



PERSONS
OF THE YEAR



The
Muslim 500

THE WORLD'S 500 MOST
INFLUENTIAL MUSLIMS

2021



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims, 2021

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Title page *Bismilla* by Mothana Al-Obaydi



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INTRODUCTION



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ۞ Praise be to God; Lord of all Worlds. ۞ The Compassionate, the Merciful. ۞ Master of the Day of Judgement. ۞ You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. ۞ Guide us to the straight path. ۞ the path of those whom You have favoured, nor the path of those against whom there is wrath, nor of those who are astray.

The Opening, 1 - 7

Welcome to the twelfth annual issue of *The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims*. We are very pleased that we have made it this far and that the book has evolved as it has. We thank you for all your support and suggestions and look forward to continually receiving them.

There are approximately 1.9 billion Muslims in the world today, making up 26% of the world's population, or just over one-quarter of mankind. As well as being citizens of their respective countries, they also have a sense of belonging to the 'ummah', the worldwide Muslim community.

This publication sets out to ascertain the influence some Muslims have on this community, or on behalf of the community. Influence is: any person who has the power (be it cultural, ideological, financial, political or otherwise) to make a change that will have a significant impact on the Muslim world or Muslims. Note that the impact can be either positive or negative, depending on one's point of view of course. The selection of people for this publication in no way means that we endorse their views; rather we are simply trying to measure their influence. The influence can be of a religious scholar directly addressing Muslims and influencing their beliefs, ideas and behaviour, or it can be of a ruler shaping the socio-economic factors within which people live their lives, or of artists shaping popular culture. The first two examples also point to the fact that the lists, and especially the Top 50, are dominated by religious scholars and heads of state. Their dominant and lasting influence cannot be denied, especially the rulers, who in many cases also appoint religious scholars to their respective positions.

This doesn't discount the significant amount of influence from other sectors of society. How to measure this influence is of course the most challenging aspect of the publication, and the one where opinions diverge the most. Influence can sometimes be gauged on a quantitative basis, the number of followers, the number of books written, the amount of sales etc., but more often it is not something measurable in quantitative terms and is more related to the qualitative and lasting effect of that influence. A combination of social metrics, public opinion (we have a month-long open call for nominations every year, and all of the suggestions are considered) and expert opinion are the basis of this attempt to measure influence. The achievements of a lifetime are given more weight than achievements within the current year. People who are trailblazers, or the lone voice in

a remote area are also taken into account as we give weight to people breaking barriers and to local influence as well as global influence. This means that our list of names will change gradually, rather than dramatically, year-on-year.

The publication selects Muslim individuals from a range of categories of influence, 13 in total:

- Scholarly
- Political
- Administration of Religious Affairs
- Preachers and Spiritual Guides
- Philanthropy/Charity and Development
- Social Issues
- Business
- Science and Technology
- Arts and Culture
- Qur'an Reciters
- Media
- Celebrities and Sports Stars
- Extremists

The individuals are listed in each category according to geographical region (Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, North America, South America), then in alphabetical order by country and finally by surname.

This publication combines aspects of a review of the past year, including a timeline and statistics, but it also hopes to serve as a prospective guide to the new year, much like a *Who's Who*.

What's in this issue?

We have our editor write about the 'Persons of the Year'; these individuals achieved or represented something significant in the past year.

Our editor then offers his 'Selected Survey' of the major events which have affected the Muslim world over the past twelve months.

We then have a special commissioned report on Covid-19. It investigates how different countries around the world have dealt with the disease and it composes a ranking of policy effectiveness based on an estimate of policy caused deaths (EPD).

Then we have our regular 'House of Islam' essay which gives an overview of Islam and its branches. An updated 'Top 50' and '450 Lists' (including 'Honourable Mentions') then follows.

Our 'Guest Contributions' section has exclusive articles covering a wide range of issues. These are sure to stimulate thought and discussion around current pressing issues.

Our 'Book Reviews' review some books that have been published recently. The 'Major Events' section provides a timeline of the major events that have tak-

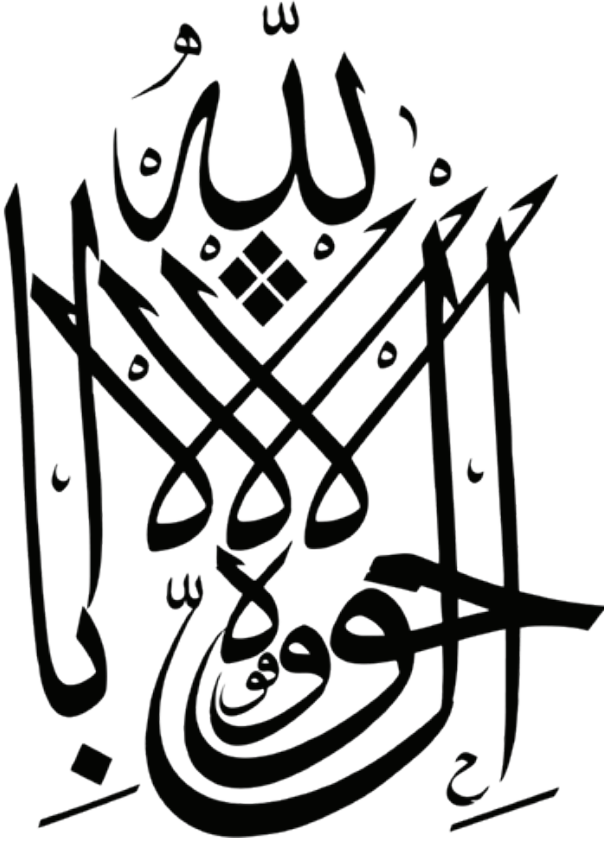
en place over the past year.

Appendices I and II provide us with lots of statistics. Appendix I shows total population and Muslim population by country, for all the countries in the world. Appendix II compiles a list of the highest Muslim Facebook, Twitter and Instagram users, as well as the highest in the world.

To give a richer visual experience we have also included several calligraphy pieces throughout the book, which we hope will serve as a beautiful reminder to pause and reflect as you go through the book.

We have also added write-ups within the main body of the text about major initiatives (see the ‘Amman Message’ on page 75, ‘A Common Word’ on page 145, the ‘Marrakesh Declaration’ on page 152, ‘The Muslim Council of Elders’ on page 160, ‘Free Islamic Calligraphy’ on page 169, ‘UN World Interfaith Harmony Week’ on page 180, ‘Altafsir.com’ on page 194 and ‘QuranicThought.com’ on page 22)

Our website (www.themuslim500.com) is a popular destination. We welcome your feedback and will take nominations for the 2022 edition through it.



There is no power nor strength except by Allah

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(Right)—The Shaheen Bagh protest that took place from 14 December 2019 to 24 March 2020 to protest the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

Woman of the Year



BILKIS BANO, INDIA

Eighty-two-year-old Bilkis Bano has managed to mobilise and inspire many to stand up against an ideology that is threatening to destroy India as we know it. Starting a simple Gandhian sit-in protest on a road in her locality of Shaheen Bagh in Delhi, she managed to bring the world's attention to the latest signpost in India's slide into Hinduvta, 'majoritarianism', 'Hindu nationalism' or 'fascism, Hindu style'.

Bilkis was joined by thousands of women, initially Muslim, but then of all religions, ages and classes to protest against the government's National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The NRC targeted people in Assam and asked them to prove citizenship by providing birth certificates. As many of these people are rural and don't possess these documents, they couldn't prove they were citizens and so were moved into detention centres where they would be classified as stateless and not have the same recourse to law as citizens.

To prevent all but Muslims from falling foul of this, the CAA was brought in. It allowed all people (except Muslims) without documentation to apply for citizenship as persecuted refugees from neighbouring countries. So, if they don't have papers and are not Muslim they can apply for Indian nationality; if they don't have papers and are Muslim, they become stateless and get moved into a detention centre.

These moves by the BJP-dominated government are another step in the realisation of Hinduvta by organisations like the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). Set up in 1925, the RSS was the alternative voice to Gandhi's vision of India. It was banished from the scene after one of its members assassinated Gandhi, and then the Congress Party kept similar voices at bay until their re-emergence in the 1990s. With the victory of Narendra Modi (a man heavily implicated in the 2002 Gujarat pogroms against Muslims) in 2014 and landslide in 2019, changes are being made on many fronts (e.g., Kashmir) which will result in disaster for the minorities of India.

Bilkis, or *dadi* (grandmother) as she is known, protested for over 100 days against this ideology which would overturn India as we know it. Her protest grew organically to over 12 locations in Delhi itself and then on to other cities, with millions of people getting involved. Where it could have gone from there is unknown as Covid-19 and its restrictions entered the fray and brought everything to a halt. With the pandemic halting the protests for several months and with a supreme court ruling deeming indefinite protests in public places unacceptable, it remains to be seen whether the warning voice of Bilkis and others will be heard so loudly again. She is determined to carry on the fight, but whether she can once again garner this level of support is an open question.





Man of the Year

ILHAM TOHTI, CHINA

Ilham Tohti has been imprisoned on separatism-related charges since 2014, with no contact with his family for the past three years. A professor of economics at university, he hosted the *Uyghur Online* website for two years before it was shut down in 2008. It advocated for the rights of Uyghur culture and questioned the lack of economic opportunities for Uyghurs, all the while seeing a planned increase of Han immigration into the region. After the 2009 ethnic clashes between Uyghurs and Han in the capital, Ürümqi, Tohti was imprisoned but released a month later, mainly due to international pressure. However, he was arrested again in January 2014 and imprisoned after a two-day trial. Since then, events have gone from bad to worse.

