



Published by
Darul Arqam Singapore
Muslim Converts'
Association of Singapore

32
Issue 02
2014

themuslimreader

MCI (P) 111/07/2014 ISSN 1793-7752

RELIGION **THEN & NOW**



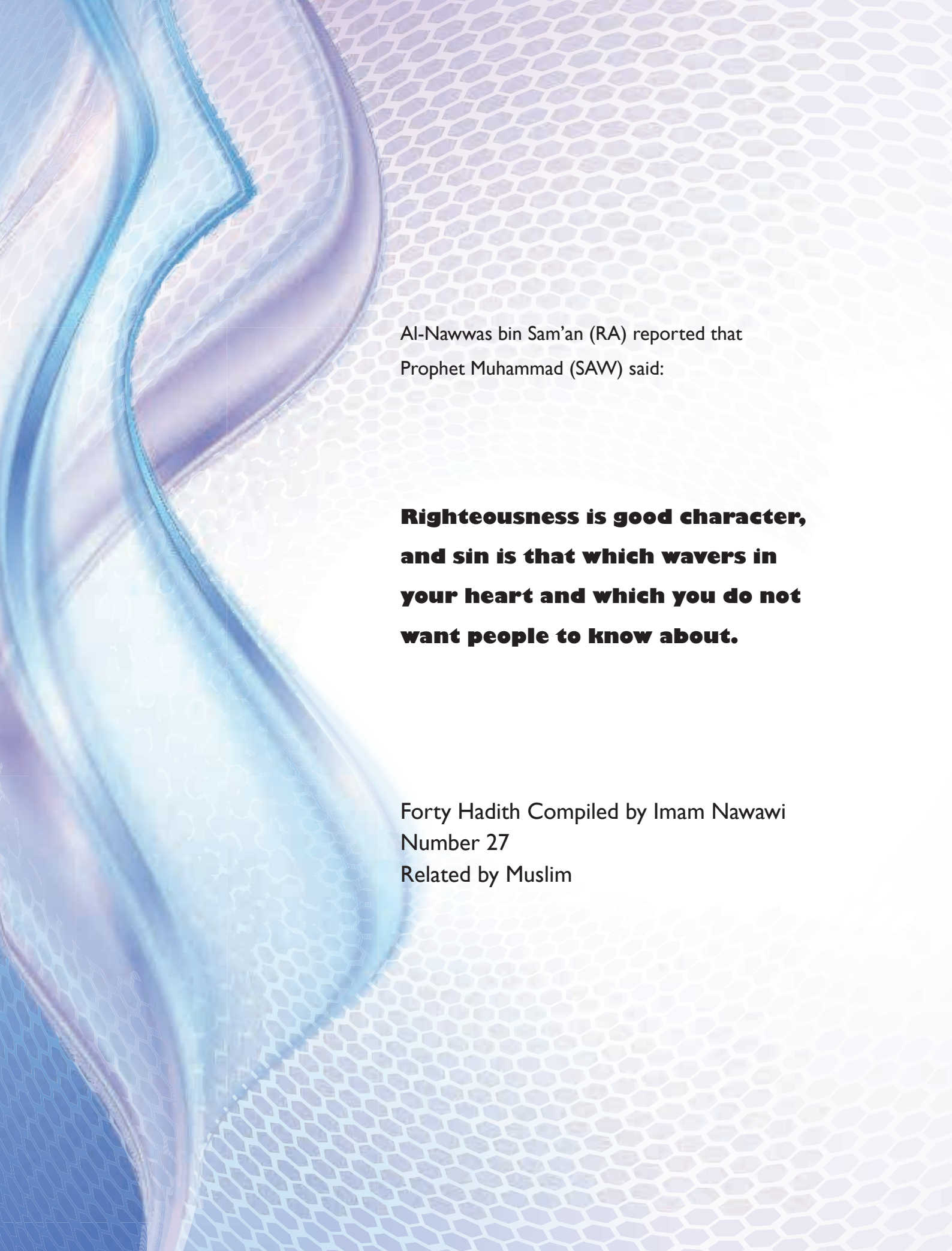


themuslimreader

MCI (P) 111/07/2014 ISSN 1793-7752



**Congratulations
YODA Team One**



Al-Nawwas bin Sam'an (RA) reported that
Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

**Righteousness is good character,
and sin is that which wavers in
your heart and which you do not
want people to know about.**

Forty Hadith Compiled by Imam Nawawi
Number 27
Related by Muslim

Religion, Then and Now



FEATURES

- 06 Religion, Then and Now
[by Dr Yamin Cheng]
- 17 Why New Zealand Needs
a Foster Home for Muslim
Children
[by David Zachariah
Blocksidge]
- 33 When Caring for the
Environment is Caring for
Ourselves
[by Sharifah Zubaidah A
Kader Aljunid]

REGULARS

- 05 Samara Mosque
- 14 What Defines the Muslim
Business Mentality
[by Umar Munshi]
- 30 The Growth of the Halal
Trade
[by Hyder Gulam]
- 57 The First Advice from
Luqman the Wise to His Son
[by Syed Ahmad Semait]
[translation by Shaffiq
Selamat]

LEAP OF FAITH

- 41 Rizq and Baraqah as I
Understand It
[by Sim Khadijah
Mohammed]
- 47 Being Thankful
[by Lee Swaleha Afandi]
- 49 The Ordinary Convert
[by Nadia Mak @ Candy
Mak]

common terms

ABBREVIATIONS IN TMR

AS: 'Allayhis Salam -
Meaning: Peace be upon him;
Used for Prophet who came before
Prophet Muhamad (SAW)

DA: Darul Arqam Singapore / The Muslim
Converts' Association of Singapore

RA: Radiyallahu 'Anhu/'Anha/'Anhum -
Meaning: May Allah be pleased with him/
her/them; Used for Companions of Prophet
Muhammad (SAW)

SAW: Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wassallam -
Meaning: Peace be upon him;
Used for Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

SWT: Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala -
Meaning: Glorified and Exalted One;
Used for Allah (SWT)

TERMS IN THIS EDITION

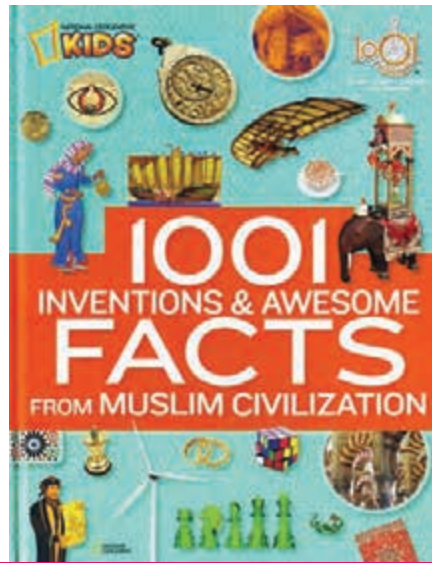
Alhamdulillah: Praise be to God
Amanah: Trust
Da'wah: Invitation to understand Islam
Deen: Religion; way of life
Hadith: Narrations about the words and
deeds of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)
Halal: Permissible
Haram: Forbidden
Hijab / Tudung: Headgear that covers
hair and neck
Iman: Faith; Belief

Insha'Allah: If God wills
Madrasah/Madrassa: Islamic School
Masha'Allah: God has willed it
Rizq: Sustenance
Shariah: Islamic Laws
Shukr: Gratitude
Sunnah: Practices of Prophet Muhammad
(SAW)
Ummah: Community
Ustadz (Ust): Teacher
Zakat: Alms-giving

Arabic terms have been represented
by simple Roman alphabets, and their
meanings briefly provided, to ease your
reading. For accurate pronunciation and
detailed meanings, it is highly advised to
refer to the original spelling and meanings
in Arabic.

TMR contains some of Allah's names and
Quranic verses. Please do not dispose in
the trash. Kindly keep, shred or recycle the
magazine.

contents



LIFESTYLE

- 21 Hidden Charm with Flavourful Desserts
[by Siti Zubeidah Kadir]
- 26 Arabic for Beginners: The Family
[by As-Souq]
- 36 The Importance of Two Languages
[by Nur Azeemah Kadir]

- 38 1,001 Things You Never Knew
[by Abdul Ghafar Abdul Kadir]
- 51 Discover Ariff series - Introduce Children to Daily Life Lessons
[by Nur Azeemah Kadir]
- 63 Remembering Omar (RA)
[by Siti Zubeidah Kadir]

HOUSE OF ARQAM

- 12 Annual General Meeting 2014
[Photographs by Razali Tompong]
- 13 Council Members and Title of Office for 2014

managing editor
aishah hussein

associate/lifestyle editor
siti zubeidah kadir

consulting editor
dr yamin cheng

technical advisor
zainal abidin nordin

contributors
abdul ghafar abdul kadir
candy mak @ nadia mak
carol 'aliya widjaya
david zachariah
blocksidge
hyder gulam
lee swaleha afandi
nazeera mohamed
nur azeemah kadir
sharifah zubaidah a kader
aljunid
sim khadijah mohammed
siti zubeidah kadir
umar munshi
dr yamin cheng

printed in singapore by
khl printing pte ltd

the muslim reader is
published three times in
a year by darul arqam
singapore.

special thanks
sheikh alaa elsayed
as-souq
david zachariah
blocksidge
mufti dr fatris bakaram
kristiane backer
muhd irfan maslan
pustaka nasional
qurrah shumar
razali tompang
yoda

cover photo
muhd irfan maslan

publisher
darul arqam singapore
32 onan road, the galaxy
singapore 424484
phone: +65 6348 8344
fax: +65 6440 6724
www.darularqam.org.sg

design & layout
adzen touche

disclaimer
the publisher and editor
are unable to accept
any liability for errors or
omissions that may occur
and any consequences
arising from the use of
information contained
in this magazine. the
views expressed do not
necessarily reflect those
of the publisher and
editor. the publication
of advertisements and
advertorials within
the magazine does
not constitute any
endorsement by the
publisher and editor of
the contents therein.

copyright
© 2014 darul arqam
singapore. all rights
reserved. the contents
of this publication may
not be reproduced in any
form or by any means,
either in its entirety, or
even partially, without the
documented permission
of the publisher.

contents

HOUSE OF ARQAM

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|----|---|
| 23 | YODA - Champion of SMYD 2014
[Photographs by Muhd Irfan Maslan] | 45 | Lectures by Sheikh Alaa Elsayed
[Photographs by Muhd Irfan Maslan] | 61 | Lectures by Kristiane Backer
[Photographs by Muhd Irfan Maslan] |
| 24 | Singapore Muslim Youth Debate 2014
[Photographs by Muhd Irfan Maslan] | 46 | Congratulations to the 2013 Al-Mawrid Essay Winners | 62 | In Conversation with Mufti Dr Fatris Bakaram
[Photographs by Razali Tompong] |
| | | 53 | YODA Celebrate Cultural Diversity
[Text by Nazeerah Mohamed / Photographs by Qurrah Shumar] | | |

editorial note

Religion, Then and Now

This edition of TMR features a dual cover - the normal TMR cover moves to the back to make room for the special front cover that highlights the winning team of debaters who represented the Youths of Darul Arqam (YODA) Team One this year in the Singapore Muslim Youth Debate (SMYD). In its fifth instalment, SMYD, which is organised annually by YODA, brought 13 teams from various institutions and organisations on a national platform to debate on issues relevant to the Singaporean Muslim youths. TMR congratulates YODA Team One, the Champion of SMYD 2014, as well as the organising committees of SMYD through the years that worked to bring this event to the community and give the youths the opportunity to openly engage in debates about Muslim issues with English as the language medium.

TMR, in this edition, looks at the difference in the views on religion that we experience today as compared to yesterday. In the main feature, Dr Yamin Cheng reminds us of how mankind has been religious all along, since day one of their existence, regardless of how they may think that religion is only 'something out of the many things' in their lives. If our eyes truly see, Islam is embedded within and around us.

With the call towards positive activism amplified today, TMR brings into focus the efforts of our New Zealand brothers and sisters who are raising funds to build their first Islamic orphanage and foster home for the Muslim children. Find out inside on how you can help in their charitable efforts to build a robust community of Muslims there.

Insha'Allah, may Allah (SWT) bless them (and us) with the strength to be the positive changes of our times.



managing editor
aishah hussein
aishah@darul-arqam.org.sg



Samara Mosque Samara Oblast, Russia



Located on the street of Stara Zagora, the Samara Mosque was opened on 28 November 1999. With an area of 3,600 square metres, it can accommodate about 5,000 worshippers at a time, and includes a Madrassa with a capacity for 60 students.

Local Samaran architect, named Rasim Valshin, designed the mosque, with carpets from Tajikistan lining the halls of the buildings. The minaret stands at 67 metres while an apple orchard decorates the compounds.

It is claimed that the Samara region of Russia is home to more than 200,000 Muslims.

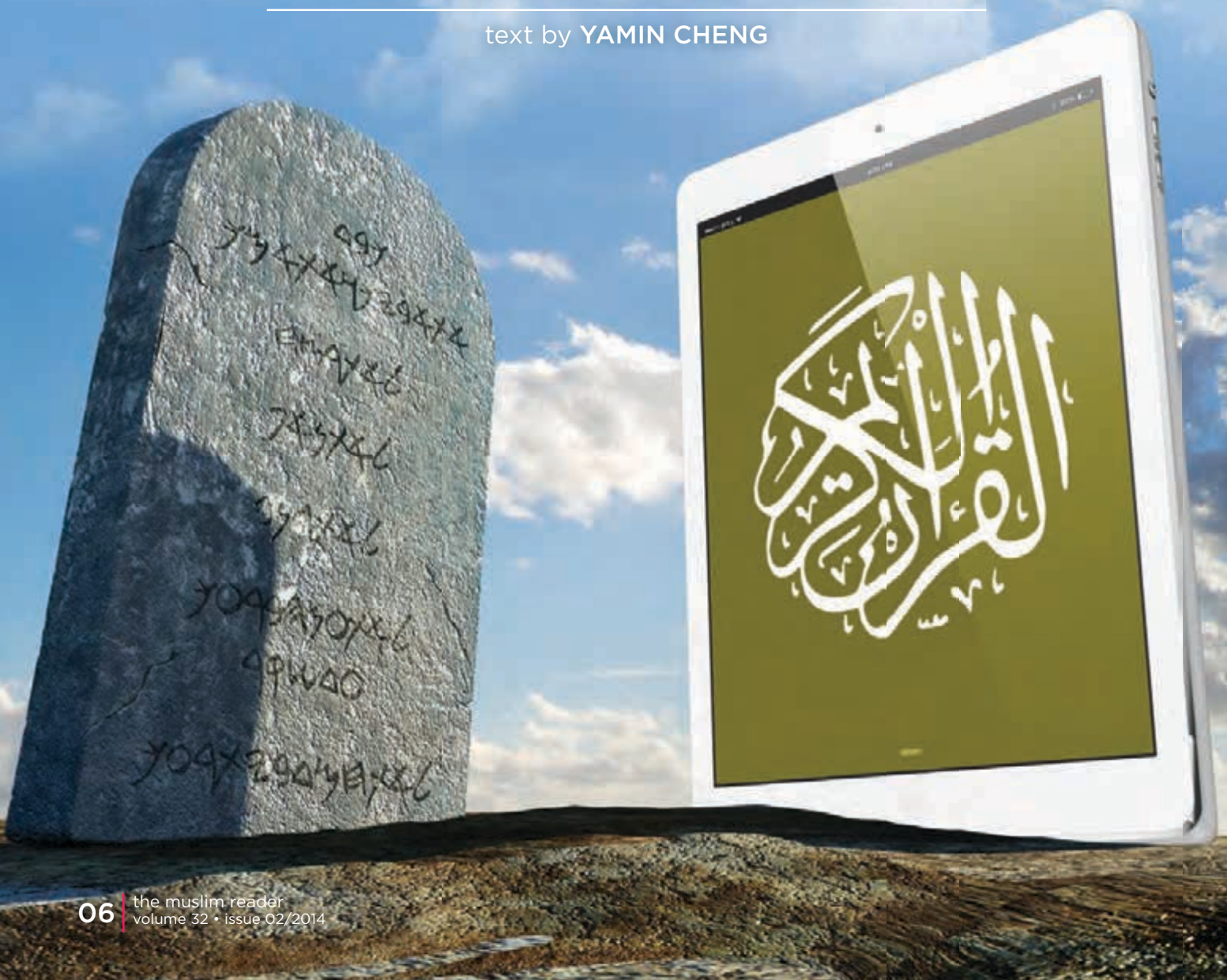


feature

RELIGION THEN & NOW

Seeing religion, as it appears to us -
a total and complete way of life, no matter
in the past or in modern times.

text by **YAMIN CHENG**



RELIGION

IS SOCIETY, POLITICS, ECONOMICS, CULTURE, EDUCATION, ART, AND EVERYTHING THAT HAS TO DO WITH HUMAN LIVING, ALL AT ONCE

Once upon a time, in many societies of the world, it would appear strange and awkward for someone living in those times to be told that religion is only one aspect and activity of the human life. For that person, religion is everything. Religion *is* society, politics, economics, culture, education, art, and everything that has to do with human living, *all at once*. Religion, Cosmos or Universe, Nature or Environment, Society and Family, Culture and Ethics, Self and the Body are inseparable from one another. Rather, they are all related as a web or chain of relationship, becoming mirror reflections of one another, and functioning as analogies for thought, feeling, and language. Even today, such as in the Malay language, one finds in the *peribahasa*, or idiom, that someone is an *alim-alim kucing*, a 'pious-looking cat,' if he is a pretender.

