



AUBE– Students' association of Beni Isguen

aubeonline47 

Mزاب valley, Algeria

Lectures with Professor Nidhal Guessoum

*Report written by Khaled Meghnine
March 2017*

Introduction:



The Mzab valley is a region situated 600 km in the south of Algiers. The Mzab consists of 7 different cities, among which Beni Isguen (Founded in the 14th century). The students association of Beni Isguen was created in the 1980s in order to reinforce bonds between the students of the city, wherever they may be, and help them prosper in their respective fields.

In the context of Science education activities of our association, Professor Nidhal Guessoum, the remarkable Algerian astrophysicist, science educator, and thinker was invited to travel from his university in UAE in order to visit the Mzab valley and address teachers, students and astronomy amateurs. However, due to the professional commitments of professor Nidhal (currently in a research trip to Paris-France) online lectures were the option chosen for this time.

It was agreed to have two online lectures, one on latest cosmic discoveries, and the second on Science and Islam. The lectures were open for students, teachers, astronomy amateurs, through (but not limited to) registrations (see table below).

Location of lectures:

Place: The meeting house of At Smail tribe¹ (1st floor for females, ground level for males).

Time:

- Saturday 25th March 2017, 09h30 am to 12h00. **First Lecture.**
- Sunday 26th March 2017, 16h30 to 19h00. **Second Lecture.**

¹ One of Beni Isguen's dedicated infrastructures for weddings, meetings, and other social activities.

First lecture: *The latest cosmic discoveries & their implications.*

Presence: 41 (38 males and 3 females). (Teachers, astronomy amateurs and students).

The lecture was clear, informative, enjoyable, and the answers to questions were clear and convincing.

Second lecture: *Islam and Science, the problems and the solutions.*

Presence: 53 (43 male and 10 female). (Science, and theology teachers, high school teachers, and university students).

The lecture was clear and informative, however the presentation was cut short in order to allow more time for questions and answers, as the topic requires more discussion. Professor Nidhal explained eloquently his Averroesian (Rushdian) approach to harmonize Science and Islam. This approach was (for many people in the audience) a deep, enlightened and new perception, needing further reading and discussions.

Organizational remarks:

- The internet flow, sound and image were overall good.
- Two internet backup plans (4G modems) were considered but the only line used was the DSL line.
- A test was done one day before the lecture with Pr. Nidhal to check settings and be ready to go.
- Communication was through AUBE's FB page and announcements.

Impact and Follow-up:

- Professor Nidhal's Averroesian approach is one of the most promising solutions to the issues between Science and Islam. We have already presented it in limited contexts in the past few years, however, this lecture was the first time to present it for a wider public in our city by the professor himself, having more impact on our teachers and students.
- The lectures were an opportunity to meet new enthusiastic people about the subject of Islam and Science. A facebook group will be created to link them all. And reading workshops will eventually be organized to group-read the books of Nidhal (and other books in the topic).
- The eager to meet professor Nidhal in person and learn from him in a face-to-face experience has grown even bigger among our students. Such a meeting is promised by the professor to hopefully be in the near future.
- These teleconferences were an opportunity for the audience to discover a new way of cutting distances short through online lectures. This success will open new horizons for learning and education in our city.

Special thanks

We thank Professor Nidhal Guessoum for his precious time and enthusiastic efforts to share his knowledge with our students and teachers despite his numerous commitments. We are indeed grateful.

We thank the teachers and researchers who joined us and contributed to the discussion, in particular M Brahim Hadjout, Kacem Bankih, Abdallah Bekkay, Dr. Mohamed Quinten and Cheikh Mustapha Bendrissou.

We thank At Smail, for opening their place to us and for their support.

We thank each and every one of the students and graduates who helped make this a success

Khaled Meghnine
Beni Isguen- 28th March 201