The Uyghurs are the world's most heavily surveilled community. Police officers routinely conduct what is known as *fanghuiju*: intrusive inspections to report on 'extremist' behavior, such as not drinking alcohol, fasting during Ramadan, sporting beards or possessing 'undesirable' items, such as copies of the Qur'an or prayer mats. If guilty of any of these things, then the person is sent to 're-education' camps. These camps hold over 1 million Uyghurs and use all tactics to erase Uyghur cultural identity. It is a genocide. Prisoners are subject to torture, forced abortions and sterilisation, forcibly fed pork or are not permitted to eat until they denounce Islamic teachings or praise the Communist Party. It is estimated that a sixth to

a third of young and middle-aged Uyghur men are currently imprisoned, or have been at some point in the past year.

Twenty-two countries mounted the first collective criticism of China's treatment of the Uyghurs on 8th July 2019 in a statement to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A substantial record of evidence gathered by numerous human rights organisations has shown an oppressive strategy targeting the Uyghur population that is designed to criminalise all forms of religiousness within Xinjiang. However, to counter this, the Chinese government issued a letter of their own, with about a third of the signatories being members of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation. This shows the extent of China's economic power and hold over many of these countries.

How much of this Ilham is aware of is anybody's guess, but since his arrest, his work has been recognised, and he has won numerous awards promoting freedom of expression and resistance to oppression. These include the PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award (2014), the Martin Ennals Award (2016), the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize (2019), and in October 2019, he was awarded the 2019 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought by the European Parliament. All of these have been collected by his daughter, Jewher Ilham, who continues the campaign to get justice for her father.



One of the many Uyghur prisons built in Xingjiang, China

A SELECTED SURVEY OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

by Tarek Elgawhary

Another year, but a year like no other. While there are many events that took place over this past year before the global pandemic, the advent of Covid-19 and the ensuing global health crises have overshadowed almost everything. It is hard to write about any issue or region today, or to even form an opinion of something without first taking into consideration the impact of Covid-19. This presents a unique challenge in writing this year's introduction to *The Muslim 500*. Instead of painting everything COVID, I decided to provide an overview of the Muslim world by region (Part I), which will include highlights of the most notable events of the past year such as the conversion of the Hagia Sophia back into a mosque and recent normalization efforts with Israel, as well as an overview of the major issues facing Muslims around the world (Part II) such as the plight of the most oppressed amongst us and the constant nuisance of Islamophobia, and conclude with a general overview of how Covid-19 has impacted and continues to impact Muslims (Part III); a more detailed coverage of Covid-19 as it relates to the world's nations appears elsewhere in this volume. This will both be a familiar format to previous *Muslim 500* introductions, providing needed continuity, while also acknowledging that while we continue to monitor specific regions and important topics, none have become as important and as pressing as the global influenza that continues to threaten us all.

PART I—MUSLIM WORLD SURVEY

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The Middle East remains a region of political and social unrest in many of its quarters. Of the ongoing civil conflicts, only Yemen has witnessed a noticeable de-escalation this past year with an agreement between the Hadi government and the Southern Transitional Council, and promising talks between the Saudi government and the Houthis. In Syria, parts of the civil war continue with no political resolution in sight. The regime has been able to move into north-eastern Syria after the US's abandonment

of the Kurds and after the Turkish incursion; the regime and its allies stepped up their attacks in southern Idlib but without launching an all-out attack.

One of the biggest news items from the region was the announcement of the resignation of Algeria's president in the spring of 2019. After 20 years in power, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika succumbed to popular protests opposing his intent to run for a fifth term. While the military encouraged Bouteflika's departure, they underestimated the staying power of the protestors. Not appeased by the president's ouster, the protest maintained twice-weekly protesters since February 2019 demanding a restructuring of the political system toward a more just and accountable government and the removal of the old regime elites. In response, the government postponed elections initially scheduled for July until December 12, 2019. Yet, all of the candidates were former members of Bouteflika's government. With the regime's loss of legitimacy, the lack of acceptable alternatives, and insufficient time to organise opposition candidates, the protestors rejected the December 12 elections as premature. Abdelmadjid Tebboune ultimately won the election, defeating Abdelkader Bengrina of the Islamist El Binaa party.

Moving eastward, there were many developments in the Libyan situation. The April 4, 2019 attack by Khalifa Haftar on Libya's Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) triggered a series of momentous events for the country that have occupied our reporting period. This attack ended any hope the UN mission in Libya had of convening a national conference to build support for essential political compromises, such as oil revenue sharing and any path to Libya's first national elections since June 2014. It also accelerated the proxy war on Libyan soil. As of late 2019, the foreign military presence included some 600-800 fighters from Russia, drones from the UAE, special forces from France, and weapons and military support from Egypt on Haftar's side, and a growing Turkish and Syrian presence, including drones, backing the GNA, plus forces from Chad and Sudan with uncertain allegiances. At the same time, militia groups with local agendas continued to clash in Libya's west and south. Haftar arrested those

in the east opposed to his efforts to impose a new dictatorship on Libya. And armed groups throughout the country carried out extrajudicial killings, abductions, torture, and executions. Unsurprisingly, DA'ISH has taken advantage of these conditions to make a comeback three years after the US and Libyan forces successfully eliminated it from controlling any Libyan territory. The current civil conflict in Libya has created great security concerns for Egypt and, in recent months, President Sisi has doubled down on his readiness to deploy military assistance to Haftar and his comrades. This past year also witnessed an enlargement of influence by violent extremist organizations (VEOs) in Africa, the details of which can be found below in the section on extremism.

The local elections in Turkey were a historic blow for President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and might spell the slow beginning of the end of his long dominance over Turkish politics. However, and as mentioned in our introduction, one of the most notable and controversial episodes in Turkey over this past year is the re-establishment of the Hagia Sophia as a mosque. The Hagia Sophia was built in the sixth century by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, and was a Christian place of worship for nearly 1,000 years before what was then known as Constantinople was conquered by the Ottoman Turks after a bloody siege in 1453. Once the world's largest cathedral, for hundreds of years it was where Byzantine emperors were

crowned, accepting the blessing of the Greek Orthodox Church amid ornate marble and mosaic decorations. After the fall of Constantinople, which the Turks renamed Istanbul, the giant cathedral became a mosque, with Turkish builders adding the minarets which now dominate the skyline in Istanbul's ancient heart. However, after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the wake of World War I, Turkey's new secular government decided to turn the building into a non-denominational museum and open it to tourists. The building opened its doors as a museum in 1935. The Hagia Sophia is one of the most popular museums in Turkey, drawing more than 3.7 million visitors last year, with many seeing the site as a place that brings faiths together.

Within hours of Turkey's high administrative court annulling the 1934 cabinet decision that turned the site into a museum, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan signed a decree handing over Hagia Sophia to Turkey's Religious Affairs Presidency. President Erdoğan said the first prayers inside Hagia Sofia on July 24 and urged respect for the decision. He said it was Turkey's sovereign right to decide for which purpose Hagia Sofia would be used and rejected the idea that the decision ends Hagia Sophia's status as a structure that brings faiths together.

Millions of Muslims around the world celebrated this move and thousands of Muslims in Istanbul came to the opening Friday prayer on July 24, 2020,

Hagia Sophia mosque, Istanbul, Turkey



which was attended by President Erdoğan and senior officials of his government. The images of the Friday prayer service and subsequent prayer services held at the Hagia Sophia were shared widely, and continue to be shared, over social media as signs of Islam's resurgence in secular Turkey.

As a former seat of the Greek Orthodox Church, Hagia Sophia's loss still rankles with some Greeks, and the move to convert it into a mosque again threatens to deepen tensions between Greece and Turkey. The debate between whether the site is considered a mosque or a museum has been quietly brewing for some time. President Erdoğan's mosque declaration has received widespread international criticism, including from US and Orthodox Christian leaders, who had urged Turkey to keep its status as a museum symbolising solidarity among faiths and cultures.

Pope Francis said he was "deeply pained" by Turkey's decision, while the World Council of Churches described its "grief and dismay", noting that the Hagia Sophia had been "a place of openness, encounter and inspiration for people from all nations". Greece Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis condemned the decision as an affront to Hagia Sophia's ecumenical character. He described the decision as one that offends those who see the site as "part of world cultural heritage". "This decision clearly affects not only Turkey's relations with Greece but also its relations with the European Union, UNESCO and the world community as a whole," he said.

This has also been a difficult year for Iran. The devastating effect of US sanctions, record low oil exports, a widening budget deficit, and a massive increase in fuel prices all became catalysts for a series of nationwide protests throughout this past year. While the protests started off as peaceful, an unfortunate turn of events ushered in one of the boldest periods of modern Iranian history since the 1979 Islamic revolution. For the majority of the year, minus the dominating effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, Iran has been stuck in a cycle of protest, counter-protest. Although in recent months it seems that the government has been able to regain some control, but attacks against strategic targets within Iran continue.

Throughout the year, non-state actors in Yemen were able to strategically improve their overall positions by using tactical military interventions and mediation efforts to their advantage. In the North, the Iran-backed Houthi militia, which overthrew the government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in 2014, re-asserted their monopoly in the areas they

controlled and stretched themselves further beyond. The expansion was an unintended result of a flawed cease-fire in the port of Hodeida that could not hold the Houthis accountable for violations or prevent escalation. In the South, Yemen's government faced a new challenge as the Emirati-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) and local groups threatened to separate due to state failure in delivering security and public services.