Max Weber, a famous German sociologist, in his study of the relationship between the Protestant ethics and capitalism, tries to show how capitalism is basically a *religious* behaviour, a behaviour that encourages a person to recycle one's profit for the benefit

of society as a whole, so that this behaviour will be the 'outward sign of inner grace,' that is to say, a visible sign of the Protestant believer that he has been elected for eternal bliss and avoid eternal damnation in the next life. This understanding of capitalism is so unlike today's understanding of it that when one thinks of capitalism today, one thinks of greed and selfishness, rather than austerity and charity.

This goes to show that, as some will argue, modern societies look at religion in ways different from those of their forefathers. If at one time, religion *is* everything and *means* everything to a person, today, religion is only something out of many things and is only meaningful in time of need.

Associations with the Past

Religion, for many of us today, is oftentimes associated with the past, and the past is always more primitive and less progressive than the present.

Religion, on its part, has existed from the day our forefathers made their presence in this world. From the time the first human emerged on earth until today, religion has always featured as a crucial

dimension of human life, giving us the story of our life - about where we come from, what we are doing in this world, and where we will be going after we die. It is only in modern times like ours that the view of religion, as the need of the oppressed, the assurance of the weak-minded, and the salvation of the hapless, comes about.

Religion is equated with myth, superstition, and things primitive. It is a thing of the past and can never feature in modern life that hails reason and science as liberation from religion. Religion is seen as old things, old ways, and all things outdated and obsolete, and these things, at best, serve only as precious mementos for museum display, reminding us how they have come to shape mankind's Dark Ages.

When we turn to even a modern thinker such as Emile Durkheim, whom every student of sociology knows, we will be astounded to find that the way Durkheim describes religion is as applicable to modern societies as it is to past or even primitive societies.

For Durkheim, the essence of religion is the 'sacred', a quality that holds everything together



in a unity so that if this quality is lost, then everything will collapse and become separate entities that do not have a common identity. For primitive people, the sacred appears as the 'totem', a name for the sacred as the unifying principle and function of whatever there is in existence. Because the totem cannot be seen or touched, an emblem, which is a visual image, is used to represent the totem. This emblem usually takes the form of an animal. If the emblem is a lion, then the sacred is visualised as a terrifying and brave power. This emblem becomes the emblem of a group or clan, so that all the members in that group or clan visualise the sacred as a lion. Following this, the members of the group or clan also visualise themselves as a lion, and their behaviour and movement imitate that of the lion.

Although modern people no longer think of religion this way, yet, in many ways, their behaviour reflects

this characteristic of religion. Take, for example, a football club. The club's emblem brings together its fans into a unity of the club's image so that if the emblem is tarnished in any way, the fans would react to the incident, sometimes even to the point of going into a fight. This shows that the emblem is actually a totem and holds a special place in the minds and hearts of the fans, so special that it acquires a 'sacred' status to the extent that doing anything harmful to the emblem means also incurring the wrath of the club and its fans.

Common between the past and the present

The past and the present may appear to us as different instances of existence, one considered less and the other more in civilizational achievements, but if looked at in the proper light, there are many things in common between the past and the present that made religion as vibrant and relevant even for those who think the modern has

THE **PAST** AND THE **PRESENT** MAY APPEAR TO US AS DIFFERENT INSTANCES OF **EXISTENCE**, ONE CONSIDERED LESS AND THE OTHER MORE IN **CIVILIZATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS**.

left religion behind in the name of progress and enlightenment.

Religion, if it has been thought of as a thing of the past, can be thought of as a thing of the present, if only we understand how the connection is made, such as between a mosque and a restaurant. The restaurant is a place of worship the same way the mosque is a place of worship, because a place of worship is a place where goodness happens, and eating food that is healthy to the body is an act of goodness. To quote what Clifford Geertz says about what planets and pendulums have in common: 'Look at them in the proper light, their very differences connect them.'

Many Muslims will find it strange, and obviously very odd, to regard a restaurant as a place where religion happens, the same way religion happens in a mosque. This perception is made more pronounced with the presence of Western fast-food outlets that have

swarmed Muslim societies. Young people like to frequent places like Pizza Hut, Burger King, A&W and other such places, and eating pizzas, hot dogs, and burgers have become a local habit these days. But these places carry with them Western names and, historically and culturally, Western things are foreign to the Muslim experience of religion. So what have Pizza Hut and Burger King to do with religion?

Names and Identity

Eating outlets with Western names nonetheless can be places where religion happens, the same way a Muslim restaurant that has a Muslim name. While names are important because they reflect what identity a restaurant carries, as long as the name is not one that touches on the sensitivities of the Muslim faith, they should not be a problem. Muslims in Singapore and Malaysia, for instance, are sensitive to dogs, but they have no problem eating hot dog. But if the restaurant is called 'Doggy Restaurant' then

the restaurant should not expect Muslim customers.

Apart from names, as long as the food is *halal*, or permissible from the viewpoint of the Islamic dietary laws, the restaurant can be considered a religious place for Muslims. There is a misunderstanding however regarding what *halal* is. *Halal* is not pork-free. Whether it is beef or chicken, *halal* beef or chicken refers to cows and chickens slaughtered according to the Islamic rituals for slaughtering. The writer chanced to visit Sentosa Island many years ago and was looking for a *halal* eatery. Incidentally, he saw two eateries adjacent to one another. One had this sign: **Non-Halal Food Not Permitted Here**. That's comprehensible enough. The other read: *Halal Food Not Permitted Here*. Sounds anything?

But for a restaurant to be a religious place, it is not enough for the food to be *halal*. The food must also

be nutritious and of good quality, the place has to be hygienic and comfortable, and the services have to be prompt and appealing. It is these 'extras' that made many people, young and old alike, and especially the little ones, to want to come to Western-style restaurants to eat because they have the recipe to attract people to their places. They have quality control.

3 Categories of Daily Living

Muslim scholars, right from the days when Islam blossomed to become a world civilization, have classified Islamic daily living into three broad categories. These are *daruriyyat* or necessary, *hajiyyat* or desirable, and *tahsiniyyat* or premium lifestyle. To be able to savour a piece of chicken so that one could go on living is *daruriyyat*. But nobody wants to eat just to avoid being hungry. They want to see the chicken properly cooked, tastes juicy, the meat is tender, and, of course, nice to see and wets the appetite. This is *hajiyyat*. But above



The entrance to an Islamic halal food restaurant in Shanghai, China. The restaurant caters to Shanghai's minority Muslim community, mainly Uighurs and some Huis. Photo: Imran Ahmed



MEALS AND RESTAURANTS COULD BE RELIGIOUS THINGS BECAUSE THEY SERVE OUT THE PURPOSE OF RELIGIOUS LIVING.

all, the appetite becomes a full picture of a culture when one sees what culinary art could do to make the chicken dish something that trains a person to be a cultured personality with the way he sits around the table, how he behaves towards the food before, during, and after meal, and how he keeps his manners when he is eating. This is *tahsiniyyat*.

Therefore, meals and restaurants could be religious things because they serve out the purpose of religious living, which is to make a person conscientious about his manners and ethics of everyday living which would then mould him into a personality desired by religion, for Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had said, "I have not been

sent but to bring into fruition the noble qualities in human character."

For Muslims, religion is everyday, everywhere, and everything, past and present, traditional and modern. For a Muslim, religion occurs even to a restaurant. The restaurant can connect him to God. Through the restaurant, he is mindful that it is God who gave him his sustenance and therefore becomes careful with what he takes into his body so that the food becomes his source of health and energy, and not a cause of his illness and gluttony. Through the restaurant too, he understands why hygiene and cleanliness are essential to his well-being and comfort, for the Prophet (SAW) had said, "Cleanliness is an aspect

of religion." In sum, the restaurant is something through which we live our religious existence, fulfil our social meaning, and portray our human identity.

When we put all these things of everyday living together, from pen to attire to restaurant and to other objects, we will see that they are linked in such a way as to form a religious matrix connecting these things as religious. Only then, religion appears to us as a total and complete way of life. Mankind has always been religious from day one of their existence. It is they who need to know that they have been religious all along, even in modern times like ours. **TMR**

KNOWING ISLAM SESSION

A Clear Perspective..

**OPEN TO ALL
NO REGISTRATION
NEEDED**



SATURDAYS 10AM - 12.30PM
SUNDAYS 10AM - 12.30PM
EXCEPT PUBLIC HOLIDAYS



house of arqam



President, Edwin Ignatious M @ Muhammad Faiz, addressed the members who attended the AGM (right).



Darul Arqam's 34th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 30 March 2014



The Council lineup for 2014 is listed on the facing page.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RAZALI TOMPANG



The Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore

COUNCIL MEMBERS Title of Office for 2014

Abdul Jalil Muhammad Tahir
VICE PRESIDENT,
CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIVISION

Abdul Razak Isa
COUNCIL MEMBER

Ariff Sultan s/o
Yousoff Sultan
VICE PRESIDENT,
DA'WAH DIVISION

Chew Wan Koon @
Nur Shafiqah
COUNCIL MEMBER

Edwin Ignatious M @
Muhammed Faiz
PRESIDENT

Fatimah Abdullah
COUNCIL MEMBER

Hafidz Abdullah
VICE PRESIDENT,
EDUCATION DIVISION

Ilyas Yeow Shih Yeh
ASST VICE PRESIDENT,
CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIVISION

Iman Wong Sai Fung
COUNCIL MEMBER

Jay Prakash S Rajoo @
Ishaq
COUNCIL MEMBER

Joy Joanne Shalome
Bikarmjeet Singh @ Farah
COUNCIL MEMBER

Lily Khoo @ Shahira
Abdullah
COUNCIL MEMBER

Mohd Ridzuan Ng
DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Moiz Tyebally
ASST VICE PRESIDENT,
FINANCE DIVISION

Muhammad Azhar
Abdullah Cheah
COUNCIL MEMBER

Muhammad Imran
Kuna Abdullah
VICE PRESIDENT, CONVERTS'
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Nazryn Azhar Samat
COUNCIL MEMBER

Nur Fitrah Teng @
Teng Chai Ling
COUNCIL MEMBER

Nur Sumaiya Tan
ASST VICE PRESIDENT, CONVERTS'
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Nurashikin Lee
COUNCIL MEMBER

Philip Hidayat Ngay
COUNCIL MEMBER

Radhiah Mohamed Salim
COUNCIL MEMBER

Razees Abdul Karim
COUNCIL MEMBER

Ridzuan Wu Chia Chung
COUNCIL MEMBER

Siti Aisha Abdullah (Bernice)
VICE PRESIDENT,
FINANCE DIVISION

Syed Ismail Ahmad Alsagoff
COUNCIL MEMBER

Wileeza Abdul Gapar
ASST VICE PRESIDENT,
DA'WAH DIVISION

Zin Bo Aung Mohamed
Ali Yacob
ASST VICE PRESIDENT,
EDUCATION DIVISION

What Defines the Muslim Business Mentality

The key to a successful Muslim business community is unity but unity based on what?

text by UMAR MUNSHI

Do Muslims in Singapore have the Business gene in their DNA? At one time, Indian and Arab Muslim migrants came to the South-east Asian region as traders and merchants, with business expansion as their primary objective. The local Malays and *Peranakan* Muslims too had a strong culture of business, characterised by the effervescent spirit of *gotong-royong* (teamwork). This vibrant fraternity resulted in thriving community-centric businesses that created employment and provided essential services.

Today, the landscape has become radically different. Singapore has transformed into a dynamic hub for trade and commerce and is one of the richest countries in the world but where does the Muslim community fit into this landscape? The services and brands Singaporeans consume are very rarely the product of Muslim

businesses. Alarming we are even losing the market share in previously 'untouchable' sectors, such as Muslim Wedding catering, to non-Muslim businesses. This is happening because Muslims are buying based on merit, and not that they are produced by Muslims – these businesses tend to give a better deal, in quality or price. We have not been able to maintain our natural dominance in our own niche markets.

Who is the Muslim Consumer

The modern consumer, and this includes the Muslim consumer, is sucked into the vicious cycle of working to spend, in order to pacify (temporarily) our insatiable desire for worldly possessions. This style of living is in direct contradiction with Islamic teachings of moderation and *shukr* (gratitude). This is the paradox of the Muslim consumer. While we acknowledge that the source of all things is Allah (SWT), and that our *rizq* (sustenance) is entirely

dependent on what He had set for us, we tend to subscribe to the view that material possession somehow defines success, and even worse, defines ourselves. Our fundamental beliefs conflict with this fundamentally flawed valuation of life.

The Right Business Mentality

The route forward is thus clear. We need to revert to doing business in accordance with Islamic principles - and in doing so, revive the soul of commerce. We need to suppress the profit motive and put it in its rightful place as a secondary priority, one that exists to incentivise efficiency and ensure long-term sustainability - not as the highest arbitrator of all things. The overriding objective for Muslim businessmen must be to seek the pleasure of our Creator, and how we run our businesses must be in sync with this. The universal good inherent in Islamic business practices and *muamalat* (financial transactions) has tremendous



THE COMMON **DENOMINATOR** IN THEIR VARIOUS FORMS OF **SUCCESS** WAS **UNITY**.

potential to uplift this depressed economy, and bridge yawning gaps in living standards.

“And Allah gives provision to whom He wills without limitations.”
(Al-Baqarah, 02:212)

An encouraging trend is the recent revival of youth entrepreneurship. Social media has removed traditional barriers to entry and a new breed of talented business leaders has experienced noteworthy success. Many of these businesses have also successfully crossed over from the virtual realm and continue to thrive as **brick and mortar** businesses. This development is a potential driver for change. What is more important than the act of being an entrepreneur is developing the entrepreneurial mindset. This mindset views problems as opportunities and focuses on creating more with less. It stimulates risk-taking, creativity, innovation, and disruptive thinking. We have a wave of such youthful talent emerging, and we need to embrace them and support them.

What we need to do

Before we can embark on reform, we need to first discard regressive old habits and embrace constructive ones. We need to go

back to the true spirit of Islamic Business. We need to identify the main cause of our lackadaisical business performance, and why it deteriorated to this insipid state. We need to come together and coalesce around shared goals. We need to support and share, to gather strengths and close gaps and weaknesses. Muslim businesses need to collaborate – in short, we need Unity.

Unity is the key ingredient we lack. In my entrepreneurial journey, I was immersed in a multitude of different business cultures – from tightly-knit circles of Singaporean Chinese, to relationship and connections-based Indonesians, to protective family-owned Saudi Arabian businesses. The common denominator in their various forms of success was unity.

We need to dig deep and exorcise our business culture of dangerous mindsets such as jealousy, greed, revenge, and viewing each other with distrust. These diseases of the heart are not only obstacles, they are also highly destructive. We need to acknowledge that these are deep-rooted problems that we need to collectively focus on removing. A united approach to removing these mindsets will in itself bring about greater unity.

A United Muslim Business Community

The creation of a united Muslim business community needs to happen at all levels. Individuals need to adopt and practise this approach to business. The community needs to support social enterprises and collaborative businesses by patronising them. Institutions and organisations also have a role to play to educate and facilitate business matching and joint-venture efforts. Specific industries and sectors may form groups and alliances with mutually-beneficial initiatives for their members. Between these levels too, there needs to be a strong flow of ideas and capital. Technology has immense potential to bring the community together. We have seen web-based open-source platforms, such as Wikipedia flourish, giving credence to the power of technology-enabled collectivism.

Collaborative models that bring investors and businesses together have also experienced unprecedented success in recent years. Crowd-funding is one such concept that has taken off in the West, with total funds raised hitting US\$5.1 billion in 2013. These are platforms where the community collectively invests or donates small

musings

amounts of capital to fund start-ups and businesses.

