
First Conference of Muslim Religious Leaders in Europe Convenes in London

Dr. Al-Issa Visits UK Parliament, Foreign Office and Defense Ministry

Supplication to the Creator is worship

Chinguetti Mosque: Centuries of Islamic Heritage



King Charles Receives Sheikh Al-Issa

at Buckingham Palace



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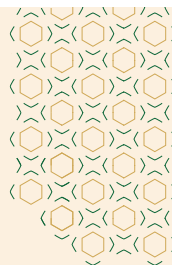
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The conference was convened at the initiative of the MWL and attended by more than 300 religious figures.

In the presence of parliamentarians and religious leaders...

First Conference of Muslim Religious Leaders in Europe Convened in London

London - MWL

The British capital, London, has hosted the first conference to bring together the reli-

gious leaders of the Muslim Community in Europe with the participation of more than 300 scholars. The conference was presided over by His Excellency the Secretary General of the

Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Issa, and attended by parliamentarians and representatives of other religions.

The conference aims to contribute to unifying stances regarding major issues concerning the European Muslim community and tackling its most pressing concerns.

In its first edition, it has achieved great success, represented in its exceptional outputs, including the declaration of the establishment of a London-based independent body that includes a Fatwa and religious guidance committee. It also approved the Charter of Makkah for training Muslim Imams in Europe, and warned against reducing religion to mere narrow political goals.

Addressing the conference, Dr. Al-Issa affirmed that it is part of the MWL's universal role to help this event and the like of it to achieve their aspired goals without any intervention in the religious affairs of any country. The MWL is honored to offer its services and exert efforts in order to reach a unified stance and find solutions.

He further indicated the exceptionality of this universal event, given the distinguished attendees and the importance of its objectives. He said the event celebrated Islamic diversity by bringing together all the different Islamic religious schools with no exception, aiming, through the wise guidance of Islam, to make this diversity more peaceful, giving, and cooperative in serving Islam and Muslims, and the entire humanity.

He said that Islam is the religion of mercy, peace, and giving. There is no differentiation among people; everybody is included under the umbrella of these Islamic moral



The conference approved the Charter of Makkah for the training of Muslim Imams in Europe

principles, regardless of differences in religion, race, or color.

Dr. Al-Issa noted that the diversity in legal opinions (Ijtihad) is an indication of the conceptual openness of this religion and the inimitability of its legislation. Examples of this can be found in encyclopedias of Islamic jurisprudence. He explained that the diversity in Ijtihad was known during the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him, who praised all those who exerted efforts to reach legal opinions and never described any of them as being wrong. He added that the Islamic Sharia calls for mitigating hardships and facilitating life for Muslims, yet extremists never assimilated such divine mercy and therefore rejected it. This is why the true and established scholar is the happiest among people with the opinions of his fellow scholars. No true scholar will ever feel bad about the Ijtihad of any other scholar, he said.

Dr. Al-Issa talked about the evils of division and disputes that have offended the religion. "Islam is too sublime to have its great and comprehensive message reduced to mere political goals and material aspirations." This approach has had its negative results, the least of which is the sharp debates taking place within the Islamic world "which have added more burdens on the Islamic Ummah and undermined its image."



Dr. Al-Issa addresses the audience at the Conference of Muslim Religious Leaders in Europe. He focused on the Charter of Makkah, a document signed in 2019 by more than 1,200 Islamic scholars from different sects, promoting religious diversity and rejecting hatred.



Dr. Al-Issa:

Islam understands the fact that religious identity does not contradict national identity

He warned against the attempts to distort the image of Islam, affirming that whatever the pretext, “the result is what counts.”

Dr. Al-Issa said those who choose such an approach in life are responsible for the division and discord within the Islamic world, and for introducing dangerous ideas to young Muslims, which have, in some cases, led to violence and terrorism. “The attempts to justify this systemic defect will not work.”

Dr. Al-Issa stressed that a true scholar and a well-established Islamic intellectual is an advocate of peace, amity, and concord, who can understand the differences among people, and defend the reputation



Government officials attended the event.

of his religion as well as his own reputation as a religious scholar.

“We have to affirm here in this conference that we are a nation that calls for wishing everyone nothing but good, and we are a nation that respects its pledges and covenants. Every Muslim living in any country respects the constitution and laws of that country regardless of the difference in religion, thought or culture.” Religious identity does not conflict with national identity and the constitutions of civilized countries protect the freedom of faith and religious practices.



More than 300 European Islamic figures exchanged viewpoints concerning a number of issues

His Excellency concluded his speech by reiterating that “the Charter of Makkah” is the most important Islamic document in our



modern history and its contents carry messages of awareness to the entire Islamic nation. All Islamic countries have unanimously ratified it and called for benefiting from it in the different religious, cultural, and educational institutions.

Mr. Rahman Chishti, Member of Parliament, Minister and PM’s Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, lauded the efforts of the MWL to show the whole world the true image of Islam and Muslims. Those efforts clarified the true message of Islam, which calls for justice and respect for man. He commended the Charter of Makkah for focusing on coexistence and rejecting any violation of human rights. He said the Charter explained that the differences among the world’s cultures should not be a reason for disputes, rather it should bring them together and strengthen their unity, adding that the Charter stipulated that education is a human right and should be guaranteed to everyone without discrimination.

