

Dear Reader,

Islam between the arrows of enemies and fools

There are many poisonous arrows that are directed these days at Islam, targeting its creed, Sharia, heritage and symbols, especially our beloved Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The enemies of faith, truth and good among some Westerners imagine that with those reprehensible actions of theirs, such as the outrageous cartoons insulting the Greater Apostle (PBUH), the stupid call to burn the Holy Quran; and the massive information campaigns against Islam in universities, clubs, streets and media in the US and other countries that have been recently carried out by extremist hateful groups imagine that via all those provocations and insults to the Muslims' sanctities and symbols, they can do harm to the greatness of Islam and the power of its bright presence and continuous spread in their own countries. Here, it can be said that the hostile campaigns aimed at distorting the image of Islam in the hearts of Westerners in order to corner the faith have contributed in unifying the various groups of Muslims that sought to detect, respond and reduce the impact of those campaigns. However, what still stirs up pain and portends threats more than the plots that are being set in the outer world is this obsessive internal distortion of the image of Islam, besides seeking to provoke moving crises, which is being done on a large scale by the groups of Takfir and blind extremism. Driven by their limited horizon and ignorance of the true rules of Islam, these groups resort to atrocities and bloodshed against Muslims who disagree with their opinions or positions, besides the foolishness of those big mouths and their limited minds, as they have been harming the harmonious relations among Islamic sects with their unbridled statements and speeches that aim to purposely, vulgarly, unduly and unwarrantedly defame symbols and figures that are respected by other doctrines. This is being exploited by the ill-intentioned and cheap media to raise noise, and probably strife, as a result of abnormal words that only those who utter should be held responsible for their consequences. Therefore, everyone very positively received and appreciated the fatwas by the Ulama who safeguard the Muslims' unity as they (the Ulama) prohibited any abuse or insult of symbols and figures that are respected by Islamic sects. These fatwas do confirm the line drawn by Ahlul-Bait (AS) Imams in this direction that was followed by the scholars of their honorable faith. We greatly hope that the rules that lead to the best relations amongst Muslims of all sects are respected by all Ulamas and their followers.



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Muslims in Uzbekistan:

the Country of Shrines and Beacons

Location:

The Republic of Uzbekistan is located in the heart of Central Asia, for it is bordered on the west and north by Kazakhstan, on the east by Kyrgyzstan, on the southeast by Tajikistan, and on the south by Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. With such geographic facts, Uzbekistan is regarded as the most important of the countries that have recently gained independence from the former USSR.

Area:

Uzbekistan is a landlocked country that covers an area of about 447,400 sq km out of which 425,400 km are land and 22,000 water.

Population:

With an estimated 27,606,007 inhabitants in 2009, Uzbekistan has the largest population of the former Soviet republics in Central Asia and the third largest population of all the former Soviet republics (after Russia and Ukraine). The majority of the population (85%) is Muslim. The Russian and Ukrainian minorities (9%) are traditionally Orthodox Christians.

The Uzbek population is made of various ethnic groups, the most prominent of which are the Uzbek (68%), Kazakh (4%), Tajik (4%), Tatar (5%, half of them are Qoraqalpoghs or Karakalpaks), and Russian and Ukrainian (10%). There is an Arab minority of around 50,000 people in the city of Arabkhane.

Language:

The official state language is Uzbek which is spoken by 74% of the population; it used to be written in an Arabic script. In the late 1920s, however, the Soviet government decreed that a Latin-based alphabet be used instead. Then in 1940 the government imposed a modified Cyrillic script (the script of the Russian language). In 1993 the government of independent Uzbekistan resolved to gradually revert to the Latin alphabet.

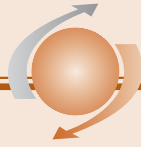


Map of Uzbekistan.

Most ethnic minorities in Uzbekistan tend to speak their own native languages. Russian (spoken by 14% of the population) was the preferred language during the Soviet period and is still widely used in the cities. Five percent of the population speak Tajik and 8% speak minority languages.

Land:

Across west central Uzbekistan is a vast area of flat plains called the Turan Plain, while additional plains lie south and east of the Qyzylqum Mountains dominate the landscape in the east and northeast. Several branches of the western Tien Shan and Pamirs-Alai mountain systems cross into Uzbekistan from neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. More than two-thirds of Uzbekistan's territory is covered by desert and steppe (semiarid grassy plains).



A Lush oasis... this is how the heart of the capital Tashkent looks.

Climate:

Uzbekistan has a harsh continental climate. Four distinct seasons create great fluctuations in temperature over the course of a year. Average daily temperatures in January range from -6° to 2°C and in July from 26° to 32°C , although temperatures can be much more extreme. There are also wide ranges of temperature between day and night.

Economy and Natural Resources:

Uzbekistan is regarded as one of the world's richest countries when it comes to natural resources. It also has 40,000 sq km of irrigated agricultural land.

Uzbekistan is the region's largest producer and exporter of seed (unginned) cotton and the world's second after the US. It produces 5 million tons of unginced cotton. It also produces wheat, rice, and bar-

ley. The country also produces fruits and vegetables, as well as jute and tobacco, especially in the eastern valleys and highlands, at river banks and in the Turan Plain.

Besides these resources, Uzbekistan has an important livestock wealth of four million cattle. This has enabled the country to produce one third of the wool produced in the region.

Uzbekistan contains significant mineral wealth. Deposits of gold, uranium, silver, copper, zinc, coal, lead, tungsten, and molybdenum are mined. Uzbekistan also harbors large reserves of oil and natural gas. It produces large quantities of natural gas, some of which it exports. The country's petroleum reserves produce enough for domestic consumption.

Textile manufacturing, which was limit-



Historical Kirkldash School in Tashkent.



Facade of Tashkent University of Islamic and Oriental Sciences.

ed in the Soviet era, is currently expanding. Automobiles and trucks are assembled through agreements formed in the mid-1990s with German and South Korean manufacturers. Transport and passenger aircraft are produced near the capital Tashkent. Industry, including mining, manufacturing, and construction, employs 20 percent of the workforce.

Government:

Uzbekistan's 1992 constitution declares the country to be a secular and democratic republic and guarantees basic human rights. All citizens aged 18 and older may vote. The head of state is the president (currently Islam Karimov), who is elected by popular vote. He rules the country along with a council of ministers headed by a premier (currently Shavkat Mirziyayev).

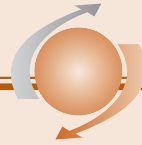
Uzbekistan has a bicameral (two-chamber) legislature: a Senate that comprises of 100 members, and a Legislative Council of 120 members.

The Most Famous Historic Cities:

Toshkent:

is Uzbekistan's capital since 1930. It is inhabited by 2.5 million people. The word Toshkent means in Uzbek "the city of stones". It lies 500 meters above sea level. Located in an oasis near the Chirchik River, Toshkent is the seat of the Religious Administration of Central Asia Muslims which is headed by the Mufti.

