



By Mohammad Al-Issa

As tensions mount in the Middle East, it might be easy from the West to imagine the Islamic world locked in an internecine political struggle, with each side wielding threats of open conflict and the violent rhetoric of exclusion. Beyond the testy politics, however, Islamic religious leaders are speaking in greater unison than ever before. The message we are advancing is one of moderate Islam, and the promotion of peace, tolerance and love.

In May, I gathered with more than 1,200 Muslim leaders, scholars, academics and religious teachers in Mecca for the Muslim World League's Conference on Moderation. We represented more than 139 countries and 27 different Islamic sects. Our four days of discussions focused on combating the global rise in hate speech and political intolerance plaguing so many of our communities. We did not obsess over Shiite vs. Sunni or the questions of theological interpretation that have proved so divisive over time. Certainly, no one in our congregation recited "Death to America," "A curse on the Jews" or any of the other political slogans so often deployed by the extremists, and so regularly replayed in television hits, newspaper quotes and rapid-fire retweets. Instead, our mission centered on advancing harmony among Muslims, and coexistence between Muslims and everyone else. After the horrifying terrorist attacks on the Islamic community

## Charter of Makkah: A Blueprint for Global Harmony

in Christchurch, New Zealand, and similar atrocities against synagogues in the United States and churches in Sri Lanka, we know we have a global problem.

Our solution is the Charter of Mecca, a document of groundbreaking frankness that received the endorsement of the entirety of the Islamic scholars who participated. It received political backing as well through its first signatory, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. The charter's 30 points send a clear message not just to the Muslim world but to the entire global community and worshippers of all faiths: We must put aside our differences and embrace our religious and cultural diversity. For isolated and independent of one another, we will never overpower the voices of hate.

We have a great challenge before us. Everywhere we look, we see old divides and outdated superstitions calcifying. We see the forces of intolerance and fanaticism finding new followers, spurred by social media and a culture that magnifies our disagreements and ignores our commonalities. How do we win this battle? From the Muslim world, it starts with commitments the likes of which we have never formally adopted or connected to tolerance.

Our charter demands that we safeguard natural resources and

manage industrial development; support climate treaties, fight hunger and poverty; eliminate disease and discrimination, and preserve the human rights of all people, including women and minorities. It includes a special obligation to empower women through social equality and economic opportunity, and to reject any effort that is disrespectful or marginalizing toward women.

We will take each of these commitments home with us, and exhort our community members to adhere to them. We must. It is impossible not to feel that we have reached an inflection point in history. We can climb the roughhewn ladder toward greater unity and cooperation, or slide down the convenient chute of conflict and divisiveness. For me,

dialogue.

Islam can play a leading role. The charter provides a blueprint for how the Muslim world should interact with other faith traditions, including precise guidance on how we ought to welcome differences and affirm our common ethical, social and environmental values. It demands that we go beyond mere theory and empty slogans by taking concrete actions to reconcile, not radicalize, our future generations. In short, it compels us to choose the ladder over the chute, no matter how difficult the climb.

This is the objective at the heart of



**As the Charter of Mecca instructs us, we must build cultural and religious ties among each other, deepen understanding between different communities, construct civilized partnerships, stand arm-in-arm against hatred and declare now and forever more that every culture is a reflection of God's will, with an inviolable right to exist.**



the choice is obvious. It is the only viable choice.

As the Charter of Mecca instructs us, we must build cultural and religious ties among each other, deepen understanding between different communities, construct civilized partnerships, stand arm-in-arm against hatred and declare now and forevermore that every culture is a reflection of God's will, with an inviolable right to exist. We must view every conflict in the world as an opportunity for

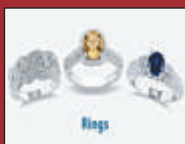
the Charter of Mecca, which we would ask everyone to embrace. We must all be leaders in building the world we want to live in.

(Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa is secretary-general of the Muslim World League, Chairman of the CRL Responsible Leaders Summit and President of the International Organization of Muslim Scholars, based in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. This article is extracted from [newsweek.com](http://newsweek.com))

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## Hazza Al Mansouri: The First Emirati in Space

**Riyadh:** It was a sleepy afternoon in Saudi Arabia, just days before schools were due to start after summer vacation. Fifty years ago today, Saudis joined the world in gathering around TV sets to watch a live broadcast of what was once thought impossible: American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin took man's first steps on the moon.

Armstrong famously said: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." True



**Hazza Al-Mansoori**

to his words, advancement in space has skyrocketed since the Apollo 11 mission, opening up doors for space scientists to reach for the stars. It was only 16 years later that Saudi Prince Sultan bin Salman became the first Arab and Muslim astronaut to travel into space. Before traveling to Houston for the Apollo mission anniversary, he sat down with Arab News in an exclusive interview to talk about his NASA mission aboard the space shuttle Discovery in June 1985.

It has been more than 30 years since space last had an Arab visitor (Syria's Muhammed Faris became the second Arab in space on board USSR's Soyuz spacecraft in 1987). But this September, the first Emirati will become the latest Arab visitor when he joins a team of astronauts. Hazza Al-Mansoori will travel to space on board a Soyuz-MS 15 spacecraft that is due to take off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Sept. 25.

## Middle East Schools Struggle to Stamp out Physical Punishment

Beatings and violent physical punishments persist in many Middle East schools despite international laws banning abuse of children and widespread concern about the effects of corporal punishment. Physical abuse is a grim reality in schools in the region, according to recent studies by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and UNICEF, which highlight Lebanon as a country of key concern. The use of corporal punishment is one of the leading factors behind Lebanon's rising school dropout rate, the HRW report said. Bill Van Esveld, senior researcher for children's rights at HRW, told Arab News that reports suggest that up to 76 percent of schoolchildren in Lebanon have been physically abused by teachers. Beatings involved being whipped with an electric cable, or struck with rulers or classroom objects, and often resulted in broken bones. In the UAE, physical punishment in state schools was banned in 1998, while in Saudi Arabia the Ministry of

Education has told schools to ban hitting and beating students. In 2017, Saudi Arabia also announced it was launching a campaign called No Hit Zone, which aimed to show parents alternative methods of disciplining a child. However, in many schools, the old adage "spare the rod, spoil the child" continues to play a part in the classroom.

Van Esveld said there is a lack of data about the prevalence of corporal punishment in other Middle East and North African (MENA) countries, but HRW is beginning research into the problem. UNICEF has also highlighted widespread corporal punishment, both in the classroom and in the home, in its latest report, "Violent Discipline in the MENA Region." Of 85 million children (aged between two and 14) in the region, 71 million are estimated to have experienced some form of violent discipline.

(Extracted from arabnews.com)

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## Australian University Supports Islamic Museum Art Prize

Australia's La Trobe University will be supporting the Islamic Museum of Australia's annual Muslim artists exhibition as a major sponsor, offering a \$15,000 Art Prize. The university's Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar said the partnership reinforces the University's commitment to connecting with all communities and transforming lives through education.



The museum is located in suburban Thornbury, Melbourne. Planned since 2010, the dream of launching Australia's first-ever

Islamic Museum came true in early 2014 in a bid to highlight Muslim contributions in Australia and address misconceptions about Islam. Constructed with a budget of \$10 million, the museum presents the tenets of Islam through various forms of art.

Muslims, who have been in Australia for more than 200 years, make up 1.7 percent of its 20-million population.

*Haj Mubarak to all the Hajis. Wishing you all very happy EID UL ZUHA,*

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## Now Available a Toll Free Number

To Help Combat Mob Lynching: 1800-3133-60000

On behalf of #UnitedAgainstHate, a toll free number was launched in Delhi Press Club yesterday recently, against mob lynching and other hate crimes. Famous lawyers, social workers, professors and senior journalists from the country spoke about this launch program and appreciated this toll free helpline service. Introducing this helpline service, Nadeem Khan of United Against Hate said that "We are



launching a toll free helpline in view of rising cases of mob attacks and hate crimes in the country. We will try to help the victims of such assaults and help them get them justice in the courts."

The aim of the Helpline Center

is to help in the speedy justice to the victims of mob lynching, by reporting the incidents right away in media, documenting them and providing judicial help, and also to prepare a document of such attacks and

build phased movement around it.

The toll Free number 1800-3133-60000 was released at the end of the programme.

(Extracted from twocircles.net)

## Dr Kafeel Khan Launches Book

Dr .Kafeel Khan's book 'Manipal Manual of clinical paediatrics' was launched on 14<sup>th</sup> July at Café Jamia, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi. Dr.Harjit Singh Bhatti -IMA spokesman, Dr Amrendra – President RDA AIIMS & Dr Abdullah released the book, which was distributed to the interns and MBBS students present there. Dr. Khan shared that he was approached by several people from both within and outside the medical fraternity to write a book about his experiences in jail and the treatment meted to him under the leadership of Yogi Adityanath the Chief



Minister of Uttar Pradesh. However he decided to write 'Manipal Manual of clinical paediatrics' for this year.

"This manual contains a number of mnemonics/ tables/ charts/ diagrams/ formulas and easy to remember principles which will enable easy registration and recall of the

clinical aspect of paediatrics", he said at the launch. "And I hope it encourages more and more young people into taking up medicine as a profession". The doctors present for the occasion congratulated the author for this excellent addition to the medical student's book shelf. They wished Dr Kafeel good luck for his future endeavours.

The event was organized by Students Union AIIMS President Mukul and Gen Sec Ankush Garg and attended by more than 100 students.

(Extracted from twocircles.net)

## Tobacco Gives J&K its Highest Tax Revenue

Jammu and Kashmir is fast emerging as the 'smoking capital' of the North.

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), among the four Indian states with the highest prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), recorded tobacco sales worth Rs 5,530 crore over seven years to 2017-18, according to state sales tax data exclusively accessed by IndiaSpend. This is the equivalent of the funds needed to construct four state-of-the-art hospitals along the lines of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Jammu.

COPD, typified by coughing, wheezing and breathlessness, is the second most frequent killer disease in India, responsible for the death of almost 1 million Indians in 2017, IndiaSpend

reported in March 2018. Caused by the inflammation of the lung's airways, it destroys the air sacs that extract oxygen and expel carbon dioxide.

Air pollution and smoking have been established as the primary reasons for COPD in India.

J&K witnesses widespread burning of biomass fuel for cooking and heating, as well as widespread smoking, which together cause a 16-18% prevalence rate for COPD in the state, while the national average is 5-7%, said Sundeep Salvi, director of the Pune-based Chest Research Foundation.

In J&K, acute exacerbation of COPD (AECOPD) in about 470,000 chronic patients

annually costs around Rs 210 crore, enough to set up four maternity hospitals, one study has estimated. "Jammu and Kashmir is fast emerging as the 'smoking capital' of the north," The Economic Times reported in February 2015, citing sources at the Voluntary Health Association of India.

One in five, or 20.8%, of J&K's people smoke, against the national average of 10.7%, according to the Global Tobacco Survey 2016-17. The state ranks the sixth highest among Indian states by smoking habits as per this survey.

(Extracted from an article by AtharParvaiz that appeared on sabrangindia.in)

## Tabrez Lynching

Jamiat Ulema files petition in Jharkhand HC

Jamiat Ulama has braced itself to provide justice to Tabrez Ansari who was mob lynched in Jharkhand. On the direction of President Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind Maulana Arshad Madani, a writ petition was filed in Jharkhand High Court demanding immediate implementation of Supreme Court's order and putting the errant police officers and doctors on trial. It also demanded compensation of 50

lakh to Ansari's widow. The body sought hearing of the case in fast track court.

Tabrez Ansari died on June 22, after being beaten by a mob which forced him to chant "Jai Shri Ram" and "Jai Hanuman" in Jharkhand. His family was also allegedly threatened by police when it begged for him to be given treatment while he was bleeding profusely in custody.

(Taken from siasat.com)

## Telangana Muslim Marriage Bureau

Free Service to Poor Muslims

The Telangana Muslim Marriage Bureau Welfare Association offers free service to poor Muslims who cannot afford to bear the cost of marriage."The Telangana Muslim Marriage Bureau Welfare Association works for the underprivileged by helping them get married just by taking 1500 to 2000 rupees. And this association is not just limited to Hyderabad, but all over the state of Telangana," Telangana Muslim Marriage Bureau Welfare Association Vice President Shaikh Kareem Feroz

said while speaking to ANI. "The main reason behind conducting this meeting is to inform people that we are starting our branches in other parts of Telangana. We even help NRIs in getting married. We do have branches in foreign countries as well. Apart from that, we also want to inform people that we would come forward to help the poor who cannot afford to get married by providing them with free service. We don't even charge them even after the marriage," he added.

## Over One lakh Muslims Seek Anti-Lynching Law

**Malegaon:** Some 97 years after seven freedom fighters were hanged by the British, Malegaon's "Shahidon ki Yaadgaar" (martyrs' memorial) monument witnessed an equally important historic event, according to the organisers, with at least 1 lakh people from the Muslim community congregating at the historical site in response to a call for a law against mob lynching. Clerics of Jamiat

Ulema, the umbrella NGO which called for the silent protest, urged governments to take note that on a "weak call" the entire textile town had "come out to safeguard the Constitution". They said, "We do not seek revenge, and don't believe in violence. We believe in the rule of law."The rally had people merging at Malegaon fort before making their way to the martyrs' monument.

(Indianexpress.com)

... إِنَّهُ وَعَلَيْمُ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

المائدة: ١٣

He knows what is in every heart

Surah Mulk [67:13]

## UK Filmmaker to Combat Hatred and Extremism

A Muslim filmmaker who worked on a Star Wars film and has produced four short films for a £1.2m project to "tackle hatred, extremism and terrorism". Rizwan Wadan, 38, who lives in Luton (UK), is behind The Error in Terror project and wants to

"give Muslims a voice". He said "negativity" towards Muslims is "getting worse". By taking skills learnt "stabilising cameras" in the industry, he wants to "stabilise the world", he said. "Positive stories need to be highlighted," he said, so he put in £70,000 of his own

money to get the project off the ground along with funding from other investors. He has made four films that have been inspired by "tragic real life events": Martyrs: a

story about acts of far-right terrorism. Characters: a drama about making people to rethink their views. Terrorism Has No Religion: a film intended to deter acts of terrorism. The Bag Thief: a comedy short about conceptions of a Muslim with a bag "There is so much negativity in films, drama, news and since 9/11. It's getting worse and

worse," Wadan said. "If the visual image is dividing us, then it's through the visual image we can bring people together." Wadan is based at Pinewood Studios in Iwer Heath, Buckinghamshire and he said he had ambitions to start a British Muslim Film Institute.

(Taken from BBC News)

## Muslims Have the Highest Life Satisfaction Suggests Study

Muslims people feel the most satisfied with their lives because they feel more 'oneness,' or connection than people of other faiths, a new study suggests. Measuring life satisfaction is about as close to quantifying 'happiness' as we have been able to get thus far, and a German psychologist's new study suggests that a feeling of 'oneness' predicts overall contentment. And when the researchers divided their 67,562 survey respondents by religion, Muslims felt the greatest sense of oneness. The new research from the University of Mannheim, Germany, has revealed that Muslims are most satisfied with life, thanks to their belief in the concept of oneness. The study suggests that people who believe in

a divine principle underlying all being and that all things in the world have a common source are more satisfied with their lives than those who do not share this belief. The single most important tenet in Islam is that of 'Tawhid'. The belief that Allah is One with no partner or associate in His Lordship, divinity or names and attributes. So, it's perhaps no surprise that Muslims feel the greatest sense of oneness. Research from a number of disciplines, including religion, philosophy and psychology have suggested that varying types of connectedness lead to an overarching sense of well-being. Unsurprisingly, atheists had the lowest level of satisfaction due to a disconnection to others or a higher power.

## 38 Muslims Pass UP Judicial Services 2018 Exam

A total of 38 Muslims, including 18 girls, are among 610 candidates who have passed the Uttar Pradesh Judicial Service Civil Judge (JR. DIV.) Exam 2018 result of which was declared on July 20. As many

as 7 students from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Residential Coaching Academy (RCA) are also among the candidates who have passed the exam.

(Extracted from ummid.com)

لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ ۚ إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

Labbayk Allaahumma labbayk, labbayk laa shareeka laka labbayk, 'innal-hamda wan niyamata, laka walmulk, laa shareeka laka



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# Colouring Her Way Out of Depression

**Seher's first art exhibition titled 'Colouring the wounds away' was held recently from July 11- 14th in the Academy of Fine Arts and Literature, Delhi.**



**S**heer Hashmi Raza, felt melancholic for no reason at all even as a child. And she did not know the reason. No one did. They could not understand why a little girl would be so gloomy without reason. Her parents thought it was a child sulking or acting glum. It took quite some years before she was taken to a psychiatrist, who diagnosed her ailment as clinical depression which explained why Seher did not have any interest in any of the activities or sometimes felt suicidal.

Says Seher, "The reason why I used to be depressed could be biological, you know, because I don't really know my real parents. I was an abandoned child and adopted from a children's home. I was 7 when my mother told me I was adopted. But my parents did not give up on me, they tried every possible thing to keep me occupied and come out of depression. My ailment was identified when I was a teenager. And I have been taking treatment."

As a child she was fond of playing with colours. And even subconsciously she used to draw trees all the time, trees of different sizes and colours. And colouring became an anti-depressant for Seher ever since, she says.

#### **Inclination towards Trees**

"It gives me a lot of peace when I make trees" Seher explains when asked about her inclination towards trees. Without any formal training in painting, she

Daughter of Shabnam Hashmi and scientist Gauhar Raza, Seher has also done a diploma course from NIFT and is a fashion stylist.

transformed her moods into beautiful paintings that caught the attention of everyone at home and their friends. "My counsellors and parents have played a major role in making a painter out of me. And now I have had my own first art exhibition" she said with happiness to TwoCircles.net. Seher's first art exhibition titled 'Colouring the wounds away' was held recently from July 11- 14th in the Academy of Fine Arts and Literature, Delhi. "On the first day itself, 68 of my paintings have been sold out of the 140 paintings" she said excitedly. She uses ink, permanent markers and sometimes even crayons to make her paintings. "My loneliness and depression inspire me to draw".

#### **Keep Yourself Occupied**

Seher has something to stay about the stigma associated with mental illnesses like depression. "It is nice that people are coming out of the closet about depression these days. But still people associate depression with madness and call such people crazy." "I want to tell people who want to get out of

depression; you have to keep yourself occupied and take up something that you are passionate about. If you are idle depression gets hold of you and then things start becoming worse", she says.

Seher is planning to have more such art exhibitions in different cities in India. And she also has plans to have her own little shop where she can sell her paintings, personalised diaries with her paintings in it and other items which will have her artistic touch to it. Daughter of the famous activist Shabnam Hashmi and scientist Gauhar Raza, Seher has also done a diploma course from NIFT and is a fashion stylist.

(Extracted from twocircles.net)

## Kashmiri Pizza Delivery Boy becomes Sub-Inspector

**Srinagar:** Currently undergoing training at the Udhampur police training academy, the journey from Pizza delivery boy to a man stands tall in Khaki with stars glittering on his shoulder, is not an easy one for Moin Khan. But, he credits his achievement to IPS officer Sandeep Chaudhary who runs coaching classes 'Operation Dreams' free of cost.

Khan, a 28-year old from a penury-ridden family picked up petty works to earn for over seven years after the tragic accident of his father Mohammed Sharief in 2009. From working as a waiter to a car washer and to a helper at a grocery store, Khan, along with pursuing academics, did ever job to fend his family. "I belong to Thanda Pani village in Nagrota constituency of Jammu district. My parents are illiterate and I am the first graduate in the family," Khan said.

After completing his graduation in Commerce via correspondence in 2012, Khan joined Pizza Hut as a waiter for a salary of Rs 2,500 per month for three years and simultaneously pursued BBA. Eventually, he came across a notification for the recruitment of

Sub-Inspectors in 2016 and applied for it. "A friend told me about 'Operation Dreams' being run by an IPS officer at a banquet hall where students from weaker sections were taught free of cost. I joined the classes which helped me crack the exams. In December last year, results were declared and a week ago I joined the police training academy at Udhampur," reported Hindustan Times.

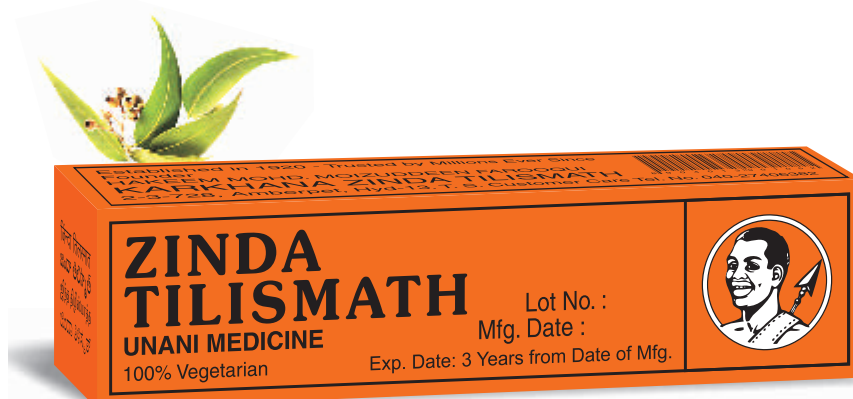
Sandeep Chaudhary, senior superintendent of police Shopian, has started 'Operation Dreams' with an aim to give free coaching classes for aspiring students coming from varied backgrounds to crack competitive examinations so as to achieve their goals. "We began Operation Dreams in Jammu where I would teach 150 students from 8am to 10am. Moin Khan worked very hard and cracked the physical, written and interview stage of the examination. I am proud of him." "His is a story of pure grit. It is quite a journey from a Pizza Hut waiter to a police sub-inspector. No excuse is big enough to crush our dreams," Chaudhary said.

