

THE MUSLIM READER

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charity that keeps on growing

An interview with President of MCAS



travel tips

Can a woman travel without a Mahram?

Guidelines for Purchasing & Owning Properties

lessons from the best

How to deal with non-practising close family members

· · · and many more



Make a difference in someone's life

الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَلَهُم بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَادِ سِنَا وَعَلانِكَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَيِومَ وَلَا خَوَثُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْرَنُونَ شَنْ

Those who spend of their goods (in charity) by night and by day in secret and in public shall have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.

[Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 2:274]
Excerpts are from the translations of the Qur'an.



"PROPAGATE MY TEACHING EVEN IF IT IS ONLY ONE SENTENCE"

~ PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM)



Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore actively serves to bridge everyone - regardless of language, race or belief towards the better understanding of Islam. Advocating no compulsion towards religion, this non-profit organisation is dedicated to deliver educational opportunities with lectures, courses, and other activities that depict Islam in discussion, behaviour and spirit.



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CONTENTS







LIFE

- 08 10 for 20 at 40 10 Pieces of Advice I'd give to my Twenty-Year-Old Self Now that I'm Forty
- 16 Invitation to a State of Grace
- 44 The Hijrah, Urbanization and Human Development



FEATURE

- 24 Religious Pluralism, Civic Values and Anti-Racism
- 34 Charity that Keeps on Growing
- 40 Sacrifices of the Heart and the Art of Selfless Giving
- 94 Dispelling Anxiety the psychology of Ibn Hazm
- 98 Who Created God?
- O2 Significant Events in 2019

FAITH

- 58 Dealing with Non-Practising/ Sinful Close Family Members
- 68 The Quran Appeals to Human Intelligence
- 72 The Social and Political Reform of the Prophet SAW
- 84 4 Beautiful Ways the Prophet SAW Honoured Women



FIQH

- 28 Guidelines for Purchasing & Owning Property
- 64 Islamic Finance and Beyond
- 86 Can a Muslim Woman Travel without a Mahram?
- 92 How to Pray when you are Travelling on a Plane 75

HOUSE OF ARQAM

- 14 Bursary Presentation
- 15 Eid Celebration
- 22 Ramadhan Zakat Disbursement
- 32 DACCnDAYS
- 33 DISP Graduation
- 38 Official Iftar
- 48 MCAS Day
- 56 Da'wah Awareness Training Programme (DATP)
- 57 Future Ready @The Learning Festival
- 70 Befrienders
- 82 MCAS In-House Talks
- 90 Qurban Drive
- 96 YODA



SPIRITUALITY

- The Character of the Prophet SAW
- 75 Prayer in Islam

EDITORIAL NOTE...

Assalamualaikum and Welcome to this year's edition of TMR. We hope you've had a fulfilling and an amazing experience throughout the year, accomplishing the goals you'd set out to do and gaining reward from the Almighty.

The Prophet SAW once mentioned, "Deeds are judged by their intention and every man shall have only which he intended." (Sahih Al Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

The new year will be upon us and soon you may start thinking about your list of resolutions. We would like to remind you of the above narration and to begin with the right intention. It is a commonly accepted sentiment that setting goals will lead you to success, but we urge you to strive for success not only in this world, but the next. Those who seek merit and grace from Allah will be rewarded with the compassion, kindness, and beneficence of the Almighty.

Set your goals but realise that together with a pure and noble intention, you can create a fun, meaningful and compelling journey.

As you turn the pages of this magazine, we hope you be inspired by the articles. Included within are articles on tips for youth to navigate life, lessons on human rights, tips for the travellers, interview with the President of MCAS, and many more!

In the course of discussing and preparing this issue, we found a recurring theme that organically rises to the surface. That theme is to continue striving for the sake of Allah SWT – to better our Adab, persevere in the face of adversity and to always have the Most Compassionate a part of your life.. in good or bad times.

Finally, as a parting note from us... Always be positive, kind and compassionate to all His Creations.

Abdullah ibn Amr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth and the One in the heavens will have mercy upon you." (Sunan al-Tirmidhī)

Till next time. Happy reading!

audziah () mar

Faudziah Omar Managing Editor

> Stay Positive y.







Saturdays & Sundays, 10am - 12.30pm Except Public Holidays

Do you have a non-Muslim friend who wants to know more on Islam?

Are you afraid that you cannot answer their questions?

Would you like trained and knowledgeable individuals to guide them instead?

Why not refer them to our Knowing Islam Session?

Everyone who wishes to know Islam at an introductory level is encouraged to attend this course. It serves as the basis to other courses at Muslim Converts' Association Of Singapore (MCAS). It is open to public & requires no registration.

Topics Include:

- · The existence of the creator
- · The need of having religion
- · What is Islam and why Islam
- Prophets in Islam
- Overview of MCAS & its services



common abbreviations

AS: 'Allayhis Salam (Arabic)
Meaning: Peace be upon him
Other similar abbreviations: PBUH (peace be upon him), PBOH (peace be on him)
Usage: For the Prophets (AS) who came before Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

MCAS: Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore Other similar abbreviations: DA (Darul Argam) RA: Radiyallahu 'Anhu/'Anha/'Anhum (Arabic) Meaning: May Allah be pleased with him / her / them

Usage: For the Companions (RA) of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

SAW: Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wassallam (Arabic) Meaning: Peace be upon him Other similar abbreviations: PBUH (peace be upon him), PBOH (peace be on him) Usage: For Prophet Muhammad (SAW) SWT: Subhanahu Wa Ta 'ala Meaning: Glorified and Exalted One Usage: For Allah (SWT)

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

Education for Children and Youth on the weekends!

DACCnDAYS provides a structured Islamic study program especially for the children of Converts and all Muslims. Besides nurturing and inculcating Islamic values, we hope to instil in the students a sense of pride and a greater sense of responsibility in being Muslims.



Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (Darul Arqam Singapore)
For more details, please visit www.mcas.sg/daccndays

common terms

Adhan: The call to prayer Akhira: The Hereafter

Astaghfirullah: I seek forgiveness from God

Alhamdulillah: Praise be to God Allahu Akbar: God is great

Aql: Mind

Da'wah / Dawah: Invitation to understand

Islam

Deen: Religion; way of life Dhikr: Remembrance of Allah Hajj: Annual pilgrimage to Makka

Halal: Permissible Haram: Forbidden

Hijab: Headgear that covers hair and neck,

worn by females

Ibadah/Ibadat/ 'Ibadah/ 'Ibadat: Acts of

worship

Ihsan: Excellence in faith
Ijtihad: Independent reasoning
Insha'Allah: If God wills

Jahillayah: Concept of time and state of affairs

before the advent of Islam Jemaah: Congregation Jihad: Struggle

Madrassa / Madrasah: Islamic school

Masjid: Mosque

Muezzin: Person who leads, and recites the

call to prayer Nafs: Life Sadaqah: Charity Sadaqah Jariyah: Ceaseless charity

Salam (greeting): Assalamu'alaikum (Peace be

upon you)

Seerah: History of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

Sharia / Shariah: Islamic laws Shirk: Ascribing partners to God

Solah / Solaat: Prayer

Subhaanallah: Glory be to God Sunna / Sunnah: Practices of Prophet

Muhammad (SAW) Ukuwah: Fraternity

Umma / Ummah: Community Umrah: Minor pilgrimage

Zakat: That which purifies; obligatory payment made annually on certain kinds of property

al-Mäwrid LIBRARY

Level 3 Entrance through 2nd floor, opposite of boardroom

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- · Islamic Banking & Finance
- · Wisdom Of The Prophet
- · Islamic Rulings & Practices
- · Islamic Moral Codes & Ethics
- · Islamic Belief System

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All Are Welcome!!













10 for 20 at 40 – Ten Pieces of Advices I'd give to my Twenty-Year Old Self Now that I'm Forty

by Dr Yasir Qadhi

ryoung', but younger than 'young', but younger than 'old'. It's an age where one has typically finished jumping all the hoops that society and education and starting a family require, and where one now looks forward to thinking about the major accomplishments of life, and the legacy that one wishes to leave.

The Quran mentions forty as the age of reaching full maturity:

Until, when (man)
reaches his maturity
(ashudd), and reaches
forty years of age, he says,
'O My Lord! Allow me to
thank the blessings that
You have bestowed on
me, and on my parents,
and that I perform good
deeds that are pleasing
to You, and make my
children righteous as
well. Truly, I repent unto
You, and are of those who
submit totally to You.

[Ahqāf; 15]

No wonder, then, that our Prophet Muhammad actually began receiving inspiration and preaching his message at the age of forty. For forty years, he was merely being prepared for the real purpose of his mission: the call to Allah.

This is the year that I reach that important milestone of life. I do not know what the future holds for me, although of course I have my visions and plans. But it seems fitting for me to pause and reflect upon the last four decades of my life, and ponder over its ups and downs.

I remember vividly many of my thoughts and emotions when I was twenty. It was exactly twenty years ago that I graduated from the University of Houston, and left for the Islamic University of Madinah, beginning a new phase of my life. I began thinking, "If I could, somehow, give my younger self some advice; if I could address the young man of twenty, now that I am forty, and hope that he would listen to my advice, what would I tell him?"

These are the top ten things that came to mind. I hope those of you who are still in their twenties (and perhaps some of you who are older!) will benefit from it.

1. Don't be so certain about your opinions and views.

Arrogance and cockiness define teenage years, and a young man (or woman) at twenty really is just a teenager, plus one. Views about how to live, about interpretations of religion, about how you would do things differently than everyone else in the world - those views typically stem from a naïve and inexperienced view of the world. You will realize that over-enthusiasm and strongly held opinions are the quintessential signs of being young. Don't judge others who disagree with your views too harshly: you just might find yourself holding those same views a few years or decades down the line!

2. The most important source of practical knowledge is life itself.

Continuing from the last point, realize that the single greatest source of wisdom is learnt by living life itself. No matter how many lectures you attend, or books you read, or how deeply you contemplate or think, nothing substitutes the wisdom gained from simply experiencing the world around you. In order to be a good spouse, you need to learn to navigate the ups and down of a marriage. In order to be a good parent, you need to have your own children and learn to take care of them throughout their stages of childhood. In order to be a good human, you need to experience the good and bad of humanity.

'Facts' from books are great, but they must be shaped and seasoned and tested on the playground of life. Appreciate that you might not be in the best shape to judge everything, especially since you might not have experienced those things before. Through experience, and trial and error, one's methods for dealing with all types of problems are refined.

A corollary of this piece of advice (and if I had more than ten in this list, this would be number eleven) is: Respect and benefit from those older than you. Perhaps you know more than an elder about a certain matter (or, to phrase it more precisely: perhaps you think you know more than them about a certain matter), but no matter how

knowledgeable you are about quantum mechanics, or investigating sahih hadiths, or understanding the latest psychological theories from your textbooks, you simply cannot match the wisdom of your grandmother when it comes to navigating the intricacies of human interactions and raw emotions.

3. Friends come and go; family stays.

Many young men and women act as if their friends are more important than their family. They will show more concern about hurting their friend's feeling than their family's. Much of the conflict at that age, in fact, comes from the frictions of interacting with and arbitrating between family and friends. Yet, as anyone older than you can tell you, your friends are not a permanent fixture of your life. They will come and go into and out of your room of life, and every few days or months or years, you will look around that room and realize that an entirely different set of friends are standing where once another batch stood. But, lurking in the background, never actually disappearing (until death!) are your family members. These are the permanent fixtures in your room of life, not your set of friends.

True, problems with parents, siblings, uncles and aunts, cousins and so forth are extremely painful, and all families have their internal disputes and major problems. It is absolutely normal to have intra-family fights (particularly, for some bizarre

reason, during and concerning marriages!). And it is normal, although not Islamic, to go for long periods with minimal or no contact with close family members. Yet, in the end, blood is thicker than anything else, and you will always be connected with family. Time heals all wounds, and even the worse of family arguments are healed (thankfully, family tragedies or celebrations act as catalysts in that regard). So never overlook your family for the sake of friends.

Having said that, and on a more cheerful note, in all likelihood the best set of friends you'll ever have are your college friends. College friends will always have a special status in your life, maybe because you were all young and lonely and single and naïve and at the prime of your youths, thrown together due to circumstances beyond your control, facing the ups and downs of a new

will go out of your lives, some never to be seen again, others once every few decades, and a small handful with whom you'll remain in touch with forever.

One final comment about families: make sure you soak in as many memories as you can from your family elders, because you never know how long they will be with you. One of my greatest regrets in this department is that I didn't get to know my grandmother as well as I could have. I never met two of my grandparents; a third died when I was only ten. It was only my paternal grandmother (who lived with us until she passed away, when I was twenty-two) that I got to know somewhat. But as a teenager, I would always be irritated when she began reminiscing of the 'old days'. I would internally cringe every time she began a story that I had already heard a hundred times, yet I would

In order to be a good human, you need to experience the good and bad of humanity.

environment away from home. Or maybe that special bond is the result of some type of unstudied scientific by-product of the hundreds of times you all had to eat takeout pizza late at night and share cheap Chinese food together. Whatever the reasons – banal or mystical – no set of friends will have the status of college friends. But once again: even they

still have to pretend as if each time were new to me. I never cared to ask her for more stories, or more details. 'When will she stop!?' I would internally ask myself as I fretted to get back to my TV show or college homework. It was only after I matured, and she and everyone of her generation passed on, that I truly realized my loss. How I wish now that I could have



learnt more about her, and her childhood. She talked to us of British soldiers in her village, of her parents and inlaws (my great-grandparents), of the ways of purdah in rural India, of distant relatives long gone from this world, of incidents that took place almost a century ago, and of the interesting customs of the time. Now that she has been gone for two decades. I vividly remember much of what she said, but I wish for so much more. How I wish I had quizzed her for more details, more incidents, more stories. Now that I reflect upon her stories, there are so many unanswered questions: questions that I never bothered to ask because at the time, I really didn't care to know, but now, have no answers to because I didn't care to ask them.

4. Habits developed now typically stay with you.

I have had the great fortune (or misfortune!) of studying twenty-two years continuously as a student at various universities (two undergraduate degrees and four graduate). What I found remarkable was that the habits I developed while studying for my very first degree pretty much stayed with me throughout my two decades of study (with, of course, modifications and developments). And the same went for my routines and other life-habits: how I dealt with early marital spats dictated my future navigation; how I reared my first child influenced my later habits with my other children, and so forth. True, I picked up some habits along the way (I never drank caffeine early on in my life; now, I am addicted to one freshly-brewed quality tea every morning, and one freshly-ground espresso drink every afternoon), and dropped others (I used to love sleeping

on the floor, and felt it gave me a better sleep – obviously that is a habit that only single people can practice!), but by and large, my 'routine' and lifestyle has remained the same.

Hence, be extra vigilant of your habits at this age, and realize that the hard work and good habits that you incorporate earlier in your life will help you throughout the rest of your life. It is easier to develop good habits at a younger age than to drop bad ones later on in life.

5. Take advantage of your health and energy while you can!

Wisdom and maturity might increase as you age from twenty to forty, but alas, strength and power does not! Looking back at those years, I can't believe how much energy I had. I could get by on small quantities of food (or even skip meals without any adverse effect); didn't require much sleep; had no trouble falling asleep; and

could rough out the worst of conditions. I took my health completely for granted.

How much energy I had! Looking at people older than me, and seeing their aches and pains and arthritis and diseases, it never occurred to me that each and every one of those elders was at one point in their lives as young and vibrant as I was. I could never imagine myself with those problems.

Yet, as the years turn into decades, slowly but inevitably time begins to catch up, and you no longer can be as vigorous, as vivacious, as energetic, as you once were. Knee joints begin to hurt, back pains become more common, sleep becomes an issue, you can no longer skip meals so easily ...and the list goes on, and continues to grow, year by year.

Indeed, it was none other than our Prophet عليه الله who reminded us to take advantage of our youth before we become old.



6. You've heard of the adage 'time flies'. Life will teach you how true that really is.

I have such vivid memories of those years, and yet they seem so far away. At times, when I recall memories from those years, I am startled to realize that fifteen or twenty or twenty five years have passed since then. How could two decades have gone by so quickly? Where did that time all go?!

And I know that as I grow older, I will also look back at these very years that I am currently living in the same way.

Do not procrastinate what needs to be done today until tomorrow. You want to fill up your time with matters that will benefit you religiously, and worldly. Accomplish much, aim high, get things done, and you will live a full and wonderful life. Waste time, and you will end up watching the years fly you by as you stand bankrupt of any lasting good. The choice is yours.

7. Life will get tougher, not easier.

We tend to exaggerate our problems at a younger age, thinking that no one has it worse than us. Looking back, I am now amused at what I considered to be 'huge' problems (the first time my first car broke down, I quite literally felt as if my life had come to a halt!). For those of us who live in stable family environments, away from war zones, with adequate

financial stability (meaning: we will not starve to death no matter what happens), it is a very safe bet to say that the most painful problems of our lives are yet to come.

I say this not to make our young men and women depressed, but to make them put things into perspective. One of the most painful moments of most people's lives comes when they see their children extremely sick or in some type of threat. At that moment, nothing that has ever happened to you as a twenty-year old could ever have been a serious problem. So, when you are tense about that exam or having missed a paper assignment or going through a tough patch with someone whom you love, take a deep breath, and realize that life is not all that bad!

8. The single most important decision of your entire life will probably be made in this decade: the choice of a spouse.

I cannot imagine a decision that will have more impact on the entire rest of your life than choosing the partner whom you intend to spend the rest of your life with! Your careers may easily change, and the field that you initially studied for typically becomes a launching pad into an entirely different trajectory. However, 'changing' spouses is not something that anyone willingly undergoes, and choosing a life-partner will have an immediate and a long-term effect on you. It will influence your character,

shape your religion, bring you untold happiness and sadness and joys and pains, affect the genes of your progeny, and dictate the nature of the rest of your life (and even afterlife).

As a person who was going into Islamic studies, I knew that I needed to find a life partner who would be

benefit their communities, were forced to abandon their plans because of spousal issues. And the same goes for other choices that you will have to make: spouses must sacrifice for each other, and who sacrifices what for whom will decide the both of your fates.

So, be picky, and look at the



willing to sacrifice much for me. I am very fortunate to have been blessed with a wife who has always supported me in my efforts, and I am extremely grateful to Allah that I have 'my Khadija'! But I can honestly say that many, many of my friends who wanted to become students of knowledge or otherwise

most important criterion: character. Beauty truly is skin deep, and what really counts is good manners and religion. When you are all alone with your spouse, with absolutely no one to help or support you, nothing will bring about a better relationship than the both of you fearing Allah for the consequences of your actions.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

9. Your obnoxious behaviour will come back to haunt you, while your love and kindness will always benefit you.

Sadly, people (especially family) don't forget. Yes, they might forgive, but they don't forget. If you hurt someone, or do something stupid or rude, it will always be remembered, and occasionally brought up. One harsh incident might cost you an entire relationship.

As Maya Angelou said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." One incident in which you humiliated a friend, or were caustic to a family member, will always affect your future with that person. And an incident where you showed your mercy, or kindness, can win over someone as a true ally for as long as you live.

So be wise, don't act rashly, and err on the side of mercy.

10. No one – and I mean no one – will ever love you, or care for you, or be as concerned for your welfare, as your parents. Cherish them in every way possible for as long as you have the opportunity to do so.

It is one of the saddest aspects of growing up that children, and especially teenagers, treat their parents in a rude manner. We are all familiar with the Quranic and prophetic commandments regarding good treatment of parents. Unfortunately, for many of us, those commandments do not seep into our hearts at a young age (and for a few unlucky ones, never!).

I have said many times in my talks, "You will never understand the love of your parents until you become a parent yourself, and it is only then that you will realize all that they did for you, they did out of love." Even if you don't have children of your own, however, try your best to give them the love and kindness that they deserve, and honor them with kindness.

It is true that all of us are at times extremely frustrated with parental expectations, or parental advice and rebukes, but our religion teaches us to control that anger and not express it verbally. 'Zip it up!' I advise my own teenager when I see he is about to get irritated with his mother (or me!). 'Talk to us when you've calmed down. It's okay to feel angry, it's not okay to show it.' (Alas, that advice doesn't always work on him!!).

No one knows how long one's parents will be around; take advantage of their presence, to earn your place in Paradise, and to have the best memories of serving them for as long as you live as well.

Now that I've passed this milestone, I ask Allah that He blesses me and my family to see many more positive milestones in my life and in theirs.



O Allah! Allow me to be thankful to You for all that You have bestowed upon me, and upon my parents! Bless me to continue to do good deeds that are pleasing to You! And make me from Your righteous and beloved servants! Ameen.

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the author. It was first published on muslimmatters. org.

Dr Yasir Qadhi is someone that believes that one's life should be judged by more than just academic degrees and scholastic accomplishments. He has a Bachelors in Hadith and a Masters in Theology from Islamic University of Madinah, and a PhD in Islamic Studies from Yale University.

Bursary Presentation

17 August 2019

On 17 August 2019, MCAS presented bursaries to successful applicants who are pursuing their tertiary education. As part of our academic and welfare project, MCAS aim to lighten the financial burden of Muslims, especially Converts and children of Converts.

This year, a total of \$118,000 was awarded to 54 students. These deserving recipients received their bursaries at the Association, which was also attended by their family members. MCAS hope that this financial aid will help boost the morale of these examplary students so that they can contribute positively to the society.





Eid Celebration

30 June 2019



Eid-ul-Fitr Celebration was held on 30 June 2019. It was attended by close to 250 MCAS members and volunteers. The emcee for the day, Bro Firdaus Wong kicked off the event with a welcome speech, followed by performances from our multi-national clubs such as the Mabuhay Club, Myanmar Club and Indonesian Club. There were also games and quizzes to capture the spirit of Eid and to liven up the festival atmosphere.

(Top and Right) Bro Firdaus Wong entertaining the audience.