His Eminence Mr. Chems-eddine Hafiz, Rector of the Grand Mosque of Paris, stressed the importance of the Charter of Makkah. “It focuses on our role in confronting the world’s present challenges,” adding that its articles will all be adopted in the Grand Mosque of Paris. His Eminence said that since its establishment in 1926, the discourse of the Grand Mosque of Paris has always revolved around the spread of the message of Islam, fraternity, unity, and dialogue among religions. “The religion of Islam does not restrict our freedom, rather it has freed us and given us the opportunity to increase the awareness of the good deeds and justice that Allah, the Almighty, orders us to abide by”.

He explained that the Europeans have their own good values and that they respect the religion of Islam. “We want to affirm that Islam is completely far from violence com-



Dr. Al-Issa:

MWL is honored to serve and find solutions without interfering in the religious affairs of any country

mitted in its name. It is our duty to ensure the separation of the religion of Islam from passive explanations and manipulations of politics and to ensure that there is no blind adoption of extreme ideas”.

Mrs. Naz Shah, a Member of the UK Parliament, explained that the “Charter of Makkah represents the truth of Islam.” Muslim scholars have agreed it is a document of peace, concord and amity among all people, “which is the essence of the message of our true religion.” She added that the charter is inspired by the charter of Al-Madinah that was issued by the Prophet, peace be upon him, which is considered to be the first document in histo-



Rector of the Grand Mosque of Paris: The discourse of the Grand Mosque of Paris has always revolved around the spread of the message of Islam, fraternity, unity, and dialogue among religions



Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief in the UK: Efforts of MWL have shown the entire world the true image of Islam that calls for justice and respect for man

ry that advocates the basic rights of all human beings with no discrimination.

“We are living in an age in which the ideas of the clash of civilizations are presented every day. Muslims, who have been suffering from Islamophobia, hatred, and all kinds of violence and oppression, are included among the people targeted by these ideas”. The Charter of Makkah fights extreme ideas and hatred and calls for unity among people in order to end these successive waves of violence. “It enhances the values and principles that we wish to prevail in our present world, and this urges us to work hard in order to see the contents of this charter a reality in our societies.”



The conference approved the Charter of Makkah for the training of Muslim Imams in Europe.



King Charles III of the United Kingdom receives MWL Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa at Buckingham Palace in London. The visit is the first of an Islamic figure after King Charles ascended to the throne. They discussed the importance of promoting friendship and cooperation among people through civilizational outreach, based on common religious and cultural values and effective dialogue. Dr. Al-Issa noted the King's appreciation and respect for the Islamic civilization.



The MWL Secretary-General gave a lecture at the Defense Academy of the United Kingdom, in the presence of a group of military commanders from the British army and international forces, upon an official invitation.

Dr. Al-Issa Visits UK Parliament, Foreign Office and Defense Ministry

London - MWL

The Secretary General of MWL, His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, highlighted the role of religious values in strengthening people's sense of the importance of protecting the planet, and reviewed the most important methods to tackle the

roots of extremist ideology, during lectures he delivered in London, the United Kingdom.

The British Parliament has held a reception for Dr. Al-Issa, hosted by the Chairman of the Parliament's Environment Committee, Mr. Stephen Thames, during Dr. Al-Issa's visit to the United Kingdom.



The UK Parliament hosts Dr. Al-Issa and the MWL delegation in London.



Dr. Al-Issa addressed politicians and military commanders at UK Defense Ministry and Foreign Office and reviewed the most important methods to confront the roots of extremist ideology and the importance of complementary roles

Upon an official invitation, Dr. Al-Issa was later hosted by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Defense Academy of the United Kingdom, where he addressed a

number of political leaders and diplomats, students of the Diplomatic Academy of the British Foreign Office and a group of military commanders from the British army and international forces.

Dr. Al-Issa spoke about the importance of protecting the environment and reviewed the Religions for Our Planet initiative, which proposes mechanisms, and an unconventional Islamic vision, to raise the level of international awareness of environmental protection and climate change. He stressed the importance of faith as motivation and highlighted the role of religious values in strengthening people's relationship with their surroundings and their sense of the importance of protecting the planet where humanity shares the resources and blessings bestowed by the Creator.



MWL Secretary-General Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa meets with officials at the UK Parliament in London.

His Excellency also cited the Middle East Green Initiative and the Saudi Green Initiative to reduce carbon emissions as examples of action taken by countries whose values are inspired by their firm principles and enlightened vision. The initiatives were launched by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to lead the region's approach to protecting the earth and nature and dealing with climate change.

Dr. Al-Issa also reviewed the most important methods to tackle the roots of extremist ideology, including the integration of the roles of the family, education and the media. He also stressed the importance of highlighting common values between civilizations, citing in this regard the essential role of Muslim scholars and imams who can urge their followers to engage in dialogue and be open to others in order to reach the required level of understand-



Dr. Al-Issa: Religious values strengthen people's relationship with their surroundings and their sense of the importance of protecting the planet where humanity shares the resources and blessings bestowed by the Creator

ing to achieve the great goal of strengthening world peace and attaining harmony among its communities.



Dr. Al-Issa meets with Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations in the UK. They affirmed the importance of working towards criminalizing acts that insult any religious sanctity under any pretext.