(Extracted from siasat.com)

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# Imam Abubakar Abdullahi

Muslim cleric who hid Christians during attacks honoured



The US government is honoring an 83-year-old Muslim cleric who hid 262 Christians in his home and mosque during an attack in central Nigeria. Imam Abubakar Abdullahi, along with four religious leaders from Sudan, Iraq, Brazil and Cyprus, were awarded the 2019 International Religious Freedom Award, which is given to advocates of

religious freedom. Abdullahi was recognized for providing shelter for hundreds of Christians fleeing attacks from Muslim herdsmen who had launched coordinated attacks on Christian farmers in 10 villages in the Barkin Ladi area of Plateau State. The cleric refused to give them up when their attackers asked about their whereabouts, International Religious Freedom

Ambassador Sam Brownback said at the awards ceremony in Washington. "The imam gave refuge to his Christian neighbors, sheltering 262 Christians in his mosque and his home.... then stood outside the doors confronting the Muslim attackers, pleading with them to spare the lives of the Christians inside, even offering to exchange his own life for theirs,"

Brownback said. "His actions bear witness to true courage, true selflessness, and true brotherly love," he said.

More than 80 people were killed in the attacks by suspected herdsmen who also set fire on many homes in the villages. Violence between the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, who are mostly Muslims, and farmers, who are predominantly Christians, in Nigeria's middle belt dates back to 2013.

The State Department, organizers of the award, given to advocates of religious freedom, said the Muslim cleric selflessly

risked his own life to save members of another religious community who without his intervention would have been killed.





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# Jewish leaders donate \$1 million to New Zealand mosque victims

Jewish community leaders joined Muslim officials in Christchurch (New Zealand), to hand over a million dollars raised in an American city for the victims of the Christchurch mosque attacks.

Following the 15 March shooting, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh raised over \$900,000 for Christchurch Muslims. The act of generosity



**New Zealand Jewish Council president Stephen Goodman (front left) and Asher Levi Etherington (front right) show Muslim visitors a Torah at a Christchurch Synagogue.**

was inspired after Muslims rallied around the Jewish community when an armed shooter opened fire in a Synagogue in Pittsburgh, killing 11 people in October last year. At a lunch time ceremony, the New Zealand Jewish Council president, handed over a cheque to the Christchurch Foundation, to establish the Abrahamic fund. For members of the Muslim and Jewish faith, the ceremony was much more than just a transferral of money from one faith to another. It was an opportunity to explore the other's religion, as Jewish and Muslim leaders were taken on a tour of each religion's respective places of worship. The visits saw Muslims and Jews realise just how many similarities they shared.

Federation of Islamic Associations New Zealand spokesperson, Dr Anwar Ghani's first time in a synagogue, was an experience he thought both communities could learn from. "The similarities between the two faith groups is just unreal. This is also something we need to be promoting within our own communities, that people should visit places of worship so that we improve understanding about each other."

After their respective visits, both groups joined Christchurch mayor Lianne Dalziel for lunch and the launch of the Abrahamic fund. During her address, the 30



**Dr Anwar Ghani (red) takes the Jewish visitors on a tour of a Christchurch Mosque.**

or so people gathered in the Mayor's lounge collectively nodded their heads when Ms Dalziel said the donation was an extraordinary gift. "The world will remember the response long after they remember the person

who committed this atrocity. They will never forget those whose lives were so cruelly taken on that day." New Zealand Jewish Council president Stephen Goodman signed the document to establish the new fund. He said the Christchurch Foundation would allocate the fund's money according to the needs of families affected by the attack.

New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies chief executive Vic Alhadeff travelled from Australia to deliver close to \$70,000 worth of money raised by Jews living in the state. He said it would have been easy to simply transfer the money, but

he wanted to send a message with his presence. "I wanted to come on behalf of the Jewish Board of Deputies to physically stand here and say we did this because we cared. That's why I wanted to come here and have a symbolic presence to show that we are all members of one humanity."

The agreement signed by the Jewish Council and the Christchurch Foundation, acknowledged that any allocation of funds would consider the interests of Muslims. The foundation would now consult with Christchurch's Muslim community to identify areas where support is needed.

## Muslim intellectuals welcome joint text with Catholics

The Document on Human Fraternity signed earlier this year by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayyeb, Grand Imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar during the Pope's trip to the United Arab Emirates has been hailed as "an unprecedented institutional event in the history of Christian-Muslim relations." In a text that runs to 15 pages and is entitled "The Brotherhood for Knowledge and Cooperation," 22 Muslim intellectuals and leaders have welcomed it as a sign that "a new phase is opening up, in different aspects, in the relations between our two religions." "This phase seems to be moving toward the recognition of the providential legitimacy and diversity of Revelations, theologies, religions, languages and religious communities," they



**Pope Francis and Al Azhar's Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayyeb greeting each other at the Vatican**

write. "Diversity is no longer seen as a call to conquest or proselytism, or a pretext for a simple facade of tolerance, but rather as an opportunity to

exercise and put into practice the fraternity which is "a vocation contained in God's plan for creation." Consequently, and by "respect

for religious plurality ... recognition of the other is necessary," the signatories also affirm. It is an acknowledgment that is "neither a forced uniformity nor a conciliatory syncretism, but instead "a warning against the risk of placing one group against the other or in the other's place."

Among the signatories are the Senegalese Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy and personalities who have long been involved in Islamic-Christian dialogue, such as the Algerian Mustafa Cherif and the Lebanese Mohammed Sammak. They were joined by muftis from Bosnia and Slovenia, the Grand Imam of the Lahore Mosque in Pakistan, a member of Kaiciid, a Saudi organization engaged in interfaith dialogue and based in Austria, as well as several representatives of Emirates organizations. Some Shia Muslims also signed the text, including the Iraqi Jawad al-Khoei.

Saughaat



## Europe's Oldest Mosque May Be Buried Underground in Spain

Spanish archaeologists have detected parts of a palace and a building that may be the oldest mosques in Europe, Live Science reported. They use a special geomagnetic instrument to reveal walls and other structures still buried underground. "Thanks to this new geomagnetic survey, we have learned that the space encircled by the city's walls was fully developed and that its population was large enough even to spill beyond the city's walls," said Noel Lenski, a professor of classics and history at Yale University. "Just as importantly, this was happening in a period long thought to be characterized

by urban decline and demographic collapse."

Without digging, the researchers used a geomagnetic instrument to reveal walls and other structures still buried underground at Reccopolis, which is in a rural area outside of Madrid. They found that the 1,400-year-old city was far more extensive than the ruins visible at the site today would suggest. "In every space that we were able to survey, we found buildings and streets and passages," study co-author Michael McCormick, a medieval historian and archaeologist at Harvard University, told Live Science.

The researchers found one large

building with a different orientation from all the other buildings on the site, toward Makkah. The floor plan also resembles that of mosques in the Middle East. McCormick says only excavations will be able to confirm that the building is indeed a mosque. But if it is, it could possibly be the oldest remaining mosque in Europe. There are nearly 1.3 million Muslims in Spain, making up 3 percent of the country's 45 million population. Muslims ruled much of Spain for centuries starting from 711 to 1492. Their last king was defeated by the Catholic king and queen, Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1492.

## Africa's First Mosque Renovated



Believed to be the first mosque in Africa, Al-Najashi mosque in Ethiopia has been drawing more visitors after been renovated recently by a Turkish aid agency. The mosque is located in the town

of Wugro, 790 kilometers north of Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, Al-Najashi mosque is said to be the first mosque in Africa. The mosque stands majestically on a spacious location, which also is said to be the

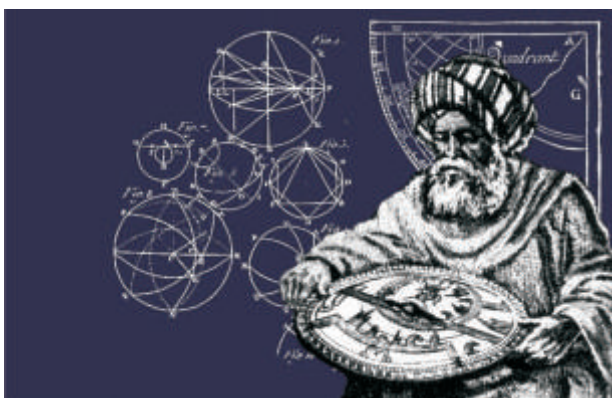
site of 15 tombs of the Prophet's companions. It is named after Nejashi, the then Ethiopian king who hosted companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who escaped persecution in Makkah.

The mosque has been renovated by the Turkish Coordination and Cooperation Agency (T KA). Ali Mohammed Ibrahim, the imam of the mosque, said he is grateful to T KA for having renovated the mosque. "After the renovation, the number of visitors greatly increased," Ibrahim said. "Not only Muslims, but Christians are also coming here to visit the mosque and its proud history, which the heritage site is full of."

## This Muslim Astronomer Calculated the Length of the Solar Year Long Before the Use of Telescopes!

Al-Battani, also known by his Latinized name Albategnius, was an Arab astronomer and mathematician born in 858 C.E. in Harran, a state of Battan in modern-day Turkey. His full name was Abu Abdallah Mohammad ibn Jabir ibn Sinan al-Raqqi al-Harrani al-Sabi al-Battani. He is often regarded as one of the greatest Muslim astronomers and his discoveries to astronomy and trigonometry played a considerable role in the advancement of science in the Middle Ages.

Al-Battani's greatest fame came in Mathematics with the use of trigonometric ratios that are also used today. He also catalogued



489 stars and calculated the length of the solar year as 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 24 seconds, which was only minutes off the length later calculated using telescopes and atomic clocks. His notable book, Kitab az-Zij (Book of Astronomical tables) was translated into Latin by the name De Motu Stellarum ('On the

Motion of the Stars') by Plato of Tivoli in 1116, and appeared in 1537 and again in 1645. Al-Battani's work had a major influence on scientists such as Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo and Copernicus. In fact, Copernicus in his book *De Revolutionibus Orbium Celestium* expresses his indebtedness to Al-Battani since the latter was able to produce more accurate measurements of the motion of the Sun than Copernicus himself.

It is also worth noting that the trigonometric methods introduced back then even serve as the basis of how GPS systems work today.

(Extracted from mvslim.com)

## Inside a 700-Year-Old Mosque in Ghana

Located in the Northern Region of Ghana, the Larabanga mosque is the oldest in the country and also one of the oldest in West Africa. Built with mud and reeds, the mosque has two tall towers in a pyramidal shape, one for the mihrab and the other as a minaret. Despite the hot temperatures of the area, the mosque stays cool inside due to it



being constructed from mud. Every year after the rainy season, local residents come together and renew the mud on the outside of the mosque and repaint it.

## Tibet's Lhasa Mosque

### One of the Highest Mosques on Earth



Standing at more than 3650 meters above sea level, the Lhasa Great Mosque, also known as Hebalin Mosque, in Tibet, China, is deemed one of the highest mosques in the world. The mosque, originally built in 1716, underwent renovation in 1959, fully

transformed to what the building looks today. The mosque has a three-entrance courtyard which covers a total area of 2,600 m<sup>2</sup>. The buildup area covers an area of 1,300 m<sup>2</sup>. The building architecture is the traditional Zang architecture style and also combines religious and local features. It was built in Tibetan traditional style with circular arch and steeple. The interior of the mosque is decorated with Islamic decorative style flowers and plants.

## 1,200-Year-Old Mosque Discovered

**At the site, an open-air mosque was found, with a prayer niche facing south towards Makkah.**

Archaeologists in Israel have discovered the remains of one of the world's oldest rural mosques, built around the time Islam arrived in the region. The Israel Antiquities Authority estimates that the mosque, uncovered ahead of new construction in the Bedouin town of Rahat in the Negev desert, dates back to the 7th to 8th centuries. There are large mosques known to be from that period in Palestine and in the city of Makkah. But the antiquities authority said that it is rare to find a house of prayer so ancient whose congregation is likely to have been local farmers. Excavated at the site were the remains of an open-air mosque a rectangular building, about the size of a single-car



**An archaeologist gestures as he stands inside the remains of a mosque in the outskirts of the Bedouin town of Rahat. Reuters**

garage, with a prayer niche facing south towards Makkah. "This is one of the earliest mosques known from the beginning of the arrival of Islam in Israel, after the Arab conquest of 636 CE," said Gideon Avni of the antiquities authority.





In the beginning, Muslim pilgrims from India used to go for Haj by road, on camels and horses, and also by ship. It is only relatively recently that pilgrims started going by air. The Government of India, in order to facilitate Indian pilgrims in performing Haj have enacted an act of Parliament which is called "Haj Committee Act". Till 2016, the External Affairs Ministry or the Foreign Affairs Ministry was the nodal Ministry which was handling Haj affairs. But, after that the Ministry of Minority Affairs became the nodal ministry for this.

Till some decades ago, most Haj pilgrims from India went by ship, and a small percentage by air. The sea journey would take a minimum 6 to 7 days. The number of ships for the journey was only two. The entire process of performing the Haj used to take a very long time. The Saudi Government felt that the pilgrims stayed for a longer period in Saudi Arabia unnecessarily for performing Haj. Hence, both the Saudi and the Indian Government mutually agreed to discontinue the sea route and send the Haj



pilgrims by air.

Obviously, the difference in the cost of travelling by sea and travelling by air was considerable. The Government decided to subsidise the airfare to facilitate the Haj pilgrims who could not afford air fare. Over the last 25 years, the number of Indian pilgrims performing Haj has increased substantially and the airfare of the chartered air flights has also increased substantially. Questions were asked as to why the Government should subsidise religious pilgrims. Questions were also asked regarding the procedure of Hajj management and the chartered flights which led to Government paying a high subsidy. Allegations were also made that the subsidy made was not to the pilgrims but, rather, to Air India, which was handling the chartered Haj flights. Ultimately, the matter was taken up to the

## Haj Management

**When I was a Member of Parliament, I had raised issues of problems of pilgrims in the Parliament and in various public forums and suggested the creation in India of an institution like Tabung Haji.**



**By K. Rahman Khan**

Supreme Court, which directed the Government to gradually cut down the subsidy. At present, the entire subsidy is withdrawn and there is no subsidy for Haj, but the pilgrims have to pay the chartered flight fare which can be considerably more than the normal fare.

The costs for performance of Haj have gone up substantially. Another problem of the pilgrims is accommodation in Makkah and Madinah—the cost is rising steeply. Efforts need to be made to reform Haj management in India and to create a nodal agency to facilitate Indian pilgrims in performing Haj.

Among all the Muslim countries, Malaysia has a most viable Hajj management system. They have established an organisation called "Tabung Haji", which is parallel



to India's Haj Committee. Tabung Haji not only helps in the smooth performance of Haj by pilgrims from Malaysia, but also helps would-be pilgrims save money so that they can later perform Haj. Intending pilgrims are

encouraged to save from their earnings in order to perform Haj through Tabung Haji. So, the institution functions both as a Haj management institution and as a financial institution to mobilise savings from the would-be pilgrims so that they can have enough money to later perform Haj. Over the years, Tabung Haji has become a large financial institution, with a fund base of over 20 billion dollars.

When I was a Member of Parliament, I had raised issues of problems of pilgrims in the Parliament and in various public forums and suggested the creation in India of an institution like Tabung Haji. I do hope that an institution like Tabung Haji can be set up here, so that some much-needed reforms in Haj affairs can be made.

**(The author is former Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha)**

## Significance of Islamic Climate Change Declaration

To sustain the economic transformation over time, there is a need for strong and deep moral motivation for change. Religion can become a powerful part of the solution if we tap into this source of divine guidance through study and reflection and if this motivates us to act differently. The Islamic declaration on climate change, launched in Istanbul on 19th August 2015, is a profound example of the role of faith in informing and reforming sustainability dialogue. This makes faith-based climate engagement essential, considering that 84% of the

world's population is religiously affiliated, according to the Pew Research Center.

Islam counts amongst its faithful 1.6 billion people. Many of them, perhaps the majority, are in countries which are most vulnerable to climate change. The Muslim leadership can contribute to global discourse as manifested in the Islamic declaration of climate change. Muslims have a mandate and responsibility to channelize the spiritual and moral force of Islam towards the aspiration to build a sustainable human civilization and a low-emission climate resilient future.

## Kashmiri woman IAS officer raises awareness among girls

A 33-year-old Kashmiri woman IAS officer has gone beyond her routine administrative duties to address an otherwise 'forbidden subject' of stress and isolation among young girls in Kashmir during their menstrual periods.

Syed Sehrish Asgar, a 2013-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, is the District Magistrate (DM) of Budgam. She is the first woman DM of the district since it was formed in 1979. She organised the first-ever all-woman conclave at the district headquarters recently to address the problems faced by girl students during their menstrual periods.

Celebrating womanhood, renowned speakers, all women from various fields, spoke on the rights, legal protection, harassment and related issues of women. The speakers included Munsiff Judge District Court Budgam, Tabasum Qadir Parray, Police Women Cell In-Charge, Budgam, Inspector Gulshana, Social Welfare officer Shaheen Rasool, Chief Education Officer,



**Fatima Tak, and entrepreneur Rubeena Tabasum.**

The speakers dealt with the legal rights of women, domestic violence and sexual harassment at workplaces and informed the participants about various women-specific schemes and government initiatives under various departments. The programme was attended by female officers of different departments, female media persons associated with national and state agencies and publications and portals, along with scores of employees, students and female participants from diverse fields.

Asgar deliberated in detail about various levels of women empowerment as she stressed upon participants to take initiatives to break the taboo of female inferiority. She said this is need of modern times that women be part of great changes society is going through and contribute more in social and economic development. She said it is incumbent upon a mature and just society to recognise the role of women and that society cannot be empowered as long as its women are not. She further stressed for standing up without fear for enforcement of women rights, for taking initiative for career building, overcoming environmental and family hindrances which may pull oneself down.

Asgar said there has been an alarming 20 per cent dropout rate among girl students because they feel depressed, dejected and stressed during their periods in a society where even speaking about such a normal biological phenomenon is frowned upon.

**(Extracted from siasat.com)**

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## Panel to curb violence against Muslims

Several Muslim organisations in Hyderabad have held meetings to chalk out a plan to curb incidents of violence especially mob violence against Muslims in the wake of several incidents of lynching taking place in India in several states. Two consecutive meetings of representatives from various community organisations, predominantly Muslim and have been fighting for the rights of Muslims have taken place. The last meeting took place on 4<sup>th</sup> July, in which it has been decided to form a board that will be called as 'Khairsugali Board' or Goodwill Board. The meeting was convened by Moulana Mohammed Hussamuddin Sani Jafar Pasha. Representatives in the panel board are from the Jamiat-e-Ulema Hind, Jamat-e-Islami, Tamir-e-Millat, Majlis-e-Ilmia, Majlis Khatam-e-Nabuwat, Najat-ul-Ulema, the Shia



community, Ahle Hadees, Safa Bait-ul-Maal and Sufi scholars. The Khairsugali board will deal with the incidents of violence on a monthly basis. Talking to Twocircles.net, Rahamath Husami, one of the organisers,

said, "The motive of forming this panel is to curb incidents of violence, we want peace. And I am sure people of other religions also want peace. We just want to say that we want such incidents to stop. And In sha Allah the panel will meet K T Rama Rao, MLA and working president of the TRS party to discuss with him the possibilities of demanding the center to provide protection through a law that also talks about strictest punishment for those indulging in mob violence. We may also have a public meeting so people will know that there is a panel that will help anyone has been victimized in all possible ways."

There have been suggestions to include other marginalized communities such as Dalits and Christians who are also at the receiving end in the panel.

(Extracted from twocircles.net)

## Polluted River in UP Becomes Symbol of Communal Unity

The town of Maholi, in Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh, has been forging a path of harmonious religious co-existence. People of various faiths there are not just accepting of each other they are accommodative. From using loudspeakers judiciously to helping out with arrangements during festivals, the town had a spirit of getting along in every aspect of life. One particular situation is the perfect example of this harmony the River Kathina that flows through their town. Polluted and filthy, Kathina's deterioration was worrying members of all faiths all of whom used the water.

Started by an ashram and the temple administration, the drive to clean up the river immediately saw

members of the mosque and the Gurdwara join in.

"Keeping our rivers clean is our duty and we will continue *sewa* whenever required," Ujagar Singh, a member of the Gurdwara community said. To Sikhs, the cleaning of River Kathina is equivalent to 'sewa' or service, an essential tenet of Sikhism.

Together they removed truckloads of hyacinth that was obstructing the flow of water and got rid of garbage like plastic, polythene, human waste, animal carcasses, and even boat wrecks. It took volunteers three days to clear excrement from the banks! Finally, they managed to clear a one-kilometre stretch. They now plan to have a proper waste managing system for their small town and have decided to muster

support from local administration to prevent littering.

