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We stand for:

- *Inter-faith and inter-civilisational dialogue*
- *Respect for the human race and rights*
- *Cooperation for the good of people*
- *Moderation*
- *Modernity*
- *High standards of spirituality*

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The Arba'een: largest gathering with a message

The world has just witnessed the largest ever religious congregation in Iraq. It happened in the vicinity of Karbala, the martyrdom place of Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of the holy prophet (Peace be with him). In the past two decades this human procession has become an unprecedented phenomenon, unparalleled in terms of identity, volume and determination than any other congregation. Yet its message has remained obscure especially in light of the indifference of world media. The followers of Imam Hussain who was martyred on 12th October 680 AD have become more aware of their duty to carry the flag that was raised in Karbala by people whose arms were subsequently severed by the enemies of the divine project. The main worry here is the tendency towards ritualising the momentous event that is observed by many people each year. Bigger figures are often presented, but the most cautious estimates of the participants are 10 million.

So why is this congregation? What is the message? And how can it be delivered? In most instances the massive processions appear to be ritualic acts void of a clear message. Sometime it also appears to be passive, retrogressive and even counter-productive. But this is not how the enemies of the religion and truth see it. They view it as a victory for the Revolution that Imam Hussain had led and sacrificed himself and those who were with him. They view it as a constant reminder of their own faults, oppression, deviation and criminal behaviour. Over the centuries tyrants did not spare any effort in combating the phenomenon, to the extent that some of them like the Abbassid ruler, Al Mutawakkil adopted the most drastic act; obliterating the grave of Imam Hussain. The aim has always been to neutralise the consequences of the Revolution.

In recent years, the Arba'een processions have grown in shape and content. For the oppressed these rituals provide a beacon of light to the oppressed whose voices have always been muted and suppressed. They are seen as the voice of the voiceless as well

as empowerment of the victims of tyranny, the weak and the dispossessed. People from all walks of life often participate especially in the long walks that resemble the walks of the women of Karbala. These women were forced out of their tents soon after their had been slaughtered when they ran to the battlefield looking for their sons, brothers, husbands and relatives. What they found were headless corpses some of which were crushed by the horses beyond recognition. Then they were forced to evacuate their tents as they were burnt by the army of the Umayyad caliphate" which was supposed to protect Islam, Quran and the Prophet's household. These women were then taken hostages by the killers of their loved ones, forced on the backs of the camels and paraded through towns and cities for forty days.

The Hussaini processions to mark the day these women finally arrived back in Karbala provide symbolic attachment to Imam Hussain and the 72 martyrs who sacrificed themselves in their quest to salvage humanity from the horror of the Umayyad hereditary dictatorship. With over ten million people converging on Karbala shrines the message is bound to be clear; that Imam Hussain did not die. It is often said that martyrs never die. The Imam would have remained alive even if he was not killed. The voice that he raised in the weeks prior to his martyrdom has remained a source of inspiration to millions of the faithful, the strugglers, the victims of dictatorship and oppression and to the reformers. Those who strived to defend the truth, the victims of oppression and the enemies of humanity find in the echoes of the Karbala tragic events a source of encouragement that has remained powerful throughout. Zainab bint Ali, the Imam's sister performed as a strong voice for the Revolution that unsettled the killers and forced them to end the farce show of victory. Despite the outward show of triumph

they were psychologically and morally defeated. Yazid gave the order to end the parading of those women and return them to Medina without delay. The Umayyad dynasty was effectively obliterated.



Sharing Faith conference

The annual conference on Muslim-Christian dialogue was held at Abrar House on Monday 12th September. The title was: Sharing Faith and had three sessions addressed by Muslim and Christian activists and scholars.

The first session was chaired by Julian Bond who asked the audience to observe a one minute silence to remember the Queen who had passed away on 8th September. Three speakers talked on the topic of the conference.

Sr Elizabeth O'Donohoe presented a glimpse of her activism with interfaith especially in Southall, London. She said: Sharing faith is about dialogue, certainly not about monologue. It is about conversation, to be able to listen and to speak. It is enemical to conversion, we should to convert the others. Sometimes it helps to break interfaith into subjects. She specified four areas of dialogue; knowledge, action, spirituality and morality.

Mustafa Al Mansoor said that his father who had died five years ago shaped his life. He said: "My relationship with God is one that one needing help from Dad. I needed help from God to avoid beating when I did not do my homework or prayers." My recollection of my early years is that I had secret formula to avoid trouble; I just pray and get away from beating." When I cannot manage things I need God. He gave several examples to prove his point.

I was going to the secondary school, my Jewish teacher would talk about the geography of the region. I had to defend something against something that I considered attack on my faith. When questioned: What is the truth of God, I have to prove that through science, philosophy and other arguments. The Quran says: "Those who have faith should not have anything to fear". You can have good life through faith. Faith is the place that I want to get to. Faith should a place where come from, not a place you go to. I use my knowledge, ability and connection to get things done. If I can't do it with my ability, then it is impossible for me. Today we speak of Jesus and Mohammad because of what they did and achieved.