Over the course of the year, the UN-brokered Stockholm Agreement reached in December 2018 failed to meet expectations. The benefits that the Houthis reaped from the Stockholm deal strengthened their control and position in Yemen. They also increased their attacks on Saudi Arabia, with repeated strikes on Abha airport in the south of the kingdom that ultimately led to casualties, and further attacks on oil installations. The Emirati announcement that it would withdraw from Yemen this year appears to have stemmed from security and economic considerations following Houthi threats to launch drone attacks on the UAE.

As far as the situation in Syria over this past year, DA'ISH and its affiliates continued to lose more of their fake state and fake caliphate. Turkey's assault on north-eastern Syria late in 2019 and the resulting intensification of Turkish-Kurdish and Arab-Kurdish conflict fronts, however, continues to be a rallying call for DA'ISH groups. While President Bashar al-Assad continues to maintain power and control, the Syrian economy took a hit this past year, particularly with Trump's Caesar Bill in December 2019, which came into force on June 17, 2020. This piece of legislation targets specific Syrian industries as well as individuals providing alleged aid to crimes against humanity. The Caesar Bill also lays out fresh sanctions against Syria but allows for a waiving of these sanctions if parties engaged in the conflict engage in meaningful negotiations and end hostilities against civilians.

Lastly, and perhaps most surprisingly, the United Arab Emirates as well as the Kingdom of Bahrain announced their intentions to establish and normalise diplomatic ties with Israel. This is the first time an Arab and Muslim majority nation has made peace with Israel since both Egypt (in 1979) and Jordan (in 1994) normalised ties decades ago. The Abraham Accords, finalised and signed on September 15, 2020 on the south lawn of the White House, was met with great fanfare in the West. However, opinion throughout the Arab and Muslim world has been mixed with a lot of confusion and rage. Immediate concern is for the plight of the Palestinian people who remain

stateless. What will happen to Jerusalem, what will happen to the illegal settlements, what will happen to Gaza, etc.? These questions and many more are circulating and making a lot of noise throughout social media. From a geopolitical perspective, this accord is painted as an alignment against Iran, which makes Bahrain's involvement interesting. The small kingdom, while ruled by a strong Sunni monarchy, has a sizable Shia population.

Only weeks old, the Abraham Accords is already echoing in the corridors of power of other Arab/Muslim nations. Sudan, Oman, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are commenting, mostly positively, on the accord, and some are even indicating a willingness to follow suit. Only time will tell what will happen, but there is no doubt that this represents a massive shift in the region.

SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Sudan has also been facing challenges since the 2018 revolution triggered by the hike in bread and fuel prices. "Freedom, Peace and Justice" became the rallying cry for a real political and social revolution calling for civilian rule, together with the commitment to the peaceful nature of the revolution as an essential prerequisite to its successful conclusion. On April 11, 2019 Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir was deposed after which the country was placed in the care of the Transitional Military Council (TMC). After a tragic massacre in June 2019, the TMC and the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) signed a political agreement and draft constitution as well as agreed on a 39-month transition phase for government. By September 2019, the TMC transferred executive power to the sovereignty council of Sudan under civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. The newly formed government faces grave challenges but continues to move the country out of its current conflict. In early September 2020, Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and Abdel-Aziz al-Hilu, a leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North rebel group, signed a declaration in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, adopting the principle of creating a new secular state in Sudan. He said, "For Sudan to become a democratic country where the rights of all citizens are enshrined, the constitution should be based on the principle of 'separation of religion and state,' in the absence of which the right to self-determination must be respected." This accord comes less than a week after the government initialled a peace deal with rebel forces that has raised

hopes of an end to fighting that ravaged Darfur and other parts of Sudan under ousted dictator Omar al-Bashir. The larger of two factions in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, which has fought Sudanese troops in the nation's border states, has refused to sign any agreement that doesn't ensure a secular system.

ASIA

The past couple of years have been trying ones for India-Pakistan relations. 2019 opened with a suicide attack carried out by a young Kashmiri man, Adil Ahmed Dar, and claimed by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) on an Indian paramilitary force convoy in Pulwama. India's subsequent air-strikes inside Pakistan further escalated tensions, resulting in cross-border air attacks in Jammu & Kashmir where Pakistan shot down an Indian aircraft and captured the pilot. Although the crisis de-escalated following Pakistan's return of the pilot, tensions continued to overshadow the bilateral relationship.

Hopes faded for an improved relationship between India and Pakistan under Narendra Modi's second tenure. Following Modi's re-election in 2019, Islamophobia has surged in India. Muslims continue to face discrimination, violence, and death. There are several accounts of Islamophobia, which include: Muslims being beaten and forced to chant 'Jai shree Ram' (Glory to God Ram), being thrown off of moving trains, hate crime lynchings, complete Muslim areas under attack and destroyed, mosque destruction at the hands of Hindutva mobs, and efforts to denationalise Muslims through the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which deserves to be detailed in a separate paper at a later date.

The Modi administration also delivered on one of its campaign promises and revoked Article 370 of the Indian constitution on August 5. Article 370 had given Indian-administered Kashmir some autonomy, including the right to craft limited local policy and to deny outsiders the right to acquire land there, which many Muslim Kashmiris saw as protection against Hindus from the rest of India moving to the region, changing its demographics, and undermining its push for independence. As expected, however, many Modi supporters cheered the decision, while detractors saw it as part of an increasingly dangerous drift toward Hindu nationalism—a way to drum up support at a time when India's economy is slowing. This same sentiment echoed around the world with activists and others decrying the communications



Protests against PM Modi's policies in India

shutdown and curfews. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan also lent his voice to these outcries taking his gripe to the United Nations.

Indian Muslims have also been the subject of continued and systematic xenophobic attacks. A video emerged in February 2020 from the Kardampuri neighbourhood in northeast Delhi showing five severely injured men lying on the street being beaten by several policemen and forced to sing the Indian national anthem. One of the men, Faizan, a 23-year-old Muslim, died from his injuries two days later. At least 52 more people were killed in the three days of communal violence that broke out in India's capital. Over 200 were injured, properties destroyed, and communities displaced in targeted attacks by Hindu mobs. While a policeman and some Hindus were also killed, the majority of victims were Muslim.

This past year also saw an unprecedented step in these attacks with the use of social media platforms. Any type of religious gatherings of Muslims has been painted as a conspiracy and various Hindu-centric hashtags began circulating. For example, @coronajihad, #biojihad, and #tablighijamatviris. In August 2020, the Wall Street Journal revealed that BJP members such as T. Raja Singh have called for explicit acts of violence against Muslims. The article goes on to implicate Facebook Inc. employees for shielding this type of hate-filled rhetoric online, despite Facebook's

own statement that such hate rhetoric can lead to actual acts of violence and extremism against Muslims.

Also, in August 2020, Modi fulfilled another campaign promise to his Hindu nationalist base by inaugurating a new Hindu temple on the site of a 16th century mosque torn down by Hindu extremists nearly 30 years ago in the Indian town of Ayodhya. This very public act by Modi was scheduled to coincide with the first anniversary of India's revocation of special rights in Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state.

Pakistan's response has been focused on using diplomatic channels to highlight various human rights abuses by Indian forces in Kashmir. For Kashmiris, the situation continues to be troubling as they live under curfew and an ongoing internet shutdown which has crippled business and raised human rights concerns. Continued frustrations in Jammu & Kashmir and statements by Indian leadership on claims to Pakistan-administered Kashmir increase the risk of another crisis between two nuclear-armed states.

Despite bilateral relations hitting a low-point, India and Pakistan kept their pledge to open the Kartarpur corridor. The corridor was officially inaugurated in November 2019 and gives Indian Sikh pilgrims visa-free access to one of Sikhism's holiest sites: Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan. The initiative indicated a genuine desire to engage with India on



*Indonesia's President Joko Widodo takes a look at the emergency hospital handling of Covid-19
(Image by Hafidz Mubarak, Antara Foto)*

issues of mutual concern. However, its significance as a goodwill gesture and potential to improve bilateral relations was overshadowed by the continued dispute over Kashmir and India and Pakistan still appear poised for continued hostility in 2021.

In Indonesia, President Joko Widodo was re-elected in April 2019 with 55.5% of the votes, providing him with a second term until 2024. As in his first term, Widodo has continued to tackle economic reforms, such as infrastructure improvement to support the manufacturing sector and digital economy, reforms of the labour market, and foreign investment rules. However, some key elements of his policy agenda remained contested due to vested interests. Compared to its neighbours, Indonesia's government was late in taking comprehensive measures to contain the coronavirus spread, most probably due to concerns over negative consequences for the economy. This has exposed the administration to some criticism.

The government led by the President Joko Widodo has been focused on structural reform and improved governance. It began a thorough overhaul of the energy subsidy program, which will fund infrastructure renovation and provide aid to the agricultural sector. However, the Islamist threat continues to be a nation-wide concern. In addition, there have been violent demonstrations with casualties and more than 1,500 arrested.

Prior to the advent of Covid-19 cases in Indonesia, which largely began in March of this year, Indonesia responded to a Chinese navy incursion in the Natuna Sea by mobilising fisherman and naval vessels to patrol the area. Likewise, early on in the year the country experienced several natural disasters in the first quarter. At least 66 people were killed after massive flooding swept the Indonesian capital Jakarta. Dubbed as one of the worst floods in Jakarta history, the massive flood was caused by the highest recorded rainfall in 24 years since record began in Jakarta.

In Malaysia, in the May 2019 general election, the Pakatan Harapan (PH) alliance of opposition parties gained 122 out of 222 seats. It surprisingly won against the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition led by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which had been in power since Malaysia achieved independence in 1957. Aiding in the defeat of the BN coalition were the introduction of an unpopular goods-and-services tax (GST) of 6% in 2015 (in order to reduce the government's dependence on oil revenues) and the involvement of former Prime Minister Najib in the so-called 1MDB financial mismanagement scandal (the disappearance of USD 4.5 billion from a state development fund).

