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Building Resilience

-Advancing despite Adversity

Social Rules in Islam

Blessed Beyond Measure
- My Journey to the Truth

From Hip-Hop to Activism
Mizznina talks about finding herself
and the global refugee crisis

Prophet Muhammad's Example
of Anti-racism

Is Kosher Meat Halal?

Where hope grows
and miracles happen

... and many more

Never stop believing

Let your life be guided by Allah

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا
دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me – indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.”

*Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 2:186
Excerpts are from the translations of the Qur'an*



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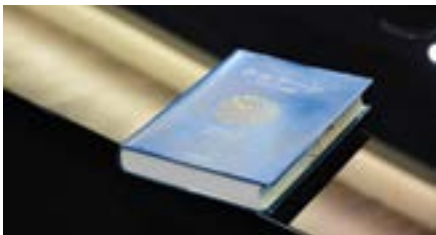
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Editorial Note

Assalamualaikum and welcome to another issue of TMR. It has been a testing year as the COVID-19 situation gave rise to unprecedented challenges across the world. This pandemic has brought to the fore a reality – that this calamity of such huge proportion requires a collective effort from every single person.

Extraordinary measures were put in place to stop the chain of infection as the world mourns for thousands across the globe who had lost their lives. While we try to make sense of the situation, governments took the necessary precaution to stop the spread. This year, only a small fraction could perform Hajj – instead of the usual 2 million, only 1,000 pilgrims were allowed. Countries were forced to close their borders and the world economy took a hit, with unemployment rate rising. This instability and uncertainty about the future triggered mental health conditions and exacerbate existing ones. Many people may also be experiencing increased levels of insomnia and anxiety, but as Believers we should dig deep and not lose hope.

Despite these trials, many positive things also came about during this difficult time. An increased amount of online participation and the opportunity to do Da’wah demonstrate hope and mercy from The Most Benevolent. Digital access ensured an increased digital literacy in the community and online classes and lectures are made easily accessible, with an outreach to global audience. Due to this ease of access, many are finding it more convenient to attend these sessions.

This edition of TMR highlights the COVID-19 situation where we discuss the state of martyrdom for those whose lives were lost during this pandemic and we feature individuals who have been affected by it. We also spoke with MCAS President on lessons from the pandemic with messages of gratitude, empathy, and mindfulness. Another silver-lining is the increased awareness of strengthening the Ukhuwah – how this downtime has enabled families to bond, especially among close relatives.

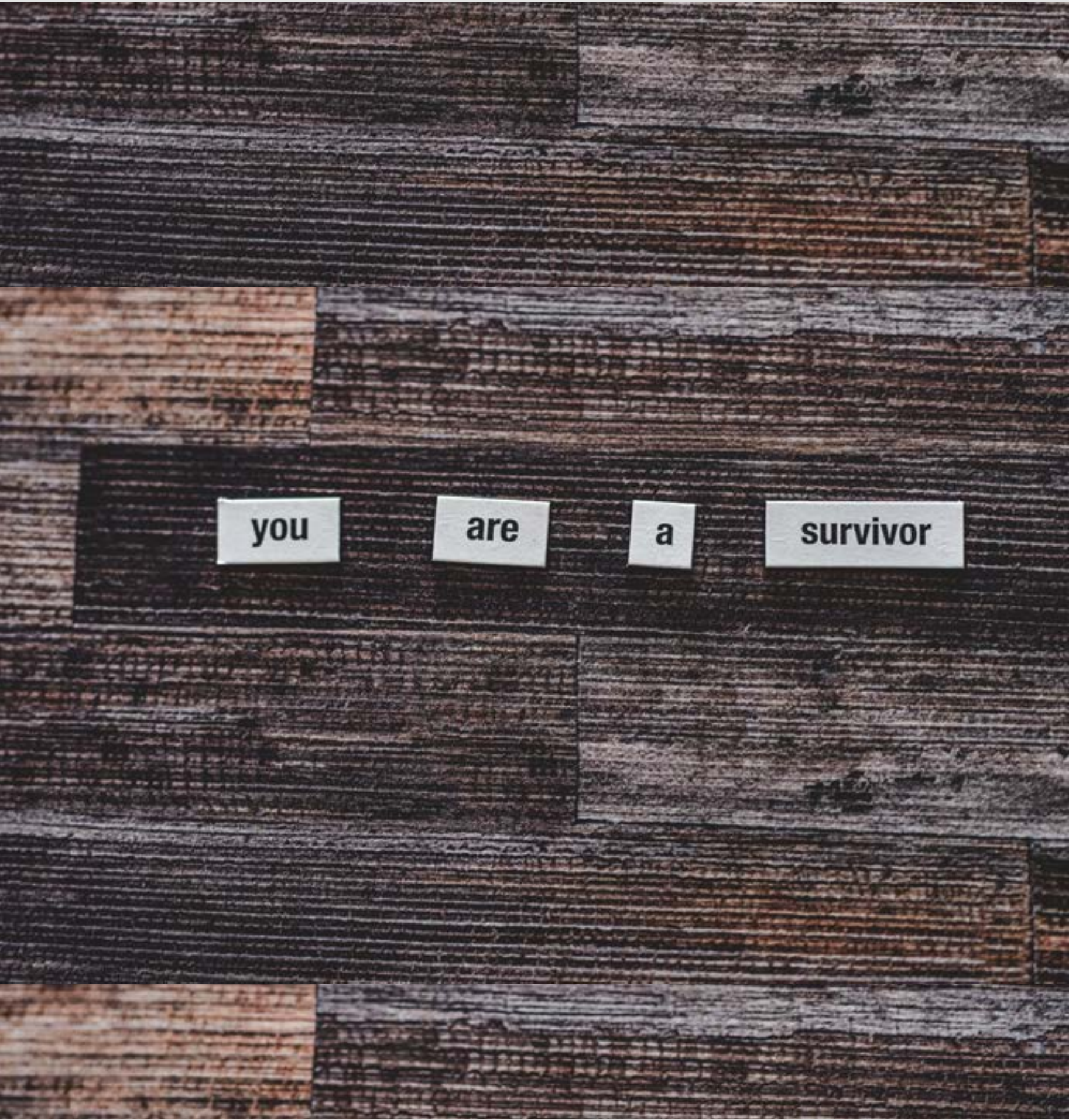
Now that we have entered Phase 3 of the re-opening, we must continue to collectively do our part to keep the virus at bay by wearing masks and adhering to social distancing measures. The question now is how can we prepare for the next normal? With the availability of the vaccine, the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel is beginning to come into sight. Within the pages of this magazine, we call attention to the importance of upholding the sanctity of human lives and encourage you to heed the advice of our Mufti.

As we continue to adapt our lifestyles and persevere in the next coming months, we hope that you continue making du’a to Allah SWT for the Ummah and remain strong in the face of adversity for, “No calamity befalls a Muslim but that Allah expiates some of his sins because of it, even though it were the prick he receives from a thorn.” (Sahih al-Bukhari 5640).

Till then. Stay safe and blessed.

Fandziah Omar

Managing Editor



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 Arqam)**

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 pronunciation 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.



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common terms

Adab: The Islamic etiquette of having good manners and character
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
Bismillah: In the name of Allah
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
Jahiliyyah: Concept of time and state of affairs before the advent of Islam
Jemaah: Congregation
Jihad: Struggle
Madrasa/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/Shar’i/Shariah: Islamic laws
Shirk: Ascribing partners to God
Solah/Solaat: Prayer
Subhaanallah: Glory be to God
Sunna/Sunnah: Practices of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)
Tafsir: Exegesis of the Quran
Tahfiz: Process of learning or the method of memorising the Quran
Ukuwah: Fraternity
Umma/Ummah: Community
Umrah: Minor pilgrimage
Wudhu: Ritual washing to be performed in preparation for prayer and worship
Zakat: That which purifies; obligatory payment made annually on certain kinds of property

“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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The Prophetic Promises for Martyrs and Medina: Is COVID-19 a plague?

by Mufti Muntasir Zaman and Dr Nazir Khan

The number of people dying from COVID-19 is increasing at an alarming rate and Muslim communities are no exception to this reality.^[1] In fact, Muslim doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers are at the forefront of tackling this pandemic. In the United Kingdom, the first doctors to have died from the pandemic were Muslim.^[2] The frightening nature of this pandemic has led many to draw parallels to ancient plagues. The comparison of COVID-19 to a plague needs to be assessed based on the definition of the latter provided in Islamic literature. Studying the validity of this comparison is important because there are legal and theological implications. In this paper, we will analyse this comparison to make sense of two issues. First, the Prophet ﷺ said that plagues will not enter Medina.^[3] Yet, we know that many people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Medina.^[4] Second, the Prophet ﷺ said that those who die from the plague are martyrs.^[5] Does this glad tiding apply to those who have lost their lives to the virus?

[1] For COVID-19 related statistics, see <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>.

[2] Aina Khan, "Muslim Minority Doctors First to Die on Front Line of UK Pandemic," Al Jazeera, April 1, 2020, www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/muslim-minority-doctors-die-front-line-uk-pandemic-200401082454308.html.

[3] Sahih al-Bukhārī, no. 1880.

[4] Bernd Debusmann Jr., "Saudi Arabia Confirms 6 Deaths, 157 New Cases of Coronavirus," Arabian Business, April 2, 2020, https://amp.arabianbusiness.com/amp/article_listing/aben/healthcare/444237-saudi-arabia-confirms-6-deaths-157-new-cases-of-coronavirus.

[5] Sahih al-Bukhārī, no. 5733.

What is a plague?

Plague is an infectious disease that has afflicted humanity for millennia, with plague pandemics^[6] massively overshadowing casualties of any other infectious disease (the Black Death^[7] in Europe, for example, resulted in estimates of up to 200 million deaths).^[8]

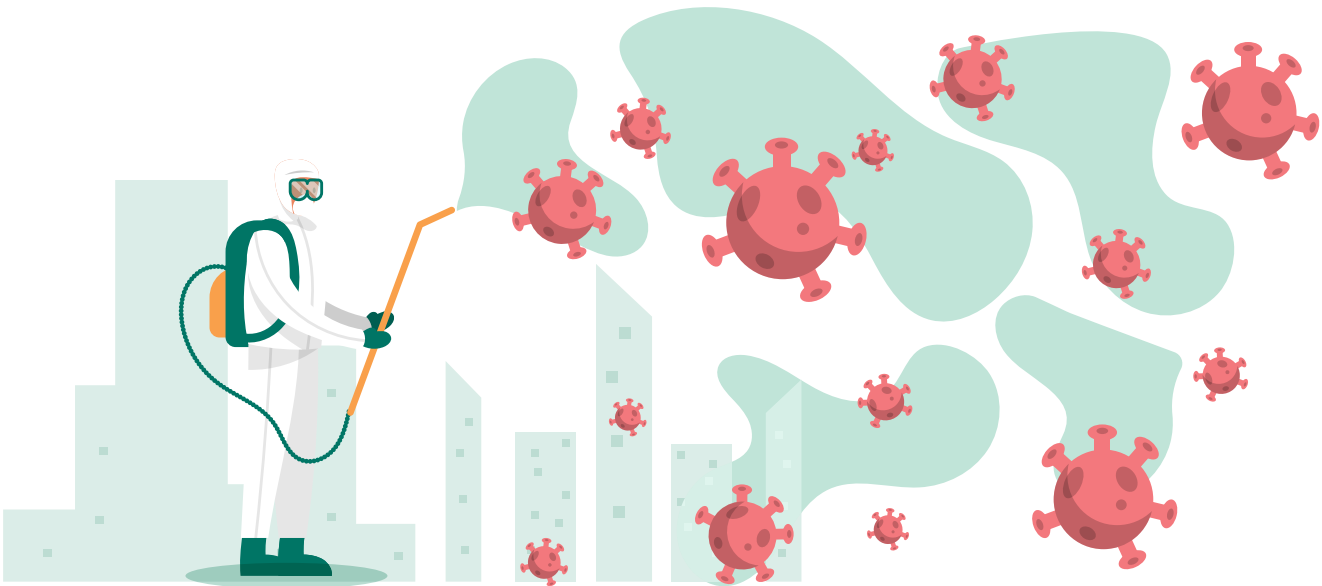
Medically, the disease is known to be caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, which is carried in the gut of fleas, which in turn live as parasites on rats; when an infected flea bites a human, the bacterium enters the tissue and, when disseminated through the lymph system, accumulates within lymph nodes in the groin and armpits which become swollen and subsequently may hemorrhage and necrose.

These massively enlarged, inflamed, and discolored lymph nodes were termed buboes, hence the term Bubonic plague, which is the most common form of the disease.

Less commonly, the bacterium is disseminated in the blood resulting in a septicemic plague. When the plague is passed on directly from person-to-person it infects the lungs, resulting in pneumonic plague.^[9]

However, the modern medical definition of plague should not be conflated with the historical usage of the term ‘plague’ which would not have distinguished specific pathogens but rather applied the term to a variety of infectious epidemics.^[10]

In fact, for Galen (d. c. 210 CE), the term ‘plague’ did not refer exclusively to a particular disease but to a disease event, an infectious epidemic.^[11] Similarly, the Mishnah, a compilation of Jewish oral law written during the first and second centuries CE, defines plague by mortality rate: 3 deaths in 3 days, in a city with a population of five-hundred fighting men.^[12]



[6] Epidemic refers to a regional excess of disease cases in a population, while a pandemic affects a larger scale, crossing international boundaries. Miquel Porta, ed., *A Dictionary of Epidemiology*, 6th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 93, 209.

[7] There has been considerable debate over the cause of the Black Death with molecular genetic analysis of skeletal remains at a mass burial site of victims confirming infection with the *Yersinia pestis* variant.

(See, for instance, Verena J. Schuenemann, Kirsten Bos, Sharon DeWitte, Sarah Schmedes, Joslyn Jamieson, Alissa Mittnik, Stephen Forrest, Brian K. Coombes, James W. Wood, David J. D. Earn, William White, Johannes Krause, and Hendrik N. Poinar, “Targeted Enrichment of Ancient Pathogens Yielding the pPCP1 Plasmid of *Yersinia pestis* from Victims of the Black Death,” *Proceedings of the National*

Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 108, no. 38 (2011): E746–52.

Nevertheless, there remain significant epidemiologic puzzles related to the transmission and mortality rate still open to further investigation. See Sharon N. DeWitte, “Setting the Stage for Medieval Plague: Pre-Black Death Trends in Survival and Mortality,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 158, no. 3 (2015): 441–51.

[8] Michael S. Rosenwald, “History’s Deadliest Pandemics, from Ancient Rome to Modern America,” *The Washington Post*, April 7, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/local/retropolis/coronavirus-deadliest-pandemics/>.

[9] For references on the medical science of plague refer to the following resources: Jerome Goddard, *Infectious Diseases and Arthropods* (Cham: Humana

Press, 2018), 151–55; Didier Raoult, Nadjet Moufok, Idir Bitam, Renaud Piarroux, and Michel Drancourt, “Plague: History and Contemporary Analysis,” *Journal of Infection* 66, no. 1 (2013): 18–26; Richard W. Titball and Sophie E. C. Leary, “Plague,” *British Medical Bulletin* 54, no. 3 (1998): 625–33; Michael B. Prentice and Lila Rahalison, “Plague,” *The Lancet* 369, no. 9568 (2007): 1196–207.

[10] Alfani and Murphy write: Although many of the worst pre-industrial epidemics appear to have been caused by the bubonic plague, the range of epidemics that are referred to as “plagues” is much larger. . . . “Plague” is one of those unfortunate words having different meanings for different people in different contexts.

It is used vaguely when referring to epidemics of different natures (type of pathogen) and consequences (affecting the whole population or a

Preventive Measures



In general, the classification of infectious diseases based on a specific pathogen (e.g., a bacterium, virus, or parasite) is characteristic of modern medicine, and thus historical disease entities are often redefined. While attempts to retrospectively assign modern medical diagnoses to historical diseases are fraught with difficulty (despite the advances of bioarchaeology, paleopathology, etc), sometimes the historical descriptions are sufficient to render a ‘highly probable’ diagnosis.^[13]

Descriptions of plague symptoms are found in such early writings as Thucydides (d. 400 BCE) and Sophocles (d. 406 BCE);^[14] however, the plagues to which they referred may have

been caused by smallpox^[15] and brucellosis^[16] respectively, among other potential pathogens.

The plague that Galen endured, known as the Antonine plague, was a viral epidemic, while the Biblical plague of the Philistines may have involved the bacterial infection tularemia.^[17] Having no knowledge of modern germ theory, the Ancient Greeks instead employed miasmatic theory, the notion that disease was caused by polluted air (the remnants of which are still seen in names like ‘malaria’, lit. bad air). This theory was later drawn upon by physicians and scholars in the Arab world.

From the foregoing discussion, it should be clear that the fact that the word ‘plague’ was used by an ancient or classical text does not necessitate that it be taken as referring exclusively to Bubonic plague and *Yersinia pestis* infection, although historical descriptions often do point in that direction.

subset of it), where the only common traits these “plagues” share is that they cause an exceptionally high number of deaths and/or cause terror.

Historians sometimes face serious problems in correctly identifying the disease, because historical sources, especially those preceding early modern times, are often blurry in distinguishing different infectious diseases. In a strictly biological sense, the plague is usually understood as an infection caused by the *Yersinia pestis* bacillus, identified in 1894 by Alexandre Yersin.

Guido Alfani and Tommy E. Murphy, “Plague and Lethal Epidemics in the Pre-Industrial World,” *Journal of Economic History* 77 (2017): 314–43.

[11] Rebecca Flemming, “Galen and the Plague,” in *Galen and the Plague* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004383302_011.

[12] Mishnah Taanit 3:4:3, https://www.sefaria.org/English_Explanation_of_Mishnah_Taanit.3.4.3?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en; see also S. Sabbatani, S. Fiorino, “The Plague of the Philistines and Other Pestilences in the Ancient World: Exploring Relations Between the Religious-Literary Tradition, Artistic Evidence and Scientific Proof,” *Le Infezioni in Medicina* 18, no. 3 (2010): 199–207.

[13] John Mulhall, “Plague before the Pandemics: The Greek Medical Evidence for Bubonic Plague before the Sixth Century,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 93, no. 2 (2019): 151–179.

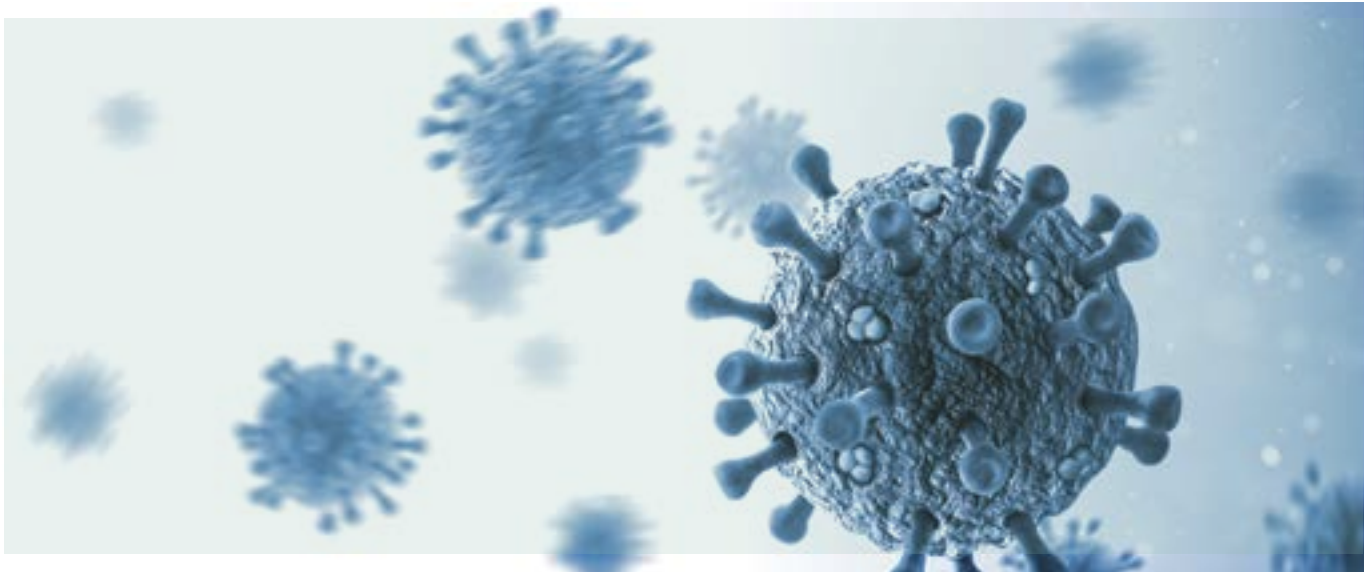
The author reasonably suggests that a diagnosis of plague is highly probable in the presence of an outbreak of (1) buboes; (2) fever; (3) headaches/achiness in the general context; (4) high mortality; and (5) a primary wound at the site of the flea bite.

[14] Rachel Finnegan, “Plagues in Classical Literature,” *Classics Ireland* 6 (1999): 23–42.

[15] Robert J. Littman, “The Plague of Athens: Epidemiology and Paleopathology,” *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine* 76 (2009): 456–67.

[16] Antonis A. Kousoulis, Konstantinos P. Economopoulos, Effie Poulakou-Rebelakou, George Androutsos, Sotirios Tsioudras, “The Plague of Thebes: A Historical Epidemic in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*,” *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 18, no. 1 (2012): 153–57, <https://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1801.ad1801>.

[17] Siro Igino Trevisanato, “The Biblical Plague of the Philistines Now Has a Name, Tularemia,” *Medical Hypotheses* 69, no. 5 (2007): 1144–46.



What is a tā’ūn?

The Arabic word tā’ūn (translated as plague) comes from ta’ana, meaning to pierce, perhaps an allusion to the excruciating pain of the disease.^[18]

In the writings of Arab and Persian physicians in the Islamicate world, including al-Rāzī (d. 311 AH), al-Majūsi (d. 384 AH), and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428 AH), this term was identified with swelling of the lymph nodes, characteristic of the buboes described earlier.^[19]

The writings of hadith commentators like al-Nawawī (d. 676 AH) similarly described gangrenous pustules with darkening (necrosis) and painful swelling in the axillae, also suggestive of bubonic plague.^[20]

An attempt can be made to infer the meaning of tā’ūn directly from the Hadith literature, however.^[21] In one hadith, a tā’ūn is compared to the ghuddah of a camel;^[22] i.e., a deadly disease characterized by swelling of the lymph glands.^[23]

In another hadith, we learn that the wounds of those who died from a tā’ūn will resemble the wounds of the martyrs and will smell of musk.^[24] Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 AH) writes that the term tā’ūn can refer to the active cause of the plague, the symptoms associated with it, or the resulting death.^[25] A related term is wabā’, which linguistically refers to a general epidemic.

Therefore, every tā’ūn is a wabā’ but the opposite is not true.^[26] In the Muwatta’, the plague of Emmaus is described as a wabā’.^[27]



[18] Lawrence Conrad, “Tā’ūn and Wabā’: Conceptions of Plague and Pestilence in Early Islam,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 25, no. 3 (1982): 292.

[19] Conrad, 293–95.

[20] Al-Nawawī, al-Minhāj (Beirut: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1972), 14:204.

[21] The Prophet ﷺ described plagues as “the stinging of your enemies from the jinn.”

See Musnad Ahmad, no. 19528. Numerous scholars including al-Mundhirī (d. 656 AH), al-Haythamī (d. 807 AH), and Ibn Hajar have authenticated this hadith. For Ibn Hajar’s extensive treatment of this hadith, see Badhl al-mā’ūn (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āsima,

n.d.), 109ff. Rashīd Ridā (d. 1935) argues that the term “jinn” can refer to what is hidden; therefore, this hadith means plagues are caused by microbes (some have said fleas), which are hidden to the naked eye.