"The challenge is to maintain the cleanliness level of the river. We could clean only a small stretch this time, but we will rally again and take the movement to the second phase," said Abdul Rauf from the mosque committee.

Religious centres ashrams, temples, mosques, gurudwaras etc., are natural assemblies of people, who can be motivated to do almost anything by their respective leaders and community members. And the actions that led to the cleaning of the Kathina river give ample proof that religion need not come in the way of unity, and the common good.

(Extracted from thebetterindia.com)

## Job Fair Organised by AMP in Pune



Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) in association with World Memon Organisation (WMO) and Pune Halal Memon Jamat (PHMJ) organised a Mega Job Fair in

help unemployed youth to get placed in reputed mainstream Corporates and to provide opportunities to the needy without any discrimination of

caste and creed. The Mega Job Fair was inaugurated by Sameer Shaikh, Assistant Commissioner of Police-Crime (Pune). Mr. Shaikh was felicitated by floral bouquets and mementos by Ehsan Gadawala, India President of WMO and Imran Lakhani, President, PHMJ. Over 55 Corporates from across various industries participated in this Job Fair with a massive turnout of 1575 candidates. At the end of the day, around 265 candidates were given on-the-spot offers by the recruiters while 740 were short listed for the next round of interviews.

## Malegaon's First Incubation Centre Inaugurated

(Arshad Mukhtar, Dr Atiqur Rahman and others after the inauguration of the centre)

**Mansoor (Malegaon):** Dr Atiqur Rahman Mohamad, Scientific Officer at Dept. of Nuclear & Atomic Physics at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), and Arshad Mukhtar, Chairman Jamia Mohammadiya Education Society (JMES) Sunday jointly inaugurated Malegaon City's first Incubation and research centre at Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Nadvi Technical Campus (MMANTC). The newly inaugurated centre will work as a link between the students of Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Nadvi Technical Campus (MMANTC), and the Industries and Entrepreneurs of Malegaon City.

"With the inauguration of the Incubation and Research Centre today, we have crossed yet another important milestone in the field of education", Arshad Mukhtar said while addressing the Opening Ceremony organised at Abdullah al-Shaya Auditorium in Mansoor, Malegaon City. "We want our students - whether they are from our Engineering college, Tibbiya College or Shariah College, to study and work with research oriented mindset", he said. "Today, I want to declare it, loud and clear,

and with cent per cent conviction. A closed mentality can't take us to the path of progress and development. Unless our students master in research, we cannot dream of success and empowerment", he added.

In his speech on the occasion, Dr Atiqur Rahman Mohamad of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) hailed the Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Nadvi Technical Campus (MMANTC) Management for opening the Incubation and Research Centre for Engineering students. "The focus of studies in most of our engineering colleges is syllabus and text books. Unlike medical colleges that have hospitals attached, engineering colleges don't have any means where their students can explore their ideas and convert them in reality", he said. "The Incubation and Research Centre at Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Nadvi Technical Campus (MMANTC) will fill this gap and provide the students a platform to explore their ideas and innovate things beneficial for the mankind", he said.

(Extracted from ummid.com)

## National Convention Demands Special Law On Mob-Lynching

Victims of communal, caste and gender violence and kin came together in Mumbai to question and deliberate upon the recent spate of hate crimes in the country. They were speaking at a National Convention Against State Complicity in Hate Crimes organised by leftist organisation Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI). Family members shared their experiences and described their struggles to get justice. Among the key speakers were Mohammad Qasim, brother of the deceased Junaid Khan, Raju Aage, father of Nitin Aage

who was killed in a caste based violence, Mukta Dhabolkar and others. The event also saw some key luminaries and intellectuals, namely the actor Naseeruddin Shah, retired judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Gopala Gowda, activist Ram Punyani, Vice President of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), Subhashini Ali, and educationist Teesta Setalvad. A resolution against hate crimes was passed at the Convention.

(Extracted from sabrangindia.in)

## Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship: Applications invited

**New Delhi:** The Maulana Azad Education Foundation has invited applications for the 'Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship' for 2019-20 for meritorious girl students from Muslim, Christian, Sikh,

Buddhist, Jain and Parsi communities. For further details, see:

[http://maef.nic.in/writereaddata/uploadedfile/MAEF636982875872393634\\_Advertisemnt\\_BHMNS.pdf](http://maef.nic.in/writereaddata/uploadedfile/MAEF636982875872393634_Advertisemnt_BHMNS.pdf)



## International Courage Award for Islamophobia Victims

A leading German Muslim group announced on July 1 presenting its "International Courage Award" to two victims of Islamophobic attacks in the country. This stance is meant to highlight the growing xenophobic and Islamophobic atmosphere in Germany, Anadolu Agency reported. "The prize was aimed to highlight the sacrifices and pain of the victims of racism. There was a need to fight racism and Islamophobia in a stronger way," President of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, Aiman Mazyek said.

One of the two Muslim victims, Mevlude Genc, lost five of her relatives in an Islamophobic attack in Solingen, Germany 26 years ago. On May 29, 1993, four Islamophobic terrorists aged 16-23 set ablaze the house of Genc's Muslim Turkish family, killing five people and injuring 14 others. The other Muslim victim who received the award is Farid

Ahmed who lost his wife at the recent Christchurch Massacre in New Zealand.

The International Courage Award is named after Marwa el-Sherbini; an Egyptian Muslim scientist who was stabbed in an Islamophobic attack during a court hearing in Dresden, Germany in 2009. Pregnant Sherbini, 31, was killed inside a German court in front of her three-year-old son and husband. Alex Wiensan, a German Islamophobic terrorist from Russia stabbed her after she testified in a criminal case for verbal abuse. The court admitted that the initial confrontation by the perpetrator against the Muslim pharmacy researcher had happened because she wore a hijab.

The first documented contact between Islam and Germany came during the 18th century as part of the relations between Germany and the Ottoman Caliphate when 20 Muslim soldiers served under

Frederick William I of Prussia. In 1745, Frederick II of Prussia established a unit of Muslims in the Prussian army called the 'Muslim Riders' and consisting mainly of Bosniaks, Albanians, and Tatars. In 1760 an exclusive Bosniak corps was established with about 1,000 men. In 1798, the first Muslim cemetery was established in Berlin.

Owing to labour migration in the 1960s, Islam has grown in Germany to become a visible religion. According to 2015 estimates by the Federal Office for Migration and refugees, there were 4.7 million Muslims in Germany or 5.7% of the population. Of these, 1.9 million are German citizens (2.4%). Moreover, according to the German statistical office, 9.1% of all newborns in Germany had Muslim parents in 2005.

(Extracted from [aboutislam.net/](http://aboutislam.net/))

## Qur'an Translated into Ghana's Main Language

The Holy Qur'an has been finally translated into the Asante dialect of the Akan language, the most widely spoken language in the West African country of Ghana. "This important process took me about four years to translate the Holy Qur'an from Arabic to Asante," announced Sheikh Harun Nkansah Agyekum during a ceremony in Kumasi, the capital city of Ashanti Region in central Ghana.

"This Qur'an translation will help with a better understanding and appreciation of the holy book so as to help those who can't read or write the Arabic language in Ghana," he continued.

During the ceremony, a former Chief Imam of the Ghana Armed

Forces (GAF), Lieutenant Colonel Umar Sanda Ahmed, congratulated Sheikh Agyekum for the "wonderful project and asked Allah to reward him for his remarkable and long-awaited achievement."

"It was becoming a norm among Ghanaian Muslims to concentrate on material things and neglect the religious education and spiritual development. But now, thanks to this achievement, it will be easier to get in contact regularly with the Holy Qur'an," Ahmed expressed. On his behalf, Sheikh Abdul Mumin, the Ashanti Regional Imam, urged Akan Muslims during the celebration to "purchase the new translated version of the Holy Qur'an and get a better understanding of its

contents. We also need a peaceful coexistence with people from other faiths."

*Translating the Holy Qur'an into the Asante dialect will facilitate reading it for millions of Muslims in Ghana as well as in other African, South American and Caribbean countries like Ivory Coast, Suriname, and Jamaica.*

The Asante dialect is a sub-branch of the Twi dialect of the Akan language. Asante is spoken by over 2.8 million Ashanti people, according to 2015 estimates. Ghanaian Muslims constitute the majority in north Ghana as Islam started to spread in the country since the 10th century before Christianity, which arrived later in the 15th century.

## World Assembly of Religions

The official title of the event, "Caring for our common future", raises questions as to the socio-political role and responsibility of world religions.

From 20 to 23 August, the southern German town of Lindau will host probably the most important meeting of leading religious representatives in the world this year. Organisers expect 900 participants from 17 religions and more than 100 countries to attend the tenth world assembly of "Religions for Peace". The New York-based non-governmental organisation was founded in 1961. Now its World Assembly, which takes place every five to six years, is coming to Germany for the first

time.

The official title of the event, "Caring for our common future", raises questions as to the socio-political role and responsibility of world religions. Some years ago, the German Foreign Office created an independent department entitled "Responsibility of Religions for Peace". Moreover there is a growing trend in international politics to involve religious leaders as interlocutors. "In many conflicts, religion is part of the problem, but it can also be part of

conflict resolution," said Norwegian Gunnar Stalsett, former Lutheran bishop and now Honorary President of the World Council of Religions for Peace. That's why it is so important to support those willing to engage in dialogue from the different religions and encourage them to speak out in their own civil societies. Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is set to attend the opening of the World Assembly

(Extracted from [en.qantara.de](http://en.qantara.de))

## Twitter Bans Religion-Based Dehumanizing Posts

**San Francisco:** Twitter has expanded its rules against hateful conduct to include language on its platform that dehumanizes others on the basis of religion. Tweets that go against the new policy will be taken down, the micro-blogging platform said in a statement recently. "If reported, tweets that break this rule sent before today will need to be deleted, but will not directly result in any account suspensions because they were tweeted before the rule was set," said the company.

Last year, Twitter asked for

feedback from different communities and cultures to ban hateful content based on religion. In two weeks, it received more than 8,000 responses from people located in more than 30 countries. "Across languages, people believed the proposed change could be improved by providing more details, examples of violations, and explanations for when and how context is considered," said Twitter. "Our primary focus is on addressing the risks of offline harm, and research shows that dehumanizing language increases that risk," said Twitter.

## Noted Theatre Activist Refuses to Accept Award

Acclaimed Kannada theatre artist, playwright and poet S Raghunandana has refused to accept the Sangeet Natak Akademi award conferred on him. The awards for 2018 were announced on 17 July. In a statement released after the announcement of the awards, Raghunandana cited the rampant mob lynchings and "violence in the name of God and religion" and held the "powers-that-be" directly or



indirectly responsible.

(Extracted from [sabrangindia.in](http://sabrangindia.in))

## MANUU Gets Outlook ICARE Ranking



**Hyderabad:** Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) is the only Indian language university to find a place in the Outlook-ICARE list of top ranking central universities.

MANUU has been ranked 20th from among 25 shortlisted universities based on parameters such as Faculty Student Ratio, Faculty with PhD, Citations Per Paper and Inclusiveness and Diversity. The UGC lists 49 central universities in India as of 12th December 2018. Dr. Aslam Parvaiz, Vice Chancellor,

called the MANUU's inclusion in the country's top-rated universities an honour and a good omen for Urdu-medium education. "Today scores of MANUU alumni can be found in various MNCs and in different

government departments. It underlines the fact that Urdu-medium education is not a hindrance in finding employment and recognition. Moreover, it is second to none with reference to medium of instruction", the Vice Chancellor said. Outlook-ICARE India University ranking is one of the leading ranking frameworks in the country apart from National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) released by Union Human Resources Development Ministry.



## First Museum of the Palestinian People Opens in Washington, DC

On the 15th of June, the Museum of the Palestinian People opened its doors in Washington, DC. It's the first Palestinian Museum in the city and is dedicated to telling the stories of the people of Palestine, exhibiting their artwork and historical and cultural documentation through contributions worldwide.

"It's a museum where people get introduced to the Palestinian story and Palestinians as a people, not as a news item," says Nassar Farsakh, chairman of the museum.

### How it started

"When I came to DC in 2011, I was really amazed by the museums and monuments and memorials in the city, and at the same time, I was lost because I couldn't find a place where the Palestinian story has been told," Nassar said.

In 2014, he came up with the idea for a Palestinian museum which then developed into a travelling show. He eventually spent several years working to achieve his ultimate vision of a museum, rather than simply an exhibition. But alongside other struggles any start-up faces, he also encountered collective resistance to the idea. "Many people said, 'No, this is not going to happen,'" he says.

He added: "The Arab-American community feels the weight of how hard it is to have a



conversation about Palestine that is fair and balanced."

### Supportive donors

Washington is a natural home for the project, according to Nassar. "So many people came to DC to share their stories," he says. He added: "We want our story told not only once, not as an event, but over and over again," he says. "We want this to be a space where people can come continuously to hear our voice."

### The museum

The collection can be found in the main room on the first floor of a terraced house in north-west DC. The space was donated by a family, and will be its home for the upcoming two years. Century-old glasswork and vases are also on display, as well as an edition of *National Geographic* from 1914 in which the "Holy Land" and Palestinian agricultural tradition are discussed.

If you leave the permanent exhibition you find the Wall of Fame, it is a collection of portraits of Palestinian feminists, scholars, entrepreneurs and more,

showcasing the impact the diaspora has had on the world. There are also diverse placards hanging on the walls, explaining facets of the country's history, including the Nakba and the modern Palestinian diaspora.

The team behind the museum put a lot of efforts

to include as many representations of Palestinian identity as possible, to ensure their portrait was comprehensive. They did that by meeting members of the Palestinian community..

### Vision and mission

The museum's mission says it hopes to create a place "where people are not marginalised because of the artificial distinctions we use to create borders between us."

Nassar says he wants the museum to be a space where non-Palestinians can see themselves reflected in universal human worries, hopes and experiences. "We want visitors to come in, hear our stories told by us in our own ways, and find themselves and find what's common for us as human beings."

The team wants to bring a deep shift in how the West approaches the political debates that surround Palestine, while also giving immigrants from Palestine a place to tell stories by connecting the public to Palestinian art and experiences.

(Extracted from mvslim.com)

## UN: Joint Call for China to End Xinjiang Abuses

(Geneva): Twenty-two countries at the United Nations' top human rights body issued a joint statement recently, urging China to end its mass arbitrary detentions and related violations against Muslims in the Xinjiang region, Human Rights Watch said. In their unprecedented move, the countries also called on China to cooperate with the UN high commissioner for human rights and UN experts to allow meaningful access to the region.

"Twenty-two states have called China to task for its horrific treatment of Muslims in Xinjiang," said John Fisher, Geneva director at Human Rights Watch. "The joint statement is important not only for Xinjiang's population, but for people around the world who depend on the UN's leading rights body to hold even the most powerful countries to account."

In recent years, human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, and the media have reported on "political education" camps in Xinjiang, in which approximately 1 million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims are detained without any legal process, and subjected to political indoctrination, ill-treatment, and sometimes torture. Chinese authorities have deployed extraordinary surveillance technologies to track – and treat as

criminal a wide variety of lawful behavior. The government has either denied that the abuses are taking place or tried to justify its conduct as part of a national counterterrorism strategy.

The previous joint statement on China at the HRC was led by the United States in March 2016 with 12 signatories. That nearly double the number of countries have joined the current effort reflects growing international concern over the situation in Xinjiang, Human Rights Watch said. The signatories so far are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

"Governments are increasingly recognizing the suffering of millions of people in Xinjiang, with families torn apart and living in fear, and a Chinese state that believes it can commit mass violations uncontested," Fisher said. "The joint statement demonstrates that Beijing is wrong to think it can escape international scrutiny for its abuses in Xinjiang, and the pressure will only increase until these appalling abuses end."

(Extracted from hrw.org)

## Dubai's Princess Haya flees UAE with £31 million, kids



London: Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, the sixth wife of Dubai's billionaire ruler, has reportedly fled the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 31 million pounds and their two children following the break-up of their marriage. According to media reports, the wife of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE is believed to be in hiding in London. The princess, the half-sister of King Abdullah of Jordan, is said to be seeking a divorce after initially fleeing to Germany with her children Jalila, 11, and Zayed, seven where she requested political asylum. She is understood to have taken 31 million pounds with her to start a new life, reports say.

Oxford educated Princess Haya has

not been seen in public since May 20 and her social media accounts, which are usually full of photos of her charitable work, have not been active since February. Two sources close to the Dubai royal family were cited as saying by media reports that Princess Haya has indeed left the country and is seeking a divorce. It comes after one of the Sheikh's daughter's Princess Latifa attempted to flee from her father and Dubai. She was captured on a boat and has since disappeared, but is believed to have been returned to the UAE.

Princess Latifa said abuse forced her to flee the kingdom and human rights groups claim she is being held in captivity in Dubai. Radha Stirling, Chief Executive of watchdog Detained in Dubai, said: "Whenever someone applies for political asylum, obviously, it is because their lives are in danger, and because they have suffered severe abuses and violations of their human rights."

"We already know that Princess Latifa, Sheikh Mohammed's daughter, fled the UAE seeking asylum and alleging unspeakable abuse at the hands of her father."

## Indonesia's Trash Problem

The country is now the world's second-largest source of oceanic plastic pollution.

If you're in Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city, you can use plastic trash as bus fare five plastic bottles or 10 plastic cups are the equivalent of a two-hour ticket. A year after this program began, each bus is collecting up to 7.5 tons of plastic a month, which the city then cleans and auctions off to recycling companies. The initiative aims to incentivize the use of public transit and to clear Surabaya's streets and waterways of the plastic trash that has accompanied Indonesia's rapidly growing economy.

Polluted groundwater and untrustworthy water supplies mean that nearly every Indonesian who can afford it buys bottled beverages. That's 'good' for companies like Coca-Cola, which more than doubled its workforce in Indonesia between 2013 and 2018, from 60,000 to 135,000. But just because some Indonesians have the money to buy more

things doesn't mean that this country, made up of 17,000 volcanic islands, has the recycling infrastructure to deal with the plastic those products are packaged in. The country is now the world's second-largest source of oceanic plastic pollution, surpassed only by China which has over four times Indonesia's population.

Waste management tends to be ad hoc in Indonesia. Many provinces and cities lack regular trash or recycling pickups and rely on informal waste pickers, who abandon what they can't use with little fear of consequences. For many islands, the ocean has become a dump for waste.

Over 2,000 independently operated collection sites known as "trash banks" also operate across the country. People bring in organic waste (which is turned into compost) and recycling that can be either exchanged for cash

or stored as credit providing basic banking services for the poor. Indonesia's trash banks get varying levels of support from local governments. In some cases, a city or regional government will pay a set cost for plastics.

The national government is also partnering with Indonesia's two largest Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, to connect religious values with the effort to reduce plastic waste. "Islam is a religion that teaches people to care [for] and conserve the environment, including the plastic problem," says Dr. Ir. Muhjiddin Mawardi, chairman of Muhammadiyah's environmental division. NU and Muhammadiyah published the book *Waste Management From an Islamic Perspective* and produce "sermons on waste," or Ngaji Sampah, that are broadcast online monthly.

(Extracted from sierraclub.org)



## New Zealand Muslims see Silver Lining after Tragedy

By Nader Aboul Foutouh

Just a few months ago, the Muslim community in New Zealand was just another minority in a society that didn't know much about Islam. New Zealanders perceived their Muslims just through outward appearances, especially the stereotypical bearded men and veiled women. Things changed after the attacks on Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch in which 51 people died. That event led imams in New Zealand to have direct dialogue with government officials, to whom they relayed grievances of New Zealand Muslims, and explore ways to promote religious tolerance. Those efforts are bearing fruit.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on July 6 pledged to have the "Document on Human Fraternity," signed by Pope Francis on behalf of the Vatican and Grand Imam Ahmed al-Tayeb on behalf of al-Azhar, placed in schools, universities and other educational institutions so New Zealand's new generations grow up bearing a message of peace and goodwill.

Since the March 15 attack on Al Noor Mosque, the Muslim community in New Zealand has made impressive gains, including receiving government authorisation to open Islamic schools, the use of loudspeakers for prayer calls and the broadcast of Friday prayers on state television.

Gamal Fouda, imam of the Al Noor Mosque, who witnessed the March attack, said in an interview that the positive reactions have had an effect on the status of Muslim communities in New Zealand and elsewhere.

New Zealand media have become increasingly supportive of Muslims.

Fouda said Arab and Islamic solidarity has helped the Muslim



**Imam Gamal Fouda of Al Noor mosque speaks with Britain's Prince William after his visit in Christchurch**

community. The United Arab Emirates, in particular, has played a prominent role in covering the cost of establishing a centre for tolerance and interfaith dialogue. The Forum for the Promotion of Peace in Muslim Societies, hosted by Abu Dhabi, has undertaken initiatives and facilitated visits to New Zealand to establish a culture of interfaith coexistence and humanity.

Fouda said the attacks revealed that neither New Zealanders at large nor the 70,000-person Muslim community in the country were knowledgeable about Islam. Even young New Zealand Muslims who spoke with the foreign press about the incident have shown only a shallow knowledge and insufficient understanding of their faith.

The imam said renovation of the Al Noor Mosque had been completed and its library stocked with a large number of Islamic books and publications in various languages and focusing on religious tolerance and respect for freedom of faith from an Islamic perspective. It is important, he pointed out, to choose imams fluent in local dialects because their task is not

only to address Muslims but also to engage dialogue with non-Muslims. The imams need to strengthen their knowledge of jurisprudence and other faith matters as well as adopt modern religious discourse and be able to address controversial issues related to Islamic heritage.