In Singapore, due to a more robust regulatory environment, adapted models with more controls on the sourcing of investments are gaining market traction. Such an approach can be Islamic in structure and spirit, and may be structured as a *mudarabah* (joint-venture), where the financier, or the *rabb-ul-mal*, provides funding for the *mudarib*, who is the entrepreneur responsible for the full management of the business. Our community needs to build and support such avenues and platforms so as to efficiently link, connect and match resources in the community for inclusive growth. This will ensure that small businesses and start-ups have the required capital to grow and create value for the economy, and their investors will concurrently earn returns on their now-productive capital.

Within our business community, unity is also a key ingredient for success in the modern marketplace. Singapore is highly competitive and globalised, which brings significant challenges and opportunities. High costs and intense competition are two of the most prevalent issues faced by all businesses. When

businesses collaborate, they are able to immediately increase their scale, which will in turn enhance capabilities and lower costs. Businesses will also be able to leverage on each other's resources and competencies, thus be better able to grab fleeting opportunities in this dynamic and fast-paced world. A lone ranger though will struggle to find his footing amongst the big businesses that dominate Singapore's markets.

A united Muslim business community is an ideal we should all strive towards. Some may find this to be naïve, but I believe that it is in fact a necessary evolution we need to embrace. The wisdom in this is from our own religious teachings spread by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) 1,400 years ago.

"The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy." (Al-Hujurat, 49:10)

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "Whosoever removes a worldly grief from a believer, Allah will remove from him one of the grieves of the Day of Judgment. Whosoever alleviates [the lot of] a needy person, Allah will alleviate

[his lot] in this world and the next. Whosoever shields a Muslim, Allah will shield him in this world and the next. Allah will aid a slave [of His] so long as the slave aids his brother. Whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. No people gather together in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, but tranquillity and peace descends upon them, mercy envelopes them, the angels surround them, and Allah makes mention of them amongst those who are with Him. And whosoever is slowed down by his actions will not be hastened forward by his lineage.

(Narrated by Abu Hurayrah (RA), Sahih Muslim, No 2699)

It is time to come full-circle and lead modern society in its own game. Success is unlikely to come quickly, as culture takes time and effort to change. Culture, however, is a matter of utilitarian dialectic, and the obvious benefits of being united will soon outweigh the irrationality of being divided,

Insha'Allah. TMR

The writer is Head Investor Relations, Ethis Pte Ltd (Ethical Investments Southeast Asia)

Be a Smart Investor

Join our Private Network of Small & Micro Investors



The Community:
Retail Investors & Businessmen

Opportunities:
Business & Overseas Property

Apply for free - Call 67468040 or visit www.clubethis.com

- ✓ Shari'ah Complaint Opportunities
- ✓ Professionally & Legally structured
- ✓ Collective purchase of Real Estate
- ✓ Support Community Businesses
- ✓ Business Matching
- ✓ Networking Events



All forms of trading and investment carry risk. Such activities may not be suitable for everyone.

Why New Zealand needs a foster home for Muslim children

text by DAVID ZACHARIAH BLOCKSIDGE

Countries such as Singapore and Malaysia are fortunate to have well-established Islamic infrastructure. Muslims who die are buried in accordance with Islamic tradition. Zakat charity is generally distributed in a fair and equitable manner. Mosques are welcoming, non-controversial places of worship. Orphanages and foster homes exist to look after Muslim children in need of such facilities.

This is not the case in many countries. Take New Zealand. Despite a Muslim population of about 50,000 and growing fast, it does not have a dedicated orphanage/foster home for Muslim children. God willing, this will change.

Appeal for Funds launched

Just before Ramadhan in 2013, the Auckland-based charity, Working Together Group (WTG), launched an appeal for funds to purchase a



WTG Volunteers on Eid

suitable property. Currently there is about NZ\$40,000 in the account. A suitable multi-bedroom property would cost at least half a million dollars at today's prices, so there is a long way to go.

What prompted their members to act were the sad stories they were hearing from social workers and others involved.

The main government agency responsible for intervention is the Child, Youth and Family (CYF) service of the Ministry of Social Development. They do the best they can but need the support of Muslims to care for Muslim children.

There are many children in need but it is impossible to obtain accurate statistics because CYF does not do a breakdown by religion.



Muslim children placed in non-Muslim homes have been known to play with the family dog. Often they are not given *halal* food.

Furthermore, many Muslims who might otherwise seek help choose to stay below the radar because they do not want to be “registered” or go through “the system”, which they see as stigmatising.

“There are scores of such cases every year,” says a professional social worker from Auckland District Health Board. He is also an Islamic scholar. Most weeks, he and his wife spend many hours in their own time counselling some of those who fall through the cracks in this way.

An Islamic, dedicated facility would cater to the needs of various groups of children and youths.

One example is teenagers who have become involved in drugs and alcohol. An unfortunate consequence of their actions is the bad influence they exert on their siblings. However, if they are removed from their family home environment, the problem arises of where to place them while they get help for their addiction or dependency.

Organisations such as the Community Alcohol and Drugs Service (CADS) do great work but do not cater (quite literally, with no *halal* food on offer) for Muslims, nor offer counselling that is appropriate from an Islamic perspective.

Another group that urgently needs help is the parents of children with disabilities such as Down’s syndrome, autism and ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder). Their parents could use respite care, which could be government-funded, to give themselves a well-deserved break every so often.

Then there are the many victims of domestic violence, usually a family



STOCK PHOTO

member such as the father (or a close male relative) committing violence against his children and often against his own wife too.

When CYF removes these youngsters from their families, even temporarily until things can be sorted out, the issue is where to send them. Most end up in inappropriate homes, with atheists, Hindus or Christians caring for them. This creates all sorts of problems.

One girl in her mid-teens – an impressionable age – started attending church with her Christian foster parents. “She was attracted to Christianity,” explains someone close to the case, “and no longer wears the *hijab*.” It is worth noting that she had initially been placed with an uncle but hated it because he simply used her for babysitting his own children.

Muslim children placed in non-Muslim homes have been known to play with the family dog. Often they are not given *halal* food. One boy ran away from his foster home because he was not being fed properly. They are not encouraged to perform their prayers – or not the prayers of a Muslim, anyway.

In one Muslim family, the decent parents wanted their children to read the Quran for half an hour every day. An older child rebelled and left home, taking his siblings with him.

In another family, the nine-year-old boy refused to go to the Mosque. “I don’t want to be a Muslim,” he said. He was being bullied at school, where he had been told: “Your religion is violent.”

In both these cases, if the children could have been placed in an

Islamic environment away from their parents for a period, such situations could have had happy outcomes.

Some youngsters end up enjoying their newfound “freedom”. Aishah and Mohamed can become Mary and James. Some girls, clearly enjoying their “freedom” rather too much, end up prostituting themselves on Auckland’s notorious “K” (for Karangahape) Road.

It is fair to ask why more married-Muslim couples do not volunteer to take in such children. After all, the New Zealand government does pay them for doing so.

Concerned about the problem, one of the trustees of a big mosque in Auckland, printed flyers, encouraging parents to sign up for the necessary CYF training, and to take in children. He handed



out hundreds of the flyers but the response was nil. "People did not want to get involved," he explains. Some were worried that they might be visited by resentful or angry parents.

There are valid reasons why most Muslim families cannot take in such children, and these mainly centre on the *mahram* (unmarriageable kin) / non-*mahram* issue. That makes the need for a dedicated facility all the more pressing.

WTG is a registered New Zealand charity (CC11124). They have no paid staff but a dedicated team of volunteers. The trustees are architect Maan Alzaher, retired school principal Ismail Waja, surgeon Habib Rahman and accountant Mohamed Nalar.

WTG presently have three community projects up and running successfully: the Helping Hand food bank, the Janaza Waqf fund and the free Janaza Service. With the support and help of Muslims everywhere, the group can succeed with the foster home project too. If you wish to donate, please pay direct into Working Together Group's dedicated Kiwibank account: 38-9006-0434628-04. Swift code: CITINZ2X. Bank address: Kiwibank, Level 1, New Zealand Post House, 7-27 Waterloo Quay, Wellington 6011, New Zealand. Or mail a cheque or money order to Working Together Group, PO Box 272 1202, Papakura, Auckland 2244, New Zealand.

Sahl ibn Sa'd (RA) reported, "The Prophet (SAW) said, 'The one who cares for an orphan and myself will be in Paradise like this' and he held his two fingers together." (Sahih Bukhari). **TMR**

The writer lived in Singapore from 1992 to 2009. He and his Malay wife Mazlinah now live in New Zealand. They are active in Working Together Group and other Islamic charities.

Do you care about the fate of Muslim kids in New Zealand?



Sahl ibn Sa'd reported: "The Prophet (pbuh) said, 'The one who cares for an orphan and myself will be in Paradise like this' and he held his two fingers together." (Sahih Bukhari)

Help establish our first Islamic orphanage and foster home.

In New Zealand, abused or at-risk Muslim children are placed in non-Muslim homes because almost no Muslim families are able or willing to take them in. Government agencies like CYFS do the best they can but need our support. We need financial donations to establish a suitable, properly managed home. Please pay direct into Working Together Group's dedicated Kiwibank account:

38-9006-0434628-04

If you would like to know more, please email
childplacement@wtg.org.nz
davidblocksidge@yahoo.com
mazlinah_hmn@mac.com

WTG is a registered charity. We are all volunteers.
 Donations of \$5 or more are NZ tax-deductible.
 Visit www.wtg.org.nz or find us on Facebook.



Hidden Charm

With Flavourful Desserts

text by SITI ZUBEIDAH KADIR



La Marelle Café and Boutique

Where: **25A Baghdad Street, Singapore 199664**

FB: [www.fb.com/lamarellecafe](https://www.facebook.com/lamarellecafe)

Best For: Its wide range of beverages from coffee to mocktails, the pasta, and desserts!

If Alice took a wrong turn in the rabbit hole and ended up in this particular café, I bet she would have kept thinking that she was still in wonderland. Colourful and whimsical can be used to describe this cheery café located on the second floor of a shophouse on Baghdad Street, within the vicinity of Arab Street.

If you come by at night, when the colourful signage on the shop front blends into the surroundings, you might want to keep an eye out for the entrance. Blink and you might miss the dark blue stairs leading up to the café and boutique where Alice herself wouldn't want to leave. (If you cannot locate it even after pacing up and down Baghdad Street like we did, we recommend keeping an eye out for a group of girls who look like they are in need of a good dessert. It usually works.)

With a gorgeous interior, beckoning, almost hypnotic neon lights and graphics galore, one cannot help but feel like a kid in a candy store. Coffee-drinking, red velvet-consuming not-quite-kids anymore, but still eager to get our hands on the pretty little notebooks, pens, bags, posters and oh, everything else that was on the shelf.

While we are not sure whether the choice of decorations and interior design allows *La Marelle* to be on the list of hipster cafés in Singapore, the menu definitely can. *La Marelle* serves a simple menu, designed to keep your choices straightforward, i.e. starters, main courses and of course, dessert.

If you are a coffee person, the menu and range would satisfy the most caffeine deprived, although the servings are too small, to say the least. Not too ideal for those

planning to stay for hours, but perfect for café hopping. The teas and specialty drinks like tropical sunset or passion sunrise, mocktails with unique names like Amelie, Blanche or Chloe, are large and can satiate the thirstiest café go-er, or if you are not that thirsty, it will at least allow you to lounge around for a substantially longer period of time appreciating the ambience.

If you are hungry, get the pasta. It is the one (delicious) item on the menu we would vouch for. Unless you are seriously travel deprived, we would advise you to stay away from the stuffed croissants from "Mexico, Germany, Italy and France". We are not sure if it was a bad batch but the croissant was dry, the sausages, tough and almost got lost in the, fortunately, fresh vegetables and salsa. (We attribute this to growing pains, since *La*

lifestyle



Marelle is almost one of the newest kids on the block.)

And if you couldn't tell by now, it is the desserts that are declared the highlight of the café. If you're looking for delicious cakes, macaroons, tarts and crumbles, this is the place to go. Unfortunately enclosed in a drab looking display case with dismal lighting, the flavours defied the odds and made it to my 'best cafés for desserts' list. Another plus point were the staff, who were a delight to talk to, patiently explaining ingredients of the drinks and how to actually consume the coffee (not as easy as it looks, we tell you).

Overall, this Muslim-owned establishment was a lovely café to visit, especially if you have dainty not-so young children, or are a young at heart female. We are not sure whether the guys felt at ease surrounded by all those bright colours but we know that once the pasta and drinks arrived, all became well for them. **TMR**





Khairul Ikhwan Ridzwan, aged 21, is currently studying in Nanyang Technological University (NTU).



Muhd Shahrum Sahid, aged 23, is currently working at a local mosque.



Noor Aqilah Noor Azlan, aged 19, is currently studying Biological Science at NTU.



Sakina Banu, aged 19, a polytechnic graduate, won the Best Speaker Award for the Finals of SMYD 2014.

Congratulations to YODA Team One, Champion of Singapore Muslim Youth Debate (SMYD) 2014

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MUHD IRFAN MASLAN



house of arqam



Singapore Muslim Youth Debate 2014, organised by Youths of Darul Arqam (YODA)



Hafifah Hafif, the Chairperson for YODA's SMYD organising committee, delivered the welcome address. (below)



Held between May and June 2014, the fifth annual instalment of SMYD received participation from 13 teams of debaters. The youths, aged between 15 and 25, included a non-Muslim, Chinese student who represented the team from NUS.



Qari (Quranic Reciter) Muhammad Hanif Salleh, aged 16, from Aljunied Al-Islamiah Madrasah, opened the SMYD Finals event. (left)



On 21 June, the grand final of SMYD was held at Singapore Post Theatrette. The first runner-up for SMYD 2014 is the team from Pergas Student Body (Majlis Pelajar Pergas, or MPP). (right)





The motion for the grand final is "Muslim community issues are better tackled at state level than community level".



The grand final of SMYD 2014 was streamed 'live' on Islamicevents.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MUHD IRFAN MASLAN



The adjudicators for the grand final were Ust Saif-ur-Rahman, Sim Khadijah Mohammed, Nadia Teo, Dr Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, and Ust Hidayat Radja Nurul Bahri. (picture on right, from extreme right to left)



Arabic for Beginners: The Family

الأسرة al-Usrah

al-Hiwaar The dialogue

Ahmad: marHaban
Hello / Hi

Khalid: ahlam
Hello / Hi (reply)

Ahmad: masaa-'ul khair
Good evening

Khalid: masaa-'un nuur
Good evening to you too

Ahmad: kaifa Haaluka yaa khaalid?
How are you Khalid?

Khalid: bikhair, alHamdulillah, wa anta?
Fine, praise be to Allah, and you?

Ahmad: tamaam. bil-munaasabah,
hal haa-dhihi Suuratu usratika?
Great. By the way, is this your family picture?

Khalid: na'am, haa-dhihi Suuratu usratii.
Yes, this is my family picture.

Ahmad: man haa-dhaa?
Who is this?

Khalid: haa-dha waalidii waliid.
huwa muhandis
This is my father Walid, he's an engineer

Ahmad: wa man haa-dhihi?
And who's this (f)?

Khalid: haa-dhihi waalidatii Maryam.
hiya rabbatu bait
This is my mum Maryam, she's a housewife

الحوار

أحمد: مرحباً

خالد: أهلاً

أحمد: مساء الخير

خالد: مساء النور

أحمد: كيف حالك يا خالد؟

خالد: بخير، الحمد لله. وأنت؟

أحمد: تمام. بالمناسبة، هل هذه صورة أسرتك؟

خالد: نعم، هذه صورة أسرتي.

أحمد: من هذا؟

خالد: هذا والدي وليد. هو مهندس

أحمد: ومن هذه؟

خالد: هذه والدي مريم. هي ربّة بيت



al-Hiwaar The dialogue

Ahmad: kam shakhSan fii usratik?
How many persons in your family?

Khalid: fii usratii khamsah ashkhaas
There are five persons in my family

Ahmad: maa-shaa-allah, hal 'indaka akh?
Wow!(lovely) Do you have a brother?

Khalid: na'am 'indii akh Saghiir,
ismuhu yuusuf. huwa Taalib.
Yes I have a small(younger) brother,
his name is Yusuf. He's a student.

Ahmad: wa hal 'indaka ukht?
And do you have a sister?

Khalid: na'am 'indii ukht kabiirah,
ismuhaa faaTimah, hiya mudarrisah
Yes, I have a big(elder) sister,
her name is Fatimah, she's a teacher

Ahmad: hal 'indaka zawjah?
Do you have a wife?

