spiritual challenge. The central lesson is clear: while Satan may tempt and deceive, responsibility for moral action remains with human beings, who are called to seek God's guidance and remain steadfast in faith.

Keywords: Satan (Iblīs), Qurʾānic theology, free will, moral responsibility, temptation, Islamic theology

First Qur'an Scholarships for Bangladeshi Women Boosts Ties with Türkiye



Bangladeshi women arrive in Istanbul to take part in a two-year Qur'an education programme run by the Aziz Mahmud Hudayi Foundation

By Al-Ummah Desk

A group of seven female participants from Bangladesh arrived in Istanbul on 5 October this year to take part in a two-year Qur'an education program under full scholarships offered by the Aziz Mahmud Hudayi Foundation of Türkiye.

Earlier, the Aziz Mahmud Hudayi Foundation, which is officially affiliated with the Presidency of Türkiye, offered full scholarships to the Bangladeshi women for the first time.

Giving details of the course, the Consulate General of Bangladesh in Istanbul said the Foundation will fully cover the expenses of round-trip air tickets, accommodation, food, medical care, and necessary educational materials for the seven students under the program.

During their stay in Istanbul, the students will have the opportunity to learn the Qur'an as well as Hadith, Fiqh, and the basic knowledge of Islam. They will also be taught the Turkish language and provided with various practical training.

Additionally, the students will receive training on basic health and hygiene, preventive healthcare, and essential etiquette and manners for young women. In addition, they will have opportunities to participate in various discussion sessions, seminars, workshops, and competitions.

In addition to the training program, the students will have an opportunity to visit historical and cultural sites to understand firsthand the history, culture, and heritage of Türkiye.

The Consulate General of Bangladesh in Istanbul lauded the Aziz Mahmud Hudayi Foundation for arranging the scholarship program for Bangladeshi students. It sees a new window to expand engagement between the two countries in the fields of culture and education.

> "By emphasizing both divine authority and human accountability, the Qurʾān situates evil within the context of moral testing rather than cosmic dualism"

"The initiative has created new opportunities for further cooperation and mutual communication between Bangladesh and Türkiye in education, religious knowledge, and cultural sectors," according to the foreign mission. The program is expected to play a positive role in further strengthening relations between the peoples of the two countries, it added.

Earlier, Ms. Marufa Bint Ibrahimy, the spouse of the Bangladeshi Consul General, welcomed the visiting students upon their arrival in Istanbul.

> "The initiative has created new opportunities for further cooperation and mutual communication between Bangladesh and Türkiye in education, religious knowledge, and cultural sectors"

Sliman Mansour:
The Brush That Kept Palestine Alive



Sliman Mansour – the end of an era

By Al-Ummah Desk

The Arab world bade farewell to renowned Palestinian visual artist Sliman Mansour on August 24. He died at the age of 79, leaving behind an artistic legacy spanning more than five decades. Throughout his distinguished career, Mansour used his brush to portray Palestine—preserving its land, memory and identity against displacement and erasure.

Mansour was one of the founders of the Palestinian visual art movement and among the most important artists to turn art into a means of preserving national memory and resisting attempts to erase and distort it. His work made him a defining figure in modern Palestinian art, with images that became enduring symbols of Palestinian identity and resistance.

Born in Birzeit in the summer of 1947, about a year before the Nakba, Mansour lost his father when he was four years old. His mother raised him and his siblings, and he spent part of his childhood and youth in the Palestinian countryside, between Birzeit, Bethlehem and

Beit Jala. It was there that his early connection with the Palestinian landscape took shape. The colors of the land, olive trees, lemon blossoms, the hands of farmers and scenes of rural life would later become central elements of his artistic vocabulary.

His artistic talent emerged at an early age, and at 13 he won a drawing competition organized by the United Nations. He had planned to study art in the United States, but the June 1967 war changed the course of his life. He subsequently enrolled at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, where he studied from 1967 to 1970. He later also worked professionally as a political cartoonist.