See Ridā, Tafsīr al-manār (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1947), 3:96. After studying all the routes and explanations of this hadith, Dr. Jamil Farid concludes that this description of a plague is possibly a statement of one of the narrators that was incorrectly attributed to the Prophet ﷺ.

For his detailed discussion, see Jamil Farid, Athar al-‘ilm al-tajribī (Beirut: Markaz al-Namā, 2015), 195–203; Lawrence Conrad, “Epidemic Disease in Central Syria in the Late Sixth Century,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 18 (1994): 12–58, 17ff.

[22] Musnad Ahmad, ed. al-Arna’ūt et al., no. 25118. See editors’ comments on the grading of the hadith.

[23] Al-Munāwī, Fayd al-Qadīr (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1937), no. 5333; cf. Conrad, “Tā’ūn and Wabā’,” 298.

[24] Musnad Ahmad, no. 17651; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rifa, 1960), 10:194.

[25] Ibn al-Qayyim, Zād al-ma’ād (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1994), 4:36.

[26] Ibn Hajar, Badhl al-mā’ūn, 102–108.

[27] Al-Muwatta’, no. 1594; cf. al-Kāndhlawī, Awjaz al-masālik (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 2003), 3:675.



Is COVID-19 a plague?

COVID-19 is the name of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus formally designated SARS-CoV-2 (previously called 2019-nCoV).^[28]

The viral infection involves the lungs, with pneumonia being the most frequent clinical manifestation,^[29] although the large number of infected individuals with mild or no symptoms has resulted in the rapidity of disease transmission.

The most serious complication of infection with SARS-CoV-2 is in the name—severe acute respiratory syndrome, which entails rapid accumulation of fluid in the lungs as a result of the inflammation.

While other viral respiratory infections share similar clinical symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue), there are other features that set SARS-CoV-2 apart. For instance, COVID-19 differs from influenza in that the former is far more contagious^[30] and more likely to result in hospitalisation and death.^[31]

It is evident however that COVID-19 does not fall under the biological definition of plague, as it is not a bacterial infection caused by *Yersinia pestis*.

Moreover, it does not manifest any of the historically described symptoms associated with tā’ūn (most importantly, swollen lymph nodes and wounds). A comparison between the two reveals a clear distinction.

At most, the COVID-19 pandemic can be classified as a wabā’, which is often linguistically used interchangeably with tā’ūn.^[32]

However, based on a strict reading of the term tā’ūn—as explained in several hadiths and the majority of scholarly commentary as referring exclusively to biological plague—it does not include COVID-19. We will now proceed to examine the implications of this comparison vis-a-vis two issues.

[28] A. E. Gorbalenya, S. C. Baker, R. S. Baric, et al., “The Species Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-Related Coronavirus: Classifying 2019-nCoV and Naming It SARS-CoV-2,” *Nature Microbiology* 5, no. 4 (2020): 536–44, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41564-020-0695-z>.

[29] In rare instances, gastrointestinal or neurological complications of the disease are the initial manifestation.

[30] Shi Zhao, Qianyin Lin, Jinjun Ran, Saliu S. Musa, Guangpu Yang, Weiming Wang, Yijun Lou, Daozhou Gao, Lin Yang, Daihai He, and Maggie H. Wang, “Preliminary Estimation of the Basic Reproduction Number of Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in China, from 2019 to 2020: A Data-Driven

Analysis in the Early Phase of the Outbreak,” *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* 92 (2020): 30053–59.

[31] Note that case fatality rate calculations depend tremendously on the number of people who are tested in a population; hence the variation in reported rates. D. D. Rajgor, M. H. Lee, S. Archuleta, N. Bagdasarian, S. C. Quek, “The Many Estimates of the COVID-19 Case Fatality Rate,” *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, March 27, 2020, pii: S1473-3099(20)30244-9, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(20\)30244-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30244-9).

[32] For a list of scholars who described tā’ūn in the general sense of wabā’, see Haytham al-Jifri, al-Ahkām al-muta’alliqa bi al-wabā’ wa al-tā’ūn, 3–8.

The author concludes that defining tā’ūn as a specific disease is most sound.



The plague will not enter Medina

The city of Medina is sacrosanct and it is understandably dear to Muslims. It was the center of the epic migration during the Meccan persecution and it is the resting place of our beloved Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ praised and supplicated for Medina on many occasions. He prophesied that faith will ultimately return to Medina, and he asked Allah to shower His blessings on the city and its provisions.^[33]

In one hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said, “There are angels on the roads leading to Medina. Neither the plague nor the Antichrist will enter it.”^[34]

Given that some residents of Medina have tested positive for COVID-19,^[35] how are we meant to understand this hadith?

A number of scholars have pointed out that ‘plague’ here refers to the specific disease described earlier.^[36] As such, the spread of other epidemics, which have historically affected Medina, does not conflict with this hadith.^[37] Furthermore, the leading Hadith scholar of the subcontinent, Anwar Shāh al-Kashmīrī (d.

FIQH

1933 CE), explains that some routes of this hadith have the addition of “in shā’ Allāh, or God-willing,” which is connected to the words “the plague will not enter”; i.e., if God wills, then hopefully the plague will not enter Medina, which is not a definitive negation.^[38]

As noted earlier, there is a clear difference between COVID-19 and the plague. Hence, cases of COVID-19 in Medina do not undermine this hadith.

It is a sign of divine providence that there exists no historical account of Medina being afflicted by the plague.

In the 19th century, European travelers marveled at how plagues never reached Medina. The Swiss Orientalist Johann Burckhardt (d. 1817 CE) observed that in 1815 CE a plague broke out in the Hijaz.

Although it spread to Mecca, the Prophet’s city remained untouched.^[39] It should be noted that a version of this hadith adds Mecca to this divine protection: “Mecca and Medina are guarded. There is an angel on every road that leads to them. Neither the Antichrist nor the plague will enter them.”^[40] Ibn al-Mulaqqin (d. 804 AH) points out that the chain of transmission is weak.^[41] Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH) writes, “This is an extremely isolated report (gharīb jiddan). The mention of Mecca is not preserved (mahfūz).”^[42]

[33] Sahih al-Bukhārī, no. 1876; Sahih Muslim, no. 1374.

[34] Sahih al-Bukhārī, no. 1880.

[35] Debusmann, “Saudi Arabia Confirms 6 Deaths.”

[36] Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī, 10:191; cf. Qāḍi Iyā’d, Ikmāl al-mulim (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā’, 1998), 7:132.

[37] Ibn Allān, al-Futūhāt al-rabbāniyyah (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2004), 4:110–11.

[38] The positioning of the words “God willing” differs in the various routes of this hadith. In some routes, it comes as “There will not enter therein the plague nor the Antichrist, God willing” while others state “There will not enter therein the Antichrist or the plague, God willing.” Al-Kashmīrī believes that the latter version is the most reliable, and other versions are the result of paraphrased

Are those who died of COVID-19 martyrs?

Those who have experienced the passing of close friends and loved ones are often reassured that their deceased are martyrs (shuhadā’)—a term applied to one who has heroically sacrificed their life for the sake of God. The loss of life is a sensitive matter and one is advised to be encouraging with a grieving family. This raises the interesting question of whether those who have lost their lives to the novel virus can be classified as martyrs.

Martyrdom (shahādah)—which etymologically, in both English and Arabic, denotes ‘bearing witness’—is a lofty rank, and its reward is unparalleled.

The Qur’an informs us that martyrs “are alive with their Lord, receiving provision.”^[43] Making the ultimate sacrifice by giving up one’s life for a noble cause is a primordial ideal not unique to Islam. Even in the current secular age, “death for one’s country, family, or a just cause is deemed its own reward.”^[44]

From the Islamic perspective, the scope of martyrdom is not limited to the battlefield. The Prophet ﷺ once asked his companions, “Who do you consider a martyr among you?” They replied, “The one who is killed in the path of Allah is a martyr.” He said, “In that case, the martyrs of my community are few!” He then explained that people who die from other tragedies, such as a stomach illness or drowning, will get the reward of a martyr.^[45] Muslim scholars have, therefore, divided martyrs into two

categories: those considered martyrs in both this life and the next (i.e., those who die in war) and those who have the status of a martyr only in the hereafter (i.e., those whose deaths are unrelated to war).

While both categories enjoy a special reward in the hereafter, the burial process for one who dies on the battlefield differs from the conventional rituals—the body is neither washed nor shrouded, for instance.^[46]

The Prophet ﷺ once asked his companions, “Who do you consider a martyr among you?” They replied, “The one who is killed in the path of Allah is a martyr.” He said, “In that case, the martyrs of my community are few!”

We learn from a number of hadiths that someone who dies from a plague (tā’ūn) will receive the reward of a martyr. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever dies from a plague is a martyr”^[47] and “Whoever remains in a plague-ridden land patiently and hopeful of reward, knowing that only what Allah decrees will reach him, will get the reward of a martyr.”^[48]

It is worth noting that those who die from a plague will only receive the reward of martyrdom, as Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852 AH) explains, if they were patient and trusted Allah’s decree. Moreover, they will receive the reward of martyrdom even if they survived the plague, so long as they manifested those qualities.^[49] Al-Haytamī (d. 974 AH) emphasizes the exclusivity of the reward mentioned in the hadith to the plague as a specific disease and not a general epidemic.^[50]

transmission. Hence, it is most valid to connect “God willing” only to the appearance of a plague and not the Antichrist. Al-Kashmīrī, Fayd al-Bārī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2005), 3:316, 6:585.

[39] Conrad, “Ta’ūn and Wabā,” 287.

[40] The words “will not enter them (lā yadkhluhumā)” are recorded by al-Bukhārī in al-Tārikh al-kābir and ‘Umar b. Shabba in Tārikh Makkah; see al-Bukhārī, al-Tārikh al-kābir (Hyderabad: Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif al-‘Uthmāniyya, n.d.), no. 2099; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī, 10:191. Ahmad b. Hanbal relates another version of this hadith in his Musnad with the words “will not enter it (lā yadkhluhā),” in which case the protection from the plague is specific to Medina. See Musnad Ahmad, no. 10265; al-Samhūdī, Khulāsat al-wafā (Medina: al-Maktaba al-‘Ilmiyya, 1972), 42.

[41] Ibn al-Mulaqqin, al-Tawdhīh (Qatar: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa al-Shu’ūn al-Islāmiyya, 2008), 27:473.

[42] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1997), 19:189. On the other hand, Ibn Hajar mentions—or quotes Ibn Shabba—that the transmitters are reliable. See Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī,

10:191. Ibn Kathīr’s observation that the mention of Mecca is extremely isolated is supported by a study of the various routes of these hadiths. There are at least seven companions (viz. Abū Hurayra, Anas, Jābir, Abū ‘Asīb, Sa’d, Usāma, and ‘Umar) who narrated that Medina is protected from plagues. Abū Hurayra’s hadith is transmitted from four routes, and only the route of Fulayh, from ‘Umar b. al-‘Alā, from his father, from Abū Hurayra explicitly mentions Mecca, and this chain is not free of criticism. See Muhammad Zāhid, Dirāsa li al-ahādīth al-wārīda fi al-tā’ūn, 123; also see the editors’ comments in Musnad Ahmad, no. 10264.

[43] Qur’an 3:169.

[44] Jonathan A. C. Brown, Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet’s Legacy (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014), 240; cf. Meir Hatina, Martyrdom in Modern Islam: Piety, Power, and Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 9–11.

[45] Sahih Muslim, no. 1915.

[46] Al-Mawsū’ah al-fiqhiyah al-Kuwaytiyah (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf, 1983), 26:272–78. A third type

of martyr is someone who sacrifices his life on the battlefield for a wrong cause. Such a person will be treated as a martyr in this life but will not receive any reward in the hereafter. See Sahih Muslim, no. 1915.

[47] Sahih al-Bukhārī, no. 5733.

[48] Sahīhal-Bukhārī, no. 3474 and 6619. Imām Ahmad narrates this hadith from ‘Abd al-Samad from Dāwūd b. Abī al-Furāt with the words “and remains in his house (baytihi).” See Musnad Ahmad, no. 26139. However, the majority of transmitters from Dāwūd mention “his land (baladihi).” See, for instance, al-Mizzī, Tuhfat al-ashrāf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1999), no. 17685.

[49] Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī, 10:194.

[50] Al-Haytamī, al-Fatāwā al-fiqhiyah al-kubrā, 1:141. To avoid confusion, we have retained the nisba of Ibn Hajar al-Makkī as al-Haytamī (with a tā’) and not al-Haythami (with a thā’) even though a compelling case can be made that the correct spelling of his nisba is with a thā’. See Shaykh Hātim al-Awnī’s Rimiyy al-bāhiṭh al-zamiyy bi-tarjih al-thā’ fi nisbat Ibn Hajar al-Makkī al-Haythamī.

The analogy with a plague may be tenuous but there are other factors that allow us to classify COVID-19 related deaths as martyrdom. Anwar Shāh al-Kashmīrī, mentions that more than thirty categories of people deserve the rank of martyrdom in the hereafter, as enumerated by the Mālikī scholar Nūr al-Dīn al-Ajhūrī (d. 1066 AH).^[51]

Instead of focusing on specific categories, al-Kashmīrī opines that an examination of all the hadiths on the subject leads us to derive general causes of death that result in someone acquiring the rank of martyrdom; these are exemplified by those people explicitly mentioned in the hadith.

These include: (1) a prolonged and painful ailment, e.g., a stomach illness (mabtūn);^[52] (2) an acute harrowing illness (marad hā'il), e.g., a plague (mat'ūn); or (3) a sudden tragedy, e.g., drowning (gharīq).^[53]

The message of the Prophet ﷺ is not that martyrdom relates only to death by a particular bacterium named X but rather that human suffering and sacrifice endured patiently for the sake of God carries tremendous reward in the afterlife.

As such, despite the distinction made between tā'ūn (Yersinia pestis infection with swelling of the lymph nodes) and wabā' (a general epidemic),^[54] those who die from COVID-19 can be classified as martyrs in the hereafter even if they did not die from an actual plague. Bearing in mind the higher objectives of the hadith, such a person can fall under the first or second scenario mentioned above.

The message of the Prophet ﷺ is not that martyrdom relates only to death by a particular bacterium named X but rather that human suffering and sacrifice endured patiently for the sake of God carries tremendous reward in the afterlife.

There are two other categories of martyrs that are relevant for our purposes. First, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, “Whoever dies of an illness is a martyr.”^[55] At face value, this hadith would suffice to consider death caused by any form of illness as martyrdom.

However, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH) dismissed the various routes of this hadith as unreliable.^[56] The Moroccan polymath, 'Abd Allāh al-Ghumārī (d. 1993 CE), further argues that even if it were authentic, in light of other evidence, this hadith refers to an illness resulting from the plague.^[57]

Second, the Prophet ﷺ said, “The one who dies from ‘pleurisy’ (dhāt al-janb) is a martyr.”^[58] The term ‘pleurisy’ historically appears to have initially referred to a symptom (‘pleuritis’ in Greek meaning ‘affliction in one’s side’), rather than a specific anatomical or pathological entity (although an association with empyema was recognised).

It is likely that the equally non-specific Arabic term ‘dhāt al-janb’ (lit. affliction of one’s side) is no different in this regard, and has been described with symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sharp pain (i.e., pleuritic chest pain), and palpitations.^[59] Based on the objectives of the prophetic saying identified by Hadith scholars above, a case can readily be made for hermeneutic flexibility to extend this conception to those who die from other respiratory complications, including COVID-19.

The reward of martyrdom in the hereafter is a matter of the unseen with no legal bearing, as opposed to legal and theological issues like entering and exiting plague-ridden lands.^[60]

[51] Al-Kashmīrī, Fayd al-Bārī, 2:248; cf. al-Bijnorī, Anwār al-Bārī (Multan: Idāra-e Tālīfāt Ashrafiyya, 2004), 15:236. The printed editions of Fayd al-Bārī, al-Majlis al-'Ilmi and DKI, relate the number sixty from al-Ajhūrī. In al-'Arf al-shadhī, he states that al-Ajhūrī mentioned up to forty. Al-Kashmīrī, al-'Arf al-shadhī (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabi, 2004), 2:346. It should be noted that both books are al-Kashmīrī's lecture notes transcribed by his students; he did not write them himself. In his versification of the martyrs, al-Ajhūrī enumerates only around thirty. See al-Ajhūrī, Ta'liq latīf 'alā manzūmat al-shuhadā' wa marātibihim, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Library, 1429-4, fol. 1r. Other examples of martyrs in the hereafter include death from a collapsing building, labor pains, and protecting

one's family and wealth. Ibn 'Ābidīn mentions that some have counted over fifty types of martyrs. See Ibn 'Ābidīn, Radd al-muhtār (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub, 2003), 3:165; al-Kāndhlawī, Awjaz al-masālik, 4:544-49.

[52] Dr. Muhammad 'Alī al-Bār writes that the mabtun (stomach illness) is best understood as someone who suffered from cholera. See al-Bār, al-'Adwā bayn al-tib wa hadith al-Mustafā (Amman: Dār al-Fath, 2011), 68.

[53] In other words, categories 1 and 2 are both disease-related but 1 involves prolonged suffering and 2 involves a terrifying rapid deterioration, while category 3 is unrelated to disease.

[54] On the terms tā'ūn and wabā', see Conrad, “Tā'ūn and Wabā',” 279-302.

[55] Sunan Ibn Mājah, no. 1615.

[56] Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Mawdū'āt (Medina: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1968), 3:216; cf. Ibn 'Irāq, Tanzih al-sharī'a al-marfū'a (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1978), 2:393 and al-Albānī, Silsilat al-ahādith al-da'īfah wa al-mawdū'ah, no. 4661.

[57] Al-Ghumārī, Ithāf al-nubalā' (Palestine: Jam'iyyat Āl al-Bayt, 2007), 24.

[58] Sunan Abī Dāwūd, no. 3111.



It is true that a martyr in the hereafter is not equal to a martyr in both worlds. But even the lowest station of martyrdom yields great rewards and serves as a source of comfort for a grieving family that suffers the loss of a loved one.

No human being can determine the status of a particular person in the afterlife; everything is ultimately bound by divine judgment. The recognition that a person passed away in circumstances matching those described of martyrs is meant to instill hope in God’s mercy and reward for the deceased’s suffering. It does not impact any worldly rituals. Allah’s mercy is limitless and all-encompassing.

Hence, there is scope to refer to those who die from COVID-19 as martyrs in the hereafter. A charitable application of ‘martyrdom in the hereafter’ can be gleaned from a sound report that ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib said, “Every type of death that a Muslim experiences will grant them the status of martyrdom. However, the stations of martyrdom vary.”^[61]

It is true that a martyr in the hereafter is not equal to a martyr in both worlds. But even the lowest station of martyrdom yields great rewards and serves as a source of comfort for a grieving family that suffers the loss of a loved one.

[59] On the definition of dhāt al-janb, see Ibn al-Qayyim, Zād al-ma’ād, 4:74-75 and al-Mubārakfūrī, Mir’āt al-mafātih (Varanasi: Idārat al-Buhūth al-'Ilmiyya, 1984), 5:255. On the shifting usage of the term pleurisy, see Adrian Wilson, “On the History of Disease-Concepts: The Case of Pleurisy,” History of Science 38, no. 121 (2000): 282ff.

[60] For instance, scholars distinguish between entering and exiting lands that are afflicted with a tā'ūn and those afflicted with other epidemics. See al-Haytamī, al-Fatāwā al-fiqhiya al-kubrā, 4:11.

[61] See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Tamhīd (Morocco: Wizārat al-Awqāf, 1992), 19:209 and Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī, 6:44.

Closing reflection

There is perhaps no hadith more suitable to describe the present global predicament than the Prophet's parable of those on board a ship: those on the lower deck think that drilling a hole in the side of the boat would be a clever shortcut to avoid requesting water from those in the upper deck. The Prophet ﷺ said, "If those in the upper deck leave them to do as they please, they will all be destroyed together. If they restrain them, they will all be saved together."^[62]

There is no greater illustration of the devastating global impact that the actions of a few can have than the case of a viral pandemic that ensues from an index case alongside super spreaders.^[63] It is therefore of paramount significance that every individual take seriously the impact their actions can have and do their part to limit disease transmission.

As the pandemic continues to intensify, it can be quite distressing for Muslims to witness their beloved family members and community members passing away from COVID-19 while alone in isolation, and without the customary washing, shrouding, congregational funeral prayers, and other acts of worship invoking God to confer honor, dignity, and forgiveness upon the deceased.

Even more harrowing is the prospect that one could be placed against their wishes—God forbid—in a mass grave or cremated. But as the living bid farewell to the departing soul, one can take comfort in knowing that they have returned to Allah, the Most Merciful, Who will most assuredly recompense the faithful for every moment of suffering in this life and, by His divine will, elevate them to the status of martyrs to enjoy the companionship of the prophets and the righteous.



Whatever may be missing in their farewell from the living, rest assured that they shall have an honorable reception at the Throne of the Ever-Living.

From the foregoing analysis, we learn that although COVID-19 does not constitute biological plague, a holistic understanding of the hadith about martyrs in the hereafter allows us to refer to those who lost their lives to the virus as martyrs. Moreover, the current pandemic reaching Medina does not undermine the divine protection conferred upon the city; thus Muslims should take due precautions and follow the Prophetic teachings regarding avoiding spreading infectious diseases.

We pray that Allah keeps everyone safe and healthy and that He raises the ranks of those who have passed away. Āmīn.

It is therefore of paramount significance that every individual take seriously the impact their actions can have and do their part to limit disease transmission.

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[62] Sahih al-Bukhārī, no. 2493, 2686.

[63] Gary Wong, Wenjun Liu, Yingxia Liu, Boping Zhou, Yuhai Bi, and George F. Gao, "MERS, SARS, and Ebola: The Role of Super-Spreaders in Infectious Disease," Cell Host & Microbe 18, no. 4 (2015): 398–

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Religious Position on COVID-19 Vaccine

Office of the Mufti,
Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, 13 December 2020

The COVID-19 global pandemic has caused critical health, economic, as well as social challenges to countries and societies around the world. Many countries have had to introduce tough laws and restrictions on movements and activities to limit the spread and transmission of the virus, and these, in turn, have caused major economic upheavals, with sharp downturns in trade and economic activity and increasing unemployment. Under these circumstances, the search for a vaccine has become extremely important to save lives, provide greater health assurance as well as to facilitate the return to economic activity and livelihood as much as possible.

Islamic jurisprudence places great importance on the sanctity and safety of human life and the protection of livelihoods. Accordingly, efforts that seek to protect human life from any form of danger and harm, such as the development of vaccines, are highly encouraged in Islam. Vaccines as a form of protection from diseases and ill-health are welcomed. Previous Muis' fatwas, such as on the Rotavirus vaccine (2013) consider vaccine a form of preventive treatment from diseases encouraged in Islam.⁽¹⁾ This is drawn from the Prophetic guidance that one could consume foods that offer some protection from illnesses.⁽²⁾

In this regard, the ethical principles of Islam are highly instructive as we face unprecedented challenges caused by the global pandemic. Whilst there have been plagues recorded in Islamic history, the specific rulings and teachings that addressed the needs of communities then were largely contextual to the scale of the problems and challenges they faced. It is therefore important to note that there is no reference to the existence of vaccines in early Islamic history or to a pandemic on a global scale. In this regard, we cannot be completely reliant on juristic precedents in Islamic classical jurisprudence as the main source of reference, but should look to the broader and more fundamental religious principles in discussing emerging challenges relating to COVID-19.

The religious view of the COVID-19 vaccine must therefore take a more holistic stance that transcends the issue of halalness or permissibility of its ingredients. There are three main aspects that need to be carefully considered.

Vaccine as a basic necessity

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic with its wide-ranging consequences that have severely disrupted normal life and social activities, including religious worship, an effective and safe vaccine has become a basic necessity (daruriyyat). An effective vaccine is critical in saving lives and in ensuring that societies can function safely and cohesively. In the context of a global pandemic, such a vaccine is equivalent to other established basic human needs such as food and shelter. A vaccine therefore is an important means to uphold the principles of the sanctity of human life and the avoidance of harm as it protects society from the harmful effects of the COVID-19 virus.