Khalid: laa, maa 'indii zawjah,
anaa a'Zab
No, I don't have a wife, I'm a bachelor

Ahmad: shukran
thanks

Khalid: 'afwan
welcome

الحوار

أحمد: كم شخصاً في أسرتك؟

خالد: في أسرتي خمسة أشخاص

أحمد: ما شاء الله، هل عندك أخ؟

خالد: نعم، عندي أخ صغير، اسمه يوسف. هو طالب.

أحمد: وهل عندك أخت؟

خالد: نعم، عندي أخت كبيرة، اسمها فاطمة، هي مدرّسة

أحمد: هل عندك زوجة؟

خالد: لا، ما عندي زوجة، أنا أعزب

أحمد: شكراً

خالد: عفواً

VOCABS

Words	Arabic	Combination Word
masaa' morning	مَسَاء	مَسَاءُ الْخَيْرِ masaa-'ul khair good evening
khair goodness (well-being)	خَيْر	and the reply is "masaa-'un nuur"; an evening full of light, is a common reply which would mean wishing that the person's evening will be bright and cheerful
nuur light	نُور	
tamaam great (alright)	تَمَام	
bi with/by	بِ	بِالْمُنَاسَبَةِ bil-munaasabah
munaasabah occasion/event	مُنَاسَبَةٍ	A phrase used in Arabic, similar to the topic switch "by the way"
hal? a yes/no question that has the meaning of is/are/do/does?	هَلْ؟	
man? who?	مَنْ؟	
haa-dhaa / haa-dhihi this (m) / this (f)	هَذَا / هَذِهِ	
Suurah picture	صُورَة	صُورَة أُسْرَتِي Suurah usratii
Usrah family	أُسْرَة	Whenever two nouns or more are attached, the arrangement will be inverted in Arabic e.g. "My family picture" becomes "picture of my family", when the "of" structure is used.
rabb lord / master	رَبِّ	رَبَّةُ بَيْتٍ rabbatu bait
bait house	بَيْتٍ	this phrase is used for "housewife" in Arabic. Literally means master of the house.

lifestyle

VOCABS

Words	Arabic	Combination Word
muhandis engineer	مُهَنْدِس	You can change the gender by adding ة / ة (ah) at the end of the noun (occupation) e.g. muhandis مُهَنْدِس (male engineer) muhandisah مُهَنْدَسَة (female engineer); taalib طَالِب (male student) taalibah طَالِبَة (female student)
Taalib student	طَالِب	
mudarris teacher	مُدَرِّس	
kam? how many?	كَمْ؟	كَمْ شَخْصًا؟ kam shakhSan? How many people/person?
shakhS plural. ashkhaaS person/people	شَخْص ج. أَشْخَاص	
cinda has/have	عِنْدَ	عِنْدَهُ - 'indahu (he has) عِنْدَهَا - 'indahaa (she has) عِنْدَكَ - 'indaka (you have;m) عِنْدِكِ - 'indaki (you have;f) عِنْدِي - 'indii (I have) عِنْدَنَا - 'indanaa (we have) In order to negate these words, simply add مَا (maa) before them e.g. مَا عِنْدِي - I don't have
Saghiir small (young)	صَغِير	
kabiir big (old)	كَبِير	
a'zab bachelor	أَعَزَب	
shukran thanks	شُكْرًا	
'afwan welcome	عَفْوًا	

*(m) refers to male and (f) refers to female.

Transliteration & Meanings

1. al-usrah

Family waalid / ab
Father waalidah / umm
Mother ‘amm
Paternal uncle ‘ammah
Paternal auntie khaal
Maternal uncle khaalah
Maternal auntie akh
Brother ukht
Sister ibn
Son ibnah / bint
Daughter jadd
Grandfather jaddah
Grandmother hafiid
Grandson hafiidah
Granddaughter zawj
Husband zawjah wife

الأسرة

وَالِد / أَب
وَالِدَة / أُم
عَم
عَمَّة
خَال
خَالَة
أَخ
أُخْت
إِبْن
إِبْنَة / بِنْت
جَد
جَدَّة
حَفِيد
حَفِيدَة
زَوْج
زَوْجَة

Transliteration & Meanings

2. al-Arqaam Numbers

waa-Hid One
ith-naan / ith-nain Two
tha-laa-thah Three
arba-‘ah Four
kham-sah Five
sit-tah Six
sab-‘ah Seven
tha-maa-niyah Eight
tis-‘ah Nine
‘asha-rah Ten
Sifr zero

٢. الأرقام

١- وَاحِد
٢- اِثْنَان / اِثْنَيْن
٣- ثَلَاثَة
٤- أَرْبَعَة
٥- خَمْسَة
٦- سِتَّة
٧- سَبْعَة
٨- ثَمَانِيَة
٩- تِسْعَة
١٠- عَشْرَة
٠- صِفْر (زَيْرُو)



Page name:
As-Souq (www.facebook.com/
As.Souq.AllAboutArabic)

Website: www.as-souq.com

"Learn Arabic, for it strengthens the intelligence and increases one's noble conduct (al-muru'ah)" - Omar Ibn al-Khattab (RA)

spotlight

The Growth of Halal Trade

Serving the demands of the Muslim consumers throughout the world.

text by HYDER GULAM

For a multitude of reasons, including growing affluence and greater choices for travel and destinations, the Muslim community has become a major market for travel, trade and other Halal segments such as the food supply chain. Many businesses are seeing the demand created by this segment, including not only banking and finance, but also in terms of Halal tours overseas and the like. Never before has the Muslim community had such an opportunity to partake in these activities, under a Halal framework. This article will look at these industry segments from a Singaporean point of view.

Food

Using a simplified framework vis-à-vis an Islamic worldview, all food and drinks can be classified under one of the following categories:

a) Halal. 'Halal' is an Arabic word which means lawful or allowable. Any food or drink

which falls under this category is permitted for consumption. Most food and drinks are considered Halal unless they are stated clearly in the Quran and Hadith as forbidden or non-Halal.

b) Non-Halal. 'Non-Halal', also traditionally known as 'Haram', means unlawful or unallowable. As the name implies, any food or drink which is classified as non-Halal is prohibited for consumption. In general, all harmful things are non-Halal. Examples of these include the meat of dead animals and birds, flesh of swine, intoxicating drugs and alcoholic beverages.

c) Syubhah. Any food or drink which lies within the grey area and does not fall clearly under the Halal or non-Halal category is classified as 'Syubhah', alternatively called questionable or dubious.

In the Singaporean context, when one examines the Halal food segment, the Muslim community

is very well served by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) as the sole custodian of Halal certification in Singapore. Established in 1978, the MUIS Halal certification mark is widely recognised in key Halal markets such as Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries through MABIMS (an international organisation consisting of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore that explains Islam to their communities) and GCC-Singapore Free Trade Agreements.

MUIS issues Halal certificates based on a set of systems-focused Halal certification requirements known as the Singapore MUIS Halal Quality Management System (HalMQ). To date, MUIS offers a number of Halal certification schemes that span across the food supply chain. To see and appreciate the value of MUIS in terms of the food supply chain, one only needs to examine the trust put



Services such as Halal holidays are booming.

in the Halal certification mark by the Muslim consumer in Singapore.

Travel and Tourism

Halal Trade and Travel takes the definitions noted above even further, and looks at the Halal tourism as a subcategory of religious tourism, which is geared towards Muslim families who abide by the rules noted above. The hotels in such destinations do not serve alcohol and have separate swimming pools and spa facilities for men and women. Malaysia, Turkey and many more countries are trying to attract Muslim tourists from all over the world, offering facilities in accordance with the religious beliefs of Muslim tourists.

The Halal tourism industry also provides flights where no alcohol or pork products are served, prayer timings are announced, and religious programmes are broadcast as part of entertainment offered on board. A Euromonitor International report released at World Travel Market in 2007 in London says that there is potential for a boom in Halal tourism in the Middle East. The report mentions a market for a Halal start-up airline, which could provide Halal food, prayer calls, Quran in seat pockets and provide separate sections for male and female travellers.

Many international hotels do serve Halal food that is slaughtered in accordance with the teachings of

Islamic Shariah (Legislation) and is free of any substances forbidden by Islam, such as pork and alcohol. Some hotels have employed people from the Muslim world to provide translation services and other assistance that may be needed by tourists from Muslim countries.

The Economist's article on Halal Business published on 25 May 2013 states: "It is not just manufactured Halal products. Services such as Halal holidays are booming, too. Crescent Tours, a London-based online travel specialist, books clients into hotels in Turkey that have separate swimming pools for men and women, no-alcohol policies and halal restaurants, and

spotlight

rents out private holiday villas with high walls.”

Malaysia is the world’s friendliest destination for Muslim travellers, according to a survey released recently, but Japan has shown most improvement as it ramps up efforts to cash in on a growing market. Malaysia was followed by the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia in this year’s rankings for “Halal” friendly holiday destinations released by Singapore-based Muslim travel specialist *Crescentrating*.

The survey evaluates countries in terms of their attentiveness to the needs of Muslim travellers, including the presence and accessibility of Halal restaurants with meat slaughtered to Islamic standards, and the provision of prayer rooms at airports, shopping malls and hotels.

Singapore was placed sixth in the global rankings, and was the only non-Muslim country in the top 10, followed by Morocco, Jordan, Qatar

and Tunisia. The tiny island state touts its man-made attractions, a vast array of local food, and reputation for cleanliness and order to travellers. The top ten in order were: Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Morocco, Jordan, Qatar and Tunisia.

The *Crescentrating* system rates overall Halal friendliness on a scale of one to seven, with seven being the highest rating. The service ratings are separated into four different areas:

- Halal food facilities
- Salat (prayer) facilities
- Services during Ramadhan
- Level of non-Halal activities in the hotel and additional Halal-friendly recreational facilities

Halal Business

Halal Business is the practice of investing money in a manner that meets the tenets of Islamic finance. A Halal Business, in particular Halal Finance and Investments would therefore not only avoid industries

such as alcohol, pornography, gaming and tobacco, but also industries and businesses which derive their profits primarily from interest or usury such as conventional lending institutions.

Halal Business is considered an alternative approach to conventional methods and is based on the principles of Islamic Finance. According to Islamic principles, conventional financial systems are unsustainable because the use of money as a commodity in and of itself results in an imbalance of wealth at the expense of society and borrowers.

Some Halal Businesses use an industry screen, where from an industry perspective, a company is deemed compliant if the total sum of non-permissible income derived from the following is less than 5% of their total revenue. The second step of the screening process examines whether a company is primarily profiting from interest or usury, or if the business has taken on a large amount of interest-based debt. Specifically, companies will fail Halal parameters if any of the following conditions exist.

The use of an Islamic or Shariah Advisory Board is also another way which Halal Businesses are able to provide compliance with their business practices. These boards are generally composed of experts in Islam, Islamic Banking and Finance as well as commercial acumen.

Summary

This short article has attempted to show the burgeoning field of Islamic principles in various industry segments. As it can be seen, it is possible to live a life that is compliant with Islamic principles. **TMR**



The Great Mosque in Sousse, Tunisia.

When Caring for the Environment is Caring for Ourselves

As trustees of the earth, Muslims need to be active in environmental conservation.

text by SHARIFAH ZUBAIDAH A KADER ALJUNID

Introduction

The environment, for many of us today, is a place to live and to obtain all our worldly needs.

For Muslims, the environment is more than a source of sustenance and a locus for habitation. The many splendored things of the environment are signs, called *Ayat*, that allude to higher meanings of existence. But above all, they allude to God, to Allah (SWT), as the reality that stands behind the environment and its contents, and therefore, the environment is actually a mirror reflecting the many names of God and His Attributes. As such, the environment is a very significant source of intellection and contemplation, inasmuch as it is a necessary source for our continuity

of existence. It is, so to speak, a source for us to think about our wonderful world of Nature, on how it can become a useful avenue to advance the cause of our human well-being, derived from the names and attributes of God that become our inspiration for our human meaning.

Although the relationship between man and his environment is a fundamental concept in Islam, awareness of this concept and the religious discourse about how this relationship is to be translated into practice by Muslims is sadly lacking. A more worrying sign is the seeming lack of commitment amongst the Muslim community in regard to environmental

conservation. Although Islam clearly advocates the importance of cleanliness and the avoidance of harm, it is unfortunate that issues relating to sanitation and public health, as well as man-made threats to the environment, are still widespread in Muslim communities. It is crucial to highlight the various guiding principles available in the Quran and Hadith on environmental conservation through accountability and proper governance.

Environmental Destruction

Thanks to the rapid development in science and technology, man is now in the position where he can transform the environment in countless ways. If done wisely, such knowledge and technology could

opinion

bring benefits to the human race. However, when such knowledge and technology are wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same can wreak havoc and harm to human beings and the environment.

Human activities have and will continue to contribute to climate change by causing changes in the Earth's atmosphere in the amounts of greenhouse gases, aerosols (small particles) and cloudiness discharged into the atmosphere. The largest known contribution comes from the burning of fossil fuels which release carbon dioxide that alter incoming solar radiation and the outgoing infra-red radiation that are part of the Earth's energy

The concept integrates three main dimensions, namely, **ECONOMY, SOCIAL and THE ENVIRONMENT**, thus indicating a shift from just aiming at material gains to the achievement of **SOCIAL JUSTICE**.

balance. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has noted that since the start of the Industrial Era (about 1750), the overall effect of human activities on climate has been a warming influence (IPCC's 4th Assessment Report, 2007) and that the human impact on climate during this era greatly exceeds those caused by known changes in natural processes, such as solar changes and volcanic eruptions.

Environmental Conservation versus Sustainable Development

The earth that we live in is a biosphere - a unique, indivisible ecosystem and all of its diverse constituent parts are interdependent. The biosphere is the part of the earth where life is possible and includes the atmosphere (air), lithosphere (land) and hydrosphere (water).

The term 'environmental conservation' is no longer widely used in the context of protecting the environment as the quest for the last three decades is about 'sustainable development'. This is borne from the recognition that man needs development in order to thrive and sustain a good quality of life on this earth. In this quest, notions such as upward movement of the entire social order, eradication of poverty, reduction of inequalities, removal of regional imbalances and above all environmental concerns invaded the notion of development. This resulted in the addition of the word 'sustainable' to development.

What then is sustainable development? The most widely accepted definition is that sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without



compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Report, 1987). This is sometimes referred to as 'inter-generational equity'. The concept itself has evolved over the years and is still in the process of being reformulated and translated into national commitments under the umbrella of the United Nations. It began with the main aim of reducing poverty through preservation of the natural foundations of life and calls for a fair distribution of goods and opportunities. The concept integrates three main dimensions, namely, economy, social and the environment, thus indicating a shift from just aiming at material gains to the achievement of social justice. This sits well with Islam to the extent that it seeks a balance between economy, society and the environment, and puts the satisfaction of the 'non-material' (spiritual) needs of the people on the same footing as material needs for achieving economic progress. (Zubair Hasan, 2006).

Islam and the Environment

The Quran contains numerous guidelines with regard to treatment of the earth and other creations of Allah (SWT) in such a way that the *wahy*, or revelation, intimately connects itself with the idea of sacredness of nature.

The Quran proclaims Allah (SWT) as absolute owner of the earth.

"Said Moses to his people: 'Pray for help from Allah, and (wait) in patience and constancy: for the earth is Allah's, to give as a heritage to such of His servants as He pleases; and the end is (best) for the righteous.'"
(Al-A'raf, 07:128)

"Yea, unto Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth, and enough is Allah to carry through all affairs."
(An-Nisa, 04:132)

The above verses show that Allah (SWT) is the True Owner while mankind merely holds the earth on a temporary basis (*majazi*). Allah (SWT) has created this world for mankind' and the land, the environment and other natural resources are GIFTS from Allah (SWT).

Mankind, on the other hand, is a *khalifah*, or trustee of Allah (SWT) in dealing with His property on this earth including land. This is the concept of 'stewardship' in Islam. Hence, there should not be pilfering and wastage.

"It is He Who has made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth: He has raised you in ranks, some above others: that He may try you in the gifts He has given you: for your Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."
(Al-An'am, 06:165)

"Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend (in charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs. For, those of you who believe and spend (in charity) - for them is a great Reward."
(Al-Hadid, 57:07)

The earth is made subjected to man but man will be held accountable for his use of this gift. Here lies the concept of *amanah* or trusteeship. Allah (SWT) commands the

believers to render the trusts (*amanah*) to whom that they belong. The Quran and Hadith make *amanah* represents an integral part of the Muslim faith and designates *amanah* as a hallmark of faithful Muslims.