Invitation to a state of grace: What the Islamic tradition can teach us about human rights

by Dr Khaled Abou El Fadl

uman rights and terrorism are alike grand concepts. Human rights is a grand concept of an ultimate or absolute good — in many ways, like the idea of divinity or the idea of light. Terrorism, on the other hand, is a grand concept of an ultimate or absolute evil, very much the antithesis of divinity and the antithesis of light.

Although we human beings
— including theologians,
jurists and philosophers

— produce a remarkable variety of terminology to negotiate our idea of good and our repulsion at the idea of evil, ultimately we keep going back to this central dichotomy. This makes perfect sense to people of faith because it is the logic of being in a state of grace versus being in a state of the absence of grace; a state of mercy versus the absence of mercy; a state of blessing versus the absence of blessing.

And yet, as powerfully liberating as is the idea of the good, the light and the divine, and as remarkably suffocating as is the idea of the dark, the demonic and the terrorfilled or terror-inducing, we human beings have enjoyed a miserable record of taking a concept of the ultimate and the absolute and rendering, in practice, its opposite. This is the real challenge to people of faith posed by the contemporary notion of human rights.

The Islamic natural rights tradition

At the risk of passing over a great many historical and conceptual complications, it is fair to say that the genesis of human rights is in the natural rights tradition, and the genesis of the natural rights tradition, in turn, is found in the natural law tradition.

Much like in the Christian tradition, in the Islamic intellectual tradition there was an earlier intellectual battle between those who believed that the notion of right and wrong exists in a primordial and transcendent essence, and that it was not dependent upon a divine command, and those who made the locus of the existence of natural right what they used to call al-husn (beauty) versus al-qubh (ugliness), very much like the idea of dark and light — to be the divine command and not anything beyond the divine command.

These two factions jostled throughout Islamic history and, as so often happens, eventually both factions were completely swept up into the political trends of the day.

At the height of the Islamic civilisation, Muslim theologians — especially theologians of natural law and natural rights — thrived. They flourished in Baghdad, in Damascus and, about a century later, in Egypt. This is ultimately the tradition that made its way through Andalusia to Europe through the works of Ibn Rushd (d.

1198) — who had a profound influence on Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) — and Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185) — who invented the idea of the social contract, which was subsequently adopted by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (d. 1778).

There were also Muslim thinkers like Ibn Baja and Ibn 'Aqil, who said that it is quite dangerous to make "good" and "bad" dependent on the divine command and nothing else, because the divine command in and of itself is represented through human will. They believed that God placed God's self, or the attributes of God, into God's creation, and the way that you discern good from bad, or light from darkness, is that you study divine creation to understand the attributes of divinity, which then become the basis for natural rights.

When the Islamic civilisation, however, becomes an imperial power, expands into Europe and has a larger number of people under its control — often in an outright military occupation — the idea of natural rights eventually gives way to the notion of divine command only as revealed through the text, and it is the experts of the text that then interpret the divine command, rationalise it and justify it.

In many ways, this dynamic is hardly surprising because we see it repeated in other civilisations — this shift from intellectual flexibility (or, if you will, a tradition of humanism, a tradition of openness, or a tradition of giving) to its opposite, where people, empires and states become intoxicated

with their own power and increasingly feel a sense of moral righteousness: they then close up and increasingly make morality something defined by an elite group of people that act as the guardians and protectors of "the truth" and make "truth" ever more exclusive.

In the Islamic case, it was the Ahl al-Hadith who considered themselves the guardians of the text. This is the same school of thought that eventually takes the form of the Wahhabis today. the dominant puritanical school which spreads through Saudi Arabia and beyond. It is no coincidence that the same school that reaches its ultimate logical conclusion in the form of the puritanism of Saudi Arabia - and which ends up generating the very practice of terrorism — arose at a time in which Muslims collectively experience their greatest level of political insecurity.

I think the historical cycle here is divine. It is as if a divine lesson or a divine instruction that the people who start out by being bearers of the truth, through a monopoly of the divine command, end up being the people who ultimately justify terrorism; and this darkness, this evil is justified vis-àvis people who are raising broader principles.

From choice to textualism

Stepping outside the Islamic tradition for a moment, we cannot forget that the natural law, natural rights and human rights tradition have been used and abused

in our modern age repeatedly to justify everything from forms of slavery to colonialism, imperialism and forms of paternalistic political intervention, and that this provided the moral righteousness to do away with what I will argue is ultimately the basis of what defines the divine, the good, or the beautiful, whether within Islam or without — and that is the notion of voluntariness, or of rational choice.

Quite often in the modern age, in every political intervention that has destroyed the native cultures of peoples — that forcibly converted them, destroyed their heritage or their language, exploited their resources or, worse, simply slaughtered them — there is always that ultimate denial of choice vis-à-vis the other because "we know best" or "we know better."

This is something that we often overlook in the modern human rights tradition, and which I see as parallel to the move from a school of natural goodness to a school





of goodness strictly through revelation: the transition of human rights in the modern age from a model of open search for the natural good to a model of making human rights a product of consensus among sovereign states in other words, a positive law theory where states negotiate and posit what is and what is not a human right. Then, once states reach an agreement through the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or whatever other instrument, that is then textually declared to establish what the right is, and even, at times, to justify a violation of principle.

Quite often, textualism is indicative of the loss of moral vision about what is supposed to be represented by the principle of religious liberty or religious freedom — the idea that it is fundamental that a human being be able to choose their faith. The crux of what defines the obligation is the ability to rationally choose. In other words, in situations where people are free to choose, one can say that we analyse a right in a certain way, but when people are not free to choose then we analyse it in a different way.

Do human rights need a 'god'?

There is a critical issue about reason and rationality that needs clarification at this point. The contemporary conception of human rights, premised on the notion of the social contract — or what I call the Rousseauian model of human rights, in which the negotiation between states creates a written text poses a challenge to faith communities. If states can negotiate a text, draft a text and produce a text, then why do we need God for the human rights tradition? We have human rights, so what does God add to this dvnamic?

The divine source plays a critical role in creating the notion of obligation, so that the obligation coming through divinity becomes an acceptance of grace, an acceptance of goodness, an acceptance of mercy and an acceptance of a blessed state, rather than simply compliance with formal legal mechanisms or the instrumentalities of law. In other words, positive law, negotiated law or textual law cannot create a state of grace, cannot create a state of peace, or cannot ultimately create a state of light to represent the goodness of human rights. It can only mimic the state of grace or

the state of light or the state of divinity.

Let me approach this from a different angle, through one of Rousseau's memorable passages in The Social Contract. Remember than Rousseau was responsible for an idea that has come to mark perhaps all the secular traditions in Europe, particularly in countries like France — the idea of civil religion. Rousseau argues that in principle we need gods, not men, to make law. He was not actually advocating a role for the church, but was arguing that law is so difficult that, as the passage goes on to say, we need men to be able to see into the future, men who are able to be objective and so on - essentially, he was creating a theoretical construct of the lawmaker as divine-like without actually being divine. That enables Rousseau then to argue that in a civil society, religion becomes a civil religion — religion that is controlled, directed and

This is very different from the model we have in the United States, in which we talk about a state keeping an equal distance from all religious involvement, and if it does get religiously involved, it must become equally involved with all religions at the same time. This is similar to the model proposed by John Stuart Mill

defined by the state.

(d. 1873), as opposed to that of Rousseau. The Rousseauian model — of the state as the ultimate and absolute source of goodness in itself — is the one that has prevailed since colonialism in all Middle Eastern countries without exception, and it enables the state to act with a sense of absoluteness, unequivocalness and non-relativity in terms of its own legitimacy. Its legitimacy is absolute and not relative, and its process is all of the goodness, not part of the goodness. But at the same time, it severely limits the potentiality of grace — the power or the potential that comes from a voluntarily individual recognition of divinity.

It is in the Rousseauian model that we end up arguing over, for instance, which religion is compatible with the prevailing civil religion and which remains estranged. This is exactly what we see happening in France, Switzerland and other European countries involving the status of Muslims. Often, arguments are made that we do not really know if Muslims are part of the civil religion because Muslims have not proven that they are capable of being a part of the civil religious tradition. Therefore, their status is tentative and negotiable, while older faith communities — Jewish and

Christian — are argued to be already part of the civil religious tradition because they have a longer history in the region.

This is, of course, is a very lawyerly way of approaching the issue, and one that is different to the approach in the United States, where we do not make judgments about which religion has become part of the civic fabric — assuming, instead, that all religions are on an equal footing.

Either human rights are universal, or they are not universal. Human rights cannot be 'European'. If they are, then they are just European rights, not human rights.

There have been cases before the European Court of Human Rights that discuss whether limitations on religious practices in some European communities involving Muslims violate the human rights tradition. (There are cases involving other communities, but for the most part, the cases involve Muslims.) If you compare that to some of the cases in the United States, the discursive differences are fascinating.

Often in the European Court, the discussion goes as

follows. Human rights is a grand idea, but it is so huge and so amorphous that we really should talk about European conceptions of human rights. This, in my opinion, is a contradiction in terms. Either human rights are universal, or they are not universal. Human rights cannot be 'European'. If they are, then they are just European rights, not human rights. The courts then often argue that we must stay limited to the specific tradition of Europe; but because we do not know what

> the specific tradition of Europe is, we must stick to the European Convention on **Human Rights** — namely, the actual legal language of the convention. And because we stick to the legal language of the convention on human rights, then it becomes an

issue of whether this language incorporates the notion of civic religion and the right of the state — that is, the legitimate power of the state in defining the role that religion is going to occupy in public space.

Consider this. There were new Christian churches that have emerged in Egypt and, very much like the textualist tradition, or the French tradition, the Egyptian Supreme Court said that these churches did not have the same status as the Coptic

Church because, while the Coptic Church has a history and tradition that allows it to be part of the civic religion of the country, these new churches have not achieved that status. That ultimately sacrifices, in my view, the principle of human rights in itself.

In this situation, we have moved from the freedom of thinking about human rights as equivalent to a state of blessing, or a state of grace or ultimate goodness — or what I call in my writings, a state of beauty — to a specific textualist or historical context that I find suffocating and so limiting, and ultimately dangerous, because it puts religion itself in the service of the state, which becomes for all practical matters the secular god.

Roberto Mangabeira Unger has argued that modern human beings have become uprooted, unsettled and so miserable that the solution is to develop a secular religion of divine human beings — a very Nietzschean view, in the sense that we should convince human beings that they are gods so that we do not need a God.

The antithesis of grace

We are at a critical juncture, when there is an ongoing battle as to how to relate to the human rights tradition.

Some prefer the Rousseauian secular nationalist model

— whether it be in France or in Egypt — where the state is granted control to determine the space for religion, and thus the state becomes the

ultimate arbiter of what human rights are and what the role of religion will be.

By contrast, there have been various movements and various theorists in Syria, Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen arguing that the model of the nationalist state — which is staunchly secularist, but nonetheless controls the role and space of religion — if it works, ends up supporting (or, at very best, giving victory to) the idea of civic rights rather than human rights.

We often confuse the two. Civic rights are rights that are produced by an actual or hypothetical consensus of society. Civic rights are the rights that you have within vour national boundaries because of a constitutional document or of a system of rights of any textual document. Human rights, by contrast, are literally that rights to which all human beings are entitled. They are inherent and undeniable. Human rights don't require an agreement; they do not depend on anyone recognising them or negotiating them. And our own role in supporting or opposing governments or movements is critical when it comes to nations that have very strong statist traditions in the modern age.

I do not think we are doing anything for the human rights tradition when we support the position of nations in which the state claims to be the possessor of truth, and then defines the space that God can occupy. If things work well for us, we are at best supporting a civic rights tradition.

This is a critical distinction, and a distinction that theorists, philosophers and theologians often fail to consider or even appropriately understand. Either we uphold the principle of human rights - in its absoluteness and universality, in its blind stand towards justice and equality of causes, in its non-responsiveness to the element with whom one can sympathise as a human being — or we do not.

I often play a trick with my students: I give them a horrible narrative about a people who suffer some horrendous injustice and give them an erroneous identity — if they are Muslim, I tell my students they are Christian. and vice versa. I ask them for their reaction. Once they commit their responses to writing, I tell them the actual

identity of the people in the story. I get their reaction again. The subtle change in language is the space where the difference between civic rights and human rights reveals itself.

Human rights is an act of grace. Even if you don't recognise yourself as having that right, I extend it to you out of respect, as an extension of my own consciousness and sense of duty. My obligation is to present the good and offer it. Whether people accept it or not, you offer it. By offering it, you have respected my human rights. And you have upheld the principle of human rights.

At the same time, if anyone dares to force me to do something, they have violated my human rights and they have fallen into a paradox and contradiction, and, ultimately,



hypocrisy. Like faith itself, you can only invite. Once you begin compelling people to go beyond the invitation and say you will not feed them unless they convert, or you will take away their privileges, not pay their bills, or not fund their colleges unless they convert, then we have moved into a

state of the antithesis of faith, or the antithesis of grace.

Human rights is like a state of grace or a state of light or a state of divinity. The divine hasn't forced us to believe in the divine. The divine hasn't compelled us. If God would have wanted, God could have created us all Christian, or all Muslim, or all white, or all uniform. But the fact that God didn't, in itself, speaks volumes. For me, this is the genesis, the beginning of my human rights analysis.

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the author. It was first published on the ABC.

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>>>>>> ALL ABOUT



The third pillar of Islam



Obligatory unlike sadaqah or charity



Given in a calculated amount



Mentioned 30 times in the Qur'an



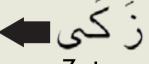
Zakat on wealth



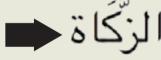
زَ كَاةُ الْفطْرِ Zakat ul Fitr Zakat on the individual

33333 DEFINITION CALLS

- To grow
- To purify
- To bless







Az-Zakah

BENEFITS OF ZAKAT



Heals your heart from stinginess



Reminds you that you are managers of wealth in dunya, not owners



Lessens the burden of the needy

Alhamdulillah

Instills values of gratefulness and compassion

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Ramadhan Zakat Disbursement

26 May 2019

This annual ceremony is part of MCAS Fakir Miskin (Poor & Needy) programme. Every year in the month of Ramadhan, MCAS disburses its Zakat and Fidyah to help the poor and needy during the fasting month and for their preparation of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr celebration. MCAS Fakir Miskin programme extends to other months of the year and includes providing short-term monthly assistance to selected families with financial difficulties

The Zakat Disbursement was held on 26 May 2019, at MCAS Tented Carpark with about 600 financial aid clients receiving \$255 in cash and \$70 in NTUC Vouchers. Each client also received a goodie bag valued at \$32.90 comprising of groceries items. The event was held over 2 sessions. The morning session was graced by Mr Amrin Amin, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs & Ministry of Health. A total of \$195,000 was disbursed (\$153,000 from Zakat funds and \$42,000 from Fidyah).

The Zakat Disbursement ceremony this year was highlighted with a Sharing Session from our Zakat Beneficiaries.

Local media were invited to the Ramadhan Zakat Disbursement and details about the event were published in Berita Harian on 27 May 2019.



(Top and Right) Three of our zakat recipients sharing their stories on stage.





(Top) Mr Amrin Amin, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs & Ministry of Health gracing the event as the Guest-of-Honour.



Ramadhan Zakat Disbursement

26 May 2019





(Top) Bro Saleem Ng, Vice President of Finance Division together with Bro Imran Kuna, President of MCAS receiving the Guest-of-Honour.







(Top) Mr Amrin Amin sharing his thoughts and giving a word of encouragement to everyone present.

(Left) Mr Amrin Amin mingling with a zakat recipient.







Religious Pluralism, Civic Values, and Anti-Racism: A Reflection on the **Prophetic Tradition**

by Dr Craig Considine

grew up in a small town in the Greater Boston area of Massachusetts, a state in the New England region of the United States of America. I was raised in a Catholic family to Irish and Italian parents. As a young boy and teenager I learned - in both secular and Catholic environments - about the importance of tolerating people of other religious traditions. I was taught about the idea that anyone can be an American because the Constitution gives no preferences on matters pertaining to religious creed or racial background. I also read about great American figures like Martin Luther King Jr., whose words and teachings resonated with me from a young age.

Learning about religious tolerance, freedom, and racial equality significantly shaped my development as a human being. These are all critically important subjects. But now I wonder if these three subjects are the best remedies to cure some of the challenges facing humanity in the 21st century.

Perhaps we can look more closely at the life and legacy of Muhammad, the prophet of the Islamic faith, for concrete ideas on how best to deal with the increasing diversity we see in our communities.

Let us first address that matter of religious tolerance. According to Diana L. Eck of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, religious tolerance is too thin of a foundation to build a cohesive society in the 21st century. She calls on human beings to engage in the process of religious pluralism, which she broadly refers to as the energetic engagement with religious diversity. Religious pluralism is distinguished from religious tolerance in the sense that it deliberately evokes dialogue, education, understanding, commitment, and cooperative engagement in order to strengthen interreligious bonds. Religious tolerance, on the other hand, is stand-offish and allows communities to remain isolated in their own social bubbles.

Prophet Muhammad was a religious pluralist. He did not merely tolerate human beings of other religious backgrounds. We see his preference for pluralism in his interactions with the Christians of Najran. When the Najrans paid a visit to Muhammad in Medina, the Christians and Muslims engaged in a deep dialogue on a number of topics including the divinity of Jesus and similarities between the Bible and Qur'an. The two sides did not agree on all the matters that they discussed, but the historical sources make it clear that the parties had a civil conversation based on shared interest and mutual respect. After the diplomatic encounter ended the Christians of Nairan exited Muhammad's mosque in order to pray. The prophet stopped them and told them to reenter the mosque so that they could pray in a more comfortable setting.

If Muhammad merely tolerated the faith of the Christians he would have watched them leave the mosque to worship their god. Instead he provided a space for the Christians to pray. These actions reflect recent events at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC when the Christian community there hosted an event in which the Islamic call to prayer echoed throughout the church before Muslims used the holy place for their own prayers.

Muhammad's preference for religious pluralism also informed his vision for the ummah, or the Muslim nation which grew during the first hijrah to Medina. It was in that



holy city in which Muhammad emerged as an effective statesman who found a way to unite factions of a divided community. Medina at the time was primarily populated by Jewish tribes and pagans. Muhammad was invited by some members of these parties to serve as an impartial mediator who would be able to bring cohesiveness and solidarity to a city in need of both.

To achieve these aims Muhammad crafted the Constitution of Medina, arguably the oldest constitution in world history. The Constitution of Medina established the ummah as a nation rooted in civic national principles such as freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, and private property. A person's sense of belonging to the Medinan community was not predicated on biological matters like race or ethnicity. Nor was one's sense of belonging linked to their religious preferences. What made someone a member of the ummah according to the Constitution of Medina was the rule of law. Essentially, citizenship rights.

Further, Muhammad's vision for the *ummah* is rooted in the universal ideal of racial

equality. We see his vision and beliefs on this matter in the relationship that he formed with Bilal Ibn Rabah, the Abyssinian slave that Muhammad befriended in Mecca. The prophet not only defended Bilal from racist remarks, but he also elevated his friend to the high status of muezzin, the Muslim that calls the faithful to their daily prayers.

Elevating Bilal to the position of muezzin, to be clear, is an anti-racism action. There is a difference between being merely "non-racist" and anti-racism. Like religious tolerance, non-racism does not energetically dismantle prejudice and discrimination. Both religious tolerance and non-racism are standoffish in the sense that they can reproduce old social patterns of division. Antiracism is more like religious pluralism because both concepts deliberately focus on reshaping social structures and encouraging people to be more socially active in terms of justice and peacebuilding.

Muhammad's Last Sermon on Mount Arafat in 632 AD is another quintessential example of the prophet's progressive views on racial equality. In his address in front of the ummah Muhammad unequivocally declared that no human being is superior to another human being on the grounds of race or racial differences. To be specific he mentioned that one human being is above another human being only through piety and good conduct. These words were echoed over one thousand years later by Martin Luther King Jr., the African American Christian minister, during his "I Have a Dream Speech" on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC in 1963.

The ummah, in light of the principles laid out in this piece, means that a "Muslim nation" is much more than a space or sense of identity for Muslims alone. The ummah is a community that has the potential, as outlined by Muhammad himself, to be a space for human beings of all walks of life regardless of religious preference, national background, or race.

Dr. Craig Considine is a scholar, professor, global speaker, media contributor, & public intellectual based at the Department of Sociology at Rice University. He is the author of many books & articles. Dr. Considine's opinions have been featured in the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, BBC, CBS News, Fox News, MSNBC, Newsweek, & Foreign Policy. He has been invited to speak at some of the leading international organizations & universities in the world. Dr. Considine is visible on social media. He holds a PhD from Trinity College (University of Dublin), MSc from Royal Holloway (University of London), & BA from American University in Washington, DC. Dr. Considine is a U.S. Catholic of Irish and Italian descent.



>>> 4 CONDITIONS FOR <<< OBLIGATORY ZAKAT





Zakat is only applicable to Muslims

Full ownership



Implies that the owner should be fully capable of disposing the wealth without being an object of contest by others

Nisab



The person's wealth at any point in time in the Hijrah year must reach Nisab, which is equivalent to the market value of 85g of gold

Amil

officer appointed

to collect

zakat

Haul



The person's wealth above Nisab must be with the person for at least one Hijrah year

Let's use an example for zakat on savings (money that is kept in all types of savings accounts including fixed deposit and current account)

Any of the following methods may be used to calculate the quantum of zakat payable

Muallaf to Islam Fisabilillah one who strives in the cause of Allah for the betterment of the community

lbnussabil

stranded travellers

on a permissable

ASNAF

Gharimin

In debt and needs

assistance to meet

his/her basic needs

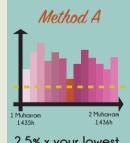
Fakir has no means

to sustain his/her daily needs

Miskin

has insufficient his/her basic

Rigab need assistance to pursue their education



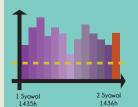
2.5% x your lowest annual balance



2.5% x your lowest monthly balance



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2.5% x last balance upon completion of haul

Method C

* The yellow dotted lines on the graphs represent the nisab

Guidelines for Muslims on Purchasing & Owning Property

Office of Mufti

Foreword

by Dr Mohamed Fatris Bakaram **Mufti of Singapore**

The Fatwa Committee is committed to develop Fatwa thinking in Singapore. Fatwas issued must remain firmly rooted to Islamic principles, and be able to effectively provide solutions to the changing needs of the community. The Committee takes special care in assessing the benefit and harm of any given issue brought to its attention.