Fouda said Westerners who attack Islam do not know much about it and, even if they want to know more about it, they would not be able to find suitable references. It is, therefore, imperative to engage a long-term effort to translate Islamic references and make them available in Islamic centres, he said, adding that it is important to promote academic studies that address false claims about Islam. Fouda called for international laws to criminalise radical discourse through social media and to counter calls for violence of any kind or purpose.

About 150 New Zealand nationals, including a leading police figure, have converted to Islam since the attacks. About 150,000 people have visited Al Noor Mosque since the shootings.

(Extracted from thearabweekly.com)

## Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Group Launched in Berlin

Jewish and Muslim entrepreneurs met in Berlin recently to launch an "unconventional Jewish-Muslim dialogue." Dubbed Shalom Aleikum: Jewish-Muslim Dialog, the project of the Central Council of Jews in Germany began with young business leaders having an open exchange on the issue of cultural identity and the job market. TV journalist Shakuntala Banerjee served as the moderator.

Central Council President Josef Schuster said the project aims to break down stereotypes and prevent anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Germany has seen a rise in anti-Semitic crimes. Although German officials report that the vast

majority of anti-Semitic incidents are carried out by members of the far right, some Jewish leaders worry that anti-Semitic acts by Muslims are more widespread than believed and are being underreported.

It is not too soon to intervene, Schuster suggested.

"People who who speak to each other from the realities of their lives can approach each other without reservations," Schuster said in a media statement.

The nationwide project has the support of Minister of State Annette Widmann-Mauz, who heads Germany's Federal Commission for Migration, Refugees and Integration. The first year's events are funded with 1.2

million euros (\$1.35 million), and will encompass various dialogue formats nationwide. Widmann-Mauz said the project was designed to break down barriers between Jews and Muslims, as well as prevent anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim sentiments from developing at an early stage. She said she was appalled at the reported increases in hate crimes related to religion. "This is not a situation that we want in our country," she said.

Additional Jewish-Muslim dialogue forums are planned for the coming months with teachers, athletes, students, seniors and women's groups, the Central Council's managing director, Daniel Botmann, said.

## District Center in Germany's Aachen Renamed Mosque Square



A square in Eilendorf district of the western German city of Aachen has been renamed to become Moscheeplatz or mosque square, to highlight the importance of tolerance and unity, Daily Sabah reported.

"I am very happy as the mayor because there is a Mosque Square in our city," said Aachen Mayor Marcel Philipp of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Party. The square is home to the Aachen Yunus Emre Mosque, which operates under the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB).

The event celebrating the new name of the 2100-square-meter center was attended by Turkey's Consul General in Cologne Ceyhun Erciyes who said that by taking this decision, the local authorities showed that the mosque is a beautiful reflection of harmony, integration, tolerance,

unity and solidarity.

"We must raise our voices together against those who are fed by fear and hatred, and we must demonstrate our friendship and solidarity as it is here today," Erciyes said.

Owing to labor migration in the 1960s and several waves of political refugees since the 1970s, Islam has become a visible religion in Germany.

According to a national census conducted in 2011, 1.9% of Germany's population, around 1.5m people, declared themselves as Muslim.

An estimate made in 2015 calculated that there are 4.4 to 4.7 million Muslims in Germany; 5.4-5.7% of the population. Of these, 1.9 million are German citizens (2.4%). According to the German statistical office, 9.1% of all newborns in Germany had Muslim parents in 2005.

## SOLAR POWER FOR MASJIDS AND INSTITUTIONS

Economical long Term Benefits Solar Panels on roof-tops for reducing the carbon footprint, reduce energy costs and finally at the end of the day contribute to the larger cause of Climate Change. Masjids, Schools, Colleges, orphanages, and Muslim institutions, domestic houses, and apartments in India can benefit from utilizing the roof-top area available for Solar Panel Installation to generate electrical energy and excess energy produced can be sold to BESCO. This system yields good returns, within five years, your investment is recovered and you continue to reap profits for the next twenty years. These projects are installed in tandem with BESCO approvals. Recently, Syed Mushtaq Ahamed of EcoSoch Team installed a 5 KW Solar Roof-Top System at **NOOR MASJID- Rajaji Nagar, Bangalore.** (A5 KW System is equivalent to savings 130 trees/annum!

**For more details contact:**

**Syed Mushtaq Ahamed on 9840870207 or syed@ecosoch.com. Visit: www.ecosoch.com**



## This Sports Star is Making a Big Difference!



Mohamed Salah is arguably one of the biggest Muslim sports stars in the world nowadays. The 26-year-old has become an inspiration to many youth worldwide. Salah was born in 1992 in Nagrig village in Egypt's Nile Delta. His father, a salesman, was unable to afford higher education for his son, so Salah decided to pursue his dream of becoming a football player. As a teenager, Salah commuted from his village for more than two hours every day to get to El Mokawloon football club in Cairo, where he made his first steps as a professional football player. After two years with El Mokawloon, he caught the eye of the Swiss top club Basel, and earned a move to Chelsea in the UK in 2014. The Egyptian striker left on loan to Serie A clubs Fiorentina and Roma in Italy from 2015 to 2017.

Following consistent match-winning performances leading Roma to a second-placed finish and a record points-tally in 2017, Salah relocated back to the Premier League to sign for Liverpool for a then club-record fee of £36.9 million.

Salah has taken the Premier League by storm since signing for Liverpool in the summer of 2017, scoring 50 goals for the English club in just 72 appearances. He helped fire Liverpool into its first Champions League final in a decade. He also led Egypt to last summer's World Cup, its first in 30 years.

Dubbed Egypt's "fourth pyramid" by fans, Salah was named the African Player of the Year for the second consecutive year. People love the way Salah interacts with his fans, whether on social media or in real life. Salah's former coach at El

Mokawloon, Hamdi Noor, told CNN: "All the coaches who worked with Mohamed say he is very polite, religious, does a lot of good. All of this helped him reach the stardom he has now. He is very charitable, very moral, isn't tied to referees or fans. He just sees the goal, he's always focused."

The Liverpool's star celebrates every goal with a prostration to God. Salah is often seen reading the Qur'an, his wife wears the Islamic hijab (headscarf), and he named his daughter Makka, referring to the holy city. Egyptian media often report about Salah's many charitable activities in his hometown, Nagrig. He launched a charity under his name that supports poor families and offers help to widows and divorced mothers. He has also paid for a new football field to be set up in his village as well as a youth centre, hospital and school. The Liverpool star has spent hundreds of thousands of Egyptian pounds to improve the lives of the people who live in Nagrig.

A recent report by Football Against Racism in Europe (Fare) found that the success of Liverpool Muslim star Mohamed Salah has significantly decreased hate and race crimes in the English Premier League.

## Actor Riz Ahmed Urges Hollywood to Re-examine Muslim Imagery

36 year-old British actor Riz Ahmed has called on Hollywood leaders to act on reducing Islamophobic sentiment in the media by presenting more Muslims and change their imagery in their movies, [Chicago Tribune](#) reported.

Ahmed is the first Muslim actor to win an Emmy award. Though his face is popping up everywhere, Ahmed revealed that he continues to be stopped, searched, and interviewed at airports because of his race. "We need your help. I'm basically here to ask for your help. Because it's really scary to be a Muslim right now. Super scary."

"With all my privilege and profile, I often wonder if this is going to be the year they round us up, if this is the year they're going to put Trump's Muslim registry into action, if this is going to be the year they ship us all off," he continued, citing international incidences of Islamophobia,



including Brexit-based nationalism in the UK and Uighur Muslims being held in detention camps in China.

Riz Ahmed became the first Muslim actor, as well as the first South-Asian actor, to win an Emmy award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Limited Series in September 2017. The award was given for his role as Nasir Khan in "The Night Of."

## Omani Woman Wins International Prize



Jokha Alharthi, an author of Omani descent, has become the first Arabic-language writer to win the Man Booker International Prize with her book *Celestial Bodies*. The prize is an alternative to the Man Booker Prize for English-language novels and is open to books in any language that have been translated into English. Alharthi's book beat five other finalists from Europe and South America. The author wants to split the £50,000 prize money with her translator, US academic professor Marilyn Booth.

Alharthi's winning novel is the story of three sisters and a desert country confronting its slave-owning past and a complex

modern world. 'Celestial Bodies' is a story that is set in the Omani village of al-Awafi and follows the life of three sisters: Mayya, who marries into a rich family after a heartbreak; Asma, who marries for duty; and Khawla, waiting for a man who has emigrated to Canada.

Alharthi, who has written two short-story collections and a children's book, and has been translated into languages including German, Italian, Korean and Serbian, said she hoped 'Celestial Bodies' would help "international readers discover that Oman has an active and talented writing community who live and work for their art".

## Jonathan Brown's Journey

I became Muslim when I was 19 or 20 years old. I was in college and I attended a class on Islam and I just really found it fascinating.

Before, I had been Episcopalian Christian, but I wasn't very religious. I believed in God but I didn't really identify Him as a Christian; it's just sort of family culture.

And I think when I learned about Islam, I really felt like this is the God that I had always believed in; and I felt that it was kind of my duty to follow this path that I felt was right.

I was young and idealistic, so I don't think I had so much a problem; maybe now it would be too easy or something that, thank God, happened to me in a time in my life when I was motivated.

*Was there a particular book or a particular person that motivated you?*

You know, there was a book that really moved me a lot. I don't I don't think I ever thought about



this as being a reason why I became Muslim, but it certainly had a big impact on me. It is the book "The Road to Mecca" by Muhammad Assad.

He's a very interesting accomplished writer and scholar. He was originally an Austrian Jewish man, who in the 1920s and 30s traveled throughout Arabia the Middle East, and eventually became Muslim, and he wrote this book

about his life.

It's just a tremendous book and he's an amazing writer.

Even his English is like his fourth or fifth language, but he's an incredible writer. And that book really touched me and I still think a lot about it.

**(Dr. Jonathan Brown is Head of Hadith Research at the USA-based Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research)**

**(Taken from aboutislam.net)**



## Catholic family seeks justice for lynching victim in Jharkhand



**The victim's wife with Minj's photo**

A Catholic family in Jharkhand is awaiting justice for a tribal man who was lynched by cow vigilantes nearly two years ago, a lay leader says. The death of Ramesh Minj "did not enter the discourse of persecution of Christians," bemoans John Dayal, general secretary of the All India Christian Council and president of the All India Catholic Union. "Christian NGOs were not involved." Meanwhile, "the family is still waiting for justice," the Catholic lay leader told AsiaNews.

"Minj lived in Tingaru, a village in Palamu district, Jharkhand. He married Anita Minj ten years ago. The couple lived in the predominantly Christian Oraon village," Dayal said, adding that the victim had many talents. During the sowing season, "he drove a tractor;" off season, "he drove

a Bolero taxi." Two years ago, "A mob of 120 people beat him for slaughtering a bullock." Minj was eventually arrested and taken to the police station in Bhandaria. His wife managed to see him before he died in jail. She said he had a torn leg and his body was covered in bruises.

Recently, Tabrez Ansari, a 24-year-old Muslim was lynched in Jharkhand. The pictures of him crouching and pleading mercy have gone viral online.

In Minj's case, Dayal blames police for his death "because of callousness and inefficiency," and failing to arrest "the politically powerful instigators of the mob."

Dayal continues: "This is a wake-up call for the Church and the community. What impacts Muslims eventually impacts Christians and other religious and caste minorities."

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

## Teenage Student Wins Big Scholarship



Shahed Saleh, a teenage Muslim Grade 12 female student, has won a \$100,000 Schulich Leader Scholarship to study Mechatronic Engineering at the University of Waterloo. The scholarship program was established in 2012 by the Jewish Canadian businessman and philanthropist Seymour Schulich "to encourage the best and brightest students to be the next entrepreneurial-minded pioneers of science and technology innovation", according to its official website.

"[...] It's not about the money, it's more of an opportunity to put myself out there and impacting other students," Saleh, a student at Vincent Massey Secondary School in Ontario, Canada, said. "It's basically robotics engineering. It's controlling machines with computers. I think robots are amazing," explained the 18-year-old student who carries a 97% average in her Grade 12 courses. Saleh knew at a young

age that she wanted to pursue engineering but it wasn't until joining the robotics team in Grade 10 that she found which vein. In light of her dream, the Muslim girl became the captain of the school's FIRST Robotics team.

(Extracted from mvslim.com)

## Celebrating His Marriage in a Unique Way

On the day of his marriage, UK football club Arsenal Muslim player Mesut Özil has revealed a big plan for children in need. He will pay for 1,000 children to have life-changing surgery, asking friends and family attending his wedding to follow suit. He and his wife Amine hope to bear the expenses for surgeries of 1000 children in need! Özil has been a huge supporter of the



charity BigShoe, who work with German and Swiss doctors to provide life-changing surgeries to kids who need it. Their partnership has existed since the World Cup and they have worked together on three different projects across Brazil, Africa, and Russia. Özil urged family and friends to take part and help the project succeed. The newlywed couple has also reportedly made sizable donations to the Turkish Red Cross, partly in an effort to feed thousands of Syrian refugees living along the Turkish-Syrian border. Özil is also an ambassador for the Rays of Sunshine charity, formed in 2003 to brighten the lives of seriously ill young people and their families across the UK by granting wishes and providing ongoing support in hospital and within the community.

(Extracted from aboutislam.net)

## From orphanage to collector's office

### Kerala man's journey against odds

A visit by Thalassery's sub-collector to the orphanage in 1983 was what had inspired a young Nasar studying at an orphanage-run school to dream of becoming a collector.

When he assumed office as the Kollam district collector on Monday, it was a dream come true for B Abdul Nasar who was raised in an orphanage till the age of 17 after losing his father as a five-year-old.

A visit by Thalassery's sub-collector to the orphanage in 1983 was what had inspired a young Nasar studying at an orphanage-run school to dream of becoming a collector. "I was the youngest of six children. When my father died, mother Manjumma struggled to raise us. So, I was sent to an orphanage at the age of five. When I was an upper primary school student at the orphanage-run school at Thalassery in 1982, then sub-collector Amitabh Kant had visited my school. Seeing the young IAS officer, I started to dream about becoming a collector," recalls the 49-year-old.

A Kerala-cadre officer, Kant is now the CEO of Niti Aayog.

After finishing studies at school, Nasar pursued his graduation and post-graduation in English literature, but as his family's burden weighed him down, he left his desire for higher studies to join a short-term course to become a health inspector. But, "after becoming a health inspector, I did not abandon my dream. I was not ready to settle with a job. I continued to apply for various competitive exams," he said.

In 1994, when the Kerala Public Services Commission notified vacancies for the post of deputy collector, Nasar decided to give it a shot. "Even as a health inspector, I found the time to prepare for the exam for (recruitment of) the deputy collector. I knew that once directly recruited as the deputy collector, one day I would get promoted as an IAS officer and my dream to become a collector would come true," he said.

After several efforts, he was finally recruited as a deputy collector in 2006. And in October 2017, he was elevated as an IAS officer.

"I kept my dream alive even though I could settle with a normal job. I always kept in mind the thought that I have a social responsibility towards society... I found support and strength from my family and my colleagues," he said.

(Taken from indianexpress.com)

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

## Brave Woman

### A Role Model for Many

Odisha's Sambalpur district administration has applauded and felicitated a 20-year-old tribal woman after she refused to marry her fiancé at the mandap as he came for the wedding in an inebriated state. Mamata Bhoi is from Gobardhan Badmal village and wasn't willing to change her decision after she found out that the groom was drunk ahead of the wedding ceremony. District officials said that the groom's family, thereafter, returned since Mamata refused to get married. While speaking at the programme, Mamata said that after seeing her fiancé in that state, she realised that she could never lead a good life with him.

"When I saw the man in an inebriated condition at the wedding mandap, I immediately took the decision not to marry him. The man was even unable to stand as he was heavily drunk. I realised that I could not lead a happy life with such a man... I instantly took the decision and I don't think that I have done anything wrong," Mamata Bhoi said. Her aunt said that Mamata's family supported her after she took the decision. Mamata Bhoi was felicitated on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in the presence of Sambalpur SP, Sambalpur collector Subham Saxena. She was presented with a shawl, a citation and Rs 10,000.

"By refusing to marry a drunkard, Mamata gave a message to all the girls that they should be very particular while selecting their spouse. She also gave the message to all the girls that their life would be hell if they get married to drunkard," Sambalpur SP, Sanjeev Arora, said.

(Extracted from mattersindia.com)

## Saudi first female ambassador starts her job in US



Saudi Arabia's first female ambassador recently started her new mission as her country's top diplomat in Washington DC. "Honored to present my credentials today," Princess Rima Bint Bandar Al-Saud tweeted.

"Looking forward to starting this chapter of my life in Washington DC," she said.

On April 16, Saudi king Salman bin Abdul Aziz issued a royal decree appointing Princess Bint Bandar as the country's ambassador in Washington, succeeding Prince Khalid bin Salman,

the king's son.

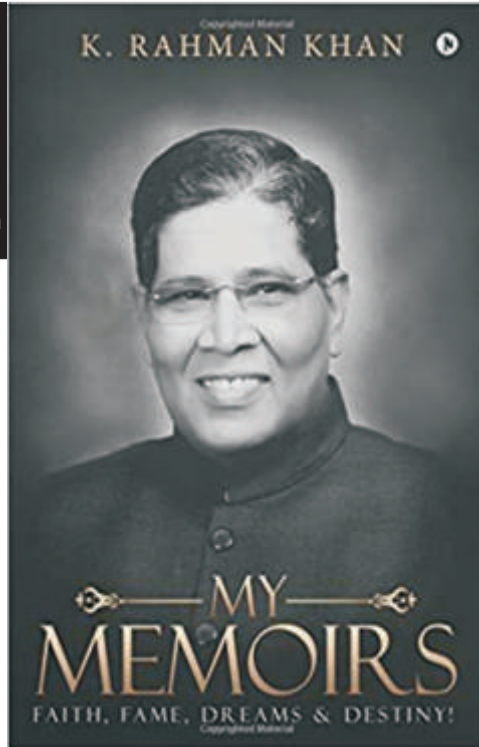
in 2003 to brighten the lives of seriously ill young people and their families across the UK by granting wishes and providing ongoing support in hospital and within the community.

(Extracted from aboutislam.net)



# A Treasure Trove of Wisdom

**My Memoirs: Faith, Fame, Dreams & Destiny**  
By K. Rahman Khan  
Published by Notion Press, Chennai  
Year of Publication: 2019  
Pages: 265  
Price: Rs 300  
For copies, contact krahmankhan@gmail.com



**M**y Memoirs, Faith, Fame, Dreams & Destiny penned by K Rahman Khan tells the story of a man who has led a truly remarkable life. It is a gripping autobiographical account of Mr Khan's journey from a little village in Mandya district to the portals of the Indian Parliament, where he served as Member of Rajya Sabha for many years and for a period of some 18 months as Union Minister for Minority Affairs. This book beautifully highlights how positive thinking can help one to reach the top of one's field. In this book, the author conveys to Muslims that with positive thinking, their religion cannot be an impediment to their progress. What is required, he counsels, is to overcome the victimhood mentality. Mr Khan spent many years in

the political field, serving in various capacities, and this phase of his life's story is discussed in great detail in the book. The book also covers Mr. Khan's involvement in setting up institutions in the financial, educational and media fields. An interesting aspect of the book are Mr. Khan's reflections on Indian politics and issues of the Indian Muslims. Mr. Khan reflects not just on crucial phases of his eventful life, but also on life as such, providing the younger generation precious advice on how to spend the short span of time that God our Creator has blessed us with on this planet in

a truly meaningful way till we go back to God. This book by one of India's most well-known contemporary Muslim politicians makes for interesting reading. It contains useful life lessons based on the fascinating life of a gentleman par excellence.

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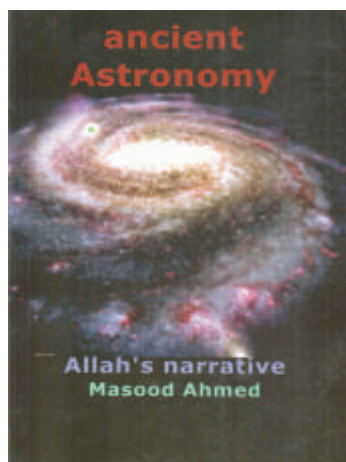


# Tackling Atheism

By Masood Ahmed

It all began when I had made a decision to immigrate to Australia. As we settled, in my urge to socialize I caught up with a sceptics' group who organised a Sunday assembly to divert children of God from Sunday school into Atheism.

With Atheism there're some outstanding issues regarding faith and religion. Atheists claim that the world was not created by God. They talk of it having come into being on its own, spontaneously. They say that modern science has liberated us from bias, so much that we can now understand the origins of planet Earth and life on it very precisely and that, therefore, we need not 'create' a God as ancient people did to explain what they regarded as the unexplainable. Many atheists claim that the God and laws attributed to Him in the scriptures are inhumane. A kind Lord would not sanction such



'cruel' laws, they say. We don't need a God that makes us fight each other, they argue. Society is better off without this 'vengeful God' and His religion, they say. The whole concept of religious law belittles kindness, freedom and liberty, they insist. All of this 'God-thing' is a human creation, they contend. Smart people created these things to have control over people.