As his artistic vision matured, Mansour came to understand that the Palestine he sought to depict could not be reduced to an idyllic countryside of olive trees, citrus blossoms, harvest seasons and embroidered dresses. The land to which he belonged was burdened by a history of bloodshed, dispossession and occupation. His work therefore expanded from recording the beauty of the landscape to telling the story of modern Palestine, with its struggle, dignity and attachment to its roots.

Yet despite the darkness of that reality, Mansour never let his paintings become vessels of despair. Instead, he sought to portray Palestine through a romantic lens, preserving beauty and hope even in works most deeply connected to tragedy. In doing so, he became one of the leading pioneers of symbolic realism in Palestinian art.

> “From “The Camel of Hardships” to his final works, Mansour’s brush carried an entire homeland-its memory, its image, its land, its beauty, and its suffering”

‘The Camel of Hardships’

The painting shows an elderly Palestinian man carrying the city of Jerusalem on his back.

In 1973, at the age of 26, Mansour created his best-known painting, “The Camel of Hardships,” which would become one of the most deeply rooted images in Palestinian collective memory. The painting depicts an elderly Palestinian man in traditional dress carrying the city of Jerusalem on his back, within a composition resembling a large eye. The image powerfully condenses the weight of Jerusalem and Palestine carried on the shoulders of their people.

The painting soon transcended the boundaries of art to become a popular and national icon. It entered Palestinian homes around the world and cemented Man-



sour's position as one of the most prominent ambassadors of Palestinian art.

The image also reflected a central paradox that remained present throughout his career: decades later, Palestinians were still carrying the burdens and tragedies of their homeland on their shoulders, and still carrying that story to the wider world.

"The Camel of Hardships" also has a complex history of its own. Mansour completed the first version in 1973, and for years the original was believed to have been lost. In 2015, however, Christie's revealed that the original was held by an art collector in London, after specialists examined it and confirmed that it was the 1973 version painted by Mansour.

He produced a second version in 1976. It was acquired by the Libyan ambassador in London and presented to Muammar Gadhafi, and is believed to have been destroyed during the 1986 U.S. bombing of Tripoli. In 2005, Mansour produced a third version, which became part of the Ramzi Dalloul collection in Beirut.

Among his other well-known works are "Bride of the Homeland," "Daughter of Jerusalem," "Sabra and Shatila," "Rituals Under Occupation" and "Memory of

Places." Across these works, recurring elements became part of his visual language: farmers, women in embroidered dresses, olive and orange trees, Palestinian villages, the key, prisons, checkpoints, the keffiyeh, the Dome of the Rock, wheat stalks and doves, among many other features of Palestinian life.

Mansour did not paint Palestine from a distance. He drew his material from the land itself. For him, the Palestinian landscape was not merely an aesthetic backdrop but a source of symbols, materials and memory. His paintings therefore often served as visual interpretations of Palestinian heritage in its historical, geographical and social dimensions.

Art Against Occupation and the Erasure of Memory

With the beginning of the First Intifada in 1987, Mansour's relationship with natural materials took on a clear political dimension. Amid campaigns to boycott Israeli goods and calls for self-sufficiency, he began seeking locally available materials for his work. He used mud, straw, wood, chalk, lime, animal fat and natural pigments, and mixed clay with food products such as sumac, cumin, coffee and henna.

His work during that period tended toward abstraction. He later returned to a stronger focus on clay and its human and political meanings, and eventually moved back toward realism.

During the First Intifada, Mansour helped establish the "New Vision" group, which made the use of locally sourced materials part of its artistic and political stance. He also played a role in building the institutions of the Palestinian art movement, helping establish the Palestinian Artists' Association, Gallery 79, the al-Wasiti Art Center in Jerusalem and the International Academy of Art Palestine.

Alongside his work as a visual artist, Mansour taught art and worked as a political cartoonist for the Jerusalem-based al-Fajr newspaper and al-Awda magazine. He held solo exhibitions in Ramallah, New York, Sharjah, Norway and Cairo, and contributed to books documenting Palestinian traditional dress and embroidery. His work thus extended beyond painting into the preservation and documentation of Palestinian cultural identity.

Mansour recognized early on that the struggle was not being fought over land alone, but also over images and memory. Through his art, he confronted attempts to distort the image of Palestinians and strip them of their humanity and identity.