Alan Murray: When I was Sunday

school teacher we have powerful teacher. He encouraged us to be open. As a confident adolescent it led me to a position where I still wanted to go to Church, I found the creed very difficult, and I stopped it. There was difference between faith and belief. Belief is an intellectual process. Faith is a practice, something you do and live. At 16, I was serving in my church. There was early morning sun light shining on me. I felt the presence of God. I felt He was calling me. I went through the selection process of the church, and went to study theology at university. You study about belief not faith. I am in my head an intellectual, even though my heart tells me to do other things. In the sixties, there was upheaval in the church. A Woolwich priest wrote a book about God, and there was the death of God theology which came from Australia and US. I went on to become teacher of religious education and continued the journey. When I finally I became formal part of the Church of England, it was an intervention by God. Father Tom, our priest, had angina crisis. The bishop told him to look for himself a reader. He asked me to be a reader. The Europeans "All faiths and none", invite atheists and agnostics to be part of discussion.

The second session was chaired by Shabbir Razvi and addressed by three people: Mohsin Abbas, Dr Laith Kubba and Revd Dr Jill Marsh (whose power point presentation was presented by Julian Bond). Mohsin Abbas talked as a journalist and presented part of his experience. He delved on that to show the nature of his faith as a young man from the Indian subcontinent.

Dr Laith Kubba said: We need to provide perspectives in order to understand the world. The divine recognised our mind. As we make the journey on earth we need a perspective. My journey led me to setting up the Quran Foundation. The tree that is rooted in the divine and in science will always flourish. There has always been a need for connection with the divine. When I look at the Quran, I genuinely look at a script that the humanity needs. When I read the bible I see many verses comparable to the Quran, in terms of creation, signs of nature. The Quran is a preserved copy of God's word. I could read Arabic so I grew with the Quran. The Quran is for humanity at large.

The third session was chaired by Julia Henrietta and addressed by three people: Rev. Dr. Reynaldo Leão Neto, Shana Parvin Begum and Revnd Frank Gelli. Dr Leao Neto talked about evangelism within three heading: The Christian span of missionary work, Personal view of evangelism and the proclamation of the good news. Revnd Frank Gelli said evangelism is to encourage, advise and warn. He said: My own jihad is intellectual." Shana Begum, who is a student of theology at Cardiff University started her talk by lighting a candle. Then she recited a verse from the holy Quran that says: Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in a crystal, the crystal is like a shining star, lit from 'the oil of' a blessed olive tree, 'located' neither to the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow, even without being touched by fire. Light upon light! Allah guides whoever He wills to His light. And Allah sets forth parables for humanity. For Allah has 'perfect' knowledge of all things. We need to bring the union of mankind. We need to be light in the darkness

* On 2nd September, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hassan ibn Ali (AS) was marked by Abrar. Sheikh Abd Ali Al Kanani talked about the necessity to understand Imamate (post-prophet guardianship and leadership). It was a philosophical approach to the subject. Then Sheikh Ali Al Karbadi delivered a lamentation session to mark the occasion.

* The international crisis of the rising costs was the topic of debate at Abrar's weekly meeting on Thursday 8th September. Dr Mohammad Haidar and Dr Ali El Kabbany spoke in some detail about this rising crisis. Dr Haidar highlighted the economic factors and how the energy prices, the Ukrainian war and the taxation systems in the West played roles in the price hikes. Dr El Kabbany presented a political perspective of the crisis.



UN special rapporteur urges halting sanctions on Tehran

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights Alena Douhan urged the US Government to cease the state of national emergency regarding Iran, which she says is incompatible with the norms of the ICCPR.

In a report issued on Monday, the UN rapporteur commended the Government of Iran, in particular the High Council for Human Rights and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the transparent and constructive manner in which they coordinated and facilitated the visit, and for their responsiveness in providing additional information and data during and after the visit. The full text of the UN special rapporteur follows:

Since 1979, the US has imposed economic, trade and financial sanctions, with a comprehensive trade ban since 1995 and significant measures to isolate Iran from the international commercial and financial system, by enforcing also secondary sanctions on non-US entities and financial institutions.

Charles III proclaimed king at tradition-steeped ceremony

Two days after his mother's death elevated him to the throne, King Charles III was officially proclaimed Britain's monarch Saturday in a pomp-filled ceremony steeped in ancient tradition and political symbolism — and, for the first time, broadcast live online and on air.

Charles, who spent seven decades as heir apparent, automatically became king when his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, died on Thursday. But the accession ceremony was a key constitutional and ceremonial step in introducing the new monarch to the country, a relic of a time before mass communications.

Scores of senior British politicians past and present, including new Prime Minister Liz Truss and five of her predecessors, gathered in the ornate state apartments at St. James's Palace for the meeting of the Accession Council.



They met without Charles, officially confirming his title, King Charles III. The king then joined them, vowing to follow his mother's "inspiring example" as he took on the duties of monarch.