Toshkent is one of the region's oldest cities, as archaeologists agree that it is over 2000 years old. Most of its architecture is characterized by old heritage. The town has several landmarks including the Hazrate Imam Square which is the religious center that consists of the Barak Khan School (built in the 16th century), Imam Bukhari's Islamic Institute and the library which is rich with oriental manuscripts including the oldest Quran that is comprised of 353 pieces of gazelle hide. There is, furthermore, the Islamic University of Toshkent and the Oriental Sciences University which enjoy distinguished scientific and educational experience.



Samarqand:

is the country's second largest city. Samarqand means the "land castle". It was described by Ibn Batouta as "the largest, most beautiful and perfectly lovely city. Built on the edge of a valley called al-Qassarien, Samarqand has great palaces and architecture that demonstrate its people's vigor." That is why Arab explorers called this town al-Yaquuta (the corundum). Samarqand has a population of 500,000 people most of them are Tajik who speak Persian.

Samarqand's most prominent landmarks include the great walls that surround the city and have four main gates: the China Gate (in the eastern part of the city) was built as a symbol of silk trade with China; the Bukhara Gate (in the northern part); the Nobihar (in the western part) and the Grand Gate or Bab Kish (in the southern part). The city was also famous for the many palaces built by Tamerlane such as Qasr Dalkalsha (the Summer Palace) and Bagh Behasht which was built with white marble brought from Tabriz on a high hilltop surrounded by a deep moat with vaults that connect the palace to a garden. Today, Samarqand is one of Uzbekistan's most active cities in agriculture, trade and industry, besides being famous for its historic markets of textures, carpets and the Samarqand paper, the secret of whose making was brought from China and later became renowned throughout the world.

Bukhara:

is located in a southwestern oasis on the Zeravshan River near the capital

Toshkent. It is one of Uzbekistan's old cities as it dates from the first century AD. One of the greatest cities of the area over the river, Bukhara has many groves that grow diversified fruits. Muslims conquered Bukhara in 53 AH; it was re-conquered by Salem bin Ziad in 61AH and Qutaiba bin Muslim in 90 AH. It became one of the cities mentioned in poems throughout time for being more like a huge museum that combined the history and heritage of different eras. The Bukhara Castle is still there today standing in pride as witness to the history of this noble city that was a fort and metropolis for the emir of Bukhara and his assistants.

Moreover, Bukhara has been renowned for its Islamic Ulama, schools and landmarks. Along with its commercial activity, the city became one of the centers that participated in the making of the Islamic civilization. It was home of many mosques and Islamic universities that gathered in one city in the whole of Central Asia, and this has made Bukhara a magnet for scholars and students alike. Bukhara remained as a capital for the monarchs of the Samanid dynasty of the Shiban tribe and the Uzbek of the Manget household, who were known as people of science and high rank, until the city fell into the hands of the Russians and was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1921. Nowadays, there are more than 140 architectural landmarks in Bukhara, including the Samanid Dome which was built by Ismail Samanid in AD 892; the

Namaz Ghah Mosque which was built in the 13th century AD; and the Baland Mosque. In addition to these mosques there is the Southern Gate, a remnant of a Bukhara mosque, which was built by the Karkhanians to be a masterpiece of ornamental art in the town. Today, one of the most renowned landmarks in Bukhara is the Friday Mosque which was built in the seventeenth century. The mosque whose ornamented minaret is 46 meters high is now called the Kulian Mosque. Finally, there is the Klan Minaret which was constructed by Sultan Erslan Khan in AD 1127.

Termez:

is located at the watercourse of the Amu Darya River. Islam entered this city at three stages: in 56 AH by Said bin Othman bin Affan, in 69 AH by Musa bin Abdallah bin Khazem and, finally, in 93 AH under the leadership of Qutaiba bin Muslim. It was later captured by the Seljuks, the Moguls and the Uzbeks. Termez is surrounded by a lovely wall. Its markets are paved with baked bricks, while its streets are old, ornamented and decorated by historic landmarks and old schools and mosques that have huge cylindrical minarets.

Among the town's great figures is Mohammed bin Essa a-Termezi (209-279 AH), one of the Hadith imams and compiler of *Al-Jameh a-Saheeh*, *Asunan Book* (known as *Sunan A-Turmuzi*), *Al-Elal Book* and other books. He was taught by major scholars such as Al-Bukhari, Qutaiba bin Said, Mohammed

bin Bashir and Is'haq bin Rahwaieh.

Khorezm:

is located in the far west of Uzbekistan. The city, which is called Khiva today, used to be part of the Islamic region of Khorasan. It was conquered by Qutaiba bin Muslim in 93 AH.

Khorezm enjoys a splendid nature that decorates its plains, hilltops and ancient streets besides its old popular markets where you can find traditional and modern miniatures and clothing. The town plays a major role today in Uzbekistan's religious, archaeological and historic tourism.

The city's major figures are:

Mohammed bin Musa al-Khorezmi whose works on algebra, arithmetic, and astronomical tables greatly advanced mathematical thought. He was the first to use for mathematical purposes the expression *al jabr*, from which the English word algebra is derived. His work on algorithm, a term derived from his name, introduced the method of calculating by use of Arabic numerals and decimal notation. Orientalists called him Ptolemy of Arabs. He died in 236 AH.

Mohammed bin Ahmed (Abu a-Rihan al-Bairuni) was born in Kath, one of the suburbs of Khorezm. He was known for liking arithmetic, astronomy and geography, besides being a scholar in religions and medicine. He died in 440 AH.

Mohammed bin Omar al-Khorezmi (a-Zamakhshari), author of *Tafsir al-Kashaf* and *Asas al-Balagha*. He died in 538 AH.



Tamerlane's Monument and Museum in Tashkent.

Nasef:

This city in Uzbekistan is today called Nakhshab. Muslims conquered it peacefully by Qutaiba bin Muslim in 92 AH. The town scholars were faqihs such as Abdullah bin Ahmed bin Mahmoud al-Nasefy (died in 710 AH) and the Hanafi scholar Omar bin Mohammed bin Ismail bin Luqman (Najme-Deen) who was born in 461 and died in Samarqand in 537 AH. Jurjan: which is a city in the Khorezm region is called in Khorezmi Urqanj. Its beautiful traditional markets attract many tourists. The town's inhabitants have Arab customs and habits such as hospitality and good association. It is the seat of governmental departments, the governor's residence and a national airport. The city's streets are flanked by green trees; the Amu Darya River and the Shuat Channel pass through the city and are used for irrigation.

Jurjan lies 1200 km from the capital Tashkent. Its inhabitants speak Turkish, which is similar to Uzbek. Some of its

population hail from Arab origins whose forefathers immigrated long time ago.

The History of Islam in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan emerged as part of Transoxiana, the ancient name used for the portion of Central Asia corresponding approximately with modern-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and southwest Kazakhstan, as a center of different cultures and civilizations throughout ages and an ancient crossroad of commercial paths between east and west. The Silk Road is regarded as the most important road between China and Europe through the Mediterranean countries, Central Asia to India. Many cities were established on this road such as Bukhara, Samarqand, Kiva besides other towns as Alexander the Great had founded eight cities in Central Asia.

Islam entered this region following the renowned battle of Nihawand in 21 AH that completed the fall of the Sassanid



Amir, a historic mosque in Samarkand.



