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Opposition rejects Saleh's reforms

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SANA'A, September 30 — Yemeni Opposition belittled the importance of the constitutional amendments announced last Monday by President Saleh and posed once more in his speech made on the eve of September 26. They considered the amendments to be a detour on the real reforms of Yemen's political system as demanded by the opposition forces.

Opposition media viewed the new initiative by President Saleh to be a new attempt by him to stand another round of elections of five years each. These amendments are due to be implemented after by the end of the current round in 2013.

Famous opposition politicians reacted differently to Saleh's initiative and considered it to be a new wit for political parties.

In a political symposium held on Friday, Supreme Authority of Islah Party member Mohammed Qahtan hinted the presidential initiative is made to lessen the public pressure on President Saleh. Especially after the recent price hikes, noting the amendments aim to grant President Saleh a new term of ten years by the end of the current term.

Commenting on Sa'ada events and the public grumbles, Qahtan pointed out the ruling authority has not realized yet that Yemen has become a large country and it still has a simple and narrow thinking limited to the tribe, family and clan at the risk of home.

Yemen Socialist Party's Political Bureau member Ali Al-Sarari did not rule out the idea that President Saleh's proposal is a tactic maneuver for keeping the existing political system. Despite the fact that such a tactics do not comply with the nature of Saleh's

ruling system. Al-Sarari criticized harshly the absolute Presidential System as presented in the presidential initiative, saying that President Saleh, by this system, aims to reach super-absolute power after he already had the absolute power.

"The problem for which the initiative was made is that President Saleh does not enjoy the absolute power, despite the fact he has all authorities in his hand and further is immunized against accountability and now he wants to immunize himself against criticism by laws like National Unity Protection Law," said Al-Sarari.

Secretary General of Popular Forces Union Party Mohammed Al-Mutawkel disclosed the nature of the presidential system after he had met early with President Saleh.

Al-Mutawkel stated that President Saleh believes in canceling the post of the prime minister: giving himself the authority to form a government including six ministries: Foreign Ministry, Public Security, Finance Ministry, National Wealth Ministry and Planning; while the tasks of other ministries are delegated to the local governance authorities.

He insinuated that he did not see an integrated view as for the nature of the local and presidential systems by President Saleh or Local Administration Minister.

Lawyer and political activist Yassin Abdulrazzaq said there is nothing new in these amendments and they are just in an effort to detour the existence of any real reforms for the political system in the country.

Al-Sahwa.net, organ of opposition Islah Party quoted Abdulrazzaq as saying that President Saleh resorts to amendments whenever he sees his term is about to be finished, adding it seems that inheriting the reign has plunged into a close tunnel and thus Saleh tries to continue in power through making amendments.

Researcher Mohammed Al-Qahri asserted the initiative is politically hollow, as the articles relating to decentralization and Parliament do not suffice. While, at the same time, referendum is still adopted. He noted the proposal of the presidential system aims to keep the power in Saleh's hands and his inheritors.

"Despite the fact that the economic aspect is the base for resolving the current crisis, the initiative is empty as it included no economic treatment and thus failed the dreams and trust of investors and consumers. Price hikes, unemployment and scarcity of commodities will remain existent...or the crisis will be worse and thus there will be more protests and the collapse of the economic situation," declared Al-Qahri.

He went on to say, "The initiative is futile and it just helps to return back to the Yemen Arab Republic. And why not when unity was just viewed as an excursion wherein the wishes were fulfilled and when conditions became complex and the matter demanded responsibility and sacrifices, it is better to abandon it."

Moreover, Al-Qahri viewed the solution in Saleh's resignation and this something he rejects altogether even at the risk of secession. He further the option of secession is possible and it will be implemented politically while the responsibility will be laid on south

through media, hinting there is no option for opposition save to join public protests as such protests are sign for ripeness in preparation for change.

Pledge and Accord document

Many opposition leaders assured the solution to the current crisis lie on implementing "Pledge and Accord" document, which contains 18 articles and signed in Jordan in 1993 between Saleh and Al-Beedh last president of south Yemen. The then document was publicly accepted and all view it to be the only way out for the current crisis.

The document stipulates what follows:

- Dividing the country into provinces with full-fledged local governance as well as building institutions state through administrative and financial decentralization. This division should be built on scientific bases, taking into consideration demographic and geographic bases as well as other economic and social conditions. According to this document, the republic is to be divided into seven administrative provinces.

- Local governance is to be made through direct and free elections principle and the elected councils enjoy wide administrative and financial authorities. Each province is divided into sub-provinces and districts.

- The document also stated that Presidency Council should contain five members and to be elected by Parliament and Shoura Councils combined. The Presidency Council is to elect the chairman and the deputy chairman from among them. And the term of the Presidency Council members should not exceed two terms. Further, the members of this council should not engage themselves in any partisan involvement during their terms in the council.

- Members of the Supreme Court are to be elected along with competent and experienced lawyers. They have experience in the Islamic law. The consultative council elects them for one time until the judge reaches one of the two terms or does badly to the profession. It is also to divide the public into military areas, specifying five years as the terms of the senior military and security leaders spent in the leading positions.

- The code also decided to form a national board consisting of the national and media elements to supervise the media and plan the official media systems. This is in order to replace the ministry ensuring its services in favor of the community without any bias to any political party. So, the media will be able to do its role properly and perfectly, leaving the state's influence.

Official media retaliates

Saleh also launched severe attack on the opposition as the later boycotted to

join the meeting held last week. The meeting aimed to make an open-ended dialogue between the authority and the opposition parties concerning the national issues of whom the political and economic reforms.

He accused the opposition of exploiting the internal events for political purposes harming the country's interest. He presented comprehensive political reforms called "initiative of making constitutional amendments."

The constitutional amendments initiative aims at improving the political and democratic system, transferring the local authority system into the local rule system.

Official sources mentioned that Saleh's initiative includes transferring the existing political system into a presidential system, giving all authorities to the president. The electoral term will be also changed into five years for two times only starting from the coming presidential election in 2013.

The initiative also stipulates that the legislative power is to be consisted of two legislative chambers namely: the parliament and the consultative council. The members of the two chambers are to be elected every four years. The parliamentarians are elected according to the number of population of the areas whereas the members of the consultative council are elected according to equal representation of every area.

The presidential initiative indicates the replacement of the local authority of the governorates by a local rule headed by the governor elected by the voters' board. It will be constitutionally amended for all these points included in the Yemeni initiative.

Saleh also called the opposition represented by the JMP (Five opposing parties) to rescind its decision to boycott the dialogue with the authority and to have a round-table session for an open-ended dialogue discussing the initiative's points for comprehensive reforms in the country.

It also includes the establishment of local police force in the governorates besides the general central security apparatus representing the entire governorates like the army. The local councils will be in charge of collecting taxes and revenues, allocating a part of them for implementing projects and running works within the local sphere.

The Supreme Commission for Elections will be formed pursuant to the Higher Judiciary Council' nomination of 14 judges. They are to be qualified enough and impartial. Seven of whom are to be selected by the president. However, Saleh's plan aims at allocating 15 percent of the parliament seats for women.

Dim political reform

Meanwhile, a modern American study conducted by the American female researcher Meni Ya'cobian- one of the specialists who follow up the file

of the Islamic movements in the Middle East, described the political reform in Yemen as dim. The study published by the American Institute for Peace (USIP) dated back the reforming retreat in Yemen to 2001. It is attributed to the struggle of the president to extend his power over all the legislative powers in the country. He was re-elected for a new term so as to complete 30 years in power.

The study also said, "Despite the

dimness of the political reforming in Yemen, the study reports that there are some attempts by the opposition to achieve the political openness. SO, it can move easily and influence the decision making."

It confirms that democracy in Yemen faces many social obstacles such as poverty and illiteracy let alone the economic corruption. It also indicates that the political reforms started at the commencement of the unification of the two parts of Yemen, 1990, in addition to establishing political parties, independent electoral system, expanding the media freedom and then holding the parliamentary elections in 1993.

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In brief

Yemeni tourism agencies sign agreements with Top Resa participants

Sept. 28 — Many Yemeni tourism and travel agencies have signed a number of agreements with French and European tourist companies during their participation in the 30th round of Tope Resa Travel Market Show 2007 held from 26 to 28 September in the French city Deauville. The agreements are expected to increase the rate of foreign tourism in Yemen during the 2008 season.

SANA'A mutual cooperation to develop educational programs

Sept. 30 — In a step to develop the educational programs and improve outcomes and incomes of the educational process in Yemen, Minister of Education, Abdul-Salam al-Jawfi, held a meeting on Saturday with representatives of donor countries over plans of the ministry for the coming year. Meanwhile, Deputy Minister of Education Abdul-Aziz bin Habtour held a meeting with a delegation of the World Bank and discussed aspects of mutual cooperation between the ministry and the bank to target five governorates—Sana'a, Amran, Mahweet, al-Dal'e and Dhamar.

Socotra Socotra Island and historical cities to be a World Heritage Site

Sept. 29 — A study to add more Yemeni historical cities to the list of World Heritage for Natural Protectorates has been discussed on Thursday, Sept. 27 between the Shoura Member Hussein al-Amry and UNESCO's general director. The study includes Hajareen, Mareb and Thula to be added to the same list as other Yemeni historical cities. Also, the two sides discussed the possible of supporting the organization for Socotra Island to be included in the List.

Hodeidah "A Cow for each Family"

Sept. 29 — As a kind of practical solution for poverty and helping poor families get income and live a more decent life, the Al-Tawasol Association for Human Development in Hodeidah, has announced after three years of launching the first-ever project in Yemen "Cow for Each Family". The project has attained good results over the three years. The Association, in cooperation with the al-Rahma Charity Organization of Kuwait, had distributed 344 cows to 344 families in different districts of Hodeidah after conducting field surveys and studying the conditions of such families. The Association said the project has aimed at finding job opportunities for poor families and reduce their poverty as a practical step toward sustainable human development, pointing that charitable people in Qatar and Bahrain have also funded the project.

Aden 10,000 seedlings in al-Hasuah Natural Protectorate

Sept. 29 — In a step to protect Yemeni Natural Protectorates, the environment Natural Protectorates office has planted 10,000 seedlings in Al-Hasuah Natural Protectorate. Al-Hasuah now is indicated more than 23 different kinds of plants. The Natural Protectorates office explained that the variation in the plants provides the university students with chance to search in the science researches and the agricultural studies.