Dr. Al-Issa meets with HE Cardinal Vincent Collins, the Archbishop of Westminster, in London. They discussed topics of common interest, particularly religious leaders' cooperation in confronting hate speech and offenses against religious sanctities. ^{→*}



Dr. Al-Issa and Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, pose for a photo after a meeting at Lambeth Palace, London. The visit comes at the official invitation of Archbishop Welby.



Dr. Al-Issa hold talks with the leaders of the Woolf Institute at the University of Cambridge in the UK. They discussed areas of cooperation between the MWL and the institute.



A street food vendor prepares the dough before iftar.

Healthy eating during Ramadan

Aftab Husain Kola

The holy month isn't just about strengthening our spiritual health but also our physical well-being. Here are some tips on staying healthy during Ramadan

Ramadan may be all about fasting, but sadly it is feasting before and after the fast that has dominated it in recent times.

We have come to realize that there should be no compromise on health. This Ramadan will be the true test of whether or not we care enough about our health. During Ramadan, it is espe-

cially crucial to take care of ourselves: a healthy body will see us through the period of fasting.

The foods we consume affect our energy levels and moods. It is therefore wise to think about what your body really needs to help it through during fasting. If you want to fast and break it without stressing your body, you must do a few simple things. All it requires is a strong will.

All the benefits of fasting will be undone by a sudden intake of unhealthy food. It will also deprive the body's natural healing mechanisms

of the benefits that fasting gives them. It is advisable to maintain energy levels and avoid unhealthy cravings during Ramadan.

Let us begin with Suhoor, the pre-dawn meal. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, encouraged those intending to fast to wake up for this meal. He is reported to have said: "Eat Suhoor; surely there is much blessing in Suhoor."

For Suhoor, physicians and dieticians recommend a light meal that includes food that provides energy and nutrition to avoid constipation. Although most people have light meals for Suhoor, there's a recent trend of restaurants offering elaborate Suhoor full-size meals. Their customers are youths who stay up late during Ramadan nights to kill time or consume sheesha, watch TV and just chatter.

These full-night open restaurants were originally meant for expats or those unable to arrange Suhoor at home. It's unfortunate that even local residents now throng restaurants and star hotels for Suhoor meals. People eating these elaborate meals tend to put on weight and become lazy during the day.

According to Dr Adithya Bharadwaj, well-known physician and diabetologist, at Indiana Hospital and Heart Institute, Mangalore, India, "It is always better to avoid or reduce the simple sugars found in white bread, sweets, candies, cakes, and plain cereals. These foods can induce a sugar rush followed by a sugar slump, a cue for cravings."

He further prescribes, "Eating salty foods should also be avoided because they will likely trigger thirst during the day. In the Middle East, foods like zaatar, olives, salted cheese, smoked meats, and brined vegetables are on the Suhoor menu. They are too salty for consumption though a few olives are fine. Spicy food has the same effect and should be eaten rarely."

Ms. Saaksha M., clinical dietitian at Indiana Hospital, recommends, "The best thing is to eat whole wheat bread or a bowl of oat cereal with

1-2 cups of milk — it provides protein, calcium, carbohydrate, and required salt. This can be followed by eating a moderate portion of fruit. Foods like fowl (slow-cooked fava beans), yogurt, labneh, etc, are also good options for Suhoor."

He further add, "Another power-packed option is to eat a bowl of olive oil-infused vegetable salad or whole wheat cereal followed by a glass of milk. Yet another option that provides energy and boosts metabolism is eating 2-3 dry dates with a glass of milk. The dates should be soaked in milk overnight. They will help avoid constipation and hyperacidity."

In short, a balanced Suhoor will leave you feeling energized and help curb feelings of hunger and thirst during the day.

The typical Iftar table is often extravagant. Most people prefer to break their fast with dates, a small portion of fruits/dry fruits and savories, followed by juice or milk-based beverages or yogurt.

Dr. Valeem Pasha, another physician at a city hospital, advises, "Stay away from aerated drinks or processed fruit juices. Except for fried savories, all items are healthy and will give you a head start to breaking the fast."

In many countries, fried items are a staple during Iftar. After talking to medical experts, I have arrived at the conclusion that fried items should not be eaten more than once a week, that too in moderate quantities.

Fat is essential for health and Ramadan cultural traditions should not be totally curtailed. Fritters, spring rolls, samosas, and bajjis are Ramadan delicacies that are relished in many societies and are difficult to part with. They may be eaten occasionally. However, it's imperative to ensure they are prepared at home or brought from hygienic eateries.

Saaksha adds, "During the Iftar meal at dusk, the body is dehydrated, acids and gases are at

high levels, energy is reduced, and the mood is usually hot and dry. Therefore, the immediate consumption of heavy meals should be avoided. It is also recommended to break the fast with a glass of fresh fruit juice, milk-based beverages, lassi, or coconut water, which will cool the body's temperament and provide the body with the necessary energy and normalize the metabolic rate."

Many people have their main meal at the time of breaking the fast while some prefer to have it after the Taraweeh prayers. In our society, the tradition we follow is to eat dinner half an hour after Maghrib prayers so that there is enough time for Isha.