The new government under Prime Minister Mahathir (who previously was UMNO leader and served as Prime Minister between 1981 and 2003)

has abolished the GST tax, reintroduced certain fuel subsidies, and cancelled or cut back some megaprojects initiated by the previous government, including pipelines built with Chinese help and a high-speed rail project planned with Singapore.

Also, Sultan Abdullah of Pahang was elected paramount leader in January 2019 after the unprecedented abdication of his predecessor Sultan Muhammad V of Kelantan. The post of paramount ruler is rotated every five years among the sultans of the nine Malay kingdoms.

On February 29, 2020, Prime Minister Mahathir resigned from his position alongside some 131 members of parliament. Five days later, the King of Malaysia appointed Mr. Muhyiddin Yassin as Prime Minister, just in time to begin a rapid response to the global Covid-19 pandemic.

EUROPE / OCEANIA / AMERICAS

Much of what we covered over this past year for Muslim minority communities in these regions is found in the section of Islamophobia below in addition to the associated implications of the migrant crises of Muslim groups into Europe and elsewhere. However, one major subject area that we would like to include this year is the impact of the Black Lives Matter movements emerging from the United States over the summer of 2020.

As a social movement, Black Lives Matter has been around since 2013. However, as recent protests throughout the United States demonstrates, public opinion towards this movement is changing rapidly. Many mainstream institutions and organisations like the National Football League (NFL), and NASCAR have come out in recent months in support of BLM.

In addition to this, BLM inspired protests throughout the United States have been aided by a polarised country more prone to protest in general rather than to sit on the side-lines. The current Trump administration has taken many public stances in opposition to gun control, climate change, and immigration, which many BLM supporters argue add fuel to the fire of racial inequality in the US.

Protests around the US peaked over the summer on June 6, 2020 when half a million people turned out in nearly 550 locations across the country. These figures make these protests the largest movement in the country's history, as reported by major American news agencies. More than 40 percent of counties in the United States—at least 1,360—have had a protest. And unlike past Black Lives Matter protests, nearly 95 percent of counties that had a protest recently are majority white, and nearly three-quarters of the counties are more than 75 percent white.

As far as this movement relates to Muslim minorities, both in the US and throughout the world, BLM is pressuring Muslims to deal with their own



anti-blackness as well as their already strained relationship with law enforcement. In the United States, black Muslims account for about one-fifth of the Muslim population and this group often receives a double scoop of discrimination: one from the general public and a second from within the Muslim community.

At the same time, BLM is emerging as a rallying call for many Muslim activists who are jumping into the fray to add their voice for the need for social justice. For US based Muslims, this is intrinsically linked to their overwhelming support for Biden over Trump in the upcoming presidential elections. The impact of BLM upon the Muslim community cannot be overstated. There is hardly a Muslim community within the US, as well as other Muslim minority communities in Europe, Australia, and elsewhere where the issue of racial equality and Islam's unique position to address this has not been a source of much discussion throughout the second half of 2020.

PART II—MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE GLOBAL MUSLIM POPULATION

ROHYNGA

August 25, 2020 marked three years since the coordinated attacks by the Myanmar military that led to the mass expulsion of nearly 1 million Rohingya—the Muslim majority population that had been living in western Myanmar at the time. It is almost impossible to fully comprehend the magnitude of this number.

The Rohingya people remain one of the most persecuted populations on earth. Nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees currently occupy crowded camps in Bangladesh, and some 600,000 Rohingya remain in Myanmar facing ongoing abuse. In the midst of a global pandemic, the Rohingya remain a highly vulnerable population. In recent months, monsoon rains have brought high winds, flooding, and landslides that have affected the shelters of tens of thousands. Hundreds of desperate Rohingya refugees have been stranded at sea after being turned back from the shores of Malaysia and Bangladesh, and many are feared to have drowned.

The humanitarian crisis of the Rohingya is an ongoing demand on the world's attention. Yet Bangladesh and other host countries are in desperate circumstances themselves. The ultimate solution for the humanitarian crisis faced by Rohingya in Bang-

ladesh—and the one they themselves seek—is a return to their homes in Myanmar. However, conditions for safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable returns are far from being realised.

Over the past year, the Myanmar military has been fighting an ethnic armed group known as the Arakan Army. This fighting has affected civilians across the state, including both ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya. In June, warnings by the military of “clearance operations” caused tens of thousands (mostly ethnic Rakhine) to flee their homes. “Clearance operations” were the same term used ahead of the mass expulsion of the Rohingya.

The crackdown against the Rohingya is not limited to physical altercations. The government of Myanmar continues to restrict internet access to large areas of northern Rakhine State. Access for international humanitarian organisations is also restricted in the area. Recently, a group of humanitarian organisations working in Rakhine State warned that recent fighting between the military and the Arakan Army, including reports of burning of villages and arbitrary detention of civilians, will likely cause greater hunger, displacement and human suffering at a time when populations are dealing with Covid-19 and heavy rains from the monsoon season.

More than 100,000 Rohingya in Rakhine State remain in internal displacement camps that are effectively open-air prisons. Rohingya homes have been destroyed, and Rohingya lands have been populated by other ethnic groups. Implementation of plans to shut down some of the camps has amounted to little beyond moving the displaced to structures next to the camps and labeling the structures “villages.”

Even for those Rohingya not in camps, restrictions on movement and access to healthcare and education remain. Reports of arbitrary arrests and sexual violence at the hands of security forces continue to emerge. Such abuses are not restricted to the Rohingya, but also extend to several ethnic minority groups including the Chin, Kachin, Karen, Rakhine, and Shan.



Covid-19 also looms as a threat to ethnic minorities in Myanmar. The underlying conditions of displacement and disenfranchisement leave the Rohingya particularly vulnerable.

In short, the abuses of the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities are not a thing of the past in Myanmar. An independent UN Fact Finding Mission has warned that the plight of the Rohingya is on the cusp of a genocide at the hands of the State of the Myanmar. A case of genocide against Myanmar is currently being presented and heard at the International Court of Justice.

UYGHUR

Due to the leakage of never-before seen footage and first-person accounts, this past year helped break open on the international stage the plight and systemic persecution of the Uyghur people—a predominantly Turkic-speaking ethnic group primarily from China's north-western region of Xinjiang—in an unprecedented way.

Even though human rights organisations, UN officials, and many foreign governments are urging China to stop the crackdown, Chinese officials maintain that what they call vocational training centres do not infringe on Uyghurs' human rights. They have refused to share information about the detention centres, and systematically prevented journalists and foreign investigators from examining them. However, internal Chinese government documents leaked in late 2019 have provided important details on how officials launched and maintain the detention camps.

Information on what actually happens in the camps is limited, but many detainees who have since fled China describe harsh conditions. Detainees are forced to pledge loyalty to the Chinese Communist

Party and renounce Islam, as well as sing praises for communism and learn Mandarin. Some report prison-like conditions with cameras and microphones monitoring their every move and utterance. Others said they were tortured and subjected to sleep deprivation during interrogations. Women share stories of sexual abuse, with some saying they were forced to undergo abortions or have contraceptive devices implanted against their will.

These detentions continue to have devastating effects. Children whose parents have been sent to the camps are often forced to stay in state-run orphanages. Uyghur parents who live outside of China are caught between returning to China to be with their children and risk detention or stay abroad permanently separated from their families.

Since 2017, Chinese authorities have been actively remoulding the Muslim population in the image of China's Han ethnic majority. The 're-education' campaign appears to be entering a new phase, as government officials now claim that all 'trainees' have 'graduated'. There is mounting evidence that many Uyghurs are now being forced to work in factories within Xinjiang. This report reveals that Chinese factories outside Xinjiang are also sourcing Uyghur workers under a revived, exploitative government-led labour transfer scheme.

Some factories appear to be using Uyghur workers sent directly from re-education camps. According to one study, 27 factories have been identified in nine Chinese provinces that are using Uyghurs workers transferred from Xinjiang since 2017. It is extremely difficult for Uyghurs to refuse or escape these work assignments which are part of the supply chain of 83 well-known global brands. For example, it was found that a factory in eastern China that manufactures shoes for Nike is equipped with watchtowers, barbed-wire fences, and police





Uyghur women forced to work in a garment factory.

guard boxes. The Uyghur workers, unlike their Han counterparts, are reportedly unable to go home for holidays. In another example it was found that in a factory supplying sportswear to Adidas and Fila, Uyghur workers were transferred directly from one of Xinjiang's re-education camps. In yet another example, it was found that several factories making components for Apple use Uyghurs as part of their labour force.

International pressure continues to mount. Earlier in 2019, Turkey became the first Muslim-majority country to voice concern when its foreign minister called on China to ensure "the full protection of the cultural identities of the Uyghurs and other Muslims" during a UN Human Rights Council session. In October 2019, the United States imposed visa restrictions on Chinese officials "believed to be responsible for, or complicit in" the detention of Muslims in Xinjiang. It also blacklisted more than two dozen Chinese companies and agencies linked to abuses in the region—including surveillance technology manufacturers and Xinjiang's public security bureau—effectively blocking them from buying US products. In June 2020, President Trump signed legislation, which passed with overwhelming support from Congress, mandating that individuals face sanctions for oppressing Uyghurs. The law also requires that US businesses and individuals selling products to or operating in Xinjiang ensure their activities don't contribute to human rights violations, including the use of forced labour.