Safety and efficacy of vaccines

Any COVID-19 vaccine that has been approved for public use must go through stringent and internationally-recognised medical safety standards and conform to strict ethical guidelines of government ethical bodies. It must have no known adverse medical effects and have been scientifically established as not expected to cause harm to those who take the vaccine.⁽³⁾ This is an important consideration in line with the principle of the avoidance of harm in Islamic jurisprudence. This is especially because of the fast pace of the COVID-19 vaccine development, testing and delivery.

[1] <https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Fatwa/English-Rotavirus-Vaccine>

[2] Hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari and Muslim on consuming seven pieces of Ajwah dates every morning as a preventative measure. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih Al-Bukhari (Beirut, Dar Ibn Al-Kathir) [5130], 5:2075; Muslim, Sahih Muslim (Beirut, Dar Al-Jiil) [5459], 6:123

[3] [https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/joint-press-statement-by-the-ministry-](https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/joint-press-statement-by-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-and-the-ministry-of-health-singapore-s-contribution-to-the-covid-19-vaccine-global-access-advance-market-commitment)

The development, manufacturing and administering of the vaccine should inspire confidence in the public that it is safe and effective.

Permissibility of ingredients used in vaccines

We must recognise that biomedical scientific research, including the development of therapeutics and vaccines, draws on a range of sources selected on the basis of scientific suitability for the aims of the research. These products may contain natural ingredients which are either impure (najis) or prohibited for consumption in Islamic law, such as porcine-based, or have been treated with such substances in the production process.

Previous fatwas on therapeutic drugs and vaccines have considered such situations and ruled that in cases where there are no alternatives, products that contain prohibited ingredients can still be used for treatment because the objective is to save lives (fatwa on Rotavirus vaccine 2013). There are also situations that permit the use of impure or prohibited substances for treatment as evident in some Prophetic traditions (fatwa on drug Heparin 2015).⁽⁴⁾

In addition to this, the impure substances or prohibited items used in upstream processes would have undergone multiple layers of chemical processes such as filtration that would render them undetectable or negligible in the final product. This is similar to the drug Heparin (the use of pig enzymes) and the Rotavirus vaccine (the use of trypsin). In Muslim jurisprudence, these processes are similar to istihala where the original

of-foreign-affairs-and-the-ministry-of-health-singapore-s-contribution-to-the-covid-19-vaccine-global-access-advance-market-commitment

[4]Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), Fatwas of Singapore- Science, Medicine and Health, (Singapore: Muis, 2017), 136

[5] Istihalah can be defined as transformation or conversion of material which involves changes in its composition and properties. It involves transformation of impure materials (from an Islamic



substance changes its form and nature and no longer becomes prohibited.⁽⁵⁾ In such situations, the final product (drug or vaccine) is deemed as permissible for Muslim use. Vaccines can also be fully synthetic and do not contain any animal components or cells, such as in mRNA vaccines developed for COVID-19.⁽⁶⁾

We wish to add that the ways in which therapeutical medicines and vaccines interact with the body and their functions and effect on the body and its organs are not necessarily similar to food that is consumed for nourishment and nutrition. In addition, whilst there is a variety of food sources and options available, medicine and vaccines are usually much more limited and take much longer to be discovered, manufactured and disseminated, due to the complex and stringent processes involved in researching and producing them for safe use. To apply the same standards or rules of food consumption on vaccines simply on the basis that these are consumed internally or processed in the human body, is therefore inappropriate. Accordingly, the process to determine if a vaccine is halal on the basis that all its ingredients are halal, based on the criteria applied on food consumption alone, is inadequate and can be misleading. New methods of assessing therapeutics and vaccines should be required where the important distinctions and differences are carefully considered and taken into account.

law perspective) into something which is pure/clean. Please refer to al-Zuhayli, Qadaya al-Fiqh wa al-Fikr al-Mu'asir (Damascus, Dar al-Fikr, 1428H/2007), vol 1, pg. 58

[6] Instead of delivering a virus or a viral protein, RNA vaccines deliver genetic information that allows the body's own cells to produce a viral protein. Please refer to: <https://news.mit.edu/2020/rna-vaccines-explained-covid-19-1211>

Conclusion

The objectives of introducing a COVID-19 vaccine and the processes involved in producing vaccines in general are largely aligned to established Islamic principles and values. We would advise and encourage Muslims to be vaccinated once it is available and when the vaccine has been medically authorised as safe and

effective, as this is a basic necessity to protect lives in the context of a global pandemic. Previous Muis' fatwas on therapeutics and vaccines have also addressed concerns on the permissibility of such products for Muslim use from the perspective of the nature of its ingredients. Thus far, COVID-19 vaccines in development

and/or trials do not diverge from these considerations. As such, we hold the position that a COVID-19 vaccine is permissible for Muslim use. The Fatwa Committee will review and assess suitability of vaccines for Muslim use if they fundamentally diverge from the principles above.

Vaccination in Islam: The Greater Good

by Dr Sara Hassan, Dr Nasya Bahfen, Hj Hyder Gulam



Assalamualaikum and Greetings All. This article will discuss vaccination in Islam. The preservation of life is a cardinal principle of Islam, and our faith gives greater honour to human life. Our great Muslim scholars like Ibn Sina have stated that "(M)edicine is the preservation of health and restoring it when it gets lost", to accept a lesser harm, in order the ward off a greater one, or to forego a certain benefit to obtain a greater one. But, first let's define what we are talking about. Vaccination is a medical preparation intended to produce an immunity to a disease by stimulating the production in the host of antibodies, Vaccines include suspensions of killed or attenuated microorganisms, products or derivatives thereof. The most common method of administering vaccines is by injection, oral and nasal spray. Many diseases can be prevented by the implementation and monitoring of a vaccination program, such as polio, measles etc.

The higher objectives of Shariah are the preservation of religion, human life, progeny, material wealth and human reason. Islamic law aims to preserve essential and other interests by preserving their existence and also protecting them from destruction. One of the cardinal principles of Islamic law is to achieve benefits and ward off harm and corruption. We should also remember and practice the Prophetic traditions, where our beloved Prophet (pbuh) not only sought remedy for himself, his family and companions, but also he used and advised certain medicaments e.g. black cumin

(black seed, nigella sativa), aloe vera, senna, henna (lawsonia inermis), hijama (cupping) and using honey for many ailments, and their prevention (such as eating an odd number of arjwa dates every morning).

Let's examine the views of certain contemporary Islamic scholars on vaccinations. The eminent Muslim scholar Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi states that using vaccines to boost immunity against disease is lawful, for it is a means of warding off something evil before it afflicts people. It is a duty of Muslims to do their best to ward off harm of all kinds, either before or after it comes. There is a juristic rule in this regard: Harm is to be warded off as much as possible. In fact, evidence and proofs states that the polio vaccine contains neither harmful elements nor impure ones and that it does not cause infertility at all. This refutes the arguments of those who have claimed that the vaccine is harmful and thus unlawful.

Sheikh Al-Qaradawi states that it is a duty upon every Muslim to ward off harm as much as they can. They must not do something that may cause them any harm or lead to their death.

Second, parents are responsible for providing their children as much as they can with all means of protection and immunity against harm and diseases in order to save them long-life suffering,



Third, people in authority in every country are to enact laws and take actions, by means of which the health of people in general, and children in particular, is to be protected against diseases. In this regard, if the government imposes a mandatory immunization scheme for children and in case of certain epidemics, such as meningitis, vaccination is required. An example of this, is when Muslims pilgrims to Makkah and Madinah must have vaccination certificate as a right of entry.

Fourth, things are primarily in a state of purity. Experts in the field in question, i.e., the vaccinations and immunizations, are the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO has stated that the vaccines is not harmful in any way, nor does it include impure elements or cause infertility (i.e. polio vaccines).

Fifth, vaccine has been used for a long time all over the world, including more than fifty Muslim countries, and has proved to be highly effective in eradicating diseases. No outstanding scholar, whether from Al-Azhar University, or anywhere else, has been reported to have objected to the use of such vaccine.

Sheikh ibn Baaz also has provided a very useful ruling on giving treatment before sickness occurs, such as vaccinations. He said that there is nothing wrong with giving treatment if there is the fear that the disease may occur because of the presence of an epidemic or other factors which may cause disease. This is a kind of warding off a problem before it happens. So if there is the fear of sickness and a person is vaccinated against an infection that is present in the land or elsewhere, there is nothing wrong with that, because it is a kind of protection.

The Mufti of Kelantan (Malaysia), the respected Mufti Mohamad Shukri Mohamad has said that Islam allows the use of vaccine although it contains 'haram' substances (forbidden in Islam) when there is no other medicine available. The respected Mufti, has said that Islam stressed on the well-being of its followers in terms of faith, life, mind, lineage and wealth, as such the vaccine is permissible in Islam. Following this line of logic, the august European Council of Fatwa and Research (1-7 July 2003) have clearly stated that it is permissible to use vaccinations for the treatment and prevention of harm, especially since forbidding its administration will result in greater harm for the individual, family and community. Even if the known that the vaccine may be from an impure sources (such as the enzyme trypsin).⁽²⁾

As social media becomes a prominent source of information, our media experts have cautioned against uncritically accepting information from non-reputable sources. One of co-authors, Dr Nasya Bahfen has said that it's so important to defer to the sources who attribute recognised scientific publications and mainstream medical professionals. "Reputable media outlets won't give the time of day to the anti vaccination lobby, and won't fall into the trap of a false equivalency, as if the anti-vaccination movement - which is actually tiny - is on the same level as the majority of scientific

finding. There is no such thing as a media conspiracy with this - there is no huge secret the anti-vax movement knows that the medical profession and medical researchers don't know."

As Muslims, whose civilisation contributed greatly to the development of the scientific method, we should be wary of seeking medical advice from Facebook memes - leave this stuff to the people who spend their lives researching it, and seek media sources who attribute peer reviewed scientific journals or mainstream medical professionals."

Inshallah (God willing), this article will help you, our dear reader, consider these principles and their application, in your daily lives. We will leave you, my dear reader, with one last point from a talk that Dr Sara Hassan gave in November 2016, at the Australian Albanian Islamic Society Women's group debunking myths associated with vaccinations.

At the talk, Dr Sara said that medical professionals take an oath of non-maleficence, that is a pledge to do no harm. This principle is encompassed by the Hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) 'There should be no harm nor reciprocating of harm'. Dr Sara is an expert in these matters of vaccination, as both a medical practitioner and a research scientist.

Dear readers, we can empathize with Dr Sara when she has to deal with a very small but very vocal group of people continue to propagate the falsehood that 'vaccination is unsafe and that the entire medical and scientific community are in cahoots with Big Pharma to conceal the 'truth'. We should be listening to the advice of experts in our Ummah like Dr Sara, and heed the warnings of Dr Nasya about the perils of getting your knowledge from social media. Till next time, Masalama.

The Mufti of Singapore and the peak Muslim body in Singapore (MUIS) has released a religious guidance on the Covid-19 Vaccine (refer to pg 22). The guidance encourages Muslims to be vaccinated, once it is available and has been medically authorised as safe and effective. The basis of this sound opinion was on the following considerations: (a) vaccine as basic necessity, (b) safety and efficacy of vaccines, and (c) permissibility of ingredients used in vaccines.

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the authors. It was first published on Al Wasat (November 2016).

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Town Hall Meeting

2 February 2020

MCAS Town Hall meeting was held on 2 February 2020 with an attendance of about 120 members. The agenda for the meeting was to present and discuss with the members of the Association on the proposed Constitution Amendments to the current Association’s Constitution. Given that the proposed Constitution Amendments are substantial in nature, the Council felt that it was prudent to discuss it with the members, explaining the rationale for the proposed changes and to gather their feedback. The Town Hall Meeting was a pre-cursor discussion of the matter before the discussion at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and no formal votes or decision was taken at the meeting.



(Left) Bro Muhammad Imran Kuna, President of MCAS addressing the audience.



(Right) Our attendees listening attentively during the session.



(Right) Bro Ridzuan Wu, during the Q&A.



(Bottom) One of our longest serving member, Bro Shahbaz Ahmad at the Q&A.



(Left) Bro Ariff Sultan, VP Corporate Affairs, presenting the proposed Constitutional Amendments.



(Top) Our Council Member, Sis Fatimah Abdullah receiving and greeting fellow MCAS members.



(Left & Bottom) Our attendees at the Q&A.





COVID-19 – The Blessings

by Noreen Yek Boussetta

We were greeted with a not so “Happy New Year” this 2020. The year started with an outbreak of a virus that was then called coronavirus in Wuhan in the beginning of the year before it started to spread to the other parts of the world and became a global pandemic that has since paralysed the world’s economy and shattered many lives and livelihoods.

Now known as COVID-19, the pandemic is still evolving around the world and countries all over are battling and grappling with the phenomena.

In Indonesia, as of November 2020, reports in the English newspaper, The Jakarta Post cites that the nationwide current statistic stands at almost 426,000 infections and a death toll that is close to 15,000.



Ika Dharmayanti, Civil Servant

Ika Dharmayanti, a Civil Servant, learnt that she was positive for the virus after going for a swab test. Her office facilitates swab checks for all employees. She remembers having just mild flu before the swab test. The news of her being positive for COVID-19 made her panic. She was also clueless as to where, when and how she got the virus.

Her immediate thoughts that came to her mind when she knew that she was a patient of COVID-19 were just confusion. "I started panicking because I have asthma and a toddler at home who is also asthmatic. I couldn't believe that I suffered from COVID-19 as I was always wearing a mask, washing my hands or using a hand sanitizer and keeping my distance while I was out," shares Ika, who is in her mid-forties.

Throughout her infectious period, her workstation had been shifted to her home. She self-isolated herself and kept a distance from her family. She also disciplined herself to use a mask at home at all times. Eating nutritious food, consuming vitamins, exercising and sunbathing everyday became a norm to her.



Ika had gone for another swab test on the 13th day after she had tested positive for COVID-19. The result of that second test was released four days later and she was negative. Despite the good news, she still continued to self-isolate for the next 10 days – because she "... was fearful that she could still spread the virus".

"There was no follow-up medical examination by (the) local healthcare workers ... I took cold and cough medicine and an asthma inhaler for quick relief of asthma symptoms. In addition, I increased the consumption of vitamins C and E," recounts Ika, who is based in Jakarta.

Now that she is healthier, Ika still worries about a re-infection. "The virus is still

in the body. I had also asked one of the general physicians ... (and had been told that) there is no research that can presume how long ... the body (can become virus free again)".

Looking at the current situation, Ika feels fortunate to be surrounded by supportive family members and colleagues who often ask about her well-being, provide advice and support.

Despite the downside that COVID-19 has had upon us, Ika is grateful that Allah SWT still gives her health and she still holds a job that is not affected by the outbreak. "As a result of the pandemic, I can now work from home ... (and) can spend more time with my family," she concludes.



Muhammad Hasif, Student

Closer to home, Muhammad Hasif, was in Amman, Jordan when COVID-19 struck. After completing his national service in November 2019, Hasif left Singapore for the Kingdom to study Arabic.

Unfortunately, not long after reaching the capital, the pandemic hit the nation. "The kingdom declared a state of emergency and went into a lockdown where everybody had to stay at home under curfew. We were not allowed to leave the house to buy food when the curfew was in place," shares the young man.

"At that point in time, my command of the Arabic language was not very strong. News of the virus and statements from the government were largely in Arabic and therefore, I was very unsure of what was happening. I was not scared of what was happening as I was living with some friends that I made there so I wasn't lonely. I thought I could stay in Jordan and wait out the virus and the lockdown to resume my classes.

However, MFA contacted me. I was told that there was a flight ... to take me home. After discussing with my parents,

we decided that it was best for me to be home with my family ... I was grateful and definitely relieved when I got back to Singapore as things got worse," recalls Hasif vividly.

When Hasif finally set foot on home ground, he was placed under Stay-Home-Notice (SHN) for 14 Days – which he readily obliged. He had stayed away from his family during that time so as not to infect his ageing parents who were more susceptible to the virus.

When Singapore entered into the *Circuit Breaker* period in March, Hasif continued having online Arabic classes with his teachers from Jordan. However, he admits that "it's harder to retain the language in Singapore as there are not many people who speak Arabic here as compared to Jordan".

Moving on, Hasif is now focused and committed to finish his four-year studies at Nanyang Technological University (NTU). The Biological Sciences student had just commenced his class in August 2020. Due to that, he has no plans on going back to Jordan anytime soon. However, the desire to learn and deepen his knowledge in the Arabic language is

still there and he will return back to the Middle East, if he is given a chance to do so again.

Not regretting to have left Jordan for home beginning of this year when the pandemic started to make its waves all over the globe, Hasif is just grateful to be back in Singapore. "Allah has control over all things. Anything can happen at any time and all things happen for a reason. I am grateful for listening to my parents who (had) asked me to ... take the flight home when I was given the opportunity. Had I not, I would have been stuck in Jordan for (a) very long (time)," he confesses.





Muhammad Furqaan, Student

It was a different scenario for Muhammad Furqaan, who had finished school recently and was planning to pursue his studies overseas. While waiting for his departure to take place, he had worked part-time at the Marina Bay Cruise Centre Singapore (MBCCS).

Unfortunately, when COVID-19 kicked-in, his plans were disrupted. MBCCS had to close down. "I lost my job at MBCCS

... and my plan to further studies was delayed," he laments.

"I was excited about going overseas" but because of the turn in event, he had to make adjustments to his daily life. He began doing delivery and did some tutoring.

Few months on, the hopeful future undergrad of *Al-Azhar University* says,

"MUIS and (the authorities) are (still) working on my departure and travel plans but up till now there are no details yet".

Despite the uncertainties, "life's good. I'm currently attending some online and physical classes. On top of that, saving up for (the) future while waiting to fly-off ... I'm awaiting my flight, praying hard and just hoping for the best.

Meanwhile, I try to fill up my time by revising on what I've learnt and reading some books (that are) relevant to my preferred course," he beams.

The unexpected event has taught Furqaan "... to be patient and persevere" in whatever situation that he is facing and may face in the future. "The blessing behind what has happened is that I get to spend more time with family and loved ones as well as gain some job experiences that may benefit me in years to come".



Nurul Khalisah, Food Technologist

On the other hand, Food Technologist, Nurul Khalisah, has been fortunate enough to have a job that has not been affected throughout these unprecedented times.

"I'm working in the essential workplace (food manufacturing); thus life goes on normally for me. Working hours, pay checks, are all as per usual. There are also no *work-from-home* arrangements for me and my colleagues as we are working in a Research & Development lab and manufacturing plant. Thus, the pandemic has not affected my life as much as it may have affected others," explains Khalisah.

However, all has not been rosy for Khalisah. Her wedding plans had been interrupted abruptly.

"Our wedding was supposed to take place at the end of June and we were 70% ready with the preparations around early March, before the pandemic got worse. When the organiser called to cancel our booking, we were lost. We were contemplating on whether to proceed with the solemnisation first or postpone the marriage as a whole". Khalisah and her family chose the latter – only to realise that the situation just got worse.



Months after that, when the authorities eventually announced that solemnisation could revert to vis-à-vis, Khalisah went ahead with the solemnisation. "By then, we only had a month to prepare. It was stressful as preparations had to be done during (the) *Circuit Breaker* period.

"Shops were all closed. We had to find everything online. Bridal makeup, henna ... were all not given permission to operate yet but Alhamdulillah two days before the solemnisation, Phase 2 had commenced and we managed to get everything settled in those two days," recalls the new bride.

Khalisah is now busy preparing for her wedding reception. At present, couples are given 100 slots for their invitees. Coming from a big family, she felt disheartened by that limitation initially – only to realise that that it is a blessing

in disguise. "Smaller number of guests means an intimate wedding. This should be the new normal for Malay weddings! Only invite those who matter and concentrate in giving the best treatment to them. With fewer guests, we can meet every single one of them and interact with them more! Having a guest list and making sure everyone RSVP will also make the wedding more organised," shares Khalisah, who can't wait for the global lockdowns to be lifted soon – so that she can go for a honeymoon.

Certainly, it has been a learning journey. A trying and tiring episode for all of us but one day this pandemic will be a thing of the past. A history on its own like no other. As Khalisah puts it, "the pandemic feels like a calibration ... we are being forced to reflect on what really matters in our life and we start to appreciate a lot of things around us that we (once) overlooked".

With the year coming to an end soon, everyone is hoping that this chapter will find its closure. May we take iktibar from these events. No matter how hard we've been hit by a misfortune, remember that, "Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear" (Qur'an 2.286) and "Allah does not take something except to replace it with something better".

Chinese New Year Celebration

2 February 2020

MCAS organised a Chinese New Year celebration for all MCAS Chinese Converts and its members to commemorate the significant cultural event. With the goal to foster ties and inculcate good relationship with their non-Muslim family members, our Converts were encouraged to invite their family and close relations to this event, highlighting the vastness of the Islamic values of diversity and kinship. Our guests were treated to sumptuous food, the traditional Lou Yusheng, Gu Zheng performance, festival delicacies, and many more.



(Top) One of the performers playing the Gu Zheng.



Friends and family enjoy during the Yusheng.



Fun and games for all.



(Bottom: Left & Right) Our guests enjoying the celebration.



(Left) Our emcee, Bro Firdaus Wong interacting with the audience.



(Left) Buffet lunch is served!



(Right) Guests during the Grand Tossing ceremony.



(Top & Right) Never a dull moment.



Building Resilience

– Advancing despite Adversity

by Faudziah Omar

An interview with Muhammad Imran Kuna, President of Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore, on the challenges, his optimism and the silverlining during this difficult time.

At the turn of the new decade, the world was suddenly thrown into chaos as news of an outbreak began coming out from China. Seemingly overnight, the virus had spread to countries far and wide. The first known report of human cases of COVID-19 were reported in Wuhan City, China in December 2019, as a cluster of severe pneumonia cases were reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Not long after that, several cases were reported in different parts of the world. On 23 January 2020, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Singapore was discovered – a 66-year-old Chinese national who had arrived in Singapore three days earlier.

As cases in Singapore and around the world began to rise, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced a partial lockdown, known as the Circuit Breaker (CB), to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the Republic. As businesses and organisations took the hit from the CB, The Muslim Reader spoke to the President of Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (MCAS), Mr Muhammad Imran Kuna on the measures taken by the Association during this unprecedented time.

The Muslim Reader (TMR): The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the existing challenges faced by the charity sectors. What went through your mind when you first learnt about the outbreak?

Imran Kuna (IK): The Association had been on high alert since the outbreak of the coronavirus in Wuhan spreading to other parts of China and its neighbouring countries. When the virus hit Singapore's shores during (the) eve of Chinese New Year, we implemented temperature screening and flagged visitors with any flu-like symptoms, requesting travel declaration from anyone who seek entry into our Association.

My immediate thoughts were to ensure that the services we offer do not get disrupted with this impending crisis. Our priority is the health and safety of MCAS staff, members, volunteers, and visitors. I was concerned for everyone, especially the students who attend our weekend madrasah Darul Arqam Children & Youth Classes (DACC&DAYS). So, we started to make preparation to notify parents about the possibility of halting all classes, until we know the extent of the outbreak. Prior to this we have had several discussions with our executive committee, so we were ready to act.

We responded quickly and took precautions early. Alhamdulillah, due to our strict policing, we did not have any incident nor there was a need to shut down the Association.



TMR: Describe the course of actions taken once the announcement of a Circuit Breaker was made by Prime Minister Lee, and were there any challenges faced during this period?

IK: As we had been monitoring the situation in Malaysia where they announced the Movement Control Order (MCO) on 18 March, we knew that if the outbreak is not contained, Singapore would follow suit. Once the announcement of a partial lockdown was made, MCAS went into full swing – our programmes and classes were swiftly moved to online platforms.

I must credit our fast-thinking staff and excellent leadership from our executive committee who developed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that proved to be useful. The health and safety measures were implemented, and we were able to seamlessly integrate the SOP into our operations to comply with Safe Management Measures set by the authorities.