Eating the main meal at Iftar puts pressure on the stomach. There are people who avoid Iftar items but have normal dinners as they break their fast. After Taraweeh, they eat some fruits

or drink a warm milk-based beverage. They feel better this way."

In many countries, a bowl of porridge with dates and fresh juice is eaten at Iftar.

Dr. Bharadwaj adds, "Talking about the main meal, the key ingredient should be fiber because it is slow-digestible as opposed to processed and sugar-based foods that burn fast. The time between meals should be optimally spaced to ensure proper digestion."

Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna in the West) says one should never take a meal until the previous meal has been digested. Whatever was lacking nutritionally in the previous meal should be compensated for in the next meal.

Saaksha prescribes, "To begin with, enjoy soups of legumes and vegetables but avoid the rich



A woman prepares raqaaq (crisp bread) in Egypt.

cream-based ones. Soups also help with hydration. Since vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber and low in calories, try a bowl of salad or baked vegetables with olive oil, pinch of salt, and pepper.

Veggies like broccoli, beetroot, artichoke, carrot, brussels sprout, and spinach should also be consumed. Fiber-rich fruits are apricots, prunes, strawberries, apples, pears, and figs. Protein-rich and easily digestible lean meat is required to maintain muscle mass. Include chicken, eggs, milk, yogurt, or fish, too."

She goes on, "Vegetarians should add legumes, beans, and nuts. Mutton or beef can be eaten in limited quantities once a week during Ramadan. Hummous and Harissa are good options. Haleem, which is widely eaten in India and Pakistan, is also a good option.

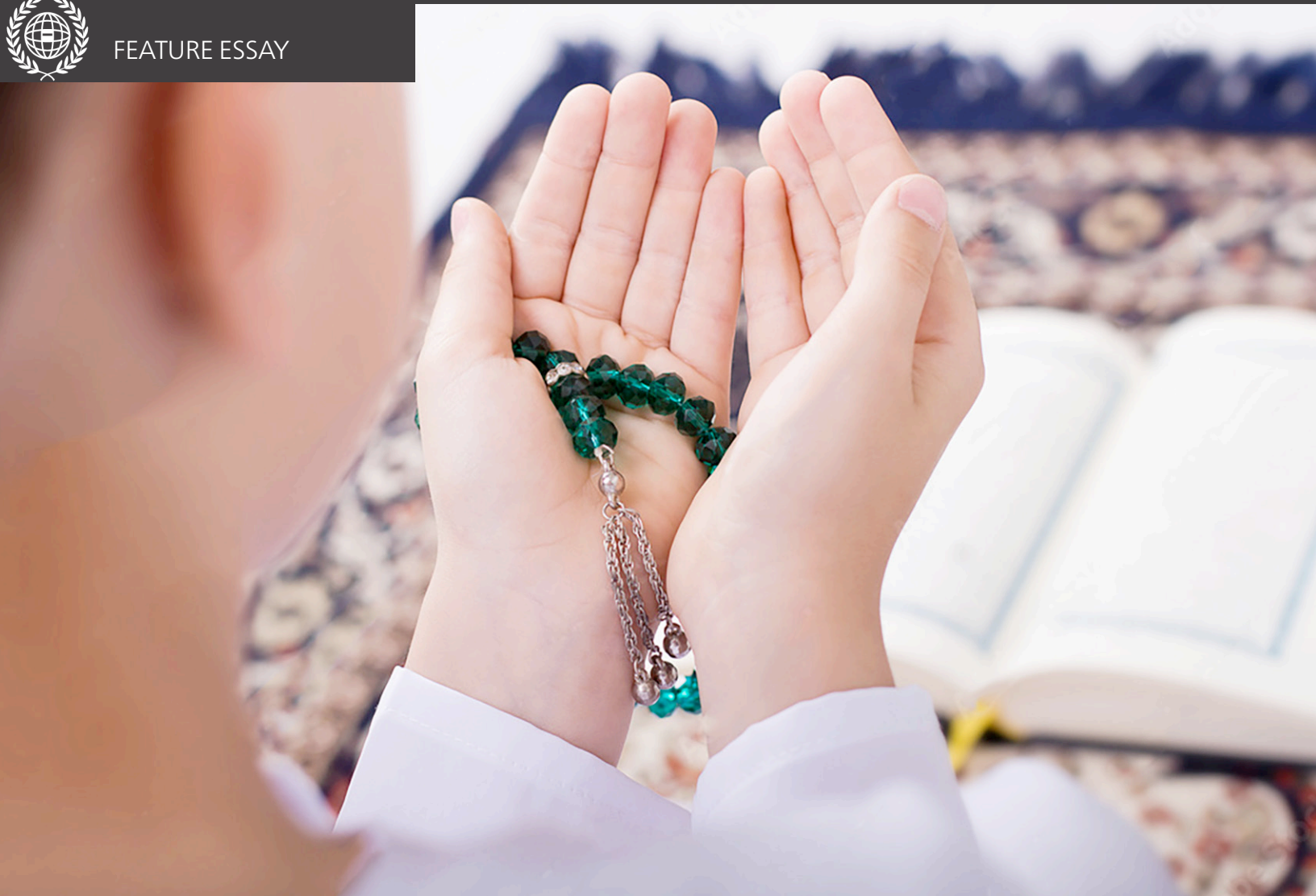
Barley, wheat, oats, millets, lentils, wholewheat flour, and rice have carbohydrates that provide long-lasting energy. Many people cannot go without rice during dinner and in Ramadan, too, they find it difficult to get rid of this addiction. The key is to control portion sizes and eat slowly."