Sa'ada WHO sends aid to 5,000 families

Sept. 29 — Since July, the World Health Organization has continued its campaign of distributing foodstuffs for 5,000 families for the citizens in Sa'ada. The campaign aims to cover citizens who are homeless after the War.

UNHCR warns of more African exodus to Yemen

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Sept. 30 — Yemen is taking part in the annual meeting of UN High Commissioner for Refugees' today (Monday) morning in the Assembly Hall in Geneva of Switzerland. The first undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry Moahi- Addin al-Dhabi is representing Yemen in the meeting.

The source said that al-Dhabi, who left Yemen on Saturday to attend the meeting, will review Yemen's stand toward refugees and support being given to them in accordance with Yemen's capacities.

Yemen is one of the few Arab States in the peninsula that has signed the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The country has also acceded to almost all international conventions on human rights. However, the implementation of these agreements is erratic. Though a national law on refugees has been drafted, it has yet to be adopted, and refugee issues continue to be governed by reference to other statutes.

The UN refugees agency has repeatedly confirmed that the influx of new arrivals from Africa due to difficult economic lives, drought or intensive bloody conflicts in their countries and rampant people-smuggling in the Gulf of Aden have put a serious strain on the limited resources of the Yemeni Government. At the end of 2006, Yemen was host to more than 96,000 refugees.

Recently, the agency stated that between the 1st and 26th of September, 50 smuggling boats (nearly two a day) arrived on Yemeni shores from Somalia with 4,741 people, mostly Somalis and Ethiopians - an increase of 70 per cent over last year when 30 boats arrived with 2,961 people for the whole of the month.

"Deaths involving smuggling boats in the Gulf of Aden is continuing, with at least 89 confirmed deaths and 154 missing and presumed dead so far this month", confirmed the agency.

UNHCR spokesperson, Jennifer Pagonis, said on Friday that five boats

arrived on Wednesday alone with 600 migrants. Four Ethiopians died in the hold of one of the boats due to asphyxiation, while 18 people were thrown overboard while still at sea.

"Survivors told us that they had been violently treated by the smugglers, who beat them with iron bars, belts and plastic tubes and stabbed them with daggers," Ms. Pagonis said. Two boats arrived last Sunday with 98 Somalis and 135 Ethiopians, she added. Two Somalis died during the voyage in the hold of one boat from asphyxiation and two drowned while trying to reach shore from deep water.

Since the beginning of the year, 13,897 people have arrived in Yemen after making the perilous voyage across the gulf, while at least 356 have died and 272 remain missing and are presumed dead. The exodus eased off in the summer due to rough seas but resumed again at the beginning of September.

The UN refugees agency said that several new arrivals informed that

Yemeni armed forces had opened fire when they spotted the boats. They said a 70-year-old Somali male was killed when shot in the heart. He was buried by the military. The new arrivals also reported that the smugglers did fire back, although they had machine guns.

UNHCR in Yemen is discussing the shooting incidents with Yemeni authorities, who have expressed their concern that some smugglers arrive with weapons and drugs. UNHCR has highlighted its concern for the safety of innocent civilians on the boats. Later this month, UNHCR will provide training to Yemeni coast guards and immigration officials on refugee law, humanitarian law and rescue at sea. We have also asked for access to the detained Ethiopians, several of whom have expressed their wish to apply for asylum.

The Yemeni coastal forces reportedly separated the Somalis from the Ethiopians and searched all their belongings before UNHCR and partner teams arrived. All Ethiopians were kept

by the military and handed over to the immigration authorities before being sent on to the immigration and naturalization authorities in Sana'a.

As the situation is deteriorating, UNHCR is planning to set up a second reception and registration centre in Ahwar in Abbin governorate along the Yemeni coast. It would also include a health centre run by Doctors without Borders (MSF). "We are also looking to expand monitoring presence along the coast, with more staff and vehicles from UNHCR and its partners. This would speed up the reception, immediate support and transfer of new arrivals to the registration centers. MSF has also set up three out of four planned health posts along the coast", UNHCR stated.

It is also worth noting that three months ago UNHCR said that it needed 47.8 million dollars to help protect Somalis fleeing daily battles in their country, as the numbers of those needing assistance are set to increase by the end of next year.

Yemen's fight against corruption stagnates

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

SANA'A, Sept. 29 Setting up an anti-corruption authority and approving Bid and Tender law are parts of the government's recent efforts to reduce corruption. The government said progress was made towards fighting corruption during 2007. But on Wednesday, the Transparency International showed Yemen didn't make strides in moves against corruption, and even got worse than before.

Yemen was ranked 131 out of 180 countries on the 2007 Corruption Perception Index by the corruption watchdog Transparency International, slipping from 111 in 2006. It scored 2.5 points out of a maximum possible score of 10.

The index scores countries on a scale from zero to ten, with zero indicating high levels of perceived

corruption and ten indicating low levels of perceived corruption.

Other countries ranking alongside Yemen include: Burundi, Honduras, Iran, Libya, Nepal, and Philippines.

"These indicators are alarming," MP Aydarous Al-Naqeeb passed these comments following the Transparency International's evaluation. "They require that the decision-maker pay attention to the unfavourable consequences that will emerge in the near future as a result of the current situation. The recent protests and social tensions are a case in point and are difficult to be contained," he added.

The expert noted that corruption is not a disobedient demon, and that it can be curbed. He said: "Corruption is a behaviour practiced by humans. We should fight those people who practice this kind of behaviour."

Al-Naqeeb, who is a member of

Yemeni Parliamentarians Against Corruption, a local NGO, is worried about Yemen's future that will be bleak should there are no serious measures to solve the problem [of corruption].

According to him, there is no serious program on the part of the government to fight corruption; nor is there a practical agenda to curb this problem [of corruption].

"The corrupt can enjoy using the state's executive and financial authorities. They can feel secured as we have never heard that anyone of them has been sent to justice," he added.

Al-Naqeeb made it clear that there is no political will to fight against corruption. "The steps taken by the government (setting up anti-corruption authority, and Tender and Bids law) have no marked practical agenda. They have been taken to meet the

donor countries' desires."

Analysts said corruption is an epidemic that kills development in the country and that it leads to unfair distribution of the state's resources. About 43 percent of Yemen's 21 million inhabitants live under poverty line, while the rate of unemployment and illiteracy remain high.

"At this stage, corruption can't be fought against as the regime has been built on corruption tools," said Dr. Mohammed Abdul-Malik Al-Mutawakel, professor of political science at Sanaa University. There must be free and fair elections, and a parliament whose members represent the public will, in order to be able to fight corruption, he added.

He noted: "We need a considerable time to create a real democratic atmosphere. The economic conditions are deteriorating and people have reached the stage of hunger."

The 2007 *Corruption Perceptions Index* looks at perceptions of public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories. Scores are significantly higher in several African countries in the 2007 CPI.

These include Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa and Swaziland. These results reflect the positive progress of anti-corruption efforts in Africa and show that genuine political will and reform can lower perceived levels of corruption.

Other countries with a significant improvement include Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Dominican, Italy, FYR Macedonia, Romania and Suriname. Countries with a significant worsening in perceived levels of corruption in 2007 include Austria, Bahrain, Belize, Bhutan, Jordan, Laos, Macao, Malta, Mauritius, Oman, Papua New Guinea and Thailand.

ITS students learn about charity

SANA'A, Sept. 29 — The International Turkish School started distributing charitable foodstuffs to over more than 600 needy families on Saturday 29th 2007. The school targeted poor students in public schools and some other poor families. According to Abdullah Al-Backali, the campaign supervisor, the Turkish school launches this campaign annually. Last year the campaign targeted 1000 families while this year it targets about 600 cases only since the beginning of Ramadan since they didn't have enough time to collect much from contributors.

"Teachers, students and parents of TIS gathered aid for 600 poor families. The campaign reached, determined in advance, needy families whose children are studying at government schools at the First Region in Sana'a. For the families indicated by the Aid Campaign Committee, an arranged food package was distributed by the school staff and the students. The aid package contained the following items:



Students of Turkish Schools while packing foodstuffs.

rice, sugar, oil, and 1 box of chocolate," said Fethullah Karakoc, the manager of ITS.

The public schools select about thir-

ty students deserving of charity, then the Turkish schools distributes the foodstuffs according to the lists given by public schools. The foodstuffs are collected from students, teachers, businessmen and sometimes from businessmen in Turkey but not from companies. Each teacher is responsible for providing ten cases with foodstuffs that cost \$15 for a case.

Teacher, Abdullhakeem Thabet mentioned, "every teacher should commit to ten cases. The cost of these cases are taken off from the salaries of the teachers that reaches \$200 for the Yemeni teachers and \$700 for foreigners. The teachers should offer a list to the school including the poor families in his zone."

Zaher Dhaifallah, 15, a student said, "we ask our families and relatives to contribute to the campaign and we try to collect as much as possible."



Teachers, students and parents of TIS gathered aid for 600 poor families.

Sports activities held to reduce terrorism

SANA'A, 30 Sept — Officials at the Yemeni General Union for Volleyball (YGUV) say sports activities can help reduce terrorism and extremism among young people.

Dr. Suhaib Al-Adeemi, head of YGUV's Sana'a Branch, said that some youths resort to terrorism as a result of leisure time they have, especially during summer.

Sport activities are a good alternative for youths to occupy their free time, he said. "We want youths to read the title and think of the difference between sport and terrorism and how they can occupy their time with better things," Al-Adeemi added.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports also organized several activities for youths during the summer school in

an effort to engage youths in different activities that might prevent them from terrorist and extremist groups that have emerged in the country.

On 18 September, the YGUV in Sana'a city launched its 2007 tournament that coincided with the Yemeni celebrations of 26th September and 14th October Days.

The tournament addressed "ostracizing extremism and terrorism" Al-Adeemi noted that this tournament had been arranged since 1996 every year. Foreign participants from take part in the event participate in the tournaments, he said.

This year, the tournament runs from September 18 until October 4. It includes teams from Arabic and foreign communities, in addition to local companies and police.