"I am deeply aware of this great inheritance and of the duties and heavy responsibilities of sovereignty which have now passed to me," he said.

Speaking of his personal grief, he said: "I know how deeply you and the entire nation, and I think I may say the whole world, sympathize with me in this irreparable loss we have all suffered."

Serious repercussions due to constant desecration of Al-Aqsa

Muslim officials have warned of serious repercussions from violations by Jewish fanatics of the sanctity of and status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, located in occupied Jerusalem's Old City.

They said the fanatics often perform Jewish rituals despite a ban on such activities that violate the decades-old status quo that says that the entire walled Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is a purely Muslim holy site and non-Muslims are not allowed to perform any religious ritual on its premises.

The warning came as the fanatics plan to blow the shofar, an ancient horn, on the premises of Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Jewish new year that coincides on September 26, and have already petitioned the Israel High Court for permission to do that.

They also want to bring into the Muslim compound prayer shawls and books as well as palm fronds and other plants used during the upcoming Sukkot holiday that will start in mid-October.

On Monday, fanatic rabbi, Yehuda Glick, blew the horn through his mobile phone during his presence at Al-Aqsa Mosque while other fanatics danced and sang loudly and performed Talmudic rituals in the courtyards of Al-Aqsa.

Muslims fear that Israel wants to eventually allow Jews to use the Muslim holy place for Jewish prayers and divide it between Muslims and Jews.

1 in every 150 people lives under modern slavery: UN report

There are 50 million people trapped in modern slavery, as one in every 150 people are "either forced to work against their will or in a marriage that they were forced into," a UN report revealed on Monday.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Walk Free, an international rights group, jointly released the report named the Global Estimates of

Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.

The 2021 global estimates showed that much more men, women, and children have been forced to work or marry in the period since the previous estimates released in 2017. It said 27.6 million people, or 3.5 people in every 1,000 worldwide, are in forced labor.

While women and girls share were 11.8 million, more than 3.3 million children also face forced labor, according to the report. It said the figure rose by 2.7 million versus the previous report.

Out of the total, Asia and the Pacific host more than half with 15.1 people facing forced labor in the region, while 4.1 million people are forced to work in Europe and Central Asia, 3.8 million in Africa, 3.6 million in the Americas, and 900,000 people in the Arab States.

In proportion to population, however, forced labor is highest in the Arab States with 5.3 per thousand people.

Israel's handling of reporter's death angers media outlets

Israel's decision to absolve itself of responsibility for the shooting death of a veteran Al-Jazeera journalist drew criticism from international media Thursday, marking a further deterioration of relations between the military and reporters covering the conflict.

The Foreign Press Association said the conclusions of the army's long-awaited probe into the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh "raise major questions about the military's actions that day and serious doubts about its stated commitment to protecting journalists in the future."

The association represents international media covering Israel and the Palestinian territories, including The Associated Press. The AP also sits on the group's board.

Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-American on-air correspondent, was shot in the head while covering an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank on May 11.

Israel said Monday that there was a "high probability" that an Israeli soldier shot her, but portrayed the shooting as a mistake during a protracted firefight with Palestinian militants.

The military said no criminal probe would be launched, meaning that neither the soldier nor commanders will face any punishment. Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid later rebuffed U.S. calls for Israel to review its controversial open-fire policies.



How a 92-year-old cleric silently halted Iraq's slide back into war

When a pronouncement by a religious scholar in Iran drove Iraq to the brink of civil war last week, there was only one man who could stop it: a 92-year-old Iraqi Shi'ite cleric who proved once again he is the most powerful man in his country.

Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani said nothing in public about the unrest that erupted on Iraq's streets. But government officials and Shi'ite insiders say it was only Sistani's stance behind the scenes that halted a meltdown.

The story of Iraq's bloodiest week in nearly three years shows the limits of traditional politics in a country where the power to start and stop wars rests with clerics - many with ambiguous ties to Iran, the Shi'ite theocracy next door.

The Iraqis who took to the streets blamed Tehran for whipping up the violence, which began after a cleric based in Iran denounced Iraq's most popular politician, Moqtada al-Sadr, and instructed his own followers - including Sadr himself - to seek guidance from Iran's Supreme Leader.

Sadr's followers tried to storm government buildings. By nightfall they were driving through Baghdad in pickup trucks brandishing machineguns and bazookas.

Armed men believed to be members of pro-Iranian militia opened fire on Sadrist demonstrators who threw stones. At least 30 people were killed.

And then, within 24 hours, it was over as suddenly as it started. Sadr returned to the airwaves and called for calm. His armed supporters and unarmed followers began leaving the streets, the army lifted an overnight curfew and a fragile calm descended upon the capital.

To understand both how the unrest broke out and how it was quelled, Reuters spoke with nearly 20 officials from the Iraqi government, Sadr's movement and rival Shi'ite factions seen as pro-Iranian. Most spoke on condition of anonymity.