Dr. Valeem Pasha sums up, "Combining two servings of whole wheat bread or one cup of cooked rice is a rich source of carbohydrates, which provide energy and protein, minerals, and dietary fiber. Avoid deep-fried, creamy, salty, and sweet foods that can lead to weight gain in the long run. A heavy meal after a fast can lead to indigestion and other gastric problems. A light meal prepared with less oil and spices is the right prescription."

To sum up, one must eat nutritious, light food, full of nourishment and energy.



Beans prepared for a mass iftar in India.



Supplication to the Creator is worship

Dr. Fatima Tanaeem

As the month of Ramadan ushers in countless blessings, favors and mercy from Allah, millions of Muslims worldwide strive to perform more and more righteous deeds

and engage in extra acts of worship. During Ramadan, several different acts of worship are performed frequently and in tandem. One of the greatest acts of worship is

making Dua (supplication.) As the beauty, power and significance of this act of worship is emphasized in the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, as well as the significance of the month of Ramadan being a blessed period of time, Muslims are urged to increase their supplication and Dua regularly and consistently during the holy month. The month of fasting and prayer should also be a month of Dua.

DUA in Islam

Dua is the essence and at the core of all religious acts in Islam. The Arabic term 'Dua' is derived from the root that means 'to call out' or 'to summon'.

In Islamic terminology, 'Dua' is calling upon God. It is the act of supplication, invocation, or request. Dua binds and connects a Muslim with his Creator, the Lord of All Worlds. It affirms a Muslim's Belief in His Oneness and shuns all forms of idolatry and polytheism. It is essentially a submission to the Almighty and a manifestation of a person's love and reliance upon Him alone. The Prophet, peace be upon him, has said, 'Dua is worship itself.' (Tirmidhi).

Dua can directly and regularly shield, protect and arm believers against the trials and tribulations of life. It is one of the most powerful and effective acts of worship in which a Muslim can engage. It strengthens one's feeling of the power and authority of Almighty Allah and affirms one's weakness and need for His mercy and assistance. As Almighty Allah loves those who constantly supplicate to Him and thank Him for bestowing His favor upon them, making Dua should be a daily routine in a Muslim's life and not be limited to times of stress or loss.

As Dua is an act of worship and making it regularly brings the reward of gaining God's pleasure and builds a stronger connection with Him. The practice of Dua holds so much power that it can change the Divine Decree (Qadr.)

Although there are no hard and fast rules to be followed while making Dua, there are certain guidelines that should be followed.

At foremost, one should approach Dua with sincerity, humility, submission, and certainty that God will hear and respond to their supplication. Allah says in the Quran: "And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." (40:60)

At the same time, one should be wary of attitudes that hinder the acceptance of Dua. These include displaying heedlessness, insincerity, doubtfulness and impatience while supplicating. A Muslim must also bear in mind that making inappropriate Dua, committing sins regularly and intentionally, and earning from unlawful and Haram sources prevent the Dua from being accepted.

A Muslim should realize that Almighty Allah answers Dua in varied ways – His response is immediate or delayed. Whatever one asks in Dua, God might replace it with something better, or ward off a destined evil or calamity, which can appear that the Dua was not answered, but it was. Not granting what one asks in Dua is an answer, given that the request might be harmful to the person requesting it, during their life or the hereafter, or both. Nevertheless, one should always remain patient, positive and humble, firmly believing in the Infinite Mercy and Wisdom of the All-Knowing and All-Wise who knows what is best for His servants.



There are numerous Dua with various purposes noted in the Quran and the Sunnah, which Muslims use for their basic and personal needs. It is also encouraged to personalize Dua in one's native language for better contemplation.

Though Dua can be done anytime, anywhere and in any language, certain etiquettes have been handed down through the Prophet's Sunnah. These include performing Ablution and facing Qiblah whenever possible, raising hands and beginning the Dua with praising Allah using His Beautiful Names and Attributes, sending salutations upon the Prophet Muhammad, peace

be upon him, at the beginning and conclusion of the Dua, and making Dua for others.

Blessed times for Dua

The Almighty Allah has blessed certain times and days. Some of these times include the time period between the call for prayer (Adhan) and the start of prayer, during prostration when praying, at the conclusion of a prayer, after night prayers until the last third of the night, during traveling, in Ramadan and during fasting.

An amazing Quranic verse establishes a direct link between Dua, Fasting and Ramadan, highlighting and honoring the



status of making Dua. Allah says in the Quran: 'And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me.' (2:186). This verse comes between the verses of Ramadan and Fasting in Surah Al-Baqarah. The verse preceding it speaks about the virtues of Ramadan, and the verse succeeding it mentions some of the rulings of Fasting. The above verse explicitly states that the Almighty Allah is very close to His Servants and He responds to any supplication of any Caller.