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UN: Death toll mounts among Somalis, Ethiopians smuggled to Yemen

By: By Lisa Schlein

GENEVA, Sept. 28 - The U.N. refugee agency says desperate people resort to desperate measures to improve their lives. And, in the case of Somalis, the UNHCR says many of them are gambling with their lives to find a place where they can be safe from the inten-

The U.N. refugee agency says the death toll continues to mount among Somalis and Ethiopians who put their lives in the hands of smugglers ferrying them to Yemen across the Gulf of Aden. The UNHCR reports at least 89 people have been confirmed dead and 154 missing and presumed dead so far this month. Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from UNHCR headquarters in Geneva.

sifying fighting in their country.

It says many Somalis and Ethiopians are paying high prices for smugglers to sail them across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen. But, it says the trip usually ends up being a nightmare and often fatal.

U.N. refugee spokeswoman, Jennifer Pagonis, says five boats arrived in Yemen on Wednesday, carrying 600 Somalis and Ethiopians. She says one person was confirmed dead, while 22 remain missing and are presumed dead.

She says surviving passengers recount numerous horror stories of life at sea.

"Survivors of a recent boat arrival told us that they had been violently treated by smugglers who had beaten them with iron bars, belts and plastic tubes and stabbed them with daggers," she said. "You know people are dying as a result of asphyxiation, people are drowning as they try to reach the shore from deep water. Several new arrivals reported that Yemeni armed forces had opened fire when they spotted boats."

Pagonis says the UNHCR brought this up with the Yemeni authorities, expressing concern for the well being of civilians. She says the authorities explain many of the smugglers arrive with weapons and drugs and they have to protect themselves from that.

Since the beginning of September, the UNHCR reports 50 smuggling boats, nearly two a day, have arrived at the Yemen shores from Somalia. It says



An undated picture shows Yemeni coast guards checking a small boat with refugees arriving from Somalia to the Yemeni port city of Aden

they carried more than 4,700 people - mostly Somalis and Ethiopians. It notes that is an increase of 70 percent over last year.

The agency says it is strengthening its operations to deal with this ongoing crisis. It says it is planning to set up a second reception and registration center in Ahwar along the Yemeni coast. This should speed up the process of transferring the new arrivals to places where they can apply for asylum.

Pagonis says the UNHCR also is looking to expand its monitoring presence along the coast. Although, she acknowledges it is very difficult to effectively monitor a coastline that is 600-kilometers-long.

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Unlocking the secrets of history

By : Hamed Thabet
For Yemen Times

In ancient Yemen, people believed in life after death. Their belief in resurrection was essential to ensure a safe passage to the afterlife for their dead. Mummification was an important step to ensuring one's afterlife in ancient Yemen. However contradictory to their belief, not only the dead lost their way to the afterworld; sadly, the mummies have never crossed the boundaries of their tombs. So where did all the mummies go?

According to the researchers, in the ancient days, Yemen was one of the most famous countries in the world with its civilization and secrets. Unfortunately, the sad truth is that there are huge numbers of mummies in Yemen that have not been revealed and introduced to the international community.

It is difficult to know exactly why this society practiced mummification, but it must surely reflect a desire to keep their dead with them since the mummies do not seem to have been buried immediately. Ancient Yemenis used to embalm their dead due to their belief that they would return to this world on the Day of Resurrection. Researchers confirmed that many mummies have been found in Yemen in several different places by accident in the last 20 years and many of them are still hidden in their tombs and unknown.

For the first time, Windol Fliees, the head of an American expedition group found samples in Ma'reb in 1951-1952 in the graveyard or cemetery of Awam Temple called Haied Bin Aqeed. But the important discovery was in 1983 in Shebam Al Garas by the archeology expedition department, which found 26 Mummies at a depth of 60 centimeters, and among all those, only one has survived. Moreover, in 1991 Mummies have been found in the Al Noman mountain in Al Mahweet governorate, and until today their work is not finished as there are many more. In 1994 in Saiah Bani Matar, Mummies have been found in natural caves, but unfortunately, no one has examined them until this date; because there are no specialists and experts to study the tombs and the bodies. In 1999, another body was found in Shaoob and finally a local found a Mummy of a small child in Damar.

However, not all mummies that were found belong to Yemenis, "A Mummy

was that he died because of suffocation by volcanic smoke," said Dr. Abdul Hakim, who is a tutor at Sana'a University in the Archeology Department and also the storekeeper at the museum.

Abdul Hakim explained the ancient Yemeni steps of mummification, saying the theory and idea of Mummies in Yemen are the same as that of any other country but of course each have their own system of embalment. On the basis of some researches on Mummies, a kind of plant called Al Ra'a, was found in all the bodies, and also chemical materials like oxides of iron and sulfur dioxide. Furthermore, camel oil was found to be the principle agent of embalming the dead.

During this process, they would tear the stomach, take out the bowels, and put the plant material and distribute the chemicals in a way that would fill the stomach in order to keep it preserved. The body was covered and painted with a color called Henna. Furthermore, the shrouding process in Yemeni Mummies took several steps. Firstly, rolls with silk and then leather were placed on the body and if the person was rich more money was spent for more rolls of silk and leather rolls. Nevertheless, some Mummies that were found in Shaoob in Sana'a were embalmed by shrouding, using cotton and straw. After putting the materials, the body was well dressed and adorned with new shoes, coats, and mineral rings in order to drive away evil spirits.

Dr. Mohamed Al- Aroosi, who was the Chief of General Assembly in ancient monuments and now teaches at Sana'a University, said: "since we found the bodies in 1983, no researches have been made to find out about these Mummies. Even the atmosphere for the bodies in the museum is as bad as hell, so much that when first the body arrived to the museum they were well and you could feel their spirit, but nowadays they are getting destroyed because of the carelessness and there being no support from the government and other countries or even Organizations to protect them. It is a shame to keep these valuable ancient monuments, while we cannot give them what they deserve, and it is better to contribute them to other museums or countries who will take care of them, instead of ignoring them as it is the case now."

It is hard to differentiate between Yemeni Mummies and the Egyptian ones, as there is absolutely no information and studies, but the only differ-



An Ethiopian Mummy belonging to 6 century and it is related to Abraha's army.

ences to their gods asking for peace and love.

In addition, the materials that were used in mummification indicate that ancient Yemenis had very advanced medical and scientific information and methods. It also indicated that Yemenis had lived luxurious life as most of the materials were very expensive at the time.

Mr. Mohamed Qasim, the head of the national team, said "because of the huge number of mummies that can be found in Yemen, the government offered to open a special museum in Al Tawilah in Al- Mahweet. The delay comes because there is no subsidy from the government to open this museum. Moreover, the lack of specialists and experts play a role in this, and our Yemeni team is not qualified.



The only Mummy that has survived from Shibam Al-Garas

"Yemen has a lot of Mummies; leaving them without proper care and maintenance is a crime. The problem is that no one can touch the bodies because they need experts in this field. Some

graves are in the Mountains at a height of 40 - 60 meters, we need help to reach them, we need help to serve them and we need help to study them," he concluded.

Mummies are half-living guardians, reanimated for some noble purpose, usually to guard against an ancient evil. The implacable enemies of vampires, mummies exist to defend their chosen charges and ensure that the living fulfill their destiny. Their resurrection is cursed, however, as their very existence amongst the living can endanger those they seek to protect due to the ancient disease that accompany them. Mummies, created by Ra (some say Sikkar's progenitor), can call upon their amulets through the magic of meket, which bestows glittering suits of golden armor upon them. As a fact, Mummification was not limited to Egyptians. Greeks and Romans who resided in Egypt were also mummified in Egyptian fashion. The process of mummification continued in Egypt as late as the fifth century C.E., then slowly tapered off when Christianity took hold. From 400 to 1400 C.E. there was a common belief that Mummia was a potent medicine with curative powers.



One of the woman's Mummy brought in 1983 from Shibam Al-Garas and now at Sana'a University museum.



leather Shoes.



Stuff used for embellishment and also used when they ride their horses

ence that we can tell for now is that mummies in Egypt took everything they could with them, furthermore there tombs told the story of their lives. The Yemeni ones, on the other hand, are different because they just took with them a small weapon, food, and a ring on one of their toes. Specialists inferred the main goal was forgiveness from the gods (Al-Rahman Thi

has been found which belonged to the 6 century, however the body wasn't preserved by humans, but by natural forces. We presume this mummy belonged to one of the Ethiopian soldiers who served in the Army of (Abraha) when they invaded Yemen. There are two theories about the soldier's death: the first theory was that he was killed in battle, the second theory

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Words of Wisdom



Corruption is a worldwide plague. It exists because it is part of human nature to deviate. But the public guards against this deviant behavior. At least when exposed, a corrupt person is subjected to penalties. Here in Yemen, it doesn't happen. If the deviant person is influential, he/she gets away with it. In some cases, the deviant official is removed from his present post, but is quickly given another.

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,
(1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times

OUR
OPINIONNihilism and
Gandhi's great soul

Despite the lure of the recent presidential announcement for constitutional changes I find myself rather tempted to comment on the significant social changes Yemen is going through. Especially that tomorrow Oct. 2, which is the birthday anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, has been declared as the United Nations day of non-violence.

The significant point is that social changes do not require the president to recommend them, referendums to endorse them, or the parliament's approval. They just happen, and cannot be undone, at least easily.

There is continuous violence in Yemen, and this is caused by the state of unrest and pessimism spread around the republic, especially in southern governorates where the people feel most disadvantaged. Yemeni people are religious and committed to traditions and social norms. However, push their buttons and everything becomes meaningless. This is particularly true when the pressure touches the livelihood of people through poverty, and their dignity through discrimination.

History tells more than one example of how extreme pressure on certain people lead to disasters. When people have nothing to lose and become pessimistic, they can turn into killing machines, simply stated. Nihilism or Anomie could be defined as the total rejection of established laws and institutions, or anarchy, terrorism, or other revolutionary activity. It could also be total and absolute destructiveness, esp. toward the world at large and including oneself.

And example of this is suicide bombers not like the ones in Palestine, who believe they have a cause, but rather those who don't have an agenda or a mission. They see their lives are worthless and decide to take the others down with them.

In Russia, nihilism became identified with a loosely organized revolutionary movement (C.1860-1917) that rejected the authority of the state, church, and family

Nihilism is the belief that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known or communicated. It is often associated with extreme pessimism and a radical scepticism that condemns existence. A true nihilist would believe in nothing, have no loyalties, and no purpose other than, perhaps, an impulse to destroy.