Those interviews all pointed to a decisive intervention behind the scenes by Sistani, who has never held formal political office in Iraq but presides as the most influential scholar in its Shi'ite religious centre, Najaf.

Three Shi'ite figures based in Najaf and close to Sistani would not confirm that Sistani's office sent an explicit message to Sadr. But they said it would have been clear to Sadr that Sistani would soon speak out unless Sadr called off the unrest.

An Iran-aligned official in the region said that if it were not for Sistani's office, "Moqtada al-Sadr would not have held his press conference" that halted

the fighting.

'BETRAYAL'

Sistani's intervention may have averted wider bloodshed for now. But it does not solve the problem of maintaining calm in a country where so much power resides outside the political system in the Shi'ite clergy, including among clerics with intimate ties to Iran.

Sistani, who has intervened decisively at crucial moments in Iraq's history since the U.S. invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, has no obvious successor. Despite his age, little is known publicly about the state of his health.

Meanwhile, many of the most influential Shi'ite figures - including Sadr himself at various points in his career - have studied, lived and worked in Iran, a theocracy which makes no attempt to separate clerical influence from state power.

Last month's violence began after Ayatollah Kadhim al-Haeri, a top ranking Iraqi-born Shi'ite cleric who has lived in Iran for decades, announced he was retiring from public life and shutting down his office due to advanced age. Such a move is practically unknown in the 1,300-year history of Shi'ite Islam, where top clerics are typically revered until death.

Haeri had been anointed as Sadr's movement's spiritual advisor by Sadr's father, himself a revered cleric who was assassinated by Saddam's regime in 1999. In announcing his own resignation, Haeri denounced Sadr for causing rifts among Shi'ites, and called on his own followers to seek future guidance on religious matters from Ayatollah Ali Khamenei - the cleric who also happens to rule the Iranian state.

Sadr made clear in public that he blamed outsiders - implicitly Tehran - for Haeri's intervention: "I don't believe he did this of his own volition," Sadr tweeted.

A senior Baghdad-based member of

Sadr's movement said Sadr was furious. "Haeri was Sadr's spiritual guide. Sadr saw it as a betrayal that aimed to rob him of his religious legitimacy as a Shi'ite leader, at a time when he's fighting Iran-backed groups for power."

Sadrist officials in Najaf said the move meant Sadr would have to choose between obeying his spiritual guide Haeri and following Khamenei, or rejecting him and potentially upsetting older figures in his movement who were close to Sadr's father. Instead, Sadr announced his own withdrawal from politics altogether, a move that spurred his followers onto the street. The Iranian government and Sadr's office did not immediately respond to request for comment for this story. Haeri's office could not immediately be reached.

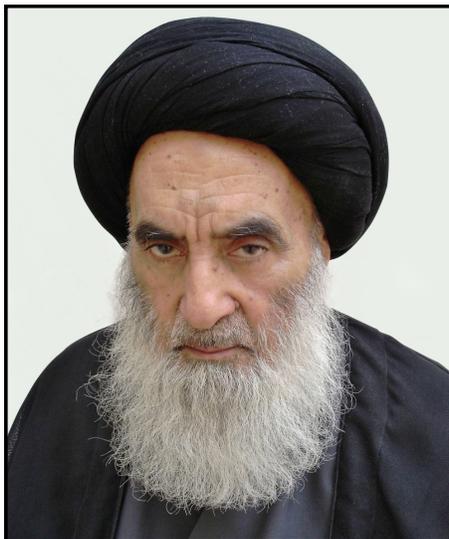
Specialists in Shi'ite Islam say Haeri's move to shut his own office and direct his followers to back the Iranian leader would certainly have appeared suspicious in an Iraqi context, where suggestions of Iranian meddling are explosive. "There's strong reason to believe this was influenced by Iranian pressure - but let's not forget that Haeri has also had disagreements with Sadr in the past," said Marsin Alshammari, a research fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School. "He directs followers to Khamenei when there's no (religious) need to do so. And it seems unlikely a person in his position would shut down his offices which are probably quite lucrative," she said.

VIOLENCE IS ONE OF THE TOOLS

As gun battles raged in central Baghdad, Sadr stayed silent for nearly 24 hours.

During that time, Shi'ite religious figures across Iraq tried to convince Sadr to stop the violence. They were joined by Shi'ite figures in Iran and Lebanon, according to officials in those countries, who said pressure on Sadr was channelled through Sistani's office in Najaf.

"The Iranians are not intervening directly. They're stung by the backlash against their influence in Iraq and are trying to influence events from a distance," an Iraqi government official said. Sadr insists on new elections, while some Iran-backed groups want to press ahead to form a government. Clashes broke out late in the week in oil-rich southern Iraq. The government has been largely silent. Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi said on Tuesday he would step down if violence continued, in a statement made hours after fighting had already stopped. "Where is the prime minister, the commander-in-chief, in all of this?" said Renad Mansour of the London-based Chatham House think tank. More violence was possible, Mansour said.