One expression of this was the recurring presence of the Holy Family in his work. He depicted Jesus wearing the Palestinian keffiyeh, seeking to reclaim

the Palestinian roots of Jesus's identity and that of the Holy Family.

Sliman's depiction of women symbolized land, motherhood, fertility, and abundance.

Palestinian women were among the most prominent symbols in his work. They appeared in traditional embroidered dresses and long headscarves, embodying the land, motherhood, fertility and abundance. This imagery was inseparable from his understanding of Palestinian identity. For Mansour, women simultaneously represented the beauty of the homeland and the strength of the human bond with land and labor, while embroidered clothing became a sign of belonging, memory and continuity.

A Beautiful Palestine Despite the Tragedy

Mansour painted Palestine through successive stages of its tragedy, from the Nakba to occupation and the Intifadas, and eventually the war in Gaza. Yet he never abandoned his desire to preserve a beautiful image of Palestine.

In 1980, he painted "Palestinian Breakfast," depicting a table with taboon bread, tomatoes, onions and olives as an expression of resilience and self-reliance through the produce of the land. In 1990, he created "Olive Harvest," evoking one of the scenes most deeply associated with the Palestinian relationship to the land.

These works reflected a central idea in Mansour's artistic vision: preserving the beauty of Palestine was not an escape from its political reality, but a form of resistance. Once the land, the village, the olive tree, women, embroidered dress, food and Jerusalem become subjects of art, the details of everyday life themselves become repositories of memory.

In his later years, Mansour expressed his shock at the persistence and escalation of the Palestinian tragedy, particularly in Gaza. He believed Palestinians had once thought the era of the Nakba was behind them, and that modern media and communications might offer greater protection. Events, in his view, proved otherwise.

Yet he remained committed to his fundamental artistic principle: to paint Palestine without surrendering its beauty.

An Artist Who Helped Build Palestinian Art

Mansour's contribution went far beyond painting. He helped build the institutional foundations of the Palestinian visual art movement and passed his experience on to younger generations of artists. He traveled widely with his work, took part in exhibitions and lectures, and mentored young artists throughout his career.

In 2024, he created his permanent mural "On the Wing of an Angel" for the Palestinian Museum, using clay, straw and henna. The natural materials were a direct extension of an artistic project that made the Palestinian land both the material and the subject of his art.

Over his decades-long career, Mansour received numerous honors, including the Palestine Prize for Plastic Arts, the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture and the Nile Award for Arab Creators. His work also earned international recognition, while his teaching at cultural institutions and universities in the occupied West Bank helped shape subsequent generations of Palestinian artists.

The Unfinished Painting

Until his final days, Mansour remained devoted to his brush. Shortly before his death, he was still sharing works from his archive on social media. A year before his death, he celebrated his 79th birthday, joking with his followers that every time he blew out a candle, he felt one year younger — perhaps an attempt to lighten the weight of illness and mortality.

In his final interview with Asharq Al-Awsat, he was asked about the painting he dreamed of creating but had never painted. He answered that he dreamed of painting a free and beautiful Palestine "without plastic surgery."

The answer was perhaps more than a subject for a future painting. It distilled the essence of his entire artistic project: a Palestine the world could see as it truly is, in its natural, historical and human beauty, rather than as it is reshaped or distorted by competing narratives of conflict.

Mansour died before painting that work. Yet he had spent more than half a century painting it in another form. He painted Palestine as land, Jerusalem, olive trees, women, traditional dress, villages and keys. He also painted a wounded and resistant Palestine, transforming its everyday details into symbols that transcended the canvas and entered collective memory.

From "The Camel of Hardships" to his final works, Mansour's brush was never merely a tool for artistic expression. It was a means of carrying an entire homeland. If his most famous painting portrayed Palestine carried on the back of an elderly Jerusalemite, his entire career could be seen as another act of carrying the country: its memory, its image, its land, its beauty and its suffering, from one generation to the next.

The artist is gone, but the Palestine he painted remains: a homeland whose beauty cannot be exhausted, a land of flowers and fragrance, and a memory that continues to resist erasure.





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