Alhamdulillah, because of that we were able to uphold our commitment to the community, with MCAS annual programmes such as the Ramadhan Zakat Disbursement, Qurban Drive, Bursary and many more activities continuing despite the challenges. In the blessed month of Ramadhan, we successfully conducted conversions online – 20 individuals proclaimed the Shahadah via zoom, fully approved and endorsed by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS).

Having said that, we were initially confronted by some challenges – understandably, people were fearful of the unknown, and the precautionary measures which we took were not popular with some. However, once our team explained the need for these measures, most people were cooperative and gave their full support.

TMR: What was the impact to the Association and how did you overcome it?

IK: Although we were able to respond with resilience in practical ways that would help us in our work, it would be inaccurate to say that MCAS did not take any hit from the effect of COVID-19. In terms of donation or zakat received this year, we have seen a drop probably due to the instability arising from the Covid-19 situation. Alhamdulillah, despite the decrease in donation, we were still able to continue providing and assisting those in need especially our Fakir Miskin clients and, Zakat recipients, among others.

On a brighter note, there are many wonderful blessings that arose from COVID-19, one of which is the ability to connect with people all over the world, breaking boundaries which was once before. MCAS talks and classes which were held virtually are seeing an increase in participation – more people are subscribing and attending our classes online. Contactless donation was also implemented to ensure that any good-intention individuals who would like to donate can still do their part during this downturn. Without these technologies, our income streams as well as our annual events would not have been possible considering the safe management measures. MCAS Cyber Raya were conducted in place of the Eid Celebrations which are usually held in-person, efforts were made to conduct Eid Khutbah and Takbir Online, all with the goal to strengthen the ukhuwah, especially in time of crisis

We are certainly looking into extending these online efforts post-COVID so that more people can benefit from them. Nevertheless, we hope to be able to resume the physical classes once we can do so. I cannot thank our members and volunteers enough for the trust they have placed in us to continue serving them.



My sincere appreciation to the people I work with. We learned a lot about ourselves from this pandemic, and the one thing I value most is teamwork. Alhamdulillah, the Association is blessed with like-minded people with the same goals, without which we might not have pulled through. The dedication of our management, staff, members, and volunteers shined through during this difficult time. This is evident with the success of our Qurban Drive.



The quick turnaround of our staff and management to procure the right tools and equipment gave us a head-start in establishing a flexible working arrangement. Operations ran smoothly, while staff continue their work from home.

This striving to assist others reminds me of a verse in the Quran in which Allah (SWT) says,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدْوَنِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“Help one another in acts of piety and righteousness. And do not assist each other in acts of sinfulness and transgression. And be aware of Allah. Verily, Allah is severe in punishment” (Quran: Al Maeda; 5:2).

TMR: It has been almost a year since the world was taken by storm by this virus, and we have had to live with social distancing measures. What is the current arrangement at MCAS and how do you think it will affect the way we interact with each other?

IK: We are operating in compliance with Safe Management Measures – Phase 2. Plans for Phase 3 have already started, where we hope to resume most of our physical classes and restore our services with face-to-face interactions. As we are aware of the risks, we are taking it slow. We must learn from those countries who had resumed normal activities but were soon faced with outburst of positive cases.

We cannot afford to expose anyone to the likelihood of an infection, so we are running any physical programmes on a need basis.



TMR: Do you think this new normal is the way forward, in terms of employee working arrangements, mode of operations, etc?

IK: This pandemic has taught us many things which may seem hard to achieve previously. As we aim to understand the long-term impacts of the crisis on our operating model, we seek ways to adapt to the new normal. With the right intention, proper planning and with the help of technology, we can accomplish the goals we set out to do. Embracing the flexibility of working from home has given us the ability to maintain our operations and continue our service offerings and build resilience through this challenging time. Our engagement with others has gone beyond the four walls, and so too our commitment to da'wah shall continue, In Sha Allah.

As a non-profit organisation, our objective is to ensure that the needs of our beneficiaries are met, and their well-being cared for. The requirement of social distancing means we are not allowed any physical contact which can pose as a challenge for our volunteers, who are often helping the needy with their essentials. The new normal may be limiting the social and physical contact between them, but we are exploring many other ways to get the necessary support to the families.

TMR: What are your plans moving forward and what is the biggest lesson learnt?

IK: MCAS will endeavour to continue providing support to the community and deliver our services to the best of our ability. More exciting programmes are planned for 2021, which we hope to be beneficial for everyone. In the meantime, stay connected with us online and continue your pursuit of knowledge.

My biggest takeaway from this experience is that faith and belief will give you the strength to overcome any difficulty. No amount of preparation can guarantee the future, but we can gain resilience by being adaptable. Our hope is that the vaccine is found soon and that As-Syafi cure all the sufferings and challenges faced in this world.

Last but not least, we pray for the healing of all who are sick, a relieve for all who has been affected by this pandemic, and forgiveness for those whose lives had been taken away due to this virus. May the Almighty keep us safe and bless you and us for all our efforts.

Together we can weather the storm during this turbulent time, and we shall emerge stronger, In Sha Allah!

Terminology Equivalents

Hebrew	Arabic
kosher	halāl
shechita	dhabiha
shochet	dhābih
halakha	sharī'a
treif	harām

Is Kosher Meat Halal?

A comparison of the Halakhic and Shar'i requirements for animal slaughter

by Dr Yasir Qadhi

The following is a paper presented to the AMJA Conference on The Halal and Haram in Food and Medicine (Los Angeles, California, March 2-4, 2012). Note that this paper does not represent AMJA in any way, and only represents the opinions of the author.

Observant Muslims and Jews only eat halāl and kosher products, and face many of the same problems in finding appropriate meat products in the modern, secularised world. Due to the dearth of kosher meat products available, and even higher scarcity of halāl meat, many Muslims feel comfortable purchasing kosher meat, believing that all kosher meats (and by extension kosher products) are necessarily halāl. Other Muslims, due to either political or theological reasons, believe that it is impermissible to purchase or consume any kosher meat products.





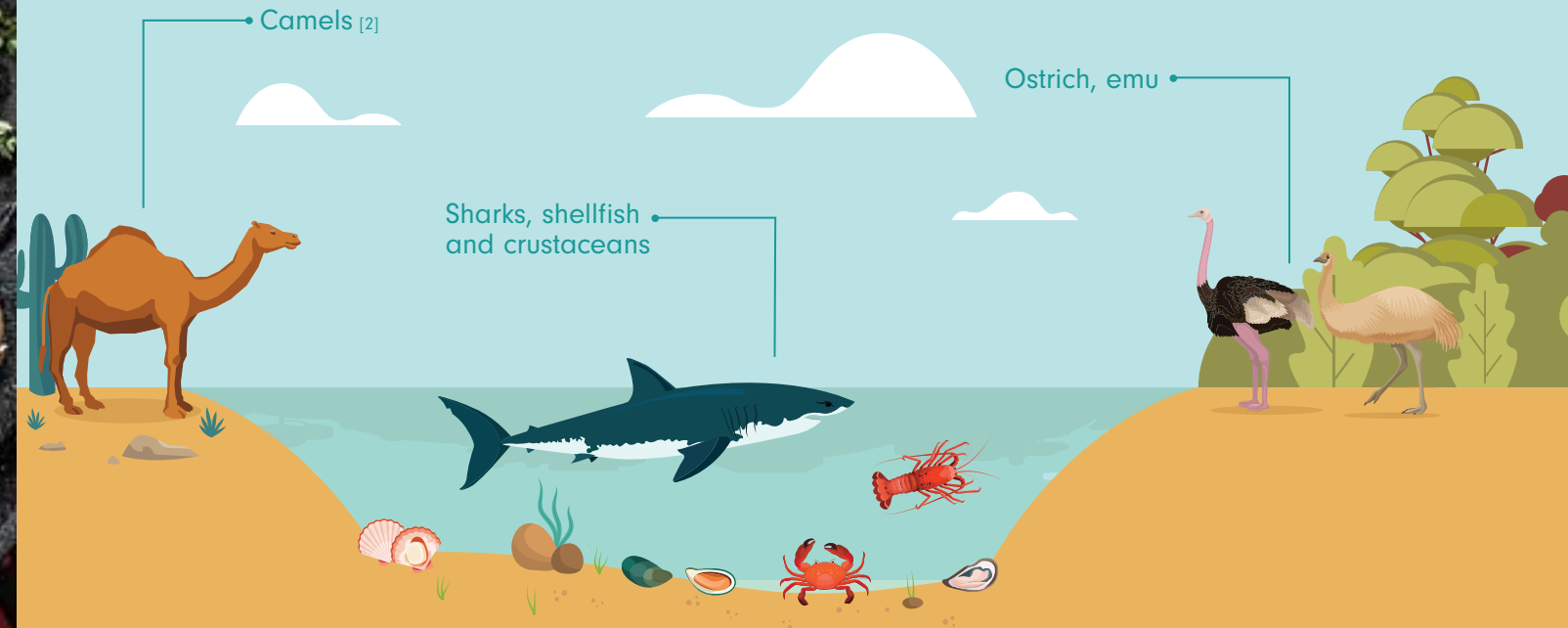
We prohibited for them good things which were made lawful for them earlier and for their preventing (people), very often, from the way of Allah.

An-Nisa (4:160)

This article seeks to discuss the question of the Islamic legal ruling on consuming kosher meat products. Therefore, political questions and personal values, which do not dictate the general ruling (asl) with respect to such products, will not be discussed.

Generally speaking (and as per Q. 4:160 and 3:50), halakhic laws are stricter than Islamic ones. This is shown not only in the foods that are permissible or impermissible, but also in the laws pertaining to slaughtering, cooking and consuming foods. Since the normative applications of Jewish law are stricter than those for Islamic law, in most cases these laws will not affect Muslims who wish to consume kosher, but would affect Jews who might be interested in *halāl* meat.

The most pertinent examples will be discussed in this paper.



Prohibitions Regarding Types of Animals and Foods

Both Jewish and Islamic laws prohibit the consumption of carrion, swine, insects, rodents and blood. Additionally, any food that is poisonous or immediately harmful to the human body would be prohibited.

All solid food items prohibited by the Shari'a are also prohibited in Jewish law.

There are a number of significant items prohibited in the halakha but allowed by the Shari'a. The Qur'an itself mentions the most common example, viz., certain types of animal fat (see Q. 6:146). Halakhic law specifies which types of fats and nerves are prohibited.^[1]

The majority of madhhabs allowed the Muslim to consume these parts that are typically not considered kosher after a Jewish slaughter. The only exception to this is the Mālikī school, which deems the consumption of these parts impermissible.

Other examples of items that are prohibited for Jews but allowed for Muslims include:

– Sharks, shellfish and crustaceans (lobster, crabs, etc.) [Note: for the hanafis these animals are also not permitted].

– Some types of birds (e.g., ostrich, emu).

– Camels (because it does not have a proper 'split hoof').^[2]

Interestingly enough, the locust is an animal that is explicitly mentioned and allowed by both halakhic and Shar'i texts.

Also note that Jewish law forbids mixing meat and dairy products together. Different Jewish authorities have different interpretations and rules for implementation – some even require two sets of kitchen utensils and separate areas of refrigerators for these two products. There is, of course, no equivalent in Islamic law.

[1] This is based on Leviticus 7:3. Generally, Jewish law does not allow fat surrounding the kidneys, the abdominal fats, the fats surrounding the stomach and intestines, and the tail fat. The nerve that is forbidden is one that is in the hind-quarters. Since it is labor-intensive to remove this nerve, generally the hind-quarters of an animal are sold to non-Jews.

[2] Many Qur'anic exegetes consider this to be an example of Q. 3:93; others also add the ruling of animal fats, but this latter opinion clearly contradicts Q. 6:146.

Jewish law also has stringent rules regarding the religious washing and usage of utensils. For example, if a ceramic or porcelain utensil is used to cook a non-kosher food, that utensil can never be purified and used for kosher cooking. However, if a metallic utensil has been used, it must be cleaned with soap and water, then left for a period of time, then immersed in boiling water under the supervision of an expert, before it may be used to cook with.^[3]

Islamic law, on the other hand, would only require the regular washing of any such utensil and would permit its subsequent usage to cook or consume halāl products in.

The permissibility of gelatin and rennet are ongoing discussions in both faiths. The exact same spectrum of opinions exists in both Muslim and Jewish circles. It appears that most mainstream Jewish and Muslim authorities would not permit regularly available gelatin, since it is derived from either pork or non-ritually slaughtered animals (with minority dissenting opinions on both sides). Proper kosher gelatin is therefore typically derived from kosher fish (and, in even rarer cases, from kosher slaughtered animals, or from certain cows that have died natural deaths,^[4] or from vegetable products).

However, it should be noted that a product that is marked as kosher does not necessarily mean that all Jewish authorities believe it to be so. In fact, most yoghurt and candy products that are marked with circle-K are not approved by most Conservative and Orthodox Rabbis.



[3] This discussion is necessarily simplistic and brief.

[4] These are so-called 'Indian cows'; since Hindus are not allowed to kill cows, any cow that dies is left untouched. Jewish law allows the bones of such an animal, if left untouched for a long period of time, to be used for the manufacture of gelatin.

[5] I have written a paper about this, published online. See: <http://muslimmatters.org/2007/07/09/of-mice-and-men-the-cheese-factor/>. muslimmatters.org/2007/07/09/of-mice-and-men-the-cheese-factor/.

Hence, Muslims need to know the different types of symbols used by the Jewish food industry, and their corresponding opinions, before they make a choice on whether a product that is marked as kosher is in fact halāl or not.

Cheese, on the other hand, appears to be an issue where the spectrum of opinions are the same, but the majorities of each are different. Most Jewish authorities would only allow cheese if produced from kosher rennet; most Muslim authorities would allow cheese from non-halāl rennet because of the issue of istihlāk.^[5] In both groups, there are dissenting minority opinions, but the minorities are on opposite sides.

There are some halakhic restrictions on vegetables and plants (for example, the orlah, or fruit that grows during first three years after planting), and Jewish law is also stricter than Islamic law regarding insects found in fruits and vegetables, but these laws are not relevant to this discussion.

Additionally, there are specific halakhic commandments for preparing Passover breads and prohibiting other foods that would also not concern Muslims.

For Muslims, the most common product that is allowed in Jewish law but prohibited in Islamic law are alcoholic beverages. Jewish law permits the consumption of 'kosher' beer and wine.

Similarities in slaughtering an animal

Once we understand the halakhic procedure for slaughtering animals, it will be possible to arrive at an Islamic verdict regarding its status. First, the similarities. Jewish law and Islamic law both require the below-mentioned. All of these are points of agreement between Jewish and Islamic law.

1



The animal must be alive when it is slaughtered (hence stunning or other procedures to render the animal unconscious should be avoided).

2



The animal must be killed with a sharp knife (hence, a blow to the head would render the animal treif and harām).

3



The knife must cut the neck arteries of the animal: in particular, the trachea, esophagus, cartiod arteries and jugular veins should be cut, while leaving the spinal cord intact.

4



The blood must be drained out.

5



There must be minimal harm to the animal – a painless and quick slaughter is required.

Minor Differences

There are some minor differences between the requirements of the two faiths. These difference would generally be negligible and irrelevant to Muslims, but not to observant Jews.

- 1

Jewish law requires a specific type of person (called a shochet) to slaughter. Typically, the shochet is an observant male Jew trained in the practice of slaughter. Islamic law allows any male or female Christian, Muslim or Jew to sacrifice as long as that person follows the proper procedure of slaughtering. Therefore, it is primarily for this reason that a dhabiḥa animal can never be kosher for observant Jews because the slaughter would be performed by a Muslim.
- 2

The perfection of the knife blade – Jewish law requires visual and physical inspection; Islamic law only requires a sharp knife even if there are some imperfections (e.g., minor abrasions and nicks would be permissible in Islam).
- 3

Jewish law requires one continuous stroke for a slaughter (moving the knife back and forth would be allowed), whereas Islamic law would prefer one stroke, but the slaughter would not be invalidated if the slaughterer quickly followed a first improper stroke with another one.
- 4

In Jewish law, the knife must be at least two times the size of the animal's neck, and perfectly straight, whereas there is no such requirement in Islam.
- 5

Jewish law completely forbids stunning, and a stunned animal would be treif; Islamic law is not unified on this point, as most authorities would consider stunning makrūh, but as long as the animal is alive and has a pulse, the slaughter would still be considered ḥalāl.
- 6

Depending on which Islamic madhab one followed, the number of passages in the neck of the animal cut might be less for some opinions of Islamic law (however, a perfect cut in both religions would require the esophagus, trachea, arteries and jugular).
- 7

While the disconnecting of the spine is prohibited in both laws, in Jewish law this would render the animal treif, whereas according to the majority opinion in Islamic law, this is makrūh but does not render the animal ḥarām (note that some authorities would view such an act as making the animal ḥarām).
- 8i

Jewish law requires a visual inspection of the lungs and some other internal organs of the animal after slaughter. Specific defects associated with these organs makes the animal treif, whereas the total absence of any imperfection (i.e., adhesion-free lungs) renders the animal a higher level of kosher, called glatt kosher.
- 8ii

If such a level of perfection was not achieved, but the procedure was followed, the meat would merely be kosher. And some type of defects would in fact render the animal treif even after proper slaughter. There is no equivalent to such a post-slaughter examination in Islamic law.
- 9

The animal's blood must be allowed to flow into the earth (or on the ground) in Jewish law (for example, it should not be gathered in a bowl), whereas there is no such prohibition in Islamic law. In practice, most Muslims slaughter and spill the blood on the ground as well.
- 10

Islamic law encourages, but does not require, that the animal faces the qiblah. Since this is not a requirement according to any madhhab, it is irrelevant to the question of whether kosher is ḥalāl.^[6]
- 11

While the Jewish invocation (i.e., blessing) is not a necessary requirement for the meat to be considered kosher, it is in practice never left. This issue will be discussed in a separate section.

From all of these points, it is clear that these factors will not render kosher meat ḥarām; most are in fact rulings that make the halakhic laws stricter than their Sharʿī equivalents, and even the Islamic ones on this list are recommendations and not requirements. Hence, from the perspective of the Shariʿa, these factors are not relevant.

Of course, because of some or most of these factors (especially the first one), ḥalāl meat cannot be considered kosher by Jewish authorities.



[6] Since this law is irrelevant to the halakha, some modern Jewish authorities have allowed taking this condition into account when performing kosher slaughters.



Major Difference - the Tasmiya Issue

There is one major difference between the two laws that cannot be overlooked and could potentially result in a verdict of tahrīm,^[7] and that is the issue of the tasmiya.

The Islamic opinions on mentioning Allah’s name at the time of sacrifice are well-known. It is clear that the majority of scholars (and the explicit texts of the Qur’ān and Sunnah) require the utterance of tasmiya before an animal is slaughtered. It is with this opinion in mind that we proceed. (It goes without saying that, for the minority who do not

require tasmiya, obviously if they do not require a Muslim to mention the name of Allah then a priori they would not require a non-Muslim to do so).^[8]

Halakhic law states that the shochet should verbally bless the act of slaughter with a specific blessing.^[9] While this blessing is not considered an essential requirement, in practice it is always done, and it is realistically inconceivable that a shochet intentionally abandons this blessing.^[10]

The formulation of this blessing translates as:

“Blessed are you, Adonai [G-d], our G-d, Lord of the World, Who Sanctified us through His Commandments and instructed us concerning proper animal slaughter”

[7] Of course, we are not talking about the issue of adding alcohol to the meat while it is being cooked. Jewish law permits the consumption of certain types of alcohol and the mixing of wine with meat products. Any such production of meat would obviously be harām for Muslims.

[8] It is relevant to point out that Ibn Hanbal’s position regarding the tasmiya for Ahl Kitāb sacrifices is explicit – and as far as I know, everything narrated to the contrary is mujmal. Hanbal reports that Abū Abdillāh said, “There is no problem with the sacrifice of the Kitābi as long as he sacrifices for Allah and in the name of Allah (idhā ahallū lillāhi wa sammū ‘alayhi).” [Ahkām Ahl al-Dhimmah, 1/189].

This was also the explicit position of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim. It should also be noted that most authorities who allowed the sacrifice of the Kitābi without mentioned Allah’s name also allowed it if they mentioned other than Allah’s name [ibid., 1/191-3].

Also, the reader is encouraged to see Ibn Taymiyya’s risāla on this issue, in Jāmi’ al-Masā’il of Dr. Bakr Abu Zayd (Riyad: Dār al-‘Ālim, 1429), vol. 6, p. 377-89. In it, he states that the obligation of saying the tasmiya before hunting or slaughtering an animal is even more clear than the obligation to recite Fātiha in the prayer.

It is the intention of the author to write a brief treatise on this issue as well, insha Allah.

[9] It is important to note that the blessing is for the act of sacrifice, and not for an animal or for the instrument.

[10] Therefore, from an Islamic standpoint, the shochet who does not mention the blessings will be fi hukm al-nāsī (i.e., the one who accidentally forgets), and the majority of scholars would deem such a slaughter as permissible, in contrast to the one who intentionally does not mention Allah’s name.

The wording clearly praises God, and therefore would be acceptable to the vast majority of madhhabs, since it is not a necessary requirement that the blessing be said in Arabic. However, the issue comes with respect to a unique blessing for each animal.

Since the Jewish faith insists that the name of the Lord only be invoked with good cause, the shochet does not repeat this blessing for each and every animal.

Instead, the shochet considers one blessing to suffice for a series of animals with the condition that each animal

is slaughtered without any significant pause or break from the previous one.^[11]

Therefore, in theory, a shochet could sacrifice a few cows, and maybe even up to a hundred chicken, with one blessing.

All of this, of course, has relevance to the Shar’ī ruling on an animal.

For the minority that does not require tasmiya (in particular, the Shāf’ī school), this issue would not be relevant, and therefore kosher would be halāl.

For those who subscribe to the position that allows one tasmiya for multiple slaughters, kosher meat would also be halāl.

For those who require a specific tasmiya for each individual animal (in particular, the Hanafi school), kosher meat would not be halāl unless it was known for sure that a blessing was given for that animal.

As a side point, there are reference to some Christian groups who required a slaughterer to sacrifice in the name of God.^[12]

[11] Most modern Rabbis allow the shochet to utter the phrase ‘bismillāh Allahu akbar’ in Arabic before each slaughter, since that does not interfere with the rules of halakha. This practice should be encouraged and Muslims should inform local Jewish slaughterhouses that they would become potential customers if the shochet could do this.

[12] In the Syriac-language Nomocanon of Barhebraeus (d. 1286), a Christian butcher is instructed to recite the phrase ba-shma d’elaha haya, “In the name of the living God.” Gregorius Barhebraeus, Nomocanon, ed. Paul Bedjan (Paris: Harrassowitz, 1898); taken from Freidenreich (cit.)





In light of all that has preceded, and in this author's opinion:

While the Qur'ān explicitly allows us to offer (and therefore sell) ḥalāl meat to Jews, most observant Jews would not consider ḥalāl to be kosher because the animal would be slaughtered by a non-Jew (and there would be other factors as well).

All kosher foods are permissible as long as 1) no significant amount of alcohol is present, and 2) any gelatin is from kosher slaughtered cattle or non-animal sources. If alcohol is used either for taste or in intoxicating amounts, the food prepared would be ḥarām; and any gelatin derived from animals not slaughtered with tasmiya is also ḥarām.

Kosher meat being ḥalāl would depend on which madhhab one follows for the tasmiya: if one follows the opinion that one tasmiya suffices for multiple animals, kosher slaughtered animals would be ḥalāl. However, if one requires one tasmiya per animal, then in general such animals would be ḥarām unless one can verify that the blessing was said for that particular animal.

In this author's opinion, since the halakhic blessing is done over a specific group of animals and the slaughter is continuous, this blessing can suffice to fulfill the requirements of the tasmiya for that group of animals, and Allah knows best.