Facade of the prestigious Sirador School in Samarkand.

Empire and accomplished the Islamic conquest of Iran. After that battle, the Muslims' armies, led by al-Ahnaf bin Qais, spread throughout Persia and conquered Herat (northwestern Afghanistan) then Merv, the capital of Khorasan.

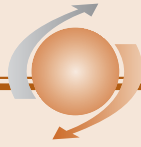
In 31 AH, al-Ahnaf conquered Takharistan, a large province in the highlands of Amu Darya. In 86 AH, Qutaiba bin Muslim conquered the cities of Pikend, Bukhara and Samarqand. A year later, he conquered Tashkent, Ferghana and Kashgar; the Islamic conquests, however, did not settle in Uzbekistan until late first hegira century when the people of Transoxiana had embraced Islam (99-101 AH) and many mosques and Islamic schools were built.

In the seventh hegira century, the Moguls, led by Genghis Khan, invaded the Muslim capitals and cities destroying all that they could reach and demolishing mosques and buildings. When the Mogul state weakened, Tamerlane rebelled against the Mogul governance and put an end to the corruption and decay that hit

the state. He established a great kingdom for the Tatars; he made Samarqand his capital in the mid eighth hegira century. When the Tamerlanian Empire collapsed, the Shibani State emerged in the tenth hegira century. They made Bukhara their capital.

As the Ottoman armies were penetrating deeply into Europe and besieging Vienna in the mid 16th century, Tsarist Russia was attacking the Islamic regions in Central Asia where Kazan (Volga) fell into the Russians' hands, then the Sybir Kingdom and later Uzbekistan as Samarqand collapsed.

Even in modern times, the Soviets had their ambitions concerning the cities of Uzbekistan. In spite of ruling Uzbekistan with a rod of iron, Muslims remained clinging to Islam and the Islamic civilization. They were armed with patience vis-à-vis the USSR suppression and its violation of their dignity besides the corruption run by the Kremlin administration in Uzbekistan led by Sharaf Rashidov who was the leader of the Communist Party in the 1980s.



Ragistan Islamic Complex in Samarkand mosques, schools and beacons.

Uzbekistan after Independence:

In 1991, as the USSR disintegrated, Uzbekistan got its independence. The country, nevertheless, did not see noticeable change as Islam Karimov, who succeeded Rashidov, turned from the president of a Communist republic into the president of the People's Democratic Party without essential change in his personality or the structure of his party as he followed the Chinese gradual model of change in governance policy. In the 1990s, the chronic Tajik-Uzbek conflict persisted; it is a historic conflict between the Turkish and Persian cultures aggravated by the divisions made by Lenin and implemented by Stalin in a bid to rule the region and inflame differ-

ences among the neighboring ethnicities and republics.

Since independence, the secular regime has been engaged in a struggle against the growing political Islam phenomenon in Uzbekistan especially in the Fergana Valley where the Islamic Revival Party, which calls for implementing Islamic Sharia, emerged, and in Toshkent, the stronghold of the Islamic Enlightenment Party. Another event in this context was the independence of Toshkent's Mufti from the supervision of the Uzbek authorities. Researcher Alfonse Olivier Roi says, "The growing Islamic movements in Uzbekistan are influenced by Pakistan, and their role model is the Islamic Brotherhood."



The Grand Mosque in Bukhara.

Major Uzbek Universities and Institutes:

* Toshkent Islamic University:

The beauty of this university is similar to the landmarks of the historic city of Toshkent as for the lofty harmonious asbestos architecture. The university that was established in the middle of the 20th century was enlarged several times; it can now take thousands of students from various areas in Uzbekistan and Central Asian countries.

This old university enjoys an active scholarly academic administration that uses a curriculum for various majors especially religious and human sciences. Furthermore, it graduates students qualified for scientific, educational and Tableegh work in university institutions.

* University of International Economy and Diplomacy:

was founded in the 1980s and became an international academy in the late 1990s to

emerge as a one of the world's most important scholarly institutions that take interest in the international economic issue and its relation to politics and diplomacy. The university is administered by a host of professors of different nationalities.

* International Westminster University in Toshkent:

was a mere institute of administration sciences dur-

ing the soviet rule. Following the independence of Uzbekistan in 1993, it developed and became an international university of administration, commerce and applied sciences. Today, this university takes hundreds of students who major in various sciences.

* Agricultural University of Wilayat Toshkent:

was inaugurated in the 1970s during the Soviet rule as the government sought to reconsider its agricultural policy and develop cultivation besides linking them to the USSR's industry and foreign economic policy. As decades passed and its practical experiences increased, this university became a prominent academy in the domain of agricultural sciences that plays a major role in promoting Uzbekistan's economy.

* Pediatrics Institute in Toshkent:

was established in the early 1990s under the essential challenge in Uzbekistan of

underdeveloped healthcare and hospitalization inherited from the former Soviet rule, especially in the pediatrics sector which recorded high rate of fatalities. Today, this medical institute contributes in curbing children disease and handicap plus helping in decreasing the fatality percentage due to the healthcare it provides to Uzbek families.

*** Abu A-Rihan Al-Bairuni's**

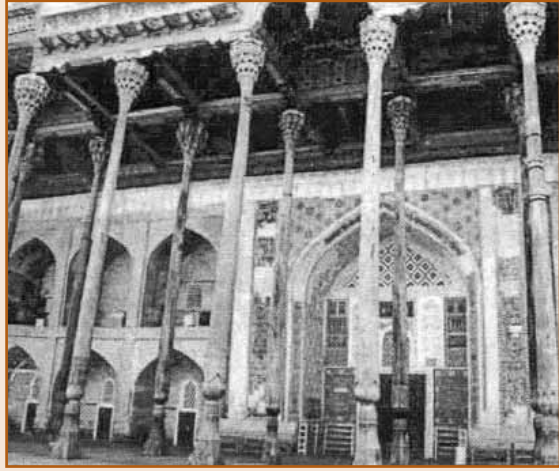
Orientalism Institute:

was founded in the 1990s, although earlier steps in this regard were taken in the 1960s, but its scientific activity was more conspicuous after the independence of Uzbekistan and its stability at the scientific and political levels. The institute is regarded as one of the most important Orientalism institutions that take interest in the Muslims' scientific heritage, in particular the mathematician, linguist, astrologist and geographer Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Bairuni.

*** Library of the Uzbekistan Muslims'**

Religious Administration:

The Toshkent-based scientific and heritage library that was established in the early 1990s is part of the Iftaa Department and the Clerics' Administration in Uzbekistan. It is under the supervision of the country's Mufti and a group of Ulama (clerics), lecturers and university professors who supervise organizing the library work and archiving the scientific, literary and historic books and encyclopedias.



Façade of the Grand Mosque in Bukhara

*** Ali Shernowa'ei Museum of Literature:**

This lovely museum includes a huge literary heritage on Uzbekistan's literary and scientific history, besides features and antiques from the country's cities and statues of its scientists and men of letter who existed throughout history since ancient times in Transoxiana through Islamic era until contemporary civilization. This museum in the capital attracts all those who visit this beautiful country which enjoys pretty landmarks and ancient historic archaeological sites.