Allah (SWT) says:

"(Believers are) those who fulfil their trusts (amanat) and observe their promises and commitments."
(Al-Mu'minoon, 23:08)

Also, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was reported to have said:

"One who betrays his trust (amanah) has no faith".

Conclusion

The above discussion strengthens the fact that if one were a good and steadfast practising Muslim, there should be no 'mischief' on this earth that would lead to environmental degradation. It is about fulfilment of a divine trust and those who take this trust seriously will, *Insha'Allah*, be able to become change agents in society to create the needed awareness for environmental conservation. May Allah (SWT) pave the way for us to become responsible Muslims. Indeed, Islam itself is not adverse to the idea of development as the Quran has in many verses expressly stated that man is to inhabit the earth and should establish a balanced way of life without excesses and deficiencies. This is known as the concept of *I'mar* in Islam, which includes spreading and settling in all parts of the earth and engaging in positive activities that could bring about prosperity - but a prosperity that will not put the environment, and inadvertently ourselves, who are the trustee to the well-being of the environment, in harm's way. **TMR**



The Importance of Two Languages

Pustaka Nasional launched a series of books in both English and Malay.

text by **NUR AZEEMAH KADIR**

In our fast paced and competitive society, a good grasp of English is critical to ensure that our intentions can be understood clearly. More often than not, whilst focusing on the attainment of perfect English, our command of our mother tongue might become weaker. With the introduction of dual language books, Pustaka Nasional had started a new initiative to tackle this issue.

A series of children's books was launched on 5 April 2014 in The Chamber of The Arts House. These books are a fun and engaging way for children to be exposed to both the English as well as Malay Language. Books of the same plot and content were produced in two different versions: English and Malay. Written by a group of Malay language trainee teachers at NIE, this book series is the first attempt at publishing a book series of this nature.

The event was graced by the Guest of Honour: Associate Professor Hadijah Rahmat who is the Deputy Head of the Asian Languages and Culture Academic Group at the National Institute of Education (NIE). She emphasised on the importance of young children to be exposed to books from an early age. She also commended Pustaka Nasional for the creative move of publishing books of dual language so that one language will not be overlooked for the sake of



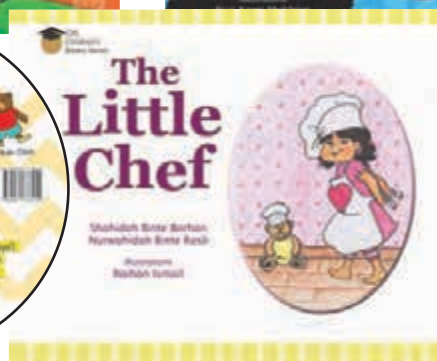
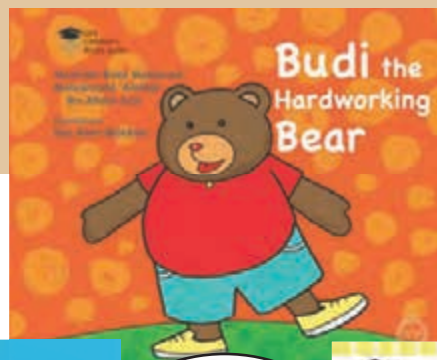
improving the other language. Of greater importance is the issue of the demand of Children's Literature in the local scene. Associate Professor Hadijah Rahmat emphasised that these publications have to be supported by the public so that other books like these can be further produced. Without the demand from the public, books like these will be deemed as unpopular and will thus cease to exist. The importance of upholding our culture through books should not be taken lightly as it is books that mould our thinking and allow us to appreciate the uniqueness of our culture that might otherwise be overlooked or taken for granted.

This delightful series features books of various themes: from familiar tales of children getting excited for Hari Raya (Eid), to more unconventional stories like a little chef helping her father whip up a delicious meal in the kitchen. The selected stories were picked from a batch of 30 other stories

that were written by the group of trainee teachers. With its engaging contents and relatable plots, it is not difficult to see why these stories have been chosen for publication.

Featured titles of the series include: Bam!, The Little Chef (Cef Cilik), What a Noise (Bisingnya!), How Many Days to Hari Raya (Berapa Hari Lagi Hari Raya?) and Budi the Hardworking Bear (Budi Beruang Yang Rajin). All the books have been meticulously edited by Dr Mukhlis Abu Bakar, who is an associate professor in NIE and a trained professional in the area of literacy education.

Books can be purchased from <http://www.kedai.pustakaislamiah.com.sg/> or alternatively, you can call 6745 4321. If you are still unsure, you can search the Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd facebook page where you will be able to find out more information about the books, as well as trailers of the charming books that were launched. **TMR**



1,001 Things You Never Knew

Find out more about the contributions of past Muslims that shaped modern civilization as we know it.

text by **ABDUL GHAFAR ABDUL KADIR**

You must have heard that the Muslim Civilization has brought to us many inventions and discoveries that are still useful till today, but have you ever wondered what they actually are? If you want to know a little more about all the discoveries made during the Islamic Golden Age, then you are in luck.

Founded by the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilization (FSTC), a non-profit foundation made up of respected academics from all over the world, the brand, *1001 Inventions*, aims to provide you with insights to an era which flourished with inventions and advancements in various fields like the Sciences, Engineering, Mathematics, and Astronomy.

1001 Inventions was conceptualised as a global brand, with products comprising of educational materials like books, videos, films, teaching resources, and the visually and experientially most exciting, the

1001 Inventions exhibitions, which has made its rounds across various continents since 2010.

Its aim, to recognise and promote accurately, advances and discoveries in Science Technology and the Arts made during the Muslim Civilization, from the 7th century onwards. In doing so, it hopes to show the origins of the current scientific understanding, so that there is a greater appreciation of contributions from scholars in the past towards the advancement of science and technology today. The accuracy of the content of the materials and the exhibition has been researched by academics, famous in their own fields, which was then reviewed by a network of leading experts from Universities and Museums globally.

From the website, the exhibitions seem like a sight to behold. With interactive exhibits, in the form of electronic games, and multimedia showcases spread out over a large 800-square-

metre space, there is something for the most inquisitive. Split into several zones, with each representing a different sphere of scientific and cultural achievement, the exhibitions recreate the Golden Age of Discovery that had a great but almost unknown impact on our world today.

The exhibition will allow visitors to relive the era when many men and women of different faiths and backgrounds, including Christians and Jews, worked hand in hand with Muslims, some traveling thousands of miles to share or to seek knowledge. It also shows how the Muslim Civilization was influenced and enriched by the knowledge received from older and more advanced societies, such as the Greeks and the Persians. A key takeaway from the exhibition is that advancements in various fields that we enjoy today was not because of one particular race, rather, it is a product of ideas and effort of many races, society and cultures during that era.

DID YOU KNOW THAT MANY OF THE ACCEPTED THEORIES REGARDING HUMAN VISION AND INVENTIONS LIKE CAMERAS WERE MADE BY MUSLIMS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF DISCOVERY?

The exhibition currently tours in English and Arabic, and has plans to be translated into many different languages to cater to a global audience. With such grandeur, it is such a shame it did not make a quick stop in Singapore after a 7-month stint in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, between October 2013 and May 2014. You might want to visit its website at <http://www.1001inventions.com> to see where its next stop would be.

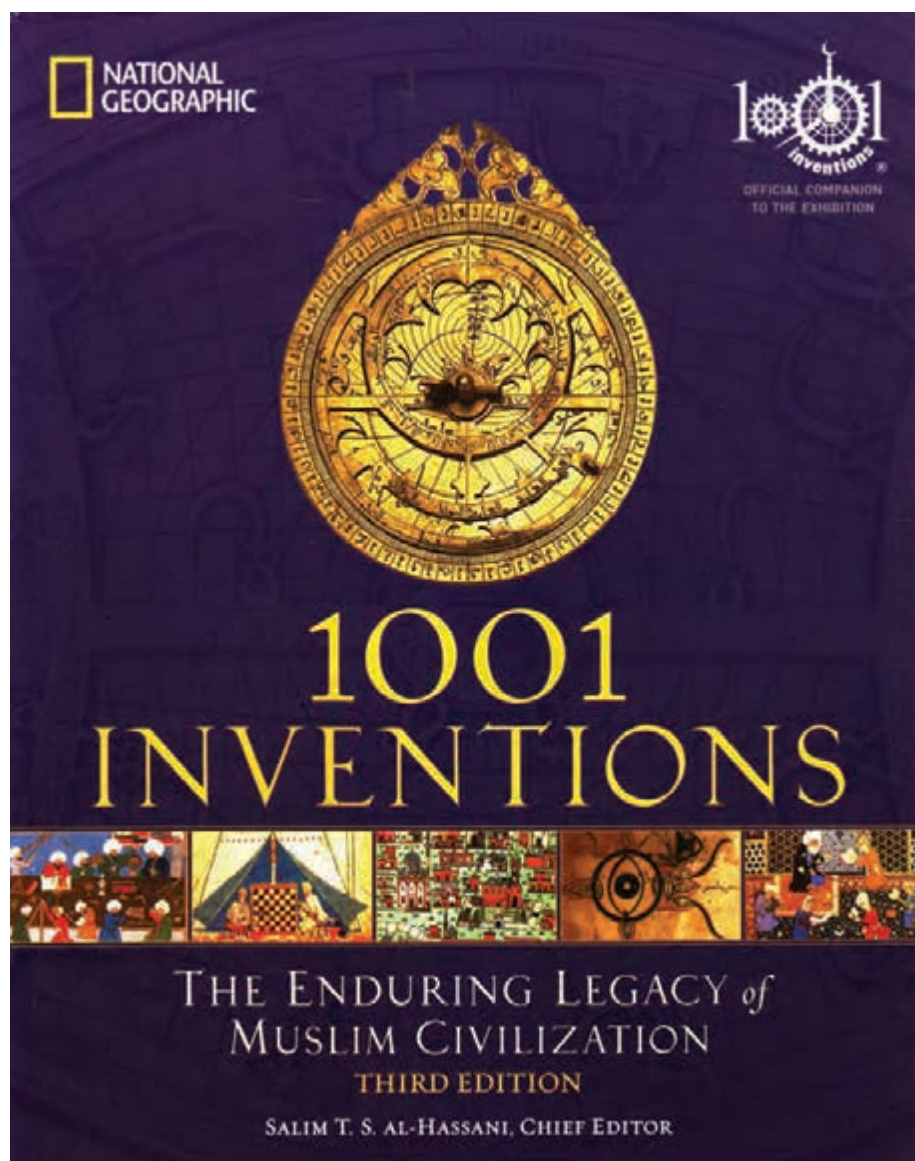
Reading Materials

'1001 Inventions: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Civilization'

For those who are unable to relive the Golden Age of Discovery through the exhibitions, there is another way you can immerse yourself in that era. With a book entitled '1001 Inventions: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Civilization' - the collaborated efforts of National Geographic and 1001 Inventions, you can have comprehensive details of the academic revolution in the palm of your hands. Readers will be thrilled with the contents of the book, compiled in a way that allows readers to scrutinise each detail in many possible angles. In the first few pages of the book, readers are able to find a map, which points out where the different discoveries were made. For history buffs concerned with dates, there is also a timeline which begins from the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and which indicates the year each discovery was made.

The book is divided into eight sections, with the first section comprising of a brief summary of what readers will expect in the other seven. The other seven are broad groups of discoveries divided by the editor into the following sections; Home, School, Market, Hospital, Town, World and Universe.

Did you know that many of the accepted theories regarding human vision and inventions like cameras were made by Muslims from the Golden Age of Discovery? A thinker named Al-Kindi pioneered theories in this field, in which was later developed into the pillars of 'scientific' knowledge used in the field of vision till today. Al-Kindi was also famous for rejecting the once popular theory that human vision was formed by rays coming out



lifestyle

from our eyes, and insisted on the fact that vision is formed through the light that enters our eyes from items which reflect it. Known as one of the 'twelve giant minds of history', Al-Kindi is a perfect example of how men from the Golden Age of Discovery were able to discover and clearly state theories in their own field, turning it into a starting point for others to work on. The book highlights their successes as well as details their failures, noting how each event made an impact to our modern day living.

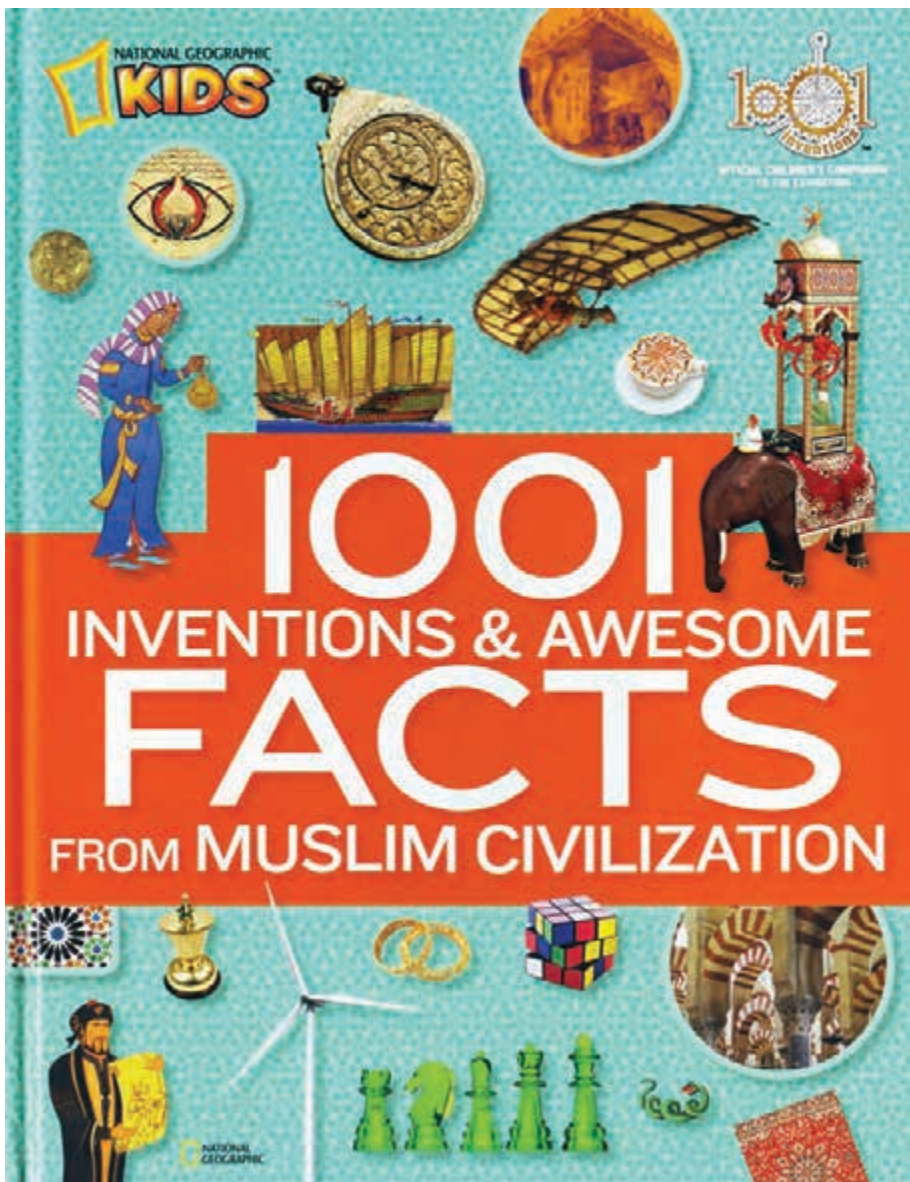
For knowledge-hungry adults, the book is available in many countries around the world, with details of these distributors easily available on 1001 Inventions' website (<http://www.1001inventions.com/media/book/global-distributors>).

'1001 Inventions & Awesome Facts From Muslim Civilization'

If you are keen on exposing your children to such interesting facts from the Muslim Civilization but are concerned that they may be dry pieces of facts that will put

them to sleep, you may want to rejoice that there is a similar book, catered towards young minds. Also published by National Geographic, '1001 Inventions & Awesome Facts From Muslim Civilization' will thrill and satiate even the most curious of children. Although most information found in this book is also in the adult version, this book has been altered specifically for children. Filled with attractive pictures and illustrations, eye-catching to readers of any age, the book contains bite-sized facts so that your children will never get bored. The facts are short, concise and succinct but are not any less interesting.