Lastly, it is important that stronger ties be developed between observant Muslims and Jews so that we benefit from each other's experiences, unite against Islamophobic and anti-Semitic efforts to ban ritual animal slaughter, and perhaps also manage to influence some kosher plants to say a tasmiya for every animal.

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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.



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Our staff, volunteers and converts at the various sessions.



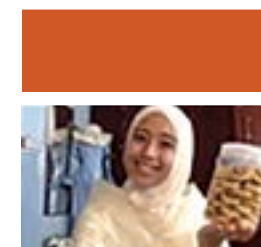
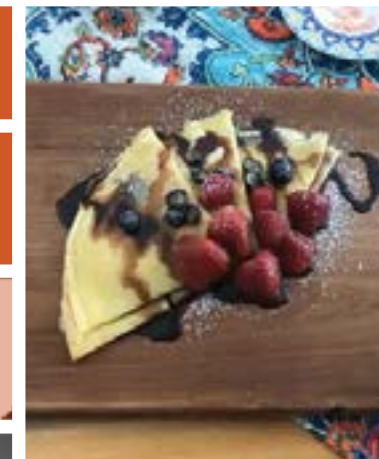
MCAS Cyber Raya

14 June 2020



Our members, volunteers and staff celebrated Eid ul-Fitr online via zoom.

Eid-ul-Fitr Celebration was held on 14 June 2020. It was a different Syawal, but not without its blessings. Traditionally, the festivities are marked with prayers in mosques and visits to the homes of family and friends. But with the circuit breaker in place, these could not be done. At MCAS, our team and volunteers got creative and organised the MCAS Cyber Raya 2020. It was a celebration like no other! We celebrated Eid virtually, where our members meet online via zoom meeting. It was filled with various segments such as a special performance by Youth of Darul Arqam (YODA), learning Eid Wishes in different languages with our Multi-National Clubs (MNC), Eid cooking show, a talk on embracing diversity by Ustazah Nuraizah Amin, and many more. Games and quizzes were also organised to capture the spirit of Eid with the aim to liven up the festivity online.



Everyone enjoying festive cookies and treats within the comfort of their own homes.



Malcolm X

is still misunderstood – and misused

by Dr Omar Suleiman

Fifty-five years after his assassination at the Audubon Ballroom in New York, we still get much wrong about Malcolm X.

Every semester in which I teach a course on Muslims in the Civil Rights Movement at Southern Methodist University, I give my students a selection of quotes from both Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X and ask them to guess who said what. So for example, I will posit the following two quotes and ask for their proper ascription:

Ignorance of each other is what has made unity impossible in the past.

Therefore, we need enlightenment. We need more light about each other. Light creates understanding, understanding creates love, love creates patience, and patience creates unity. Once we have more knowledge (light) about each other, we will stop condemning each other and a United front will be brought about.

The majority of white Americans consider themselves sincerely committed to justice for the Negro.

They believe that American society is essentially hospitable to fair play and to steady growth toward a middle-class Utopia embodying racial harmony. But unfortunately this is a fantasy of self-deception and comfortable vanity.

And every single time, they have been unable to identify **the quote on the left as belonging to Malcolm**, and **the one above to Martin**. But it is not just a few students that have gotten it wrong. The American education system and most mainstream portrayals of Martin and Malcolm have been simplistic and sanitising.



Martin is the perfect hero who preached non-violence and love, and Malcolm the perfect villain who served as his violent counterpart, preaching hate and militancy. The result is not just a dishonest reading of history, but a dichotomy that allows for Dr King to be curated to make us more comfortable, and Malcolm X to be demonised as a demagogue from whom we must all flee.

Reducing these men to such simplistic symbols allows us to filter political programs according to how "King-like" they are. Hence, illegitimate forms of reconciliation are legitimised through King and legitimate forms of resistance are delegitimised through Malcolm X.

Malcolm was never violent, not as a member of the Nation of Islam, nor as a Sunni Muslim. But Malcolm did find it hypocritical to demand that black people in the United States (US) commit to non-violence when they were perpetually on the receiving end of state violence.

He believed that black people in the US had a right to defend themselves, and charged that the US was inconsistent in referencing its founding fathers' defense of liberty for everyone but them.

Malcolm knew that his insistence on this principle would cause him to be demonised even further and ultimately benefit the movement of Dr King, which is exactly what he had intended. Just weeks before his assassination, he went to Selma to support Dr King and willingly embraced his role as the scary alternative. In every interview, in his meeting with Dr Coretta Scott King, and elsewhere, he vocalised that the US would do well to give the good reverend what he was asking for, or else.

But he never actually said what the "or else" was, placing a greater urgency on America to cede to King's demands. Malcolm had no problem playing the villain, so long as it led to his people no longer being treated like animals. And while King may have been steadfast in his commitment to non-violence, the thrust of Malcolm fully served its purpose.



As Colin Morris, the author of *Unyoung, Uncolored*, Unpoor wrote, “I am not denying passive resistance its due place in the freedom struggle, or belittling the contribution to it of men like Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Both have a secure place in history. I merely want to show that however much the disciples of passive resistance detest violence, they are politically impotent without it. American Negroes needed both Martin Luther King and Malcolm X ...”

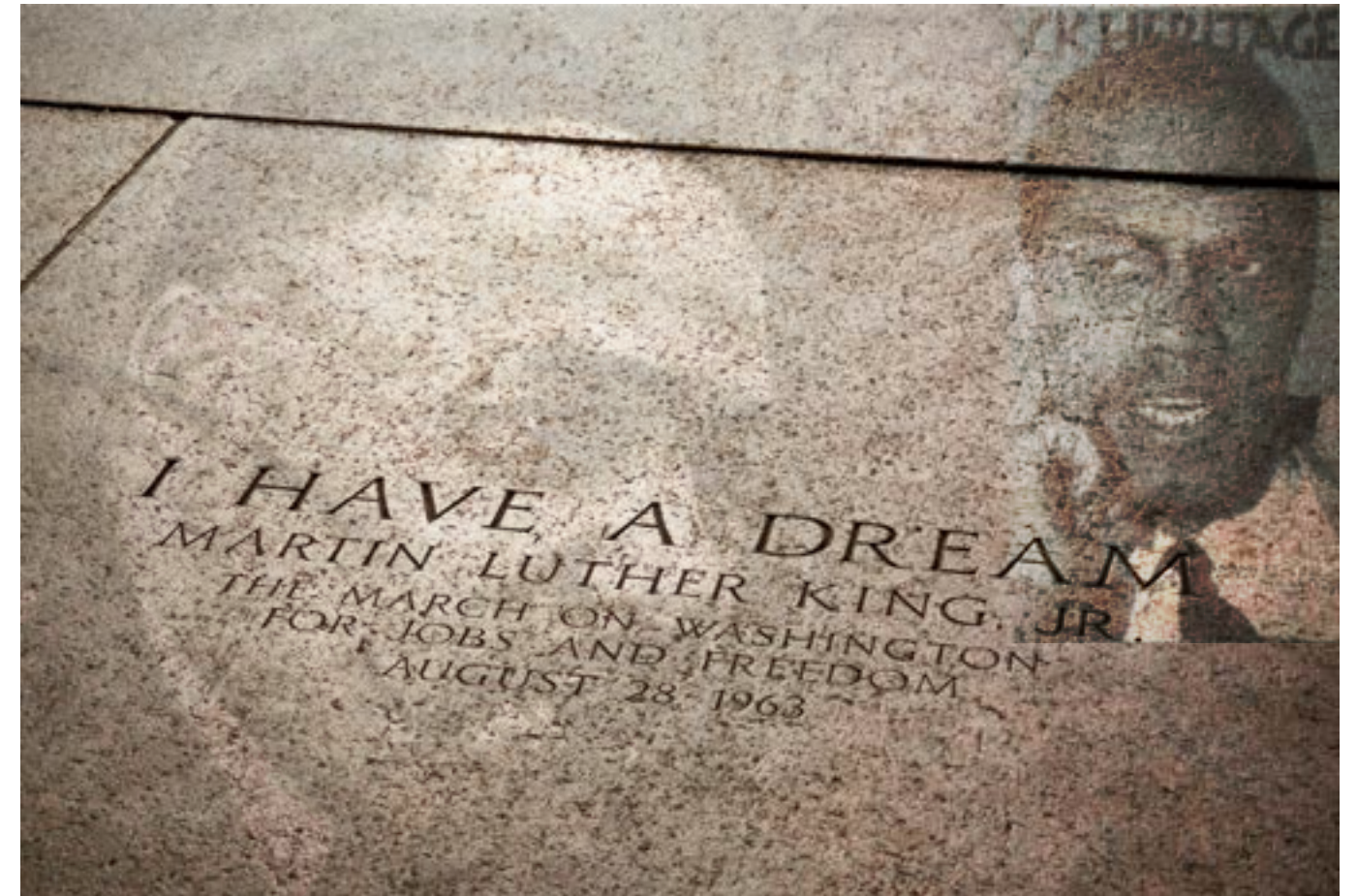
But it was not just that Malcolm and Martin had complementary strategies to achieve black freedom, they also spoke to different realities. Malcolm spoke more to the Northern reality of black Americans who were only superficially integrated, whereas Martin spoke to the Southern reality where even that was not possible.

Malcolm also spoke to the internalised racism of black people that was essential to overcome for true liberation. As the late James Cone states, “King was a political revolutionary. Malcolm was a cultural revolutionary. Malcolm changed how black people thought about themselves. Before Malcolm came along, we were all Negroes. After Malcolm, he helped us become black.”



That is why, despite the diminishing of Malcolm in textbooks and holidays, he has been consistently revived through protest movements and the arts. He has lived through the activism of the likes of Muhammad Ali and Colin Kaepernick, inspired the black power movement, and been an icon for American Muslims on how to exist with dignity and faith in a hostile environment.

And even in those claims to Malcolm as a symbol, Malcolm himself in the fullness of his identity is erased. In championing his movement’s philosophy, some seek to secularise him, intentionally erasing his Muslim identity. And in championing his religious identity, others seek to depoliticise him.



This was a tension that Malcolm noted in his own life, saying:

**“For the Muslims, I’m too worldly.
For other groups, I’m too religious.
For militants, I’m too moderate, for
moderates I’m too militant. I feel like
I’m on a tightrope.”**

Muslims too should be cautious not to sanitise Malcolm, as the US has sanitised Dr King. To restrict Malcolm solely to his Hajj experience is similar to restricting King solely to his “I have a dream” speech. Malcolm was a proud Muslim who never stopped being black. And while he no longer subscribed to a condemnation of the entire white race, he was unrelenting in his critique of global white supremacy.

Malcolm was consistently growing in a way that allowed him to not only champion his own people’s plight more effectively but to tackle a broader set of interconnected issues. And while history seems to posit Malcolm as his polar opposite, Dr King

had begun to articulate many of the same positions that made Malcolm so unpopular.

In the words of the great James Baldwin, “As concerns Malcolm and Martin, I watched two men, coming from unimaginably different backgrounds, whose positions, originally, were poles apart, driven closer and closer together. By the time each died, their positions had become virtually the same position. It can be said, indeed, that Martin picked up Malcolm’s burden, articulated the vision which Malcolm had begun to see, and for which he paid with his life. And that Malcolm was one of the people Martin saw on the mountaintop.”

Perhaps it is time we ask why we only seem to celebrate one of them.

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research. It was originally printed on Al Jazeera on 21 February 2020.

Imam Dr Omar Suleiman is the Founder and President of the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, and an Adjunct Professor of Islamic Studies in the Graduate Liberal Studies Program at SMU (Southern Methodist University). He is also the Resident Scholar at Valley Ranch Islamic Center and Co-Chair Emeritus of Faith Forward Dallas at Thanks-Giving Square.



Prophet Muhammad's Example of Anti-Racism

by Dr Craig Considine

Relations between different ethnic and religious groups in the Middle East, U.S., and EU are deteriorating at a rapid pace. Across these three areas, Muslims are pitted against non-Muslims and black and brown people are pitted against white. What is needed now more than ever is a role model whose teachings counter bigotry and whose acts serve as a model for coexistence.

I believe that role model is none other than Prophet Muhammad.

Approximately 1,400 years before the Civil Rights movement in the US and the anti-apartheid campaign in South Africa, the Prophet Muhammad dealt with the issues of xenophobia and prejudice in Saudi Arabia. In this short piece, I highlight how the Prophet fought against the idea of judging individuals and groups based solely on their skin colour and ancestry.

Prophet Muhammad's anti-racist views are seen in his friendship with Bilal ibn Rabah, a black slave who rose to a leading position within the Muslim community of 7th century Arabia. One story relates how Muhammad defended Bilal after Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, one of the Prophet's companions, called Bilal "the son of a black woman." Annoyed with this emphasis of identifying people by skin colour, Muhammad criticised Abu Dharr by stating "you are the man who still has the traits of ignorance in him."

The Prophet's reference to Abu Dharr's ignorance refers to the "pre-Islamic" state of jahiliyyah, an Arabic term meaning "the state of ignorance of Divine guidance." This period of Arab history before Muhammad's arrival was marked by "barbarism" and "lawlessness," as described in the Quran. The Prophet's anti-racist mentality helped lead Arabs out of this darkness and into the light by guiding them onto the path of justice and equality.

Bilal, who other Muslims referred to as "master" because of his knowledge and grace, became the muezzin of the Prophet, meaning that he was responsible for calling Muslims to the five daily prayers. In choosing Bilal for this honourable role, Muhammad demonstrated that social exclusion and subordination based upon skin colour was not to be permitted in an Islamic society.

Before Muhammad revealed his message, Arabs were overly proud of their tribal and ethnic identities, so much so that tribes and ethnic groups became the social standard of society.

The Prophet's teachings changed all of that. He emphasised the importance of piety as the hallmark of respect. In challenging Abu Dharr, Muhammad showed that he was willing to rebuke even his closest companions if that person denigrated someone because of his or her ethnicity.

The Prophet believed that this form of "tribalism," or al-asabiyyah in Arabic, was cancerous because it drove people to ethnic loyalties even if that meant they supported oppression and injustice.

The Prophet's Last Sermon at Mount Arafat in 632 AD is perhaps his most noteworthy manifestation of anti-

racism. In his speech, Muhammad stated that "An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab... a white person has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over white except by piety and good action." The Last Sermon is the culminating point of Muhammad's life.

He challenged a disunited population that was constantly engaged in warfare by calling on people to unite under a banner of humanity.

By distancing himself from the tendency to categorise others based upon ethnicity, the Prophet preceded the words of Martin Luther King Jr., whose "I Have a Dream" speech called for African Americans to be judged not by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character.



"An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab ... a white person has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over white except by piety and good action."

- Prophet Muhammad



Muhammad's message of anti-racism is especially important during February, which is Black History Month in the US. Al-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, the African American civil rights leader who is more commonly called Malcolm X, reflected Muhammad's insistence on harmony.

After he performed Hajj, the Islamic pilgrimage, El-Shabazz wrote home to his friends that all Muslim pilgrims in Mecca accepted the "Oneness of God." He added that white people in the US should echo the Muslim pilgrims and "cease to measure and hinder and harm others in terms of their differences in colour." El-Shabazz's anti-racism perspective mirrors Muhammad's spirit of friendship and inclusivity. Like the Prophet, El-Shabazz is a role model for the anti-racism movement.

I consider Muhammad to be a quintessential anti-racist figure because he promoted peace and equality. Without a doubt, he advanced human rights in an area of the world that had no previous experience with this practice. Non-Muslims who belittle the Prophet as a racist murderer have certainly not considered the examples highlighted above.

To further promote better relations between Muslims and non-Muslims as well as people of different skin colours, it is imperative that media outlets highlight Muhammad's anti-racist ethos. Rather than being a divisive figure, Muhammad is an inspiration for those working to rid the world of the evil of racism.

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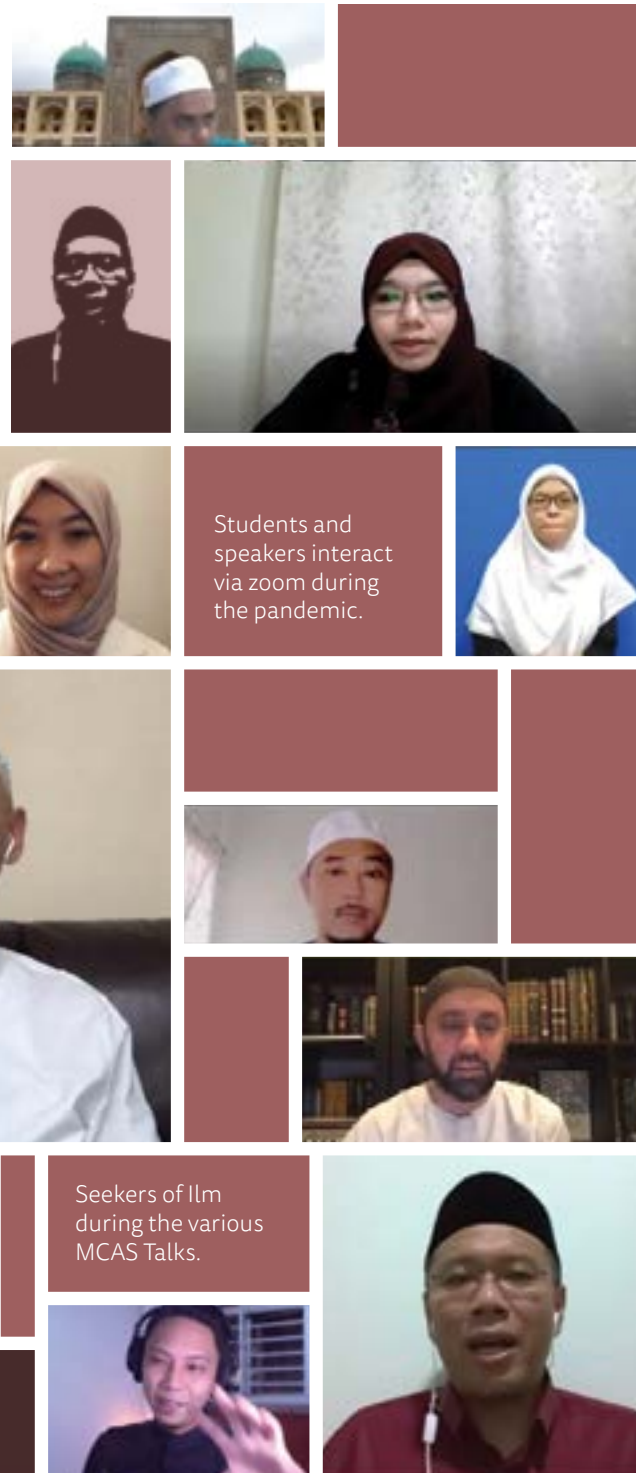
Dr Craig Considine is a scholar, professor, global speaker, media contributor, & public intellectual based at the Department of Sociology at Rice University. He is the author of many books & articles. Dr. Considine's opinions have been featured in the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, BBC, CBS News, 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.

MCAS Talks

- Featuring Guest Speakers

Islamic lectures are essential to the journey of a Muslim, especially for a convert who is learning about Islam. This year, our traditional Public and In-House talks were conducted virtually via Zoom meetings, with the aim to make them accessible to members and students of MCAS. 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.

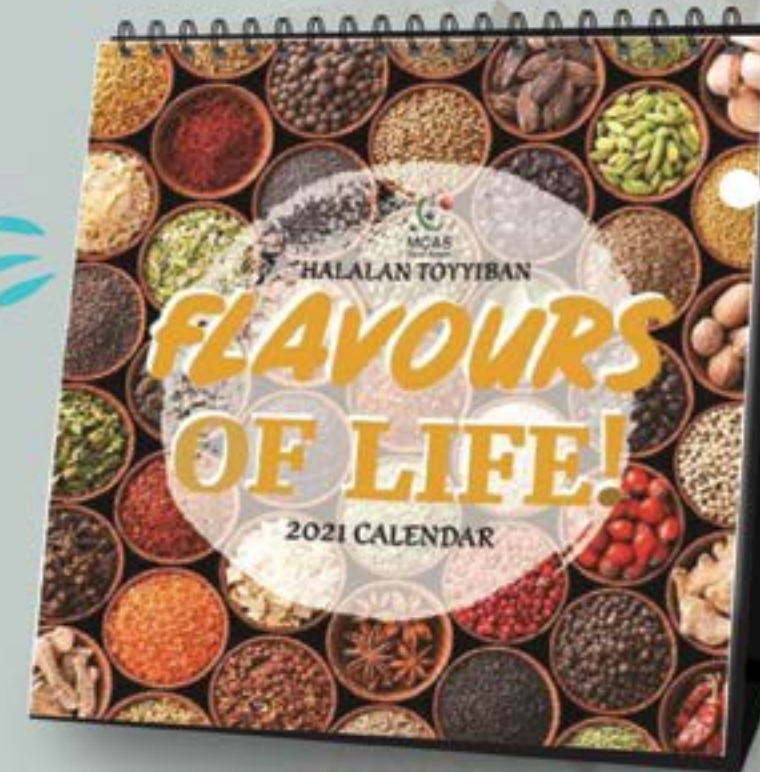
Prominent speakers such as Ustaz Firdaus Yahya, Ustaz Khalid Rafi, Ustaz Taufiq RNB, Ustazah Nadia Hanim, and many more were invited to deliver talks on contemporary issues affecting the understanding of Islam as well as the universal message of Islam.



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awarded PhD at the age of 64

by Dr Iskandar Abdullah

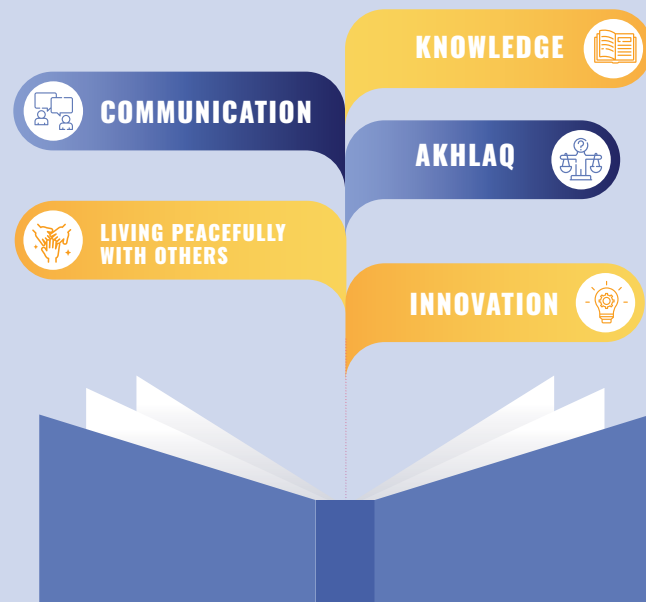
Mudaris Iskandar
Abdullah converted to
Islam at the age of 18.

At 60 years old and beyond, many in the age group may be busy retiring with grandchildren but for Mudaris Iskandar Abdullah, he was recently awarded a PhD in Arabic Studies from Mishkah University (Egypt), during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The convocation was held online on 28 June.

"Alhamdulillah, I am blessed with the strength and energy to continue learning," said Mudaris Iskandar when contacted by Berita Harian (BH) recently. Mudaris means teacher or tutor in Arabic language.

His motivation to continuous learning is derived from the exemplary qualities shown by two individuals Al Amir Fadhl El Dandarawi and his son Al Amir Hashem El Dandarawy whom both constantly reflects their self-development. Currently, Al Amir Hashem El Dandarawy is the chairman of Dandara Cultural Centre in Egypt. Dandara Cultural Centre carries out programs in human development based on 5 pillars.



The 5 pillars are Knowledge, Akhlaq, Communication, Innovation and Living peacefully with others.

Dr Iskandar's pursue in knowledge signifies his human development. He has invested his time as his capital and has reap the returns in obtaining his PhD. He also believes holding to these 5 pillars, one can develop himself to be the best of an insan.

Al Amir Fadhl Abbas and Al Amir Hashim Fadhl also encouraged him to pursue knowledge which includes reading Al-Quran with better understanding and meanings of the language and culture of the Arabs.