*** Imam Bukhari's Institute:**

was inaugurated in the mid 1990s in the historic city of Bukhara in a bid to preserve the heritage of Muslim Ulama including the famous narrator Imam al-Bukhari who compiled the "Sahih" which included Hadiths.

This Islamic institute receives all those who want to learn about the resources of



The Castle Gate of the Old hall in Bukhara.



Historical Abdul-Aziz School in Bukhara.

religious Hadith and Sira (Prophet's - pbuh – biography) through studying for successive years after which a student gets a license in religious Islamic sciences.

*** Library of Abu A-Rihan Al-Bairuni's Institute:**

This public library is affiliated with the Orientalism Bairuni institute. It was dedicated by the institute to the people and students who want to read and learn about the institute's scientific and cultural activities in addition to helping those who do not have comfortable places to study and read their school or college assignments.

*** Ibn Sina's Library in Bukhara:**

This library is regarded as one of cultural and scientific achievements in the city of Bukhara. The project whose construction began in the 1980s was inaugurated in the early 1990s as soon as the library had been provided with the Islamic books and oriental manuscripts that bear witness to

the pedigree of this city and its scholars and sages' greatness throughout history.

*** The Treasury of Toshkent Islamic University:**

The idea of the project of a scientific treasury dates back to the middle of the 20th century when the Toshkent Muslims started to think of a way to preserve the city's heritage which is over 2000 years old through creating an exhaustive heritage treasury of all the Islamic scholarly achievements that could be found in order to store and document them in a modern scientific fashion in a large archive under the supervision of a group of heritage books' experts.

*** Mer Arab School Bukhara:**

is one of the most renowned schools in Bukhara. It was founded by Sheikh Abdullah Yemeni, a religious leader of Yemeni origin. The school in which Islamic sciences are taught graduates imams and preachers besides bringing up students to the tolerant Islamic teachings.

* Al-Bukari's School in Toshkent:

This school had a long history throughout the former Soviet rule as it lived long decades of negligence; however, after the independence of Uzbekistan, the school came to life again and assumed a major role in educating the new generation of the Uzbek youth according to the principles of the Islamic faith.

Historic Schools:

* Oleg Bek School:

is one of Samarqand's historic schools. Located in the middle of Registan Square, this school has a stately lofty façade with two high minarets flanking its gate and a dome in its corner while fabulous inscriptions decorate its entire façade.

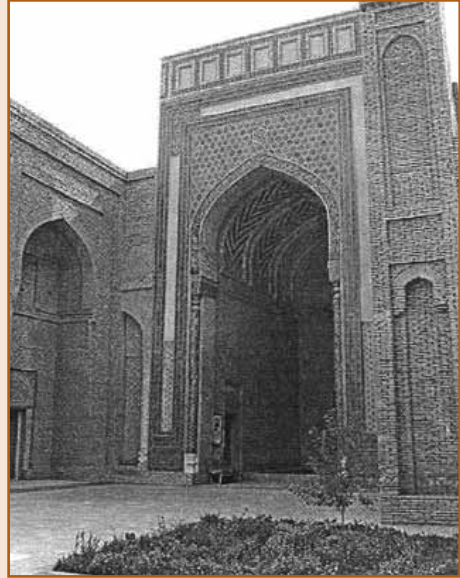
The school had 50 rooms as classes and for accommodation in which 100 students lived. The building underwent enlargement; now it has two floors and four high domes over the classrooms. Oleg Bek himself taught in this school.

* Sheradar School:

was originally a Sufi mosque before Samarqand governor established this great school in the same site which is opposite Oleg Bek School. When you look at its façade, you figure out that it is a great historic landmark due to its stateliness and magnificent architecture especially its gate, domes and the two minarets that loftily stand at its entrance.

* Tala Cary School:

that is also located in Samarqand dates back to 1056 AH, AD 1646; it is the gold-



Stately entrance of an Islamic school in Termez.

en superb school that represents the third temple in the Ragistan Square next to the Grand Mosque. This school is characterized by attractive architectural art and a wealth of colors and ornaments.

These religious scientific schools no longer perform their Islamic mission after being turned into touristic archeological buildings in 1336 AH, AD 1918 following the Soviet Russian invasion of Uzbekistan with the aim of erasing its Islamic identity.

Historic Mosques:

* The Grand Mosque in Bukhara:

This archaeological mosque dates back to the establishment of the city of Bukhara, which was praised by several poets in the ninth and tenth centuries AD.



Domes of the Sufi Khojy Mosque in Bukhara.

It is more like a small museum in a larger one, the city itself that combines several histories and heritages. Nevertheless, it is a mosque in which the Bukhara Muslims gather to hold their prayers and rituals besides being a beautiful archaeological site frequented by many tourists to closely see its lovely architecture.

*** Langar Ata Mosque:**

is located in the center of the village of Langar that enjoys lovely landscapes and green plains. The mosque is rich with this dual beauty that combines the old heritage of architecture with the modern one. Large numbers of Uzbek Muslims come to this mosque for worship especially in the holy month of Ramadan, and on Eid and religious days.

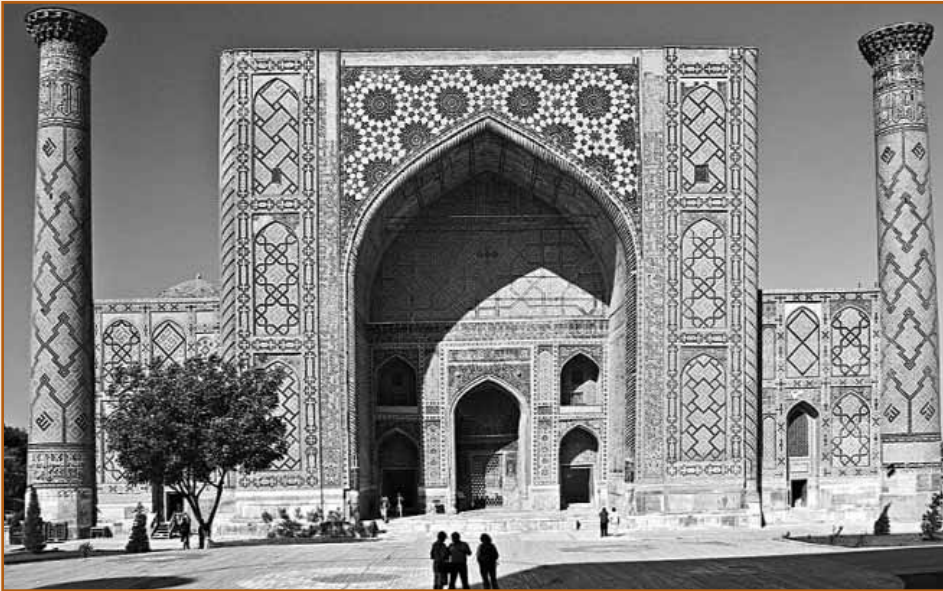
*** Bibi Khanum Mosque, Samarqand:**

one of the historic landmarks of Samarqand, the oldest of Uzbekistan's cities and the one

rich with splendid archeological sites. Tamerlane built this mosque in AD 1400 in commemoration of his favorite wife Bibi Khanum. There are two smaller mosques in the outer nave of this grand mosque, which is also called the Jewel of Samarqand. Its internal nave is surrounded by a corridor that is decorated with ornamented alabaster. A 50-meter minaret stands at the main gate of the grand mosque.