Science is the future, they argue, the liberating force that will lead us toward light. Religion holds us back from progress and from being humane. So many atheists believe.

It all began when I had made a decision to immigrate to Australia. As we settled, in my urge to socialize I caught up with a sceptics' group who organised a Sunday assembly to divert children of God from Sunday school into Atheism. I was welcomed there with open arms. Peter and I exchanged views to understand the sceptic's premise for disbelief. To my question about what manner of evidence he required for investing into faith he elegantly surprised me. "Anything that convinces my mind for belief", he replied. I gripped my thumb in self-talk: Peter needed to read the Quran. Three years into dialogue, several meetings, a university lecture, books, countless phone

calls, emails and messages: it was relentless and encouraging to both of us. The discussions grew more objective and academic.

One day, in renewed spirits and zeal we met. Peter sounded hopeless. With a note that he would be friends with me he said: "We have wasted a lot of time Masood and nothing concrete has come from you; we must end this melee on God."

At this point I understood his main contention that goaded him to disbelieve in God. He said:

"Look at this cosmos, Masood, it is so large. It is enormous! There are multitudes of planetary bodies the likes of our planet. There is no God who created this uniquely. All this existence is without Him or She or It. We don't know whether such an entity exists or has made anything at all. In fact, in universities world-wide, research on evolutionary sciences happens as a matter of fact-finding. No expert in the field has thus far detected the hand of God in all of this nature that we investigate, which scientists are well able to explain. We don't need God, Masood. It's made up! A man like you can't be led by blind faith in a God that doesn't exist.

You've been brought up to believe. It's hardwired in you. Not everyone can overcome this conditioning. But you can do it, Masood. Come, join us and find out how life is so good without drinking this disease. We don't know if God truly exists, although we can surmise: He doesn't talk, we have no clue where he resides. If this God wanted us to believe in him and he had made all of this, he would have surely told us something about how he made it."

In his pause, by all my reading of the Quran for ages, I told him that God has taught us.

"Where is the evidence for it?" he exclaimed.

It was clear to me that a rich and full narrative must be written. God helped me write two books on these subjects of real concern, titled "ancient Astronomy Allah's narrative" and "Creation of Earth and Origins of Life Allah's Narrative". I invite you to read these books with Allah's blessings.

*Available on Amazon for readers worldwide. Indian readers can avail the books by contacting (WhatsApp) +91 77601 63365, +91 96323 04270. Email- "authorofancientastronomy@gmail.com"*

## Parenting Lessons From a Tree

By Dara

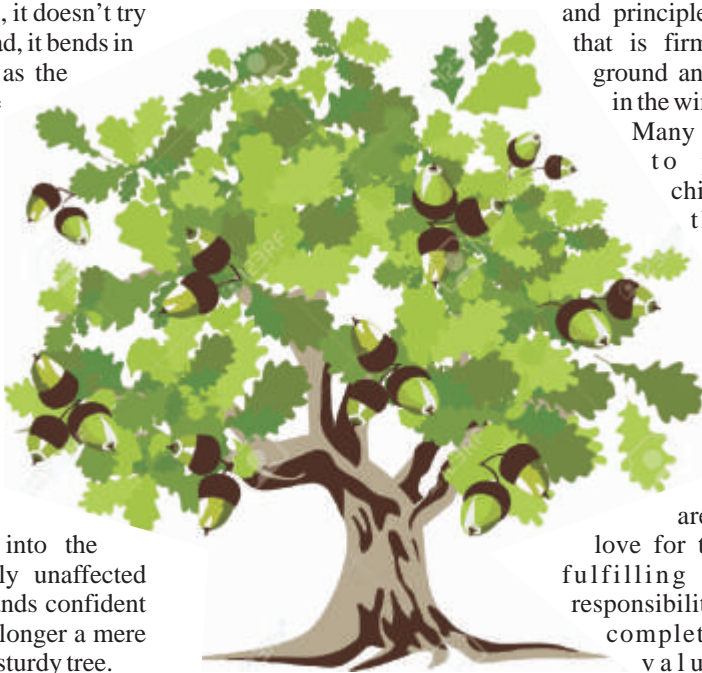
When a tree begins to emerge from the ground, it is in the form of what appears to be a feeble sapling. Its stem doesn't as yet have the capacity to weather a storm. So, at this time, what does the little plant do? It becomes the epitome of gentleness. If a strong wind blows, it doesn't try to combat it. Instead, it bends in just the direction as the wind wants to take it. It willingly adjusts to the situation, without protesting. It is the epitome of humility.

Some years later, the very same plant has become a big tree. It is now firmly established on the basis of a thick trunk which has sent roots deep into the ground. Supremely unaffected by the wind, it stands confident and erect. It is no longer a mere 'plant'. It is now a sturdy tree.

This example from the world of nature provides valuable lessons for child-rearing. Like a tiny plant that gradually grows into a firmly-rooted tree, a child needs a certain period to grow into a mature adult capable of successfully negotiating the world. In this period, it needs to

learn the values and virtues of humility and gentleness and the art of adjusting with others values that are epitomised by a small plant.

But along with this, the child also needs to be nurtured in the values



that are necessary to become capable of standing erect on its feet as an adult. Parents must guide their children, in a well planned way, keeping in mind how they want their children to become when they become adults. Their parenting style

must be such as will enable their children to grow up into a person who can confidently manage the challenges of the world. Great care needs to be given to provide the child with the inputs it needs to become a person who stands firmly rooted in certain values and principles, like a big tree that is firmly rooted in the ground and doesn't collapse in the wind.

Many parents work hard to provide their children with what they regard as education in a 'good' school, with good food and clothes and with many other material comforts. They think that in doing this they are expressing their love for their children and fulfilling their parental responsibilities. But often they completely ignore the value dimension altogether. If children are brought up in the lap of material comfort and with the 'best' of school education but not given the necessary value inputs by their parents, it won't be any surprise if they go completely astray and ruin their precious life.

## LETTERS

### Acts of Goodness.

Thank you for regularly publishing many positive stories and news items in '*Islamic Voice*' articles on communal harmony, interfaith understanding, women's empowerment, acts of kindness etc. These can provide people with hope and may also inspire them to engage in similar acts of goodness.

Another wonderful thing is that you also occasionally publish articles by people of other faiths on religious and social issues. Thanks for this! In this way we can learn good things from diverse sources. Goodness is to be had in every community and faith!

Please keep up the good work! May Almighty bless you!

Roshan, Bangalore



### Your New Website is Very Confusing!

As an old reader of Islamic Voice, I find your new website a complete hotchpotch! As they sometimes say, old is gold. The old IV website was very neat and clear, and for readers, very easy to use. But in the new IV website, if you want to read one particular article on spirituality or religion, other articles of past years keep showing up on the side, and this is very distracting. While the new features in the new website like sharing and facility for comments is good, the subject wise classification which was there in the old website is missing, and this makes the website very confusing. Please revamp it and go back to the old website if you really want *Islamic Voice* to become popular worldwide. Please also make sure that the entire paper is uploaded as an e-paper every month.

Noorie Rahman, Bangalore



# Banking: A Dilemma for Indian Muslims

**There is no theoretical macro-economic model with any Muslim country to help realize the vision of an interest-free economy.**

Muslims in general avoid 'banking', the reason for it being the institution of interest ('riba' in Arabic) which has been regarded as highly ignoble because the Holy Qur'an strictly prohibits interest-based transactions in all forms. But, in the modern economic and banking systems of all countries, interest has become so completely institutionalized that it is almost impossible to conceive a system without interest. In the light of this fact the question arises whether there is an independent Islamic economics. Is it a discipline of its own, and is it in practice among Muslims?

The discussion on the subject of Economics is important in this regard as banking is a part of the economic system and interest is a common factor both in the banking and modern economic systems. Islamic Economists argue that an independent Islamic Economics has been defined in accordance with Islamic Law (Shariah Law). It is driven by ideals such as full employment, satisfaction of basic human needs and economic distributive justice, which in general is the same for all other economic systems. But the distinctive feature is that it is based on certain pivotal institutions, of which most important is the prohibition of interest on financial transactions which are not formed as a means of production or backed by tangible assets. Money cannot be traded for any return. In addition, the rationality includes prohibition of excessive uncertainty, speculation, unearned income, wealth by chance etc.

Is all this in practice among Muslims and Muslim-dominant countries? The answer is 'No', though efforts are continuing to realize the vision. Although more than 1400 years of Islamic History have been completed, yet the community has remained warped in the interest-based economic system. The major reason claimed for this is the period of colonial domination of Muslim countries, during which period the interest-based system became solidly entrenched and today still continues.

The dominance of interest is so complete that almost no Muslim country can say that their economic and banking system is without the factor of interest. An eminent Islamic Economist Dr. Umer Chapra has said in this context, "There is no theoretical macro-economic model that would show how the Islamic

values and institutions and different sectors of the economy, society and polity would interact to help realize the vision'.

The contemporary Islamic 'resurgence' has ignited the desire of many Muslims around the world to conduct their financial dealings consistent with Islamic Economics. But a feasible system has not yet been found, and the reasons for this failure should include the attitude of the community of preferring to avoid the educational and professional fields which are related to money and banking. The reassertion of what are thought to be Islamic principles has also pushed the Muslims who were banking with the available avenues (commercial banks) into difficulty with a definition of 'riba' as being all forms of interest, thus putting an end to the debate about whether 'riba' refers to interest or to just usury. Differing views are still voiced referring to inflation as a fact of life in every economy and every country, but this factor has not been given due consideration while concluding that in a financial transaction a certain amount is 'riba'. The definition of 'riba' has been supposedly concluded but the dilemma of Muslims has been compounded! The 'resurgence' is not without its share of success. Landmark developments have been made since 1960's especially in the field of banking. Many Islamic banks and non-banking financial institutions have been established since 1975. The driving force behind these developments is the collaboration between Islamic scholars, economists and bankers. This unique collaboration has narrowed down significantly differences of opinion. More importantly, Muslim scholars have voiced that banks are wholly acceptable in Muslim society as they perform useful services of financial intermediation and help in the process of mobilizing savings and channel them into productive uses for capital formation and development.

With regard to the Indian Muslims, a large majority avoids banking. They are against raising credit from banks and generally rely on self-

By  
**Mohamed Ashrafulla**



“Younger community members should be encouraged to be part of the start-up ventures, to become business leaders and also to become bankers.”

financing, although they are mainly engaged in businesses requiring capital for their ventures and working capital for growth. It is sad to note that the community of most skilled artisans and merchants are now relegated to businesses such as scrap collection, automobile repair, etc. and owners of almost only micro, small and some medium enterprises. Although, education is catching up and graduates are increasing, most of

them are ending as employees with no means of capital for entrepreneurship.

What is the way forward for Indian Muslims? They must recognize the fact that in the modern-day economy, interest has become institutionalized worldwide. There is no theoretical model with any Muslim country to help realize the vision of an interest-free economy. Commercial banks have been operating based only on interest for centuries, and to date in the nooks and corners of every Muslim country. Muslims should note that the roads, transport, electricity, government health and educational facilities and other social infrastructure they use are largely funded by issuance of bonds or by debt. So, has the community avoided their usage? No! Can it be avoided? The answer is: 'Impossible'. The salaries/pensions of the employees in government and private sector are not without elements of debt or income from sources which are not considered to be halaal. So, is the community having a privilege of picking and choosing jobs by analyzing the employers' financial sources? Not at all! Why then has a large section of the community singled out only banking for avoidance?

Commercial banking is no doubt based on interest, but then what are the alternative choices for the community for raising large credit? Money, banking and

finance have become powerful means for domination, and their avoidance has already resulted in the pathetic economic status of the community, which may only further worsen in future.

'Islamic banking' is it the panacea? Islamic banking is rapidly becoming more visible as a global activity, and it has attracted serious interest of Indian Muslims as well. Success so far has showed that Islamic Banking is not only conceivable but also feasible and viable. It has attracted hitherto untouched segments of Muslims which for religious reasons had stayed outside financial circuits. It is also important to mention that the movement is still developing and is experiencing difficulties comparable to an embryo struggling to survive in an inhospitable environment.

The community's political and business leaders, economists, bankers and the religious scholars should come together for discussions and debates on the subject of banking for breaking the barriers of understanding, for knowing the banking needs of Indian Muslims, for finding solutions and also for drawing ideas for establishing acceptable financial intermediaries. Younger community members should be encouraged to be part of the start-up ventures, to become business leaders and also to become bankers, as without entering the deep waters of banking, finding alternatives that meet the community's requirements would be difficult.

**(The writer, presently based in Bangalore, is retired VP, Dubai Islamic Bank and can be reached at ashrafulla@hotmail.com)**

## Athens Mosque Likely to Open by September

Greece's education and religion minister says the country's first state-sponsored mosque is likely to begin operating in September 2019, about three years after its construction was approved by Parliament. Kostas Gavroglou spoke during a visit to the nearly complete mosque on the outskirts of the Athens city centre, accompanied by representatives of the Muslim community. "It is particularly good that soon there will be the first prayer from the imam of the Athens mosque. We hope this will happen in September at the latest," Gavroglou said.

Supervised by the Greek state, the 350-capacity mosque is situated in



the industrial area of Eleonas, near a refugee camp. The \$967,000 construction project has none of the ornate grace, typical of Islamic places of worship. But for the Muslims of Athens, it would be the

city's first formal mosque in more than 180 years. Tens of thousands of Muslim migrants live in the greater Athens area and have been using informal prayer rooms in basements and disused stores.

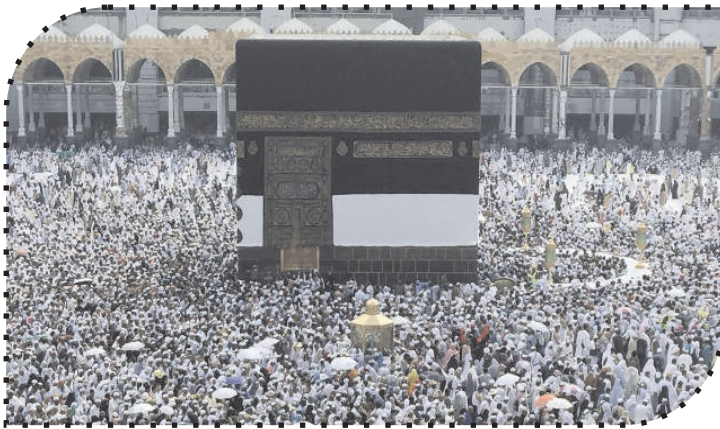


By Nigar

Every year as the time for the Hajj arrives, my memories of my Hajj get revived, helping me cherish that unforgettable journey! Prior to 1997, which was the year I performed Hajj, life for me was something like one big party! Bestowed with a job that required me to allure consumers to buy things like shampoos that would supposedly give them glorious hair to watches that would supposedly add to their 'sophistication', the fame and fortune that the advertising world brought with it was what I considered my purpose of life. Prayer was far from my mind and heart. Daily binging on fast food, slogging late hours to meet deadlines and other such aspects of the rat-race I was running ultimately took a toll on my health, emotional, mental and physical. Then, one day this was in 1997 when I was at home recovering, I decided to give it all up. The glamour and the attention and the tensions that I had lived with just did not make any sense. My ill health, I felt, was a message from God to wake up and realize the true purpose of my life. I told my parents that I wasn't keen to continue in my career and I

# What Hajj Taught Me!

Life is About Prayer, Not Partying!



wished to do Umrah. My mother gave me the wise suggestion to perform the Hajj instead as my father was around and could be my mehram. So, that's how I set off for Hajj with my father, by God's grace. I was very excited travelling to Mumbai from Bangalore and then to Jeddah by plane.

When the bus from Jeddah arrived in Makkah, it was quite late at night. I had been told by several people about what to do when I saw the Kaabah for the first time. But as I set eyes on the Kaabah for

“While all those who perform the Hajj follow the same rituals, the inner experience that one goes back with could be different for each person.”

the first time, I was stunned so much that I could not utter anything. I just kept looking at the Kaabah in wonderment!

While all those who perform the Hajj follow the same rituals, the

inner experience that one goes back with could be different for each person. The stay in a tent at Mina and the escape from a big fire that broke out then, the fact that there are lakhs of pilgrims who perform the tawaaf around the Kaabah but yet each one gets the chance to do it, the order and discipline of so many people praying together at Arafat, the night spent under the open sky in Muzdalifa, the hospitality of the inhabitants of Makkah and Madinah all these uplifted my

spirits so much that I felt that God had been very kind and merciful towards me. I realized that I could lead a God-conscious life if I determined to and that I should shed my dependence on a worldly designation to be in peace. When I was in Madinah at the Prophet's Mosque, I prayed that I did not want to work to earn lots of money but to be in a place that gave me peace.

For me, the Hajj was a big turning point in my life. That good old proverb *Sau choohay khaa key billi hajj ko gayi* ('The cat ate a hundred mice and then set off on the Hajj') rightly applied to me! It helped me realize that I should not be leading a party-full life but, rather, a prayerful one!

## HADITH ILLUMINATES THE PATH

### Once in a Lifetime

Despite the great significance of Hajj, it is enough to do it only one time in your whole life. Islam is easy and takes into consideration the difficulties that pilgrims go through:

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that one day the Prophet (Pbuh) addressed people saying:

“O people! Allah has prescribed Hajj upon you, so perform it.”

A man asked, ‘Every year, O Messenger of Allah?’

The Prophet kept silent. When the man repeated his question thrice, the Prophet said: “Had I

answered in the affirmative, it would have become a (yearly) obligation, and this would have been beyond your capacity.”

Then he added: “Leave me alone so long as I leave you alone (i.e. do not ask questions about things I didn't mention). What caused the destruction of the people before you was that they used to ask so many questions, and disagree with their Prophets.

So when I command you to do something, do it to the extent of your ability, and if I forbid you from doing something, avoid it.” (Muslim)

## Importance of Manners

Children Must Be Taught How To Think, Not What To Think

By Larissa

As a school teacher but not yet a parent, I feel somewhat responsible for the teaching of little minds. I know I am only with them for half the day and then they are returned back to their parents, but I see them in situations their parents never do and truth be told, I actually spend more time with some of my school children than their parents do. So with that, I thought to write a post about the importance of manners, especially in our children.

It's not enough to teach our children the words, “sorry, please & thank you.” Without meaning and empathy, we might as well teach our children, “banana, strawberry and apple.” Without understanding, they are just words, foreign and sometimes used as a scapegoat. As an educator I believe that teaching manners and etiquette is more important than academics. But do we really appreciate this in our curriculum or society?

If your child came home with 0/10 for his English test but his teacher was impressed and admired his kind nature, the way he shares his pencils, the way he always loves to help those around him, the way that he is honest and sticks up for the wronged, the way that he is curious and asks questions to stimulate his mind, the way that he listens carefully to his teacher and respects



the time she spends helping him... How would you react? Most parents would blame the child for underachieving, for wasting their hard earned money... for being stupid etc.

But we must stop and ask ourselves, what's really important in life?

**Abu Hurairah (RA) said, “I heard Abu al Qasim (Rasulullah (SAW)), say, ‘The best among you in Islam are those with the best manners, so long as they develop a sense of understanding.’”**

(Al-Bukhari)

We can get consumed with academic achievements and make our children spend hours studying for one exam, we put pressure on them to get top marks and send them to extra lessons, every year the pressure gets more and more. Meanwhile, the last time they helped their grandma with taking the rubbish was 3 months ago.

They stopped greeting their elders when they walk in a room. They are depressed but don't feel comfortable enough to tell us...

Yet, our Prophet (Pbuh) did not reprimand anyone. He didn't correct anyone's faults except in private. He loved children and elderly and he taught the whole of mankind the best of manners...

**Anas (RA) said, “I served Rasulullah (SAW) for ten years. During that time, he never once said to me as much as ‘Oof’ if I did something wrong. He never asked me, if I had failed to do something, ‘Why did you not do it?’, and he never said to me, if I had done something wrong, ‘Why did you do it?’”**

(Al-Bukhari)

As a teacher and when I am a mum inshallah, I want my child to feel loved. To feel important. To know that he will make mistakes and he always has the chance to be forgiven. I want him to care about others before himself. I want him to be honest regardless of the consequences. I want him to learn respect before his ABC's. I want him to change the world but most importantly, I want him to change himself.

*If you want to change the world, go home and love your family.*

—Mother Theresa

(Extracted from [shukrallahblog.wordpress.com](http://shukrallahblog.wordpress.com))

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By Amna Anwaar

Contrary to what humans would like to believe, life is not a bed of roses. It is a journey, where we stumble upon pain, calamities, heartbreak, loss, desolation, and helplessness. Sometimes, we find ourselves falling into an abyss of darkness. It is so deeply consuming that you think you might never come back up. You try to paddle your way up, trying to get some air into your starved lungs, but you find yourself tired from the continuous struggle and eventually your limbs give out and you are stuck. Stuck and alone without an escape.

That, in a nutshell, is what depression feels like.

#### How to Deal with Depression

Depression does not need a reason to exist. Sometimes it is just there, hanging around the corner, staring at us. It can be exhausting and utterly draining on a person mentally and physically. Depression is not sadness. Sadness is temporary while depression is long-term and it is very much real. However, for those of us who personally face these depressive demons on a daily basis, there is hope for us to overcome them.