UK employees face high levels of institutional racism: Survey

UK employees from ethnic minority backgrounds face high levels of racial discrimination in the workplace, forcing many to quit, a new survey has found.

The survey, conducted by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), found that over 120,000 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers across the UK left their jobs due to racism in their respective workplaces.

“This report lifts the lid on racism in UK workplaces. It shines a light on the enormous scale of structural and institutional discrimination BME workers face,” TUC Secretary General Francis O’Grady said.

“This report must be a wake-up call. Ministers need to change the law so that employers are responsible for protecting their workers and preventing racism at work,” O’Grady added. According to the TUC, one in four (27%) BME workers experienced racist jokes at work in the last five years. The same number of people were made to feel uncomfortable at work due to people using stereotypes or commenting on their appearance.

One in five (21%) workers said they had racist remarks directed at them or made in

their presence and were bullied or harassed at work due to their appearances.

For 38% BME workers, the most common perpetrator of harassment at their workplace was one of their colleagues, while 17% of workers reported it was a direct manager or someone else with direct authority.

The study also revealed that the majority of racist behavior and other discriminatory incidences faced by BME workers went unreported due to the institutional nature of racial harassment.

“It’s disgraceful that in 2022 racism still determines who gets hired, trained, promoted – and who gets demoted and dismissed,” O’Grady said.



“And employers must be clear they have a zero-tolerance policy towards racism – and that they will support all staff who raise concerns about racism or who are subjected to racial abuse,” he added.

As a result of such widespread racist and discriminatory behavior, many BME workers reported that these incidents left a long-lasting impact on their careers.

One in 13 (8%) BME workers left their job as a result of the racism they experienced and more than one in 3 (35%) reported that the most recent incident of racism left them feeling less confident at work.

Some 34% reported that such behavior had left them feeling deeply embarrassed with 31% reporting a negative impact on their mental health.

Following the deeply concerning revelations of the study, the TUC urged the government to work with trade unions and employers to ensure that employers have a duty to take action to prevent racism at work and to improve workers’ rights regardless of race and ethnicity.

French more accepting of far-right ideology: Survey

France’s recently concluded presidential and legislative elections reveal that the French are increasingly embracing a far-right-wing ideology that was once considered taboo, according to the latest survey by the Foundation for Political Innovation think-tank.

The survey, titled “Political changes and government majority in a right-wing France,” was published Monday by the Le Figaro daily newspaper. It points to the shift of an increasing proportion of French people to the right politically, based on the analysis of the election results and three opinion polls with a sample of more than 9,000 people carried out parallel to the voting cycles.

The survey claims that large-scale abstention, blank votes, and protest votes, or votes cast in an election to demonstrate dissatisfaction with the choice of candidates or current political system, led to the marked success of far-right candidate Marine Le Pen and her National Rally (RN) party.

“This success is visible not only at the polls but also in public opinion. The ideas of the RN are increasingly widely accepted,” it said.

It also demonstrates the shift towards the right through voting data. During the 2022 presidential election, the right-wing protest vote won 32.3% of the vote compared with 27.1% during the 2017 presidential

election.

“Between 2017 and 2022, the protest vote in the presidential election is dominated by the right, while progressing more strongly on the right (+5.2 points) than on the left (+2 points),” the survey said.

After the RN bagged 89 seats, forming the largest opposition group in the National Assembly, nearly 47% of the respondents considered the development “a good thing.” An overwhelming 59% of respondents who position themselves on the right consider the RN capable of governing, and 57% believe the party advocates a society in which they would like to live.

Public opinion-wise too, 39% of the respondents said they “completely agree” or “tend to agree” with the party’s ideas. Besides the RN, Europe Ecology – The Greens (EELV) is the other popular party that has wide ac-

ceptance (39%) in terms of ideology.

The majority of the voters of far-right parties RN (91%) and Reconquest! (94%) are worried about the immigration of foreigners. More than half of the respondents (63%) think that “most immigrants do not share the values of our country and this poses problems of cohabitation.” This opinion is in the minority among the voters (38%) of the left-wing coalition NUPES.

Le Pen’s RN party remains the most popular sociologically and is expanding its electorate sharply in smaller cities, the survey analyzes.

The survey paints a “worrying” picture politically, as the parties that were deemed capable of governing like the Socialist Party (PS) on the left or Les Républicains (LR) on the right no longer have the means to rely on their own forces.

President Emmanuel Macron’s Ensemble party also “suffered a limited but real disappointment with regard to the clear re-election.”

The RN too will eventually face challenges after Le Pen ceases to be its leader, it said. “Our politics are in crisis because we are collectively unable to grasp the era in which we are entering and therefore to define the role that we could play in it,” the survey concluded.



Fatana urges govt to open girls schools, allow women to work

Afsana Haidari, 5th September
Afghanistan Woman Association president Fatana Ishaq Gilani has urged the caretaker government to prioritize combating illiteracy and give women and girls their rights Islam has given to them.