In September 2020, Disney released a new blockbuster movie on its streaming platform titled *Mulan*. Since much of this movie was filmed in the Xinjiang region, there has been an international outcry denouncing not only the movie and Disney, but calls for people to cancel their subscriptions to the Disney's streaming platform. It is still too early to determine the effect of this campaign, but one thing is for sure: the plight of the Uyghurs is becoming more mainstream.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia continues to be one of the critical areas we monitor and affect virtually every Muslim population on earth, Muslim minority populations specifically. This past year witnessed an increased level of global Islamophobia. Amongst these minority populations Islam is often seen as an enemy and a religion of intrinsic violence whose disciples have a tendency to harm followers of other religions. Islam is also typically portrayed as a threat to western values and civilizations and an 'alien' religion prone to bloodshed—a stigma that triggers intolerant attitudes amongst non-Muslims vis-à-vis the other. These negative stereotypes are what ultimately form negative sentiments. Over this past year, major Islamophobia-monitoring groups observed a multi-fold increase of negative sentiment towards Islam and Muslims, mostly throughout Western Europe and the United States. The rise of nationalist candidates

and political parties has led to a broader conversation of identity politics in these areas. Discussions of ethnicity, race, and religion are now taking place almost everywhere in the West. For those who eschew the presence of minorities, like Muslims, within their borders, this is tinder for the fire.

This, however, is not an overnight phenomenon. Traditionally, politics in the West was framed around economic issues surrounding how much power and leverage the central/federal government should have over its states/regions; how to ensure equal opportunity to all its citizens; how to create equal access to free markets, etc. Over the past decade or so, however, the conversation has moved away from this towards one dominated by identity rather than ideology. Indeed, today's political landscape is increasingly characterised by assertions of identity and group belongingness. The shift of global politics from ideology to identity is linked to the recent widespread populist revolt against globalisation and its disruptive cultural dimension. The growth of populist movements in Western political spaces is not only grounded in the discontent with globalisation's unequal economic consequences, but also on the threats to traditional national identities arising from high levels of migration which have given birth to anti-immigrant populism and the emergence of white nationalism. Identity politics has become a powerful tool in contemporary politics that has fostered, for instance, President Donald Trump's election as well as Brexit.

Studies in both Europe and North America over this past year demonstrate an increase of attacks against Muslims as well as an increase of unfavour-

able opinions and views of the general population towards Muslim minorities. Even though many Western nations have pressing domestic, economic, and health concerns, the issue of minorities, Islamic radicals, immigration, etc., continued to dominate the conversation in European as well as American elections.

EXTREMISM

Extremism claiming to base itself within the family of Islam is one of our most closely monitored areas as it typically impacts large parts of the Muslim world. This past year was an eventful year in the fight against extremism and radicalization, but many challenges remain.

AFRICA

This past year witnessed an enlargement of influence by violent extremist organisations (VEOs) in Africa. In West Africa, jihadist activities increased in Burkina Faso and Mali. Boko Haram conducted hideous attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Al-Shabaab continues to terrorise East Africa, from Somalia and Kenya to Tanzania and Uganda. In Southern Africa, militant violence afflicts northern Mozambique. In these and other African nations, VEOs continue to target youth for recruitment, capitalise on humanitarian crises, and expand their ability to manoeuvre, destabilise, and influence. Unfortunately, VEOs continue to be a serious threat to continental security and thrive on political instabili-

Al-Shabaab fighters



ty in many of the countries with sizable Muslim populations. The need for long-term prevention tools continues to be a dire need.

African countries and regional organisations sustained ongoing counterterrorism efforts this past year against threats in East Africa, the Sahel, and Chad while increasing emphasis on preventing the expansion of terrorist groups, affiliates, and associated organisations into new operating areas in West Africa and Southern Africa.

Specifically in East Africa, al-Shabaab retained safe haven, access to recruits and resources, and de facto control over large parts of Somalia, through which it moves freely. It also launched external operations attacks in neighbouring Kenya. Al-Shabaab maintained its allegiance to al-Qa’ida, remaining intent on limiting the influence and reach of the northern Somalia-based group of ISIS-linked fighters responsible for local suicide bombings and other attacks against Somali security forces in greater Mogadishu.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali security forces continued cooperation with the United States to exert pressure on al-Shabaab, primarily through coordinated counterterrorism (CT) operations and small advances in governance in southern Somalia. The United States continued to support East African partners across the Horn of Africa in their efforts to build counterterrorism capacity, including in aviation and border security, advisory assistance for regional security forces, training and mentoring of law enforcement to manage crisis response and conduct investigations, and advancing criminal justice sector reforms. East African partners undertook efforts to develop and expand regional cooperation mechanisms to interdict terrorist travel and other terrorism-related activities.

In Chad, ISIS-West Africa, which split from Boko Haram (BH) in 2015, continued to conduct attacks against civilians, government, and security forces, which resulted in deaths, injuries, abductions, and the capture and destruction of property. Nigeria, along with its neighbours Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Benin worked to counter these threats, but proved unable to stop ISIS-WA’s advance in the region or ensure adequate governance and protection for civilian populations. The United States continued to provide advisors, intelligence, training, logistical support, and equipment to the Lake Chad region countries and supported a wide range of stabilization efforts, such as defection, demobilization, disengagement, de-radicalization, and reintegration programming. Continued attacks by BH and ISIS-WA have taken a heavy toll on the civilian population, especially in northeast Nigeria where attacks have displaced more than two million people and left roughly 10 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Although significant terrorist activities and safe havens continued to persist in the Middle East and North Africa throughout this past year, the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and its local partners achieved important milestones, including liberating the remaining territory held by ISIS in Syria. Given the collapse of its so-called caliphate, remnants of ISIS in Iraq and Syria reverted to clandestine tactics—a trend expected to continue. Beyond Iraq and Syria, ISIS branches, networks, and supporters across the Middle East and North Africa remained active in 2019, including in Libya, the Arabian Peninsula, the Sinai Peninsula, Tunisia, and Yemen. Al-Qa’ida



(AQ) and its affiliates have also remained active throughout the region. For example, ISIS continued its terrorist campaign in Sinai through its branch ISIS-Sinai Province (ISIS-SP), and terrorist groups in Egypt carried out more attacks than in recent years. Of note, ISIS-SP was the first ISIS affiliate to swear allegiance to the new ISIS self-proclaimed caliph following Baghdadi's death.

In the Maghreb, counterterrorism efforts and operations by Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia thwarted the activities of ISIS and other terrorist groups. Algerian armed forces and internal security forces published figures showing an increase in arrests of terrorists or terror suspects compared with 2018, and Tunisia increased its successful CT operations, including the killing of Jund al-Khilafah's leader. In Libya, non-state actors conducted ground operations to neutralise the threat posed by ISIS and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) fighters and facilitators. The United States conducted precision airstrikes targeting ISIS cells in southern Libya, disrupting the group's organisational presence in the South and eliminating key ISIS personnel. Most terrorist attacks in Libya during the year were conducted by ISIS.

Despite setbacks, AQ remained resilient and actively sought to reconstitute its capabilities and maintain safe havens amid fragile political and security climates, particularly in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. For example, AQ and AQ-affiliated groups continued to operate in Idlib province in northwest Syria, and AQ-aligned Ansar al-Islam also posed a threat in Egypt.

In Yemen, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS's Yemen branch continued to exploit the security vacuum created by the ongoing conflict between the Republic of Yemen Gov-

ernment and Iran-backed Houthi militants, while also fighting one another. Additionally, the IRGC-QF and Hizballah continued to take advantage of the conflict to destabilise the region, including by providing weapons and training to Houthi militants who committed attacks against neighbouring states. AQAP used its tribal connections and public discontent with the Iran-backed Houthis to recruit new members, conduct attacks, and operate in areas of southern and central Yemen with relative impunity, although CT operations eliminated key leaders, pushed the group out of certain areas, and pressured the group's networks. Though significantly smaller than AQAP, ISIS's Yemen branch engaged in operations against AQAP and continued to claim attacks against Yemeni security forces and civilians, as well as Iran-backed Houthis.

Trouble continued to brew in South Asia over this past year, with terrorist attacks in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as in Sri Lanka. A February 14, 2019 suicide bombing against an Indian paramilitary convoy in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir led to military hostilities and heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. Although ISIS lost the last remnants of its territory in Syria in March, it announced new branches in Pakistan and India in May and claimed responsibility for the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka in April.

Although al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been seriously degraded, key figures among AQ's global leadership, as well as its regional affiliate al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), continued to operate from remote locations in the region that historically served as safe havens.

Afghanistan continued to experience aggressive and coordinated terrorist attacks by ISIS's branch in

Smoke rising after an air strikes in Sana'a



the region, ISIS Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), and by the Afghan Taliban, including the affiliated Haqqani Network (HQN). Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) retained full responsibility for security in Afghanistan and, in partnership with NATO's Resolute Support Mission, took aggressive action against terrorist elements across Afghanistan. In offensives in late 2019, the ANDSF and the Taliban significantly degraded ISIS-K in Nangarhar province, denying ISIS territory, but the group continues to operate and regroup.

On the prevention side, the Christchurch Call to Action spearheaded by New Zealand has continued to gather great momentum. Not only is this initiative supported by dozens of countries, currently the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is the only Muslim majority nation to sign on, it is also supported by the world's largest tech companies and service providers. This initiative continues to create a needed space in which nations and large corporations can share information and work on tackling the problem of violence and extremism in a more streamlined fashion.

PART III—COVID-19

As mentioned in the introduction, this has been a year like no other. While the aforementioned survey of critical issues are indeed major events of this past year, they must all be now read through the lens of Covid-19.