Also, there are several Hadiths indicating

the importance of making Dua earnestly and regularly in Ramadan, especially in the last 10 nights of the month. Syeda Aisha, May Allah be pleased with her, said, "With the start of the last 10 days of Ramadan, the Messenger of Allah would pray all night and would keep his family awake for the prayers. He tied his lower garment (i.e., avoided sleeping with his wives) and devoted himself entirely to prayers and supplication." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet, peace be upon him, specified one special Dua to say repeatedly, which is translated as: 'O Allah! You are All-Pardoning, You love to Pardon, So Pardon Me.'



Chinguetti Mosque in Adrar Region of Mauritania.

Chinguetti Mosque: Centuries of Islamic Heritage

Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Anb

The historical city of Chinguetti is renowned as one of the most prominent cities in Mauritania. It is distinguished by its strategic lo-

cation amidst the sand dunes in the northwestern part of Mauritania in the region of Adrar. The city lies approximately 533 km



away from the Mauritanian capital, Nouakchott, and is characterized by its lowlands, plateaus, plains, and extensive sand dunes.

Throughout history, Chinguetti has played a significant role in the political and cultural landscape of Mauritania. It served as the center of the Almoravid dynasty, renowned for their efforts in defending against the Crusaders and safeguarding the Maghreb region. Chinguetti also served as a hub of civilization, scientific inquiry, and intellectual pursuits, boasting numerous libraries adorned with precious and rare manuscripts. Notably, the city is distinguished

by its grand mosque, known as the Jama Mosque, which stands as one of the oldest mosques in the Islamic world and showcases a unique architectural style. This mosque stands as a testament to the rich historical heritage of Chinguetti.

Historic Mosque

Chinguetti Mosque is the oldest mosque in the country. One of its remarkable features is the presence of more than thirty mosques within its premises. The ancient mosque, which has stood the test of time, emanates a rich historical aura. It is considered the first-ever constructed building



in Chinguetti. Designed to withstand the ever-changing desert climate, the mosque is particularly famous for its square-shaped minaret, standing at a height of ten meters. Some scholars even regard it as the second oldest Islamic structure in the world. Chinguetti Mosque, along with its iconic minaret, has become an emblem of national pride for Mauritania.

There is no consensus among historians

as to when the historic mosque was built, although most suggest it was in the 13th century AD, which coincides with the establishment of the city. Over time, the mosque underwent expansions and additions.

The mosque is composed of a prayer hall, four additional aisles, and an open courtyard. It served various functions historically, being a venue for military gatherings and a hub for Quranic recitation circles and diverse sciences. Remarkably, the building stood tall for over eight consecutive centuries, despite its simple construction materials of local stones, yellow clay, palm thatch roof, and mud-reinforced trunks. Characterized by its lack of elaborate decorations, the mosque underwent renovations over the years, with its roof being replaced multiple times in the modern era. Nevertheless, it has preserved its original architectural form, reflecting the traditional heritage and simple architectural style cherished by the people of Chinguetti.

Distinct Architectural Culture

The city's architectural style represents the essence of desert architecture. Local construction materials such as mud bricks and stones were used to build its traditional buildings. The cut and evenly-sized stones were intricately stacked to create remarkable structures. Palm-wood panels were used for roofs, adding a historical touch to the overall aesthetic. Chinguetti's architectural designs were influenced by Moroccan and Andalusian styles, brought by trade caravans, commercial expeditions, migrations, and the presence of skilled builders and architects. The minarets of the Chinguetti Mosque bear resemblance to those found in

Tunisia, Libya, and Andalusia, while the interior design and vault shapes exhibit similarities to Moroccan and Andalusian models, with slight adaptations based on local resources.