From time to time, the Fatwa Committee will evaluate and review the impact of fatwas. This is to ensure that fatwas continue to protect public welfare (maslaha). If there is feedback that points to the contrary, the Committee will study such feedback carefully and decide on how best to address such matters.

The Fatwa on home ownership in the form of joint tenancy has evolved over the last 20 years. In the first Fatwa on this issued in 1997, the Fatwa Committee viewed the joint tenancy contract as a form of shared

ownership, where each joint tenant owns half of the entire property. Accordingly, when a joint tenant passes away, the surviving owner is entitled to only 50% of the property, and the remaining 50% is subject to distribution by faraid.

After studying the public feedback on the 1997 Fatwa, the Committee decided to review its position in 2008. The Committee decided then that joint tenants have the option to ensure that the surviving owner will inherit the share of the deceased joint tenant if an additional document (nuzriah or hibah ruqba) is drawn up to that effect. This option allows the surviving owner to own the entire property after the death of the joint owner from a religious perspective.

The Fatwa Committee has since monitored the implications of the 2008 Fatwa. Feedback from various parties, including the religious fraternity and legal practitioners have shown

that there are challenges such as problems for the surviving spouse when pressured by other beneficiaries to sell the property because the deceased had not drawn up any additional religious document. This outcome was not intended by the Fatwa, yet it continues to be a common problem faced by families. The Committee started a review of its position from last year and has now issued a new Fatwa to address such issues. In this new Fatwa, buyers who purchase a property as joint tenants can be assured that the joint tenancy contract is also religiously valid without having to draw up additional documents.

With this new Fatwa, there is a clear option for those wanting to choose right of survivorship (which is the case for most buyers), and especially in the case of a matrimonial home. Others who wish to set aside their property for faraid beneficiaries may opt for the tenancy-in-common contract.

Under the tenancy-in-common contract, the share of the deceased person in the house (as defined in the tenancy-incommon contract) remains intact, and hence, could be distributed according to faraid. Everyone needs to carefully and responsibly deliberate on the consequences of the different options. It is our responsibility to ensure that our dependants are financially stable after our passing, and not be put in a predicament of financial distress and uncertainty.

The evolution of the Fatwa on joint tenancy is a testimony of the willingness of the Fatwa Committee to understand, and if need be, address the consequences of its decision-making, and its commitment to provide solutions, guided by the principles of Islamic law. May Allah s.w.t. bless this endeavour, and continue to guide the Fatwa Committee in its efforts to issue Islamic guidance for the Muslim community in Singapore





Introduction

Buying a property is usually an exciting process for many. However, we must not forget that the decision we make in the manner of holding the property will have a significant impact on our family members and loved ones.

Joint Tenancy Contract

Under joint tenancy, each of the coowners together own the whole
interest in the property. If one were
to buy property under a joint
tenancy contract, the right of
survivorship applies. This means
that upon the death of any joint
owner, his interest in the property
would automatically pass to the
surviving joint owner. In other words, the
surviving joint owner will legally own 100% of the property
after the death of the co-owner.

Tenancy-in-common-contract

Under the tenancy-in-common contract, each co-owner holds a separate and distinct share in the property. The right of survivorship does not apply. Upon the death of a co-owner, his share of the property will form part of his estate, and be distributed accordingly. The surviving co-owner continues to maintain his/her interest in the property as determined in the contract.

The Fatwa Committee has reviewed its position on the joint tenancy contract. This article seeks to highlight the main issues addressed in the Fatwa text, and other frequently-asked queries arising from this Fatwa.



1. What is the latest Fatwa decision on the issue of joint tenancy contract?

The 2019 Fatwa recognises the joint tenancy contract as a religiously valid contract. Muslims who purchase real property as joint tenants do not have to make any additional religious document (either a hibah ruqbah or nuzriah) in order for the right of survivorship to apply. It removes the need for the additional religious document previously required under the 2008 Fatwa.

2. Why is this Fatwa review necessary?

The Fatwa Committee has carefully monitored the implications of the 2008 Fatwa. Based on feedback gathered from various parties on the challenges that arose from the 2008 Fatwa. the Committee decided to review the Fatwa to eliminate existing difficulties in order to safeguard public interest. The 2019 Fatwa accords with the objectives and principles of Islamic Law by ensuring that the surviving joint owner's need for shelter and housing continues to be protected.

3. What was the 2008 Fatwa decision, and what were the feedback given on the Fatwa?

Under the 2008 Fatwa, each joint tenant only owns 50% of the property. However, they can opt for the right of survivorship by making an additional document (nuzriah or hibah ruqba).

However, feedback received by the Fatwa Committee show that there were many owners who did not draw up nuzriah or hibah ruqba document even if they had intended to opt for the right of survivorship. This has caused difficulties for the surviving joint owners when faraid beneficiaries pressure them to sell the property.

There have also been cases where joint owners intended for the property to be distributed according to faraid, but the surviving party refuses to honour this agreement.





4. Why is the joint tenancy contract now regarded as a religously valid contract?

There are provisions within Islamic law which allows for the recognition of contemporary and new contracts which are not expressly prohibited in Islam. An Islamic legal maxim states that "the original rule in transactions is permissibility". Although joint tenancy cannot be found in traditional Islamic law, the contract does not conflict with Islamic principles:

- A The objective of the contract is clear.
- **B** The contract does not contain any ambiguity,
- C There are no elements of injustice or oppression, and
- **D** There are no elements of deceit.

Muslims who sign on the contract must hence fulfil and abide by the conditions stated in the contract. This is based on the hadith:

"And Muslims must fulfil the conditions they have agreed upon, except the conditions that prohibit something lawful and legalize something illegal." (At-Tirmizi)

The contract also achieves the objectives of Islamic law (maqasid) by ensuring that surviving owners continue to secure the basic need for shelter and housing.

5. Is the Fatwa denying the rights of the faraid beneficiaries?

No. The Fatwa addresses the nature of the joint tenancy contract from an Islamic viewpoint. Since the surviving owner has full interest in the property, there is no estate left behind. This however does not mean that the option for faraid no longer exists. Buyers who wish to opt for faraid can still choose the tenancy-in-common contract. In fact, this option will ensure that upon the death of a co-owner, his/her share of the property will form part of his estate, and be distributed according to faraid. Buyers now have clearer options that are both religiously and legally valid.



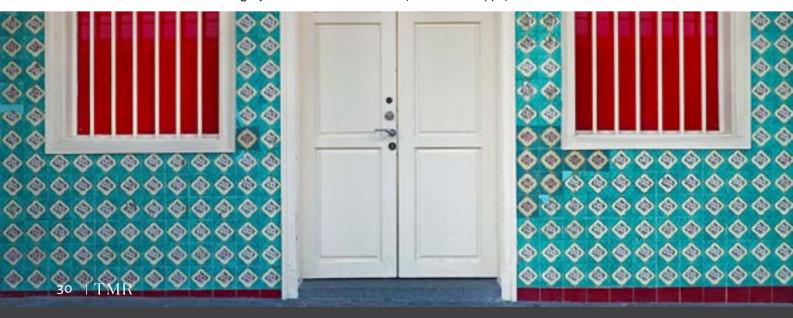
6. Is it religiously better for me to choose the joint tenancy contract or the tenancy-incommon contract?

If the co-owner is your spouse, joint tenancy contract is the better option to safeguard the interest of your family in the event of your passing. Having to give up the matrimonial home after losing one's spouse would be extremely distressing and can cause serious financial burden. In fact, it is our religious responsibility to ensure that our dependants are financially stable after our passing, and not to be put in a predicament of financial distress and uncertainty.

Amir b. Sa'd reported on the authority of his father (Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas): Allah's Messenger visited me in my illness which brought me near death in the year of Hajjat-ul-Wada' (Farewell Pilgrimage). I said:

"Allah's Messenger, you can well see the pain with which I am afflicted and I am a man possessing wealth, and there is none to inherit me except only one daughter. Should I give two-thirds of my property as sadaga? He said: No. I said: Should I give half (of my property) as sadaga? He said: No. He (further) said: Give one-third (in charity) and that is quite enough. To leave your heirs rich is better than to leave them poor, begging from people; that you would never incur an expense seeking therewith the pleasure of Allah, but you would be rewarded therefor, even for a morsel of food that you put in the mouth of your wife." (Muslim)

There are however other possible scenarios that may cause for tenancy-in-common contract to be a more just and appropriate option. Owners must responsibly deliberate and decide on the best choice possible according to their personal circumstances.



The Fatwa Committee would like to remind members of the public of the following:

To seek legal advice before making the decision to enter into, or to convert a contract from joint tenancy to tenancy-in-common and vice versa. All owners must be clear of the legal consequences of their decision, and the implications on the surviving owners.

To be mindful when making any decision relating to property ownership so as to not cause injustice and difficulties to living beneficiaries, especially those who would end up losing their shelter because of this decision.

7. My spouse died last year. Should the previous Fatwa or the new Fatwa apply?

The 2019 Fatwa should apply if the property has not been sold and distributed. This Fatwa should not apply retrospectively to properties which have already been sold for the proceeds to be distributed to beneficiaries in accordance with the 2008 Fatwa.

8. Can the other beneficiaries force me to sell my property according to the new Fatwa?

As the surviving owner under the joint tenancy contract, you have 100% interest in the property. This means that the property is not subject to faraid and there are no beneficiaries involved.

Buyers who wish for distribution according to faraid can opt for the tenancy-in-common contract.

9. I have previously drawn up my nuzriah/hibah ruqba document in addition to my joint tenancy contract. What happens now?

There are 3 possible scenarios arising from this situation:

- A If the intention of the nuzriah or hibah ruqba document is to give effect to the concept of right of survivorship, then the joint tenants do not need to do anything, as the document is in line with the 2019 Fatwa.
- B If you have made a nuzriah to give the property for faraid, but now would like to revoke the nuzriah and stick to right of survivorship, then you are required to perform one of the following as a form of penalty (kaffarah):

- Provide food for 10 poor people with the type of food that he usually consumes; or
- · Clothe 10 poor people; or
- Fast for three days consecutively

On the other hand, if the document you have drawn up is the hibah ruqba, then there is no specific penalty incurred if the hibah ruqba is revoked because it is not a form of yow.

C If the joint tenants indicate in the nuzriah or hibah document that they wish to give their share of the property to non-joint tenant(s), then they should legally change their contract from joint tenancy to tenancyin-common. By doing so, then they will not incur any penalty (kaffarah). The nuzriah or hibah ruqba document for faraid under a joint tenancy contract will no longer be effective from both the legal and Fatwa standpoints.

10. How do I find out more about the Fatwa?

You may access the full Fatwa text at the following link:

https://www.muis.gov.sg/ officeofthemufti/fatwa/englishjoint-tenancy

Or scan the following QR code:





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DACCnDAYS

(Children and Youth Classes)

MCAS Children & Youth Classes (DACCnDAYS) are formed to provide a structural Islamic study program especially for the children of Converts and all Muslims. Besides nurturing and inculcating Islamic values, we hope to instil in the students a sense of pride and a greater sense of responsibility in being Muslims.

DACCnDAYS is a part-time religious class conducted every Sunday educating the Children with Religious Knowledge subjects and Quranic Literacy.













DISP Graduation

(Diploma in Islamic Studies - 16th Intake)



On the 6th of July, the Diploma in Islamic Studies (DISP) 16th Intake Graduation took place at MCAS auditorium with the distinguished Prof. Dr. Aahad M. Osman-Gani, Dean & Managing Director of IIUM Academy of Graduate & Professional Studies gracing the ceremony.

42 students graduated from the programme, with our Convert brother, Mr Wong Wai Meng @ Aminuddin Wong emerging as the top student. This event was also attended by the graduates' family members.





(Left) A graduate receiving his award.

(Bottom) Our line-up of graduates during the ceremony.





Charity that **Keeps on Growing**

by Faudziah Omar

An interview with Muhammad Imran Kuna, President of Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore, on being Muslim, Leadership and his vision for the Association.

On a pleasant Tuesday morning, after a busy week planning for the next Association event, Muhammad Imran Kuna sits in the boardroom, sipping a cup of his favourite latte. The President of MCAS exudes a quiet confidence and a gentle humility that belies the experience he's had with the Association.

Imran took office in 2018 as President, but without first spreading the message of Islam - dedicating his time as a moderator at forums and public talks while volunteering as Assistant Vice-President of Da'wah Division. Later he joined the Converts' Development Division as the Vice-President before becoming the Deputy President of the Association. He was involved in almost every aspect of the Association, from managing the Converts to doing Da'wah at MCAS events talking to potential Muslims. These days, he takes calls after

midnight from his cell phone, facilitating the burial of a deceased convert or addressing any concerns that is brought to his attention. His hands-on approach has made him a regular face at the Association.

As he darts across town meeting with organisations on future collaborations, engaging with MCAS' staff and his Board of Committee is always a priority. It leaves one to imagine how this earnest man finds time juggling between family and his hectic work schedule while volunteering diligently at the Association. Utilising his time wisely is key to fulfilling his promise to grow MCAS to its full potential, when he first took office.

TMR speaks with the man who helms the Association as he opens up about life, his passion to help the underprivileged, the challenges of leadership and his vision for MCAS.

FEATURE

The Muslim Reader: How did you become interested and ultimately converted to Islam?

Imran Kuna: It was never by chance but certainly a path that was set by the Almighty. I believe I've always been a very religious person. I come from a very staunch Hindu family who practices Hinduism at a high level. There was a time when I felt Hinduism was the way of life and every other religion out there was nothing but tales and myth.

However, deep inside I always felt that something was missing. There was a burning desire – a quest to know who God is, does only one God exist or was there indeed a God?

That lead me to search for the Truth and during my search, I ventured into Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and even Atheism. At every juncture when I stood confused, I always had a dream and at several instances in my life it kept directing me towards the Oneness of God. That's when I was touched by Islam and since then, I have never looked back.

TMR: When did you convert to Islam?

IK: Alhamdulillah, I converted on 7 March 2010, so that makes it almost 10 years now.

TMR: Did you encounter any hardships in life that almost break you?

IK: Yes. I personally feel that those challenges were meant to happen, and it has prepared me for my journey to Islam. As a Muslim, I realised that these hardships have many folds and that these challenges are means for me to seek refuge in Allah (SWT) and continue to have faith in His plans. Now I see that for every trials and tribulations, there is a hikmah (wisdom) behind everything.

On Volunteering...

TMR: Where did you first start volunteering? Describe your experience.

IK: It wasn't by chance that I came across MCAS. Back in 2008, when I was still learning about Islam, I was already eager to do something for the Ummah. I started looking for things to do for my friends and colleagues. The chance came when, during Ramadhan, I volunteered to collect Bubur Lambuk, also known as Bubur Masjid (rice porridge) at the mosques for my colleagues and staff as they were unable to do so during working hours. It was also then that I realised they did not have a proper space to do their prayers in the office - so I jumped on the opportunity to dedicate an area for prayers. I was eager

to do more. I went to the various mosques to volunteer, hoping that the community would embrace a newcomer like me, but it was not to be.

As Allah would have it, my desire to be worthy of His Deen pushed me to try out different things and areas. I made the intention for Him to guide me and that was when I found the place to volunteer it was none other than MCAS. I felt at peace when I'm at the Association. I was surrounded by new converts and fellow Non-Muslims searching for the truth and whom I could relate to. I felt empowered and encouraged by everyone's enthusiasm. I saw the opportunity to integrate myself with these people who I now call family. Most importantly, volunteering at MCAS also enabled me to learn more about Islam and know for certain that Islam is indeed the right path. That was how my MCAS journey started and the rest is history.

TMR: How long have you volunteered at MCAS?

IK: It would be about 10 years.

TMR: Since you have volunteered with MCAS for at least 10 years, how do you find MCAS now and then?

IK: Alhamdulillah, we have made good progress. I won't deny that there are challenges but there have been various initiatives

focusing on the development of converts as well as community outreach and higher Islamic education.

In my opinion, we have achieved certain milestones that would pave the way for future generations to leverage and build on, Insha Allah.

TMR: Being a convert yourself, you know the challenges faced by other converts and understand their needs, how do you think you could help them in the capacity that you are now?

IK: Well, the very first time I don the entity of a convert and became part of this wonderful organisation, I knew I had an uphill task. My duty is not just to help fellow converts but also reflect upon myself in the process so that I can then lead by example. I want to be able to inspire others and give back to the community and especially to the Deen, when needed most.

An area which I knew was going to be beneficial to the convert community in Singapore was the "cradle to grave" programme. It was a programme which had its humble beginning in 2014, while I was heading the Converts' Development Division. Our objective is to provide a holistic service and support all converts from the point of embracing Islam, i.e. from their Islamic education and their growth as a Muslim.

FEATURE

I believe that this programme is key to successfully holding the hands of the new Muslims, guiding them step by step, using the element of experiential learning and befriender & mentoring programmes to keep the converts closely knitted.

I hope to be able to reach out to the senior converts community and bring them back to MCAS, Insha Allah.

On his plans for the Association...

TMR: What is your vision for MCAS?

IK: To grow MCAS into a centre that provides a balanced perspective on Islam and a place for anyone that wants a helping hand in the Deen.

TMR: As the President of an established Association, surely you carry many responsibilities. How do you balance vour personal and work life while you volunteer?

IK: It can get a little tough sometimes and there are bound to be challenges. However, with the right intention, I believe we can achieve our goals especially when we set our mind on them. One thing that keeps me going is the passion to serve our community.

Helping the under-privileged and youths at risks are key areas that we are focused on. Time management is also key - my day usually starts off pretty early and I usually prefer to schedule meetings in the mornings and spend the afternoon catching up on emails and stuff. As a volunteer. I must stretch myself a little bit more to be able to maximise my time with the staff that I work with.

And of course, I cannot do all these without my family. They have been a source of strength and a great support. At the end of the day, I look forward to a home-cooked meal and wind down with a good book. On the weekends, sometimes I catch up with the boys for a non-competitive soccer match to help me keep

TMR: What is vour proudest achievement during vour tenure leading the Association?

IK: It has to be this year's Qurban Drive where we set a record of reaching out to about 1,000 families and Madam Halimah Yacob. President of the Republic of Singapore inaugurated the event. During the Qurban Drive, we distributed Qurban meat and groceries to our financial-aid clients. This year was special as it was the first time we collaborated with several organisations to distribute meat to their financial-aid clients as well.

The objective of this project is to create awareness on the significance of Qurban, especially among our converts and to promote the act of giving in celebration of Eid-ul Adha. When the project was launched in 2017. we were only providing for 450 families. It is with Allah's grace that we were able to expand on the number of recipients and to top it off we broke the Singapore's Book of Record in the Largest convoy of Vehicles to deliver groceries for Charity.

TMR: How effective are the collaborations between MCAS and other organisations?

IK: Being inclusive is significant, not only for the Association but also as a nation. Collaborations bring about a better understanding and it promotes good relationship between organisations. It is also an opportunity for us to strengthen the ukhuwah (fraternity) amongst our community. Especially, for converts like me, collaborations bring exposure and better understanding of the various Muslim Organisations and their role in the community in Singapore.

TMR: For new volunteers or people who are thinking of volunteering at MCAS, what is your advice?

IK: Have clear and good intentions. Do not seek recognition from others for what you do - always remember that the real reward comes from Allah (SWT). You must learn to adapt and take things in your stride as it may not be rosy all the time, but if you persevere, you will taste the sweetness and the sense of fulfilment doing charity work.

At some point you may make mistakes, as I have made some along the way. But we must learn from it, like I have. Fall we may, but we must get up and learn from our mistakes. You will receive criticisms - however, listen with an open mind so that you can benefit from the good of it. Because that is how we learn and that is a mark of a true leader. It all boils down to your intention... In the path of Allah every step and everything that happens has His Wisdom. So I'm glad for who I am today, Alhamdulillah.

"Allah never change the condition of a people unless they strive to change themselves."

[Surah Al-Rad 13:11]

Official Iftar

1 June 2019

MCAS Official Iftar was held on 1 June 2019 at the MCAS car park tentage area.

The event was graced by Mr Masagoz Zulkifli, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources & Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs. Minister Masagos officiated the launch of MCAS new book - Muslim Converts' Guidebook, together with the Chief Executive of MUIS, Mr Esa Masood. Other guests included ambassadors from the various Consulates, representatives from several Muslim organisations as well as other invited dignitaries and guests.

Ustaz Muhd Syazwan Elrani gave a talk on the topic Reflections in Ramadan: The Journey After. He highlighted the significance of the blessed month and encouraged the audience to ponder and reflect on our faith, good deeds and experiences we've had and to continue striving beyond Ramadhan.









(Left) Minister Masagos and Mr Esa Masood during the book launch.





(Top) Bro Ridzuan Wu with our guests.





(Top) MCAS volunteers. (Left) Minister Masagos with our distinguished guests.

Official Iftar

1 June 2019



(Top) Bro Faiz Edwin Ignatious with our Guest-of-Honour and other guest.

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(Top and Right) MCAS volunteers.

(Left) Minister Masagos with Mr Suhaimi Rafdi of Mercy Relief, after the cheque presentation.





MERCY RELIEF

(Top) Bro Saleh O'Dempsey, Vice President of Education Division seated with guests.