At the advent of the outbreak, many thought that Covid-19 would become the great equaliser presenting the world with an opportunity to pause, reflect, think, and reform. However, what did in fact happen, and continues to happen, is that the virus accentuates pre-existing fault lines of rich and more; the haves and the have nots.

ROHINGYA & COVID-19

Bangladesh's first case was reported on Mar. 8 2020, but Covid-19 was not detected in the camps until May 14. The Covid-19 pandemic represents a grave threat to the Rohingya community. Having fled decades of persecution by the Burmese military, the majority of Rohingya currently live in densely populated refugee camps in Bangladesh or in internal displacement camps in Rakhine State. Most are denied access to the internet, mobile phones, humanitarian aid, and sanitary conditions—all of which heighten the risk of infection and contagion. Since the emergence of the pandemic, both Myanmar and Bangla-

desh have come under international and domestic pressure to enact measures that would protect the Rohingya from widespread infection. While a major Covid-19 outbreak has thus far been avoided, several of the measures enforced throughout the Covid-19 pandemic—including internet bans, limitations on humanitarian access, and the denial of freedom of movement—risk further exacerbating the marginalization and exclusion of the Rohingya community, and threaten the Rohingya's health and human rights over the long term.

SYRIAN REFUGEES & COVID-19

The vast majority of Syrian refugees live in urban areas, intermixed with the host communities in Turkey (3.6 million), Lebanon (about 1 million), and Jordan (over 650,000). These refugees generally live in poverty on the margins of society and face loss of employment, livelihoods, shelter, and nutrition. Covid-19 has intensified abject poverty rates, gender-based violence, and xenophobia.

The virus also shrank an already fragile source of refugee income. Informal employment was already associated with exploitation and inadequate wages. The economic downturn more negatively affected Syrians than native Turks.

UYGHURS

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region reported 112 new confirmed Covid-19 cases on July 30, 2020, the regional health commission was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency. Of the 112 patients, one was in the Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture and the other 111 were in the regional capital Urumqi, 30 of whom were previously asymptomatic cases according to the commission. By July 30, Xinjiang had 523 confirmed Covid-19 cases and 108 asymptomatic cases. But here is the kicker: 12,416 people were still under medical observation. Further information is hard to come by.

Aside from the difficulties Covid-19 presents to these vulnerable Muslim populations, it has caused unprecedented challenges to the normal day-to-day practice of Islam. The first of these challenges was the closure of mosques for Friday congregation prayers, soon followed by total closures of mosques including closures for the five daily prayers. For the first time in centuries, the call to prayer from the minarets declared, "pray at home" instead of "hasten to the prayer." These mosque closures also impacted

other type of events that are typically associated with mosques: classes, Qur'an study, birth celebrations, and funeral prayers. The last one has especially been challenging as great restrictions are now in place for washing, shrouding, and burying bodies, all impacting the way Muslims carry on their day-to-day lives.

Soon after these closures took hold throughout March and the first half of April 2020, Covid-19 restrictions carried over to the observance of the holy month of Ramadan, which began on the eve of April 23, 2020. The mosque restrictions already in place indicated that this year's Ramadan would be like no other. For the first time in modern history, daily *tarawih* prayers, *iftar* gatherings, and even Eid would be cancelled. Many Muslim-majority countries sought to address this deficit with increasing their religious programming on TV and online. Many affluent Muslim minorities followed suit by having their programming online as well, working hard to keep communities together and keep the spirit of Ramadan going.

Once Eid al-Fitr was a virtual experience, it became clear that the question on everyone's mind was, "what will happen with Hajj?" Data from the Saudi General Authority for Statistics show that 2.49 million pilgrims took part in Hajj in 2019. Close to 75 percent of pilgrims came from abroad. More than two million Muslims from dozens of countries were planning on flying to Saudi Arabia in 2020 to take part in Hajj. Since the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, Hajj has never been cancelled. However, for the first time in the Kingdom's history, on 23 June 2020, Saudi authorities announced Hajj would be held for a limited number of pilgrims who reside within the country due to the high risk of Covid-19. The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umra imposed restrictions to the type of pilgrims who could attend Hajj in 2020, including banning older pilgrims from performing Hajj. Only around 10,000 pilgrims were chosen from the Covid-19 recovery database, 70%

of them were non-Saudi residents. Again, another major Islamic ritual was impacted by Covid-19 and again, another Eid passed virtually.

At the time of this writing, it is impossible to fully understand and comprehend the toll that Covid-19 will have on Islam and Muslims around the world. However, it is clear that the following can be thought to be included in such an assessment. The plight of Muslim refugees (Syrian & Rohingya) and persecuted Muslim minorities (Rohingya & Uyghurs) will be negatively affected as they struggle to make new homes and new lives. While international attention is increasingly given to these situations, the tinder of Covid-19 amongst them can spark an enormous fire of xenophobia, further isolation, and persecution. In similar fashion, it is hard to conceive of Muslim prayers and other devotions resuming "normal" function anytime soon. There is no doubt that the global pandemic will further shape and influence how our prayers are gathered, how our Ramadan activities are run, and ultimately will take its biggest toll on the types of precautions that will be needed to successfully perform Hajj.

CONCLUSION

As I said in the beginning, another year passes, but a year like no other. To end on a positive note, I am reminded of two statements of our beloved Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace): "Strange is the affair of the believer, because it is always good. If happiness befalls them, they thank Allah, and it is best for them. If difficulty befalls them, they are patient, and this is best for them" (Muslim) The second is, "My community is like the rain: we don't know if the beginning is good or the end" (Tirmidhi). This is, perhaps, the best advice as we end this uncertain year and begin another in the midst of the pandemic. Let us be patient knowing that the best is yet to come, *insbaAllah*.

Dr Tarek Elgawhary is a scholar of Islam and comparative religions having studied at both Princeton University and al-Azhar Seminary. His writings and thoughts on life, Islam, and mindfulness can be found at www.makingsenseofislam.com.

QuranicThought.com



QuranicThought.com is a project dedicated to making all the important texts of the Islamic Sciences over the course of history up to the present day available free to everyone in the world, at one trusted address. This massive endeavour, consisting of millions of books and tens of thousands of hours of audio recordings, will be permanently ongoing *in sha Allah*. All texts will be available in Arabic, and English translations will be provided where these are available, God willing.

The site is committed to providing all the texts available in a non-political, non-partisan way, promoting all four established Sunni *madhabib* and respecting the other *madhabib* of Islam: Zeidi, Jafari, Thahiri and Ibadhi, as well as the thought of the early imams like Sufyan al-Thawri, Laith Ibn Sa'd and Al-Awza'i.

The materials have been categorized by Qur'an (for listening); *tafsir*; *hadith*, *usul*, *seerah*, *'aqidah*, *fiqh*; *ihsan*, and *falsafa*. This is followed by a list of 25 books for the essential texts of all disciplines which all Muslims should know and a section on the 500 most influential books on Sunni Thought (according to the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institution's seminal survey).

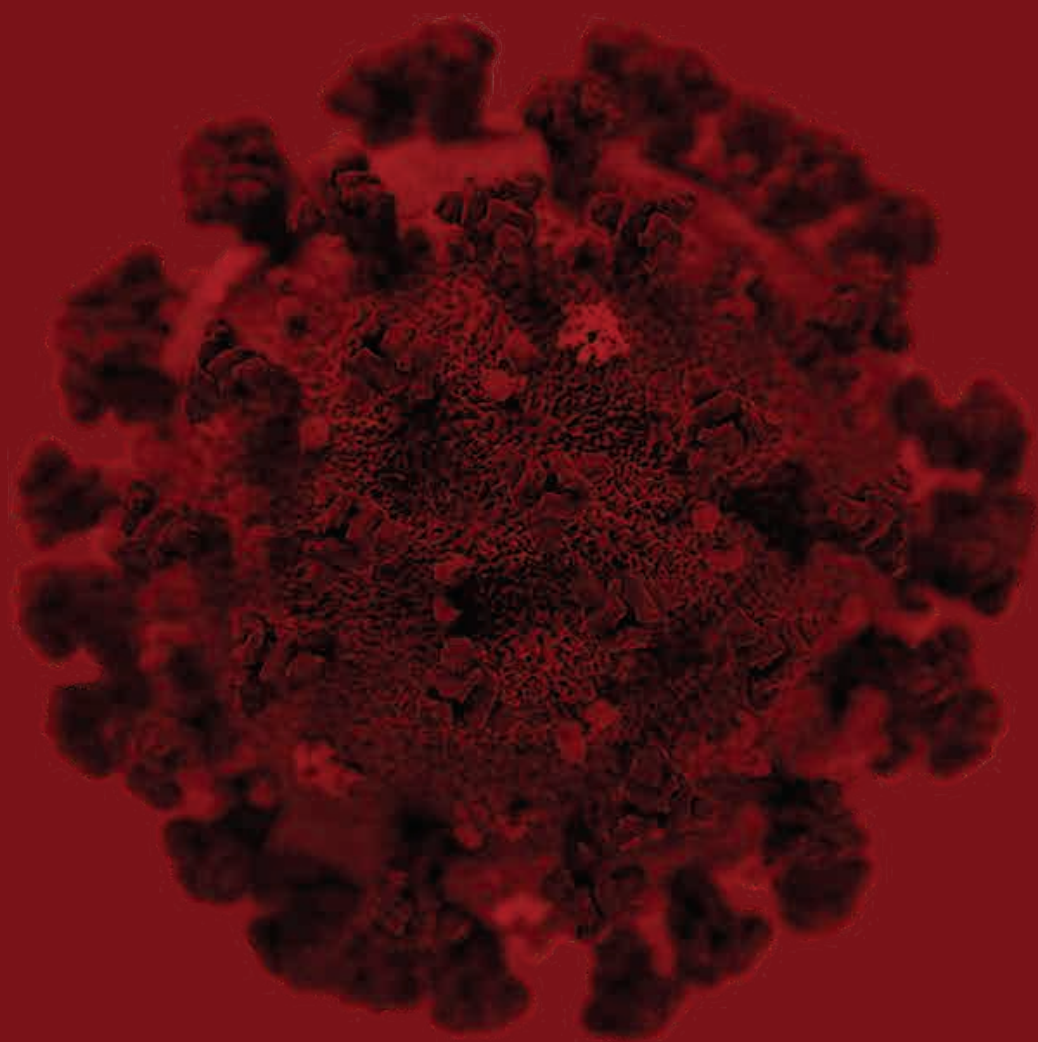
Then, there are sections for three pivotal Shafi'i scholars (in association with the Professorial chairs on Razi and Ghazali linked to this website): Ghazali, Razi and Suyuti. Studying the entire thought of one major comprehensive thinker can be far more conducive to real comprehension and to absorbing an Islamic world-view than cherry-picking from many scholars, especially with polymaths like Ghazali, Razi and Suyuti.