While there are local policies to push Yemenis further into despair, there is an attempt elsewhere to commemorate non-violence leaders in the world who proved that justice and change can be achieved through piece.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that by means of non-violent civil disobedience, India can gain its independence from British rule, and it did. The essence of Gandhi's political philosophy was the empowerment of every individual, irrespective of class, caste, colour, creed or community. To him, extreme poverty was itself a form of violence.

I don't believe that Yemeni people will reach a state of nihilism, or at least that is what I hope. Yet, the unrest Yemen is going through is extremely worrying. Celebrating Mahatma Gandhi on Oct 2 should be a reminder of how taking ways others than his can lead to only destruction. Here is to **Nadia Al-Sakkaf** Editor-in-Chief Gandhi, the great soul.

Black coup

The peaceful protests of struggling retirees were about to culminate with the issuance of a republican decree and formation of field committees to address their legal demands, which have earned national recognition and popular legitimacy.

Since 1994, illusions have joked with imaginations of the winner in that year's Civil War, thereby permitting what is not permissible such as looting, land grabbing and violating principles of equal citizenship and partnership. These illusions also prohibited what is permissible.

As of 1997, we first started to see the abuse of equal citizenship and ending the partnership with other politicians in the country, the country was since then confiscated in favor of the General People Congress. This was primarily at the expense of equal citizenship.

We understand well that Yemen's political regime doesn't tolerate its citizens, nor does it represent people, thus making them unpaid labor, who are exploited by influential officials in a way contravening and exploiting the Constitution. Nothing more has been realized other than a regime at the expense of the nation, totalitarianism under the guise of unity and supporting oppressors at



By: Ali Al-Garadi

the expense of the oppressed.

For the majority of Yemenis, national unity means an ideology, an identity and an interest, and any gestures about exploiting unity for personal gains is an apostasy from the most precious thing Yemeni people have—unity.

Frankly speaking, I say to those who behave in a way harming our national unity may be traitors for the regime, thereby suggesting baseless justifications for cracking down on protesters and peaceful protests and denying the oppressed their constitutional rights. Also, they may have hired mercenaries, who trigger animosity toward the nation's unity. Regretfully, all this vocabulary is taken from the authority's dictionary. This is why I have become unable to understand the meaning of resisting oppression, corruption and bloodshed, as well as relating them with unity and the unified nation. Why do we retreat from those who brought us up while we

were children and educated us on the slogan "Jaizan is our land and Najran will be restored?"

Our houses were destroyed and our children became homeless for the sake of this unity. But I understand well that the regime supported the currents of 'reforming the unity course' at the expense of the Yemeni Socialist Party. I understand that we are supporting the preparation of extorters to assault journalists at the Liberty Square, raid newspapers and loot their equipment.

The authority is exercising a coup against democracy but in a smooth manner. There is also a coup against popular representativeness and legitimacy while others are exercising another coup against peaceful protests and driving the situation toward much more violence and anarchy. Ultimately, the situation will reach a single result, which is a blind regime and a kind of ruler, who exercises violence against the nation because they are blinded against human rights.

Ali Al-Garadi is a Yemeni journalist and the head of the media committee of Yemeni Journalist Syndicate.
Email: aligradi@hotmail.com
Source: Al-Ahali Weekly

Who machinates apostasy?

By: Tawakul Abdussalam Karaman

The national unity is nothing more than a slogan in the sense of loyal affiliation to homeland. If feelings of the unified identity begins to vanish, this means that the national unity is on the way to vanish too. With the sunset of July 7, the feeling of unified identity has disappeared while the seasons of psychological apostasy and secession emerged, and what happened after that is nothing more than futile details.

Today, the regime is experiencing the final season on the way to unprecedented collapse, as the President could skillfully gather all the opponents against his rule. A few years ago, the President and his henchmen viewed the coalition of Islah and Yemeni Socialist parties as a joke, saying that Islah Party might have converted from Islam or YSP might have embraced Islam. Leaders and members of the Islah Party and their allies in the Joint Meeting Parties needn't explain how they moved toward

such a strategic coalition that reached a maximum limit of identification. Do you think that the jurisprudence of the President and his henchmen views any humiliation machinated against junior and senior opposition members as a reaction to this identification?

The opposition should understand that such machinated humiliation compelled citizens and prominent leaders of the southern governorates to form a unified front against him and his retinue. The consequences of this humiliation may damage national unity, particularly as the problem gets more complicated. We are sure that President and his henchmen will not be part of the solution to this problem, and this is why we say that they have nothing to do in order to calm the inflammatory situation.

The regime repairs the outworn with the outdated. This is what we can say as we see that he forms consecutive committees to resolve a persisting problem, which all the state's institutions collectively failed to resolve. For instance, the most recent committee, which the President formed under the chairmanship of Salem Saleh, was required to repair any damage left by opportunists on national unity. Also, the committee was required to replace the opposition and any other forces having effective presence in the homeland, including the Yemeni Socialist Party and the retirees' society. We have been bearing in mind that this committee would pour more oil on the inflaming situation, and it is impossible to be an alternative to YSP or other effective organizations.

A few days ago, we heard about a republican decree appointing Shumailah and Shamlan governors for Shabwa and Abyan respectively. This decree involves an additional insult since we

understand well that citizens of these governorates are no longer able to tolerate the two newly appointed officials because of current conditions. Why have citizens of both governorates not said to the president that local governance with all its powers is the front valve of unity? They would have rather said that those who exclusively appoint servants from Sana'a and nearby areas as chiefs of security departments, district directors and governors in the south, are responsible for damaging national unity.

Citizens of Shabwa and Abyan should have told President the Saleh that application of the Document of Pledge and Accord and any previously reached agreements and conventions is the only thing that can strengthen national unity. Also, the use of force and the unfair security measures that may lead to bloodshed are impossible to strengthen the cause. National unity is based on popular satisfaction and feeling of joint interests, but neither is available in the southern areas, and therefore, there is a growing feeling among people in these areas that unity hasn't achieved its sought goals and they are in fact losers.

There are two options for the regime: local governance with complete powers or national fragmentation. The situation forces us to anticipate unprecedented fragmentation, as well as an inevitable end to the idea of national unity. But the critical question being raised her is that "Are the President and his henchmen wise enough to select the positive option?" I fear the answer may be 'NO'.

Tawakul Karaman is a prominent women journalist and Chairwoman of Women Journalists Without Chains.
Source: Al-Thawri Weekly.

SILVER LINING

Opposition & Saleh
political reforms proposal

The opposition coalition did a good job by rejecting President Ali Abdullah Saleh's call for a meeting to discuss crucial issues in the country. The opposition made a brave decision and everybody was happy about it as mainstream public opinion is that there is no genuine opposition and that all parties are just puppets at the hands of the president. The opposition justified its apology for the absence of an agenda for the meeting to which it was invited by phone.



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

I believe President Ali Abdullah Saleh succeeded last week in trapping the opposition coalition by forwarding his proposal for a package of political reforms. The proposal includes important reforms like the establishment of local police, local control of revenues and expenditures, direct elections for the heads of the local councils. It also cuts the presidential term to five years from seven, reduces the parliamentary term to four years from six and reserves 15 percent of the parliament seats for women. There is no doubt the proposal would boost democracy and broaden political participation.

The proposal might be a political maneuver by the president. The opposition has, however, to deal positively with the plan that takes in some of its demands. There is no ground for it to reject it entirely. This is, of course, a clever trick set by the president. I know the opposition has got an unpleasant experience from its long-aged stuck dialogue with the ruling party over most of these issues mentioned in this proposal. It should, however, take it seriously and make its feedback and comments and by this it would be able to put the president and his party in a fix. At the same time, the ruling party should deal with the opposition as a partner rather than a criminal engaged in troublemaking and thus should be held accountable. The opposition did a good job by staging protests to denounce economic hardships and corruption. It is good that people take to the streets and protest peacefully against the government's wrong policies. These organized peaceful protests could prevent loose violent actions like in Sa'ada. Therefore, it is crucial now the government seriously addresses the question of the retirees and land property. People need to see concrete actions instead of committees that work as pickle jars.

Yemen is truly facing sophisticated political and economic challenges. It is easy to address the political challenges through conducting some reforms as the proposal of Saleh entails. Nevertheless, to handle the economic challenges is the question. Ordinary people do not care whether the political system is parliamentary or presidential. They do care about foodstuffs and how to fill in their empty stomach. This is their primary concern right now. Such political reforms will not be fruitful unless juxtaposed with economic plans to address the economic hardships and corruption that really matter to everybody.

It is, in fact, very important that the ruling party and the opposition reach an agreement on political reforms to take democratic drive forward. This is because political stability is precondition for creating an environment for genuine and serious economic and administrative reforms to help tone down the tension putting the country at stake.

Mohammed Al-Qadhi (mhalqadhi@hotmail.com) is a Yemeni journalist and columnist.

Letter to the Editor

"My minimum programme", as President of India:

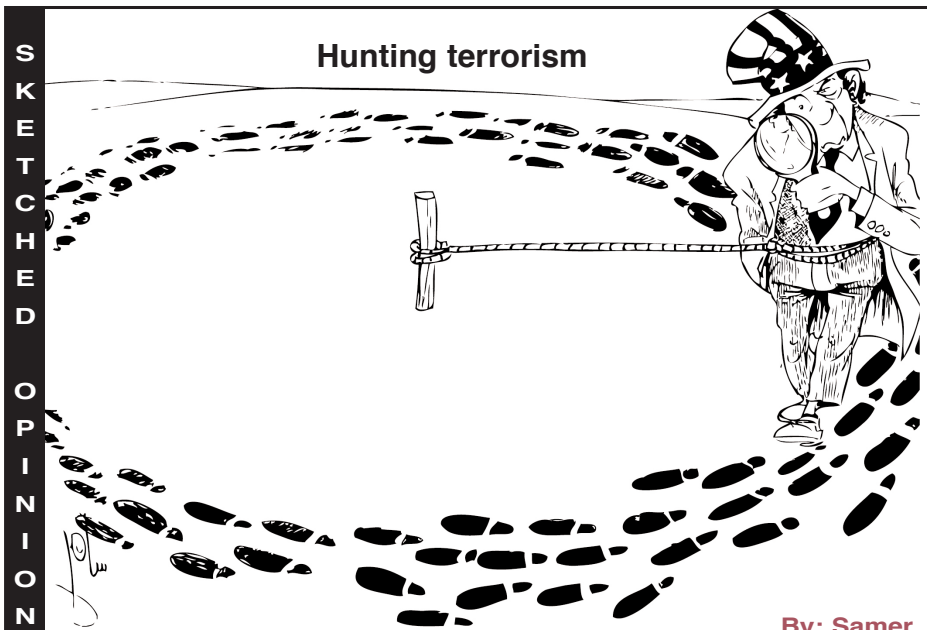
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- 5) Gandhiji: Mahatma Gandhi's Autobiography "My Experiences with Truth" free copy to every family. This book enshrines fundamental principles of living a good and useful life. It is secular in nature.
- 6) Sports: Free coaching classes in tennis, squash, karate and golf, so that we generate sports stars for

the future. Gymnasiums can be used free, across the country.