The arrangement of the book is also different from the one for adults; where each page turns into a new discovery (or topic) for the children. For example, there is a section entitled 'Soaring Facts about Flight', dedicated to historical facts about flying, entails how the success and failures of a Muslim man from the 9th century, who attempted to fly, eventually led to the success of the Wright Brothers and modern day flight. Interestingly, the book makes it a point to show the children that not all successes in that era is attributed to Muslims. This, along with all other details in both books point out that Muslim and non-Muslims alike, are somehow linked and interdependent in terms of knowledge and discovery, and how everything could not be so perfectly in place without a Greater Force orchestrating it. If we are to look at the conveniences we have today and consider, in retrospect, we will be able to see how Allah (SWT) has allowed us, His creations, to enjoy life through the discoveries and inventions of others. **TMR**



Rizq and Barakah

as I understand it

From painful lessons, our writer became better aware
of God's blessings upon her.

text by SIM KHADIJAH MOHAMMED

RIZQ IS THE CONCEPT OF
ALLAH'S (SWT) **BLESSINGS** TO MAN
IN MATERIAL FORM. **BARAKAH** IS THE
VALUE WITH WHICH THAT MATERIAL BLESSING
IS IMBUED BY ALLAH (SWT).

“Say (O Muhammad [SAW]): ‘All the bounty is in the Hands of Allah; He grants to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, the All-Knower.’”
(Al-Imran, 03:73)

“Say: ‘Truly, my Lord enlarges the provision for whom He wills of his slaves, and (also) restricts (it) for him, and whatsoever you spend of anything (in Allah’s Cause), He will replace it. And He is the Best of Providers.’”
(Saba’, 34:39)

Have you ever wondered why some “poor” folks are the happiest people on earth, whilst some

“rich” folks never seem to attain happiness, despite their apparent wealth? Well, I have. And I have found a way to reconcile these strange truths with concepts that are taught to me in my religion. Let me first begin by setting out some definitions of *rizq* and *barakah*, as I understand them, before I share my viewpoints with you.

To my mind, *rizq* is the concept of Allah’s (SWT) blessings to man in material form. So a person’s house, salary, children or even an opportunity which is awarded to that person is his *rizq* from Allah (SWT). On the other hand, *barakah* is the value with which that material blessing is imbued by Allah (SWT). So, for example, if Ali has \$10 for

which he is grateful, Allah (SWT) may put more value or *barakah* in that \$10 than the value or *barakah* that is put into Roslan’s \$100. Ali’s \$10 may then “stretch” to cover his expenses for 3 days, while Roslan’s \$100 may be swiftly depleted in a single receipt. To the objective bystander, Roslan is “richer” than Ali. But, in truth, Ali is the richer of the two. What, then, is the difference between Ali and Roslan, such that Ali is better off? In my view, that difference is, and must be *shukr*, or gratitude. As Muslims, we are taught that if we are grateful for the blessings bestowed upon us by Allah (SWT), we will not only be better off in our own context, but be in a better position to assist others. One whose needs are satisfactorily

leap of faith

met is better placed to help those in greater need.

Travelling light back to his Creator

Our beloved Prophet (SAW) was very much alive to these concepts, and therefore chose a life of simplicity, so as to maximise the benefit that he could confer upon others. He slept on a mat in a sparse room, much to the surprise of leaders who visited him at his quarters. They would remark that such a lifestyle was unbecoming of a man of his stature, and his response would be that he was a mere traveller in this world, and he intended to travel light on his journey back to his Creator.

SubhanAllah (Glory be to God)! If the leader of the Muslim *ummah* lived in such simplicity, who are we to hoard and covert material wealth? I do not pretend to live a life of simplicity. I have an iPhone, an iPad and a laptop computer. I live in a rented apartment which is very much in excess of the space and comforts that I need. I was given a good education, and am blessed with a steady stream of income. But I am well aware that just as Allah (SWT) has seen fit to bestow these blessings upon me, so too can He revoke them just as easily. Being alive to this fact has made me grateful for what I have, and has instilled in me a sense of responsibility towards those who may not have been so fortunate. I forget this, from time to time, but *Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to God), Allah (SWT) has seen fit to constantly remind my complacent heart of these wisdoms. I was not always this way. I am ashamed to admit that I once lived in an apartment way beyond my means. I took pride in the designer furniture and appliances that adorned my beautifully-renovated



If the leader of the Muslim ummah lived in such simplicity, who are we to covert material wealth?

ONE MORNING, I HAD FORGOTTEN TO TAKE SOME COINS FROM MY SAVINGS BOTTLE, AND ONLY HAD \$4 ON ME TO LAST THE ENTIRE DAY.



I bought a pack of **3 epok-epok** and had **2 for breakfast**, saving **1 for lunch**.

home. I was heavily in debt, but craved more material goods to fill an inexplicable void in my life. Then came my divorce which took a further unexpected toll on my finances. I was left with almost nothing, and had chosen to leave most of my material possessions and all of the gifts and jewellery from my ex-husband behind, to achieve a fresh start. I refused to engage in petty battles over what contributions were owed to me. Instead, I chose to walk away and start over, with what little I had in my pockets. It mattered not that I had to build my life over from scratch. Money could be earned

again, I told myself – after all, I was blessed with an able body and mind, *Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to God). What mattered was that I left with my dignity intact.

Then one day, I had an epiphany.

I had been saving my 1 dollar coins and 50 cent coins in a bottle for a rainy day, and it seemed that I was in the midst of the monsoon season. One morning, I had forgotten to take some coins from my savings bottle before I left for work, and found, to my horror, that I only had \$4 worth of coins on me to last the entire day. What on earth could I buy with \$4, such that I would be able to sustain myself?

To give or not to give

To my pleasant surprise, I chanced upon a Malay food stall which was selling 3 *epok-epoks* (curry puffs) for \$1. I bought a pack of 3 and had 2 for breakfast, saving 1 for lunch. On my way to work, I was tempted to buy a soya bean drink which would have cost \$1.40, but decided against it. As I took my usual route to my office building, I passed a “tissue paper auntie” in a wheelchair. “*To give or not to give?*”, I asked myself. And I gave \$2 out of my remaining \$3 to her. I reasoned in my head that she needed the money more than I did. After all, I had a spare *epok-epok* to tide me through the day!

leap of faith



Then I got to the office and realised to my joy that, first of all, I had an unopened bottled drink on my desk from the day before. Secondly and more importantly, it was Wednesday and my office would be serving free lunch that day. “*This must be my lucky day*”, I remarked to myself, and indeed it was, for I still had a spare *epok-epok* in case I needed to stay back late to work, and an additional \$1 coin with which I could buy a drink from the office vending machine. I reflected upon the irony of how happy I was to have these little intangible blessings, when I’d previously had an insatiable thirst for material goods. Then it dawned on me.

Wealth is not merely a blessing. It is also a responsibility. Allah (SWT) bestows more objective wealth on some and less on others, to see if they will meet this obligation of distributing wealth according to their needs and the needs of others. Quite apart from being in a state

I GOT TO THE OFFICE AND **REALISED** THAT IT WAS WEDNESDAY AND MY OFFICE WOULD BE **SERVING** **FREE LUNCH** THAT DAY.

of gratitude, those of us who are blessed with more *rizq* are trustees of that wealth. We can choose to squander it, in which case our *rizq* would not be imbued with *barakah*. We would therefore need more than what we have already been given. It is for this reason that some “rich” folk seem to always need more, because their thirst is never quenched. Had they been grateful and observed their responsibilities in relation to the wealth they were

bestowed, they would have received more *barakah* in their *rizq*, and would always be in surplus.

Never mine to keep

In that moment, when my objective wealth was lacking, I felt more blessed than I had ever felt in my life. I knew that Allah (SWT) had seen fit to teach me a painful lesson for not having been grateful and responsible for the wealth that had previously been bestowed upon me. It was not mine to keep; it had never been mine to keep. I was merely its trustee, and needed to act accordingly, to fulfil my obligations to Allah (SWT).

I am in a better financial state now, *Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to God), but I know that this is only due to my awareness of my blessings and my obligations. So I walk a fine line, occasionally tipping over to each side as I go, but ever grateful for what I have.

If everyone understood

Just imagine the world we could live in, if everyone understood *rizq* and *barakah* in this way. There would be no hoarding; there would be no poverty. The objectively “rich” would always care for the objectively “poor”, and no one would take more than they needed from the singular “pot of gold” placed on earth by Allah (SWT). Yes, the John Lennon song is ringing in my head, but what is so wrong with being a dreamer?

I once read a quote by Mahatma Gandhi, “*Be the change you want to see in the world.*” I’m starting with me, and I sincerely hope that someday you will join me, so that the world can be as one, as it was always meant to be. **TMR**

The writer is a born-Muslim of Chinese-Malay descent. Her father was a Convert to Islam in the 1970s.



Lectures by
Sheikh Alaa
Elsayed, from 13
to 16 February
2014

Lecture topics:
Marriage: Bliss or Blues?
True Love for the
Prophet (SAW)
Recapturing Hearts
For the Love of God!



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MUHD IRFAN MASLAN



The lectures on 13
and 14 February were
held at Darul Arqam
Auditorium, while the
lectures on 15 and 16
February were held at
Max Atria, Singapore
Expo.



Sheikh Alaa Elsayed
lives in Greater
Toronto Area, Canada,
where he serves
as the Director of
Religious Affairs for
the Islamic Centre of
Canada-ISNA. He is
also a member of the
Canadian Council of
Imams. He has hosted
Vision of Islam, a
weekly TV show which
runs through Alberta,
Canada.



Congratulations

Al-Mawrid Essay Winners

al-Māwrid
RESOURCE
LIBRARY

2013

theme:

thankfulness

(shukr)

1st: Lee Swaleha Afandi

2nd: Humairah M Jamil

3rd: Sia Jingyun Erna Sharida

3rd: Nurfarahin M Amin

and thank you to all who participated in the competition.

Being Thankful

Al-Mawrid Essay
Competition 2013 winning
entry for the theme of
thankfulness (shukr).

text by LEE SWALEHA AFANDI

Thankfulness is the expression of gratitude for a bounty that one receives. A true believer is one that is ever grateful for the numerous bounties bestowed upon him by the Almighty.

Ever wondered why a Muslim says *Alhamdulillah* (All thanks be to Allah) after a sneeze? To the common person, a sneeze is regarded as a bother due to the mess produced by the nasal passage. To others, it may be an annoyance because it results in the spreading of germs. But the response of a believer is different. Instead of complaining, he is grateful for the sneeze because he knows that it comes from Ar-Rahman (The Compassionate),



leap of faith

and for him there are numerous benefits.

Sneezing is the process of expulsion of harmful particles through the nose and mouth accompanied by mucus and air. Medical research has proven that sneezing has many health benefits for the human body. Doctors say that sneezing is the body's mechanism to eliminate tiny microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses from the respiratory passage, which would otherwise be detrimental to one's well-being. So the next time, you feel a sneeze coming, embrace it and thank Allah (SWT) for it, as has been taught to us by our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

"If one of you sneezes, then pronounce *Alhamdulillah*, and let those who hear it respond with *Yarhamukallahu* (may God have mercy on you), and if answered so, they greet with the greeting *Yahdikumullahu wa Yushlihubaalakum* (may God give you guidance and improve your condition)".
(Bukhari)

Ever thought why we thank Allah (SWT) as soon as we complete a meal? To the common person, he is able to feed himself only through the means of his own hard work and efforts. But how many there are a people who have the best spread of food laid before them, but are unable to eat even a morsel as Allah (SWT) did not permit them to do so. Moreover, there are people in poverty-stricken countries who die from thirst and starvation every few minutes. In contrast, the believer knows that the food he obtains is only through the provision of the Ar-Raziq (The Sustainer).



BUT HOW MANY THERE ARE A PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE **BEST SPREAD OF FOOD** LAIN BEFORE THEM, BUT ARE **UNABLE TO EAT EVEN A MORSEL** AS ALLAH (SWT) DID **NOT PERMIT** THEM TO DO SO.

So as grateful believers, we should always remember to thank Allah (SWT) for the sustenance he has provided us with, by reciting the following supplication after each meal:

"All praise belongs to Allah, who fed us and quenched our thirst and made us Muslims."
(Ibn Al Sunni)

And lastly, the commonly overlooked blessing is the process of relieving oneself. It allows for the removal of toxins from the body and prevents the build-up of waste in the digestive system. We take it for granted and often only realise the value of it when this ability is taken

away from us. And that is why as Muslims we are taught to recite the following supplication after exiting the latrine:

"O Allah I seek your forgiveness. All praise is to Allah who has taken away from me the discomfort and granted me comfort".
(Bukhari)

In conclusion, Islam teaches us to be ever grateful for even the slightest benefits that may seem insignificant to us, but as a whole plays a vital role in our daily lives. And as such, we are encouraged to moisten our tongues frequently with the glorification of Allah (SWT).
Alhamdulillah. **TMR**

The Ordinary

Convert

Find out what some Converts have to say about their life after embracing Islam.

text by CANDY MAK @ NADIA MAK



Israr with his wife, Farah.

You may be curious to know what changes other Converts experience through their journey in Islam. You may also feel the need to compare your journey with someone else's... perhaps to check if you are undergoing similar experiences like his or hers.

Let it be said that every Muslim journeys through Islam in their own way. Our families and social backgrounds are unique. Our days, weeks and years are experienced on wildly dissimilar terms. It is how we ride the challenges and how we count the blessings, *Insha'Allah*, day-to-day, week-to-week, and then year-to-year – that matters.

From this perspective, the ordinary life becomes extraordinary. And in this article, we celebrate The Ordinary Convert. We hear three candid stories about their journey thus far.

Name one thing in your life that has changed since you converted

Family relationships. I grew closer to my family and learnt to appreciate them more, especially since they have accepted and respected my

leap of faith

decision, and supported me a lot throughout this ongoing journey. I never expected them to embrace my conversion with such grace and understanding. Though not entirely necessary, my mum even bought new pots and utensils so that she can cook for my husband and I!

~ Mysha

Diet was one of the biggest changes I've experienced since conversion. The need to observe a *Halal* diet as a Chinese is very testing at times.

~ Israr

Giving up short dresses and other revealing outfits; change of diet; adjusting to the prayer routine.

~ Nur'Ain

Name one thing in your life that has *not* changed since you converted

Thankfully, my weight has not changed much despite living on a new diet of yummy lontong and ayam masak merah, made with much love from my husband's family and relatives.

And, I guess my parents still love me as much – that doesn't change!

~ Mysha

Many things have not changed in my life. Being a Muslim is like being a character in a game who has the option to "upgrade". One continues being the same person, but with Allah's teachings and philosophy, one becomes a "stronger" and better version of himself in the process.

~ Israr

I still keep my hair long. No *tudung*.

~ Nur'Ain



Mysha with her family, Idil and Ihsan.

Who has played an important role in your journey so far?

My husband. We are open in our discussion about practices and beliefs, for example, about what is *haram* and what is *halal*. We try to attend workshops together to learn (and relearn, for him). We also try to pray together at home where possible. He guides me along the way.

~ Mysha

My wife, Farah, has played the single most important role in my journey as a Muslim, reminding me to pray daily and to adhere to the pillars of Islam.

I've learnt to recite the verses from Surat al-Ikhlas daily with Farah after our prayers. It emphasises the oneness and purity of Allah, and that there is no one but Him. All evil beings are but nothing compared to Allah and I have no worries if I seek refuge in Allah. It was especially meaningful and useful in recent testing times.

~ Israr

My husband has played the most important role so far.

~ Nur'Ain

"On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear."
(Al-Baqarah, 02:286) **TMR**

also check this out: <http://muslimmatters.org/2013/12/04/myth-naturally-good-muslim/>

Discover

Ariff series

– Introduce Children to Daily Life Lessons

New series by Jumaini Ariff depicts relevant values through the lens of an enthusiastic Muslim boy.

review by NUR AZEEMAH KADIR

Pustaka Nasional livens up the local children literature scene by publishing the “Ariff Discovers Series”. Written and illustrated by Jumaini Ariff, this delightful series pulls us into the world of Ariff and his family. Ariff, a 6-year-old boy filled with enthusiasm, is placed into various situations which young readers will find relatable. There are five books in this series - each with its own exciting plot and gripping adventure.