Moreover, Ghazali represents a high point in Islamic *usul* (particularly in his *Mustasfa*), a high point in *ihsan* and *'aqida* (in his magnum opus, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*) and a high point in both logic and philosophy in his books on those subjects. Razi represents the high point of Tafsir and Kalam in his *Mafatih al-Ghayb*. Suyuti represents a high point of Tafsir *ma'thur* (transmitted tafsir) in his *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, *Al-Durr al-Manthur* and his *Iqan fi 'Ulum Al-Qur'an*, a comprehensive survey of *hadith* in his collections of *hadith*, and authoritative exposition of Shafi'i *fiqh*.

This website and app is already the most extensive Islamic book and audio resource on the internet and continues to grow by the Grace of God.



COVID-19



Special Report: Covid-19

Comparing International Policy Effectiveness

by Faem Raza

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This article seeks to rank 184 countries by policy effectiveness against Covid-19.

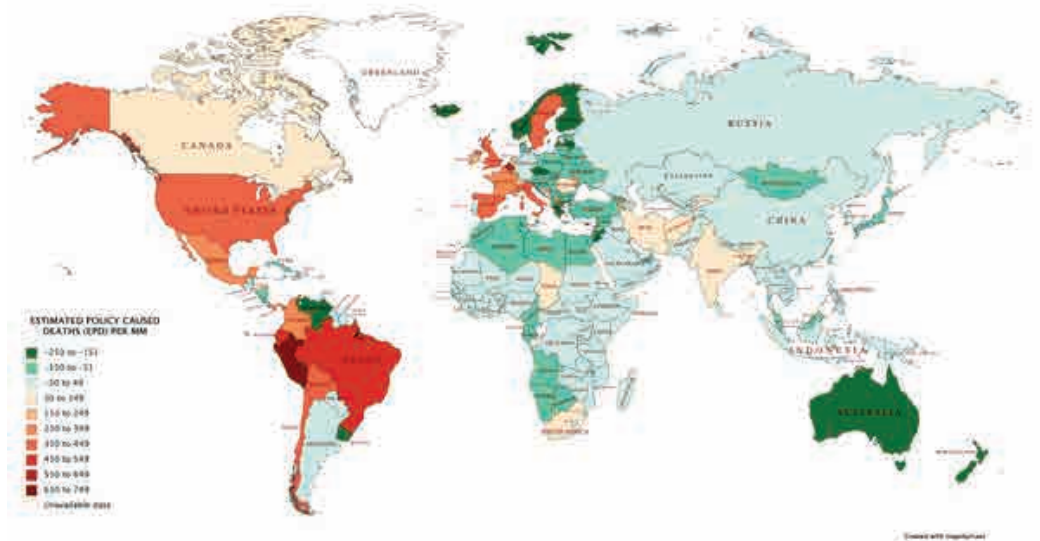
Defining policy effectiveness is a difficult problem and ideally would include measures of protection of the economy as well as control of spread of the disease and related deaths. This article discusses some of the challenges associated with assessing this and explains why a ranking methodology finally chosen was based on an Estimate of Policy caused Deaths (EPD).

This EPD is derived by analysing official Covid-19 death rates around the world, and then adjusting them for 9 variables considered to be influences which are not related to policy. These 9 variables are: (i) population density, (ii) median age, (iii) urbanisation, (iv) wealth, (v) government health spending, (vi) literacy, (vii) health, (viii) annual international arrivals, and (ix) proportion of citizens over the age of 65.

The map below illustrates this graphically. Global results are split into ten equal brackets of 100 EPD points, ranging from the best performers in dark green, to the worst performers in dark red.

A negative EPD score suggests policies have saved lives in comparison to global averages, and a positive EPD score suggests more lives have been lost due to policy.

Data used in this model is correct as of 9th September 2020.



The tables on the next page rank all 184 countries by EPD, from best performing to worst; and show EPD scores by countries arranged alphabetically.

COUNTRIES BY EPD			
#	COUNTRY	POPULATION	EPD
1	Curaçao	164,222	-245
2	Anguilla	15,028	-243
3	Cayman Islands	65,867	-241
4	Iceland	341,665	-230
5	Malta	441,769	-230
6	Jordan	10,222,263	-219
7	Uruguay	3,476,039	-219
8	New Zealand	5,002,100	-215
9	Greece	10,413,105	-192
10	Australia	25,555,531	-177
11	Venezuela	28,420,266	-174
12	Finland	5,542,378	-167
13	Norway	5,429,288	-160
14	Czechia	10,712,805	-158
15	Cyprus	1,209,030	-158
16	Latvia	1,882,069	-151
17	Jamaica	2,963,641	-150
18	Dominica	72,020	-149
19	Croatia	4,100,306	-147
20	Lithuania	2,714,722	-139
21	Lebanon	6,819,477	-136
22	Japan	126,401,103	-135
23	Estonia	1,326,707	-135
24	Fiji	897,680	-132
25	Georgia	3,987,680	-132
26	Cuba	11,325,278	-132
27	Hungary	9,655,582	-130
28	Gabon	2,235,312	-127
29	Israel	9,197,590	-127
30	Tunisia	11,841,944	-120
31	Slovakia	5,460,153	-118
32	Syria	17,578,043	-118
33	Bulgaria	6,938,165	-111
34	Poland	37,838,578	-103
35	Algeria	43,997,567	-103
36	Denmark	5,796,113	-102
37	Mongolia	3,288,108	-101
38	Malaysia	32,443,761	-100
39	St. Vincent Grenadines	111,008	-97

COUNTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER		
#	COUNTRY	EPD
155	Afghanistan	68
50	Albania	-79
35	Algeria	-103
170	Andorra	265
57	Angola	-71
2	Anguilla	-243
74	Antigua and Barbuda	-44
135	Argentina	23
166	Armenia	184
60	Aruba	-63
10	Australia	-177
58	Austria	-69
100	Azerbaijan	-17
92	Bahamas	-26
121	Bahrain	8
158	Bangladesh	86
43	Barbados	-88
47	Belarus	-83
183	Belgium	638
53	Belize	-74
95	Benin	-23
130	Bhutan	18
180	Bolivia	433
161	Bosnia and Herzegovina	106
46	Botswana	-85
181	Brazil	461
59	Brunei	-65
33	Bulgaria	-111
131	Burkina Faso	18
124	Burundi	12
127	Cabo Verde	14
144	Cambodia	33
62	Cameroon	-57
153	Canada	54
3	Cayman Islands	-241
143	Central African Republic	28
151	Chad	52
179	Chile	426
101	China	-16

COUNTRIES BY EPD				COUNTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER		
#	COUNTRY	POPULATION	EPD	#	COUNTRY	EPD
40	Nicaragua	6,639,367	-97	171	Colombia	266
41	Turkey	84,510,112	-95	128	Comoros	15
42	Grenada	112,623	-91	54	Costa Rica	-73
43	Barbados	287,443	-88	19	Croatia	-147
44	Libya	6,888,779	-86	26	Cuba	-132
45	Slovenia	2,078,993	-85	1	Curaçao	-245
46	Botswana	2,360,365	-85	15	Cyprus	-158
47	Belarus	9,448,722	-83	14	Czechia	-158
48	Ukraine	43,682,293	-83	36	Denmark	-102
49	Haiti	11,428,634	-80	107	Djibouti	-11
50	Albania	2,877,188	-79	18	Dominica	-149
51	Morocco	36,992,794	-75	118	Dominican Republic	6
52	Taiwan	23,825,074	-74	82	DRC	-36
53	Belize	398,963	-74	182	Ecuador	468
54	Costa Rica	5,102,920	-73	56	Egypt	-72
55	UAE	9,912,851	-73	68	El Salvador	-46
56	Egypt	102,690,815	-72	97	Equatorial Guinea	-19
57	Angola	33,048,914	-71	23	Estonia	-135
58	Austria	9,016,202	-69	141	Eswatini	27
59	Brunei	438,271	-65	134	Ethiopia	21
60	Aruba	106,853	-63	24	Fiji	-132
61	Hong Kong	7,508,518	-62	12	Finland	-167
62	Cameroon	26,665,949	-57	169	France	254
63	Namibia	2,549,419	-56	28	Gabon	-127
64	Serbia	8,730,506	-52	136	Gambia	24
65	Germany	83,835,352	-50	25	Georgia	-132
66	Sao Tome and Principe	219,911	-49	65	Germany	-50
67	Palestine	5,123,061	-47	75	Ghana	-42
68	El Salvador	6,492,458	-46	9	Greece	-192
69	Zambia	18,476,730	-46	42	Grenada	-91
70	Kuwait	4,282,356	-46	146	Guatemala	34
71	Saudi Arabia	34,914,836	-46	132	Guinea	20
72	Uzbekistan	33,559,779	-46	129	Guinea-Bissau	16
73	Paraguay	7,148,989	-45	102	Guyana	-15
74	Antigua and Barbuda	98,083	-44	49	Haiti	-80
75	Ghana	31,192,083	-42	156	Honduras	73
76	Trinidad and Tobago	1,400,358	-41	61	Hong Kong	-62
77	Tanzania	60,040,404	-41	27	Hungary	-130
78	Zimbabwe	14,903,319	-40	4	Iceland	-230