*** Talakhan Mosque, Samarqand:**

This large mosque was built during the rule of the Samanids and the Kraknik Turks when many mosques were constructed. As the Moguls invaded the region in the 13th century, those achievements were destroyed, but Tamerlane rebuilt them in the 14th century. In the 20th century parts of this mosque were restored and enlarged to enable more worshippers to come to the site.



Masterpieces of Islamic buildings in Samarkand.

*** Majoki Atori Mosque, Bukhara:**

is a historic mosque that was built by the Samanids. Majoki means “underground” and Atori means “vendors”. The mosque was named as such because at a certain time in the past the ground level rose, and this led to lowering the mosque. It was destroyed when a fire broke out in the city in AD 937, but it was reconstructed in the 12th century. A dome was added to the building in AD 1546. Today the mosque is frequented by Muslims from different areas especially on Fridays and Eid days.

Islam and Muslims in the words of the Mufti of Uzbekistan:

This is the interview made by the magazine with Sheikh Abdel-Rasheed Qari

Bahramov, the president of the Religious Administration and Mufti of Uzbekistan about Islam and the Muslims’ conditions in this country.

Your Eminence the Mufti, we begin our interview with you with the question:

*** when did Islam reach Uzbekistan?**

Uzbekistan came first to know Islam in the year 30 AH. Our country is the land of science and scholars, for it has many cities that have had great fame in Islamic history as they were the hometowns of several Islamic scholars.

*** What are the main institutions of Da’wa and Islamic education in Uzbekistan?**

There are: Imam Bukhari’s Institute in Toshkent from which a large number of clerics and mosque imams in the

Turkistan region graduated; the Islamic Mer Arab Institute in Bukhara; and an Islamic University in Tashkent that includes faculties of Islamic History, Islamic Philosophy, Fiqh, Sharia and Natural Arts. We have many Da'wa institutions that work under the supervision of Dar al-Iftaa to spread Arabic language and Hadith besides taking interest in our native language, the Uzbek, as a national language and the most important of the Muslims' languages in Central Asia. After Uzbekistan got its independence, this language recovered its Arab identity and is now being written in Arabic alphabet.

* What is your role in preserving the heritage of knowledge and science that the scholars and faqihs of Uzbekistan have left?

Uzbekistan lived for some time under the Communist rule that targeted all that was Islamic. In spite of this, Muslims in our country have managed to protect and preserve the manuscripts of various sciences and knowledge fields. Islamic and cultural institutions are currently authenticating, publishing and translating these manuscripts in coordination and cooperation with international Islamic institutions. Furthermore, we periodically hold celebrations and conferences to commemorate our prominent figures and make known their achievements and role in advancing sciences and cultures in the world.

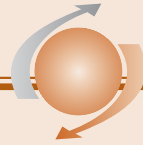
* Can your Eminence tell us about some

of efforts made by the Muslim Ulama of Uzbekistan?

The two Muslim Ulama that we have commemorated were Sheikh Abu Mansour Mohammed bin Mahmoud al-Hanafi al-Matureidi of Samarqand, one of the prominent figures of Islam in Fiqh and Scholastic Theology who was known as the Imam of Theologians. He was born in the village of Matureid (near Samarqand) in AD 1130. The other Uzbek scholar was Burhan u-Deen al-Moghnani who had devoted himself to studying the Holy Quran, Hadith and Islamic Fiqh. He died in AD 910.

* Some studies say there are still Arab villages and neighborhoods in Uzbekistan until today. Is this true?

There is a village in Uzbekistan called Jenor in the Qashqardia province in which more than 13 thousand Arab Muslims live and maintain their original Arab identity as they speak formal Arabic, wear Arab costume and have Arab customs and culture. Some historic accounts say that they are the great-grandchildren of the Arabs who came to Uzbekistan with Qutaiba bin Muslim who built the first mosque in the city of Bukhara in 94 AH. Another account says that their great-grandfathers were the Arabs brought by Emir Taimur who invaded Bilad a-Sham. Anyhow, these Arabs have become an integral part of the history of Uzbekistan. Moreover, there are Arab communities who settled a long



time ago in Bukhara, Toshkent and Samarqand.

*** What about the efforts made by Islamic institutions regarding spreading Arabic in Uzbekistan?**

The Uzbek Muslim people have maintained and clung to their doctrinal identity under the worst circumstances that they encountered. They have also clung to Arabic, the language of the Holy Quran; therefore, schools that help students memorize the Holy Quran, which also helped maintain the Arabic tongue, have been spread throughout the country.

*** How do you see the condition of the Islamic Ummah in light of the challenges it is encountering?**

In order to overcome those challenges, the Ummah must resort to cooperation, unity and ignoring the differences among the Islamic nations besides founding a union that includes all Muslims to advance the Islamic World economically and politically. Muslims must present a good example to other peoples plus developing human relations with them. They need to take interest in promoting the spirit of research and Ijtihad (interpretative judgment) in the future generations. There must be a dialogue with the West in order to demonstrate Islam's tolerance towards non-Muslims.

Ahllul-Bait's (AS) Shia in Uzbekistan:

Since Abu Muslim al-Kharasani's revolu-

tion against the Umayyads and following the rise of the Shia states in Persia and Ghazna (today's Afghanistan), Ahllul-Bait (AS) have had followers and loyalists in Transoxiana throughout Central Asia which is currently the Islamic republics such as Azerbaijan, which has a Shia majority, and Uzbekistan, where Shias make around 8% of the country's Muslims. Most of the Shias in Uzbekistan hail from the Turkestan tribes that live in the area to the north of Afghanistan's Bamian Mountains due to its closeness to Mazar-e Sharif, the largest Shia city in Afghanistan. Others have come from Iran or Afghanistan while some families hail from Russia. They live mainly in the southern areas and in the cities of Jizzakh, Guliston, Qarshi, Fergana and other southern Uzbek towns. There are, moreover, members of the Shia community who live in Toshkent and Samarqand.

Just like their Sunni brothers, these Shias were subjected to bitter experiences and persecution at the hands of the former Soviet authorities. Later, following the independence, they encountered the Wahabi fitna and the attempt to indulge them in a conflict with Sunni Muslims in Uzbekistan.

Having overcome those ordeals, Shias in Uzbekistan today have a sense of freedom when it comes to performing their rituals. They also have a noticeable social, cultural and commercial activity, besides the fact that they positively inter-

act with other religious and ethnic groups in the country. During the past decade, some Shias have managed to shoulder the responsibility of improving the social, economic and religious conditions of the sect followers through cultural and educational activities in mosques, husseiniyats and schools besides marking religious occasions and Ramadan nights with reciting Holy Quran and related Duaas along with holding mass iftars and Quran competitions.