Islam has equipped the believer with the essential tools to fight depression and recover from it. The greatest tool being the blessed Holy Quran itself.

From a psychological perspective, having a strong and healthy bond with Allah can directly lead to

# Battling Depression with the Quran – How?

**The answer to depression lies in the words of Allah and His infinite wisdom: trust Him, for He will never forsake you and He is the best of Planners!**

better mental well-being. This relationship with God needs to be built on unrelenting trust in Allah, His plans and His Will. Allah never forsakes His believers. If the believer trusts Allah blindly, Allah proves enough for him.

If you feel yourself drowning in depression, recite the Holy Quran more often. One of the biggest causes of depression and anxiety is the fear of the unknown and the uncertainty of the future. The feeling of not being in control of your circumstances or the events in your life can cause restlessness, desolation, and frustration. By reciting the Quran, one is constantly reminded that it is only Allah who has control over all affairs and He has a plan for each and every one of us. Every single thing that happens to us is part of a bigger and perfect plan that our



permanent world will emerge that of Heaven and Hell.

Allah created this world to test us. And God tests those He loves and He asks His faithful believers to bear those trials with patience and tawakkul. Sometimes, these trials and tribulations are also a means to elevate the status of a believer and for the purpose of the expiation of his sins. If a believer bears the trials in this world with the intention of pleasing Allah, He promises eternal rewards in the Hereafter.

This life is created for hardship, loss, and disappointment. It is only our faith in Allah that can enable us to bear these worldly trials and keep ourselves focused on the ultimate goal of an eternal life in Paradise.

Through the recitation of the Quran, our hearts find ease. And we are reminded about the endless

favors of Allah upon us.

At the end of the day, it is our faith in Allah that can keep us afloat in this world. The key is to trust in the power of Allah and His infinite wisdom to know what is better for us and what is not. He loves us beyond measure. And He waits for us to rely on Him so He can give us beyond measure as well – in this world and the Hereafter.

#### Why Trials?

This world and its trials are all meant for one purpose: to bring us back to Him. Allah afflicts us with hardship so we may find solace in Him. He tests us so we may rely on Him to get us through it. And He sends calamities in our path so we may call for His help and His help alone. He only wants His servants to remember Him and turn to Him and to not get lost in the rat race of this worldly life. And He wants man to realize his purpose of creation to worship Him. We should supplicate to Him with firm faith in His providence and His control over everything. He will only decree what is best for us.

There is always hope for healing in Islam. Nothing is impossible for Allah and there is no abyss you can reach that is beyond His help.

The answer to depression lies in the words of Allah and His infinite wisdom. Trust Him, for He will never forsake you and He is the best of Planners!

**(Extracted, with some modifications, from an article taken from the Net)**

#### The Fear of God

The Arabic word for the “fear of God” is taqwa. It comes from the root word meaning “to protect from something, to prevent”. Indeed, a person exhibits the fear of God by seeking to prevent God’s punishment by carrying out what God has commanded of him and abstaining from what God has prohibited him.

God had called upon all people in every era to fear Him.

*And We had enjoined upon those who were given the Scripture before – as well as yourselves – to fear God. (4:131)*

It is God’s right over His servants that they fear Him as He ought to be feared.

*O you who believe! Fear God as He ought to be feared and do not die except as believers. (3:102)*

Ibn Mas’ud explained what it means to fear God as He ought to be feared by saying:

“It means that He is to be obeyed not disobeyed, remembered not forgotten, and shown gratitude not ingratitude.”

#### The Relationship between Knowledge and the Fear of God

God says:

*It is only those who have knowledge among God’s servants who fear Him. (35:28)*

There are two ways in which knowledge and the fear of God are

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FEAR GOD?

**It is God’s right over His servants that they fear Him as He ought to be feared.**

It is God’s right over His servants that they fear Him as He ought to be feared.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

Fear God wherever you are. Follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will blot it out. And deal with people in a good manner. (Tirmidhi)

Ibn Rajab says:

“This is powerful advice, bringing together the rights of God and the rights of His servants.”

related. The first is that true fear of God comes about as the result of having proper knowledge of God and His perfect attributes.

Ibn Abbas said about this verse: “They are those who know that God is capable of all things.”

He also said: “The verse means: The only people who fear me are those who know my power, my might, and my dominion.”

Ibn Kathir says in his commentary of this verse:

“The only people who fear God in the true sense are those who are knowledgeable about God. This is because the more knowledge a person has about the Almighty, the All-Powerful and All-Knowing, who possesses the attributes of perfection and the best of names the more perfect and complete this knowledge is the greater and more total his fear of God will be.”

The second way that the fear of God and knowledge are related stems from the fact that the fear of God is to seek to prevent God’s punishment by carrying out God’s commands and abstaining from His prohibitions. Consequently, a Muslim needs to have knowledge of these matters in order to fear God properly. An ignorant Muslim may have a sense of fear, but he will not be able to fully carry out what that fear requires of him.

Ibn Abbas said:

“To have knowledge of the Most Merciful is to be someone who associates nothing as a partner with Him, who deems lawful what He has made lawful, who prohibits what He has prohibited, who preserves what He has enjoined upon him, and who has certainty that he shall meet Him and that his actions will be accounted for.”

#### Follow up a Bad Deed with a Good Deed

The Prophet (peace upon him) tells us that performing a good deed wipes away the sin incurred from perpetrating an evil one. Scholars have disagreed whether the “good deed” being referred to here refers specifically to the context of repentance or whether it is general for all good works.

#### The strongest view is that all good deeds can wipe away evil deeds. God says:

And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good works do away with evil deeds. That is a reminder for those who take heed. (Quran 11:114)

#### A believer should always repent for his sins. God says:

And those, who when they commit an indecency or wrong themselves,

remember God and seek forgiveness for their sins – and who forgives sins except God – and then do not knowingly persist in what they have done, for them is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide forever. How great is the reward for those who work righteousness. (Quran 3:135)

A believer should follow up his sincere repentance with the performance of good works. This is what God wants from us. He says:

Indeed, I am Most Forgiving to whomever repents, believes, and works righteous deeds and then continues upon guidance. (Quran 20:82)

#### God also tells us:

Except for those who repent, believe, and work righteous deeds. For those, God will change their evil deeds into good deeds, and God is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Quran 25:70)

This is especially true for major sins. A Muslim must never leave a major sin to go without repentance, for God’s promise of forgiveness is for those who turn to Him in sincere repentance. The Prophet said:

A servant, if he acknowledges his sin and then repents, God will forgive him.



# My friend, Firoz Ashraf

**I think of him as a large-hearted, grand-fatherly, local figure forever worrying about the education of young Muslim girls...**

**By Vrijendra**

In the late evening of June 8, 2019, Firoz Ashraf died in a freak accident outside his home in Jogeshwari when he was crossing the road. It is more than a month since he died, and many memorial meetings have been held to mourn his death, to celebrate his life, to remember him and to try to find out who will and how would fit in the large void he has left behind in so many, especially, young lives of so many Muslim girls for whom he was, to use an old but apt cliché, a saviour! In the last one month, I have also thought about him more than ever.

First, I think of him as a large-hearted, grand-fatherly, local figure forever worrying about the education of young Muslim girls he had been deeply involved with for decades. His concerns about them were all practical: which school they should go to, who would teach them, what to teach them, what they would eat, how to pay their school, college fees, how to fight with, argue with, persuade, whatever, their parents to send these girls to school, to not burden them with too much house work, to let them dream their modest and not-so-modest dreams! And they were always there in his modest house in Abba Apartments. I would constantly tease him: Are you running a dharamshala? He would laugh good-naturedly and tell me: kya kare, yaar. Inko kon dekhega? And then he would tell me the life-story of the girl in the house.

I found it remarkable that his concern for the poor Muslim girls never faded with time. Instead, it intensified as he became more well-known, as more girls and families sought him, as ex-students told others about him, visited him to help and to seek help for others. It was as if there was a whole community of these young girls from poor Muslim families for whom life had a marker: before they met 'uncle' and after. It is impossible to describe the easy and intense emotional connect he had with these girls. Firoz, in his seventies, was their friend, confidant, advisor, father-figure who could fight with the real father and much more: everything, as so many tearfully recalled in memorial meetings. Many of them broke down and wondered what they would do now that the uncle was no longer there.

But for him, I would have never known about these lives. But for him, many of these young Muslim girls would not have



known any other life but what they were born into. He was an activist all his life but he was not a 'big' activist. He did what he could. He did not carry the burden of the world on his shoulders. He wore it lightly. In the process, he did not worry too much about where the help came from as long as it came. It was, then, not a surprise that his biggest grouse was against progressive, affluent leaders of the Muslim community. Normally, Firoz was fun, full of laughter and stories but his passionate fury was roused as soon as the subject of big Muslim leaders and activists came up. He held them – at least, partly – responsible for the sorry plight of the community. He would lament that they did nothing; cared for nothing; full of themselves, they only talked big, he would say. And he knew. He had experienced their callousness and pomposity often.

Before the riots of 1992-93, in the aftermath of the demolition of Babri Masjid in UP, Firoz was a different man: a progressive, left intellectual, trade unionist and activist, he lived in a cosmopolitan society in Malad, largely among Hindus. The riots forced him to shift to Jogeshwari, among his religious community. But Firoz did not regret the decision. Sometimes, he would suggest that he regretted that he

got to know the Muslim community so late.

Firoz was not just an activist. He was also a life-long journalist, writing regularly and copiously. You got to see this Firoz if you entered his sanctuary: a room of his own. (Those who know him knew that adjacent to his house in Jogeshwari, he had another room. The distance between these two houses is about 15 feet. But for Firoz, it was a world apart. When one walked with him from one place to another, Firoz would swiftly, easily change). Here, he would talk about what he was writing, literature, history, books and magazines. He would tell you stories about the state of Urdu and Hindi newspapers and journalists.

I had talked to him just a couple of days before his untimely death, when he called me up because my wife and I had failed to show up at his place for our Eid lunch! This time, somehow, he had forgotten to invite us! As usual, he was candid about how, sometimes these days, his memory failed him. I promised to visit him soon. Little did I know that this would be my last conversation with him! (Of course, I am at an age when one never knows which conversation with whom is the last one.) In any case, Eid lunch without him would never be the same again.

(Taken from [sabrangindia.in](http://sabrangindia.in))

## Farida Raj: Inspiring Urdu Writer

**Hyderabad:** From being a special education teacher to winning the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Telangana State Urdu Academy for her contribution to promotion of Urdu through informative articles, 64-year-old Farida Raj has traversed a long and arduous, but satisfying journey in her endeavour to empower women.

Farida decided to wield the pen to help her fellow women gain control over their lives. "I used to cater to children with learning disabilities and cerebral palsy, and I knew the importance of genetic counselling. I settled in Hyderabad post marriage and used to visit the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). One day, I saw a lady there with a baby who was mentally challenged. The baby was her seventh child and all her other children had the same problem too. I found that the woman had never gone for genetic counselling as she was unaware of such a thing. The woman belonged to a poor Muslim family in Musheerabad," Farida, who was born and brought up in Mumbai, said. The encounter prompted Farida to reach out to such women to go for genetic counselling before conceiving another child. "The articles in Urdu papers for women were either about cookery or beauty tips. So, I decided to reach out to



them and the best medium was the newspaper," she said. Farida began writing for the Urdu daily Siasat, which she says, was quite a challenge even though she spoke the language.

Farida also organises lectures by oncologists about cancer and has taken to writing on children and dyslexia. She has written two books on dyslexia.

(Information extracted from an item in [timesofindia.indiatimes.com](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com))

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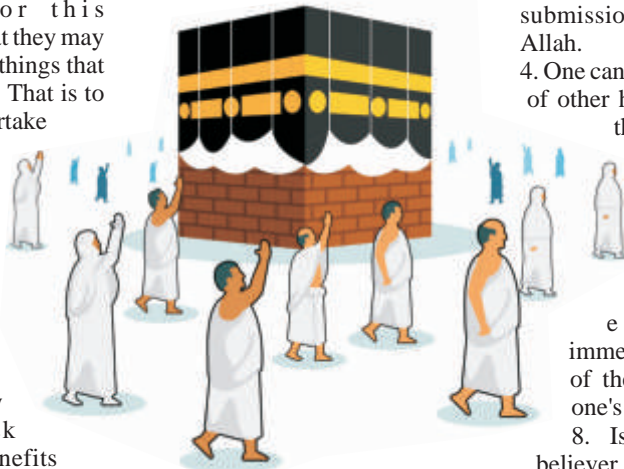
# Benefits of Hajj

**"And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men; they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways; That they may witness the benefits for them".**

**Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage) Chapter 22: Verses 27-28**

**A**lmighty Allah had commanded Abraham to make a general proclamation of Hajj, the first reason given for this commandment is: "That they may come here and witness things that are of benefit to them". That is to say that they may undertake the journey and assemble here and witness with their own eyes that it is intended for their benefit only and its advantages can be noticed only when a man personally experiences it by performing the task himself. Worldly benefits include trade, business and other commercial benefits. Most notable among these benefits are the purification of the soul, refinement of character, refreshing of one's spirit and the

spiritual training that takes place in the most honourable land on this



In addition to the points made above, one may note some of the following benefits of Hajj:

1. A source of reflection as well as inspiration for the believers.

2. One of the greatest ways to remove sins.
3. An opportunity for the Muslim to demonstrate his complete submission and obedience to Allah.
4. One can witness the willingness of other humans to sacrifice for the sake of Allah.
5. Hajj helps us to realize the relationship between our faith and sacrifice.
7. A moving experience that immediately brings thoughts of the Day of Judgment to one's mind.
8. Is a reminder to the believer that he is on a true, lifelong journey for which there is no return.

(Source: "Purification of the Soul" - By Jamal al-Din M. Zarabozo)

## This World and the Hereafter

**In a general comment on human beings, the Quran (76:27) says: Those people [who are unmindful of God] aspire for immediate gains, and put behind them a Heavy Day.**

**By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan**

Man has been created as an eternal being. But his life span consists of two parts: the pre-death period, and the post-death period. A common weakness of man is that he takes his pre-death period as the basis or framework of his thinking and is concerned only about it. He does not think in the context of the post-death period of his life. This is the truth that is referred to in the above-cited Quranic verse. This is no ordinary matter. It is this issue that gives man's thinking the right or wrong direction.

A person who thinks only in the framework of the problems and issues of the pre-death period of life develops in himself a world-oriented thinking. His thinking will, in every sense, become non-realistic thinking because he ignores the reality of the eternal life after death. And non-realistic thinking is another name for wrong thinking.

In contrast to this, a person who thinks in the framework of the issues of life after death will develop in himself Hereafter-oriented thinking. This sort of thinking is realistic thinking, because it is based on the reality of the eternal Hereafter. And realistic thinking is but another name for right thinking.

Man's progress or destruction depends entirely on this issue. If a person who develops in himself world-oriented thinking, his entire life will move in the wrong direction. In contrast, the person whose thinking is Hereafter-oriented will head in the right direction. It is this issue that is of fundamental importance for man's character-building.

(For more such thought-provoking reflections on Life, Death and the Hereafter by the noted Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, see his recently-published book "Reflections on Life and Death", which can be downloaded free of cost from the following link: <https://cpsglobal.org/books/reflections-life-and-death>)



## CPS's Free Quran Translation Distribution Programme

The New Delhi-based Centre for Peace and Spirituality (CPS), headed by noted Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, has produced a vast amount of literature on Islam and issues of contemporary interest, geared to a multi-faith readership. It has also been deeply engaged in promoting peace and understanding between Muslims and others.

One of the CPS's major activities is its Quran translation distribution programme, in collaboration with Goodword Books, a publishing house headed by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's son Saniyasnain Khan. These attractively-designed translations are available in many regional and international languages, including English, Urdu, Hindi, Dogri, Punjabi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Chinese and Filipino. At present, translations are underway in Polish, Japanese, Burmese and Manipuri.

Generally, CPS prefers that its English translation serves as the reference for any other translation. But, if they get permission to publish a translation of the Quran which has already appeared in a particular language, they may agree publish it without alterations but adding an Introduction by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. But after first print, they try to secure a translator for that same language, and if they get a suitable one, they start a process of translating the Quran afresh in that language.

Copies of the translation of the Quran published by CPS/Goodword Books can be procured from completely free of cost. All one needs to do is to fill up a simple request form on the CPS website, which can be accessed here:

<https://cpsglobal.org/content/order-free-quran>

When a request form is submitted, it is automatically filtered and forwarded to the Quran Distribution Centre (QDC) of that particular country (as of now there are QDCs in eight countries, in Asia, Europe and North America, besides India). The QDC team then posts it locally. In India, the form is filtered state-wise and forwarded to QDC of that

particular state to handle. At present, there are QDCs in Srinagar, Jodhpur, Meerut, Patna, Kolkata, Indore, Bombay, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Calicut, Goa and Chennai. Requests from places where CPS does not as yet have a QDC are handled by CPS Delhi.

In addition to sending copies of the translation of the Quran to people who request for them, CPS team members sometimes contact them and provide other relevant literature, depending on the interest shown by them through the remarks field on their form. CPS members also engage in free distribution of translations of the Quran in seminars, conferences, literary fests, book fairs, tourist attractions, schools, colleges, libraries, hospitals and prisons. Several popular hotels in different countries have placed copies of the translation in their rooms.

QDCs stock copies of the translation of the Quran in languages commonly spoken in their area. In case they do not have a copy in the requested language, they forward the request to CPS Delhi and it is taken care of. The books are generally sent by ordinary post, but if someone mentions that she/he wants it urgently, it is sent by courier or speed post.

On an average, CPS gets around 500 requests a month from different parts of India for Quran translation copies, mostly for the English translation, which has been widely acknowledged as simple, clear and easy-to-read. One can request for one copy for each form. Requests come from both individuals and organizations and from people of different faith backgrounds.

The programme is sustained financially by the contribution of CPS members and well-wishers. QDCs procure copies of the translations of the Quran and post them at their own expense. Where it is not possible, Goodword Books sponsors this.

Recently, CPS launched a new website (<http://www.cpsquran.com/>) where translations of the Quran can be downloaded, free of cost, in more than 25 languages. CPS accepts donations from those who wish to contribute financially for the Quran translation distribution project. Details can be had from here:

<http://www.cpsglobal.org/donation>

**"A man having pure, noble and holy thoughts, enjoys inner peace and joy and is really in heaven. To have an unbridled mind, full of low, grovelling desires, is virtually to live in hell. So heaven and hell are as we make them according to the state of our mind and life."**



# What a Wonderful Sunday!

**Our common humanness, cemented by a desire to be of service to someone in some way or the other, brought us together.**

**By Zizzy**

Yesterday, I had a really wonderful Sunday! No, no, I didn't laze around in bed till lunchtime! Nor did I watch the latest movie on TV! And no, I definitely didn't go to a mall for a meal or to window-shop! What made yesterday a very special day was that it was full of wonderfully positive interfaith experiences. And that's something that really makes my day!

That morning, I got up, as usual, a bit before five. I freshened up, spent some time chatting with God and had my morning coffee. Later, I set out with my friend N to meet a common friend, S, an elderly man from a Muslim background. For several years now he has been heading an organisation that provides financial assistance to students from economically poor families to carry on with higher education. N and I had fixed to meet R at S's house. In his 40s, R, who is from a Hindu background and is father of two children, works as a domestic help. His economic condition is very vulnerable, to put it mildly. We contacted S thinking that he might be able to help him with a



scholarship for his children's education.

S was very enthusiastic when we mentioned the issue to him. R then spoke with him, and he asked R to meet him at his home. N and I thought it would be a good idea if we went along too.

We had a lovely time at S's place that morning. S and his amiable wife (great hosts they are!), R and his two children, N and I together, we were from three different faith backgrounds, but that didn't matter in any way as we chatted and laughed over tea and biscuits! S also very kindly explained to R what he needed to do to apply for a scholarship for his children. Hopefully, in a few days', the application will come through!

S and his wife wanted us to stay on for longer, but N and I had to go elsewhere. We needed to meet T, a widow from a Sikh background

who works very hard to make ends meet. Our friend V (who is from a Hindu background) had mentioned that he could arrange for a sewing machine for T to make clothes and earn some money. Someone else had said that they might like to employ T as a caretaker of their

home. We wanted to share all this good news with her.

After meeting T, we went to N's place. Shortly after we got there, M, a friend of N's sister, who is of Buddhist background, dropped by. It was good to meet him after many years and to chat for a while. So, as you can see, yesterday I had a really busy day, a wonderful time with people from many different religious backgrounds. We didn't need to speak about religion, nor even things like 'communal harmony' or 'interfaith dialogue' in order to feel connected. Our common humanness, cemented by a desire to be of service to someone in some way or the other, brought us together, so that what some people might regard as 'major' boundaries of community and religion didn't matter, as far as I am concerned, at all!

# Life is Like a Salad!

**Our own lives are like a salad cauldron a mix of joy and sorrow, difficulties and ease. What we put into this salad of life is actually up to each one's conscience.**

**By Raheny**

In this day and age when in many public places there are CC cameras installed so that people can be caught if they violate rules the concept of God Watching Us may sound old-fashioned to some people, although it still remains a fact. Firm in the faith that God was watching them at all times, many of our ancestors lived honest lives without CC cameras looking down on them. Our own conscience, these ancestors of ours remind us, should prick us when we do something wrong because we should know that God is watching us wherever we are.