- 7) Hygiene: Toothpaste will be given free to all children below the age of 15 and deodorants will be given free to all workers who work in the sun.
- 8) Literacy: Free notebook and pens will be distributed to each household to incentives them to write, and thus improve literacy.
- 9) Language Class: Free language class for people who learn another language, other than their mother tongue, e.g. people from Tamil Nadu can learn Hindi and a Punjabi can learn Malayalam.
- 10) Water: Processed water will be free in the country. This is the minimum, we owe to citizens.
- 11) Cinema: Free cinema shows, will run throughout the day in designated theatres and people can walk in and watch movies free of cost. Daily living is stressful, so a little cinema at the end of the day, can provide relaxation."

Regards

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By: Samer

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Yemen Press Review



26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army
Thursday, September 27

Main Headlines

- Anti-arm bearing campaign continues, has achieved positive results, says security official
 - Modern U.S. Study discloses funds to moderates in Yemeni Islah Party
 - President of the Republic to meet civil community organizations on Saturday
 - Advisor to Sudanese President praises Saleh's efforts in supporting situations in Sudan
 - An Indonesian envoy to arrives in Sana'a by the advent of October with a letter to President Saleh
 - Yemen to participate in Arab Parliament's meeting scheduled for this October
 - Electricity & Energy Minister: Yemen to start constructing first plant for generating nuke electricity by the advent of 2009
 - Saleh addresses Yemeni people on 45th Anniversary of 26 September Revolution
- President Ali Abdullah Saleh congratulated on Tuesday the Yemeni people on the 45th Anniversary of 26th September Revolution and the 44th Anniversary of 14th October, the weekly newspaper reported in a front page article. "We have called on all political forces for national dialogue on political reforms in order to follow up changes," the paper quoted Saleh as saying. "Some political forces tried to trigger crises to escape from their internal problems. But people know who are behind sit-ins and demonstrations of retired military and security personnel that created obstacles to the development process

and investment in the nation." Saleh confirmed that the peaceful transfer of power could not be via protests, describing such acts as "a serious mistake". He said that the door of dialogue is open for all political forces as the dialogue is the sole means to resolve all problems and crises, affirming the importance of strengthening democracy inside parties.



Al-Sahwa Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Yemeni Islah Party
Thursday, September 27

Main Headlines

- Academics and political leaders warn of risks posed to September 26 Revolution's values, demand serious reading of reasons
 - U.S. Study describes political reform scene in Yemen as gloomy due to extending President Saleh's term
 - Aden Security forces disperse illegally retired protesters, many of them arrested
 - Al-Nuba Defense team withdraws from trial over lack of evident charge against client
 - Lightning kills one, injures another in Abyan while 19 sheep have been reportedly killed
 - Civil Community Coalition considers crackdown on peaceful struggle as threat to national unity
 - Politicians, clerics downplay constitutional amendments declared by Saleh
- Yemeni politicians and religious scholars downplayed the constitutional amendments declared by President Ali Abdullah Saleh on Monday, considering those amendments as an attempt to circumvent required

reforms in the nation, the weekly paper reported. It added that Saleh had announced Tuesday his intentions to amend the state's constitution.

According to the newspaper, he intended to reduce the presidential term from seven years to five years and the parliamentary term from six to four years. Saleh explained that changes would also include shifting the country's government to a presidential system and pointing out that such amendments should enhance democracy and give him broad powers to overcome the country's economic problems.



Al-Wasat Comprehensive Independent Weekly
Wednesday, September 26

Main Headlines

- Revolutions of public rage continue while security authorities confront them with unprecedented crackdown
 - Sharp disputes over postponing meeting of Yemeni-Saudi Coordination Council
 - Arms-bearing ban campaign kills innocent Sheikh in Taiz
 - Parliamentary report reveals that bad road networks nationwide claimed lives of 12 thousand, injured another 75 thousand over past five years
 - Tribal Sheikh discloses a plot of assassination attempt against President Saleh
 - President Saleh presents initiative to change political system
- The independent weekly reported that Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who is under international pressure to introduce reforms, told opposition leaders he wants to cut the

presidential term by two years to promote democracy. It added that government officials told Reuters Saleh plans to cut the presidential term to five years from seven, reduce the parliamentary term to four years from six and reserve 15 percent of the parliament's 301 seats for women.

According to the newspaper, Saleh is also keen to abolish the post of prime minister and run the cabinet himself, they added. The Yemeni leader, who was re-elected last year, appointed the current prime minister Ali Mohammed Megawar, who was seen to have strong economic credentials, in March. Analysts in Yemen said then that Saleh took this step to show donors, such as the World Bank, that he was serious about political and economic reforms.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (Ruling Party)
Monday, September 24

Main Headlines

- Foreign Minister: We are working to activate diplomatic action for implementing President's platform
- The majority of world countries back Yemen's entry into World Trade Organization, says senior government official
- Zakah revenues increase by 91 percent this year
- 150 thousand tons of wheat and flour arrive in Yemeni ports over the last few days
- Dialogue is an opportunity to be exploited by parties, says Al-Thawra State-run Daily
- Government implements second phase of wage & salary strategy as of this October

- Government takes serious steps to boost tourism sector
- Economists and businessmen: Opposition instigates rioting to hinder investment

In a front page article, the ruling party's mouthpiece quoted economists and businessmen as saying that Joint Meeting Parties push their members to join riots with the aim of hindering investment in Yemen's southern and eastern governorates. By fomenting the rioting, the opposition parties also attempt to hinder service projects. According to the newspaper, economists and businessmen added that the opposition's support for the vandalistic acts that violate law and order is part of a conspiracy aimed at impeding the implementation of development and service projects, which the government is currently undertaking.

The economists and businessmen accused the opposition of disgusting local, Arab and foreign investors, who have plans to initiate investment projects in the country. By this behavior, the opposition machinates to deprive our country of such projects that may help reduce unemployment and create more job opportunities for youth.



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, September 25

Main Headlines

- Diplomatic crisis between Sana'a and Riyadh postpones meetings of Yemeni-Saudi Coordination Council
- JMP Higher Council holds authorities accountable for deteriorating situations, denounces

- address of hostility toward parties
- Joint Meeting Parties in Hajja claim protection for rights and dignities of citizens, stand in solidarity with journalists

Opposition parties in Marib collect 100 thousand signatures claiming service and development services in their governorate

- Nasserite leader questions feasibility of marking First Anniversary of last year's presidential elections as nothing of Saleh's platform was implemented
- Armed tribal confrontations break out over murder of MP's son by unidentified people in Sana'a
- Government fails to put a stop to skyrocketing prices
- Official media in Yemen hails Egyptian court's verdict against editors
- Sana'a governorate teachers to protest delay of cashing hardship allowance

Yemen teachers and educational professions syndicates in Sana'a governorate are due to organize a sit-in on Saturday in protest against the delay of cashing hardship allowances to more than 3400 teachers, the newspaper reported in a front page article. It added that both syndicates released a statement saying the government hasn't fulfilled its pledges to pay the accumulated sums of hardship allowances accrued to teachers like it did in other governorates nationwide.

According to the statement, teachers will escalate their protests until they grow into massive strike from work in event the Ministry of Education doesn't pay them the accumulated sums of hardship allowance without any illegal deductions. Over the past time period, teachers and educational professions syndicates organized protests nationwide, thereby compelling the government to meet their demands.

International Day of Non-Violence

On 15 June 2007, the United Nations General Assembly voted to observe 2 October – the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi – as the International Day of Non-Violence. The Resolution by the General Assembly has asked all members of the UN system to commemorate 2nd October in "an appropriate manner and disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". October 2nd would be commemorated at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, for the first time this year.

Mahatma Gandhi – the apostle of peace and non-violence

The world knows greatness in many forms. There are the great, who won celebrated military victories. There are the great, who have deepened our knowledge of the physical universe. There are the great who have helped us understand the workings of the human mind. There are the great who by their inventions have transformed the way we live.

Mahatma Gandhi stands in a category of his own. He too was an inventor but of a different kind—an inventor of a unique way of protest, of struggle, of emancipation and of empowerment. His generalship lay not in making war but in waging peace. His weaponry was not arms and ammunition but "truth force" ("satyagraha", as he called it). The moral universe was his field of action. He explored a whole new dimension of the human psyche—its capacity to willingly accept suffering, even unto death, not to attain the kingdom of heaven, but a better world here and now, by bringing about social and political change.

Gandhi's charismatic leadership brought the cause of India's independence from British colonial rule to world attention. His philosophy of non-violence, for which he coined the term "satyagraha", has influenced both Indian nationalist and international movements for peaceful change.

By means of non-violent civil disobedience, an idea he developed from the teachings of Leo Tolstoy and Henry David Thoreau, Gandhi helped bring about India's independence from British

rule. This inspired other colonial peoples to work for their own independence, ultimately dismantling the British Empire and replacing it with the Commonwealth of Nations. Gandhi's principle of *satyagraha*, often translated as "way of truth" or "pursuit of truth", has inspired other democratic activists, including Martin Luther King, Jr. He often said that his values were simple; drawn from traditional Hindu beliefs: truth (*satya*), and non-violence (*ahimsa*).