After obtaining his Masters 2 years ago, he was further motivated not to stop what he had started, hence obtaining the PhD.

"If we do not start, we will not know. I will only stop seeking knowledge when I close my eyes. Before that time, I will continue learning, insya-Allah," explained Dr Iskandar whilst stating his appreciation to the chief administrator of Mishkah University, Professor Dr Abdul

Hakeem and his PhD manager, Professor Dr Fawzi Abu Rabbi, who are always supporting and guiding him.

His wife and 2 children have been giving him full support, with words of encouragement.

The interest in studying Al-Quran is very intense until he is called "Al-Quran engineer" among his friends, due to his persistence in researching each word in Al-Quran, analyzing them and presenting the summary of his findings.

"Someone asked me how fast can I read and complete the whole Al-Quran. I replied, for just one sentence, I can take hours! This is because I will take time to observe every letter, the literature and history associated with it. That is my interest," said Dr Iskandar with a smile.

As a teacher in Arabic language and culture for more than 30 years, Mudaris Iskandar has guided and tutored many students. Among his students who have excelled includes Mufti of Singapore Ustaz Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir and the Senior President of Syariah Court Ustaz Alfian Yasrif Kuchit.



Mudaris Iskandar has been teaching for 30 years, and his past students include Mufti of Singapore, Ustaz Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir and Senior President of Syariah Court Ustaz Alfian Yasrit Kuchit.

Mudaris Iskandar has also previously taught Arabic Language and Culture at various clubs, schools and institutions like Tampines North Community Club, Al-Zuhri Institute and Raffles Junior College.

When learning or teaching, he adapts himself in using Information Technology (IT) to facilitate his teachings and when there is a need to refer to any online documents.

"Now with technology, very easy. I have around 3000 books in PDF in my thumb drive, for my reference," he said.

He is also making use of interactive platform during his teachings to attract the interest of his students.

The religious knowledge and Arabic Language that he gained is amazing, because Mudaris Iskandar is a Mualaf who reverted to Islam when he was 18 years old. Before this he was a Hindu.

However, according to him, he grew up within the Malay/Muslim community in Syed Alwi Road with his family and he had the opportunity to see and observe

the beauty of the religion through the behaviour of his neighbours.

He started to learn and know more about Islam when he was in secondary school.

Mudaris Iskandar hoped that the Malay/Muslim community continues to learn and seek knowledge regardless of their age. He also hoped for the Malay community to progress further together with other communities.



"I hope we all can progress together. Do not isolate ourselves or be calculative with other people. If you are capable, help others so that we can improve together," advised Dr Iskandar.

He ended with another advise from his senior mentor, "Don't look at Muslims but look at Islam and the Prophet (PBUH)".



This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the author. It was originally published on Berita Harian (Singapore) on 9 September 2020, with additional editing by Mudaris Dr Iskandar Abdullah.



Blessed beyond measure

– my journey to the Truth

by Haniya Ee,
MCAS Council Member, 2020 - 2022

I am just your regular working adult, working a nine to five job, who grew up in a Chinese family where both parents do not speak much Chinese. I had hobbies, plenty of hobbies, because I was a person who was easily bored. I lived life thinking that I would only live once and having struggled with undiagnosed Bipolar Disorder for eight years left me yearning for a simple life without tasting despair ever again.

If you told me five years ago that I would become a Muslim one day, I would probably laugh in your face. I was brainwashed by media to think that Islam was a barbaric and archaic religion that was no longer relevant in the current times. Being a science junkie, I would not allow myself to believe in a religion that seemed so far away from logic and science. However, unlike most science junkies who were atheist, I believe that there was a Supreme Creator. The one who started it all.

I grew up watching my grandparents worship idols and I would imitate them because I was drawn to the act of worship and the belief in a greater being. It was only when I was 14 that I embraced Christianity through a friend. The belief in a supreme Creator spoke to me and while there was Jesus in the picture, he was always an afterthought. But that quickly came to an end when I found to my horror that the Bible was no longer in its original form. It was revised, many times by different people who injected their own thoughts and preferences into the book. It was no longer an accurate account of events. I felt deceived. I was angry. I told my younger sister, who had been happily attending church with me, to stop reading the book and we left Christianity for good. However, the concept of a Supreme Being stuck with me and I told myself that I did not need to be in a religion to believe in God.



Fast forward a few years, my parents got divorced and my life went into disarray. Then came eight dark years of struggling with mental illness. But what kept me going was God and every time I came close to ending it all, the Christian ideology that people who die by suicide will go straight to the hellfire kept me hanging on. Night after night I would pray with my face wet with tears that my Lord will stop the pain that was threatening to swallow me whole.

However, despite everything that happened, Islam never came into the picture nor did any other religion. There was no discovery, no turning point, Islam was like a silent stream that flowed deep in the earth, slowly nourishing the seed that was planted into my heart by my sister who told me many years ago that the Qur'an and the Bible shared similarities.

Unlike most science junkies who were atheist, I believe that there was a Supreme Creator.

Over the years, I would find bits and pieces of Islamic theories and concepts that I would agree with but somehow, my heart was blind and I rejected Islam all the way until that fateful day when my sister invited me to attend a religious class with her.

That evening, the teacher answered all the questions that I had with such eloquence that I knew on the spot that this was the religion that I was looking for and that Islam can only be the truth. When my sister asked me that night, as we were on the way home, if I was going to become a Muslim, I surprised her by saying 'Yes' because there was a nagging feeling in my heart that this was my only chance to do so.

And so I accepted Islam without knowing much about the religion other than abstaining from pork and alcohol, the hijab and fasting. When I was told by my non-Muslim best friend that I now had to pray five times a day, I was shocked. What have I gotten myself into? But thankfully I had my enthusiastic younger sister with me on this journey. While she took her Shahada two weeks before me, we did our official conversion at MCAS together on the same day. She would tell me everything that I needed to know as a Muslim and what I needed to do.



We learned to pray together and wore the hijab on the same day. We attended religious classes and learned to read the Qur'an together. Without her by my side pushing and dragging me forward, I would have just been a Muslim who did the bare minimum. Being one of the laziest person you can find on the face of Earth, attending religious classes would be the farthest thing from my mind and since as women, we were allowed to pray at home, you would never find me praying in the mosque as I had social anxiety and praying in public places made me anxious to the point of feeling sick.

Now when I look back, I see Allah's wisdom in having my sister and I convert at the same time and allowing me to accept Islam at a time when I had so little knowledge and understanding about the religion. Allah knows us best.



My inspiration to write the book came about one day after reading an article on BBC about teenagers joining terrorist groups after being brainwashed with their ideologies. It got me thinking. What is happening to our youth? How is it that they do not understand our religion enough to believe what the terrorist groups are telling them? Why is Islam so misunderstood?

I felt like somebody needed to write a book to educate our youth about our religion and it should be done in an interesting and fun way. No teenager would want to read Imam Ghazali's book but they have no qualms about reading Harry Potter. The book can even be science fiction to show how Islam can be relevant in an advanced society and not archaic as what mainstream media is making it out to be. Maybe we can even up the game a little more and target the Non-Muslims as well? Disguise the book as an ordinary novel with no mention of Islam throughout the book so they can learn without prejudice until we have the big reveal on the last page! Surprise, you are reading about Islam! What a novel idea! I told my sister that somebody really needed to write this, and she told me, "Why don't you write it?"

Of course, writing is not easy. I am not a good writer to begin with, not to mention writing a book about Islam. I was very worried. I am not a scholar and any falsehood in the book would drag me down into the hellfire. I made plenty of du'as and Istikharahs during that time and the general feeling I had was to write it. And write I did. The writing process was amazingly fast. Ideas just came to me so easily; it was as if I was pulling them out from a hat.

Even though I did have a few writer's block along the way, especially with the battle strategy and fight scenes but it was nothing a few du'as could not fix. However, despite the ease in writing, it could not suppress the unease I was feeling as I started to write about the religious concepts. As much as I tried to seek help from religious teachers, most of the time I do not get a reply and I am relying very much on the knowledge that I had acquired from religious classes and books. I felt helpless and lost and have thought of giving up many times along the way. I lost sleep and had severe anxiety, sometimes just looking at my draft would make me feel nauseated. I was scared.



But something was pushing me forward. Every time I decided to give up, a friend would come up to me to ask about my book and give encouragement. The anxiety would ebb away, and I would start writing again. Every night I would pray for Allah to stop me if this book is going to stop me from entering Paradise, to stop me if there was going to be any falsehood in it, to stop me if it was going to misguide anyone. This cycle would continue until I finished the book 10 months later. Then in 2020, my heart was finally put to ease when I won the Daybreak Press Book Award in the Islamic Fiction category. Alhamdulillah, I was elated. I would not have completed this daunting and stressful journey without the help of Allah. No part of the book is from my own ability.

It has been a year since I completed writing The Path that Leads Upwards. If you're interested to read a soft science fiction novel about a girl chasing her dream to become the strongest Metrabot pilot in the Galactic Federation against all odds and her journey to finding God then do give this book a try.

Copies of the paperback version are available at Wardah Books, Kinokuniya and Times Bookstore while the eBook is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Apple Books and Scribd.

All about Zakat

زكى

Zakaa



الزكاة

Az-Zakah



Please pay your zakat at Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (MCAS)



4 Conditions for Obligatory Zakat

Muslim By Faith

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

Haul

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

Definitions

To Grow

To Purify

To Bless

It is



The third pillar of Islam



Mentioned 30 times in the Qur'an



Obligatory unlike sadaqah or charity



Given in a calculated amount

Types of Zakat



زكاة المال

Zakat ul Mal/ Zakat on wealth



زكاة الفطر

Zakat ul Fitr / Zakat on the individual

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

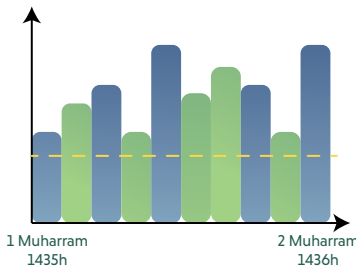


Instills values of gratefulness and compassion

Zakat Calculation

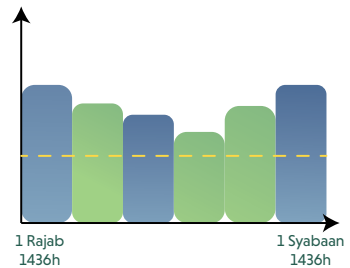
Let's use an example for zakat on savings
(money that is kept in all types of savings accounts including fixed deposit and current account)
Any of the following methods may be used to calculate the quantum of zakat payable

Method A



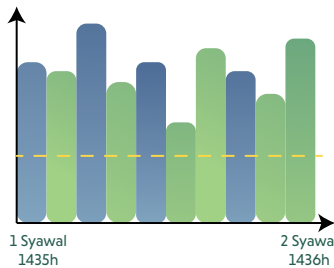
2.5% x your lowest annual balance

Method B



2.5% x your lowest monthly balance

Method C



2.5% x last balance upon completion of haul

*The yellow dotted lines on the graphs represent the nisab

An interview with Arif Peter Pang on his published book "A Chinese Seeker's Journey to Islam".



In the Pursuit of the Truth

by Faudziah Omar

As a young boy growing up in the vicinity of Syed Alwi Road, Arif Peter Pang had always enjoyed the richness of Singapore's multi-cultural, multi-religious society. He often watched his Indian neighbours worship their idol Gods at the local temple, and Arif was no stranger to the chants and the sweet-smelling incense coming from the Buddhist and Chinese temples. On his way to school, he would wave and greet the aunties and uncles busying themselves with their morning rituals, some with joss-sticks and assortment of flowers in hand.

As he walked more than a mile from his home, he encountered two mosques and two churches with their unique architecture, recalls Arif who had fond memories of the cultural and religious surroundings of Singapore then.

His parents who were immigrants from China wanted a well-rounded education for their children. Arif's early childhood saw him attending a Nationalist Chinese School for about a year and a half, before being sent to a public English school. It was during those period – at 9 years of age that he started venturing into various temples, churches, and other places of worship to feed his curiosity about religion.

He completed his secondary and tertiary education at two missionary schools, St Joseph's Institution and St Andrew's Secondary, where his conscience about God's creation was awakened. There he learnt about the relationship between God and man, and the reason man is created. His mother was a baptised Catholic, but she was not practicing and did not impose her faith on Arif and his siblings. As for Arif's father, he did not subscribe to any religion although he was more inclined towards Taoism and Confucianism.

Arif's environment and surroundings had often made him wonder about the existence of a true religion and unbeknown to him, this would be the starting point of his spiritual journey.

The book – *A Chinese Seeker's Journey to Islam* is available at MCAS English Islamic Bookshop and selling at \$27.00.

Quest for the Truth

Arif's first engagement with Islam was via his legal work, when in 1994 he helped a friend with a salvage contract to survey the Malacca harbour estuary for a reclamation project. As a lawyer, he was asked to advise on an estate belonging to an Arab family who owned many properties which were held under a trusteeship. Due to the proprietorship of the owners who were Muslims, it required Arif to understand the Faraid laws, also known as the Muslim Laws of Inheritance. This resulted in him having to research and study the English translation of the Quran.



Arif during his Hajj.

Soon after, several projects that happened in succession brought him to different parts of the Muslim world, when prior to this, Arif has not been exposed much to Islam. As Arif recalls the various projects he had worked on and the opportunities that were placed in his path, he said that he cannot be more thankful for the blessings he was bestowed.

"I realised that my life has been a divine destiny where all along, it was led by The Almighty," exclaimed Ariff.

The Turning Point

Arif's moment of truth came at the most poignant time in his life. Having interacted with many Muslims and since granted the chance to study and read the translation of the Quran, Arif's numerous questions about religion were finally answered. Deep down he knew he had found the religion that he had been searching for. The guidance came one day in the most unexpected way.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

"You are not responsible for people's guidance 'O Prophet' – it is Allah Who guides whoever He wills." (Quran: Al Baqarah; 2:272)

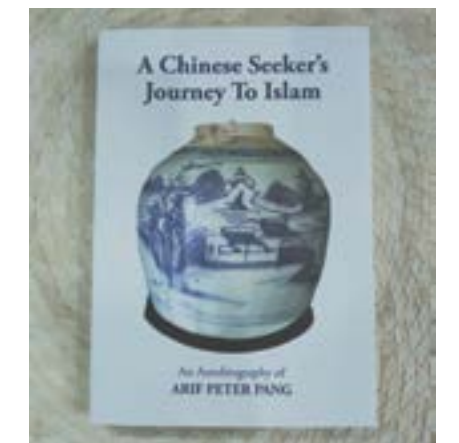
They say that death is a beautiful gift for a Believer, and when death beckons, the ones left behind experience sadness as they grieve for their loved ones. Arif understood this, but at the funeral of his friend's wife who had just passed away, Arif stood forlornly while the others performed the Salat Al-Janazah (funeral prayers). Although he knew in his heart that Islam is the true religion, he did not embark on any Islamic classes and neither did he concern himself with a conversion, thinking that these are just ceremonial and formalities. Arif was so convinced about Islam that he started fasting for a few years during Ramadhan on his own and prayed to Allah S.W.T. from his heart.

However, on that fateful day, Arif realised that his lack of understanding and knowledge on Islam hindered him from performing prayers for his friend's deceased wife. At that instant he made a resolution that would mark the turning point in his life. Later that day, Arif headed to Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (MCAS) to sign up for the Beginners' Course in Islam. Weeks went by and after gaining an Islamic knowledge, he took his Shahadah and became a Muslim. That was on 8th August 2008.

Autobiography and Reflections on Life

Since becoming a Muslim, Arif had been very active in the community. As a trained lawyer and a professional, he dedicated his time as a Council Member at MCAS. Arif did so with fellow Converts and other like-minded individuals and served for two terms on the Board. Other than being involved with the Association, Arif had also recently published an autobiography entitled "A Chinese Seeker's Journey to Islam", which detailed his life experiences and pursuit for the Truth. It is an inspirational story about a man whose devotion to find the true religion, leading him to deepen his knowledge on his Chinese heritage.

In the book, Arif also discussed the different forms of writing such as the ancient Chinese ideograms, cuneiform, and the Egyptian's hieroglyphs, revealing his findings in detail. According to Arif, writing this book had enabled him to appreciate his Chinese upbringing even more. Now that he is busy researching materials for his second book – with a working title "Love of God by a Chinese Muslim", he anticipates the process that the journey will unravel.



As he reflects upon his life, he quoted one of his favourite philosophers, Rumi with – "Every story has an end but in life every ending is just a new beginning".

Befrienders

(Project Touching Hearts)

The Befrienders, also known as Project Touching Hearts (PTH) is a support programme for prospective Converts attending the Beginners' Course in Islam (BCI). The befrienders undergo training to equip themselves with the essential skills for befriending and to help address issues regarding conversion and basic queries on Islam. PTH aims for befrienders to encourage the prospective Converts to continue attending other classes and workshops to benefit their journey in Islam.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, most activities were held online to ensure the well-beng of our staff, members, and volunteers. A series of talk show entitled "Being Me" featuring motivational stories by Converts and Asatizah were conducted. One of the sharing done by local actress-restaurateur, Anna Belle Francis, revealed how Islam has helped her and it included some of the practical ways she adopted that had significantly changed her life. Also sharing her journey was Professor Jackie Ying, a renowned nanotechnology scientist, who revealed that her conviction and faith grew stronger through her work in biomedical science.

During Ramadhan, a programme was created for Converts and their Befrienders as a platform for them to connect and share about the challenges they may be facing. The session started with a 30-minutes lecture followed by an interactive discussion. In addition, every night after the tarawih prayers, an online tadarus AL-Quran sessions were held for Converts and born-Muslims. For the first time, these sessions brought together participants from Project Touching Hearts (PTH) and Youth of Darul Arqam (YODA) to complete (khatam) the Quran during Ramadhan.



Sharing sessions by our converts and volunteers.



Some of our participants during the Tadarus AL-Quran sessions.

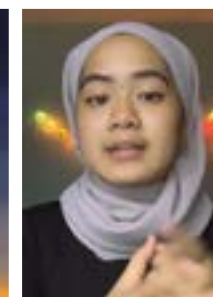
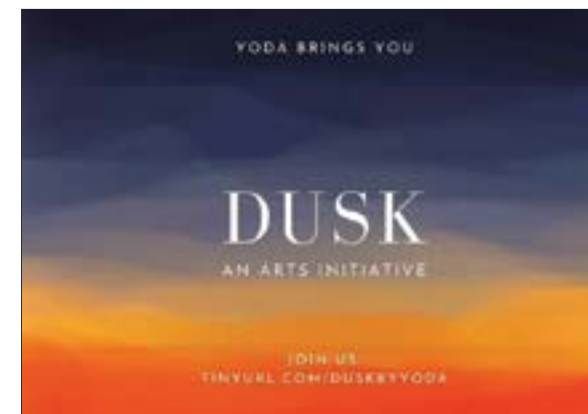
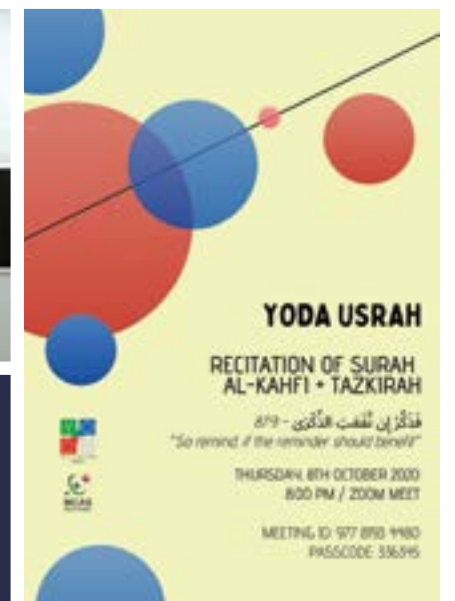


YODA

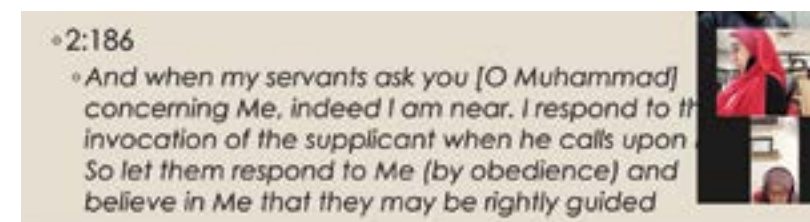
(Youths of Darul Arqam)

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 were YODA Virtual Open House, Usrah Engagement Sessions, and DUSK – an arts initiative. As most events were conducted online, the youth volunteers extended their involvement in other programmes organised by the Association, namely Cyber Raya 2020 and the tadarus AL-Quran sessions.



YODA volunteers and some of the events held this year.



From Hip-Hop to Activism

Mizznina Talks About Finding Herself... & the Global Refugee Crisis

by Shazrina Azman

Bismillah, Alhamdulillah and thank you for the opportunity to share my journey. My name is Shazrina binti Azman, also known as Miznina. I am 40 years old, a born Muslim and have been living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia all my life. I have been involved in music and entertainment from the young age of eight, and I graduated from Garden International School in 1996, before furthering my studies in Sunway College and Edith Cowan University in Perth, Australia majoring in Media and Public Relations.

In 1996, I was already pursuing a career as an Independent Artist together with some of the pioneers of the hip-hop industry in Malaysia - First Borne Troops and The Teh Tarik Crew - as an emcee, dancer and deejay (D.J.). When I returned to Malaysia in 2001, I continued to persevere in that field while working as a producer, D.J. and host for several years for a variety of radio stations in Malaysia such as Wowfm, Redfm and Flyfm.

Since then I have launched a number of successful albums - group and solo, collaborated with a number of artists worldwide and have won numerous awards. Alhamdulillah today I am the co-founder of a number of companies; Qalbyapp, Rae Ventures, Dopstv and I am also the founder of Min Qalby Foundation.



My Spiritual Journey

As you can see from my background, most of my entire young life was dedicated to the music, entertainment, and hip-hop industry. That was my Deen and for a long time I lived that MTV Dream.

There was also a point in my life in my early 20's that I became completely lost and oblivious due to addictions to clubs and the party and glamorous lifestyle many youths seem to fall into. I was reckless and was only hurting myself and those who love me. I was living this YOLO life for a number of years, and it took a tragedy to awaken my heart and senses.

The first AHA moment was when my eldest brother passed away in 2007. I was shocked and could not believe that someone so close to me was taken away. This calamity was indeed a blessing, as it had brought my family and I closer to each other and most importantly, closer to Allah.

I did not change overnight. It was not like how many people think that I became a practising Muslim at the snap of a finger. In fact, this was the beginning of my journey in becoming a better human being, one who is healthy, free of toxic addictions, relationships, and environments. A human being who was a cause of happiness to the people in my life and not a cause of worry. I wanted to be free of unhealthy attachments.

Once I had achieved that, it was easier for me to start learning more about Islam. Alhamdulillah, my family and I frequently performed Umrah, and I had naturally learnt how to pray and make du'a again. Even though I was not consistent in praying five times a day or wearing the hijab, I was on my way.

The next AHA moment was when I married my husband Noh in 2011. He is a positive influence in my life as he helped slowly shift my "anything goes" attitude (hanging out with non-mahrams, clubbing - although we abstained from the drinks, etc.) to a more halal lifestyle. He also encouraged me to do my five daily prayers and to wear the hijab. Alhamdulillah.

The pinnacle of my Hijrah was when I performed the Hajj in 2013. I was determined to return a changed person and that was when I decided to dedicate my life to becoming a real Muslim. That was also when I decided to keep on my hijab and leave the entertainment industry for good.



Striving for His Sake

The biggest challenge for me was trying to break my ego down, realising that I am no-one and that I am only a slave of Allah. Once I was able to break the ego, Alhamdulillah, Allah made it easy for me to continue to pursue a path in seeking beneficial knowledge from the Quran and Sunnah.