Fatana told Pajhwok Afghan News during an interview that the Afghanistan Women Association worked with thousands of Afghan women and girls in education and health sectors in the past one year and provided assistance to two thousand needy widows and orphans.

During this period, she said, they even helped dozens of security personnel of the Islamic Emirate.

Gailani said: "In the initial days after the political change in the country when Taliban captured Kabul, I served meals to 70 or 80 Taliban fighters three times a day who were residing in our street, I bought winter clothing and blankets for them."

"I did not leave the country after the Taliban takeover and stayed in the country, I was busy in welfare works in those hard times," she said.

"When the Taliban seized power on August 15, their spokesman said they will not prevent women from education and work, it made me optimistic," Fatana said. She felt good after the political change in the country and planned to extend her

welfare activities for more women and girls in the country.

But the Islamic Emirate was yet to fulfill its promise as girls above the sixth grade still could not attend their lessons while majority of women not allowed to work, she lamented.

Fatana doesn't know the reason of schools closure and said: "I do not know the reason why the doors of schools are shut for girls, I know nothing".

She is concerned about the closure of girls' schools above grade six and wom-

en's work and asks the government to revise this decision.

"The women are angry about this decision because it is their right to work and study, but once again I ask the government to rethink about its policies in this regard," she added.

As the academic year began in March, the government postponed the opening of girls high and secondary schools and said the government was working on a plan after which the schools will be opened.

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials have repeatedly said they are committed to giving women all Islamic rights. They say some women are attending their jobs while others get their salaries at home.

Fatana suggested the government should consult personalities of good reputation and women activists for solution to these problems.

Fatana continued: "I and all other Muslim women want their rights that Allah has given them. I want to attend proudly my job, I want my rights guaranteed in a secure and safe environment."

Fatana Gilani believes that Afghanistan's problems are caused by foreign interference and suggests the caretaker government to work hard to stop foreign interference.



Muslim student challenges SC on Hijab ban

New Delhi: A counsel for one of the Muslim students, who has challenged the hijab ban in government educational institutions in Karnataka, on Thursday contended before the Supreme Court that Article 25 only protects the innocent bona fide practice of religion- 'wearing a hijab yes! But, wearing an orange shawl is a belligerent display of religion.'

Senior advocate Devadatt Kamat, representing the student, submitted before a bench comprising Justices Hemant Gupta and Sudhanshu Dhulia that Article 25 only protects the innocent bona fide practice of religion. He added that wearing a namam, yes! Wearing a hijab yes! Wearing an orange shawl is not a bona fide practice. "The argument of the state is that if I wear hijab, other students will wear an orange shawl. Wearing an orange shawl is not a genuine religious belief. It is a belligerent display of religion, that if you wear this, I will wear this....," said Kamat.



He further added that every religious practice may not be essential, but that does not mean the state can keep restricting it as long as it does not fall foul of public order, morality, and health. Kamat said the question is whether uniformity in public space is a ground to restrict Article 25? Whether a Muslim girl wearing a head scarf is an insult to discipline? Kamat added that one can wear headgear, kara, as part of his religious belief, it may not be a core religious practice, but as long as it does not affect public order, health or morality, it can be allowed.

The bench queried Kamat that wearing a hijab in street may not offend anyone, however, wearing it in a school might raise a question, what kind of public order school would want to maintain?

The top court will continue to hear the matter after lunch. On Wednesday, Kamat asked the apex court how a secular administration, allowing others to wear bindi, kada, or cross, could restrict Muslim students' fundamental right to choose to wear hijab, in addition to prescribed uniforms. The top court is hearing a clutch of petitions against the Karnataka High Court judgment, which upheld the right of educational institutions to ban wearing of hijab in pre-university colleges in the state.

Jamaica Celebrates First Female Muslim Pilot

Celebrated across the country, Hassanah's achievement started as a dream of a young girl who loved the feeling of ascending into the sky while traveling to visit her grandparents in Trinidad.

"Since then, my eyes were always glued to the sky and my fascination for airplanes grew. I love looking out at the gorgeous landscape. Nature is breathtaking and I love that flying gives me the opportunity to absorb the picturesque scenery," she recalled.

Hassanah passed her flight exam on August 25 and received her license on August 29. Her next dream is to get commercial license training and fly for airlines.

The first Muslims arrived in Jamaica as enslaved people. Islam was one of the main religions of Africans brought to the Caribbean and America.

Today, roughly 5,000 Jamaicans identify with the Islamic faith. There are eleven mosques across the island.