Gandhian principles

Mahatma Gandhi bequeathed to us three guiding principles: *Satya* and *Ahimsa* (Truth and Nonviolence), *Satyagraha* (or the force born of truth and nonviolence) and *Sarvodaya* (or upliftment of all). It is the value of these principles that we have to rediscover if we want to deal effectively with today's challenges.

Truth and nonviolence

Truth and nonviolence are generally considered to be the two key ingredients of Gandhian thought. It is possible to pursue truth without being nonviolent. Nations go to war believing truth is on their side, or that they are on the side of truth. The more sensitive among those who believe truth is on their side insist that there should be no war but that it should be a just war.

Thus just as it is possible to pursue truth without being nonviolent, it is also possible to pursue nonviolence without pursuing truth. In fact, it could be proposed that such a disjunction between the two run the risk of cowardice being mistake for, or masquerading as nonviolence. The point becomes clear if we take the world "truth" to denote the "right" thing to do in a morally charged situation. Mahatma Gandhi was fond of quoting the following statement from Confucius: "To know what is right and not to do it is cowardice."

Satyagraha

The term *Satyagraha* was first coined by Gandhi in South Africa to express the tendency of the Indian minds and methods of meeting violence, injustice or of thwarting unjust laws of racial discrimination practiced by the white minority there. It is a method which involves a

breach of the law, but without causing physical harm to the agents of the law. The purpose is to undermine the unjust system so that it gives way and reform can be achieved. It was conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excludes the use of violence and hatred in any shape or form. *Satyagraha* is a relentless search for truth and determination to reach truth not by inflicting of suffering on the opponent, by on one's self. It literally means holding on to truth, Gandhi calls it 'soul force'. Non-violence is the basis of *Satyagraha*. It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. For, according to Gandhiji, we are children of one and the same creator.

Sarvodaya

The essence of Mahatma Gandhi's political philosophy was the empowerment of every individual, irrespective of class, caste, colour, creed or community. To him, extreme poverty was itself a form of violence.

Democracy has become the preferred form of government in the 21st century, yet sadly his "notion of democracy" is far from being universally accepted.

Economic growth has also to be consistent with the imperatives of environmental conservation and stewardship. But sustainability does not mean that vast numbers of people are denied better material well-being and living standards.

The relevance of Gandhian teachings in the 21st century

The question to ask is not whether Gandhian teachings are relevant or not. The real issue is whether we have the courage and strength of mind to follow in his footsteps, whether we are prepared to live our lives by what he preached and most importantly, practiced.

The simple truth is that instead of diminishing in relevance, Mahatma Gandhi has actually become all the more pertinent in the 21st century. Whichever the challenge we confront, you can be sure that the Gandhian way is a real, live option, an option that informs and illuminates.

New threats to peace, harmony and stability have emerged. And it is one of

the paradoxes of the 21st Century that while the establishment of peace has become the world's single greatest imperative, the traditional instruments of preserving peace have been found to be increasingly ineffective. Whether it is ethnic nationalism or religious chauvinism, economic inequality or military might — all of them powerful drivers of conflict in today's world — there is no doubt that we are in great need of a new paradigm for solving conflicts.

We are today passing through an extremely critical and controversial phase of terrorism. The climate of terrorist violence is explosive. Terrorism is being used every where either with enthusiasm or with fear. In recent years, we have witnessed terrorist violence affecting almost all countries. Even the so-called advanced, affluent nations suffer from the menace of terrorist violence.

Countering violence and terrorism

Terrorism can be both individual as well as State sponsored. In recent times, religious fundamentalism has assumed dangerous proportions. Racism, which yields violence, has also become a device to assume important positions in public life. The situation demands that non-violent techniques as means of social change are put into practice immediately.

Gandhiji said, "I am not ashamed to stand erect before the heroic and self-sacrificing revolutionary because I am able to pit an equal measure of non-violent men's heroism and sacrifice untarnished by the blood of the innocent. Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others." He also observed that "at the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism if applied in a sufficient measure will produce the desired result, namely, bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, nor retaliate with tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism."

The relevance of nonviolence

It is difficult to reconcile Gandhian

thought with the modern theory that non-violence is simply a strategy of convenience. In the words of Gandhi nonviolence "is not a coat that you can wear today and take off tomorrow". Although Gandhi emphasized the need for spirituality in the practice of nonviolence that was not the only reason why he believed nonviolence must be a way of life. For Gandhi living nonviolence was a practical necessity. Unless one lives it, one cannot practice nonviolence. Just as we are required to create a whole culture of violence around us to practice violence we need to create a culture of nonviolence around us to practice nonviolence.

The story of the starfish has an appropriate moral lesson for us. A man once went early in the morning to the beach for a walk. Dawn was still minutes away from breaking. In the haze he saw a figure near the water's edge picking something up and throwing it into the water. Out of curiosity he went to enquire and was told that during the night the tide came in and washed all the starfish ashore and when the sun comes out they will all perish. The curious man looked at the shoreline and saw thousands of starfish stranded. He said: "You aren't going to be able to save all these starfish so what difference is it going to make?" The Good Samaritan was still busy throwing the starfish and had one in his hand that he was about to toss into the water as he turned and said: "It will make a big difference to this guy." The moral clearly is that we should not be overwhelmed by the state of the world and do nothing to change the world. Gandhi always believed that small acts of change can ultimately make a big difference.

The question that we need to ask is, therefore, not whether nonviolence is relevant but whether we are willing to move away from greed, selfishness and all the negative attributes that govern our lives to the more positive attributes of love, compassion, understanding and respect. The choice is ours to make. That is the essence of Gandhi's message.

Conflict resolution

Gandhi would have given primacy to the search for the underlying causes of conflict. Violence can be wanton and sense-



Mahatma Gandhi

less. But often, conflicts can be symptoms of a deeper malaise that needs to be understood. This is not to romanticize violence—Mahatma Gandhi never did. But it is to analyze why it occurs and address it at its very source and root.

But today's enemies are not just individuals; they are also ways of thinking and perceiving the world itself. Countering violence with even more violence does not provide a durable solution. Whatever else Mahatma Gandhi may have done in our circumstances, surely strengthening the well-springs of discourse and dialogue must play a central part in it. And he would have gone even further. He would have looked within himself. For him, external engagement went hand in hand with internal interrogation. In reaching out, he would first and foremost have asked himself the question—"to what extent am I myself responsible?"

Mahatma Gandhi fervently believed in the pivotal role of religion in everyday life. He saw it as an ethical and moral mooring to all our actions – private and public. But his was a faith that drew from every religion, a faith that was all-inclusive. When asked about his religious belief, he said, "Yes I am a Hindu. I am also a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist and a Jew".

Curtis of the Indian Embassy, Sana'a

RAMADAN 2007



By: Harun Yahya
www.harunyahya.com

Only love can defeat terrorism-5

The Muslim Should Use Soft Words to Call People to the Morality of Islam

Every Muslim has the duty to call others to the morality of Islam, to inform them of the existence of God and the proofs of His creation. God Himself has revealed that responsibility in Verse 3: 104: "Let there be a community among you who call to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success." He also reveals how that invitation is to be made:

Call [them] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition, and argue with them in the kindest way. Your Lord knows best who is misguided from His way, and He knows best who are guided. (16:125)

Correct and courteous words accompanied by forgiveness are better than charity followed by insulting words. God is Rich Beyond Need, All-Forbearing. (2:263)

Anyone who wishes to lead a virtuous life should encourage others toward virtue. Anyone who wants to see good should make an effort to help spread it. Anyone who wants to see others behave according to their conscience should encourage them to do so, and anyone who opposes cruelty should warn those who engage in it. In short, anyone who wants right to prevail should call on all others to abide by it. When issuing that call, however, it's most important to keep in mind that only God can inspire people to become Muslims, and cause words pleasing to them to have any effect. God has revealed that our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), as a result of his noble character and superior morality, always treated people well--and has recommended him as a role model for all mankind.

Islam Commands Solidarity and Cooperation Among People

In the Qur'an (5:2), God has issued this command:

... help each other to goodness and godliness. Do not help each other to wrongdoing and enmity. Have fear of God. God is severe in retribution.

As that verse makes clear, the faithful struggle only for what is good. They consider the words of God in Verse 4:127 of the Qur'an: "Whatever



good you do, God knows it. They never forget that they will be recompensed for all they do in the sight of our Lord, but God reveals that pleasing mutual aid needs to be in a framework of "good and godliness."

Islam Commands us to Repay Evil with Good

A good action and a bad action are not the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend. (41:34)

Ward off evil with what is better. We know very well what they express. (23:96)

In these verses, God promises the faithful that they can secure positive results, so long as they adopt a pleasant

Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best (meaning) in it: those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding. (Surat az-Zumar, 18)

attitude in the face of wrongdoing. The Qur'an emphasizes that even when a believer is dealing with an enemy, still he can establish a warm friendship. Responding to evil with good is also an essential part of compassion. When any believer sees others adopting an attitude that will not be pleasing to God, he considers first of all how that will affect them in the hereafter. Then he approaches them with toleration and humility, refusing to let himself become puffed up with pride.

Over the course of their lives,

believers may come across people of very different characters. Yet they will not change their view of morality according to the people they meet. Others may speak mockingly, use ugly words, become angry, or even behave in a hostile manner. Yet the true believer never ceases to be polite, modest, and compassionate. He will not respond to ugly words with more of the same. He will not laugh at those who mock him, nor answer anger with anger, but remains patient and tolerant. In the face of insulting behavior, he will respond with proper morality, and with such compassion that the other will feel ashamed.

That is the morality our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) recommends to us. In one of the hadiths, he says, "You do not return evil for evil, but excuse and forgive." In another hadith, he calls on the faithful in these terms: "None of you must be the kind of weak person who says, 'He who has no compassion will receive none.'"

In the Qur'an (5:13), our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) was told to be forgiving when betrayed by some of the children of Israel:

... They have forgotten a good portion of what they were reminded of. You will never cease to come upon some act of treachery on their part, except for a few of them. Yet pardon them, and overlook. God loves good-doers.

As this verse shows, poor morality displayed by someone else is no justification for displaying the same thing. Each individual is solely responsible to God for his actions. According to the Qur'an, acting with compassion, affection and proper morality in the face of someone else's bad behavior is a sign of superior morality that reveals the extent of a believer's devotion to God.