Sacrifices of the Heart and the Art of Selfless Giving

by Hyder Gulam

While we humans are born without sin, and a natural inclination towards God, this is not a panacea towards the successful passing of the test to be assessed on the Day of Judgement. While we are blessed with the immaculate and perfect Revelation, we are also gifted an intellect with which to judge and exercise our will within the panoply of means provide to us by our Lord (swt). This short piece aims to be a reflection, a positing of experiences of things learned and still learning, about failings and striving. About sacrifices of the heart and the art and act of selfless giving.

Everyone is created perfect by our Lord (swt), and everyone has a unique story and lived experience. What drives and motivates them may not be the same universally – we may be unique drops in structure and composition, but we are indeed part of the endless ocean created by God (swt). Our test from

Allah is set for us, and is not something we cannot bear, but must be strived in order to succeed. Outlined below are some common skill sets that may be utilised, as an anchor to fix our lives, and a light to drive out darkness in our Nafs and the corrupting influence of Shaitan, our accursed and avowed enemy:

Wake up to yourself and your reality

Audit your own conduct, before you are externally audited by the Supreme Being. Remind yourself of your past mistakes, and what you can do to improve yourself. Do not dwell in what you cannot change, but rather take solace on how you can be a better person when facing a similar situation by constantly observing your conduct and correcting it. Remember God in constant remembrance of the heart, through the actions of the limbs, through the watchfulness of your eyes and the moistness of your tongue.

Never be proud of your present situation

Don't ridicule that of others – your lush, verdant garden, can easily become dry, barren and withered by the will of God – and even if it does, this is a test for you: be cheerful for such a test. Remember, everyone is better than you. Everything is a mercy from God (swt), and not that you deserve it, but rather you may be tested by it.

If people speak ill of you, beg for their forgiveness

If they irritate and annoy you, give your thanks. If they fall ill, visit them. If you see another person afflicted with sin and hardship, do not see that as their damnation, but rather as a warning to yourself. Take people as they are, in all sincerity and with no expectations.

"Indeed, to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He gives life and causes death. And you have not besides Allah any protector or any helper." [Surah Taubah 9:116]

Do not complain spiritually to anyone other than Allah

And even in that, do not bemoan your circumstances before the tests of our Lord (swt). Never say "I wish...", as nothing happens but by the leave of God.

Put into action what you learned - actualise your knowledge

Do not waste your time on matters that do not better you or improve your spirituality. Your eyes will deteriorate, and your hearing will fail – before that time, inculcate purification of thought and be mindful to lose your attachment to the material world.

Shaitan is most active in places of good

These places, such as Mosques and noble gatherings, and not so in nightclubs and other avoidable places, as the accursed has already corrupted those places and seeks to expend his efforts on the good. That is why the mihrab in the Masjid is a place of war (harb), between the Imam and Shaitan.

Have presence of heart when you pray

Perform the night prayer when you can, and make it a regular habit. This is the best time to communicate with Allah, in the veil of the night, when there are no distractions. To make something a habit, practice it for 40 times – until it becomes inscribed in your action as second nature. The difference between successful and unsuccessful people is that they finish what they set out to do, are persistent

during trials, are tenacious in staying the course and are firmly resistant in the way of our Lord (swt). Those who face more challenges are most resilient and tougher in the way of Allah (swt). Prepare your children and loved ones accordingly.

Do not have expectations of others and lay blame for any shortcomings on yourself

Be modest and in the middle path in everything that you do. Allah loves beauty, so avoid extremism in asceticism - in your dress, bearing, how you interact, eat, and treat all His creation. Your outer physical being must be in conformity with your inner spiritual being and filled with sincerity. Moderation requires balance and not exceeding the teachings of religion. Your worldly business and spiritual devotion to God are in a cosmic balance and harmony. You are a mere star in the galaxy of the sky - you are part of a community of humanity, so do not dissociate vourself from others. All are creations of Allah, and deserve the utmost love and respect.

Do all action for the sake of God, and for His love alone

Make your intention/niat to be amongst those on the straight path - have no expectation of reward or gain, but only with sincerity, without fear or desire. Remember maintaining your goals, achievements and good deeds, is much harder than achieving them. Trust in God alone in all your efforts, and seek the means that God has provided. He will always show you a way that you did not think existed as He is the Creator of all the means - the apparent and the hidden, the seen and the unseen. The logic of the laws of the Universe are His creation and are subservient to His Will. He only needs to say "Be" and it is.

"Put your trust in Allah if you have faith" [Surah Al-Maidah 5:23]

Start and end your day in the most blessed way

Start your day with a good and honest supplication, and end the day in a good manner and thanks-giving for the bounty and protection you have been afforded. Always sleep in a state of purity with your wudhu. Be healthy and eat less and not to you are full, prolong your life for the worship of Allah (swt).

Give charity consistently and often

Do it with a smile, a kind word, a small donation, your time. Do good for goodness sake. Charity is your test – are you up to it? Start first with those who have a right over you such as parents, family and neighbours, then work outwards.

Be the same person in public and in private

Protect your eyes and other organs, and your Nafs from sin. Cast out ill thought from your mind especially the satanic whisperings of the slinkering whisperer. Shaitan decorates rubbish to deceive us, and makes alluring that which is mischief, in order to tempt us away from the Straight Path. Avoid anger and losing your temper aspire to your angelic self as inspired by the Ruh, and avoid the Nafs that is created of clay and the base emotional self.

What about those who aspire to leadership, what are some pearls of wisdom to share:

- Be the servant-leader. You are no better than the community you serve. Avoid fame, and be ordinary.
- 2 Leaders must do laborious and menial tasks they must break down their own egos, repair their own shoes and mend their own clothes, so to speak. Do not indulge in the plague of pride and the fire of jealousy - do not compare yourself to others, and always debase your efforts and achievements.

"And so those who were given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord and [therefore] believe in it, and their hearts humbly submit to it. And indeed is Allah the Guide of those who have believed to a straight path." [Surah Al-Hajj 22: 54]

- The end does not justify the means the principle of justice must underlie everything that you do.
- Δ_{\star} Simplicity is elegance make things easy for the people within the arc of the Shariah. Be gracious in your everyday affairs and interactions, maintaining your adab, courtesy, manners and politeness in dealing with all types of people, irrespective of their position and status.

5 Stay connected with Islam - how have you achieved and maintained your continual professional development as a Muslim? It does not stop because you are a leader - do not be too arrogant to continue learning, attend a class, or do a course. Never be content with your knowledge in religion - it is a lifelong pursuit up to your last breath - as it is narrated, the Prophet (saw) encouraged the planting of trees even if you knew that the next day would be the end of the world.

The last piece of critical learning, and one that no matter how many times we fail, we but must strive to get up again is to always act ethically and morally in everything we do, for the sake of Allah (swt):

"Worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He surely sees you".

To be a better servant of and to God (swt), we must constantly pursue beneficial knowledge that bring us closer to God (swt), because the best servant of God (swt) treats all of God's creation and creatures with respect and fairness.

"O you who have believed, persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful."

[Surah Al-Imran 2: 200]

Hyder Gulam was born in Singapore and educated in Melbourne. He is a registered nurse, a qualified lawyer, an accredited mediator as well as a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing in Australia. He has post graduate qualifications in business/management, law, nursing and Islamic studies. He has published in areas such as trans-cultural nursing, Islamic law, health law, criminal law and military law. Hyder is now an in-house legal counsel for a multinational based in Singapore.

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The Hijrah, Urbanization and Human Development

by Dr Spahic Omer

The Prophet SAW championed that under the auspices of Islam and its unique tawhidic worldview, the Muslims are seen as brothers to each other and their similitude is like a wall whose bricks enforce and rely on each other...

eople are both the creators and demolishers of every civilizational accomplishment. They, too, are the only beneficiaries of each and every valuable civilizational upshot. Similarly, people are the creators and inhabitants of cities, a locus of civilization. They create cities and then live and work in them. They do this either commendably, thus securing and enjoying the fruits of their right acts, so long as they stick to the right schemes which led them to such a state, or appallingly with no clear purpose or direction. In the latter scenario, things are always bound to work against the inhabitants of a city, making their lives both miserable and injurious. Allah says to this effect: "Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned, that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from evil)." (al-Rum, 30:41)

Of the essence is thus constantly and painstakingly educating, purifying, nurturing and cherishing individuals, as well as overseeing and monitoring their progress and involvements, along the lines

of an adopted worldview, philosophy and vision. This is so because individuals make up groups and societies, and they are the planners, makers, beneficiaries, consumers and sustainers, or slayers, of every civilizational triumph. They subsist at the heart of every urbanization scheme and advancement. Indeed, human development and urbanization are intertwined. They cannot be separated. Neither of them can be treated without, or at the expense of, the other.

It goes without saying that the people are the most direct causes of their own civilizational destinies. They, by and large, are fully responsible for them. Allah says, for example, that He will change the condition of a people only when they change what lies in themselves, i.e., when they change themselves first. (al-Ra'd, 31:11) He also says that He will help a people only when they "help" Him by obeying Him and by following His religion, Islam. (Muhammad, 7) This close and causal relationship between urbanization and any sort of civilizational awakening, on the one hand, and human spiritual and moral development and enlightenment, on the other, has been emphasized as a blueprint for genuine and lasting success in both worlds since time immemorial. It in fact denoted the focal point of each and every holy prophet's struggle and teachings, from Adam to Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

About Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Allah says that he was sent in order to teach people that they "... should worship none but Allah" (Hud, 11:2), and that they should seek "... the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance; that He may grant you enjoyment, good (and true), for a term appointed, and bestow His abounding grace on all who abound in merit! But if you turn away, then I fear for you the penalty of a great day. To Allah is your return, and He has power over all things." (Hud, 11:3-4)

Thus, in view of the developments that the Islamic message was living through in the city-state of Madinah, following the Hijrah, such a thing, i.e., nurturing and developing community members consistent with the values and beliefs of Islam, instantaneously attracted much of the Prophet's attention.

It should be noted that at the time of the Hijrah, the ongoing revelation of Islam was entering its 13th year and the Muslims were yet to set up a free and autonomous state of their own.

Once the city of Madinah with most of its inhabitants wholeheartedly welcomed the new religion, so fiercely disapproved of by many where it had originated, the wait finally came to an end and the stage was set for broadening the focus of the young community's undertakings. As a result, the focus of revelation was likewise widened. The religion of Islam thus began to assert itself as a universal code of life overlooking no segment of human existence - a momentous development indeed after having been portrayed essentially as an inclusive belief system during the precarious episode in Makkah.

From the point of development, urbanization and community building, the whole Madinah period of revelation - in particular the first half, about four to five years - was, as expected, exceptionally eventful too.

community building, as a launch pad for a wholesome urban development, was well-structured and arresting. He championed that under the auspices of Islam and its unique tawhidic worldview, the Muslims are seen as brothers to each other and their similitude is like a wall whose bricks enforce and rely on each other; they are like a solid cemented structure held together in unity and strength, each part contributing strength in its own way, and the whole held together not like a mass, but like a living organism. The Muslims are furthermore related to each other in such a way that if one of them (a part of an organic and formidable formation called the Ummah) is troubled by a problem of whatever kind, the rest of the body parts will remain disturbed and restless until the matter became solved.

Surely, for the reason of nurturing community members did the Prophet (PBUH) upon arriving in Madinah disclose to the assembled crowd some of the paths which invariably lead towards Jannah (Paradise) in the Hereafter, as well as towards individual and collective felicity in this world. Such paths are: implementing and spreading

peace and concord wherever possible and by whatever lawful means, sharing and compassion, maintaining good relations with relatives (as well as with others), and praying at night when everybody else is asleep. The companion 'Abdullah b. Salam said that these were the first words he had heard from the Prophet (PBUH). Without doubt, these were among the very first advices the Prophet (PBUH) gave following the Hijrah, because 'Abdullah b. Salam was among the first to see, meet and hear the Prophet (PBUH). No sooner had he done so, than he embraced Islam, as he realized that the Prophet's face "seemed by no means like the face of a phony."

For the same reason did the content of the Prophet's sermon at the first Friday prayer (Jumu'ah) in Madinah - as well as the content of the other sermons of his at this juncture - emphasize the importance of such issues as faith (iman), taking hold of the good and leaving the evil, brotherhood, sincerity, steadfastness, gratefulness for the blessing of Islam, the significance of helping one another in righteousness and piety and not in sin and rancor, the common cause of the Muslims, and the like.

Some of the underlying societal qualities and features of Islam, such as commitment to the established cause. justice, equality, and mutual understanding and cooperation, have also been manifested as early as during the exercise of determining the site of the first urban component in the city of Madinah, i.e., the Prophet's mosque, and during the marking out of its boundaries. At the earmarked location of the mosque there was a walled piece of land that belonged to some people from the Banu al-Najjar clan. The Prophet (PBUH) sent to them and asked them to suggest to him the price of the land. They replied: "No! By Allah! We do not demand its price except from Allah." The Prophet (PBUH) accepted the offer and the occurrence typified as well as inaugurated, so to speak, a new phase of the unreserved keenness of the first Muslims to sacrifice whatever they possessed for the cause of strengthening Islam and the Muslim community.

Additionally, the mosque proper was about to expand into an area used for drying dates which belonged to two youths, both orphans, named Sahl and Suhayl.



The Prophet (PBUH) asked them too to suggest to him the price of the place. However, when they said that they demand no price for it, the Prophet (PBUH) insisted that they tell the price, since they were orphans and possessed little. Eventually, he paid them ten golden dinars. The money was Abu Bakr's.

The Prophet's scheme of personality and community building, as an integral part of his urbanization paradigm, reached its climax when he legislated the system of mu'akhah (brotherly association) among the Migrants (Muhajirs) from Makkah and Helpers (Ansar) from Madinah. The mu'akhah included 90 men, 45 from either side. While some claim that the mu'akhah took place after the building of the Prophet's mosque, albeit before the battle of Badr, others contend that it in fact occurred during the process of building the mosque. The mu'akhah was accomplished in the house of Anas b. Malik. So binding was the treaty that the Migrants for sometimes were the heirs of the Helpers, and vice versa, instead of their own kindred by blood. Later, however, the verse 33 from the Qur'anic chapter al-Nisa' was revealed and the matter of the Migrants and Helpers inheriting one another was cancelled.

Shortly after arriving in Madinah, the Prophet (PBUH) also organized the relationship between the various inhabitants of Madinah, including the Jews, and recorded it in a document (the Constitution of Madinah). The commitments of each group within Madinah and its rights and duties were comprehensively enshrined in the document. That the society of Madinah was founded and was set to progress on the basis of commitment, love, mutual understanding, cooperation and support, was thus demonstrated in a striking applied fashion. As was the Islamic perception of believers envisaging them in their mutual love and affection as one entity whose components depend on and complement each other.

Furthermore, nurturing and developing exemplary community members in the young and constantly evolving city-state of Madinah was dealt with by God's direct interventions as well, by means of prescribing guidelines and directives that targeted at both men's and women's steady spiritual and moral development, as well as at clearly defining their roles and standings in the community.

For example, in the night of al-Mi'raj, which occurred sometime between one and two years before the Hijrah, the institution of prayer (Salah) was prescribed to the Muslims. The prayers of those not traveling and of those traveling had both been of two rak'ahs, except the Maghrib (sunset) prayer which was of three rak'ahs from the beginning. But about

a month after the arrival of the Prophet (PBUH) in Madinah, two rak'ahs in Zuhr (noon), 'Asr (mid afternoon) and 'Isha' (evening) prayers were added to the prayers of those who were not traveling.

Certainly, this addition which came to pass in Madinah immediately after the Hijrah had scores of benefits for the spiritual and civilizational maturity of many Muslims, some of whom had just entered the fold of the new Islamic code of living, given that the task of one's prayers is to restrain one from shameful and evil deeds (al-'Ankabut 29:45) and to foster honesty, goodness, conformity and dedication. As the Prophet (PBUH) experienced a midnight journey from the al-Masjid al-Haram to the al-Masjid al-Aqsa (al-Isra'), whence he traveled to the seven heavens (al-Mi'raj) where the prayer commandment was decreed, every human soul similarly ought to undergo a journey of its own in its religious growth in life. Praying five times a day at the divinely appointed times and as many rak'ahs as God asked us to take on - which in fact signifies conversing with our Lord and Sustainer, plus powering our soul and mind with the spirit of Truth - is the most invaluable asset that one may possess all through the long and thorny journey. Every single prayer is thus expected to elevate its executor a step or a degree off the wickedness and the confines of this world and towards a spiritual fulfillment.



LIFE



So, the bigger number of those who willingly and enthusiastically tread on the said spiritual journey, ever ready to better themselves and those around them, the better the prospects for their ideals to materialize and flourish become. With such people aboard, imposing a struggle for the supremacy of God's Word as the sole objective of existence will never be an impossible proposition, as plainly shown by the history of the Madinah city-state and by the history of other successful Islamic societies.

For the purpose of creating healthy and upright individuals who will constitute a healthy and virtuous society, the prescription of Adhan (calling to prayers), Siyam (fast), Zakah (the alms),

Sadagah al-fitr (charity of fast-breaking), Jihad (struggle for the holy cause), and some other legislative moves with regard to halal (lawful) and haram (forbidden) - all these came about as well during the earliest Madinah period. Although the citystate of Madinah was just about a few years old, yet some of the most crucial and decisive aspects of the individual, family and societal life have already been duly taken up. The aspect of urban development was just a dimension in a multidimensional cultural and civilizational mission undertaken by the Prophet (PBUH) and his followers.

This article is an excerpt from the author's book "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Urbanization of Madinah".



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MCAS Day

3 March 2019

MCAS Family Day was held on 3 March 2019. The aim of the event is to unite all MCAS staff, members and volunteers to bond and mingle, in appreciation of their involvement with the Association. Most attendees were clad in traditional garments or national costumes.

The event was held at the Heritage Chalet, located in Pasir Ris and the theme for the day was "Reliving the Kampung Spirit". Lots of traditional games and activities, as well as traditional food stations and drinks were offered, to reminisce the good ol' kampung days.

There were over 300 participants who came together with their friends and families. Everyone was thoroughly entertained as they soak in the fun during the various activities and games.



(Top) MCAS volunteers posing for a photoe while serving drinks during the hot afternoon.





(Top and Right) Everyone was up on their feet and enjoyed themselves during the event.

Robins the Kompung Spirit





(Top) Volunteers reliving the Kampung Spirit.

(Right) Heave-Ho... Tug-of-War.





(Left) Kids having a go at the games booth.



The Character of the Prophet



by Sheikh Mohammad Elshinawy

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Grantor of Mercy

God combined in His final Prophet # the most illustrious qualities, ensuring by that the confidence of his audience. His person sparkled from every angle and was thus seen as admirable in everyone's eyes. Those who considered lineage crucial - though it is not in God's eyes - found Muhammad ﷺ descending from a nobility that was the purest of the pure. Those who practiced s face glowed with المجازية, physiognomy (assessing a person's character based on physical appearance) felt that Muhammad integrity. Those who experienced him firsthand, or later read his biography, found in Muhammad عليه والمائية a lifestyle of extraordinary sincerity and conviction.



The Prophet صلے اللہ was not merely a person whose honesty was testified to, rather his clansmen had officially titled him as-Sādiq al-Amīn (the Truthful, the Trustworthy). Even when they persecuted him and rejected his message, they still trusted him with their most precious possessions. Aisha (rA) said, "He عليه وسلم instructed 'Ali (rA) to stay behind in Mecca, in order to return all the trusts the Messenger of Allah عليه وسلم had for people. There was nobody in Mecca (even his enemies!) who had valuables that he feared for except that he kept them with the Messenger of Allah عليه due to the honesty and trustworthiness that was known [to all] about him. Thus, 'Ali (rA) stayed back for three days and three nights to deliver everything entrusted by the people to the Messenger of Allah ملية , and then caught up with "after completing that task." عليه الله

His principled honesty was so evident that even people from different eras, backgrounds, and religions recognize it. Indeed, you frequently find them unable to imagine a fair person reading his life and arriving at a different conclusion.

In fact, although the Scottish philosopher and historian Thomas Carlyle (d. 1881) certainly had his reservations about Sincerity عليه الله sincerity عليه الله sincerity at times bordered between deep intrigue and apparent conviction. For instance, he explains, "It goes greatly against the impostor theory, the fact that he lived in this entirely

unexceptional, entirely quiet and commonplace way, till the heat of his years was done.

He was forty before he talked of any mission from Heaven. All his irregularities, real and supposed, date from after his fiftieth year, when the good Kadijah died. All his 'ambition,' seemingly, had been, hitherto, to live an honest life; his 'fame,' the mere good opinion of neighbors that knew him, had been sufficient hitherto. Not till he was already getting old, the prurient heat of his life all burnt out, and peace growing to be the chief thing this world could give him, did he start on the 'career of ambition;' and, belying all his past character and existence, set up [by others] as a wretched empty charlatan to acquire what he could no longer enjoy! For my share, I have no faith whatever in that [imposter theory]."[2] In the same book, Carlyle says, "The lies (Western slander) which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man (Muhammad) are disgraceful to ourselves only."

In the history of humanity, many imposters have claimed prophethood, and they have all been found void of virtuosity and unethically opportunistic. This is endemic to and expected from, imposter prophets - for they have embraced being the most sinister of liars. Just as lying about your friends is worse than lying about a random person, and just as lying about your parents is worse than lying about your friends, there is nothing uglier than a person lying about God. Therefore, when a man

SPIRITUALITY



His Honesty...continue

with the undisputed honesty of Muhammad المنطقة lives for forty years without ever lying, then claims to be God's Prophet, this should be seen as a sign of the veracity of his claim.