My biggest supporters were my parents, husband and all my family members, Alhamdulillah. Many of my friends were also happy for me and many did not understand why, and so they left – another blessing too as Allah had introduced some amazing new friends to help bring me closer to Him.

My advice for those who are striving to become a better Muslim, is to always check your intentions and ask yourself, for who and for what am I striving for? Sincerity in intentions to strive for the pleasure of Allah will help give you the istiqamah you need to keep on improving yourself. When we strive to please people, we will find that once an obstacle comes our way or when people stop praising us, then we stop improving ourselves and just give up.



The Pursuit that Opened Many Doors

After my Hijrah, I did not plan on doing any active Da'wah work as I was busy learning about the Deen, and I was still trying to get used to my new Muslim lifestyle. At the end of 2013, I was approached by two friends who invited me to be a part of an Islamic TV show together with Ustazah Yasmin Mogahed. They handed me her book to read and I was instantly hooked!

In 2014, we started filming in New Zealand and the show was aired on national television that same year, Alhamdulillah. We did not realise at the time that it would have such a huge impact on the viewers. We then later decided to form a new company that specialises in Da'wah and to highlight the beauty of Islam with DopsTv.

Alhamdulillah today I have also established other companies and businesses: Eternal Rewards, an upcoming Islamic App named "Qalby", and Rae Ventures – a company that focuses on the growth and empowerment of startups and Islamic/ethical businesses.

I have also recently launched a Yayasan – Min Qalby Foundation which specialises in providing humanitarian aid through emergency relief and education, empowering startup/stuck businesses and entrepreneurs and also assisting Islamic and educational institutions to help provide for the teachers or classes. Our aim is to give access to free education for those in need, In Sha Allah.

Pursuing knowledge has always been my passion and some of the best moments of Da'wah for me was being able to spend some time with scholars to ask questions and to learn from. I also enjoy interacting with new Muslims and being inspired by their journeys. These to me are so precious!

**I was living this YOLO life
for a number of years, and it
took a tragedy to awaken my
heart and senses.**

Making the World a Better Place, One Deed at a Time

I was motivated to be involved in humanitarian work ever since my Hijrah in 2013, and in 2014 during the month of Ramadhan, Israel launched a war on Gaza. This struck me and I was deeply affected by this act of terror on innocent Muslims.



This prompted me to learn more about the Syrian crisis and dug deeper into world events and history. As I scoured through the internet, I was horrified when I came across the numerous atrocities committed. Determined to do something, I made du'a to Allah to send me the right people with whom I could learn from and work with.

Alhamdulillah, I departed on my first humanitarian mission to Jordan in 2014 and it changed my life forever. I was humbled when I met Syrian refugee families in camps, as I listened to their plight; from individuals who shared their stories of how they used to live before the war, the people who were killed, how they moved from one camp to another, their hopes and fears. One minute they had everything and then the next, all was lost. Yet, despite all the pain and hardship, they greeted us with Salaam, a smile and gratitude in their hearts that they are still alive. SubhanAllah. This was such a valuable lesson for me to always be grateful and to strive in helping others.



During my first trip to Jordan I was introduced to the founder of Cinta Syria Malaysia and I had the opportunity to also visit their refugee schools in Jordan, Turkey and Malaysia, Alhamdulillah. I realised that the way to help empower a community is through education, rather than just donation. Education will help gear up the youth to be independent and instill hope for a better future.

As an advocate on human rights, I am active on my social media, spreading awareness on campaigns and causes which I feel passionate about. These are mainly the refugee crisis, the fight against Islamophobia and the oppression of Muslims.

With the COVID-19 situation, refugees are among the most vulnerable as they are faced with this additional threat. It has been challenging. COVID-19 has affected all of us in so many ways, some good and some bad, but whatever it is, as a Believer, we know that there is always goodness behind everything that happens – whether we see it or not.

A lot of my activism has shifted to helping Malaysians cope with the situation. In terms of Da'wah, COVID-19 has opened doors for me with more opportunities to do Online Da'wah. Alhamdulillah, conveying the message of Islam does not stop no matter how good or how bad a situation is.



knowledge is divine.

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Qurban Drive

16 August 2020

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 instills, especially to MCAS Converts, as well as to promote the act of giving in celebration of Eid-ul Adha. A total of 750 families received the qurban meat which was distributed by MCAS volunteers.

Due to Covid-19, this year’s distribution was done in a contactless manner, with the frozen mutton packed into cooler bags and placed at the doors of the beneficiaries, who were informed ahead of the scheduled delivery.

The event was graced by Mr Mohd Fahmi Aliman, Mayor for South East District and Member of Parliament for Marine Parade GRC (Geylang Serai). 50 cars were flagged off by the Guest-of-Honour, as they made their way to the beneficiaries. In the spirit of giving, Mr Aliman also took to the homes of a few beneficiaries in his constituency to personally deliver the meat.

We hope that with this annual initiative, it will 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.



Our Guest-of-Honour, Mr Mohd Fahmi Aliman, speaking with MCAS President, Bro Muhammad Imran Kuna and one of the sponsors from Al Falah Academy SG.



Our volunteers packing the Qurban meat into cooler bags and into the waiting vehicles, with the help of our Guest of Honour.





Social Rules in Islam

by Hyder Gulam

In the Arabic language, things have a masculine or feminine gender. The general rule is that dual body parts, such as ears, eyes etc. are generally feminine, and the single body parts, such as mouth and noses, are masculine.

This paper is about some of those body parts and how we can cultivate and train them to adhere to and uphold the social rules in Islam. So, what are the social rules in Islam? This article will examine some specific social rules (namely trustworthiness, watching the tongue, keeping promises, and avoiding arguments), as well as discussing how these social rules are applicable during a pandemic, such as COVID-19.

In Islam, socialisation is very much encouraged and furthermore Islam discourages self-isolation, except in cases of necessity such as illness or contagion. In fact, the Prophet (pbuh) said that 'asceticism' or self-isolation which is practiced in the other faiths is not encouraged in Islam and that the asceticism of a Muslim is: 'Hajj', 'Jihad' (striving), or 'daily prayers'. In other words, Islam encourages practical action within society rather than self-isolation. Accordingly, knowledge and practice of social rules is a cardinal underpinning in Islam.

While the rules of jurisprudence are important in Islam, the rules of socialisation are also extremely important. In fact, while the rules of jurisprudence are called 'the minor jurisprudence', the rules of socialisation are called 'the greater jurisprudence' (and practical mysticism is the 'greatest jurisprudence').

Unfortunately, in recent times there has been more focus on the minor jurisprudence. We also often overly focus too much on this, caring about minor aspects of jurisprudence and ignoring major social rules. Paying attention to minor jurisprudential issues such as purifiers and impurities and so on are important, but it must be coupled with attention to issues of greater jurisprudence. It is through practising these social rules that we can attract positive goodwill towards Islam and become good examples and a source of pride for our family and Ummah.

Trustworthiness

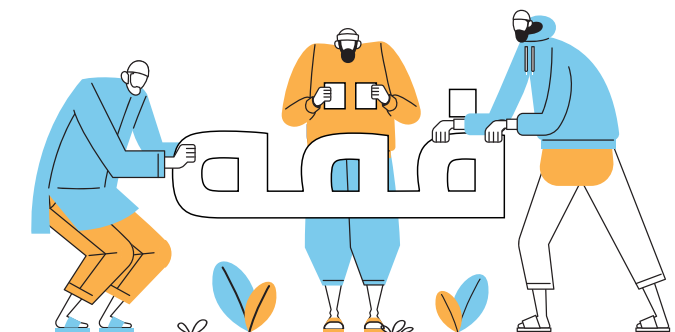
One common theme among the narrations we have about social rules is the emphasis on trustworthiness. This trait is always one of the first and most important traits that a believer is encouraged to practice. Trustworthiness has several meanings in different contexts. Trustworthiness can mean faith in the Unity of Allah because this fulfils the trust of Allah, the Exalted. It can also mean sincerity in belief.

Trustworthiness also has a meaning in the social context, where it means to fulfil the trust that a person has been given. This trust may be in terms of wealth, such as when a person's friend leaves money or something of value with them, or when a bank lends money to a person. The trust may be a person's health, such as when a doctor is looking after a patient, or a teacher a student. There are many other examples of trust in everyday life, and in each case, the person who is expected to fulfil the trust is obligated to fulfil it in ordinary circumstances.

Trustworthiness is an obligation without exceptions or limitations. The following narration shows that fulfilling the trust is among a number of selected obligations in which there are no exceptions, and where there is no difference in the obligation whether the people involved are believers or non-believers.

“there are three situations where Allah (swt) did not make any exceptions: respect to parents, keeping promises and fulfilling trusts” - Imam Al-Sadiq (as)

In another example of the inclusiveness of this obligation, the Prophet (pbuh) even returned a trust to a direct enemy. When the Muslims were fighting against the polytheists in Arabia, the Prophet (pbuh) went to a polytheist called Safwan ibn Umayyah, whose business was to sell shields. The Prophet (pbuh) asked him if he would lend him 70 shields to use in the war against the polytheists. Safwan asked: ‘Will I really get these shields back from you?’ The Prophet (pbuh) answered: ‘It is a trust, which I guarantee’. After the war against the polytheists ended, the Prophet (pbuh) returned all the shields to Safwan ibn Umayyah.



Speech – Minding the Tongue

Humans are social creatures who cannot live in isolation. We are naturally inclined towards living together and communicating with one another. The main form of communication between humans in their social life is speech. In fact, it is the ability to speak which sets humans apart from other creatures. While most other abilities that a human possesses can also be found in other creatures, speech is something unique to mankind. Speech is one faculty which has neural connections to many different organs, such as the brain, the mouth, tongue, vocal cords, lungs, diaphragm etc.

When considering the tongue, we obviously acknowledge that the physical tongue is a blessing which allows us to speak, eat, taste etc. However, here we are discussing the ability of speech. Historically, humans have been defined in philosophy as: ‘speaking animals’.

Even though living socially comes naturally to humans, it is often very difficult to live well in society. One of the major challenges in fact is how we use our tongue. Our words can be very hurtful if they are not well considered, and words which are not weighed up can cause many problems. Therefore, in order to live well in society, we need to mind our tongue, and bring awareness in how it is being used.

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah (swt) mentions that He has given us eyes and a tongue and lips, and showed us two paths, leaving it up to us to choose whether we use these blessings in the right way or the wrong way:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

“Have We not given him two eyes, And a tongue and two lips, And pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways?” - Surah Al-Balad, 8-10

It is a person's speech which introduces that person and gives us the best insight into what kind of person they are. We know little about a person until we listen to them speak. Once they speak, we then either see the ugliness or the beauty of their personality through their speech. This is why Imam Ali (as) has said:

“Beauty is in the tongue, and perfection is in the intellect” and that also: “Man is concealed under his tongue.” - Beharul-Anwaar Vol. 1 p. 96

It is because of the above that a person's tongue can be the best or the worst part of a person. Luqman - the wise, as mentioned in the Qur’an - was asked to bring the most expensive and valuable part of an animal. He went to the market and bought

a tongue (of a sheep). The next day, he was asked to bring the cheapest and least worthy part. Again, he brought the tongue. When questioned, he said that the tongue may be the least or the most valuable part of the body, depending on how it is used.

One unique characteristic of the tongue is that most other body parts require a third party for a sin to occur (e.g. a lustful or envious look). However, the tongue's sins require no third party. On the other hand, another unique characteristic of the tongue is that it is with the action of the tongue that one becomes a Muslim, once they recite the two testimonies.

A man asked the holy Prophet (pbuh) to advise him. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: “Mind your tongue.” The man asked for more. The Messenger of Allah gave the same advice. When the man insisted for the third time, the Prophet said: “Woe to you! Does anything other than the harvest of their tongues drop people on face into the Hell-Fire?!” - Al-Kaafi, Vol. 2:94

Imam Ali (as) says:

“There are ten characters in a person that are manifested through the tongue” - Al-Kaafi, Vol. 8:20 :

- 1 The tongue is a witness, that informs of what is in the conscience.
- 2 A judge which can judge between truth and falsehood.
- 3 A speaker which answers questions.
- 4 An intercessor through which a need can be realised.
- 5 A describer through which things can be known.
- 6 A commander which can command to good deeds.
- 7 An advisor that can prohibit evil deeds.
- 8 A consoler through which grief can be consoled.
- 9 A tool of praise through which spite can be removed.
- 10 A persuader that can bring pleasure to the ears.



Here are some imperative social rules related to tongue, which can be practiced by all of us:



Avoid all the plagues of tongue – such as backbiting, idle talk;



Don't be the sole speaker – let there be others engaged in the conversation as well, and listen twice as much as you talk, as you have two ears and one mouth;



Don't prolong your stories. The more you speak, the more you slip, the more you bore people, and above all the more you harden your heart and theirs;



You don't need to say but what you know, and you don't say all what you know.

It is not the physical beauty that really matters and endures, but rather the beauty introduced by the tongue. Allah created beauty, loves beauty, and beautiful speech is a noble trait.

Keeping Promises

In Islamic ethics, this is a very important quality after minding one's tongue and being trustworthy. It is extremely important for a Muslim to keep a promise they have made, and this is one of the signs of a believer, as can be seen in Surah al-Mu'minun quoted below. The Mu'min (believer) would say that their promise was a debt they owed, and they would not rest until they had repaid that debt.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

“And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant”
- Surah Al-Mu'minun, 8

Unfortunately, breaking promises is a problem that is common amongst humans. We easily break promises we have made to other people, especially when it comes to not turning up on time when we have promised to do so. One example of this is our Muslim gatherings, which often begin late and finish late, and is a negative trait that we have become accustomed. We also often make promises we know we cannot keep. We promise our children a reward, or promise a person we will help them with a problem, but later realise this promise is too difficult to keep and so we back out. These acts are not liked by Allah (swt), who says in Surah as-Saff:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

“O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do.”

- Surah As-Saff, 2-3



Therefore, when we speak and make a promise, we need to think first and assess whether we can keep this promise or not. If we cannot, it is far better to not make the promise in the first place. Even the people of the Age of Ignorance saw breaking promises as a bad and evil thing.

Hence, as Muslims, we must be extra vigilant to not do something that even the people of the Age of Ignorance knew was wrong.

The following ayat also shows the importance of keeping promises. When Allah (swt) praises Prophet Ismail (as), he mentions the fact that he was true to his promises, even before he mentions his status of being a prophet:

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ
وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا

“And mention Ismail in the Book; surely he was truthful in (his) promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet.”
- Surah Maryam, 54

Avoiding Arguments

Islam strongly discourages people from being argumentative. Being argumentative and quarrelling over small issues has its roots in the psychological disease of paranoia and can lead to many family, community and political problems. In short, utter only words of goodness.

The Holy Qur'an gives us a simple formula for avoiding arguments, and this is to agree to disagree. In the Qur'an, Allah (swt), even though He is The Truth, is instructing His Messenger (pbuh) to agree to disagree with the polytheists and say to them:

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

“You shall have your religion and I shall have my religion”
- Surah Al-Kafirun, 6

The Holy Qur'an gives the example of people arguing about the number of the companions who fled to the cave. The Qur'an states that people were guessing the number without any knowledge, and that this argument is useless.

Here, the Qur'an is encouraging us to avoid arguments which have no value to our faith and our practical life and to avoid wasting time on such issues. The narrations of the Family of the Prophet (pbuh) also instruct us:

“The most pious person is the one who avoids quarrelling even if he is in the right.” - Beharul-Anwaar, 2:127

This narration from the same source as that above, discourages Muslims to engage in futile arguments which have no purpose other than boosting and proving one's knowledge and superiority. However, if the purpose of argument is defending Islam and disproving the misgivings about it, it is regarded as one of the most rewarding struggles – but this must be done with adab, respect and decorum.

“...if a person meets Allah with these three qualities, will enter paradise from whichever gate he wishes: he whose manners are good, he who fears Allah when in public and when alone, and he who avoid quarrelling even when is in the right.” - ibid

Arguing frequently even has other physiological effects. Studies have shown that people with wounds experience delayed healing of their wounds in comparison to people who live a more peaceful life without frequent arguments.

There is no better way of sowing enmity than to enter into arguments. Therefore, Islam discourages being argumentative whether it be within the familial, community or at a national level. We should definitely try to avoid arguing. In fact, being argumentative can lead to a disease of the soul:

“Avoid arguing, for it leads to disease of the heart.”
- Beharul-Anwaar, 2:139

Instead of a tit-for-tat reciprocation, which is a zero sum game, it is better to respond with kindness than hostility. The Holy Qur'an tells us to “(P)ush back with something more beautiful” - Surah Fussilat, 34, because the beautiful and the evil deed are not equal. Imam Razi says:

“God tells us to push against their ignorance and crudeness in what is the most beautiful of ways (ahsan al-turuq). For if you endure, and are patient with their ugly manners, again and again, and do not respond to their stupidity, with anger and do not react to the hurt that they do, they will feel ashamed of their ugly manners, and will abandon their evil habits...they will move from hostility to affection, from hatred to love.”
- Imam Fahkr Al-Din Razi (1985), Mafatih Al-Ghayb, Dar-Al Fikr, p. 128.



Advice for our readers...

Domestic disagreements can have terrible effects on a family, children and all those involved. A husband and wife should try their very best to avoid arguing, especially when it comes to minor and trivial issues, and siblings should be mindful of the hurt they cause their parents when they argue over meaningless matters.

Entering arguments unnecessarily has many unwanted effects:

- It leads to animosity between the people arguing.
- It leads to the faults of people being exposed.
- It can waste a lot of time, and consumes valuable resources for little gain.
- It ends up destroying relations between people.
- It brings any buried grudges to the surface.
- It could lead to stress-induced ailments.

Social Rules in a time of Pandemic

This final part of this paper will deal with some Islamic guidance in relation to a pandemic. In fact, these are an extension of the social rules in Islam. Without repeating the very good advice and Fatwa from the Mufti of Singapore regarding Covid-19 (see here: <https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Fatwa/Fatwa-Covid-19-English>), this part will canvass some matters in relation to contentment with God's acts, "when hardships arrive, afflictions descend and sicknesses become severe." - Imam Al-Haddad (2003), The Book of Assistance, Fons Vitae, p. 126

Imam al-Haddad mentions a hadith which says: "(W)orship God by being content, and if you cannot, then know that in the patient endurance of that which is unpleasant lies much good" - ibid. Reliance on God and being grateful is one of the hallmarks of a sincere servant:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

"And the one who relies on God, God will suffice for him."
- Surah Al-Talaq, 3

Do not let the fear of poverty or pandemic prevent you from giving to charity, for it is during these trying times that charity will bring success -

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

"...verily with hardship comes ease"
- Surah Ash-Sharh, 6

In this regard, strive everyday to give something away or perform an act of selfless giving or charity. Surah al-Insan reveals this service to others irrespective of personal gain:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا نَّمَا
نُطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

"And they give food in charity out of love for Him, saying: 'We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you'
- Surah Al-Insan, 8-9

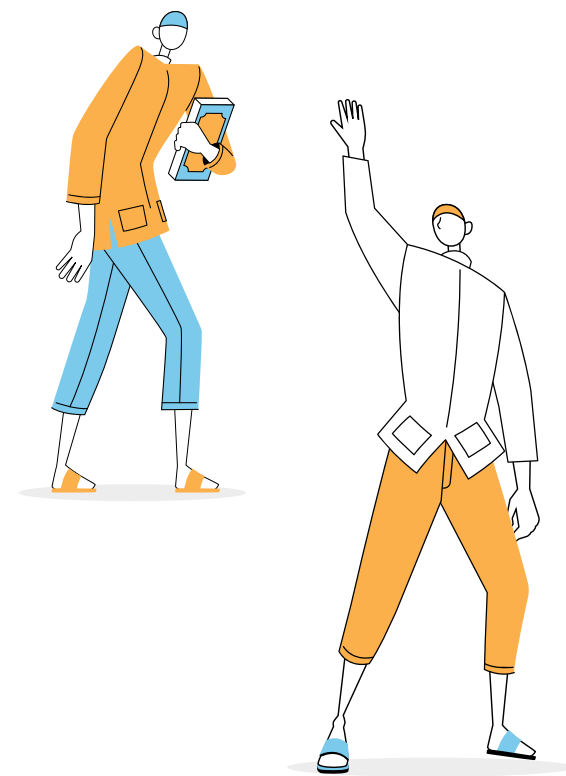
Beware of ihtikar, which is to buy food which is much needed, and then hoard it up until the prices goes up. This applies to all essential items. A pandemic is the time to let the angelic attribute in you shine – enquire on your neighbours and friends, volunteer with a charity to help the less fortunate etc. Community service is the elixir of love for the Ummah.

Maintain your personal hygiene and physical fitness. Make sure to uphold your grooming, apply perfume and clean attire. Remember God is beautiful and loves beauty.

Remember the trials of Nabi Ayyub (as), when he called to his Lord:

وَأَيُّوبُ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ
الرَّحِيمِينَ

"Indeed, adversity has touched me, and you are the Most Merciful of the merciful."
- Surah Al-Anbiya, 83



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.



9 Steps to Remain Steadfast

- 1 Make your intention for all actions, conduct, thoughts and your obedience for the sake of Allah.
- 2 Many intentions can attach to a single act, but your primary and sincere one should be for Allah.
- 3 Make your intentions continuously.
- 4 Just as deeds are judged according to their intention, make your intention as a means of getting close to Allah.
- 5 Always strive to be in ritual ablutions (wudhu) – and to remain in this state even outside the obligatory prayer.
- 6 Be moderate and keep in the middle way of everything. Maintain your courtesies and uphold your civility.
- 7 Learn a wird (an act of devotion) that can be a means of regular, structured devotion and remembrance (dhikr). This will help you to illuminate your heart and control your senses. Be persistent, preserve and perform your wird at regular appointed times. An example of a wird is Ratib Alattas, or the Latif al-wird of Imam Al-Haddad.
- 8 Recite the Qur'an and learn its meaning, ideally in Arabic, but otherwise in a language you are familiar with. Read the various Tafsirs and listen to scholars like Professor Khaled Abou El Fadl (for example) who explore and explain the Surahs and Ayaats (see <https://www.usuli.org/>).
- 9 Look upon your fellow brother/sister in humanity with kindness and compassion. Offer a caring word, or a prayer, so that they may feel at ease, even if it is for a moment. That moment may be inconsequential to you, but may be the right action at the right time.

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.

It has been a challenging year when the new school term was disrupted due to COVID-19. As a precautionary measure, regular health check such as temperature taking were carried out to ensure the safety of all students. As the situation worsens, DACCnDAYS program had to be closed from 9 February onwards. To ensure that the students continue with their Islamic education, lessons were moved online via Google Classroom.



Hand sanitisers were provided to all students and temperatures were taken before the start of every class.

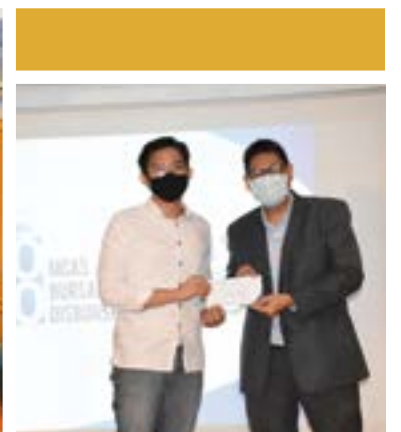


Bursary Presentation

12 September 2020

On 12 September 2020, 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 61 students. Due to COVID-19 situation, the ceremony was conducted in the auditorium and executed in two separate sessions to facilitate safe distancing measures. MCAS hope that this financial aid will help boost the morale of these exemplary students so that they can contribute positively to the society.



MCAS Deputy President, Bro Adam Foo handing bursaries to our well-deserved recipients during the presentation.