Islam Commands The Faithful to be Forgiving, Always

One important sign of compassion is a person's ability to forgive. In Verse 7:199, God calls upon His servants to "make allowances for people, command what is right, and turn away from the ignorant."

Some may find this attitude difficult, but in the sight of God, it will be well rewarded. Those caught up in anger may well refuse to forgive mistakes. But to the faithful, God has revealed that it is better to forgive and, in Verse 26:40, has recommended this morality:

The repayment of a bad action is one equivalent to it. But if someone pardons and puts things right, his reward is with God...

In another verse (26:43), God reveals, "But if someone is steadfast and forgives, that is the most resolute course to follow." Verse 24:22 emphasizes that this is a very superior form of morality:

Those of you possessing affluence and ample wealth should not make oaths that they will not give to their relatives and the very poor and those who have emigrated in the way of God. They should rather pardon and overlook. Would you not love God to forgive you? God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

In these words, He encourages the faithful to consider their own positions when it comes to forgiveness. Because everyone wants God to forgive him, to

protect and show him mercy, so do we hope that all others will excuse and forgive our mistakes. Therefore, God has commanded the faithful to treat others in the same way they would like to be treated themselves. That important responsibility encourages the faithful to be forgiving towards one another. Our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) encouraged them in these words: "That person is nearest to God, who pardons, when he has someone in his power, one who would have injured him."

Under conditions that reveal an

Modesty is part of faith and faith is in paradise, but obscenity is part of hardness of heart and hardness of heart is in hell. (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Tirmidhi)

individual's sincerity, the faithful behave forgivingly and compassionately towards one another. If he who has committed error sincerely repents having done so, they cannot judge him for his past deeds. Even when the faithful are totally in the right and the other completely in the wrong, still they have no compunction about forgiveness, because God recommends such behavior as an example of proper morality (3:134):

Those who give in times of both ease and hardship, those who control their rage and pardon other people-- God loves the good-doers.

When it comes to forgiving, the faithful don't distinguish between great and small errors, nor do they tailor their view of forgiveness accordingly. Someone may have committed an error inflicting severe harm on others, great financial loss, even loss of life. Yet the faithful know everything happens by the permission of God, as part of His destiny. When it comes to such things, they therefore place themselves in the hands of God and feel no personal anger. (To be continued)

Quick grasp of faith
* If a person's close relative or family member performs the prescribed acts of worship, will he or she benefit from such a connection?

In the verse "Neither your blood relations nor your children will be of any use to you. On the Day of Resurrection He will differentiate between you. Allah sees what you do," (Surat al-Mumtahana, 3) Allah informs people that their close relatives will be of no help on that Day. Another verse as "... he will come to Us all alone" (Surah Maryam, 80) reminds each person that he or she will be called to account by himself or herself. Given such statements, no one will benefit from the worship of another on the Day of Judgment. Allah gives every person an individual understanding and an individual conscience, and warns each of them in various ways. For that reason, the worship of one's closest relatives or family members will benefit only the person who performs them. If people do not fulfill their religious responsibilities, despite seeing their closest relatives and family members doing so, and thus knowing that these pious ones are on the right path, they will be held responsible by Allah in the

Hereafter.

(For further reference, please see, Quick Grasp of Faith 1-3, by Harun Yahya)

Miracles of The Qur'an

The Movement Of Mountains

In one verse, we are informed that mountains are not motionless as they seem, but are in constant motion.

You see the mountains you reckoned to be solid going past like clouds. (Qur'an, 27:88)

This motion of mountains is caused by the movement of the Earth's crust that they are located on. The Earth's crust "floats" over the mantle layer, which is denser. It was at the beginning of the 20th century when, for the first time in history, a German scientist by the name of Alfred Wegener proposed that the continents of the Earth had been attached together when it first formed, but then drifted in different directions, and thus separated as they moved away from each other.

Geologists understood that Wegener was right only in the 1980s, 50 years after his death. As Wegener pointed out in an article published in 1915, the land masses on the Earth were joined together about 500 million years ago, and this large mass, called Pangaea, was located in the South Pole.

Approximately 180 million years ago, Pangaea divided into two parts, which drifted in different directions. One of these giant continents was Gondwana, which included Africa, Australia, Antarctica and India. The second one was Laurasia, which included Europe, North America and Asia, except for India. Over the next 150 million years following this separation, Gondwana and Laurasia divided into smaller parts.

These continents, that emerged after the split of Pangaea, have been constantly moving on the Earth's surface at a rate of several centimetres per year, and in the meantime changing the sea to land ratios of the Earth.

Discovered as a result of the geological research carried out at the beginning of the 20th century, this movement of the Earth's crust is explained by scientists as follows:

The crust and the uppermost part of the mantle, with a thickness of about 100 kms., are divided into segments called plates. There are six major plates, and several small ones. According to the theory called plate tectonics, these plates move about on Earth, carrying continents and ocean



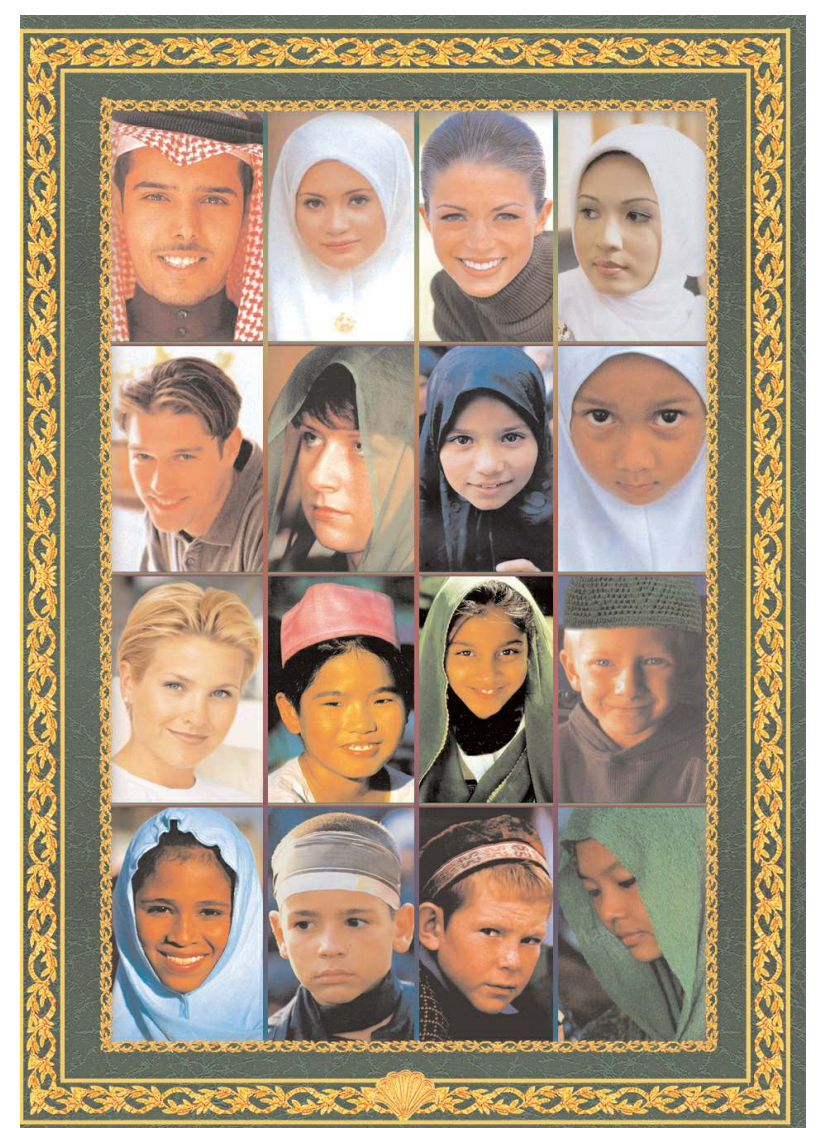
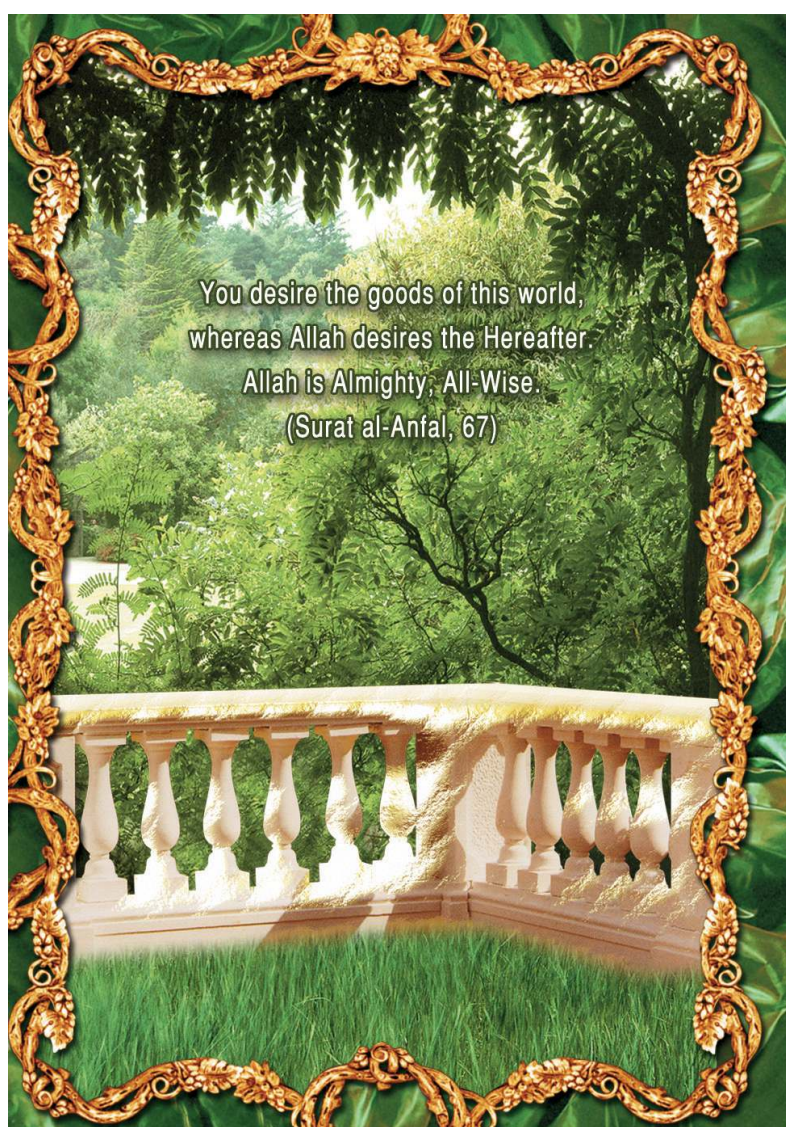
floor with them. Continental motion has been measured at from 1-5 cm per year. As the plates continue to move about, this will produce a slow change in Earth's geography. Each year, for instance, the Atlantic Ocean becomes slightly wider.