The other day, I was at a place of worship and people were engaged in service, cutting vegetables or rolling out chapatis for lunch. I was sitting amidst four to five women and a little girl, cutting radish and cucumber for the salad and putting the bits into a cauldron. The items for the salad had to be cut in a certain size, neither too big, nor too small.

I followed what the other women were doing, trying to keep to this moderate size. Besides me sat a little girl who was cutting cucumbers with her little hands and knife, but the pieces she was making were just too big. One of the women sitting with us told the girl to make the pieces smaller, but she could do only as she could.

Sitting next to her, I had no heart to tell her to cut the cucumbers smaller. After all, she was a kid. While I continued working on the

salad things, a thought came to my mind. If the big pieces of cucumber were mixed into the big cauldron of salad, no one would notice as the quantity was so huge. Yet, as a rule, a good salad ought to have moderately-sized pieces of radish and cucumber and things like that!

It was easy to just put those

big cucumber pieces into the cauldron and be over with it. But I felt a sense of responsibility to redo what the girl had done. I began recutting the pieces she had made, bringing them down to the right size and putting them into the salad

cauldron. At the end of it I was a little tired, but the feeling of having done something right wiped away the tiredness after a while. My conscience would have pricked me if I had to irresponsibly put the huge salad bits into the cauldron. Doing that might have saved me time and energy, but it would not have given me a good night's sleep.

Our own lives are like a salad cauldron a mix of joy and sorrow, difficulties and ease. What we put into this salad of life is actually up to each one's conscience. If we are aware that God is watching us all the time, every little action or deed we do should be done in the awareness that God is always watching us and will take account of what we do. Then, we will do only what is right.

Our lives can be peaceful only if we do the right things because we are guided by faith that 'God is watching us', and not just because CC cameras may be hovering above and around us!



◀ Page 20

## What Does it Mean to Fear God?

And Deal with People in a Good Manner

God tells us repeatedly in the Quran to observe good manners in our dealings with others. He says: Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from those who are ignorant. (Quran 7:199)

**God says:**

Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better. Then he between whom and you there had been hatred will

become as though he were your dear friend. (Quran 41:34)

Prophet Muhammad is the perfect example of what it means to possess good manners. God says, describing him:

Indeed you are of a great moral character. (Quran 68:4)

The Prophet emphasized how good manners are of paramount importance in Islam when he said: I was sent only to perfect good manners.

Indeed, he tells us that good manners are part of faith. He said:

The believers with the most complete faith are those who have the best manners.

Among the good manners that we should cultivate is to be sensible in our dealings with others and not to react hastily when they do that which displeases us. The Prophet said to Ashajj `Abd Qays:

You possess within yourself two qualities that God loves: discernment and forbearance.

(Extracted from [aboutislam.net](http://aboutislam.net))

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# Islam, Nature and Climate Change

The resources of this planet aren't meant only for human beings. Rather, they are meant for all forms of life.

By Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz

This planet, with its many bounties, is our home while we live here. But it isn't just for human beings that God created the earth. God prepared and created it for all living beings, for all life forms. The Quran (55:10) says: "He has laid out the earth for His creatures."

The gifts of Nature that come from God are in plenty. As the Quran (16:18) says: "If you try to count God's blessings, you would never be able to number them. God is ever forgiving and most merciful."

Whatever exists on Earth has been placed here in a measured quantity. As the Quran (15:21) tells us: "There is not a thing but its storehouses are with Us. But We only send down each thing in an appropriate measure". These resources need to be distributed in an equitable manner. Since justice, balance and equity are the main

that we are beset with today. Islam does not approve of a lavish lifestyle, of unjust consumption of resources, of a wasteful attitude and extravagance. Thus, for instance, the Quran says: "O Children of Adam, dress yourself properly whenever you are at worship: and eat and drink but do not be wasteful: God does not like wasteful people." (7:31).

Islam links israf or extravagance to fasad (chaos, disorder, imbalance and mischief in society) and forbids it. It declares that the extravagant are corrupters of society and spoilers of social order and harmony. It forbids people from following such people or systems. Thus, it says, "...do not obey the bidding of those who are given to excesses, those who spread corruption in the land instead of putting things right" (26:151-52).

The bounties that God blessed this planet with have an inherent



reformers). God characterizes believers as the musleheen of the society. They have been commanded to engage in acts of correction and reformation that can undo the damage done by the spoilers or corruptors. Thus, it is the duty of all believers to take up corrective measures for improving society and to ameliorate the conditions of people suffering because of inequalities, imbalances and disorders in society, including due to the destruction of the ecology.

The importance that Islam gives to respect for Nature is also evident from the Islamic understanding of the role of human beings on this planet. According to Islam, our role here is that of trustees or guardians. Hence, our relation to Nature should be one of stewardship, not of mastery. We are only stewards, not owners of this planet the sole Owner of this planet and everything in it is God. Till not very long ago, some people advocated that human beings were Masters of Nature or Conquerors of Nature. Today, however, there is a growing awareness that we are simply trustees of Nature and that it is our duty to protect it not only for us humans but for all life forms.

All the creations of God are a Divine work of art. They have been

## The Perennial Relevance of the Quran

The Quran must be interpreted in every age with all the sorts of relevant knowledge that are available in that age.

“In the Quran (41:53) God says: We will soon show them Our signs in the Universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth.”

This verse, being part of the Quran, will be read in exactly the same way, till the last day, the Day of Judgment. So, we can take it to mean that the process of God revealing His signs in the universe, His creation, will continue till the Final Day. This means that newer sciences and advances in knowledge will reveal more of God's signs to us over time. For this, we will have to have fresh thinking on the Quran in all ages. With every significant advancement in knowledge about the universe, we will, if need be, have to go back to the Quran and re-understand and reinterpret it with the help of the new knowledge at our disposal in order to gain from the Quran the appropriate solutions to the problems of that age. This is because the Quran has a message for all ages, and the key for this is knowledge (ilm), including of the facts of the universe. For every age, the knowledge of that age is the key. Use that key for understanding the Quran and it will open to you the guidance you need to handle the issues of the age. And this process will continue right till

the Day of Judgment. In this way, we can understand and realise that Quran is a book for all times. To do otherwise, to cling to one particular interpretation of the Quran, developed at a certain point in time and in a particular context, and to claim that it is the final interpretation would freeze our understanding of the Quran. The inner dynamism of the Quran can be accessed only if we seek to approach it with a fresh mind, with the help of new forms of knowledge, including from the findings of various sciences.

In other words, the Quran must be interpreted in every age with all the sorts of relevant knowledge that are available in that age. Since ours is an age of science and technology, we need to understand the Quran with the help of modern sciences. In this way, we can truly appreciate the fact that the Quran is a book that is relevant for all times.

(Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz is editor of the Urdu Science magazine and Vice-Chancellor of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. He can be contacted on maparvaiz@gmail.com)

called as aayaat or signs of God, indicative of the greatness, goodness, subtlety and wisdom of the Creator. To deface, defile or destroy Nature would thus be an impious or even blasphemous act. To disrespect Nature by polluting it is to disrespect an ayah or sign of the Creator.

Balance is one of the most crucial factors operating in Nature. To

damage or destroy this natural balance, as is happening today, is to destroy oneself. As the Quran (6:51) says: "He who transgresses God's bounds wrongs his own soul." The destruction of one part of the environment will have repercussions for every component, including human beings. This is almost self-destruction, which is strictly prohibited in Islam.

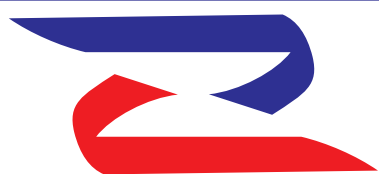
**Balance is one of the most crucial factors operating in Nature. To damage or destroy this natural balance, as is happening today, is to destroy oneself.**

planks of the Islamic system, Islam asks believers to treat all natural resources with the same spirit. The Quran declares without any ambiguity that God has created whatever is in the Earth for everyone: "It is He who created everything on the earth for you" (2:29). It is important to note here that the resources of this planet aren't meant only for human beings. Rather, they are meant for all forms of life.

The resources of Nature that God has created need to be used judiciously. Extravagant and mindless use of these resources has resulted in the environmental crisis

balance. Even a slight change can upset the balance. We know, for instance, how even a small increase in the level of carbon dioxide can lead to climate change. Whenever the balance in the elements occurs, there is fasad pollution, chaos or disorder. Human beings' extravagant misuse of Nature's resources has resulted in widespread fasad, manifested in the ecological crisis that we are faced with.

In contrast to those who engage in fasad (the mufsideen), including those who spoil the natural balance to serve their own ends, are the musleheen (rectifiers, correctors or



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# God Beyond the Horizon

Reflection on the immensity of God's universe can also help us realise our own nothingness in comparison.

By Fr. Babu Thattil CMI

Everyone needs something or the other to believe in a deity, a power or maybe an ideology. Many of us believe in an All-Powerful Being called in English as 'God'.

It is a human tendency that people who share a particular understanding of God gather together and form a religious sect or community. They develop strong bonds among themselves, based on their beliefs, dogmas, laws, customs and practices. They are often proud of their own religion, leaders and mode of belief and practice. They try to keep all those who do not belong to their group at a distance or else seek to incorporate them into their group, which they believe is the only one on the right

human reasoning and interpretation, they are different and diverse. Because of this, different groups of religionists often come into conflict, each believing that their particular understanding of God is the only valid one, or the best one. When we try to limit the power of God within the narrow confines of a particular religious tradition or a particular understanding of God, egoism rises, communal egos clash and this leads to conflict. This is a consequence of a very narrow and conception of God.

The fact, however, is that God, the Ultimate Power who created the universe and still continues to control and protect it, cannot be



realise that the God who has created the universe and is sustaining it is just one, that He is the same God of all Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and everyone else. To think of that there is a God of one particular community and a second God of another community and so on is completely false!

Reflection on the immensity of God's universe can also help us realise our own nothingness in comparison. This, in turn, can help religious groups understand that they need to be more humble in the claims that they sometimes make about God and their particular understandings about Him.

## Some Mindboggling Facts About God's Universe

The fastest known object in the universe is light. It travels at a tremendous speed of 3,00,000 kilometres per second! In one minute there are 60 seconds, in a day there are 86,400 seconds, and in one year there are 31,536,000 seconds. So, in one year, light travels a distance of 94,608,000,000 kilometres, that is, approximately 10 trillion kilometres! This distance is known as one light year.

In the light of this, consider these facts: The star nearest to Earth is the Sun. The Sun is located at a distance of around 149,600,000 kilometres from Earth, and light takes 8 minutes and 20 seconds to travel from the Sun to Earth. That may not seem much time. But did you know that the distance between Earth and the star closest to it after the Sun, which is called as Alpha Centauri A, is about 4.22 light years that is, around 4.22 X 10 trillion kilometres!

Here are some more amazing facts! The Sun and its planets, including Earth, together form our solar system. This solar system is located in a galaxy known as the Milky Way. It is believed that there are 100-400 billion stars in this galaxy alone and that there are more than 100 billion galaxies in this universe!

Consider also this fact: Our Sun is one of the smallest stars. Yet it has 8 planets, including Earth. Other stars definitely can have more planets than the Sun does. If we assume an average of ten planets for each star, how many planets could there altogether be in the universe? The figure may be around  $400 \times 10^9 \times 100 \times 10^9 \times 10$  (400 billion X 100 billion X 10)! Again, this is a

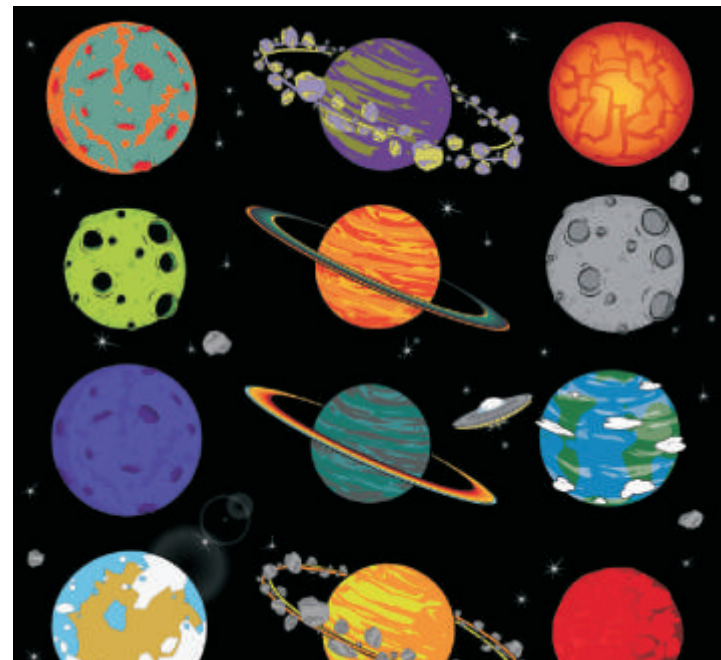


figure far beyond our comprehension!

In the Milky Way, the galaxy where our solar system is located, the average distance between the nearest stars is about 5 light years, or 45 trillion kilometres. On this basis, the size of the Milky Way may be calculated as 400 billion x 45 trillion kilometres! And that may be the approximate size of our galaxy alone. Remember, there are billions of other galaxies in the universe! How immense, then, must the whole universe be! And do keep in mind that the universe is constantly expanding!

At present, the closest known galaxy to our Milky Way galaxy is the Canis Major Dwarf galaxy. It is located at a distance of 236,000,000,000,000 kilometres (25,000 light years) from the Sun. If this is the distance between our Sun and the nearest galaxy to ours, can you imagine the distance between us and the farthest galaxy in the universe? Even if light travels several trillion years it may not reach from our galaxy to the farthest one! If the universe is so immense, how immense must God, its creator, be!

## Our Relative Insignificance

What is the size of Planet Earth? Its circumference is only 40,075 kilometres and its diameter just 12,760 kilometres. Does this Earth have any real significance, in terms of size, in the universe?

Let us imagine that a truckload of sand is deposited in an empty space. Can you calculate how many tiny pieces of sand the heap contains? It sounds impossible, but one simple way to find out is to take a gram of sand and count the number of particles it contains. Then, measure the weight of the truckload of sand in grams and multiply this figure by the number of particles in one gram of sand. This will give you the approximate number of sand particles in the sand-heap.

Now, consider this: Does a tiny particle of sand have any significance in a huge truckload of sand? No, not at all! How many particles of sand are carried away by the wind or by vehicles that pass over the sand-heap and no one bothers about them! In

terms of size, if we take the entire universe to be a giant truckload of sand, the Earth is just a minuscule sand particle or even less! The Earth is thus not even a tiny speck in this immense universe!

If, then, the Earth does not have any significance, in terms of size, in the enormous universe, what do you think is the real significance of just one individual on the Earth you or me or anyone else? Yes, you probably guessed right! We are actually almost nothing at all! But yet, with our individual egos and communal, ethnic, religious and national superegos, we think that we are the centre of the universe! Individuals and communities think they are the best of all!

The fact however is that we are actually insignificant creatures in this huge universe. With the advancement of science, man feels that he can do everything and attain anything. But the truth is that we are unable to control the power of the nature, especially when it becomes violent. We are absolutely helpless before things like earthquakes, tsunamis, tectonic movements, and even the rain! Yet, we consider ourselves as something very great! We want the whole world to go our way!

If we ponder on the mindboggling immensity of the universe, which reflects the power of God Almighty, its creator, we may realise how limited and limiting some of our erroneous and divisive views about God are.

Remember that there is only one, enormously powerful God, only one humanity and only one life for everyone. We need not stupidly try to 'protect' God by killing our fellow men in God's name. The true way to serve God is by respecting the life of all human beings, no matter what their religion, ethnicity or nationality, and by respecting the life of all other of God's many creatures too.

(Fr. Babu Thattil CMI, a Catholic priest with many years' experience in educational field

as principal is presently Associate Director of Vidyavanam Ashram, an interfaith Christian ashram in Bangalore)

If we ponder on the mindboggling immensity of the universe, which reflects the power of God Almighty, its creator, we may realise how limited and limiting some of our erroneous and divisive views about God are.

path. Along with this, they sometimes tend to look at others with suspicion or even abhorrence and contempt, which can, on occasion, turn into conflict and even war.

Some people go the extreme of wanting to promote their own belief system to the exclusion of all others and even at the cost of their extermination. Many conflicts through human history have been driven by this monopolistic urge to establish a group's 'faith' or power over others. In such cases, the ultimate purpose is actually to foster the group's collective ego, which they conveniently attribute to God.

## God is Beyond Our Limited Understandings

Being the Ultimate or Absolute, God is beyond our human understandings of Him. But, despite this, people try to confine God to their own limited understandings. Since these understandings are a product of

limited within the boundaries of any religion, ideology, sect or community. Being the Supreme Power, He is and must be beyond any such limits.

There is, and there can be, only one Ultimate and Supreme power, and we all are only His children. How can God, being the creator of the entire universe, be the God only of a particular community, religion or sect? This is simply impossible! Growing in our knowledge of the immensity of God can help us grow out of limited and self-limiting understandings of God that have been used through history to foment conflict between religious communities. And one way we can grow in our appreciation of God's immensity is to reflect on the immensity of the universe, which is God's creation.

## Reflecting on God's Creation

Reflecting on the universe, its size and its complexity can help us

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**Q: Would you please tell us more about your project?**

**Wildeman:** It is an e-project aiming to profile all mosques in the Netherlands. Through this project, any Muslim can know all about the mosques there with full information about each mosque. Each mosque's profile features its ethnic background, address, postal code, telephone number, email address, picture of the mosque, overhead organization, language of the Friday sermon Khutbah, bookstore, mosque's capacity for males and females, availability of bathrooms and place for ablution (wudu) both for men or women, and finally some general remarks (like, old building, no parking, special lessons, furnishing, also the mosque's prayer times according to its specific location). Moreover, the user can know whether this information is 100% confirmed or not as I did visit most of them personally to prepare these profiles. So those which were visited by any one else other than myself are labeled "unconfirmed."

Thanks to Allah, there are 350 confirmed addresses out of the project's 408 different ones. Based on the number of the confirmed mosques, I have currently 160 full mosque profiles on the website.

**Q: Can you now give us a glimpse of your journey into Islam?**

**Wildeman:** I don't really know when I became a Muslim. I started reading about Islam by coincidence four or five years before pronouncing the testimony of faith (Shahadah). I just wanted to know about that hot issue tackled a lot by the European media.

The first book I read about Islam was very academic and very difficult to understand. So I decided to get another book to understand Islam more, and I kept reading more and more.

After reading many books, I found out that Islam was not as I expected. In fact, many of the Islamic opinions were similar to what I naturally believed in.

Most of the ideas that the media is disseminating about Islam as a religion of oppressing women turned out to be totally wrong. I found Islam to be a very rational religion. It is pro-science. It encourages people to understand everything around them, to meditate, and it is truly a self-critical religion. Before digging more into Islam, I had always thought that life of an atheist is very easy, in terms of being free to do whatever one wants, but personally I used to criticize such a lifestyle. Then came a stage when I grew a certain awareness of God. This was emphasized by the truth I felt in both the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah.

# Hopes of a Dutch Convert

Nourdeen Wildeman

**Nourdeen Wildeman is a Dutch convert. He converted to Islam "officially" on December 9, 2007. Despite his recent conversion, he managed to launch his ongoing project "Find the Mosque that Fits You Best."**

**In this interview, Nourdeen talks not only about his project's experience, which gives useful information on Dutch mosques, but also about his daily challenges and opportunities as a Dutch Muslim convert, as well as a positive role model for European Muslim youth.**

**Q: And what was your source for Islamic knowledge?**

**Wildeman:** As a matter of fact, I did not contact any imam to learn more about Islam. I just read many books. Later on, I had good relations with some Muslim brothers and sisters, but my readings helped me so much that I, sometimes, knew more Islamic information than many of them.

**Q: What was your family's reaction to your conversion and how do you cope as a Muslim member in a non-Muslim family?**

**Wildeman:** My religious background includes my father who is an atheist and my mother a Christian, so I mainly grew in a multi-religious environment. I did not tell them immediately that I will convert to Islam. Instead, I paved the way for it by asking them about their reaction if I turned to another religion such as Islam. They said that this is my life, and as long as I don't disturb anyone, then I'm free. My mother suggested that it would be easier for me to be a Christian. My answer was that I'm not seeking the easiest religion, but the truest. As for my father, I was so happy that he accompanied me to my Islamic statement ritual (Shahadah), and video-taped it. His concept in supporting me was that I'm part of him, and Islam will be part of me, then he will accept me with Islam.

In fact, many of Muslim converts face big family problems when they declare their Shahadah, and most of them are women. I even have more respect for women in my country who revert to Islam as it is more difficult for them because they have to wear veils. I knew some who were kicked out of their homes and their families didn't accept them any more. But I was lucky, Alhamdulillah, with my family. After that, I got involved with some Islamic networks and forums through which I knew some Muslims. Then, I met with those Muslim fellows and asked them to show me how to pray. They encouraged me to pray in a mosque. It took me a month to go to a mosque because that was so scary for me at the beginning. It's like going to a



swimming pool as a young kid for the first time. It was my first time to pray before other people. Had I known that I'd be very much welcomed to the mosque as I'm now, I'd not have delayed my prayers in mosques at all. But now I have many friends who invite me to have lunch with them every now and then.