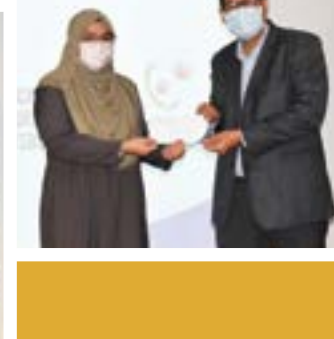




Photo taken in 2019 with Haji Sugimoto and the Japanese Converts living in Singapore, and their children.

An Insight into the Life of a Japanese Da'ie

Interview by Qurrah Shumar
Written by Faudziah Omar

Is there any way to convince a person about God to someone who does not think beyond this world? Listening to Haji Kyoichiro Sugimoto might give you an idea on how to approach the nafs and reason with someone who has no beliefs in any faith. Ever since he was in his teens, he had often grappled with the existential questions through his pursuit of the truth, and his mission to propagate Islam brought him to the steps of MCAS. The soft-spoken, ever-smiling Imam visited Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (MCAS) on 27 November 2019 to learn more about the Association's approach and the support system in place for new Converts as well as non-Muslims who are interested in Islam.



Born in Gifu, Japan in 1976, Haji Sugimoto had travelled the world to places like Europe, the Middle East as well as other Muslim nations like Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia. When he was a university student in Japan, he made friends with a Muslim student from Bangladesh. During the summer vacation, Haji Sugimoto was invited by this friend to visit his hometown and to meet his family. It was during his visit to Bangladesh that he saw a lot of under-privileged families with hardships that he had not witnessed in his birth country. Days after that encounter, he was still bothered by what he saw and it got him thinking about their plight, believing that there must be a reason for these extreme situations in peoples' lives. He knew that a person does not get to choose the place or families he is born into, and there must be a system or higher power at work.

Quest for Knowledge and The Truth

As it turns out, Allah has a plan for him. This experience was the beginning of his journey to Islam. He started delving into the religion. He made many friends who are Muslims and formed his basic understanding of Islam with their help. According to Haji Sugimoto, he found Islam to be extraordinary – the emphasis of *silatulrahim* on continuing to foster good relations impressed him and had a lasting effect on him. Determined and hungry for knowledge, he could always be seen in the library, poring over Islamic books with Japanese translations. He also started reading the Japanese translation of the Quran. One year later in 1997, he embraced Islam.

His interest in the religion also brought him closer to understanding his own culture – he realised that the values synonymous with Japanese are intrinsic to Islam, such as the Japanese character of politeness, cleanliness, punctuality, trustworthiness, being respectful and the diligence in their work. These values are highly regarded in Islam and Muslims are often encouraged to strive on them.

Fast forward to 2019 on his visit to MCAS, we had the opportunity to host Haji Sugimoto as he conducted a Converts’ sharing session with the Japanese speaking community. He met with around 35 Japanese Converts who are currently residing in Singapore. Conversing in Japanese, Haji Sugimoto spoke about the teachings of Islam, gave away copies of his translation of Quran in Japanese and shared on the developments of Islam in Japan.

According to Haji Sugimoto, religion and politics are not discussed much in public, especially in the workplace and schools. It is regarded as a private and sensitive matter, and most Japanese do not have any strong affiliations to religious groups. The challenges that he faced doing Da’wah in Japan are many folds. Haji Sugimoto believes that Da’wah should be propagated to non-Muslims, follow up on new Muslims are necessary and education for young Muslims are essential. Unlike in Singapore, he said that there is no support system set up in Japan, hence his visit to MCAS to benchmark and study so that he could help his local community upon his return.

He shared that for the new Muslims who embraced Islam due to their search for spirituality, religious identity, and purpose in life, they are pretty much on their own, having to learn about the religion by themselves. On the other hand, for someone who converted due to marriage, their spouse is expected to teach them, but due to language limitations and lack of understanding of Islam, the spouse may find it difficult to educate their loved ones. As a result, problems may arise among families and friends during this critical period of adjustment.

Having a fundamental knowledge of Islam is crucial as it can help the new Muslim to better navigate and adapt to their

new lifestyle. They should not be rushed into observing the rules and regulations, but rather take it at a pace that they can manage. Haji Sugimoto said, “New Muslims should not be overwhelmed by these rules and regulations. But rather focus on the spiritual and ethical aspects of Islam first. Only then can the new Muslim appreciate and perceive the similarities between Japanese cultures and values that we already practice, with Islam.” He added that this would create an easier transition for the new Muslim to go back to the *fitrah* (the original state) and feel peace and tranquillity in their heart. This would enable them to build the connection and *Iman* with God, developing oneself to a higher level, step by step. “Focus on the heart, repair your heart first,” explained Haji Sugimoto.



Mission and Purpose

As a Convert himself, Haji Sugimoto understands the challenges one face when searching for the true religion. At this stage in his life, he envisions to convey the message of Islam to all household in Japan by the year 2050. It is a huge task, but not an impossible one because he has a plan. There need to be three approaches – Da’wah to non-Muslims, follow up with new Muslims, and education for the youths. He intends to adopt the system of a holistic learning journey he had learnt from MCAS, i.e. to provide a lifelong learning path from foundation to advanced level for new Muslims. Haji Sugimoto believed strongly that these new Muslims deserve to be given a priority as they were chosen by Allah S.W.T to receive hidayah.

He reflected upon the Da’wah of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. where he had taught and developed the sahabah, although they started out in small number, they became knowledgeable and mighty due to the quality of their fundamental education of Islam.

He emphasised that there is a need to consider the approach from the beginning – to create a strong community of Muslims by taking care of the new Muslims first. With that, he hopes the systematic education approach can see these new Muslims developed to the point that they can be a Da’ie themselves and do Da’wah by creating a community in their area, so that the Ummah of Rasulullah S.A.W. is ever-growing.

Interaction with Non-Muslims

As the Chairman of the Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre, Haji Sugimoto often engages with non-Muslims who asked fundamental questions like *Why do we need a religion?* He shared that in Japan, many people have no affiliations with any religion, hence they cannot think beyond this world. He would respond to them by defining the basis of Islam – not merely explaining why we need a religion but focusing on *Why Islam?* From there, he will expound further by clarifying that it is a way of life, food for one’s spirit/soul, and explain how Islam distinguishes from other religion.

When challenged on the scientific existence of God, like how does one prove there is God because we cannot see or touch God, we can only believe in God. Haji Sugimoto would explain that we cannot prove the existence of God scientifically. Science by definition require experiments and observations,



but we cannot observe and experiment God. So, we have that limited tool. We cannot prove (the existence of) God through science, however we can prove the science of God – the creations of God through science. That is our human limitation, he said.

Haji Sugimoto also explained that unlike western societies, the Japanese are more polite and not aggressive towards people who may be different from them, for example they are respectful of others and not judgemental towards those wearing the hijab. Even in a public place, if a Muslim were to approach a staff enquiring for a space to perform one’s prayers, the staff will be most likely to oblige.

He reiterated that the approach should be correct and Da’wah should be done thoughtfully, “The focus must be on ta’aruf – to centre on establishing relationships and to build the trust and rapport first. Then, the person you are doing Da’wah to would see the Islam in you, not in your words but in your behaviour and attitude,” he exclaimed.



Bigger Goals Ahead

Being a Muslim for the most part of his life, Haji Sugimoto is passionate about spreading Islam in Japan. His Da’wah efforts see him occupied throughout the day – he is the Chairman of Chiba Islamic Cultural Centre, overseeing all their activities, preparing the Khutbah, over-seeing the entire management of the centre, as well as conducting seminars and workshops for new Muslims and born Muslims. Haji Sugimoto is also the Headmaster of Niihilma Learning School and Chiba & Global Outreach Specialist for Japan, IERA UK. He juggles these responsibilities and caring for his family by managing his time wisely. He meets with three of his sons when he comes home at night, dedicating a few hours, and then only spending time his wife after 9 in the evening. Although it is not easy, he gets a sense of satisfaction when he retires at night.

Through his experience, he found that in order to lead and provide a service to the community and be successful in running an Islamic centre, one would have to equip themselves with knowledge and surround themselves with people who are experts in their field. He once had the opportunity to meet with Malaysia’s former Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and the advice that was given to him was to know your followers and be knowledgeable to solve problems. These followers are specialists in their areas, people who can support him to build programmes for new Muslims, non-Muslims, and the youths in Japan. There also need to be collaboration and constant learning from scholars to solve issues that may arise.



Despite his heavy workload, Haji Sugimoto has a bigger ambition. One of his goals is to have the Japanese translation of the Quran

in every hotel room in Japan. As a Japanese himself, he knows that Japanese people in general are fond of reading, and they do not like to be persuaded on important matters such as religion, preferring to gain understanding through books. Therefore, he decided to approach a few hotels in Japan, and after some negotiation they agreed to place these translated Quran in the rooms. His strategy was to point out to these hotels that since they already have Bibles and Buddhist transcription in the drawers, so why not the Quran. According to Haji Sugimoto, each hotel chain may have 20-30 hotels, and he plans to start from there. He hopes despite these small steps, eventually every hotel room in Japan may have the Japanese translation of the Quran, In Sha Allah.

First Council Meeting

27 September 2020

For the first time in MCAS 40th history, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was conducted virtually, as recommended by the Commissioner of Charities (COC), due to the COVID-19 situation. It was held on 27 September 2020, during which Council members for the term 2020-2022 were elected. The Council members consist of 15 Converts and 12 Born-Muslims. With the conclusion of the Electronic Annual General Meeting (eAGM), the elected Council members held their first council meeting, and unanimously elected the incumbent, Mr Muhammad Imran Kuna Abdullah as President for MCAS. This will be Mr Imran Kuna's second term as President of the Association.



Please join us in welcoming our new and returning Council members:

Muhammad Imran Kuna Abdullah – President	Aniza Anuar Acquavella	Muhammad Feroz Bin Abdullah
Foo Eng Yoong @ Adam Foo	Ahmad Badri Bin Muhammad Isa	Phone Myint Naing @ Mohd Yusof
Ariff Sultan s/o Yousoff Sultan	Keng Poh Meng @ Mikhail Keng	Razees Abdul Karim
Jeanpierre Guillaume @ Bilal	Ee Man Ling Janice @ Haniya	Tan Siong Seng @ Muhammad Hadi Tan
Hamzah Bin Abdul Mutalib	Ee Man Wah Joyce @ Aisha	Umar Siraj Md Noor Bakor Sharbeeni
Haziq Harjit Singh s/o Bot Singh @ Haziq Harjit Singh	Fatimah Binti Abdullah	Veen Helena Marie @ Maryam
Chung Yow Min @ Danial Chung	Lee Ying Peng @ Kathirah Khalisah Lee	Zin Bo Aung
Abdul Razak Bin Rahmat	Luke Ong Kim Hoe @ Luqman	
Nur Hani Binti Nasir	Mohamed Ishak s/o Al Amatin Sahib	
Selvasingam s/o Gamapathi @ Sharukh Abdullah	Mohamed Mustafa Bin Ismail	

Project Reaching Out

3 October 2020



As part of the initiatives for Project Reaching Out, MCAS extended help to our Converts in supporting them during this unprecedented time. A COVID-19 Converts' Support Fund were created to help ease the financial burden of households affected by the economic uncertainty resulting from the pandemic. The support fund aimed to assist 100 Financial Assistance clients who are Converts, with each client receiving a \$50 NTUC Voucher and a \$50 one-time cash assistance.



MCAS President Bro Muhammad Imran Kuna, our Guest-of Honour and attendees during the event.



Where Hope Grows and Miracles Happen

*by Ustazah Nuraizah Amin,
Executive Officer at
MCAS (Darul Arqam Singapore)*

With utter disbelief upon looking at the result of her pregnancy test, Ustazah Khairunnisa also known as Ustazah Nisa, thought her eyes were playing tricks on her. Not expecting anything different as she was used to receiving negative results – for 10 years she had to go through disappointment repeatedly, and it was disheartening. After umpteen times of tests, she finally saw a glimmer of hope – a sign that she has been yearning for years.



It took her a while to react with the reality of being a pregnant woman and that her dream of becoming a mother is becoming real. Both Ustazah and her husband, Ustaz Ho Muhammad Adi, are grateful and felt blessed to receive confirmation of the pregnancy after consulting their doctor.

During their 10 years of marriage, she faced numerous challenges, such as to build her own little family with her husband, maintaining a good relationship with her in-laws, and especially when posed with the question, “When are you going to have kids?”. Every time that happens, a myriad of emotions would go through her – the anger, frustration, sadness and even uncertainty. Most of the times she would get annoyed with this question, but she soon realised that this is the normal expectation of others after someone gets married. One good lesson that we can learn from Ustazah Nisa is to always appreciate your spouse, and know that you have each other for support. She and her husband would reflect together on issues that upset her, and they will think of a proper way to overcome such difficulties. When it comes to the favourable question asked, she would reply with “Your kind Du’a is very much appreciated” or she would simply say, “insha Allah”, and smile.

Whenever she feels stressed pertaining to this issue, she would remain patient and strong, holding on to the hopes that Allah will bless her with children when the time is right. She would also be reminded of the story of Nabi Zakariya (A.S.) continuously praying to Allah without fail and hold dearly to this verse:

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ
الْوَرَثِينَ

And [mention] Zechariah, when he called to his Lord, “My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir], while You are the best of inheritors.” Surah al-Anbiya’, verse 89.

It is only by Allah’s will, that Nabi Zakariya (A.S.) and his wife, were blessed with Nabi Yahya (A.S.) even though she was no longer in her childbearing age. This is a miracle that Ustazah Nisa held on to and made this ayah as her daily du’a. Apart from this, she would also love and cherish non-blood related children making them smile and happy always.



Being in the obese range, Ustazah Nisa has never lost hope in her dream to become a mother, despite the doctor’s opinion that her weight may hinder her ambition. She was advised to lose some kilos, as being physically healthy will increase her chance to conceive. Knowing this however did not cause her to make any effort to lose weight as she could not find one good reason to make the changes in her life. However, in 2017 everything changed. Her hope to conceive diminished slowly when doctor diagnosed her with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). It was difficult for her to grasp the situation and accept the reality, that as long as she is still in the obese range and with her condition of PCOS, she was told that she will not be able to conceive. Although Ustazah Nisa was aware that with the advancement of technology where assisted reproductive treatments are available, she and her husband agreed to choose the natural conception. They believe that they have yet to exhaust their efforts to conceive naturally before exploring other alternatives.

It all began last year, when she woke up one morning and reflected that her birthday was coming and she would be turning 30 soon. All sorts of questions started running through her mind, “Have I fully utilised my utmost potential as a servant of Allah? How would I embark on my 30s with this state that I am in at the moment? And can I participate actively to bring up my children and explore the world together with them?” Finding the answers to these questions seemed hard, she finally realised that to overcome her issues, she needed to make a change – she had to transform herself to be a healthier person to achieve her dreams. She decided to address her health issues by losing weight and hoping that her issues with PCOS would resolve naturally by itself, and until then she will put her plan to conceive on hold. Her strategy was to deal with the issues one at a time. With the help of her husband, she progressed steadily albeit slowly, with his full support.

What was more pleasing, Ustaz Ho not only encouraged and spurred her to change, but he was also determined to do it together. They both started to embark on the journey together by gaining knowledge first – fixing their irrational belief that healthy lifestyle is likely to haunt them to only eat greens and required them to run every day. Much to their surprise, they discovered a different aspect to living a healthy lifestyle. They never knew it was as simple as having sufficient sleep. They could still indulge in flavourful healthy dishes, and above all, being grateful for what they are and what they already have. This is where her hope grows, and miracles happen.

She started by inculcating one good habit in her daily routine. Although she admitted that the first step to begin a healthy lifestyle was easy, the hardest part was being consistent! Many would jump into this journey impulsively only to give up half way. She began by changing her food intake in stages, delightfully discovering that she could still enjoy her favourite food while dieting. And best of all, her husband also benefitted from her effort to change as he gets to eat these healthy

meals prepared by his beloved wife. The recipe of one of her favourite dish is shared at the end of this article.

As she made steady progress, she grew more hopeful and was equally determined to shed more weight through physical activities. This was when she started to lift weights, and started a cardio program with a personal trainer, together with her husband. They both thoroughly enjoyed their cardio routines, cheering each other on and discovering a new side of themselves altogether.



Ustazah Nisa has been in this journey for almost 2 years now, and to this day she does not have a most or least favourable workout routines, as she is still happily exploring all kind of workouts. There would be days when

she would be demotivated, but she would remind herself of her main goals. To gain motivation instantaneously, she would watch workout programmes such as CrossFit competition videos on YouTube, before eventually finding herself getting ready for her workout routine. During this journey, she reaped more than what she expected – she was rewarded with a positive mindset, good physical posture, self-confidence, and was especially grateful whenever she accomplished any small wins.

Ustazah Nisa is thankful that Allah has given her the chance and inspiration to take this leap of faith for this transformation. As for now, she is happier to receive the news that her reproductive system is functioning well, and that she has come to embrace the fact that slow progress is still a progress. Ustazah Nisa acknowledges that she still has a long way to achieve her fitness goal, but she will persevere in the face of obstacles.



Before and After photo of Ustazah Nisa

Last but not least, Ustazah Nisa’s advise to everyone out there who wants to make a change – just take the leap and make that first step; be it choosing one positive habit first and remaining consistent, whether it is your food intake or a physical activity. Enjoy the experience and journey of being healthy, and finally to celebrate every victory no matter the size!

Kuah Laksa

Ingredients (to be blended):

2 table-spoon Belacan
2 inches Galangal
3 Red Onion
10 Candlenut
A handful of Dried Shrimps
20 Dried Chillies (soaked in hot water beforehand)

Other ingredients:

Coconut Milk
Prawn Broth
Lemongrass
Salt
Oil
Fish cake
Prawns

Instructions :

1. To make the spice paste – add dried shrimps and dried chillies into a food processor or blender and blitz until fine. Add the candlenut and blitz further until fine. Add all the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth.
2. In a stock pot, heat oil and saute the spice paste for a few minutes. Add lemongrass until fragrant and continue for about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the prawn broth and trimmed coconut milk and simmer for at least 10 minutes to allow the flavour to combine and develop. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to a low simmer to prevent curdling. You can also adjust the richness of the broth at this point by adding more water to lighten, or more coconut milk to enrich.
4. Add fish cake and prawn. Season with salt to taste.



SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN

2020

JANUARY

- 3 US kills top Iranian general, Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad air strike.
- 3 Yousuf Deedat, son of late Ahmed Deedat, dies after being shot in the head.
- 23 UN's top court orders Myanmar to protect Rohingya from genocide.
- 23 Wuhan, China – the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak goes under an unprecedented lockdown, impacting 11 million residents.
- 31 Muslims face existential threat in India, potentially stripping 200 million Indian Muslims of their citizenship.

AUGUST

- 4 Giant explosion in Beirut, Lebanon killing 135 people and injuring another 500, with many still missing.
- 5 India PM Modi lays foundation for Ayodhya Ram temple amid Covid surge.
- 12 3 people died in Bangalore after police clashed with protesters who were speaking out against a blasphemous Facebook post that were offensive towards the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).
- 27 New Zealand's Christchurch mosque terrorist sentenced to life in prison with no parole.

FEBRUARY

- 3 Slovenia's first mosque opens after 50 years of opposition.
- 14 1,700 medics fighting the coronavirus in China have been infected. Overall, 67,000 global cases of coronavirus have been documented, with the first European death on February 15.
- 19 New Leak Shows How China Targets Uighurs in Xinjiang.
- 27 Saudi Arabia imposes temporary ban on 'umrah' pilgrims amid coronavirus concerns.
- 28 India's ruling BJP's fiercest Islamophobic campaign in Delhi state elections.

JULY

- 1 First call to prayer inside Istanbul's Hagia Sophia in 85 years.
- 10 Hagia Sophia: Turkey turns iconic Istanbul museum into mosque.
- 24 Erdogan joins thousands to pray for first time at Istanbul's Hagia Sophia.
- 29 'Unprecedented' Hajj begins - with 1,000 pilgrims, rather than the usual 2 million.
- 29 A missing piece of Stonehenge was returned after 60 years.
- 30 Muslim woman in India takes care of Hindu COVID-19 positive mother's newborn twins.

SEPTEMBER

- 4 Muslim athletes break the one-hour world records in Brussels.
- 10 Sudan Separates Church and State After 30 Years of Religious Rule.
- 12 Bahrain follows Emirates in normalising ties with Israel.
- 22 Saudi Arabia to lift ban on Mecca pilgrimage amid virus.
- 23 Saudi king's rare address to UN showcases monarch in charge.
- 27 Saudi Arabia plans to resume tourist visas by early 2021.

MARCH

- 8 Gunman opens fire in Paris mosque, wounding one.
- 11 Man sent anti-Muslim tweets to a political candidate who then helped pay his medical debt.
- 11 The World Health Organisation declares the coronavirus a pandemic.
- 19 Fear of spread persists as pilgrims go home after Tabligh event in Indonesia cancelled at last minute.
- 26 New Zealand mosque shooter backtracks, pleads guilty to all charges.

JUNE

- 1 Killing of Autistic Palestinian Man by Israeli Police Draws George Floyd Parallels.
- 6 The World Health Organisation announced that all people should wear masks in public to help stop the spread of COVID-19.
- 6 Hope for the survival of Hainan Gibbons, extinct since the 1970s, as scientists discovered a new breeding pair.
- 29 China cuts Uighur births with IUDs, abortion, sterilization.

OCTOBER

- 3 Kuwait monarch Sheikh Sabah Al-Sabah, who was widely respected for his dedication to peace, died at the age of 91.
- 13 Saudi media softens tone on normalisation, offering clue to kingdom's thinking on Israel.
- 23 Palestinian President Abbas condemns Israel-Sudan ties.
- 24 Sultan of Brunei's son, Prince Azim, dies at 38.
- 24 Egypt starts voting in first stage of parliament elections.
- 25 France recalls Turkey envoy after Erdogan says Macron needs 'mental check'.
- 25 Khabib Nurmagomedov Announces Retirement After Winning at UFC 254.
- 26 Pakistan PM, Imran Khan accuses Macron of attacking Islam by 'encouraging' blasphemous cartoons.

APRIL

- 1 Muslim minority doctors first to die on front line of UK pandemic.
- 3 The global number of coronavirus cases has surpassed 1 million, nearly 53,000 people have died from the virus.
- 4 Muslim call for prayer recited from mosques to raise morale in Germany, Netherlands.
- 6 As mosques ban congregational prayers due to coronavirus, many set up live-streaming to broadcast prayers and sermons.
- 17 Saudi grand mufti says Ramadhan night, Eid prayers to be done at home.
- 29 Anti-apartheid campaigner and supporter of the Palestinian cause, Denis Goldberg dies at 87.

MAY

- 4 Court reinstates Muslim candidates kicked out of New York elections.
- 5 Australia's largest mosque will begin broadcasting Muslim call to prayer over loudspeakers every night until the end of Ramadhan.
- 15 No Eid ul-Fitr visits this year; Haj pilgrimage for Singaporeans to be deferred amid Covid-19 pandemic.
- 20 Former football star, Fred Oumar Kanoute raises \$1m to build Seville's first mosque in 700 years.
- 22 Church Opens Up Its Doors to Muslim Worshippers So They Can Have a Place to Pray During Quarantine.
- 27 Muslim woman becomes one of Britain's first hijab-wearing judges.

NOVEMBER

- 8 Four children 'terrorised' by heavily armed French police during anti-terror raid.
- 10 Hopes rise for end of pandemic as Pfizer says vaccine has 90% efficacy.
- 10 Muslim Young Men Protect Catholic Church After Deadly Attacks in France: 'We will protect churches ourselves'.
- 26 Somali-American fashion model Halima Aden quits runway citing pressure to 'compromise' religious beliefs.
- 27 Top Iranian nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh assassinated.

Keep your tongue moist
with **HIS** remembrance
Du'a is a weapon of a Believer

Du'a

The Prophet ﷺ said:

**Your Lord is munificent and
generous, and is ashamed to
turn away empty the hands
of His servant when he
raises them to Him.**

– Abu Dawood

ONE-MINUTE DAWAH



Do charity by helping others

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)