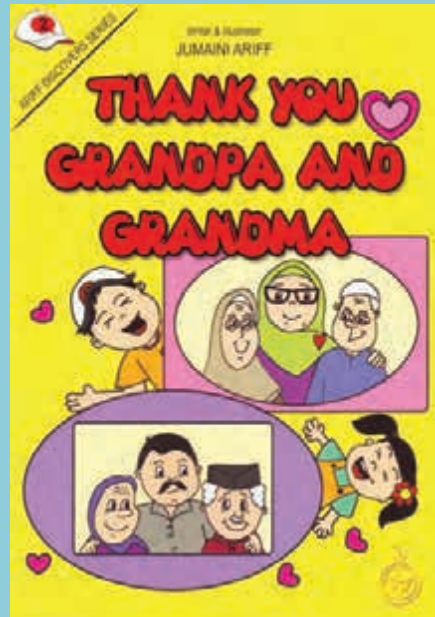
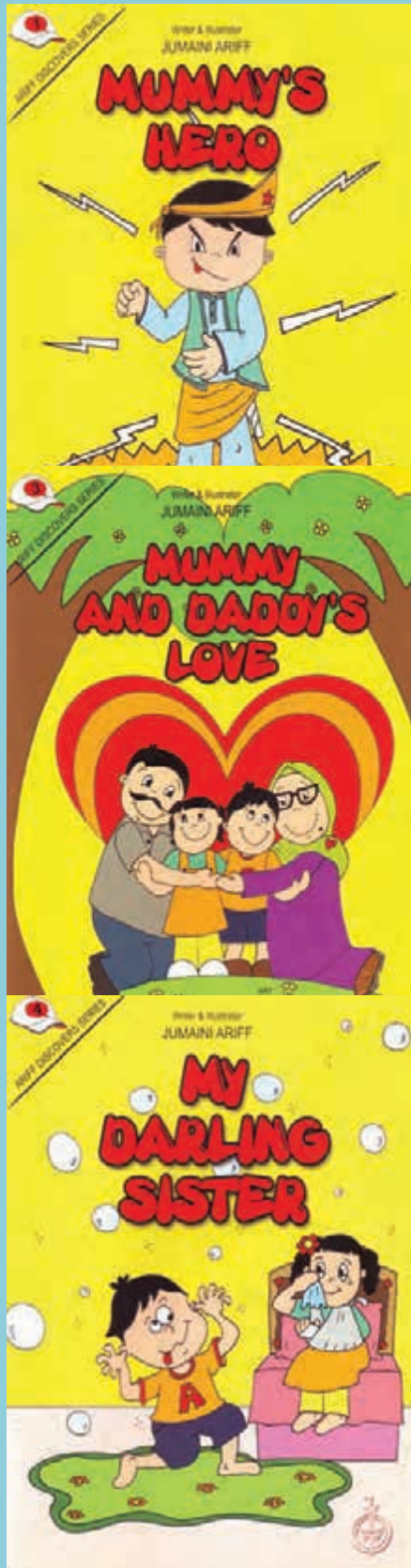
Likeable Characters

The characters in this series are familiar, friendly and likeable. The introduction of Ariff as a

Silat warrior in the first book sets the tone that Ariff is an average boy seeking thrill in what seems like a typical household. In the other stories, Ariff initially shows not so desirable traits that other children will be able to identify - such as laziness and selfishness - however, he learns to replace these bad traits with better ones through the course of the story. In this regard, Ariff is not a distant hero that children should look up to. He is the boy that children can relate to. This will allow readers to connect emotionally with Ariff, which facilitates the reader's understanding about his

situation and creates empathy so that they can ingest the lessons learnt as well.

The other characters include Ariff's parents as well as his younger sister, Qiyah. Like Ariff, these characters are also figures which can be found in the Singaporean Muslim household. Readers might be excited to find traits in their own parents and sisters that can be found in the supporting characters of the series. By making these characters relatable, readers can thus draw comparisons between the characters and their own family members.



clear and will definitely allow for much discussion between readers and their parents.

Moral Lessons

Each book carries its own moral lesson. Right from the first book, readers will learn of the importance of keeping promises with Ariff's heroic adventures. Other books include themes of the importance of filial piety, sharing, empathy as well as responsibility. Though this may seem like abstract concepts that children may find hard to grasp, the simple stories in this book allow for clear understanding of these concepts.

Family Bonding

As an added bonus, each book comes with fun activities which parents and children can engage in. This allows for deeper understanding of the stories told in this book. In addition, readers will also clearly understand how each lesson can be drawn out to make it relevant to their own lives as well. The fun and simple activities can be conducted with materials which can be found in every home. A simple activity can go a long way in the bonding of a parent and a child.

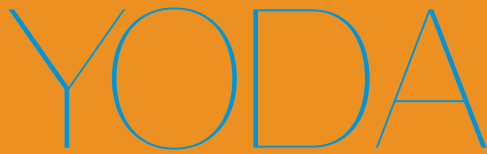
Singaporean Setting

The stories in the series are based in a regular Singaporean household. Readers would find the series familiar as the setting is something they would probably come across in their lives, such as the dreaded house lizard, as well as the difficulty to maintain a pet. The familiar setting allows readers to draw out lessons from the book to apply to their everyday life.

Colourful Plots

Each book in the series carries its own plot. The plots span out across various situations; from the incorporation of history by looking at Ariff's family tree to Qiyah's terrible mishap due to Ariff's negligence. The story is well paced and easy to follow, especially for children aged between 5 and 9. The moral implications from each story are

This series is a great way for parents to introduce to their children how lessons can be learnt in their daily lives. Due to the fact that this series is set up for local Singaporean readers, parents will find it useful that the stories in the books are so similar to what their own children might be facing. The "Ariff Discover Series" is indeed a great initiative by publisher Pustaka Nasional to bump up the local children's literature scene. **TMR**



Celebrate Cultural Diversity

Appreciating diversity in Islam by exchanging experiences and listening to Muslims of different cultural backgrounds.

text by **NAZEERAH MOHAMED**
photographs by **QURRAH SHUMAR**

The third Cultural Exchange by Youths of Darul Arqam (YODA) was held on 22 February 2014, at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University (SMU). This time, YODA collaborated with SMU, which has kindly hosted the programme at their venue.

The objectives of YODA's Cultural Exchange have remained constant:

- To impress and expose our youths with a cultural perspective of Islam
- To empower them with the diversity from within the religion
- To inspire them with the drive to contribute to the *ummah* (community)

Every year, YODA gathers speakers of diverse backgrounds from various countries to speak about Ramadhan and Eid as they experienced in their native lands. Although technological advancements have created unlimited access to information, some youths may remain oblivious to the splendour of the global Muslim community. As diversity reminds us of Allah's Mercy, a heightened sense of awareness towards the vibrant Muslim community can infuse esteem in one.

This year, YODA invited speakers from Pakistan, Myanmar and Algeria, to speak to the participants, who are mostly local and international students.

In her speech, YODA's chairperson, Nur Hani Nasir, spoke about the tagline of YODA's Cultural Diversity programme, which is "Share, Enlighten, Experience", to accentuate the goals of the event. In addition, a painted 'tree' was pasted on the wall of the venue for participants to add their "leaves" of inputs using post-it notes. The participants shared their perspectives and what naturally came to their minds when talking about cultural diversity.

Seeing the colours of Pakistan

Anam Hussain, from Pakistan, was the first speaker. She currently is an undergraduate at the National University of Singapore (NUS). In her presentation, Anam elaborated on the various ethnic groups in her home country, and described the colourful scenes of Ramadhan, Eid and weddings as celebrated there.

It was refreshing to know about the ethnic diversities in Pakistan and how the food, as well as language, would vary accordingly. The detailed wedding customs left many of the participants in awe of the beautiful outfits and ceremonies. Given a chance to try 'Gulab Jaman', a traditional deep-fried fritter soaked in spiced sugar syrup, the participants experienced an energetic boost of sweetness, enough to be hyped up for more from the next speaker.

Tasting the flavours of Myanmar

Wai Min @ Saifullah came from Myanmar, and is also pursuing his studies at NUS. He opened his

house of arqam



presentation with the daily menu of the common meals that they had back at home. It was during this point that the first speaker, Anam, noted the similarity in some of the foods mentioned to Pakistani ones - especially when the names sounded almost the same although in a different language.

Myanmar has a huge number of ethnic groups and its similarities in culture with other countries within the region are remarkable. Wai Min's presentation was accompanied with a demonstration of making the traditional 'Pickled Tea Leaf Salad', also known as 'Lahpet Thohk'. Participants were slicing cabbages and tomatoes to make their own *Lahpet*, which they sampled together. Overall, this dish

garnered mixed reviews from the participants. The nutty flavours blended deliciously with the spicy, strong flavours of the leaves, which could have been overpowering for the less adventurous.

Feeling the trends of Algeria

The third speaker was Yassine Hamidouni, from Algeria, who has been residing in Singapore since 2010. As his presentation was about a country from a region different than Singapore, many of the participants were amazed by the different ways that certain customs were practised. During weddings, the groom normally has to ride on a horse on his way to the wedding.

He showed beautiful pictures of the landscape in his country and had

also included the various outfits different people in different parts of the country would wear.

Yassine also showed pictures of a traditional Algerian outerwear for women to cover themselves. His presentation was followed by a demonstration of how to put on the outerwear, with his lovely wife as the model. Participants had a chance to learn to put it on, as well as learning to put on the traditional Berber turban normally worn by the men in the country. Many struggled with the twisting and tucking-ins of the cloths, but it was certainly fun trying to figure it out.

Wrapping up the event, participants spoke about important takeaways, which we could implement in our daily lives. While religion is fundamental in understanding the way we function as human beings, we often forget that we have commonalities as one human body, or humankind. Notably, the participants shared sentiments about being more compassionate towards those around us, regardless of how different we may seem, and to better appreciate our existence as Muslims, with the beauty of diversity that Islam offers us with.

TMR



YODA Cultural Exchange programme for 2014



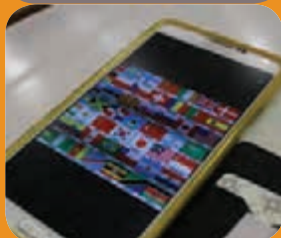
Participants got to try out various outfits and taste special dishes from Pakistan, Myanmar and Algeria.



The programme helped to heighten the youths' sense of awareness towards the vibrant Muslim community.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY QURRAH SHUMAR



Participants shared sentiments about being more compassionate towards people around them, regardless of how different they may seem.



al-Mawrid RESOURCE LIBRARY

Youth Writing Competition

OPEN TO ALL BETWEEN
13 & 19 YEARS OLD
REGARDLESS OF RACE,
RELIGION OR CREED

Cash Prizes
1st: S\$500
2nd S\$300
3rd S\$150

Theme:
Hate the **sin**,
Not the sinner

CLOSING DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2014



The Muslim Converts'
Association of Singapore
32 Onan Rd, The Galaxy,
Singapore 424484
www.darul-arqam.org.sg
6597 0400 (press 2)

TERMS & CONDITIONS

The competition is open to all residents of Singapore.
The competition admits submissions from youths aged
BETWEEN 13 AND 19 as of 1 January 2014.
ALL ENTRIES must be 1,300-1,500 words.

Each submission must be accompanied by a completed entry form.
To receive an entry form, please e-mail to omar@darul-arqam.org.sg

Essay Submission Instructions:

All submissions must be in the form of continuous writing or essay format.
The essay has to be typewritten & emailed with the following email title:
EssayComp_<NAME of writer> <CONTACT#>
e.g. EssayComp_NUHA_99235678

Please submit entries to Omar Ma at omar@darul-arqam.org.sg

Submission Format & Layout :

Paper Size: A4 (21cm*29.7cm)
Margin: Normal (Top: 2.54cm, Bottom: 2.54cm Left:
2.54cm, right: 2.54cm)
Orientation: Portrait
Background: clear / white
Font Type: Times New Roman
Font Size: 12
Spacing: 1.5
Pan graphing: All Left indent

The First Advice from Luqman the Wise to His Son

Continuing the series of “Wasiat Luqman Al-Hakim Kepada Puteranya”, this is an elaboration on the first advice, ‘Do not associate God with partners’.

originally in malay by SYED AHMAD SEMAIT
translation by SHAFFIQ SELAMAT

“My son! Don't you ever associate God with partners; verily associating God with partners is a grave injustice!”

Indeed, humans are always weak in handling their personal affairs. Let alone in the matters related to their base desires. The devils have been setting traps everywhere to lure humans to join them, so that on Judgment Day, we will end up in hell together. Only then will the devils be satisfied, to see Adam's sons being thrown with them into the belly of hell.

Hence, the sons of Adam should always be cautious, so that they will not steer off the straight path, the path that Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) are pleased with, or they become a slave of Satan and his trickeries. Satan will make everything evil look beautiful, such that it looks good and attractive. Those who

have been enslaved by their base desires will jump into Satan's snare without second thoughts or any further considerations. They will then commit various sins and vices without thinking deeper of its consequences. In this case, they have become totally blinded, forgotten their roles as servants of Allah (SWT), and forgotten Allah (SWT) as their Creator.

Time and Opportunity to Repent

Fortunately, Allah (SWT) is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, Most Fair and Most Forgiving. He gives the sons of Adam lots of opportunities and time to repent and return to Him. “Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance.” (Al-Isra, 17:25)

But among all the sins, there is one that will not be forgiven by

Allah (SWT), which is the sin of associating partners with Him.

Is it befitting for God to be associated with others, whereas He is the One who made us? He protects us from all harm. He gives us sustenance and various pleasures, even though we always forget Him. As such, Allah (SWT) will not forgive the sin of *shirk*, or associating Him with others. And therefore, Luqman had advised his sons never to associate partners with God, as it is an unforgivable major sin.

Shirk leads humans away from the truth

Allah (SWT) explains in this statement, “Whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.” (An-Nisa, 04:48)

Why is that so? Because associating partners with God, or to be more specific, *shirk*, leads humans away from the truth, as well as enslaves

family

them to Satan and makes them obey his commands. Isn't Satan calling on humans to reject the laws brought by the Messenger (SAW) and to defy the religion approved by Allah (SWT)? It is clear now, that Satan wants humans to tread on the wrong path, the path that brings humans out of succour and guidance. Thus, whoever veers off the path of guidance, will be pushed to the path that leads to hell, as they do not follow the right path. Beware, o mankind! Not a single soul who veers off the path of guidance shall escape damnation, as how Satan is damned.

Allah (SWT) clarifies this issue in the following verse, "Verily, Allah will not forgive (the sin) of one who associates Him with partners. But, He forgives all other sins save that." (An-Nisa, 04:116)

After getting the explanation of this verse, it is most appropriate for us to look back. Try to reflect on this advice, and look at ourselves. Have we implemented its teachings in our lives?

The issue discussed in this advice is not only important for children, but also for parents. Our age is one that is heading towards change and reformation. Most people like change and reformation as they signify progress. Who does not like progress?! Nevertheless, the progress that we experience each day often makes us forget our religious duties until we leave them behind. Our religious duties often become second priority, whereas religion is crucial for life on earth.

Hence, it is not surprising for us to discover that in today's Muslim communities, many are unfamiliar with their religious duties. Or even if they know, their knowledge is



perhaps very minimal, revolving around personal obligations only. Knowing that is still good compared to not knowing anything at all.

In facing the daily waves of progress, we come across various issues, which at times are closely related to our problems. Perhaps some impinge on our faith and conviction. As a result of not having enough religious knowledge, or having just superficial knowledge, it is not impossible for one to be entrapped by matters that may pull them into polytheism or associating partners with God - this can taint their religion, and greatly affect their Islamic beliefs.

Children need religious education

With regards to children, the problems faced are greater. Most parents send their children to secular schools. Even if the children received religious education there, it would certainly be inadequate. They still need fundamental religious education that can mould them into pious Muslims. To materialise this, the children should be given additional knowledge, be it at home or religious schools, in the afternoon or evening and so on. Only schools that exclusively teach religion can mould our children into practising Muslims, whose faith is sound and whose manners are impeccable.

When a child is equipped with Islamic manners and inculcated with Islamic attitudes, behaviour and outlook; they would naturally know how to conduct themselves. Islam will be their code of conduct in all matters, be it concerning worldly affairs or the hereafter. In general, parents no longer have to worry about their children's actions.

When a child is not provided religious education, in fact is left

alone to their own devices, they will most likely be swayed by a wayward lifestyle. They will find themselves extremely unrestrained to do anything as they please. A child who lives like this will be guided by their base desires, whereas one's base desires are driven by Satan's whispers. By then, they will live without a sense of purpose and without any strong conviction. Their habits are controlled by base desires. Their actions are guided by their shallow mind that is wayward and is not attached to the truth.

Wayward children come from this group. They have no objectives and purpose in life, apart from only following their hearts. As such, many young Muslims have abandoned their parents' religion for other religions. This is because they do not know the real Islam. They only know Islam by name.