Finally, "The sun eclipsed in the lifetime of Allah's Messenger on the day when [his son] Ibrāhīm died. The people said that the sun had eclipsed because of the death of Ibrāhīm. Allah's Messenger said, "The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of the death or life (i.e., birth) of anyone. Rather, they are two of the signs of Allah, by which He instills fear in His

slaves. When you see the eclipse, pray and invoke Allah. "اعا Had the Prophet في في been an imposter, this would have been the perfect opportunity to capitalize on such a credibility booster. These coinciding events opened an extremely convenient window for self-promotion, and yet, the Prophet في المواقع would not even let others interpret this as the skies being saddened for Ibrāhīm. Though hurting from the tragic loss, he ما معدود المعاونة المعاو



His Austerity and Asceticism

The simple, austere lifestyle of the Prophet (is a major indication that his mission could not have been self-serving. After all, this was a man who controlled all of Arabia by the end of his life. Even before that, he had thousands of followers throughout his stay in Madinah; followers who obsessed over him, and would have loved to do anything in the world for him. With all that considered, we find no luxury in any sphere of his life. Rather, we find in his apartment a straw mat that would leave marks on his side, and a hanging leather water skin from which he bathed. When he will be wished to prostrate in this room, he would tap Aisha (rA) to bend her legs to make room for him to prostrate. For months on end, no fire would be kindled for cooking in his home, and his family had to be content with dates and water unless a Companion gifted them some milk.

Edward Gibbon (d. 1794), a historian and member of England's Parliament, wrote, "The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty. The Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire; swept the floor; milked the ewes; and mended with his own hands his shoes and garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed without effort or vanity the abstemious diet of an Arab."[4] In other words, he had not just endured the coarseness of an austere life, but it flowed naturally from him. He was not trying to encourage monkhood or self-deprivation, nor was he faking this minimalism to earn praise from the people. Gibbons continues, "On solemn occasions, he feasted

his companions with rustic and hospitable plenty. But, in his domestic life, many weeks would pass without a fire being kindled on the hearth of the Prophet."

According to Washington Irving (d. 1859), an American biographer and diplomat, "He was sober and abstemious in his diet and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected but a result of real disregard for distinction from so trivial a source ... His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vainglory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power, he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting a regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonials of respect were shown to him." [5]

Bosword Smith (d. 1908), a reverend, schoolmaster, and author writes, "Head of the State as well as the Church; he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a police force, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without their supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life." [6]



The great bravery of the Prophet "שלים" meant that he was not only truthful, but certain of his truthfulness. Some orientalists, though all are derisive in depicting Islam, choose to argue that Muhammad שלים was not consciously lying, but suffered from a mental illness that subjected him to delusions of grandeur. This claim crumbles at the feet of the Prophet's documented bravery, because someone who "hears voices" and has psychological disorders would be inconsistent, reluctant, and incapable of achieving all of the triumphs he achieved. More importantly, a mentally disturbed person would never come up with a complete system of beliefs and laws that would earn the respect of thousands of historians, philosophers, and other men of wisdom. Therefore, the consistent and matchless bravery of Muhammad

The Prophet المنافقة never fled in battle; rather, he fought fearlessly on the front lines. It would have been perfectly understandable for the Prophet منافقة to shield himself behind the army, for his death would mean the end of the message. Yet, 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib (rA), the celebrated warrior, would say, "I myself witnessed on the Day of Badr how we used to stay close to the Prophet منافقة for cover, and he was the closest of us to the enemy, and he was the fiercest [warrior] on that day."[7]

A man once said to al-Barā' b. 'Âzib (rA), "Did you flee on the Day of Ḥunayn, O Abu 'Umāra?" He replied, "I can testify that

the Prophet of Allah المنظم did not retreat. Rather, it was some hasty young men who met – without adequate arms – a group from Hawāzin and Banu Naḍīr. They happened to be [excellent] archers, and they shot at them a volley of arrows that exposed [their ranks]. The people turned [for help] to the Messenger of Allah المنظمة, whose mule was being led by Abu Sufyān b. Harb. He المنظمة dismounted, prayed, and invoked God's help. What he said was, "I am the Prophet; this is no untruth. I am the son of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib! O Allah, send your help!" By Allah, when the battle grew fierce, we would seek protection behind him, and [only] the bravest among us could stand by his side [in battle]."[8]

When Allah revealed, "O Messenger, convey that which has been revealed to you... and Allah will protect you from the people" [al-Mā'ida (5): 67], the Prophet "forbade his Companions from continuing to stand guard at night by his door. One night, the Muslims – who remained anxious that the Romans would attack Madinah at any time – awoke startled by a loud crash. Rushing to the scene, they found the Prophet "grade" already returning on a bareback horse belonging to Abu Ṭalḥa, his sword hanging around his neck, reassuring them that it was a false alarm. It takes exemplary courage, racing out alone to face potential danger like that, courage that even the brayest souls would admire.



The Prophet Muhammad والمنافرة did not only display bravery at specific junctions in his life, but rather showed exemplary endurance and consistency throughout. Consider a man who never knew his father firsthand, hardly enjoyed the compassion of his mother, and then lost his grandfather, and then his uncle and dearest wife simultaneously. Consider a man who lived to witness every single one of his children die save for one, who was treated like a menace and fugitive after decades of building a flawless reputation among his people. Consider a man who experienced physical abuse until he would faint, was starved for years by his own people, and faced countless campaigns of character assassination. Consider a man who was driven out of his home, sent fleeing to Madinah for shelter, only to find hypocrites there awaiting every opportunity to betray him. Consider a man watching assassination attempts against

his life unfold regularly, as well as the murder and mutilation of his relatives and companions, and then the slander of his cherished wife Aisha (rA), the daughter of his most loyal comrade. Who could persevere with hope, and persist in matchless ethics, through all this except someone infused by a unique aid from the heavens? The Prophet aurique aid from the heavens? The Prophet post rose from that abyss of negativity and not only survived, but became a fountain of mercy and empathy for people, animals, and plants alike. This is nothing short of miraculous; only God brings the dead out of the living, and produces a spring from a rock, and nourishes a rose in the desert. Only God could have kept him smiling throughout, playing with his grandchildren, standing by his principles, and lifting the spirits of those who suffered so much less than him. Only God could have empowered him



His Perseverance...continue

enemies, and concern for the arrogant. Only God could have kept his heart grateful at times when others could not even be patient, and his heart merciful at times when others could not even be just.

Though the incidents reflecting his perseverance are innumerable, any honest person can simply familiarize himself with the embargo in the ravine of Abu Tālib. This continued صلي الله for an utterly brutal three years, wherein the Prophet watched the lips of his Companions turn green from eating leaves and gnawing at animal hides out of desperation for any nourishment. In fact, he watched his dearest family members slowly deteriorate in front of his eyes. Khadīja (rA) and Abu Tālib were so debilitated by the embargo that they never recovered from it; they both died soon thereafter. And with the received in that عليه وسلم protection of Abu Ṭālib gone, the Prophet year the most humiliating treatment of his life.

ميل الله Aisha (rA) reported that she once asked the Prophet "Have you encountered a day harder than the Day of Uhud?" The Prophet عليه said, "Your tribe has troubled me very much,

and the worst was the day of 'Agaba when I presented myself to 'Abd Yalāyl b. 'Abd Kulāl, and he did not respond to what I sought. I [eventually] departed, overwhelmed with grief, and I could not relax until I found myself at a tree where I lifted my head towards the sky to see a cloud shading me. I looked up and saw Gabriel in it. He called out to me, saying, 'Allah has heard your people's speech to you and how they have replied, and Allah has sent the Angel of the Mountains to you that you may order him to do whatever you wish to these people.' The Angel of the Mountains greeted me and said, 'O Muhammad, order what you wish, and if you like, I will let the two mountains fall upon them.' I said, 'No, rather I hope that Allah will bring from their descendants people who will worship Allah alone without associating partners with Him."[11]

spent ten days in Ṭā'if after speaking عليه وسلام spent ten days in Ṭā'if after speaking to its leaders, calling its people to Islam, until mobs gathered to drive him out. They made two rows and forced him through them while they hurled obscenities and pelted stones until blood ran down his blessed legs, and Zayd b. Ḥaritha's head was gashed.[12] But even in that darkest hour, all this compounded anguish still did not break the Prophet عُلِيُّوسِلُّهُ s perseverance.



never lost علية وسلم It is remarkable how the Prophet Muhammad hope in the support and victory of Allah, regardless of how apparently hopeless his situation would sometimes become. This optimism tells of a heart laced with supreme faith. and عليه الله Upon leaving Mecca for the migration, the Prophet Abu Bakr (rA) were tracked to a cave. Mercenaries stood at the mouth of the cave, and simply had to bend over to look inside, and nothing would have prevented them from noticing and capturing the Prophet عليه وسلم. In that unnerving moment, when despair would penetrate even the firmest of souls, the Prophet مليالله calmly utters to his Companion an unbelievable statement: "O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two - when Allah is their third?" The Quran later referenced this incident by saying, "If you do not aid the Prophet - Allah has already aided him when those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Mecca] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he said to his companion, 'Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.' And Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and supported him with angels you did not see and made the word of those who disbelieved the lowest, while the word of Allah - that is the highest. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise" [at-Tawba (9): 40].

A person may say: how do we know that Muhammad did not fabricate this verse after the event, portraying with it a dishonest image about his unwavering conviction in God? The simplest response is that Abu Bakr (rA) personally witnessed how calm and collected the Messenger of Allah صلى الله was in not been so, would Abu عُلُولِيُّاهِ those terrifying minutes. Had he Bakr (rA) have remained his greatest admirer and continued venerating him as the embodiment of integrity, even after the Prophet عليه وسلم 's death?

had in على الله had in his faith, whereby the promise of Allah which his heart saw would override the hopelessness his eyes saw. This is identical to what occurred to Moses (as) at the shore; "And when the two companies (the Israelites and Pharaoh's legions) saw one another, the companions of Moses said, 'Indeed, we are to be overtaken!' He (Moses) said, 'No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me." [ash-Shu'arā' (26): 61-62] This degree of certitude was unique to the Prophets and Messengers; even if the world lost hope, they would never unravel.



When analyzing the veracity of Muhammad's prophethood, one would be remiss to limit his followers to the noble Companions. Prophet Muhammad ما المنافية is the single most influential personality in human history (see: The 100, by Michael Hart), being imitated in the most private, or nuanced, particularities of his life. For a millennium and a half, there has been a worldwide fascination with resembling the final Prophet, even at the cost of opposing the dominant culture or current trends. For 1.6 billion people today, that is a small price

to pay for mirroring the most ideal human being that ever lived.

David George Hogarth (d. 1927), a British scholar and archeologist, said, "Serious or trivial, his daily behavior has instituted a canon which millions observe this day with conscious memory. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has ever been imitated so minutely. The conduct of the founder of Christianity has not governed the ordinary life of his followers. Moreover, no founder of a religion has left on

so solitary an eminence as the Muslim apostle."[15]

However, his most profound followers were undoubtedly his Companions, and this is what distinguishes their testimony to the truth of his message. These Companions were not a mere bunch of good fellows who prayed at night, devoted their lives to God, but shared a collective naivety. This was, without bias, the most significant generation in the history of mankind. The genius of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (rA), for instance, has been recognized by many historians. In fact, the Columbia History of the World asserts how 'Umar effected a superior bureaucracy

than that of the juggernaut Roman Empire which preceded Muslim rule.[16] When a tribal Arab can construct a federal government with centralized power, but also the flexibility to make the peripheries of this union sustainable —and by that change the course of history—one should concede that this was an exceptional mind. This is but one person who believed in the prophethood of Muhammad one who mimicked him عليه وسلم with an obsessive admiration. Abu Bakr giving half his wealth for the sake of Islam, Bilāl

refusing to recant his beliefs

despite unthinkable torture, Sumayya and Yāsir being tortured

It is remarkable how the Prophet Muhammad and never lost hope in the support and victory of Allah, regardless of how apparently hopeless his situation sometimes become.



SPIRITUALITY



to death for refusing to even pretend they did not believe in Muhammad عليه , are not petty events. As for those who survived, they undertook the momentous task of inculcating his spirit and message into their lives, making them most deserving of God's praise, "You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah." [Âl 'Imrān (3): 110] Being followed so ardently by this caliber of people, who experienced him before and after prophethood, and witnessed his behavior on a daily basis, is a clear gauge as to how certain they were in him صلى الله and his mission.

William Montgomery Watt (d. 2006), a Scottish historian and Emeritus Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies, wrote, "His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement

- all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an imposter raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad... Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must not forget that conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty."[17]

This was the immaculate personality of the Prophet Muhammad ملي visible to those centuries and seas apart from his lifetime. It leaves no wonder why an entire generation outdid one another in emulating his smile, his selflessness, his stand for truth, and his serving humanity.

- Collected by al-Bayhaqi in as-Sunan al-Kubrā (12477), Ibn Kathīr in al-Bidāya wan-Nihāya (3/218-219), and at-Ṭabari in Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulook (2/372)
- [2] See: On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History, by Thomas
- [3] Collected by al-Bukhāri (1043)
- [4] The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, by Edward Gibbon, Chapter 50
- [5] Mohamet and His Successors, by Washington Irving
- [6] Muhammad and Muhammadanism, by Bosword Smith
- [7] Collected by Ahmad (619)
- [8] Collected by Muslim (4388)
- Collected by at-Tirmidhi (5/351) and al-Ḥākim (2/313)
- [10] Collected by al-Bukhāri in al-Adab al-Mufrad, Book 14, Hadith 303
- [11] Collected by al-Bukhāri (3059) and Muslim (1795)

- [12] Collected by Ibn Hishām in as-Sīra (2/70-72) and Ibn Sa'd in at-Ṭabaqât al-Kubrā (1/211-221)
- صلياله Some people cite a narration from az-Zuhri about the Prophet having suicidal ideations when the revelation paused for a short period (to increase his longing for the angelic visits, and to ensure he would never take this revelation for granted). Even if one overlooks the fact that this narration has a mu'allaq (incomplete) chain, it simply portrays the suffering, turmoil, and sadness that he endured and was not deterred by. After all, he مليه never surrendered to these passing thoughts or impulses and threw himself off the mountain, but rather wrestled with them successfully. Therefore, this only proves - if anything - that his optimism overrode his pains, and that nothing about his life and human nature was ever hidden.
- [14] Collected by al-Bukhāri (3866, 4663, 4692) and Muslim (2381)
- [15] Arabia, by D.G. Hogarth, first published in 1923
- [16] The Columbia History of the World, 1st Edition, p. 264
- [17] Muhammad at Mecca, by William Montgomery Watt, Oxford University Press (1953), p. 52

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Da'wah Awareness Training Programme

(DATP)

Da'wah Awareness Training Programme (DATP) is in its fourth year running. The objectives of the program is to train and equip aspiring Da'wah volunteers, age 18 and above, with relevant knowledge and skills to present Islam responsibly and confidently to the world. Among the participants were Converts and local Mosque docents.

Modules were conducted by local and international Asatizah (scholars) as well as communication experts. Participants mastered Prophetic and Contemporary Da'wah techniques and developed effective ways to answer questions on Islam. They also had the opportunity to apply the acquired Da'wah skills during the practical training sessions.



(Right) Mosque visit.



(Top and Right) Training in session.

(Bottom) Our docents during a mosque visit.



(Right) Ustaz Khalid Rafi engaging with the students.



Future Ready @ The Learning Festival

2 - 3 November 2019



Future Ready @ The Learning Festival 2019 was held from the 2nd to 3rd of November at Our Tampines Hub. The aim of the festival is to highlight the importance of learning through engaging the larger community. This was a joint collaboration made possible by People's Association, Yayasan Mendaki in support of Raikan Ilmu (Celebrating Knowledge).

A fun filled day of learning, more than 60 booths participated in this event. The participants range from companies whose expertise are in technology such as robotics & virtual reality, institutions offering skills future & upgrading courses, community programmes as well as showcasing of publications which are available in the market. There were also activities for the little ones at the PlayFest area.



It was an exciting, fun and informative event where one could expand their learning horizons on the latest technology trends, get creative through fun & play and explore new skills to upgrade oneself, especially for youths and adults.















Dealing with Non-Practising/Sinful Close **Family Members:**

Argument for "Hate the Sin, Not the Sinner"

by Ustaz Dr. Muhammad Haniff Hassan, Research Fellow at RSIS

When a Muslim has committed himself to live based on his religious principles, the existence of a close family member (i.e. parents, siblings, spouses or children) who chooses a different way of life or possesses habits that do not conform with Islamic teachings (i.e. drinking alcohol, taking drugs, fornication, gambling or non-performance of religious obligations) will pose a challenge and problem because:

- · The incompatibility of such lifestyle and habits with one's personal beliefs and principles
- · The effect of such lifestyle and habits on the home environment and other family members
- Energy, mind and time are needed to counsel the family member because Islam obligates Muslim to enjoin good and forbid evil, especially among close family members and often this would cause strain in relationship
- · Situation like this may induce stress, sadness and frustration to a person.

The outcome of the situation varies. Some may be able to remain patient, continue the good counsel and remain strong. However, many fall into depression and experience broken relationship that harm personal wellbeing and harmonious family life.



The outcome (hidayah to change) is in the hands of Allah s.w.t.



How should a Muslim deal with such situation?

The first step, for a Muslim, is to do reflection on self and the problem; What is the reason or factor that could have caused the family member to live such lifestyle or commit the forbidden habit?

The objective is to identify the root of the problem that would help identify the solution and also for Muslim to identify his own weakness, flaw or negligence that might have contributed to the deviant behaviour or caused his efforts to counsel the family member ineffective.

This is consistent with the act of the Prophet during his trip to the city of Taif for the purpose of inviting its inhabitants to Islam. While on his way back to Mecca after been harshly rejected by the inhabitants, he prayed to Allah for guidance and strength and reflected that the rejection might be due to his untactful approach and lack of strategy, instead of blaming the people.

His prayer, as reported in a hadith, was; "O Allah! To You alone I make complain of my helplessness, the paucity of my resources and my insignificance before mankind. You are the Most Merciful of

the mercifuls. You are the Lord of the helpless and the weak. O Lord of mine! Into whose hands would You abandon me? Into the hands of an unsympathetic distant relative who would sullenly frown at me? Or to an enemy who has been given control over my affair? But of Your wrath does fall on me, there is nothing for me to worry about.

I seek protection in the light of Your Countenance, which illuminates the heaven and dispels darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world and in the Hereafter. May it never be that Your wrath, that You should be wrathful to me. And there is no power nor resource, but Yours alone." [i] (Narrated by Al-Tabrani)

A Muslim must also maintain positive attitude that the situation that he is facing is a form of test from Allah s.w.t. and for a good reason as stipulated in The Quran;

"And most certainly shall We try you by means of danger, and hunger, and loss of worldly goods, of lives and of [labour's] fruits. But give glad tidings unto those who are patient in adversity." [The Quran 2:155]

The Quran has clearly stated that test and tribulation is part and parcel of life, "He who has created death as well as life, so that He might put you to a test [and thus show] which of you is best in conduct, and [make you

realize that] He alone is almighty, truly forgiving." [The Quran 67:2]

And some of life tests come from immediate family members, "O you who have attained to faith! Behold, some of your spouses and your children are enemies unto you: so beware of them! But if you pardon [their faults] and forbear, and forgive-then, behold, God will be much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace." [The Quran 64:14-5]

Although life test comes with challenges and hardship, it also opens opportunity for gaining God's pleasure if a Muslim maintains patience and strives to his best ability to overcome it.

This positive attitude is consistent with the teaching of Islam that Muslim should strive to maintain good faith towards Allah s.w.t. as mentioned in a hadith,

"Allah said: I am to my slave as he thinks of Me, (i.e. I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him)." [Narrated by Al-Bukhari]

And not to lose hope when facing difficult situation, "..and do not lose hope of God's life-giving mercy: verily, none but people who deny the truth can ever lose hope of God's life-giving mercy." [The Quran 12:87]

Lesson from the Prophets

The Quran is the primary reference book for Muslims in all life challenges.

In the context of the problem being discussed, The Quran has narrated stories of prophets as best examples and inspiration for Muslims.

There are stories of prophets' dealing with their close family members who committed grave sins and some others rejected the call to tawhid and chose to be on the side of disbelievers.

These prophets are:

Adam

His son Qabil disobeyed God's instruction on offering sacrifice and murdered his brother.

[The Quran, 5:27-30]

Nuh

His wife and son rejected his faith and perished with disbelievers.

[The Quran, 11:42 and 66:10]

Lut

His wife refused to accept tawhid and perished with disbelievers.

[The Quran, 66:10]

Ibrahim

His father chose to be with his idol-worshiping people.

[The Quran, 6:74]

Ya'kob

His children's conspiracy caused tremendous hardship to his son Yusuf.

[Chapter 12 of the Quran]

Muhammad

His uncle Abu Talib refused to utter the *shahadah* till his last breath.

[The Quran, 28:56]

In addition, there is also a story of Asiah, wife of Pharaoh, in The Quran who believed in Allah secretly while her husband was a staunch opponent of Prophet Musa. [The Quran, 66:11]

Thus, whatever scenario of a misguided close family members a Muslim may have to face, there is example in The Quran from the stories of prophets where he can learn from and seek guidance.

There are, however, common lessons from all the stories. The first and most glaring lesson is the prophets maintained family relationship with the misguided family members

i.e. wife, father and children and did not ostracise them.

Nuh and Lut did not divorce or chase away their wives. Nuh and Ya'kob did not cut off relationship with their children. Both continued to be dutiful fathers and showed care and concern to them. Ibrahim did not show disrespect to his father. The Quran recorded Nuh's love to his son till the last minute of his life in 11:42-5 and Ibrahim's

respectful conversation with his father in 19:41-6.

Both were constantly praying for the misguided family members until Allah s.w.t. commanded them to stop [The Quran, 9:113-4, 11:46].