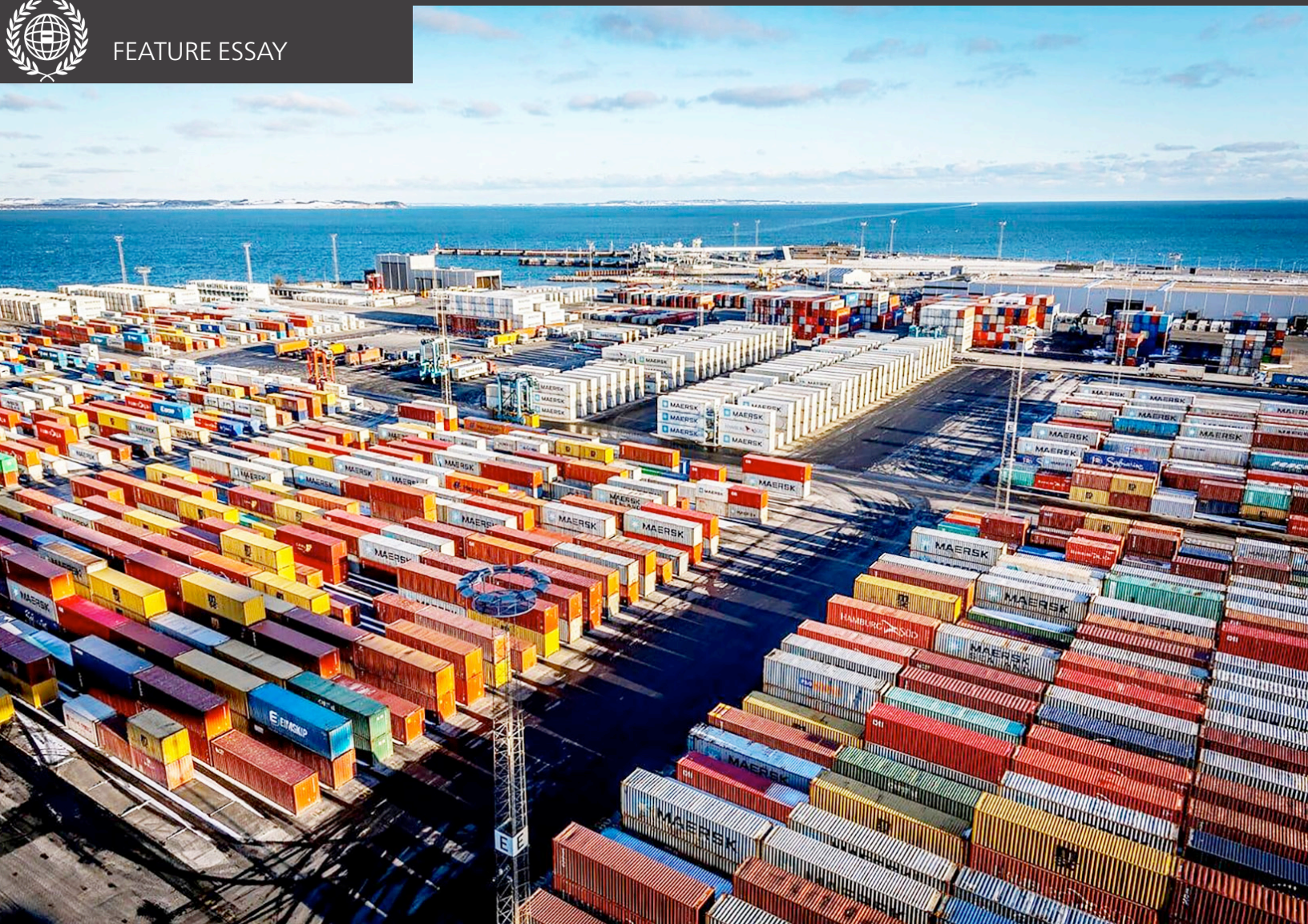
What makes the mosque truly special is its preservation of the ancient architectural form and the authentic urban style that has been passed down through generations. The mosque floor remains unfurnished with carpets, with worshipers performing their prayers on the soft sand, symbolizing the profound connection between the sacred land and the heavens that illuminate it. To this day, people continue to gather at the mosque, embodying the enduring spirit of the Chinguetti community. It stands as a testament to their unwavering cultural heritage and timeless traditions, which have remained steadfast amidst the passage of time and the waves of modernity.

Chinguetti Historic and Civilizational Role

Historically, Chinguetti gained renown as a city of knowledge, scholars, and religious figures. It became widely recognized for its emphasis on education, attracting students from across the Arab Maghreb, Africa, and beyond. The proliferation of knowledge and the abundance of scholars in Chinguetti can be attributed to the region's focus on religious sciences, dating back to the early 4th century of the Islamic calendar. Through the efforts of Arab Maghreb scholars, Islamic knowledge and culture flourished in Chinguetti, and the city's fame and the reputation of its scholars extended throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds, with its scholars authoring tens of thousands of books and establishing



its prominence in various fields of study. Chinguetti's heritage and the achievements of its scholars remain significant cultural landmarks in the Arab and Islamic spheres. Additionally, Chinguetti is home to numerous libraries brimming with thousands of invaluable manuscripts and rare books. These libraries are mostly family-owned and contain some of the works of early Muslim scholars. They have been a destination for researchers and those interested in the Islamic cultural heritage in Africa.



Blue economy and tourism

Tasnuva Jahan

The blue economy concept is a relatively modern one. Human civilization depends on the oceans from decade to decade since the oceans are a crucial source of food, energy, and minerals. Many ancient nations were skilled seafarers who used boats for trade and exploration. The ancient people were skilled navigators and explorers; they used the stars and other natural cues to navigate the

vast Pacific Ocean. Coastal zones and marine environments are primarily related to the blue economy framework and concept. The ocean makes up 70 % of the world's surface and is home to 80 % of all life. It supports biodiversity and produces food, energy resources, and economic prospects. The Blue Economy theory is linked to many industries, such as fisheries, aquaculture, energy, transport, and tourism.

According to the World Bank, it is the 'sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.'

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report estimates that ocean-based industries offer a \$2.5 trillion export value (UNCTAD report, 2021). Future growth in this area will be fueled by aquaculture, offshore wind, energy, fish processing, shipbuilding, and recycling. The blue economy generates significant profits for Australia, Europe, the United States of America, Africa, China, and small island developing nations. Regarding coastal and island tourism, the Caribbean is a leading region, with more than 44 million tourist arrivals in 2019. The Asia-Pacific region is also a crucial player, with destinations such as Thailand, Indonesia, and the Maldives attracting millions of tourists yearly. Notably, after the Red Sea Project is finished, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be ready to compete in the world tourism market. Nevertheless, the blue economy idea provides an outline for linking the climate change problems to both coastal ecosystems and the communities dependent on them. This article only highlights the tourism sector in the blue economy.