On Salafism: Concepts and Contexts

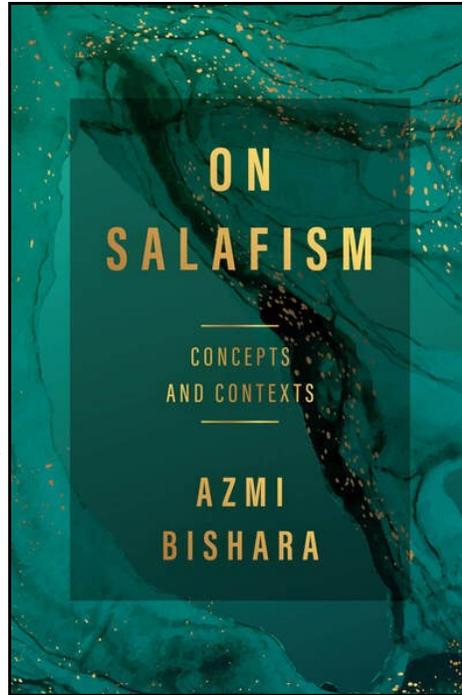
By: Azmi Bishara

On Salafism offers a compelling new understanding of this phenomenon, both its development and contemporary manifestations. Salafism became associated with fundamentalism when the 9/11 Commission used it to explain the terror attacks and has since been connected with the violence of the so-called Islamic State. With this book, Azmi Bishara critically deconstructs claims of continuity between early Islam and modern militancy and makes a counterargument: Salafism is a wholly modern construct informed by specific sociopolitical contexts.

Bishara offers a sophisticated account of various movements—such as Wahabbism and Hanbalism—frequently collapsed into simplistic understandings of Salafism. He distinguishes reformist from regressive Salafism, and examines patterns of modernization in the development of contemporary Islamic political movements and associations. In deconstructing the assumptions of linear continuity between traditional and contemporary movements, Bishara details various divergences in both doctrine and context of modern

Salafisms, plural. On Salafism is a crucial read for those interested in Islamism, jihadism, and Middle East politics and history.

Azmi Bishara is one of the Arab world's most prominent scholars, a critic of au-



thoritarianism and colonialism, and a staunch supporter of democratic transition in the region. Named by *Le Nouveau Magazine Littéraire* among the world's most influential thinkers, he has published on political thought, social theory, and philosophy, including *Religion and Secularism in Historical Context* (2013) and *Sectarianism without Sects* (2021).

"On Salafism is a timely, erudite account of the genealogy of Salafism, covering a broad chronological and geographical scope. Azmi Bishara provides important correctives to recent scholarly approaches to Salafism, and forcefully demonstrates that modern articulations of Salafism are facets of ideological projects, not natural culminations of classical Islamic traditions."

—Ahmad Dallal, American University in Cairo

"On Salafism covers a subject too often the source of deep misunderstanding. Drawing on comprehensive social science research, Azmi Bishara develops a fully documented history that stuns."

—François Burgat, French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)

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Understanding 'Sectarianism'

Fanar Haddad

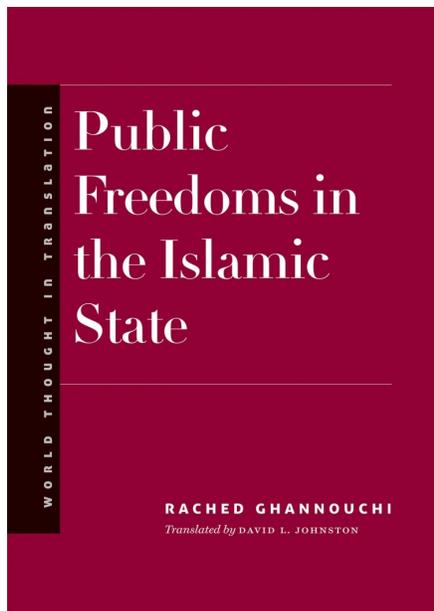
Much has been published on sectarianism in the Middle East but few writers have separated received wisdom from the facts, as Haddad does in this book.

'Sectarianism' is one of the most over-discussed yet under-analysed concepts in debates about the Middle East. Despite the deluge of commentary, there is no agreement on what 'sectarianism' is. Is it a social issue, one of dogmatic incompatibility, a historic one or one purely related to modern power politics? Is it something innately felt or politically imposed? Is it a product of modernity or its antithesis? Is it a function of the nation-state or its negation?

This book seeks to move the study of modern sectarian dynamics beyond these analytically paralysing dichotomies by shifting the focus away from the meaningless '-ism' towards the root: sectarian identity. How are Sunni and Shi'a identities imagined, experienced and negotiated and how do they relate to and interact with other identities?

Looking at the modern history of the Arab world, Haddad seeks to understand sectarian identity not as a monochrome frame of identification but as a multi-layered concept that operates on several

dimensions: religious, subnational, national and transnational. Far from a uniquely Middle Eastern, Arab, or Islamic phenomenon, a better understanding of sectarian identity reveals that the many facets of sectarian relations that are misleadingly labelled 'sectarianism' are echoed in intergroup relations worldwide.