The examples contain important lesson for Muslims who are facing the same situation – maintaining relationship and not ostracising the

These examples illustrate the following scenarios where a Muslim might be facing;

- Pious husband living with misguided wife (story of Lut and Nuh with their wives)
- Pious wife living with misguided husband (story of Asiah with Pharaoh)
- Pious child living with misguided parent (story of Ibrahim with his father)
- Pious parent living with misguided children (story of Adam, Nuh and Ya'kob with their children)
- Pious individual living with close relatives (story of Prophet Muhammad with his uncle and relatives).





misguided family, despite their misguided behaviour. The wisdom it would allow the door of communication to remain open which, one day, may cause change in their hearts and behaviour, in contrast of severing relationship, which may not only close the door of communication but also hurt the feelings and aggravate the problem.

Secondly, the prophets continued showing love, care and concern to the family members, although they did not condone the misguided behaviour.

This, thus, brings about an important lesson that maintaining family relationship and fulfilling their rights are not forbidden and boycotting and marginalising them are not the only way to deal with them or address the problem. They cannot also be regarded as approving and condoning the sins.

The prophets' stories also teach Muslim parents that faith and piety cannot be inherited. They can only be instilled in children through consistent and continuous education and counsel i.e. from birth till adult.

Parents, thus, must realise that occupying themselves with plentiful *ibadah* to attain personal *taqwa* and closeness to God, might not have effect on their children's piety, if it is done at the expense of the children's religious upbringing.

From blaming, to self-empowering

It is important to note that maintaining positive relationship and showing love and care may have unintended effect. Instead of realising the mistake and taking steps for change, the family member may regard it as acceptance and, thus, continue with the misguided behaviour.

Thus, such approach must be complemented with active and constructive engagement to counsel the family member and change his behaviour or lifestyle.

This requires knowledge and skills from various disciplines which should be acquired through methodological learning and training from experts because, most often, the misguided behaviour is a result of complex and multiple factors i.e not simply lack of religious knowledge or guidance and, thus, continuous preaching about halal and haram in Islam, even in a nonconfrontational manner, may not have the intended effect.

Instead of spending time blaming, condemning and lamenting about the challenge faced, it would be better and productive for a Muslim who intends to see change in his misguided family member to spend time and energy in empowering himself with necessary tools i.e. knowledge and skills that would help deal with the situation in an effective and constructive manner.

Not to forget, a Muslim must constantly seek guidance from Allah s.w.t. and maintain close relationship with Him through continuous *ibadah* that He provides strength and patience and guides towards harmonious resolution of the problem.

It is empowering also to realise that a person's door towards repentance is not closed as long as he is alive. Stories of sinners discovering or rediscovering the truth is not uncommon.

Two examples can be cited. First is the story of a companion by the name of Tulaihah bin Khuwailid. He apostasised and claimed to be a prophet during the Prophet's life time. However, he returned to Islam during the rule of Abu Bakr, the First Caliph, after his army was defeated in a battle. He later died as martyr in the Battle of Nahawand against Persian empire army during the Second Caliph Umar's rule. Another companion, Abdullah bin Abi Sarh left Islam and joined the Meccans who were the enemy of the Prophet. However, he repented and returned to Islam and was appointed a governor by Uthman, the Third Caliph.

Don't be quick to judge

For member of community, the stories of the prophets teach that one should not be quick to judge or condemn Muslims who have to live with non-practising family members.

Such situation is not a cause for blame in Islam, Allah s.w.t. did not reprimand His prophets for having sinful and disbelieving children, wives and parents. A Muslim is only blamed in such situation if he condones with heart and deed the misguided behaviour and does not strive to counsel the family members.

Unless one has evidence that such Muslim is in complicit with the misguided family members in sin, not judging him negatively is a virtue based on principle, "al-asl baraah al-zimmah" (one should be considered innocent and free from any obligation, duty or blame, until proven otherwise) and The Quranic verse that says,

"O you who have attained to faith! Avoid most guesswork [about one another] for, behold, some of [such] guesswork is [in itself] a sin..." [The Quran, 49:12]

The Quran states that no person will be burdened by the sin of others and a person will only be accounted for the deed that he performed, "That no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden; and that nought shall be accounted unto man but what he is striving for." [The Quran, 53:38-9]

Those who are tested by Allah s.w.t. with non-practising family members, they are required only to counsel them in the best manner, "Call thou (all mankind] unto thy Sustainer's path with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner-for, behold, thy Sustainer knows best as to who strays from His path, and best knows as to who are the right-guided." [The Quran, 16:125]

And in the best of their ability, "Remain, then, conscious of God as best you can..." [The Quran, 64:16]

The outcome (hidayah to change) is in the hand of Allah s.w.t., "Verily, thou canst not guide aright everyone whom thou lovest: but it is God who guides him that wills [to be guided]; and He is fully aware of all who would let themselves be guided." [The Quran, 28:56]



The article was first published in Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "Dealing with Non-Practising/Sinful Close Family Members: Argument for "Hate the Sin, Not the Sinner"", Wasat, no 28, August, 2019, available at https:// blog.pergas.org.sg/wasat/dealing-with-non-practising-sinful-closefamily-members/. It is republished here with permission.

Singapore – Islamic Finance and Beyond

by Sani Hamid, Harinah Abdul Latiff, Fazrihan Duriat



S ingapore is uniquely an expensive secular country which welcomes Islamic finance despite having a Muslim minority. While new Islamic finance players have joined the industry, the minister in charge of Muslim affairs mentioned

that religious teachers are "well-placed to serve in many adjacent fields, such as social work, counselling, Islamic finance, law and beyond". Hence, while the Committee on Future Asatizah plans to develop the Singapore Islamic College with a

broad-based curriculum of Islamic sciences, the M³ - a collaboration of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), self-help group Mendaki and the People's Association Malay Activity Executive Committees Council -

represents a nationwide effort between key Islamic institutions to support the Muslim community such as providing educational financial support for the youth. SANI HAMID, HARINAH ABDUL LATIFF and FAZRIHAN DURIAT explore.

| Table 1: Progress by MAS, government agencies | 5 |
|---|---|
| and financial institutions in Singapore | |

| and financial institutions in Singapore | | |
|---|---|--|
| Entities | Activity | |
| MAS | Plans to issue up to five new digital bank licenses in a major move to liberalize the banking industry here, paving the way for fintech companies to become fully-fledged banks. | |
| MUIS | Fatwa committee issued a decision on joint tenancy and tenancy-in-common contracts. Set up a Special Needs Trust Scheme to sponsor families. | |
| Singapore Exchange (SGX) | Hosting venue for World Islamic Banking Conference Asia 2019 and IFN Singapore Forum 2019. | |
| Warees | Development cost to upgrade Bencoolen Mosque (asset under management) will be funded through Sukuk Musharakah bonds. | |
| Qatar National Bank | Continued its wholesale banking with competitive pricing and looking at regions like Indonesia. | |
| Macquarie Bank | Responding to growing demand for Shariah compliant banking and investment solutions across the region as institutional investors continue to seek diversification. Working with market participants to promote use of industry standard agreements to support Islamic business. | |
| CIMB Singapore | Seeing growth in Islamic commercial banking businesses and recently closed a SG\$130 million (US\$95.88 million) property financing deal. | |
| RHB Singapore | Focusing on sustainability and green financing facilities in Singapore aligned with Bank Negara Malaysia's value-based intermediation initiative. | |
| Maybank Singapore | The Asset Triple 'A' Awards (Singapore) Best Islamic Retail Bank Islamic Bank of the Year Planning more Shariah awareness programs and exploring new propositions and digital banking capabilities. | |

Review of the first half of 2019

Financial Alliance's Islamic Wealth Advisory (FAiWA) division has new unique offerings as follows:

- 1. The i-REITs Managed Account was introduced (in collaboration with Phillip Capital) as Singapore's first Shariah REITs Managed Account for retail investors, focusing mainly on Singapore-listed REITs under the Singapore FTSE Shariah ST Index.
- 2. The Montreux Healthcare Fund (under the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) restricted scheme), a private equity fund in the UK specialist healthcare sector, received its Shariah pronouncement from Malaysia's International Shari'ah Research Academy.

The BIMB-Arabesque Global Dividend Fund 1 (under the MAS restricted scheme) was launched by Bank Islam Malaysia Asset Management. It is the world's fourth-largest global equity Islamic fund which offers a unique investing approach through deep machine learning and big data technology. This is offered by FAiWA and other financial planners.

Other interesting observations are as follows:

- Sabana REIT, which is listed in SGX, obtained a revolving commodity Murabahah financing facility of up to SG\$23 million (US\$16.96 million) from CIMB Bank for general investments and corporate funding purposes.
- · La Français Forum Securities is managing a Shariah Compliant Global REITs Mandate out of the Singapore office.
- IdealRatings' Singapore office continue to provide Islamic capital market and asset management solutions to market players in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.
- Franklin Templeton, Amundi and Nomura Asset Management offices in Singapore performed the midback office functions for their respective Global and APAC ex Japan Shariah funds.
- · Ethis became the first Singapore-based crowdfunding platform licensed by the Securities

- Commission to operate in Malaysia.
- FAiWA held an Islamic investment public symposium, partnering with Bursa Malaysia-i, NTUC Income, Franklin Templeton, AXA and such.
- Halal Universe plans to relaunch its news portal, www. halal-u.com, by the fourth guarter of 2019.
- Walton International Group is currently launching land investments with cash flow features to align with the current growth sophistication in Shariah compliant investments and to suit the needs of Muslim investors.
- · Ascent Islamic achieved getting 500 Muslim clients and collaborated with Ustaz Nuzaihan Hamdan.
- SMU Islamic Business & Finance Society organized a talk titled 'Investing in Shariah Compliant Equities' presented by Hamisah Samad.

- 916 Pawnshop is actively promoting its Al-Rahn (Shariah compliant pawning) businesses endorsed by Koperasi Dagang Emas' Shariah panel.
- IF@SG members published an article on Shariah issues relating to FOREX trading.

Other noteworthy players complementing the Islamic economy are as follows:

- Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry will develop a Halal hub in two years' time.
- CrescentRating released its Global Muslim Travel Index 2019 and offers a 'Halal Tourism Executive Program' with local trainers.
- Hao Mart saw Ronnie Faizal Tan opening more than 35 Shariah compliant grocery outlets in Singapore, with plans for expansion.
- Have Halal, Will Travel uses Visa's Islamic portal to showcase travel and food destinations for Muslim segments in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.
- CollabDeen (the world's first community collaboration technology platform) held its first Global Islamic Economy Series session, inviting speakers from Refinitive, CrescentRating and MastertheCrypto.
- United World Halal
 Development will be
 organizing a World Halal
 Day Volga Investment
 Summit in Russia in
 October 2019, focusing
 on Halal sectors including
 Islamic finance.

| <u> </u> | | |
|---|--|--|
| Table 2: New Islamic finance players in Singapore | | |
| Entities | Activity | |
| Wahed Invest | Its robo-advisory services expanded to provide global access about Islamic value-based investing to countries like Singapore. | |
| tryb | Singapore-based fintech investor tryb became the first Southeast Asia- based venture capital firm to invest in the Shariah fintech industry by backing a pre-seed round for Indonesian start-up Alami. | |
| Dayn Advisory | Provides mortgage advisory to reduce interest incurred by Muslim customers on their conventional home loans (via refinancing) by comparing rates across different banks in Singapore. | |

Revisiting HDB Financing-i

Housing loans in Singapore make up 75% of all consumer lending totalling about SG\$265 billion (US\$195.44 billion). A Shariah compliant housing facility was mooted by CIMB and Maybank in consultation with the Central Provident Fund back in 2010.

To gauge the demand, a local survey was conducted in May 2019:

- Public 97 reponses (Muslim community), and
- **IF@SG** 55 responses (Islamic finance practitioners)

Results from both groups are almost similar. Preliminary analysis by Dayn Advisory revealed the following about both groups:

- 90% react positively to Shariah compliant Housing & Development Board (HDB) financing
- 60% view a Shariah compliant option as necessary, and
- 50% would switch to the Shariah compliant option and willing to forgo extra savings of about SG\$116-138 per month

Surprisingly, there were respondents thinking that Islamic finance concerns merely terminological changes and is a 'backdoor' to Riba. This could be attributed to inadequate understanding of Muamalat like how Shariah compliant contracts are structured (differences between 'borrower/ lender', 'sale/purchase', 'lessee/lessor', 'partnership' and such).

Azmi Muslimin, currently the chairman of Singapore's Association of Muslim Professionals' finance and investment committee and the chairman of Darul Arqam's investment and asset management subcommittee, personally believes the Singaporean Muslim community would welcome Shariah compliant property financing products for both the HDB and private residential property markets.



Conclusion

Singapore was ranked by Swiss business school IMD as the world's most competitive economy. With fintech, Islamic finance can boost the Singaporean economy, focusing on specific areas such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Shariah compliant housing schemes. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Singapore's senior minister, will co-chair the 2019 Human Development Report advisory board to tackle inequalities and improve the regulation of global financial markets. Hence, should Islamic finance and the Halal industry be the way to go, Asatizah and practitioners will need political support to balance economic development with environmental protection and social inclusion.



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The Qur'an Appeals to Human Intelligence

by Dr Rashid Raashed

nviting humanity to live a conscious and accountable lifestyle is the main purpose of the Qur'an being custom-made for their own benefit. In conducting the art of living, the Qur'an calls for human intelligence to become alive and active. Without breaking with the tradition of the revealed texts, throughout human history, the Qur'an argues that: "We have also sent down the reminder i.e. the Qur'an to you (O' Muhammad (s)) that you may clearly explain to the people (the true value of) what has been revealed unto them. (Do so,) in such a way that this may provoke their thought and contemplation" لعلهم يتفكرون) Yatafakkaroon)[2].

The key terms in this verse, are (Azzikr الذكر) i.e. the reminder and (Yatafakkaroon يتفكرون) i.e. that they may contemplate. The Qur'an invites the human intelligence and logic to argue, explore and reason with the objective of reaching a conviction.

By implication, however, it has to be achieved within the limits of human ability and experience. Constructed to its true value, this would probably be judged as the most compelling aspect of the Qur'an's call to reform. The most outstanding feature of human beings is the ability to employ logic and act accordingly. Inviting the humans to use this logic for their own good, was thus, the best that could have been done.

For humans, however, not to live up to their own standard, is a choice open to all individuals. But given the misuse of the free-will, this will not be without the consequences[4]. Negligence with one's duty of care, in a social setting, is a criminal offence, in our own judgement. Why shouldn't the same logic be called upon, when we fail to care for our own conscience and logic? So the prime test is, 'be the human first'!

The usage of the Qur'an while calling for the employment of human

intelligence (Alaqi العقل), has always been in the form of an active verb. In many ways, it is fascinating. It implies the duty of engaging intelligence constantly, during life and living it, as an art. Acting according to the dictates of human intelligence will only consolidate the human instinct of upholding the universal "moral law" to which all humans respond, regardless of one's belief in a faith or otherwise^[6].

Inviting the humans to decipher God's art and skill in creating the heavens and the earth (Inna fi khalqis samate wal ard ان في خلق السموات والأرض), the Qur'an engages human intelligence as follows:

The benefits of night sequencing the day, utilising the means of maritime transport (Wal fulkallati fil bahr والفلك التي تجري في البحر), for human good (Bima yanfannas سينفع الناس), the effects of rainfalls on making life on earth vibrant, and after all, manipulating the directions of wind and cloud to enhance life, provide abundant signs of God, to those who use their

intelligence effectively (لأيات لقوم يعقلون Laayatil leqaumiy yaqiloon) [8].

The Champion of Self-Censoring!

The statistics will show that against the forty-nine (49) instances, where the human intelligence has been invoked into action and made alive, not in a single instance, it was referred to in a neutral sense, using a noun.

Instead of nominal usage of terms, such as 'Aql عقل i.e. 'logic' and 'Fkr نفر i.e. 'thought', the pattern has always been in the verbal usage, such as 'Yaqiloon i.e. those 'پعقلون who employ logic, 'Yataffakaroon 'يتفكّرون' i.e. those who put their thought into practice. It is a prime example that the Qur'an never commends the knowledge for its own sake. Rather, knowledge is to be procured, with an aim to engage it for carrying out the reform of individual selves and the society, beyond[10].

FAITH



The Qur'an, therefore will be found determined to place the human being in the position of honour, responsibility and decision making. For humans thus, losing the accountability to their own conscience would represent the loss of purpose and identity.

Before anything else, the invitation of the Qur'an to ponder upon the signs of God represents respect for human intelligence. The recognition of human faculty towards rational thinking sets the policy of the Qur'an in dealing with humanity in general.

One's ability to judge the 'right' from the 'wrong', (Wahadainahunnajdain is more (و هديناه النجدين poignant a benefit from the Creator, than the benefit of physical organs (Alam najalallahun ainain wa lisanau washaftain [12] (الم نجعل له عينين، ولسانا وشفتين

First of all, it fits with the universal call of the Qur'an aimed at humanity at large. It also sets the Qur'an's relationship with those opting to employ this faculty, within the margin of freedom to choose and making a responsible choice.

The conclusion as above. cannot be narrated any better than: "Despite the excuses, he may choose to throw around at times, human being is the best witness unto himself" (Balil insano ala nafsihi baseerah walau ulgi maazeera

(بل الانسان على نفسه بصيرة ولو ألقى معاذيره [14]. In censoring one's conscience thus, nothing could be more compelling, touchy and poignant!

In guaranteeing all this, there can be no better statement than the categorical denial of applying force or coercion on issues of faith and religion. To others it may be a civil right or agreed public duty to other fellow humans who are bound by urge and the convention of co-habitation.

But to a believer in the Qur'an however, affording the religious neutrality represents an article of religious faith inscribed in

the Qur'an itself. Without the commitment to grant freedom to choose one's own belief, dogma or action path will make a Muslim breach his own religion.

As to the Qur'an however, inculcating this freedom as a religious belief, however, stands for a much superior value and commitment, compared with true democratic governments today!

Indeed, the mission of the Qur'an is to help humans distinguish between what constitutes guidance and aberration from its path. As a concept, this institution compares with freedom of information and choice' in modern context.

After this, the individuals are set free to make a choice that is both just and responsible in their own judgment[15].

- [1] The Qur'an 16:44
- [2] The Qur'an 16:44
- [3] The Qur'an 50:37, 39:21, 50:08 & 87:07
- [4] The Qur'an 50:37, 39:21, 50:08 & 87:07
- [5] Collins Francis, The Language of God, (Pocket Book), Simon and Schuster UK Ltd. London 2007,
- [6] Collins Francis, The Language of God, (Pocket Book), Simon and Schuster UK Ltd. London 2007,
- [7] The Qur'an 02:164
- [8] The Qur'an 02:164
- [9] Refer exhaustively, all the verbs utilised in the Qur'an under: ، عقلوه, تعقلون، نعقل، يعقل، ، يتدبّرون يعقلون and ،يفقهون
- [10] Refer exhaustively, all the verbs utilised in the Qur'an under: ، عقلوه م تعقلون ، نعقل ، يعقل ، ، يتدبرون يعقلون and ،يفقهون
- [11] The Qur'an 90:08-10
- [12] The Qur'an 90:08-10
- [13] The Qur'an 75:14-15
- [14] The Qur'an 75:14-15
- [15] The Qur'an 02:256, 18:29 & 109:01-06



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Befrienders

(Project Touching Hearts)

The Befrienders or also known as Project Touching Hearts (PTH) is a support programme for prospective Converts attending the Beginners' Course in Islam (BCI). The Befrienders undergoes training to equip themselves with the essential skills for befriending and to help address issues regarding conversion and basic queries on Islam.

PTH randomly follows the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Saturday of the BCI cycles. Over 10 weeks for every cycle, different topics are discussed weekly and the Befrienders encourage the prospective Converts to continue attending other classes and workshops to benefit their journey in Islam.







(Top) Our close-knit Befrienders always on hand to assist fellow Muslims

(Left) Our close-knit Befrienders, always on hand to assist fellow knowledge seekers.





Befrienders (Project Touching Hearts)







(This page) Big happy BEFRIENDERS family.







The Social and Political Reform of the Prophet

by Dr John Andrew Morrow

The Constitution of Medina

The Arabian society in the 6th century CE in which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) grew up was devoid of political organization. People were divided into warring tribes. Tribalism, racism, and prejudice were rampant. The rich exploited the poor. The powerful enslaved the weak. Women were viewed as sexual objects and treated as chattel. They could be brutalized without mercy.

With the exception of small numbers of Jews and Christians, along with the monotheistic Hanifs and a segment of Zoroastrians, the overwhelming majority of the population was pagan, animistic, idolatrous, and polytheistic.

Unlike the Hindus, however, the Arab idolaters did not believe in life after death or reincarnation. Their real religion, however, was materialism and hedonism.

If Arabia lived in darkness, the situation outside of the Peninsula was hardly brighter. During Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) time, there were two superpowers, Byzantium and Persia. Besides waging war with one another directly, they also opposed one another by means of proxies.

Growing up, the young orphan was drawn to nature where he contemplated the wonders of creation. After marrying his

first wife, Khadijah, he started to spend long periods of time in the seclusion of a cave on the outskirts of Mecca where he sought spiritual solace and a solution to the problems afflicting his society. After years of seeking, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received revelation and an answer to all his questions.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) preached that God was One. This belief in unity was the be all and end all of Islam and would pervade all of its aspects. Since God was One it signified that Humanity was one.

While in Mecca, the Prophet's priority was preaching Divine Unity and Human Unity. He called for an end to racism, tribalism, classism, and sexism. He insisted that all

human beings were created equal and that superiority could only be attained by striving for piety.

He condemned the evils of slavery and advocated on behalf of slaves of every race, religion, and ethnicity. He sided with the meek, oppressed, and downtrodden. He taught that greatness was not in having but in giving and, in turn, gave all of his wealth away to help the poor.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) called for the emancipation of women and demanded that they be treated with love, honor, respect, and dignity. He denounced the sacrifice of children to pagan gods and the burying alive of baby girls.