This possibly happens because of one of two reasons:

First: The parents' negligence in providing religious knowledge for their children from young; in introducing true Islamic teachings and its principles; in telling them stories that will strengthen their faith, and so on.

Second: The parents did not give priority to religious education, by not sending them to schools where they will receive religious guidance. Besides that, the parents also know little about religious matters, and never practised the Islamic way of life in their own homes, such as performing prayers, fasting, reading the Quran and so on.

A child who is not brought up with proper Islamic knowledge may be prone to social diseases that are afflicting modern civilizations. We notice an outbreak of malaise such as drug abuse, glue-sniffing, consumption of sleeping pills and so on. Although lots of energy and money have been spent on combating these social ills, they continue to spread rapidly. These children are labelled as antisocial, since their wrongdoings are very grave. This is just the social perception. Imagine the label they would get when judged from a religious perspective.

The spread of social ills

Usually, children who are afflicted with these diseases, whether they like it or not, will succumb to other bigger social ills. They will form their own world, a very strange and extreme one. For that reason, their actions are considered as a crime that must be prevented, and they are thus judged according to regulations imposed upon them. They are then isolated in a cell to be treated and reformed so as to become normal citizens again. Although not all of these efforts are guaranteed to succeed, they are very worthy and should be lauded.

In big countries, the problems are more chronic, and it is more difficult to curb these ills from spreading. More often than not, the group afflicted with these ills comprises teenagers - youths who supposedly highly regard personal freedom in their lives. By embracing liberal theories, they are enslaved by their base desires. These theories are very misleading and especially harmful to themselves, besides to the society at large.

The world that they carved for themselves is filled with various

crimes and vices, which when they are stranded in, is hard to escape, other than those who are blessed by Allah (SWT). They steal, murder, sleep around, rape the womenfolk, abuse others, intoxicate themselves, and commit whatever they please without caring about the laws and social perceptions. They are no better than animals. In fact, sometimes animals behave better than them.

What can we hope from a child whose behaviour is this bad, or something of that sort? Society will not benefit from such children. In fact, society also will not be able to deal with the mischiefs from them. Islam does not wish for its followers to behave as such. For that reason, Islam imposes heavy judgment on each of the abovementioned sins.

When children with such morals are despised by their society and religion, it is not unlikely that they in turn will hate their society and faith. By committing antisocial acts, they will be judged and placed behind bars. By hating their Islamic faith, they may become faithless and may end up in hellfire. This is deemed as detrimental for both their lives in this world and the hereafter. It is evidently the greatest loss.

I do not think any among us wants our offspring to fall to such a low level. Nevertheless, such a fate could befall on our children when they are left on their own devices without being guided to stay on the correct paths as shown by our noble religion. To ensure success, we as parents should familiarise ourselves with good examples to emulate. Only then will the children trust us, and follow our footsteps.

And in terms of socialising, we must stand 'on guard'. If possible, let us

**SATAN WILL
MAKE EVERYTHING
EVIL LOOK
BEAUTIFUL,
SUCH THAT IT LOOKS
GOOD AND
ATTRACTIVE.**

be the ones to guide our children in choosing whom to mix with. Advise them not to mingle with the company that may bring harm, not only to themselves but also to their parents and family members.

Islam encourages social participation

Islam never forbids us from mingling with people of other faiths. We cannot isolate ourselves from various worldly affairs. We must socialise, in any case. And it is not an offence in our religion. The Quran states, '*Lakum diinukum, waliya diin*', to you be your way, and to me be mine. (Al-Kafirun, 109:06) But that does not mean we have total freedom in socialising, that we have no restrictions, that we can choose any clubs to enter, that our children who join the bands of musicians for funeral processions are free to join them in sending the deceased of non-Muslims to their graves. This is regarded as a sin that is shouldered by every Muslim in a community if it persists. Where are the parents who allow their children to carry out this deed? Is it because of money that they are willing to close their eyes to the actions of their children?

This is a sin that may lead its doer towards *shirk*. If the doer was truly ignorant about his religion, no one is to be blamed when someone equate that deed as *shirk* because the doer is only Muslim by name.

In fact, some of them might have even changed their names, and are already known among their friends by names that are foreign and unIslamic. Whither goest the pride of Muslims towards their religion? *Wallahu-a'lam* (only Allah [SWT] knows).

Some of our children wear necklaces and have pendants around their necks. What kind of pendants? Why is there a need for pendants? Perhaps they are imitating youngsters from the West! But the pendants worn by some of them are crosses or symbols of evil groups. Look at how the children of Muslims can imitate the ways of others without understanding their origins.

Some of them have their bodies tattooed. Tattooing one's body is not something easy and it takes hours at once. A clean body is pierced with pins or needles until it bleeds. The excruciating pain is unbearable. The tattoos show images of naked women, ghosts and djinns; some depict Satan and devils, which perhaps are the figments of imagination of the tattoo artists. Why have tattoos? They say, "We feel 'high' and great." See how misplaced their thinking is.

These are some of the vices that could bring us to the wrong path, as led by Satan and his accomplices.

Thus, Luqman's advice to never associate God with partners is not merely by lip-service. It must, in fact, be affirmed through our deeds and actions, including generally staying away from vices that can lead us towards *kufr*, or disbelief, and *shirk*. May Allah (SWT) protect us from them. **TMR**

The first instalment of this series, i.e. the introduction to the book, is available in TMR Vol 32, No 1.



Lectures by
Kristiane Backer,
from 10 to 11
January 2014

Lecture topics:

From MTV to Mecca

The Mercy of Prophet
Muhammad (SAW)



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MUHD IRFAN MASLAN



The lecture on 10
January was held at
Shine Auditorium,
while the lecture on 11
January was held at
Max Atria, Singapore
Expo.



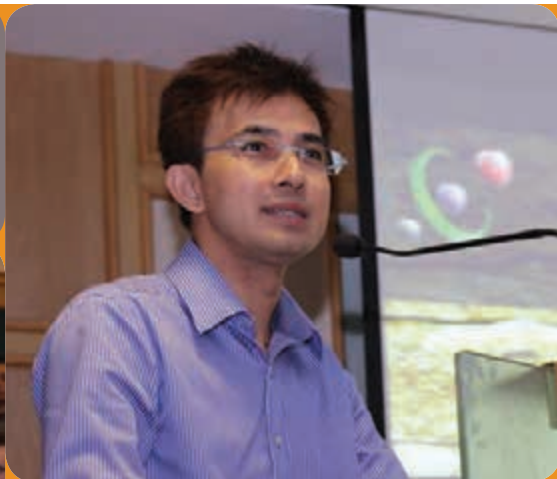
Almost 200 copies
of Kristiane Backer's
book were sold
over the 2 days. The
audience got to
meet her personally
and had their books
autographed. (right)



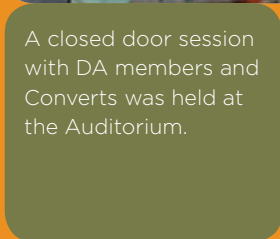
house of arqam



Mufti Dr Fatris Bakaram visits Darul Arqam



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
RAZALI TOMPANG



A closed door session with DA members and Converts was held at the Auditorium.



Mufti Dr Fatris Bakaram was appointed as Singapore Mufti on November 2010.



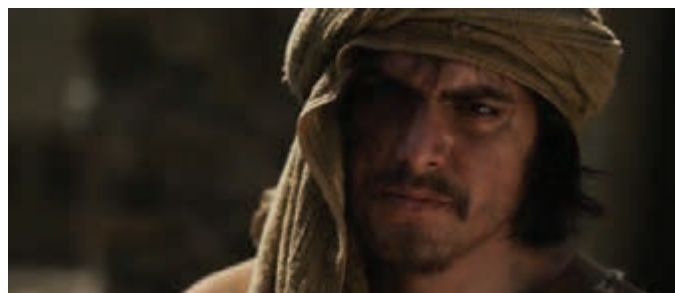
The Mufti, who is appointed by Singapore's President in consultation with MUIS Council, plays a significant role by providing advice and guidance to the Muslim community, as well as the government, on matters pertaining to Islam.



Remembering Omar (RA)

The English-subtitled series on Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (RA) vividly reminds viewers of the characteristics that this Prophet's Companion is known for.

review by **ABDUL GHAFAR ABDUL KADIR**



Most of us would be well-versed with the stories of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his Companions (RA), but some of us may lack the knowledge about the history of Islam after the death of Prophet (SAW). Despite the fact that many of the stories of his Companions (RA) are almost as important as the stories involving the Prophet (SAW) himself, their contributions and struggles may be relatively unknown to many today. Of late however, there are an increasing number of books and shows which focus on the lives of each of the Prophet's Companions, and which is fortunately easily accessible to everyone. The more popular one in recent times is the television series

on Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (RA), the second Caliph in Islam.

Produced and broadcasted by Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC), the first of this 30-episode series aired in the month of Ramadhan in 2012. As evident in the title of the series, the story revolves around the character of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (RA), although the producers did a good job of slowly revealing to viewers, the significant figures during that period. The series will also at times, return to key events during the Prophet's time or even to Abu Bakr's Caliphate, depicted in a way to allow viewers to see the Islamic history in a more holistic way. We have to warn you: this series can be addictive. Action scenes,

dramatic plot twists and recounts of the challenges that the Muslims went through during that era, can make you glued to your seat, wondering what will happen next and if the struggle will ever end. If you are expecting a low cost production, think again. To date, MBC claims that it is the largest ever Arabic language production, staffed by about 30,000 actors and a global technical team who took about a year to finish the filming, and at the same time, spending about 200 million Saudi Riyals (\$67 million) for the whole production.

For those curious to know if there are scenes of Omar (RA) before he embraced Islam, especially those of him as one of the biggest



challengers of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the series does depict such scenes in flashbacks although most episodes do not dwell on that. The debut episode starts off with Omar (RA) performing his pilgrimage and giving a sermon to the Muslims under his rule. It continues to the point where he is travelling past an area where he grew up in, and he had a flashback to the era before Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received his first revelation. Viewers will be able to see how the Arabs, including Omar (RA), went through the transition from the period of *jahiliyah* (ignorance), to becoming a Muslim in the early days. Viewers can also expect to see how one can be corrupted by power, position and wealth, and how it can prevent a person from choosing the right path, even if it is right before one's eyes.

Later in the series, Omar (RA) is depicted as a fair leader who will not hesitate to mete out punishment to anyone who has done wrong, or implement changes for the sake of Islam, even if it means challenging the norms and expectations of the people. For example, in the last episode, he removed Khalid Al-Walid (RA), one of the most significant figures in Islam's history (and also a cousin of Omar [RA]), from his position of power in the Islamic military command. One would be able to see that Omar (RA) acted not on the need to exert his power, but solely on the fact that he fears the

punishment of Allah (SWT) in the event he abuses the authority given to him.

The director, Hatem Ali, and producers did great in relaying the story of the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions (RA) especially of Abu Bakr and Omar (RA). But a greater feat achieved by them is that they succeeded in allowing viewers to see how the characteristics of the Companions (RA) are aligned to what have already been described about them in historical texts. The actions and decisions of Omar (RA) as well as other significant figures, like Caliph Abu Bakr (RA), in the show allow people to reflect about the past, during the time when these important figures were alive and striving to ensure the word of Allah (SWT) is spread to people like you and I.

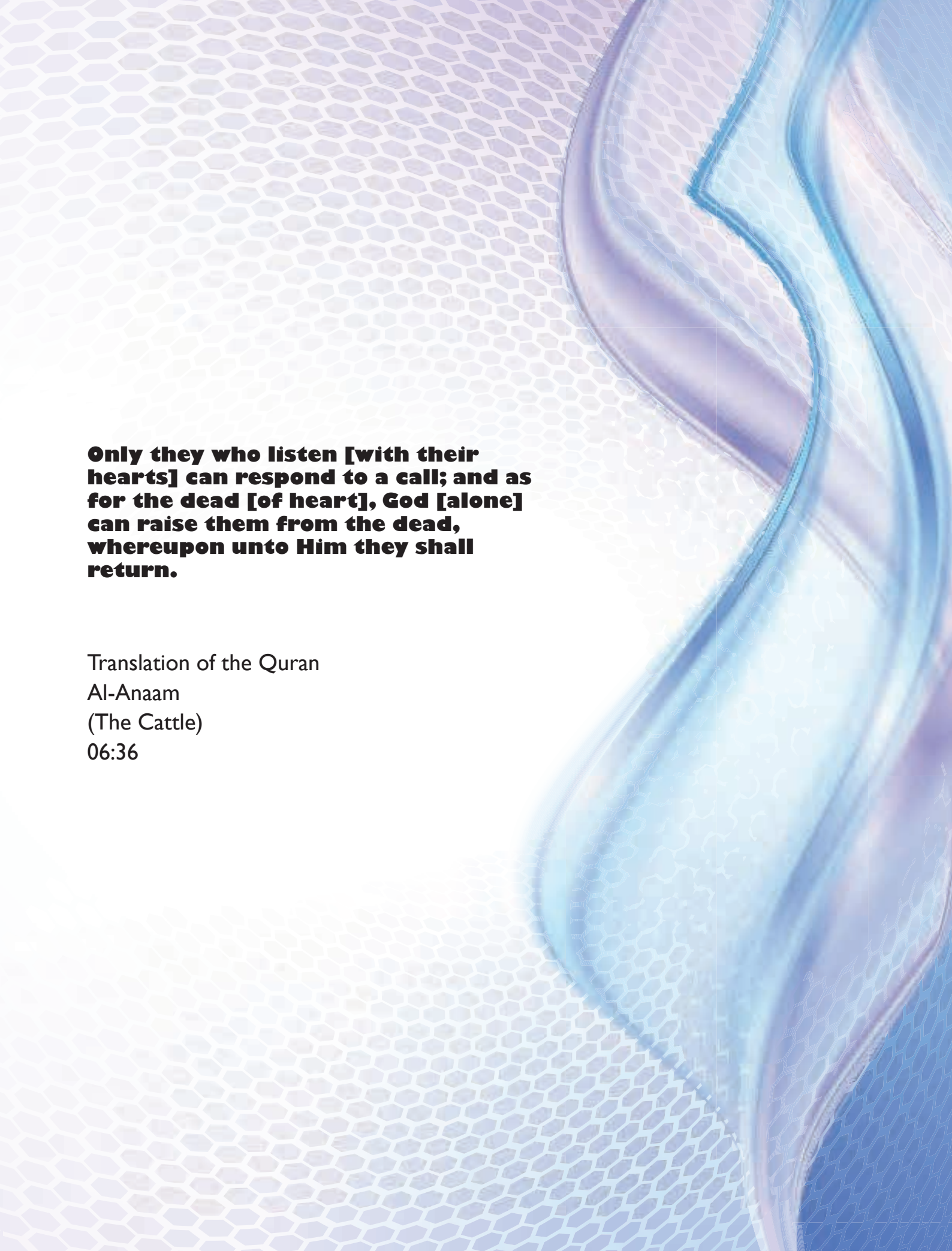
The series, written by Waleed Saif, received much positive feedback. Due to the fact that the show is based on reliable historical facts, much of its contents have been praised on. The emphasis it has on the teaching of Islam is very enlightening and it shows how the Prophet (SAW) as well as his Companions (RA) strived to spread Islam, especially in its earlier days. The director had also done a great job shaping Islam's history into a captivating and educational show.

But the show is not without its criticism. Many have called for

the show to be banned, including some influential scholars from the Middle East. Much of their ire arose from the fact that the depictions of the Companions (RA) of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are by actors, with some suspected to be non-Muslim. Some scholars fear that the visual representation of the real person from Islamic history may lead to idolisation. Even though some argued that there is no *hukum* (laws) against visual depictions of key figures of Islam in the Quran or Hadith, *fatwas* (legal opinions or learned interpretations by qualified jurists) have already been issued against the viewing of this show.

Ultimately, no matter which side of the fence you are standing on, what is important is that we recognise the contribution of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (RA) as well as other key figures in Islam. We must remember about how Omar (RA) was known for his inflexible integrity, and about how wise Omar (RA) was in regulating or implementing laws. We must also note how he personally struggled to uphold his responsibility as the second Caliph of Islam, especially the fact that he was able to weaken armies who were considered giants in their time. All this so as to continue the legacy of our beloved Prophet (SAW): to spread the word of Islam. **TMR**

Find the Omar series, with English subtitles, on YouTube via "MBC Group"



Only they who listen [with their hearts] can respond to a call; and as for the dead [of heart], God [alone] can raise them from the dead, whereupon unto Him they shall return.

Translation of the Quran
Al-Anaam
(The Cattle)
06:36