The greatest event that happened to me after I became a Muslim was organized by Brother Jacob. The Dutch Converts' National Day was a very important day for me and for all Muslims in the Netherlands who shared everything with me. It was just then when I realized that there are many Muslim reverts, and that they are having the same lifestyle I have.

**Q: It seems that you have a very supportive family. But what about the professional part of your life, was it negatively affected by your conversion to Islam?**

**Wildeman:** After I declared the Shahadah, I sent an e-mail to my

boss telling him that I have become a Muslim. However and thank God, I did not get fired. Instead I got a bonus at the end of the year based on my evaluation. My boss said that in addition to my good performance during the year, I was also capable of making difficult choices when I became a Muslim. He said that I have the guts to take a difficult choice and that is also good for work.

**Q: Are you planning to do any further in-depth Islamic studies and what were the very useful books for you being a Dutch Muslim convert?**

**Wildeman:** I read a book by Tariq Ramadan entitled In the Footsteps of the Prophet. This book helped me a lot as a European Muslim because it is written in a way suitable for western Muslims. The Arabic way of writing a story is different from the Western one, but he was able to convey the message using the western approach.

(Nourdeen Wildeman is born and raised in the Netherlands. He converted to Islam in 2007 and is active in the field of dawah and supporting New Muslims. He is board member for the Dutch 'National Platform for New Muslims', writer and public speaker at gatherings in his country and abroad).

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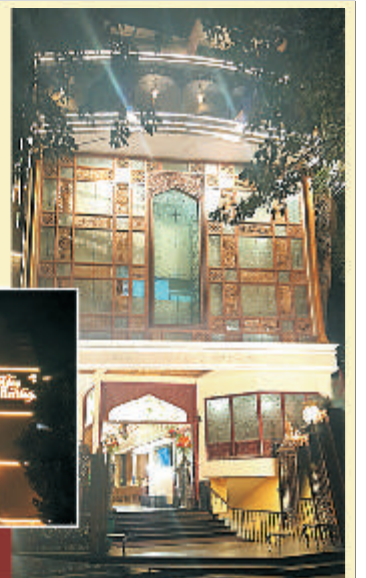
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# Soul Searching in Serene Srirangapatna!

The Discover Yourself Workshop was held in Darul Umoor campus, Srirangapatna, for the Madrasa students on 9,10 & 11 July 2019 by Dr Sadathullah Khan, spiritual life coach and facilitator.

## Some of the Students Share their Experiences:

- This workshop changes one's life
- My life before the workshop was full of hatred and after the workshop, I am free from hatred.
- I had the most spiritual benefit from this workshop.
- This workshop touches the human heart and it is very important for all human beings
- I can't count the number of benefits I got from this workshop. I overcame all my shortcomings and I got the courage to seek forgiveness from my family.
- Before the workshop, I had many misunderstandings and after attending the workshop, everything was cleared.
- It is a life-changing workshop
- Before the workshop, I judged people based on their externals, but now I will see and treat every human being as a human being.
- It is a great service to humanity in bringing people's hearts together.
- This workshop is a way to make a human being a true human being
- This workshop is a gift from Allah. Earlier I was just surviving and existing, but now I am enjoying.
- Before the workshop, I was a human being, but devoid of humanity, it taught me a humanitarian way of life.
- Alhamdulillah! I bear witness to Allah and state that this workshop has changed my entire life. I was going through lot of problems, stress, and tensions and now I am completely free.
- Before, we were living in darkness, after the workshop, many internal changes happened, it cleansed and purified our hearts.
- This workshop unites the hearts, removes all the misunderstanding and teaches us to live as human beings.
- This workshop opened many doors that were locked before attending it. It brought color to my life.
- The workshop removed me from the world of opinion to the world of Reality.



**SHOAIB:** Before the workshop, I had an only passion, not courage. But after the workshop, I got passion and courage and now I can do anything. I wish my entire family would have been here to benefit from this workshop, but I feel that every human being will definitely benefit.

**FARIS:** If I had not attended this workshop, I would have missed all of humanity and equality. The workshop was unique, and the topics were relevant to the day to day living about how to overcome problems in relationships. This workshop must be held in every taluk and district to free people from hatred and bring in love and equality. I got lot of benefits and the most were my spiritual upliftment and I feel peace, contentment, and tranquility inside me, free from all hatred and enmity. I cannot express in words. I got a new life.

**MUZAMMIL:** In the workshop, what was being said was known to us at the level of only knowing, that is at the mental level and it never went into our hearts. I feel there are

two reasons for this, first, because we were lazy to take it into our hearts and the second, the people who taught us the knowledge were also at the level of only knowing and hence they could not touch and transfer the knowledge into our hearts. The treasure was very valuable, but we did not know the value of it. In the workshop, same knowledge was presented using techniques with a modern methodology which helped guide us to go deep within, experience the value of the knowledge we possessed and at the same time, the knowledge penetrated in our hearts that altered our life. We knew Islam is a way of life, but we did not try to focus on it. But here, it was demonstrated practically, that is, of living Islam as a way of life in our day to day life that brought in love, peace, harmony, brotherhood.

**RIZWAN:** Before the workshop, I had no purpose in life and I had low self-esteem and always felt inferior to others. Alhamdulillah, after the workshop I got the confidence and it changed my whole purpose of life. I have no words to express

about the workshop, but only I can say, it is a spiritual (ruhani) workshop. I benefitted a lot and I feel that my entire family must attend this workshop so that they can come out of darkness to light.

**OSMA:** If I had not attended this workshop, I would have not been aware of the real-life and to distinguish between Haq and Batil (Truth and Falsehood). Before the workshop, I used to feel superior and look down upon some people and my approach was inappropriate. But after the workshop, my whole perspective of life changed, and I got to see others as human beings. I am grateful to sir and I pray to Allah to bless him in both the worlds. This workshop should be promoted all over the world so that maximum people benefit.

**SALIM:** Before the workshop, I was not conscious and aware of the way I spoke, saw others as inferior and called others by slang names. Now I am aware and inshallah will overcome all these bad habits. I shall see and treat everyone as human beings.

## A Life Changing Workshop

The Discover Yourself Workshop was held on 28, 29, 30 June 2019, at the Al Ameen College Campus, Bangalore, by Dr Sadathullah Khan, spiritual life coach and facilitator.



**AAFIYA:** Before attending the workshop, there were arguments, anger, dissatisfaction and disappointments in every relationship. After attending, it is easy to deal with life. I will say it saved my marriage. Now my husband and I share a good communication and a healthy relationship, Alhamdulillah! Thank you Sir, Jazakallah Khairan.

**SALMA:** Life before the workshop was full of anger, confusion, and restlessness. Alhamdulillah, after the workshop, I started to live in the

present and now I am conscious about my thoughts, feeling like a feather from inside. After attending this workshop, my life has changed in a positive way. I find, peace and calm and able to do anything.

**FARHAT:** This 3-day journey with Sir was amazingly beautiful, Alhamdulillah! Saw life with a new perspective, a vision enlightened. I can break the barriers which prevented me to open. I can shut up all the background music running inside and overcome my fear to speak. I am grateful to Allah, my husband

and Sir from the bottom of my heart for guiding, directing and enlightening me.

**SAIRA:** The workshop has made a huge difference in my life. I have learned how to overcome anxiety, how to deal with difficult people, not to react in any situation, not to be angry in unwilling situations or problems we face and not panic. At last, I must say attending this workshop is really life-changing.

**SAIMA:** This workshop helped me change my entire perspective about life. It made me free from insecurity and being judgmental. Also, it was an entirely different

## Some of the Participants share their Experiences:

- It is useful in day to day life and it made life easy.
- A journey from hatred to peace.
- The workshop has taught me to enjoy life with all its problems and difficulties. It changed my point of view completely.
- The second time when I attended, I again got the energy to change myself. I feel like it's a continuous process until our whole environment and culture changes.
- It is very useful. It is that knowledge which is missing in schools, these are the subjects which should be part of the school curriculum.
- A life changing workshop, every family member should and must benefit from it.
- I can feel the change inside me. It has changed my views on crucial aspects of life.
- I got the answer, who am I? And came out of negativity in my mind.
- It has made a huge difference in my personal and professional life, in terms of taking back the control of life, to write the future.
- It opened me to the inner me- which I did not even know.
- It is a unique program with an immediate realization effect.

experience to be attending a workshop like this, which imparts a good motive to live life in a better and a meaningful way.

**SAFIYA:** Alhamdulillah! I got the opportunity to attend the workshop. It was really a life-changing workshop. Before the workshop, I always found faults in others and felt I am better than others. But after the workshop, I realized negativity is in the mind. I learned here that Allah is Haq (Truth). If I want to connect to

Allah, I have to use my heart and not my mind and accept the reality, love everybody to seek the love of Allah. Jazakallah Khair, for connecting me to Allah and disconnecting me from Satan.







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## Stand Up to Racism

## Jewish filmmaker charts how American-Muslim life has deteriorated under Trump

**Galvanized by the president's travel ban, director Adam Zucker challenges US citizens to stand up to racism against Muslims in a recent documentary.**

For the last two-and-a-half years, congregants and clergy from Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum's synagogue, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, have shown up every Friday in front of the Islamic Center at NYU in Manhattan. With warm smiles and holding handwritten signs sporting "Shalom/Salaam," Kleinbaum and friends greet Muslim worshipers arriving for the afternoon prayers. "It's about the power of being an ally," Kleinbaum says with regard to the interfaith work the synagogue has undertaken with the neighboring mosque.

This alliance is only one example of Jewish-Muslim solidarity shown in Adam Zucker's new documentary film, "American Muslim," premiering at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. The film focuses on the experiences of American Muslims in the Trump era. The film challenges Americans of all faiths or no faith to consider how they are



**Film-Maker  
Adam Zucker**

that the 61-year-old Jew didn't know any American Muslims. "New York has a very large Muslim population, and I am a lifelong New Yorker, but I hadn't really met any Muslims," Zucker admitted.



standing up (or not) for those targeted by increasing xenophobia and racism, which has been linked by some to the current administration's rhetoric and immigration policies.

Director Zucker said his own way of responding to his disappointment at Trump's election was to pick up his camera and make a film that would introduce viewers to Muslims, about whom the president had made numerous controversial statements during his campaign. For this new project, Zucker set about profiling a handful of American-Muslim New Yorkers of different backgrounds, genders and ages. Finding subjects for the film wasn't so easy, given

According to Zucker, the fact that he is Jewish did not at all bother the people he interviewed and filmed. "Virtually every American Muslim I spoke to was glad I was there documenting their story. People felt a need to open up, and working on this film opened up for me an unfamiliar world that profoundly moved me," Zucker said.

Zucker found the framework for his film on January 27, 2017, when Trump signed a controversial executive order effectively targeting Muslim migrants. Zucker documented protests against the ban and tracked the trajectory of legal challenges to it.

It was important to Zucker to

reflect the diversity of the American Muslim community, and to dispel misconceptions. More than once, subjects of the film bemoan the fact that many Americans incorrectly think that all Muslims are Arabs, and that all Arabs are Muslims. In fact, most Arabs in the US are Christian.

The film introduces audiences to Dr. Debbie Almontaser, a veteran Yemenite-American educator and activist, and a longtime partner to Kleinbaum in interfaith efforts. Another community activist, Aber Kaway, a young Palestinian-American woman, campaigns for a Palestinian-American priest running for local government. Another featured personality is Mohamed Bahi, a young Algerian-American who founded Muslims 'Giving Back', an organization that runs a variety of charity and social programs for residents of the local community Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The film often emphasizes that unlike post-9/11, American Muslims can now rely on a network of partnerships with interfaith, pro-immigration, and social justice groups to fight the Muslim Ban. Zucker noted that the support is mutual. After the October 27, 2018 massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Muslims he met while making the film reached out to him.

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

## TALE -TIME

## The Mystery of the Disappearing Crystals

**Abba came into Saira's room while she was still asleep to bless her and say Khuda**

**And what did he see? A thief stealing a crystal!**



**Hafiz.**



**By Shahin Ashraf Ali**

Saira was a young girl who was fond of collecting shiny pebbles. Sometimes, she found pretty crystals too. What a lovely collection she had!

One day, Saira decided to use her collection to dress up her house. She happily went around the house keeping stones and crystals in different places. She displayed some in the pots of the indoor plants, and I must tell you, the pots looked really nice! Then, she put a few shiny pebbles in little glass bowls, which she set on the dining table. Finally, Saira was left with a few beautiful crystals. She arranged them on her study-table by the window. How lovely the room looked!

Ammi and Abba loved Saira's display and praised it. Saira felt very happy. Visitors to their home appreciated Saira's collection and arrangement. But then, one day, Saira began to notice that the group of crystals placed on her

study table was becoming smaller. "Who is stealing my crystals," she wondered aloud to her parents. They too wondered, "Who indeed?" It seemed like a mystery for sure!

One day, early in the morning, Abba had to go out of town for work. Before leaving, he came into Saira's room while she was still asleep to bless her and say *Khuda Hafiz*. And what did he see? A thief stealing a crystal!

Ammi and Abba loved Saira's display and praised it. Saira felt happy. Visitors to their home appreciated Saira's collection and arrangement.

Abba quietly woke up Saira. And what did they do? Well, the two of them burst out laughing! They saw the naughty thief perched on the window holding a shiny crystal in its beak and staring at them! It was a big black crow! What's more, bird cocked its head sideways and seemed to say, "What's the matter? Can't a crow too admire something in Nature so pretty and pick it up?"

And thus the mystery of the disappearing crystals was solved! Moral: Our natural world is full of surprises and beauty. Whenever a believer happens to witness God's glory in anything in God's Creation, her/his heart is so filled with awe that her/his tongue spontaneously declares *Subhan Allah!* ('Glory be to God')!

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# Wuppy! Time for Quran Bedtime Tales, Kids!

Bedtime Quran Stories: Heart Warming Stories to Read

By Saniyasnain Khan

Edited by Burhana Islam

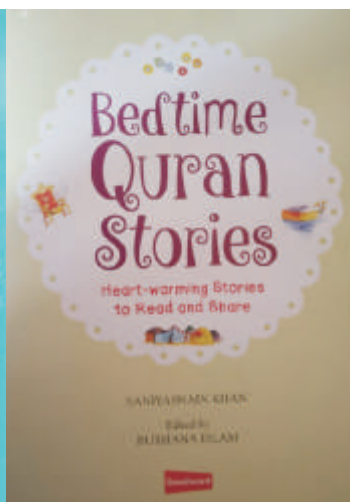
Published by Goodword Books, New Delhi (info@goodwordbooks.com)

Pages: 131

Year: 2019

The good old days of children going to bed by 8.30 pm are gone for many (maybe most?) families. Hooked onto mobiles and television and what not, many youngsters are wide awake till midnight or even later. And so, what about grandmothers reading stories to their grandchildren before bedtime that was a regular feature of life for many of us decades ago? Maybe these times are also gone. But wait!

There is a glimmer of hope here: in the form of Bedtime Quran Stories by Saniyasnain Khan! This book, a wonderful collection of more than 20 stories from the Quran, is another gem from Goodword Books, a publishing house that is doing great service in bringing out a vast range of very suitable spiritually-inspiring and educative books for people of all ages, including for kids. The book highlights key moral values in a manner easily understandable for children, in addition to which are from prayers from the Quran at the end of each story.



Its easy-to-read text makes this book a perfect way to introduce little ones to teachings of the Quran. It's simple, short and beautifully-narrated stories highlight key aspects of Islam, such as love, humility, obedience, patience and trust. Providing an enjoyable way for children to learn the basics of faith in God, Bedtime Quran Stories makes a wonderful gift for any child. Like other children's books based on Islamic themes that Goodword Books have published, this book's bright, full-colour illustrations make it particularly special. The

pretty illustrations of date trees, camels, birds, sheep, ancient houses and the like that accompany the text are really endearing! My favourite story in this book is titled "Love Your Parents", with cute pictures of ducklings following a mother-duck, a deer and her fawns and fluffy baby rabbits with their mumma!

Do procure a copy of this book for yourself or as a gift for someone else. Not just children but just about anyone of any age may find it wonderful!

Before I accepted Islam, I was looking for universal rules. I wanted rules to hold on to. Rules that actually have validity. Even back then, in the late 1950s, there seemed to be a tendency towards individualism. Everybody claimed to have found the truth. Everybody had different norms. And interpreted rules according to their personal taste. That confused me. Weren't there any universal rules? And who was able to come up with these kind of universal rules? A great philosopher? Some genius? And how long would these universal rules then be applicable?

## Searching for God

All my pondering led me back to the question about God. My heart had already affirmed His existence. There was no question about that. All the good that happened to me, must have had a divine source. My heart wanted to show gratitude. But to whom? Who was God? Was He the father-God sitting on a cloud in

the heaven? Or was He the suffering god on the cross? Or this smiling figure from the far east? I wanted to give gratitude to God. But my heart wanted to be absolutely sure about God. There was no compromising on sincerity. And it had to be with complete conviction.

## That is the Truth

After I survived a critical surgery, I continued searching for the purpose in life. Why was I still alive? Then, for the first time, I consciously came in contact with Islam. I was still wary because of all the disappointments with my



Fatima Grimm

search for the divine truth I had made before. So I read the Quran. I talked to the very few Muslims around me. And my heart could only say: Yes. That's it. That is the truth. I did not find any unbridgeable contradictions. Everything made perfect sense. And that was when I started to feel

## READING TIME

# Quran Stories For Toddlers

## Tell Your Toddler a Quranic Tale

As a toddler, I must have been quite naughty trying to pop mud into my mouth and doing other such naughty things, much to the horror of my parents! Thankfully, toddlers of today's times are very lucky, and their parents luckier, what with such wonderful books for little children now available like "Quran Stories For Toddlers" by Saniyasnain Khan.

At first sight, this little book looks like a piece of multi-coloured cake! Packed with cute illustrations, the baby font used for the copy makes the book appealing for both parents and the toddlers. It's a sort of read-out-aloud book which parents can use to narrate Quranic stories to kids. Starting with stories like "Allah Made the First Man", "The Two Brothers" and "Prophet Nuh Builds a Boat" and ending with "The Birth of Prophet Isa", the book presents some of the basics of Islam in a joyful and lively style which kids will enjoy. Goodword Books, publishers of this book, is led by Saniyasnain Khan, an Indian children's author with over 100 children's books to his credit. He hopes that this



timeless volume will help children to know the true purpose and meaning of life. His wonderful team comprising illustrators Gurmeet and Bindia Thapar, editors Sufia Khan and Maria Khan, art editor Mateen Ahmad and graphic designer Asjad Ali have done a marvelous job of making "Quran Stories for

Toddlers" a wonderful gift by introducing children to 12 beautiful stories from the Quran. Each story comes with a verse or prayer from the Quran. The book offers a unique opportunity for kids and parents to read together from an early age and to understand the message of the Quran.

The book is available in two colours...blue and pink. The pink one says it's "For Girls" and the blue says it's "For Boys". I wondered why the difference when the contents are the same? Maybe author Saniyasnain Khan has an answer to this enigma!

## Looking for Universal Rules and Inner Peace

**Fatima Grimm was one of the first German Muslim women to embrace Islam. Born in 1934, she accepted Islam in 1960. She gained great prominence as a German convert and worked for different German Muslim organizations. She died in 2013 in Hamburg.**

should do this not through tiresome preaching. But by being a good example. By living Islam in our daily life. And by living peace in our everyday interactions with other people.

## Keeping Our Inner Peace

If we want to keep our inner peace, we have to ground ourselves in deep knowledge and recognition of God. Allah's holy book, the Quran, is an infinite source of inner peace. Reading and pondering the Quran everyday is a steady and reliable help in our everyday life. And we should always realize that the life in this world is only temporary. By realizing this, we will be freed from the most difficult fears of this world. The fear of death.

As Muslims, we know that we will return to our Lord, the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful. And InshaAllah we will be given a place in His paradise.

Ameen.

inner peace inside my heart. It was a victory.

## Only the First Step

However, becoming Muslim was only the first step. And to keep that inner peace needs constant working, learning, trusting in God. I learned that it was extremely important to follow the rules given to us by Allah. Only by following His rules, we can feel inner peace. That includes especially praying. Meeting our Lord five times every day. Only if we have the inner peace in our heart, we can try and go out. To spread peace. However, we



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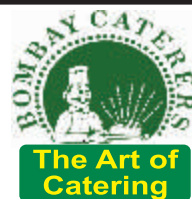
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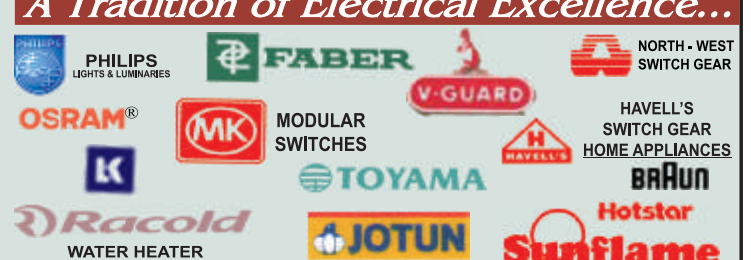
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