Reviews

'No one has written with more theoretical and practical insight on Muslim sectarianism than Fanar Haddad. In this volume, he brings together the best of his insights on a topic that remains poorly understood. An essential read for anyone who is serious about understanding "sectarianism" in the Arab world today.' — Nader Hashemi, Director of the Center for Middle East Studies, University of Denver, and co-author of *Sectarianization*

'A clear-sighted and highly readable analysis of the shifting contexts and meanings of sectarian identification in the modern Arab world. Detailed and politically astute, this book makes a critical contribution to the literature on sectarian political identities.' — Charles Tripp, Professor of Politics, SOAS University of London

'A thought-provoking account of Sunni-Shi'a relations in the Arab world that critiques how the term "sectarianism" has often been used.' — Toby Matthiesen, Senior Research Fellow, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

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1. CLOSER AND CLOSER TO MAN-KIND COMES THEIR RECKONING : YET THEY HEED NOT AND THEY TURN AWAY.

2. NEVER COMES (AUGHT) TO THEM OF A RENEWED MESSAGE FROM THEIR LORD, BUT THEY LISTEN TO IT AS IN JEST,

3. THEIR HEARTS TOYING AS WITH TRIFLES. THE WRONG-DOERS CONCEAL THEIR PRIVATE COUNSELS, (SAYING), " IS THIS (ONE) MORE THAN A MAN LIKE YOURSELVES ? WILL YE GO TO WITCHCRAFT WITH YOUR EYES OPEN ? "

4. SAY : " MY LORD KNOWETH (EVERY) WORD (SPOKEN) IN THE HEAVENS AND ON EARTH : HE IS THE ONE THAT HEARETH AND KNOWETH (ALL THINGS). "

ANBIYA, OR THE PROPHETS

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This is our website. Have visited it: It will put you face-to-face with an alternative world, full of spirituality, morality coupled with modern outlooks and perspectives. We want to hear your views on its contents, layout and general quality.

Join us in our Noon and Afternoon prayers
Everyday
at 12.00

Hope exists until the end

by AbdurRahman.

One day, as Ali bin Abi Taalib and al-Hussain bin Ali were walking together, they heard a man supplicating to Allah. The man was begging Allah to forgive him for his evil crimes. His sincere tone and eloquent words aroused the interest of Ali, who turned to his son and said, "Do you not hear the man who is so very contrite because of his sins? Go catch up with him and call him."

When al-Hussain caught up with the man, he saw that he was clean-looking, clean-smelling, with nice clothes and altogether handsome- except that he seemed to be paralyzed on the right side of his body. Al-Hussain said, "Answer the summons of the Leader of the believers, Ali bin Abu Taalib." Dragging his right side, the man followed al-Hussain back to where Ali was waiting for them.

"Who are you and what is your story," asked Ali.

"My story is that of a man who did not fulfill the rights of others and is now being punished for that," said the man.

"And what is your name?" asked Ali.

"Munaazil bin Laahiq," said the man.

"And what is your story?" asked Ali.

"I was famous among the Arabs for my frivolous and sinful exploits. Merciful and kind, my father would constantly admonish me and advise me to mend my ways. He would remind me of Allah's punishment, saying, 'My son, do not go against He who punishes with the Hell-fire!' When he would persist in advising me, I felt his voice grating on my nerves. I would get so frustrated that I would beat him with harsh blows. In response to my blows, he one day said, 'By Allah, I will fast without breaking my fast and I will pray without stopping to sleep.' He fasted for an entire week, but seeing no change in my behavior, he climbed a camel and set off to perform Hajj. His parting words were, 'I am going to the House of Allah, and there I will seek help from Allah against you.' When he reached Makkah, he embraced the curtain of the Kaa'ba and supplicated against me, asking Allah to make me paralyzed on one side of my body. By the One Who raised the sky and sends down the rain, no sooner did my father finish his supplication than I became paralyzed on my right side, which became like a piece of wood. Anyone that would then pass by me would point to me and say, 'Allah answered his father's supplication against him.'" "What did your father do then?" asked Ali. "O Leader of the Believers, after he became pleased with me, I asked him to go back and



invoke Allah on my behalf. He agreed to do so. I walked alongside him as he rode on his camel, until we reached a place called the Valley of Arak. When we reached there, a group of birds flew away from a tree, their sudden movement frightened the camel. As the camel raced off in a state of fright, my father fell off it and died."

It was certainly late for the man, but not too late, and so Ali advised him to continue to supplicate and to

repent for his past misdeeds. Ali then parted from the man, but before leaving him, he taught him the supplication that a person in distress should say. [The narration does not specifically mention which supplication it was that Ali taught the man.]

The Fable of the Porcupines

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold.

The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep warm.

This way they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions.

After a while, they decided to distance themselves one from the other & they began to die, alone & frozen.

So they had to make a choice..

Either accept the quills of their companions or disappear from the Earth. Wisely, they decided to go back to being together.

They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the warmth & heat that came from the others. This way they were able to survive.

*Man is not what he thinks he is
he is what he hides.*

André Malraux

*What you leave behind is not
what is engraved in stone monuments,
but what is woven into
the lives of others.*

Pericles

*The great use of life is
to spend it for something
that will outlast it.*

William James

*One thing you can't hide - is
when you're crippled inside.*

John Lennon