Although the Prophet gained a solid following among the wretched of the earth, he was opposed by the elites of the age who viewed his unitarian and egalitarian vision as a threat to their selfish interests.

The tribal leaders tried to buy him. When that failed, they tried to get him to compromise on matters of principle. When that failed, they tried to pressure him economically. When that failed, they resorted to intimidation, violence, and isolation. Having exhausted all avenues, the leaders of Mecca attempted to have him assassinated.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW), however, was a brilliant strategist who made alliances with members of other faith communities who sympathized with his ideals. He reached out to Jews, Samaritans, Christians, and Zoroastrians. He even extended an olive branch to pagan Arabs.

His diplomatic efforts were a phenomenal success and he signed dozens of treaties. The Messenger of Allah sent some of his followers as refugees to the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia. He made allies with Yemenite Jews and the Christian monks from the Sinai.

He had even secretly accepted an invitation to relocate to Yathrib. a city to the north of Mecca, where he was unanimously acclaimed as its leader. The city in question was divided equally between Jews and Arab pagans. Muslims merely numbered in the hundreds.

While most of the people did not profess Islam as a religion, they believed in the social and economic principles preached by the Prophet. The city itself came to be known as Medina al-Nabi or The City of the Prophet. Eventually, as they experienced the benefits of Islam, most of the city's population was converted to the cause.

Shortly after arriving in Medina, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) gathered the tribal elders and, in consultation with the broader community, produced the first written constitution in the history of humanity.



Known as the Constitution of Medina, it established the creation of an Ummah or Motherland, a modernstyle state, and essentially introduced the concept of citizenship. Race, religion, tribal affiliation, kinship, and class were no longer determining factors in matter of identity. Citizens were now bound to the Ummah or State.

It was a tolerant, diverse, and pluralistic society organized into semi-autonomous religious communities which governed themselves according to their own faith traditions.

Muslims were judged according to Islam. Christians were judged according

to Christianity. And Jews were judged according to Judaism. And while the Prophet could only preach during the persecution in Mecca, speaking truth to power, cultivating solidarity, and engaging in charitable endeavors, in Medina, with the power of the people and the State behind him, he was able to turn theory into practice and ethical principles into laws.

The Constitution of Medina and the Covenants of the Prophet, which are precursors to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Bill of Rights, are testimonies to the power that propelled Islam.

By the time Prophet Muhammad (SAW) passed away, in 632 CE, Islam had spread throughout all Arabia and was about to spread like lightning throughout the Middle East, Persia, North Africa, and beyond.

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the publisher. It was first published on Australasian Muslim Times, Digital Issue 160, March 2019.



Prayer in Islam

by Dr Amjad Hussain

Prayer is one of the five pillars of Islam. This article by Dr Amjad Hussain explains common features of Islamic prayer, such as the call to prayer, daily timings and the direction of prayer. He also explores the linguistic, geographic and sectarian diversity of prayer in Islam.

n Islam, prayer, supplication, purification and most ritual actions are considered acts of worship ('ibadat). The most well-known, and an obligatory, act in Islam is the performance of the five daily prayers, which in Arabic is known as salah (often written salat). In the Qur'an, the Arabic word salah means to demonstrate servitude to God by means of certain actions. The same term is used in many languages throughout contemporary Muslim-majority countries, such as in Malay and Swahili. In other languages, such as Persian, Urdu and Turkish, the term that is commonly used for the ritual prayer is namaz. However, regardless of the term used, the ritual prayer and most other worship is always performed in Arabic throughout the Muslim world and is nearly identical with only slight variations. Different terms reflect the geographical and linguistic diversity of the Muslim world, but the Arabic language unifies them.

What does ritual prayer mean in Islam?

By performing this ritual prayer five times a day, Muslims remember their Lord, express their love and respect for Him and invoke and strive to express their gratitude towards Him. The notion is that this activity brings the individual face to face with God and since it is both done in congregation and individually it also

emphasises group solidarity as well as being in the presence of God. Whereas the salah is a highly structured form of prayer consisting of facing a distinctive direction, performing specific physical movements and recitations at certain times of the day, there are other prayers such as invocations, supplications and diverse Sufi acts of worship that are much more casual and informal. This article will attempt to offer the reader a general introduction to all of these forms of prayers found within the faith of Islam.







What is the Adhan?

Although a Muslim may perform their ritual prayers at the prescribed times wherever he or she may be, it is seen as preferable to pray with a congregation in the mosque. For this specific reason, in the second year of the Hijrah (623-24 CE). i.e. the beginning of Islam in the 7th century, the concept of a call to prayer (adhan) was introduced by the Prophet Muhammad. This call to prayer was designed to congregate worshippers and remind them that it is time to pray. It is always recited in a loud voice by a person who is generally given the title of muezzin (mu'adhin). Originally, during the Prophet's time, this call took place in the streets and from the rooftop of the highest houses or the mosque of Medina. Over time the mosques evolved and acquired tall towers called minarets, which are now a renowned symbol of Muslim worship. From there the muezzin used to recite the adhan five times a day; however, nowdays, it is often recited from within the mosque and broadcast by loudspeakers.

How should **Muslims** prepare for prayer?

In Islam the rules of cleanliness are a matter of sanctity, not just hygiene; for Muslims to perform ritual prayers it is necessary to wash away impurity through ablution. There are mainly two types of impurities according to Islamic law: najasah, which is related to material impurities whereby a person is in proximity to forbidden or unclean things such as bodily substances and alcohol, and hadath, which are personal impurities that are divided into the major and minor.

Both najasah and hadath prevent a person from performing acts of worship. The najasah is removed by simply cleaning, generally with water, the impure surface or material. The minor hadath is caused by flatulence, sleeping, going to the toilet and intoxication of any kind and must be removed by performing the minor ablution called wudu'. This involves cleansing of the hands, the mouth, the nostrils, the face, the arms, the head, the ears and the feet in a specified way with water. The major hadath is caused by such things as seminal emission, sexual intercourse and menstruation; to deal with major hadath Muslims must perform the major ablution, which consists of a complete bath or shower called ghusl.

The notion of ablution emphasises the sanctity related to both the physical and spiritual aspects of life. Once ablution has been performed, the Muslim is ready to commence the ritual prayer.

When should Muslims pray?

According to Islamic law the five ritual prayers are obligatory upon every sane and pubescent Muslim man and woman, and should be performed within their prescribed time periods. The five ritual prayers are prescribed in the Qur'an, but it is the hadiths that specify their times. It is interesting to note that the names of the ritual prayers are related to the times of the day that they are prescribed within, which are: Fair or Subuh (dawn), Zuhr (afternoon), 'Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (just after sunset) and Isha (night).



Each salah may be performed by the individual alone or in a group, from the beginning of its time period until the beginning of the period of the following salah, except for Fajr (dawn), which begins at daybreak. On Friday there is also an exception regarding the Zuhr (afternoon) ritual prayer. On Friday the Zuhr salah is known as Jummah, and it is obligatory for men, and recommended for women, to perform this salah with the congregation at the mosque. Nevertheless, there are legitimate reasons for why someone may miss Jummah. Historically, all of the time periods for the ritual prayers, for the whole year, were published in various calendars and almanacs. Today, they are readily accessible on the web and via numerous apps.

How does the qiblah relate to prayer?

When performing the salah all Muslims are obliged to face towards the direction of the Ka'bah in Mecca; this is commonly known as the giblah (also spelt kiblah). All purpose-built mosques are therefore built facing the direction of Mecca with a niche (mihrab) indicating the direction of the giblah. In the event that Muslims must perform their ritual prayers elsewhere, they use their prayer rugs in order to assure that they are praying in a clean area. In these cases they have to estimate the direction of the qiblah. Nowadays, Muslims may use a prayer compass or a giblah app to do this. Historically, detailed giblah tables were found published alongside works on cosmology.



How do **Muslims** perform and express reverence in the ritual prayer?

All of the ritual prayers in Islam consist of units or cycles (rak'ah). The shortest ritual prayer consists of two units and the longest of four units. These units are either fard (obligatory) or sunnah (only recommended, but generally done).

While standing and facing the giblah the worshipper makes an intention to perform the salah; this is carried out by stating which prayer is to be performed, how many units (rak'ah) and intending full-heartedly to perform that worship for the sake of God. If he or she is in a congregation following the imam then this is also specified in the intention. The intention may be articulated in any language but the rest of the prayer must be performed in Arabic. Straight after the intention, the worshipper raises his or her hands beside their head while saying Allahu Akbar ('God is the most great'). The worshipper lowers his or her hands and puts their right hand over the left hand at either the level of the chest or the navel.

This is followed by further words of praise to God, the recitation of al-Fatihah (the first chapter of the Qur'an) and another section of her or his choice from the Qur'an. The rest of the prayer is concluded with various

prescribed movements such as bows, prostrations and sitting. The whole ritual prayer ends with the worshipper first turning his head to the right and then to the left, saying 'peace be upon you and the mercy of God'.



How is the Friday congregational prayer different?

The Friday ritual prayer (Jummah) is performed during the afternoon instead of the normal afternoon prayer, behind an imam in a congregation; it also includes a sermon (khutbah). The khutbah normally consists of quotations from the Qur'an and the Prophet, the praising of God, supplication for the Prophet and his ummah (Muslims) and normally a topic relating to Islam. Once the sermon is completed the two fard rak'ah are performed behind the imam. In Islam, Friday is not commonly recognised by Muslims as a resting day like the Sabbath is in Christianity and Judaism, and in most cases once the Jummah prayer is completed the usual business of the day is resumed.



SPIRITUALITY

In what other ways do Muslims reflect on God through worship?

At the end of a prayer the invocation (dua') is read, following Prophetic tradition (Sunnah). The dua' consists of raising one's hands, praising God, sending blessings upon the Prophet(s) and then supplicating and asking God for whatever is required; it is traditional to end the invocation by wiping the face with both hands. Many of the supplications are recorded

Prophetic supplications, but the dua' is not restricted to only Prophetic supplications. The dua' may also be said at any time (not just as a conclusion to prayer) and ablution is not a requirement. The same applies to the tasbih, which is a form of dhikr (remembrance of God) at any time; it generally consists of repeating the names of God and phrases that praise and exalt God. The reciting of this is traditionally carried out on prayer beads that commonly consist of ninety-nine beads which represent the ninetynine names of God. These beads are also known as tasbih or misbaha. Based upon Sunnah, it is common for Muslims to repeat thirty-

three times three separate praises and exaltations of God on a prayer bead after the completion of the ritual prayer.

Diversity of practice

Although the ritual prayers with ablution, supplication and tasbih are the general structure of a Muslim's worship, there are also other types of prayers, mostly connected with Sufism. Most Sufis, both individually and in gatherings, use the prayer bead (misbaha) to recite litanies (wird), invocations and other remembrances of God (dhikr). In fact, the praising of the Prophet

Muhammad and sending peace and blessings upon him, which is also a part of the salah, dua' and the Friday sermon, was further developed by Sufi mystics throughout Islamic history.



The article is reprinted with the kind permission of the author, Amjad M Hussain (2019, September 23). Prayer In Islam, Retrieved from https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts/articles/prayer-in-islam.



Amjad M. Hussain is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Divinity at Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey. Previous to this post, Hussain worked as a Lecturer in Religious Studies at Trinity University College, Carmarthen and later as a Senior Lecturer in Islamic Studies at Trinity Saint David, University of Wales. His published works include, A Social History of Education in the Muslim World: From the Prophetic Era to Ottoman Times (2013), The Study of Religions: An Introduction (2015), The Muslim Creed: A Contemporary Theological Study (2016) and Islam for New Muslims: An Educational Guide (2018).

Congratulations

to our newly appointed Registration Officers

For the term: 1 August 2019 - 31 December 2020







Front Row (Seated, From Left):

Ustazah Shameem Sultanah Abdul Gaffoor, Ustazah Bushra Habibullah, Ustazah Kalthom Muhammad Isa, Sis Salmiah Haji Sayadi, Ustazah Nuradilah Sari

2nd Row (Standing, From Left):

Bro Muhammad Feroz Bin Abdullah, Ustaz Muhammad Hanafi Mohamed Ekbal Shah, Ustaz Kyaw Zin Tun @ Omar Ma, Bro Juana Saifful Bin Manis, Bro Johari Abdul Aziz, Bro Abdul Razak Isa, Bro Muhammad Imran Kuna (MCAS President), Ustaz Irwan Hadi Mohd Shuhaimy (Deputy Director – Office of Mufti, MUIS), Bro Bani Ali, Bro A Muralitharan @ Muhammad Yusuf Ali, Bro Hafidz Bin Abdullah, Bro Mah Li Jaafar, Bro Mohamed Sameer Shahul Hamid Maraicar

3rd Row (Standing, From Left):

Ustaz Mohammed Nazim Rahuma Dulla, Bro Mohammad Farhan Bin Md Shah, Bro Umar Siraj Md Noor Bakor Sharbeeni, Bro Chung Yow Min @ Danial Chung

Absent:

Bro Foo Eng Yoong @ Adam Foo , Ustaz Muhammad Ameen Packir Mohideen, Ustaz Muhammad Fadhlullah Daud

MCAS In-House Talks

- Featuring Guest Speakers

Several in-house talks were held this year. The objectives of these talks were to engage, create awareness and convey the message of Islam with astuteness and in an appealing manner to the non-Muslims, new Muslims and born-Muslims who are seeking deeper knowledge on Islam.

Prominent speakers such as Ustaz Khalid Rafi, Ustaz Mizi Wahid, Ustaz Taufiq RNB, Ustazah Nadia Hanim, Ustazah Liana Musfirah, among others were invited to deliver talks on contemporary issues affecting the understanding of Islam as well as the universal message of Islam.

(Right) Ustaz of Education at MCAS at one of MCAS' talks.











MCAS In-House Talks

- Featuring Guest Speakers





deaf-mute









Liyanah Musfirah engaging with the audience.

4 Beautiful Ways the Prophet Honoured Women

by Ustaz Syazwan Elrani

n Islam, women are not loved, have no rights and are oppressed. These may be some things that you may have heard being said about Muslim women. When we look at the life of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, we can see that these statements could not be further from the truth. Although he was sent during a time where women were believed not to be given meaningful recognition, he led by example with his respectful treatment of women. This article will touch on 4 beautiful ways Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. honoured women during his lifetime.

His relationship with his wives were based on mutual love and respect

Throughout his life, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. treated his wives the way they should be treated. They were gratified by his presence, tenderness, affection and the love he provided to them was second to none. The Quran perfectly encapsulates this virtue:

"And of His signs is that
He created for you from
yourselves mates that you
may find tranquillity in them;
and He placed between you
affection and mercy. Indeed
in that are signs for a people
who give thought."

Surah Ar-Rum [30:21]

His first wife Khadijah r.a. was his source of emotional and spiritual comfort. It was Khadijah r.a. who instilled confidence in him when he received the first revelation. It was in her that he sought support and strength throughout his quest in reforming the society.

His wife, Aisha r.a. was the one he spent his last days with and throughout their marriage, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. treated her in a very gentle and romantic way. They played together, drank from the same spot on the cup, and constantly exchanged sweet words to one another.







He allowed women to engage in public roles

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w's wife, Aisha r.a. was a scholar who used to express herself freely in the public sphere. She even praised the women of Ansar for not letting their shyness stop them from asking questions about Islam and learning their religion.

After the death of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. Aisha r.a. continued to impart knowledge to the companions. As she was the closest person to the Prophet s.a.w. she was one of the most knowledgeable individuals during that time. She inherited many of the hadiths from the Prophet s.a.w. which she continued to transmit to others around her. She played a major role in disseminating the message of the Prophet s.a.w. and became a key reference point for the companions. Her contributions to Islamic scholarship is one of the legacies she left for future generations.



He showed immense love to his daughter

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. was never shy about showing his deep love for his daughter, Fatima r.a. When she entered the room, he would stand up for her, kiss her, take her hand and make her sit in his place. His affection for Fatima r.a. was so intense that it was narrated by Al-Miswar bin Makhrama that he s.a.w. said, "Fatima r.a. is a part of me, and he who makes her angry, makes me angry." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

In response, Fatima r.a. also loved the Prophet s.a.w. immensely. From a very young age, she was brave enough to stand her ground and protect her father from people who were trying to harm him. She took care of him so well that she was called "the mother of the father".

He uplifted the status of women

The Prophet s.a.w. uplifted the status of women, from that of being the property of men to that of equal status in the society with accorded rights and dignity. The Prophet s.a.w. paid special attention to the

women in his society, who previously had been denied any rights, freedom and space. He was patient and kind towards them and listened to their plight.

Several women had come to him asking for divorce (khul') including the wife of Thabit ibn Qay. Thabit's wife came to the Prophet s.a.w. and told him that she had nothing to reproach her husband with as far as religion was concerned, but that she did not want to be guilty of infidelity regarding Islam (by failing to respect his rights as a husband or betraying him through her thoughts or behaviour). The Prophet asked her whether she was willing to return the garden that he had given her as dowry, and she accepted. The Prophet then asked Thabit to accept the separation.

Conclusion

Our Prophet s.a.w. over 1400 years ago, had already taught the world the true value of women. Through Islam, he empowered women and encouraged them to fulfil their maximum potential as righteous servants of Allah. In this light, may we continue to honour the women around us through the tradition of our beloved Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.

 $This \ article \ is \ reprinted \ with \ the \ kind \ permission \ of \ the \ publisher. \ It \ was \ first \ published \ on \ Muslim SG \ website:$ https://muslim.sg/articles/4-beautiful-ways-the-prophet-honoured-women?type=articles

Ustaz Syazwan Elrani is a member of Asatizah Youth Network. He spent 12 years of his studies at Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah. He later furthered his studies in the Faculty of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage at the International Islamic University Malaysia, majoring in Figh and Usul Figh (principles of Figh) and minoring in Comparative Religion.



by Ustazah Nadia Hanim

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم اللهم صل على سيدنا محمد و على آله و صحبه وسلم

There are **TWO** opinions from scholars with regards to this issue of whether a woman can travel without being accompanied by a mahram (husband or male relative whom she is prohibited to marry).

1. It is not permissible for a woman to travel without a mahram

This opinion is held by scholars from the school of Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. It is based on an absolute understanding of many narrations from the Prophet s.a.w.

Abu Hurairah r.a. reported: The Messenger of Allah عمولالهد said,

"It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the last day to make a journey of one day and night unless she is accompanied by a mahram (husband or male relative whom she is prohibited to marry)."

[Al Bukhari and Muslim]

Ibn 'Abbas r.a. reported: The Prophet علم said,

[Al Bukhari and Muslim]



2. It is permissible for a woman to travel without a mahram

This opinion is held by scholars from the school of Imam Shafi'i, Imam Malik and by most contemporary scholars: Sheikh Yusuf Al Qaradawi, The European Fatwa Council, Darul Ifta' of Egypt, Shaykh Qara Daghi and scholars from Al Azhar.

Clearly, these scholars were aware of the existence of the priormentioned authentic narrations from the Prophet ما المالية . However, they used the sciences

of hadith to examine
the narrations deeply
including looking at the
asbab al wurud (reasons
why the hadith was said
by the Prophet عليه), isnad
(chain of narration) and
illah (the effective reason).

These scholars deduced that the *illah* (effective reason) why women were not allowed to travel without a *mahram* in the past was because of safety issues. If she can fulfil the conditions that allow her to travel safely, the prohibition is lifted.

The principle behind the narrations from the Prophet all on travelling with a mahram is to honour, protect and give special care for women.

To support this ruling, there is another narration based on Sahih Bukhari in Fathul Bari written by Ibnu Hajar: It has been narrated through 'Adiy Ibn Hatem r.a. that the Prophet عليه وسلم told him, "And if you live a long life, you will surely see women traveling from Hira till they tawaf the Ka'bah, fearing no one except Allah". Imam Ahmad's report of the hadith includes: "By He in whose hands is my soul, verily Allah will bring this matter [Islam] into completion until women travel from Hira and tawaf the Ka'bah without being accompanied by anyone." Scholars mentioned that this particular narration is a صلى الله form of glad tiding.

Therefore, according to the scholars who were inclined to this opinion, it is permissible for a woman to travel without a mahram if she observes the following:

- She ensures that the paths towards her destination and on her return journey are safe and she does not meet with any harassment and chaos which can jeopardise safety.
- She has trustworthy companions throughout the journey.

The majority of scholars, such as 'Ata', Sa'id Ibn Jubair, Ibn Sirin and Hasan al Basri, have also permitted a woman to travel for obligatory Haj without a mahram if she is accompanied by trustworthy people. Imam Abu al Hasan Ibn Batal mentioned in Sharh Bukhari, "Imam Malik, Imam Al Awza'i and Imam Shafi'i said, 'A woman who does not have a mahram may travel for her obligatory Haj with other women in trustworthy company." These scholars based their opinion on a precedent the Mothers of Believers r.a. performed Haj after 's death عليه وسلم the Prophet and during the caliphate of 'Umar r.a. while they were accompanied by 'Uthman ibn 'Affan r.a, who was clearly not a mahram. Furthermore, Ibn 'Umar accompanied women from among his neighbours for Hai.

In another opinion, Imam Al Baji, a Maliki scholar, mentioned in Al Muntaqa Sharh Al-Muwatta that a woman's travel without a mahram is contingent upon the number of people accompanying her. It is impermissible for her to travel without a mahram if she is with a small group of people.

However, it is permissible for her to travel without a mahram if she is accompanied by a large number of people who can ensure her safety. This opinion was reported from Imam Al Awza'i.

The scholars differ on the issue but it is my personal opinion that it is better for a woman to be cautious and to put in all efforts to travel with trustworthy company who can look out for her safety, and that may include a mahram. In Islam, women are given high status and are not considered the weaker sex. The principle behind the narrations from the on travelling عليه وسلم with a mahram is to honour, protect and give special care for women.