There is an important point that needs to be stated here: Allah referred to the motion of mountains as drifting in a verse of the Qur'an. Today, modern scientists also use the term "continental drift" for this motion.

Continental drift is something that could not have been observed at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, though Allah clearly indicated how it was to be understood: "You see the mountains you reckoned to be solid" in the verse. Though, He further described this action in the following verse, stating that the mountains were going past like clouds. As has been indicated, attention is clearly drawn to the movement of the layer in which the mountains are fixed.

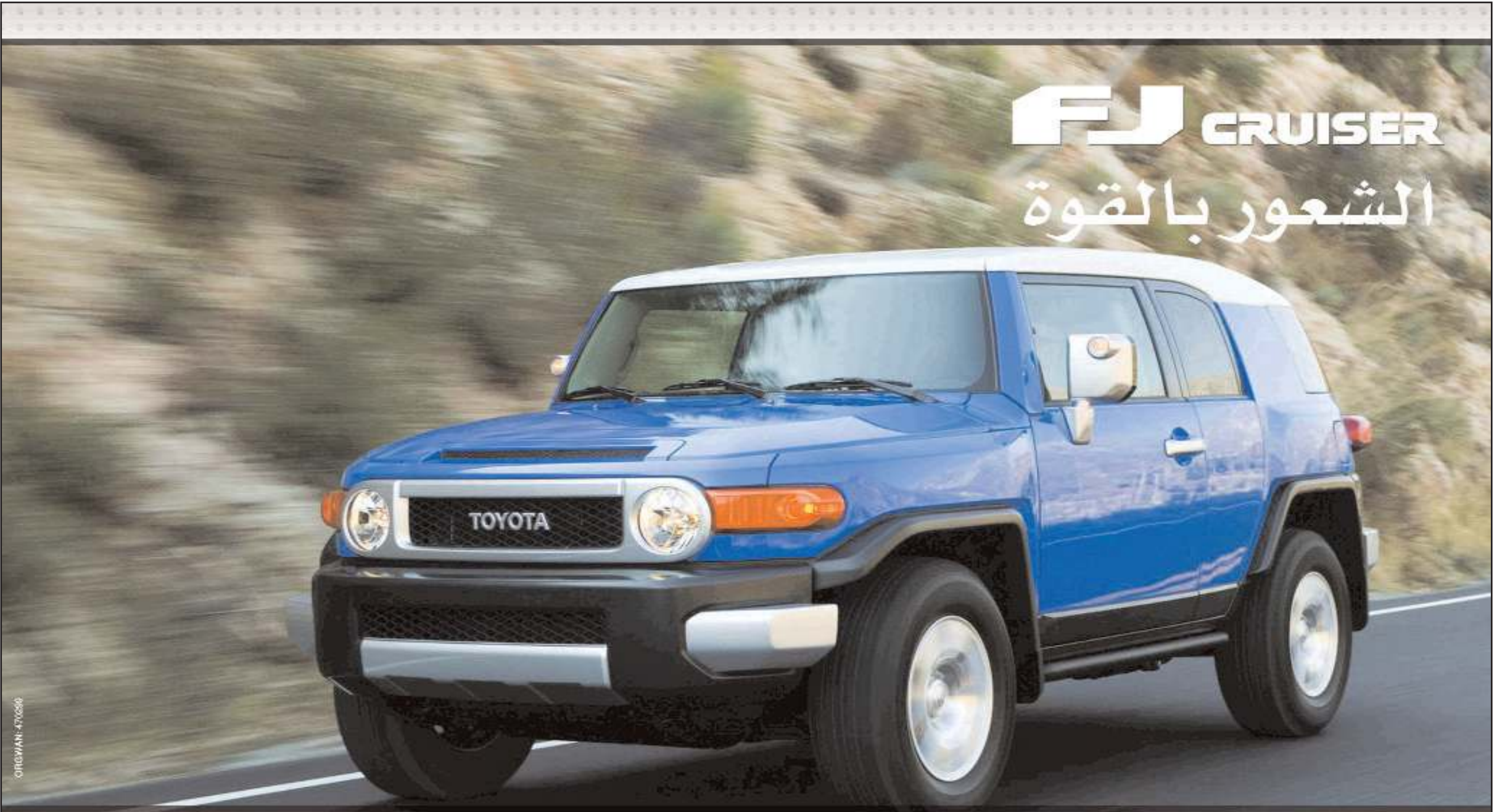
It is without doubt a great miracle that this scientific fact, only recently discovered by science, should have been revealed in the 7th century, when conceptions of the nature of the universe were based on superstition and myth. This is another very important proof that the Qur'an is the word of Allah. (For further reference, please see, Miracles of the Qur'an, by Harun Yahya)

To purchase the works of Harun Yahya, please visit www.bookglobal.net





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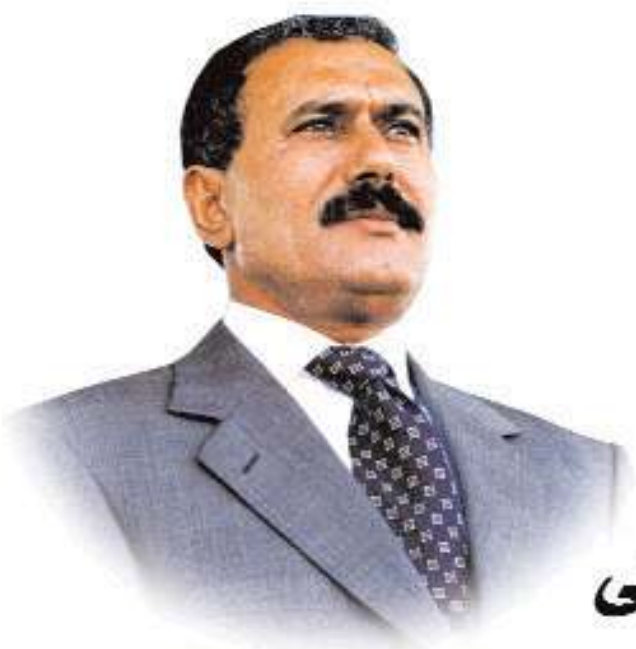
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children

Open meals for fasters, a feature of Yemeni society in Ramadan

By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy
For Yemen Times

In some Yemeni cities, it is a common feature of the Holy Month to find open meals for fasters in places like mosques, markets, and homes. People offer such open meals as a religious and social prestige that characterizes Yemeni society, reflecting a sense of cooperation, mercy, and intimacy among the people.

Such a custom is remarkably good for poor people as well as those who do not live with their families. Actually, the people follow the prophet's (Peace be upon Him) Hadieth that says "he who breakfasts any faster gets as many rewards from Allah as that faster gets, though his rewards are not decreased". This is the religious aspect of this custom which makes some people run to do it almost every year. Mohammed Hassan says: "I do this to help poor people and those who do not have families".

Though the aim is more or less the same, such meals differ from one place to another. The place and people invited are not, moreover, the same in all cases as elaborated below:

Some people take only some food items like dates, soup, samosa, and juice or coffee to mosques, where it is open for all fasters to share. In this case, all are invited, no distinction between a rich and a poor, or a friend, or an enemy. "I take only breakfast to mosques, where I leave it open for any one", said Nageed Ba'adany, who used



A small restaurant in Taiz: Hustle and bustle of last minute preparations before the Iftar time.

to take breakfast items to the mosque of his residence.

For some people, taking only breakfast to mosques is not enough because it is either expected by some fasters to get dinner also, or because such people get it a chance to help them. A negative aspect in bringing food to mosques is noticeably seen in this month "The mosques get dirty in Ramadan because of the breakfast and sometimes dinner food", said Shawlaq Mosque's Imam.

In some markets, the street sellers have their breakfast and dinner in the places where they sell their items. Though some of them get food from their homes, or buy it from restaurants, they also get food from their neighbors. Maged Al-gonaid, a Qat seller, said: "I

can not go home early for breakfast and dinner. Sometimes food is sent from home. Two people working in the same market bring food for me as well."

Some people leave the doors of their homes open at the sun-set. Not all of them, however, invite fasters for breakfast and dinner. Due to some (almost) financial circumstances, some people invite people to have only breakfast at homes. This happens in rare cases because it is not a show of respect and social prestige to invite people only for breakfast and not dinner as well. In some cases breakfast and dinner are offered at the same time, while in others, the sun-set prayer separates the two meals.

Some people invite only specific

acquaintances, e.g. friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. "I invite my relatives, friends, neighbors especially those who do not live with their families in the city", said Abdulhakeem. In this, a kind of intimacy, love, and respect is created among people who breakfast, then pray, and have dinner together. In such meals, people meet, discuss common affairs,

and may establish good relations. "I rarely meet my relatives. But in Ramadan I can meet them daily in one of the relative's home where we are invited for breakfast and dinner", said Abdulah Mahdi.

However, there could be a negative aspect in this. Inviting only particular persons for such meals may create a kind of a social barrier between poor and rich people. Here, some persons are invited just as a courtesy. As a result, poor and those who are in need for such meals are ignored. The main aim of these meals is, therefore, broken, and people may not get the expected rewards.

A poor man expressed his anger towards such people when he

described a neighbor's case saying "I sometimes want to have breakfast at his home because I can not go to restaurants, or any other nearby place. But I feel that he is only inviting well-looking, and highly-ranked people though I am his neighbor".

On the contrary, some families leave the door open to whoever wants to share. Abdurahman wonders "why invite only some people rather than others since it is only for Allah's sake, I want all to come". This represents a state of equality for all.

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