Among their achievements:

*** Al-ul-Bait's (AS) School in Jizzakh:**

is a primary school that enables the students who finish classes to go to intermediate schools and institutes. The school administration teaches them the teachings of tolerant Islam plus loving their faith and homeland. Most of the students hail from modest social classes and the supervising educational administration provides them with the scholastic items they need.

*** Jaafari Mosque in Jizzakh:**

was established in the early third millennium by the country's Muslims via contributions from Muslim traders. Building the mosque was a necessity due to the scarcity of mosques in this area. Today, large numbers of Muslims, men and women, from various areas frequent this mosque to perform the daily and Friday prayers.

*** The Educational Complex in Guliston:**

was founded in 2002 by a group of col-

lege professors and students with the aim of directing the youth generation towards an Islamic culture that is aware of its heritage and present and teaching the youth the great Islamic civilization of Transoxiana. In order to achieve these scientific goals, the complex organizes symposiums, lectures and seminars on historic and contemporary issues that assist in clarifying the pure image of Islam in the minds of the youth. Currently, the complex is undergoing expansion and development as a mosque, husseiniyat, educational halls and entertainment sites are being added to enable it to take more participants and visitors.

*** Imam Sadeq's (AS) Mosque in Qarshi:**

was built in the beginning of the millennium as a result of incessant efforts by contributors and philanthropists during the 1990s. Hundreds of worshippers come to this mosque to participate in the prayers that are led by some imams who had studied in the universities of Najaf and Qom before returning to Uzbekistan to tend Allah's sanctuaries and mind the Muslims' affairs besides bringing up the youth according to Islamic ethics.

*** Al-Qa'em's (AS) Mosque and Husseiniyat in Fergana:**

This mosque was built in the middle of the 1990s. Later, a husseiniyat was added to the project in which Majalis Ashuraa and Sira sermons are recited on religious occasions that are attended by Ahlul-Bait (AS) followers in Fergana.

Comparison Between the Conditions of Imam Hasan (A.S.) and the Conditions of Imam Husayn (A.S.)

Many people think that the Hashimite pride, which always resulted from honorable attitudes, was more appropriate for the attitude of al-Husayn, peace be on him, than the attitude of al-Hasan, peace be on him. This is a primary viewpoint that suffers from the paucity of an innermost analysis and accuracy. Al-Hasan was a Hashimite with high glory during all his attitudes. He was similar to his father and his brother in glory. Thus they were all an example to the original reformers in history. However, each one of them had a special jihad (armed struggle), message, and attitudes which he derived from the core of the conditions that surrounded him. These conditions were early examples of jihad, glory, supporting the usurped right to authority. Al-Husayn faced death through killing during his condition, and al-Hasan retained his life through making peace (with Mu'awiya) during his condition. With these two ways they were able to continue their doctrine and to condemn their enemies. In the meantime these two ways were the necessary logical solu-

tions for the problems of both conditions. These solutions were the best means, which al-Hasan and al-Husayn followed to please Allah, the Most High, not to win the life in this world. They (i.e., the solutions) are the real victory that last throughout history though al-Hasan and al-Husayn were apparently deprived of their rights and their succession to authority.

The two sacrifices (i.e. al-Husayn's sacrifice in his life, and al-Hasan's sacrifice in his succession) are the utmost degrees to which the original leaders aspire during their human revolutionary attitudes.

The time factors accompanied both al-Hasan and al-Husayn during their succession. They created for each of them a private condition towards his supporters, and a private condition towards his enemy. In other words the two brothers had two different conditions. As their conditions were different, their ways of jihad were different. Therefore their ends were different.

The following are the conditions their supporters and their enemies caused:

1. The Conditions their Supporters caused

For al-Husayn, peace be on him, he suffered from the treason of his Kufan companions. Such a kind of treason helped al-Husayn take a step to pave the way for his glorious success in history. That is because the people had broken their pledge of allegiance to al-Husayn before he declared war mobilization. Thus his little army was empty of any traitorous person on the day when he stood to fight against his enemies to achieve his ideal objectives.

However, the treason from which al-Hasan, peace be on him, suffered at the Camp of Maskan and the Camp of al-Mada'in was quite different from that which al-Husayn suffered. That is because al-Hasan declared war mobilization, and then his army moved to the mentioned camps. However, the enemy rumors played an important role in scattering the army. Thus chaos, plots, and treason spread all over it. Accordingly, al-Hasan was unable to wage holy war (jihad) against his enemies. In other words this was the army through which al-Hasan lost hope of winning victory in that war.

From here we understand that Al-Hasan's supporters pledged allegiance to him, and accompanied him to his camps as holy fighters (mujahidin). However, they broke their allegiance to al-Hasan, dis-

obeyed him, and joined his enemies. Thus they were worse than those who had broken their allegiance to al-Husayn before he met his enemies.

In this manner al-Husayn paved the way to fight against his enemies when the events of treason before the battle helped him form the most wonderful army in history in loyalty and obedience though his army was few in number.

As for al-Hasan, he was unable to retain supporters even from his sincere Shi'ites. For he was not sure that he would gather them and direct their movements because of the chaos which his enemies spread. Therefore, isn't there a great difference between their two conditions towards their supporters?

2. The Conditions their Enemies caused

The enemy of al-Hasan was Mu'awiya, and the enemy of al Husayn was Yazid b. Mu'awiya. History is full of differences between Mu'awiya and Yazid. For example, the son (i.e., Yazid) had plain dullness, while the father (i.e., Mu'awiya) had a deep viewpoint that the people regard as smartness.

The enmity of these two men (i.e., Mu'awiya and Yazid) towards al-Hasan and al-Husayn did not result from an accidental condition. Rather it was a past historical enmity between banu Hashim and banu Umayya.

The Umayyads did not match the Hashimites one day. Rather the

Umayyads showed enmity towards the Hashimites, for the former feared that the latter would take their authority. This is the reason why the people and the historians mention the Umayyads face to face with the Hashimites. Now we have the right to ask: Isn't there a great difference between those who follow desires and those who follow ideals? Isn't there a clear difference between those who had corrupt lineages and those whom Allah purified completely as it is in the Qur'an? Isn't there an obvious difference between the corrupt people and those who adopted intellectual talents, good manners, pure race, and sciences that have played an important role in developing man in all cultural fields? Such were the Hashimites who brought light to the world. [1]

How different they are!

What al-Hasan b. 'Ali anticipated was likely. For if he had waged a hopeless war against his historical enemy Mu'awiya b. Abu Sufyan b. Harb, the war would have led to the greatest disaster against Islam. Also it would have destroyed all Shi'ites of the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. In this connection Mu'awiya had excellent abilities to carry out this plan to end that long historical enmity towards 'Ali, his sons, and their Shi'ites. However, such a possibility was enough for al-Husayn when the young man (i.e.,

Yazid) antagonized him. That is because Yazid was luxurious. He was unable to solve problems nor was he able to mobilize the trends nor was he able to make plans. Moreover, his ambition was to be a king with many treasuries, even though he faced al-Akhtal the poet whose words al-Bayhaqi has narrated:

“Your religion, indeed, is like the religion of the donkey

Rather you are more unbelieving (person) than Hurmuz.”