One of the pillars of the blue economy is tourism, when it is planned, developed, and managed effectively. Sustainable tourism is 'tourism that respects both local people and the traveler, cultural heritage and the environment.' It plays a crucial role in preserving oceans by offering financial incentives and methods to safeguard ecosystems. Tourism is a leading employer and contributes directly and indirectly to employment globally. The number of people working in the tourism industry informally has been rising daily. Over the past decade, tourism's direct and indirect contributions have increased the GDP in many countries. According to the UNCTAD report, tourism

accounts for 40% of the blue economy.

Tourism benefits of the blue economy

Globally, the blue economy or coastal tourism is the largest marketplace segment. Sustainable blue economy tourism can reduce poverty and generate new job opportunities. It serves as a primary basis of foreign exchange for one-half of the Least Developed Countries. Coastal tourism includes beach-based recreation and tourism, seaside activities for tourists, diving tourism, marine eco-tourism, yachting and marinas, fishing tours, and local artisan markets.

Numerous coastal towns offer guided dive tours and fishing trips with locals. This travel can foster the growth of the blue economy. Fishermen maintain fish populations at balanced levels for healthy ecosystems by following the fishing rules and regulations. Consequently, local economies and marine ecosystems will both thrive.

Local markets can showcase and sell their artisan work and crafts to holidaymakers in the blue economy project as travelers are often interested in buying different products as souvenirs and unique collectibles. These products are mostly made of materials like dead coral, washed-up shells, or sand in many places. Artisan crafts can run a vital role in small countries' economies. The growth of the tourism industry offers creative entrepreneurs the chance to unleash their creative potential. Local communities could start their businesses for their long-term development.

Responsible tourism

Ecotourism in the marine environment includes nature observation and appreciation, environmental protection, and community involvement. Additionally, it involves academic, volunteer, or scientific travel. This kind



of tourism is essential to the blue economy advancement. It integrates ecological protection, preservation, and promotion of travel destinations, including their resources, species, sites, and communities. It also helps local communities' social and financial growth. Marine ecotourism directly supports coastal and marine ecosystems. Cleanup dives are an example of an activity that incorporates conservation and restoration, as divers carefully clean the oceans and reefs out of their genuine thirst for an enjoyable experience.

In many cases, travelers who see incredible natural sights such as pristine beaches or colorful coral reefs can realize the importance of preserving and protecting the planet. Conver-

sations with the locals about how they handle food or freshwater shortages might occasionally help tourists understand the importance of such resources. This motivates travelers to practice responsible consumption, lessen waste, and inspire others to do the same.

Tourism also inspires communities to preserve and celebrate local cultures, as many local cultures are at risk of total disappearing. Without preservation, there is a chance to lose countless family-passed traditions, including food recipes, handicrafts, and languages. Communities now appreciate the worth of their distinctive cultural heritage due to the growing demand for immersive, community-based travel. Tourism motivates people to

cherish, protect, and spread their history over the globe.

Negative sides of blue economy tourism

Tourism is one of the largest financial industries around the globe. It creates new jobs, promotes entrepreneurship, and pushes investment in travel destinations. Unfortunately, over-tourism, resource depletion, environmental deterioration, and pollution have caused more detriment than benefit in many locations. Overfishing, coral bleaching, and other issues affect the check and balance of marine life, which will affect island and coastal communities. Thailand's Maya Bay in the Phi Phi Islands is an example where corals died and marine life disappeared over tourism. Another example is from the Honduran and Panamanian islands of Roatan and Bocas Del Toro in Central America. The islands' marine life is now at risk of habitat loss and environmental damage due to excessive tourism.

Sometimes blue economy tourism prevents social dislocation in the many large towns near coastlines and waterways, as these areas experience stress from rapid urbanization. People move to these areas for better economic chances, which puts more strain on the existing infrastructure. Additionally, it leads to traffic jams, resource depletion, inflation, pollution, and reduced quality of life overall.

However, when sustainably developed, tourism can create endless opportunities. It can get up through circular as well as regenerative blue economy advancement.

Islamic perspective of blue economic concept in tourism

Islamic principles emphasize the importance of environmental protection and stewardship. According to the Qur'an, people are the

'protectors of the earth' and must protect and preserve its resources. This concept is consistent with the blue economy's sustainable development goals, which strive to strike financial growth with environmental conservation.

Allah says in Surat al-Baqarah, verse 267: "O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth. And do not aim toward the defective therefrom, spending [from that] while you would not take it [yourself] except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy." This verse shows that using natural resources wisely and as efficiently as possible is beneficial.

Surat Al-Ma'idah, verse 87, states: "O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors." This verse explains that the Almighty created people to conduct good deeds on Earth. Therefore, marine biodiversity can be developed as a blue economy concept without destroying nature. Islamic ideals can help to advance social justice, environmental protection, and economic expansion.

In conclusion, tourism has had adverse effects in several countries. However, eco-friendly tourism can be valuable for boosting economies and promoting ecological development. Still, the blue economy's sustainable growth can offer coastal communities employment opportunities. While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted international travel, the blue economy still depends heavily on the coastal and marine tourism industry. Sustainable and nature-based tourism growth helps protect marine and coastal habitats while enhancing local economies.

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