It is up to the individual to choose which opinion he or she is comfortable with, without dismissing the others. All the opinions mentioned came from scholars who are knowledgeable and worthy in giving their ijtihad. May Allah have mercy on them and may Allah guide us all.

Wallahua'lam.

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the publisher. It was first published on MuslimSG website: https://muslim.sg/articles/can-a-muslim-woman-travel-without-a-mahram?type=articles

Ustazah Nadia is a member of Asatizah Youth Network (AYN). Before graduating with B.A. Usuluddin from Al-Azhar University, she studied women's fiqh extensively at Daruz Zahra in Tarim Hadramaut, Yemen. Ustazah Nadia currently heads Al-Wafa', an institute that aims to provide moral and spiritual guidance and illuminate souls through knowledge and wisdom.





Qurban Drive

25 August 2019

MCAS Qurban Drive was first launched in Year 2017. The objective is to create awareness on the significance of Qurban and the values that it instils, especially to MCAS Converts, as well as to promote the act of giving in celebration of Eid-ul Adha. A total of 1,200kg Qurban meat were distributed to MCAS' Fakir Miskin clients.

This year, we are honoured to have President Halimah Yacob as our Guest-of-Honour as we collaborated with several Muslim organisations to reach out to these disadvantaged families. 1,000 families benefited from this distribution. 80% of these beneficiaries are made up of recipients from participating organisations which comes under the category of Fakir Miskin/Converts/ Elderly Aid. MCAS provided Qurban meat sponsored by Al-Falah Academy SG and Hezom International. We hope to touch the hearts of the families and uplift their spirit this Eid-ul Adha, with the intention to strengthen the bond of our Muslim brothers and sisters.



In delivering and promoting the spirit of giving on this day, MCAS has broken the record for the largest convoy of vehicles delivering groceries for charity in the Singapore Books of Records. The convoy consists of 142 vehicles, which are made up of 77 cars, 64 bikes and 1 lorry.









(Left) President Halimah Yacob waved the flag to commence the start of Qurban Drive 2019.
Ready, Set, Go!

Qurban Drive

25 August 2019



(Top) One of our volunteers during the Qurban Drive, sharing his experience with President Halimah Yacob.

(Right) We had set a new Singapore record for having the Largest Convoy of Vehicles Delivering Groceries for Charity.











How to Pray When You Are Travelling on a Plane

by Ustaz Fadhlullah Daud, Head of Education Division at MCAS (Darul Arqam Singapore) Looks forward to the month of December. For working adults, this is the perfect time to clear our annual leave, take a break from our work and perhaps, go for a short trip or two to appreciate the beauty of the world.

For parents, the long school break is also the best time to bond with their children. They can spend quality time with their family by visiting other countries and learning about its people, social norms, culture and beliefs.

Whatever reasons our travel may be, we are encouraged to accompany our trips with the intention of learning. The Messenger of Allah s.a.w. said, "Allah makes the way to Paradise easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge." [Hadith reported by Imam Muslim].

As Muslim travellers, while we are enjoying our vacation, we should still make prayers our topmost priority. Praying is the most basic form of showing gratitude to our Creator, who has granted us the wealth, time and health to travel.

Alhamdulillah, we often witness our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters fulfilling their religious obligations (i.e prayers), whenever they have the chance, especially during transits at airports

or Rest and Recreation (R&R) pit stops along the highways. However, have we ever wondered how can we perform our prayers during long-haul flights that have no stopovers?

Conditions and essentials for prayer to be valid

As we all know, part of the conditions (Syarat) to validate our prayers are: i) covering the Aurah; ii) facing the Qiblah; and iii) praying during the times of prayer.

Standing up while performing our obligatory prayer is also important as it is part of the essentials (*Rukun*) that one must act out when performing the prayer. Without fulfilling all the conditions (*Syarat*) and the essentials (*Rukun*), the prayer would become invalid.

Facing the Qiblah while on a plane

Scholars agree unanimously that the five obligatory (Fard) prayers should be performed whilst facing the Qiblah from the 'Takbiratul ihram' to the 'Salam'.

However, if one is in a moving vehicle such as a ship, train

or plane, he must make the effort to face the *Qiblah* to the best of his ability, and find the most suitable location to pray. If there is ample space or a wide area for one to perform his prayers, it is obligatory to face the *Qiblah* and carry out the prayer as per normal (i.e. with *Ruku', Sujud* etc) as much as possible.

However, if there is no space or if the space is too narrow for one to perform his prayers, one still has to face the *Qiblah* during the 'Takbiratul ihram' and continue performing his prayers facing any direction afterwards.

Standing or sitting while praying on a plane

As far as you are able to, it is better for you to stand in prayer, even while you are on a plane. However, if it is not possible for you to do so because of dire circumstances such as space constraints or it is dangerous to do so because the plane is unstable, you may sit instead. 'Imran Bin Husain narrated that the Prophet P.B.U.H. said to him: "Pray while standing and if you can't, pray while sitting and you cannot do even that, then pray lying on your side." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Performing prayers again if a condition or essential is not met

There are TWO opinions from scholars. The Syafi'ie School of Jurisprudence (Mazhab) states that if one is unable to perform his prayers as per the norm (i.e. facing the Qiblah, standing, ruku', sujud, etc.), he or she needs to perform the prayers again (Qada') upon arriving at his or her destination.

It was reported that Jabir bin 'Abdillah r.a. said: "Rasulullah s.a.w. prayed (the Sunnah prayers) on his riding camel (moving vehicle) traveling to wherever he was traveling to, however when he wishes to perform his Fard (obligatory) prayers, he would disembark his camel and face the Qiblah (to perform his prayers)." [Hadith reported by Imam

However, some scholars view that one need not perform his prayers again if efforts have been made to face the Oiblah but he or she failed to do so due to dire circumstances.

Al-Bukhari]

According to Imam Al-Muzani, as quoted by Imam An-Nawawi in his book 'Syarah Sahih Muslim', religious obligations that are carried out to the best of one's abilities, even if some

of the conditions were not met and it was not done in a complete manner due to dire circumstances, and not out of abuse or lack of concern for one's religion, are accepted and do not require them to be repeated.

Our scholars based this opinion on the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah r.a., who says: "I heard Rasulullah s.a.w. say: "What I have forbade you against, should be avoided, and what I have enjoined unto you, should be carried out to the best of your abilities. Verily, the destructions of those nations before you were due to (incessant and unnecessary) questions posed by them, and their dissents towards their Prophets." [Hadith reported by Imam Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

May Allah accept all our efforts and Ibadah in fulfilling our duties as His righteous servants, Amin.

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Dispelling anxiety - the psychology of Ibn Hazm

by Bilal Cleland



bn Hazm of Andalusia, who died 2 years before that major event in British history, the conquest of Britain by William of Normandy in 1066, was one of the great thinkers of our Islamic past.

His great-grandfather Hazm was a convert to Islam, one of the many Spaniards of that time who were drawn to the teachings of the Quran.

Ibn Hazm became a prolific author, writing some 400 works, of which only 40 still

He was an enthusiastic literalist, rejecting Islamic interpretations based upon analogy, and frequently engaged in public debates with Jews and Christians who of course enjoyed their rights as People of the Book in Islamic Spain.

In his famous work In Pursuit of Virtue he wrote in paragraph 79 "Put your trust in a pious man, even if the religion that he practices is a different one from your own. Do not put your trust in anyone who scorns sacred things, even if he claims to belong to your own religion. As for the man who defies the commandments of the Almighty, do not ever trust him with anything you care greatly about."

This attitude of acceptance and toleration of 'the other' was not outstanding at the time in an Islamic community, but when we consider what happened in Spain after the Catholic "Reconquest" as it was called, it is stunning.

The Ottoman Sultan Beyazit had to send ships to Spain to rescue Jews who risked being burnt alive under the Catholic monarchs and hundreds of thousands of Muslims were forced to flee, under the threat of death, to North Africa, leaving their property behind.

Preaching truth. defending womenhood and helping the oppressed have long been the marks of piety in Islamic consciousness.

Ibn Hazm's depth of understanding of the human condition seems modern to

He wrote: "I have tried to find one goal which everyone would agree to be excellent and worthy of being striven after. I have found only one: to be free from anxiety. ... Dispelling anxiety is a goal upon which all nations agree – from the time when the Almighty created the world until the day when this world will pass away and be followed by the Day of Judgement."

In answer to the question as to how this dispelling of anxiety might be achieved, he concluded: "You should therefore understand that there is only one objective to strive for, it is to dispel anxiety;

and only one path leads to this, and that is the service of the most high God. Everything else is misquided and absurd."

This service to God was described in the following terms: "Do not use your energy except for a cause more noble than yourself. Such a cause cannot be found except in Almighty God Himself: to preach the truth, to defend womanhood, to repel humiliation which your Creator has not imposed upon you, to help the oppressed. Anyone who uses his energy for the sake of the vanities of the world is like someone who exchanges gemstones for gravel."

Preaching truth, defending womanhood and helping the oppressed have long been the marks of piety in Islamic consciousness.

Although tribalism and worldly ambition eventually brought about the demise of Islamic civilization in Al Andalus, such understanding has never disappeared.

Ibn Hazm found that such service to God could result in incarceration, and today it is even more likely to do so in the various dictatorships ruling much of the Muslim world.

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YODA

(Youths of Darul Argam)

Made up of youth volunteers from diverse backgrounds and different age groups, YODA aspires to bring together the youths in Singapore and engage them through various activities to develop their understanding of Islam.

Some of the events held by YODA are Singapore Muslim Youth Debate, Crossroads, Spoken Words, YodaSparks, and their recent celebration of YODA 10th Anniversary.





(Top) Winners of SMYD 2019.



(Right) Youth mentor and Author, Bro Aiman Azlan Mizi Wahid.



YODA (Youths of Darul Arqam)













Who Created God? Responding to Russel and Dawkins

by Kazi Miah

FEATURE

ou can very well ask - Who Created God? This question has been asked in all ages! Bertrand Russel, the leading philosopher of all times is known to the world for this agnostic question! Today Bertrand Russel resurrected in the voice of Richard Dawkins, the atheist icon of current time!

Anyone can ask any question, however there exists rule of legitimacy in asking questions! 'Did the crow breed a jet plane' - this is of course a question, but its beyond the acceptable limit. Any question is a question - but some questions are insane!

We experience a cause behind every effect; there is an initiator for every known entity! Everything indicates to an origin.

Bertand Russel's historic question - 'Who is the father of God' thus brings insurmountable problem for God's supporters! They mostly answer in Donald Henry Porter's way - when almost all scientific theories meet the dead end of no possible answer, such quest does not hold any justification! We or Henry - none has an appropriate instrument to respond to this query any better! Such infirm answer doesn't move anything! The questioner remains a winner!

But a crucial question must be answered with profound strength of information, facts and figures; not by words that are logical stimulus only!

What is the basis of this question? Certainly, one would say everything has a source or creator; this is an established rule of Nature!

What is Nature? Nature is the Creation in the first place!

As such - we are asking a question about Creator using the matrix of his Creation.

Creator and Creation are two different entities: one MUST use same yardstick to measure these two different entities!

A surveyor measured a road using meter-tape and after a while decided to measure rest of the road with a kilogrambalance; this is analogous to the thinking of 'Who created God' a practice that is utterly corrupted as inappropriate measuring tool is in use. The whole approach is wrong and as far as Dawkins is concerned, he does not even understand the basic rules of comparison!

Nonetheless, defiant Richard Dawkins still stands for his claim as usual! God must have one creator, elsewise, He could not exist by himself!

Then I would ask Mr Dawkins - what does he understand by 'Creator'?

Wright brothers would have been creators if they made the aeroplane, not by using already existed materials; instead, by creating those parts from nonexistence! Wright brothers are not Creators; they are inventors or assembling hands!

No inventor is a Creator and Richard Dawkins never saw a Creator! An inventor has parents; Creator is unlike an inventor and thus could not have been subject to the inventor's rule of parents!

Russel & Richard at this stage merely fail to understand the difference between Creator and inventor! Yet they claim to be the knowledgeable exotica in human history! They are like children who simplicity cannot stop asking! Have the exalted knowledge-icons had tumbled into the childhood naivety of not knowing of what they are asking for?

Let's turn our face to a different direction.

Let's not talk about Creator, not Creation, not Universe, not Walls, not Superclusters, not Clusters not Quasars, not Galaxies, not Stars, not Planets, not Earth - but only a micro grain salt, the next division of which will take it out of eye sight!

In such micro-grain salt, there are as many as 1016 atoms [10,000,000,000,000,000 atoms] of Sodium [Na] and Chloride [Cl]. If you want to know this micro grain salt in full details, then you must know the three-dimensional status of each of the atoms [there are more]!

FEATURE

When salt crystalizes, every single atom of Na and Cl binds to the array in its specific position through an abstruse force; such positioning requires minimum 10 bits of information for every atom. As such, the tiniest micro grain salt turns to be a collection of 1016 x 10 = 1017 [100,000, 000, 000, 000, 000] bits of information! To know it fully, you must have the capacity to accommodate 100, 000, 000.000.000.000 bits of information in your brain!

Let us now understand the information capacity of Mr Dawkins' brain, one who questions – 'who made God?'

Knowledge at the basic is information; the faculty of human intellect is directly proportional to the total number of information one possesses! Ultimately, processing of information outlines knowledge! Information is thus the fundamental basis for knowledge! How many bits of information Dawkins or anyone could accommodate in his brains?

Ability to accommodate information depends on the number of neuron cells available in the brain- the three pounds of flesh! A standard brain has 1011 neuron cells; each of them is corresponding to one bit of information!

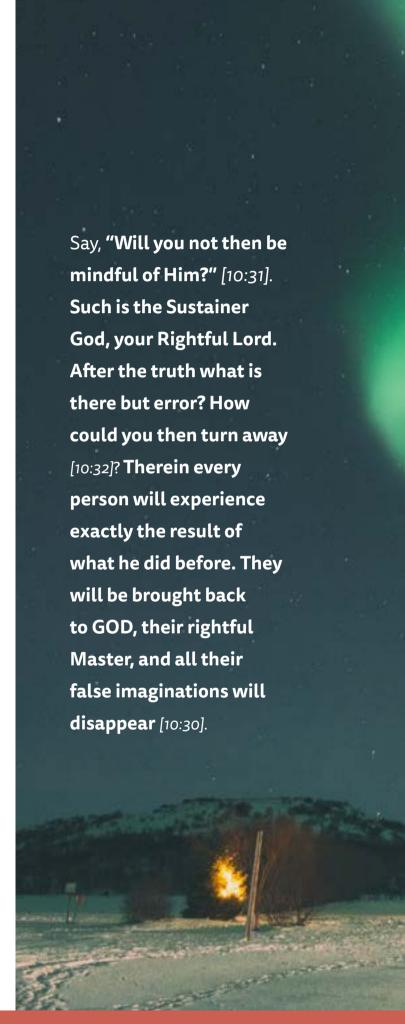
However, the way dendritescreate interconnecting circuits, on average, the capacity of each cell rises to 1000 times! That would mean, in cent percent utilization prospect, Mr Dawkins would accommodate 1011 x 1000 = 1014 bit of information!

This is a cosmic limit!
Remember, we were discussing the tiny last visible micrograin salt contained 1017 bits of information! Now if you compare the faculty of knowledge Mr Dawkins could hold with the information sum of the tiniest salt grain, we see, it needs at least 1000 Dawkins' heads combined [1017 / 1014 =1000] to accommodate all information the tiny bit of salt holds!

We see - Dawkins is not even competent to understand the last salt particle in the visible range. Yet he is not questioning about a salt grain, about a mountain, about earth, about a solar system, about a galaxy, about a cluster, about a supercluster, about the Wall and finally not about the universe - but asking about the Creator who created the mall! Fools are always courageous! Courageous Dawkins is asking a question about the Creator of this universe with a naivety that is not enough powerful even to understand a salt grain!

To be able to understand the Creator of the universe, one will need in the least an ability to understand this entire Cosmos! How big this Creation is? The visible universe and invisible universe combined make the Creation!

Theory defines the expanse of the visible universe as,- If you can attain the speed of light and voyage at the rate of 10,000,000,000,000 [10 trillion km] a year, then you will need roughly 14 billion years to reach from one limit to the other only for the visible universe! Unfortunately, the invisible universe is many billions times bigger!



FEATURE

To understand such a Creation, one would need a brain as massive as the Creation is!
Unless Dawkins attains that big head– fundamentally, he has no right to ask – 'Who Created God'? And indeed this question lies past beyond legitimate boundary! Dawkins is guilty of invoking illegality in raising a question – Who Created God? Alas! On this illegal paradigm Dawkins made his fortress of fame!

Death is undesirable, yet one must accept it as there is no escape from it! Death is a natural limit. Similarly, God is a Natural Limit! God does not need a father. Nature by its own nature protect this limit! We are required to accept that there is no maker for God; there is no probability, no necessity, no explanation and no argument and no dispute!

"No vision can perceive Him, He percevieth all visions [6:103]! Say (O Messenger), "Who is it that provides for you from the heaven and the earth, or who is it that has full power over your hearing and sight? And who is it that brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living? And who is it that directs the Orders of the Universe?"

They will say – "God."

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SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN 2019

JANUARY

- Qatar introduces a 100% tax on alcohol and other "health-damaging goods" in the conservative Muslim Gulf state.
- 6 Malaysian King Sultan Muhammad V abdicates after two years of rule in historic first.
- 31 Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah crowned as Malaysia's new king.

AUGUST

- 2 Saudi Arabia announces new rules for women including allowing them to travel independently abroad without a male guardian's permission.
- India reclaiming Kashmir as the Indian government announces it is changing the status of Indian-controlled Kashmir from a state to a union territory, revoking Article 370.
- Gunman opened fire at a mosque in Norway, ahead of the Eid-ul-Adha celebration.
- 15 Israel bars US Democratic congress
 -women Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar
 from entering for supporting
 Palestinian-led boycott movement.
- Russia's Chechnya inaugurates
 Europe's largest mosque, which has a
 capacity for more than 30,000 people.
- Indonesian President Joko Widodo announce plans to move the country's capital from Jakarta, to the island of Borneo.

FEBRUARY

- Pope Francis arrives on historic visit to Abu Dhabi, as his first ever papal visit to the Arabian Peninsula.
- Pakistan shoots down an Indian fighter jet and captures the pilot, further escalating tensions in the disputed Kashmir region.

JULY

- Ancient Iraqi city Babylon declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Mass surveillance and detainment camps in Xinjiang Province as China continues its strategy of cultural persecution on Muslim Uyghurs.
- Archaeologists discover ancient mosque which dates back to 7th or 8th century, in Israel's Negev Desert.
- 30 India bans triple talaq.

SEPTEMBER

- 11 Former Indonesian President, B. J. Habibie dies of heart failure at 83.
- 17 Indonesia raises the female marriage age to 19, in line with males, to curb child marriages.
- Mosques demolition across China continues amid fears of escalating persecutions of Uyghur Muslims.
- 23 Brazil sends army to help tackle fires in the Amazon Rainforest.

MARCH

- A right-wing Australian gunman entered a mosque, kills 51 and wounds 50 in a shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Facebook removes 1.5 million videos of the Christchurch mosque shootings in first 24 hours after the attack, with 1.2 million blocked at upload.
- Mandatory halal certificates to take effect this year as Indonesia streamlines Halal Certification through new government agency.
- 25 US President signs order recognising Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights.
- Pope Francis arrives in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, his first-ever visit to the region of Northern Africa.

JUNE

- 3 Sudanese military attacks protesters in Khartoum killing 100 people, some dumped in the river Nile, prompting international condemnation.
- 1 million took to the streets in Hongkong, protesting an extradtion bill that allows China to extradite fugitives.
- 17 Egypt's ousted president, Mohamed Morsi dies after collapsing during a court appearance in Cairo.
- Ancient palace revealed after drought drains water in Mosul Dam reservoir, uncovering the 3,400 year old Bronze Age palace on banks of the Tigris River.

OCTOBER

- 6 Protests in Paris as demonstrators flooded the street after a bill was passed allowing single women and lesbian couple access to fertility/ IVF treatments.
- 7 Turkey launches ground offensive in Northern Syria, alleging that the operation is to create a "safe zone" to house Syrian refugees.
- 11 Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as he helped end his country's 20 year war with Eritrea.

APRIL

- Brunei brings into force new Sharia laws punishing gay sex and adultery with death by stoning, sparking global outcry.
- 3 Ex-Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak goes on trial for the 1MDB corruption scandal in Kuala Lumpur.
- Terror attacks on Sri Lankan churches and hotels on Easter Sunday kill at least 253 and injure hundreds.

MAY

- President Recep Tayyip Erdogan opens Turkey's largest mosque in Istanbul.
- Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei announces a moratorium on the death penalty for gay sex and adultery after worldwide condemnation over new Sharia laws.
- 8 Iran announces it will stop complying with parts of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.
- 21 Indonesian President Joko Widodo re-elected, defeating former general, Prabowo Subianto.
- Omani author Jokha Alharthi, the first Arabic writer to win the prestigious Man Booker International Prize.

NOVEMBER

- India's Supreme Court grants permission to build a temple at the centuries-old Ayodhya holy site, ending one of the country's land disputes.
- Maulidin Rasul is celebrated by Muslims to commemorate the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW.
- 20 Internet blackout reaches its fourth day in Iran as protests on rising fuel prices continue, causing international concern.
- Priceless diamonds three out of ten diamond sets with 37 pieces each, stolen from the Dresden Green Vault in Germany.

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The Prophet (SAW) said, "Greeting your brother with a smiling face is charity. Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong is charity...

Removing boulders and thorns from the road is charity. Pouring water from your vessel into your brother's is charity"

(Sunan At-Tirmidhi)