This possibility was sufficient for al-Husayn when the sword of terrorism (i.e., Yazid) began to chase the Shi'ites everywhere, made them homeless and imprisoned those great figures who followed the doctrines of the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), and to whom these doctrines were entrusted to convey them to the generations after them.

Thus al-Husayn thought that it was better for him to go on carrying out his decision. He was sure of his plan, his objectives, and their future towards his enemies.

As for al-Hasan, he was not as sure as his brother al-Husayn. That is because al-Hasan suffered from the spiritual backgrounds of his army. Moreover, among his enemies were Mu'awiya and his fearful servants who made spiteful hostile plans.

Finally, al-Husayn made use of Mu'awiya's mistakes such as his attacks

against the peaceful Muslim cities, his attitude towards the conditions of the Peace Treaty of al-Hasan, his killing al-Hasan with poison, his pledge of allegiance to his son Yazid, and so on. All these errors of Mu'awiya, in addition to the support of the Muslim public opinion urged al-Husayn to take steps against the Umayyads.

In the meantime, al-Husayn made use of the errors of Yazid, Mu'awiya's successor, who was fond of monkeys and wine. All these things were appropriate factors for al-Husayn to carry out his plan.

Al-Husayn's conditions towards his enemies, and his conditions towards his supporters agreed with each other on supporting his movement, carrying out his task, and leading him to the glorious victory through which he succeeded with Allah and in history.

As for al-Hasan, as we have already mentioned, he was tired of the conditions which his companions caused. Thus these conditions prevented him from obtaining martyrdom. Also he suffered from the conditions which his enemies caused. So these conditions prevented him from waging war against them though he was aware that such a kind of war would destroy his doctrines.

For this reason al-Hasan thought that it was necessary for him to develop his way of jihad, and to start his battle through making peace with Mu'awiya.

The objectives which al-Hasan wanted to accomplish through his Peace Treaty with Mu'awiya forced Mu'awiya and his party to face a quick failure in history.

Indeed, after this study, it is difficult for us to distinguish which of the two brothers (i.e., al-Hasan and al-Husayn), peace be on them, had a greater effect in his jihad, more intense influence on his objectives, and a more careful opinion in defeating his enemies.

It is obvious that the Umayyads faced many hardships after the Peace Treaty. That was because of al-Hasan's plans and his directions. Indeed all these hardships took place due to this successful plan which al-Hasan's enemies supported, whether they knew that or not.

[1] In reply to Mu'awiya, the Commander of the faithful said: "In spite of our old established honor and our well-known superiority over your people, we did not keep away mixing with you and married and got married (among you) like equals although you were not so. How could you be so when (the position is that) from us is the Prophet while from you is the liar, from us the Lion of Allah while from you is the Lion of the allies, from us is the two Lords of the youth of Heaven while from you are the children of the fire, from us is the Lady of the women of the worlds while from you is the bearer of firewood, and there are many distinctions between you and us."

Sister Tania Bowling - Germany



Early life:

Sister Tania Bowling was born in 1976 in Germany which is one of the developed and important countries in Europe and the world. Germany has a population of 65 million people; 3 million of them are Muslims who hail from Germany, Turkey, Iran, or Arab countries. Most of the Islamic community reside in the cities of Munich, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Aachen and Hannover. Sister Tania has been brought up in a Christian family that had the traditions that characterize Western families.

She had the honor of embracing the Islamic faith according to Ahlul-Bait's (AS) teachings in 1999 as she left Christianity at the age of twenty-two after a period of "loss and self-ignorance" until Allah took her hand and rescued her from the bottom of darkness into the splendor of light.

Intellectual Loss Stage:

Tania was living in atmospheres she

describes as: "We were at that time living together, side by side, but none of us cared about the other. Everyone lived for oneself and for the sake of oneself; we shared loneliness and isolation. I do not exaggerate if I say that each one of us did not even live with oneself that one had abandoned; we did not even think about our future. None of us dared to question himself or herself: Why do I live? Why was I born? Where have I come from? And where am I heading?"

Everyone was aimlessly wandering astray in dark alleys and turns. We were all loitering in the alleys of mob life, without thinking about a shelter or a cozy home. We spent our lives in a loss of goals, ethics, doctrine, and morale."

Reasons for Abandoning Religion in the West:

This was an early reaction that occurred towards religion in the West as a result of the acts of the clergy and the distortion of the Christian religion which has

failed to perform its functions and role in the life of the Christian individual and community; the clergy have set for their societies laws and regulations that have made the religion of Christ the most complicated of the major and positive religions, in contrast with Jesus (AS) who had presented the faith with simplicity.

Christian scholars thought that, by doing so, they have founded a an intellectual structure that is good for regulating the lives of the individual and the community. However, once those theories were put into practice, it was clear that they were not right as they stumbled and shook. It was not possible for those teachings and principles to survive in the land of reality; the fruit they harvested was utter failure and falling into bitter disasters, which backfired against those teachings, or rather against religion in general. Consequently, the West generally lived in a state of loss.

Sister Tania says: “More than 50% of the people and more than 60% of the young men and women in our area had a state of loneliness despite the apparent friendship, companionship and family ties. Actually, all the human relations, in their materialistic and apparent forms, were for the sake of amusement, playing, and time-killing. These people could only stand them for a few hours of their nights or days, while spending

the rest of their lives isolated from others in a room or an apartment.”

The Journey from Darkness to Light:

Sister Tania lived for twenty years in such an environment, until she found her soul, thanks to pure Islam represented by Ahlul-Bait’s (AS) School. Having recovered that soul which she had lost all that time, Tania knew about her Lord Who had been, before that, strange to her.

The beginning of the story of her journey from darkness into light was when she met by chance a Muslim young woman wearing hijab in a market in the city of Hamburg. Sister Tania describes the incident by saying: “I was then impetuous, like any German young woman; therefore, I made fun at the hijab of that woman and degraded her for it. I said to her: What kind of illness do you have to cover your body as such?

The veiled girl answered quietly and soberly: “A woman’s veil, shyness and chastity testify to the soundness of her soul. Hijab gives women a moral freedom that enables her to maintain her social security, while nudity is contrary to common sense.”

Tania says: “I categorically rejected what she said and went on with my friends to do what I was doing.

However, I kept thinking about that veiled woman's argument, self-confidence, knowledge and commitment to her principles until I had the opportunity, driven by curiosity, to go to Imam Ali's (AS) Mosque in Hamburg. There, I talked and had dialogues with a number of Shia Muslims of different ethnicities who had gathered there. I noticed that they had strong arguments and evidence. I had good ties with a number of them to get to know the facts of which I had not been aware before. Gradually, my mind and soul began to be attracted by their ideas and beliefs, and I started to feel as though I had been a Muslim just like them, one who did not differ with them in anything."

Sister Tania was lucky to learn about Islam directly, not through Christianity that has tried to penetrate Islamic thought via an approach of skepticism, deception and fabrication of facts to distort the Islamic history, principles and culture under the banner of Orientalism.

Orientalists have introduced their opinions and prejudices as they interpreted events, discussed texts and analyzed issues. They have looked at Islam from their own window and threw on it their own shadows in a bid to change its original milestones. Thus, they have confused between Islam as an orthodox religion and the deteriorating situation of

Muslims, judging, as Kiesling did, that Islam was a dead religion!

Brilliant Islamic Values:

Sister Tanya says: "What caught my interest in Islam was the Muslims' moral relationship with their Lord; their strong ties with their families; the existence of a purpose of life to them; their solidarity that knows no boundaries, be that at the racial, national or geographic origin levels, in addition to their attachment to their religion and the established belief in their ideological issues."

She adds: "Muslims have taken these things from Islam itself. They lead their daily lives according to these principles, to some extent. Of course had I met Muslims estranged from their religion and Islam, I would not have had confidence in Islam."

Ahlul-Bait's (AS) Role in Preserving Islam:

Sister Tania has been extremely attracted to reading Islamic intellectual and doctrinal books: she first read the Holy Quran, then the Hadiths of the Prophet and his household (AS). This has added to the strength of her faith and the awakening of her mind and heart besides brightening her face with the light of faith due to these Hadiths role in addressing the human being's problems and deepening their religious awareness.

Sister Tania has found in these teachings the spiritual security and tranquility she had been lacking. She describes her situation after converting to the doctrine of Ahlul-Bait (AS) by saying:

“I have gained from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet and Ahlul-Bait (AS) all that a human being could wish for as for one’s religion, though I have lost everything because of embracing Islam! However, on the other hand, I have found my self and gained my soul. At that time, I could find everything except for Allah, but still I felt that I was in a state of loss and confusion.

Today, after I have found my self – which I had lost for twenty years - and knew my Lord Who was strange to me, I have obtained everything, and indeed all that I wanted, thanks to Islam.

I have obtained moral freedom besides brothers and sisters in Allah everywhere: in Hamburg, in Germany, rather throughout the world, and most importantly, I have found, among many other things, Allah’s message to humanity that He had sent centuries ago; I found it in the closet of history treasures, so I took it and this is the greatest capital in my life.

I have turned the page of a night that had persisted for twenty years of my life through the dawn of a new day. The sun of Islam has granted me warmth and rekindled in me activity and vitality after

a long winter hibernation that continued for many years.”

Sister Tania describes her relationship with others, especially her family after being honored by becoming a Muslim. She says: “Despite suffering from ostensible loneliness and the many problems with my family because of being honored by Islam, I still live with my father and mother. Of course, we have had, throughout this long period, numerous diatribes and discussions; nevertheless, they have realized that I am serious about my affiliation to Islam, which greatly reduced the intensity of argument between us. In fact, my parents now admire my Islamic manners and personality as they have noticed that my actions are now better than in the past.”

With this firm will and deep-rooted determination, Tania has been able to overcome many of the obstacles that emerged in her way to Islam. Thanks to her high intellectual potentials, which she had acquired from the knowledge of Ahlul-Bait’s (AS) School, she has managed to withstand the opposite currents and prove her professional competence. She is a model to every human being who clings to his or her principles heedless of anyone who might blame them for that. She has a wish: “I hope that the Almighty guide my father and my mother to Islam.”

Inauguration of Imam Hussein Complex in Nigeria

Imam Hussein (AS) Foundation's Religious and Cultural Complex was recently inaugurated in Okene (Kogi state) in Nigeria. The inauguration took place in the presence of Imam Hussein Foundation's president in Lebanon Hajj Jihad Abdallah besides local, official and Ulama figures from all Islamic sects along with a large number of Muslim citizens, especially those who follow Ahlul-Bait's teachings, who came from different parts of Nigeria.

The event began with recitation of Holy Quran verses and Duaa. Several speeches were delivered by the imam of Okene (Kogi state) Mosque Hajj Abdullah Musa Galdima, the general representative of Imam Hussein Foundation in Nigeria Abdul-Rahman Adika, Sheikh Mohammed Zubeir, Sheikh Luqman Musa, Deputy of Jomaa Imam in Okene Mohammed Saleh Abera. The speeches

hailed the efforts made by Imam Hussein Foundation to achieve the project and make it a reality. The speakers focused on the importance of Islamic unity and the rewards of building mosques and worship places. Then Hajj Abdallah spoke and thanked all those who worked for the achievement of the project.

The event was concluded with a tour in the complex and offering memorial gifts to the participants.

The complex includes a large mosque that can take 400 worshipers and is regarded as one of the largest in the area. It includes Imam Hussein's Library and Imam Hussein's School that can take at this first stage 120 students. A future addition will include a religious hawza (seminary) for the Nigerian students who want to major in religious studies and a dormitory for students and teachers



Host of the area Ulama, officials and residents participating in the mosque inauguration.



Hajj Jihad Abdallah with some Ulama and Teachers of Imam Hussein Foundation in Nigeria..



The School building.



The Mosque building.



The public library building.



Women in the Inauguration Ceremony.



German church eyes boosting coop with Muslims on fighting poverty

German Protestant leader Nikolaus Schneider has called for stepping up cooperation with the nation's 4.3 million Muslims on tackling poverty and social alienation.

In a message marking the holy month of Ramadan, Schneider stressed it was time that Muslims and Christians worked together for the sake of those people who 'need our solidarity, support and help.'

The problem of poverty and social inequality in Germany has been troubling to me, he said.

Schneider called for a factual discussion on the objectives and prospects for success in fighting poverty in the country. The number of poor people in Germany has dramatically increased over the past decade, according to a study released earlier this year which indicated that some 11.5 million people were living in poverty.

New Drive to Spread Quran Message in North America

A Canadian Muslim associated with the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) is spearheading a campaign to spread the message of Islam in Canada and the United States.

Suhail Kapoor intends to distribute tens of thousands of English language copies of the Holy Quran with the support of Muslim philanthropists. "A copy of the Quran will cost only \$1.25 if we print it in large numbers," he said.

The move comes after a nondenominational church in Gainesville, Florida, announced plans to host an "International Burn a Quran Day" to mark the 9/11 attacks. "Ours is a proactive move and we hope it will have a positive response. Many people turn against Islam because of their ignorance about this divine religion. If they get a chance to read the Quran, which is a miracle from God, it will definitely change their mind," Kapoor told Arab News.

Kapoor, who has been engaged in the propagation of Islam ever since he embraced the religion in 1990 while working in Saudi Arabia, spoke about the mesmeric power of the Quran in winning the hearts of people.

Born a Hindu, Kapoor himself embraced Islam after reading a translation of the Quran given by one of his friends in Saudi Arabia 20 years ago.

"I accepted Islam after I found that it gives convincing answers to all my questions related to the purpose of life."



Hijab ban for cops ruled illegal in Norway

A Norwegian administrative court has said a ban on female police officers wearing the Islamic headscarf was illegal, in response to a government refusal last year to allow officers to don the hijab.

The Norwegian Equality Tribunal said in a non-binding opinion that the ban ran counter to the country's freedom of religion and anti-discrimination laws by depriving a whole category of women from access to the police profession.

"The official objective is for the police to mirror Norwegian society as a whole," the tribunal wrote in its ruling.

"The society is multi-cultural and diverse, and the police should also illustrate this diversity, precisely to allow it to maintain trust at large" among the population, it added.

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