COUNTRIES BY EPD			
#	COUNTRY	POPULATION	EPD
79	Saint Kitts and Nevis	53,271	-39
80	Yemen	29,946,262	-39
81	Tajikistan	9,576,830	-36
82	DRC	90,048,792	-36
83	Saint Lucia	183,788	-34
84	Nigeria	207,068,357	-34
85	Qatar	2,807,805	-32
86	Papua New Guinea	8,978,313	-32
87	Liberia	5,079,365	-30
88	Seychelles	98,463	-30
89	Mozambique	31,413,222	-30
90	S. Korea	51,277,698	-30
91	Portugal	10,190,924	-28
92	Bahamas	393,954	-26
93	Kazakhstan	18,818,912	-25
94	Russia	145,946,547	-23
95	Benin	12,180,704	-23
96	Thailand	69,833,642	-19
97	Equatorial Guinea	1,411,179	-19
98	Uganda	45,998,726	-19
99	Mali	20,355,707	-18
100	Azerbaijan	10,156,475	-17
101	China	1,439,323,776	-16
102	Guyana	787,278	-15
103	Timor-Leste	1,323,080	-14
104	Mauritius	1,272,174	-13
105	Togo	8,314,123	-12
106	Philippines	109,854,237	-12
107	Djibouti	990,683	-11
108	Laos	7,295,273	-11
109	Lesotho	2,145,472	-10
110	Madagascar	27,820,103	-8
111	Senegal	16,823,797	-7
112	Singapore	5,859,075	-6
113	Ivory Coast	26,497,023	-6
114	Mauritania	4,671,785	-3
115	Sudan	44,036,091	2
116	Kenya	53,988,201	3
117	Sierra Leone	8,006,823	5

COUNTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER		
#	COUNTRY	EPD
160	India	103
140	Indonesia	25
163	Iran	148
119	Iraq	6
165	Ireland	174
29	Israel	-127
176	Italy	395
113	Ivory Coast	-6
17	Jamaica	-150
22	Japan	-135
6	Jordan	-219
93	Kazakhstan	-25
116	Kenya	3
70	Kuwait	-46
159	Kyrgyzstan	97
108	Laos	-11
16	Latvia	-151
21	Lebanon	-136
109	Lesotho	-10
87	Liberia	-30
44	Libya	-86
20	Lithuania	-139
125	Luxembourg	12
110	Madagascar	-8
120	Malawi	7
38	Malaysia	-100
157	Maldives	78
99	Mali	-18
5	Malta	-230
114	Mauritania	-3
104	Mauritius	-13
173	Mexico	348
167	Moldova	194
148	Monaco	37
37	Mongolia	-101
137	Montenegro	24
51	Morocco	-75
89	Mozambique	-30
145	Myanmar	34

COUNTRIES BY EPD				COUNTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER		
#	COUNTRY	POPULATION	EPD	#	COUNTRY	EPD
118	Dominican Republic	10,868,449	6	63	Namibia	-56
119	Iraq	40,387,603	6	149	Nepal	42
120	Malawi	19,219,556	7	164	Netherlands	162
121	Bahrain	1,712,032	8	8	New Zealand	-215
122	South Sudan	11,218,401	8	40	Nicaragua	-97
123	Rwanda	13,010,583	9	133	Niger	21
124	Burundi	11,954,285	12	84	Nigeria	-34
125	Luxembourg	627,871	12	168	North Macedonia	228
126	Oman	5,130,194	13	13	Norway	-160
127	Cabo Verde	557,125	14	126	Oman	13
128	Comoros	873,000	15	150	Pakistan	46
129	Guinea-Bissau	1,976,483	16	67	Palestine	-47
130	Bhutan	773,208	18	172	Panama	332
131	Burkina Faso	21,006,724	18	86	Papua New Guinea	-32
132	Guinea	13,197,140	20	73	Paraguay	-45
133	Niger	24,360,921	21	184	Peru	743
134	Ethiopia	115,481,268	21	106	Philippines	-12
135	Argentina	45,274,241	23	34	Poland	-103
136	Gambia	2,428,899	24	91	Portugal	-28
137	Montenegro	628,081	24	85	Qatar	-32
138	Suriname	587,627	24	152	Romania	54
139	Sri Lanka	21,430,438	25	94	Russia	-23
140	Indonesia	274,068,991	25	123	Rwanda	9
141	Eswatini	1,162,430	27	90	S. Korea	-30
142	Somalia	15,973,145	28	79	Saint Kitts and Nevis	-39
143	Central African Republic	4,845,332	28	83	Saint Lucia	-34
144	Cambodia	16,762,243	33	66	Sao Tome and Principe	-49
145	Myanmar	54,479,223	34	71	Saudi Arabia	-46
146	Guatemala	17,976,822	34	111	Senegal	-7
147	Vietnam	97,504,356	35	64	Serbia	-52
148	Monaco	39,295	37	88	Seychelles	-30
149	Nepal	29,233,798	42	117	Sierra Leone	5
150	Pakistan	221,683,215	46	112	Singapore	-6
151	Chad	16,510,635	52	31	Slovakia	-118
152	Romania	19,212,516	54	45	Slovenia	-85
153	Canada	37,804,826	54	142	Somalia	28
154	Switzerland	8,666,651	58	162	South Africa	147
155	Afghanistan	39,088,687	68	122	South Sudan	8
156	Honduras	9,933,918	73	178	Spain	426

COUNTRIES BY EPD			
#	COUNTRY	POPULATION	EPD
157	Maldives	542,308	78
158	Bangladesh	164,999,225	86
159	Kyrgyzstan	6,544,193	97
160	India	1,382,567,327	103
161	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,276,820	106
162	South Africa	59,448,983	147
163	Iran	84,194,553	148
164	Netherlands	17,142,164	162
165	Ireland	4,948,171	174
166	Armenia	2,964,309	184
167	Moldova	4,032,141	194
168	North Macedonia	2,083,357	228
169	France	65,301,291	254
170	Andorra	77,289	265
171	Colombia	50,985,133	266
172	Panama	4,327,410	332
173	Mexico	129,188,221	348
174	Sweden	10,111,264	362
175	USA	331,372,810	373
176	Italy	60,444,583	395
177	UK	67,954,116	398
178	Spain	46,758,276	426
179	Chile	19,147,292	426
180	Bolivia	11,702,818	433
181	Brazil	212,846,718	461
182	Ecuador	17,692,994	468
183	Belgium	11,599,276	638
184	Peru	33,057,742	743

COUNTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER		
#	COUNTRY	EPD
139	Sri Lanka	25
39	St. Vincent Grenadines	-97
115	Sudan	2
138	Suriname	24
174	Sweden	362
154	Switzerland	58
32	Syria	-118
52	Taiwan	-74
81	Tajikistan	-36
77	Tanzania	-41
96	Thailand	-19
103	Timor-Leste	-14
105	Togo	-12
76	Trinidad and Tobago	-41
30	Tunisia	-120
41	Turkey	-95
55	UAE	-73
98	Uganda	-19
177	UK	398
48	Ukraine	-83
7	Uruguay	-219
175	USA	373
72	Uzbekistan	-46
11	Venezuela	-174
147	Vietnam	35
80	Yemen	-39
69	Zambia	-46
78	Zimbabwe	-40

2. INTRODUCTION

Assessing and comparing Covid-19 responses for different countries around the world is an extremely difficult task. Data is inconsistent within countries from month to month, let alone between them. Even after the better part of a year, very little is understood regarding the nature of the disease and there is no global unanimity on optimal policy. Despite this, there are plenty of widely accepted themes to consider and no shortage of appropriately caveated data and discussions to analyse.

There are two main measures of policy effectiveness: the economy and death rate.

In order to construct a ranking system, measures of economic performance were reluctantly precluded, due to a lack of available and dependable data. Instead, an Estimate of Policy caused Deaths (EPD) was constructed. This was derived from an analysis of official Covid-19 deaths for 184 countries after removing 9 variables: (i) population density, (ii) median age, (iii) urbanisation, (iv) wealth, (v) government health spending, (vi) literacy, (vii) health, (viii) annual international arrivals, and (ix) proportion of citizens over the age of 65.

It is important to note that the countries which most effectively controlled the outbreak of the virus generally adopted the best economic strategy too.

These 9 variables were removed to separate the effect of policy from non-policy factors in official Covid-19 death counts. For example, if two countries obeyed the same policies, but one has a lower median age, there will be a difference in observed deaths. This will be due to the nature of the virus and demographics, not policy, so any comparative measure of policy effectiveness would have to eliminate this difference.

The results show that policy effectiveness varies widely across the world. Africa, Asia and Oceania have performed well, whereas Europe, and in particular the Americas, have performed poorly. There are notable exceptions within some of those regions.

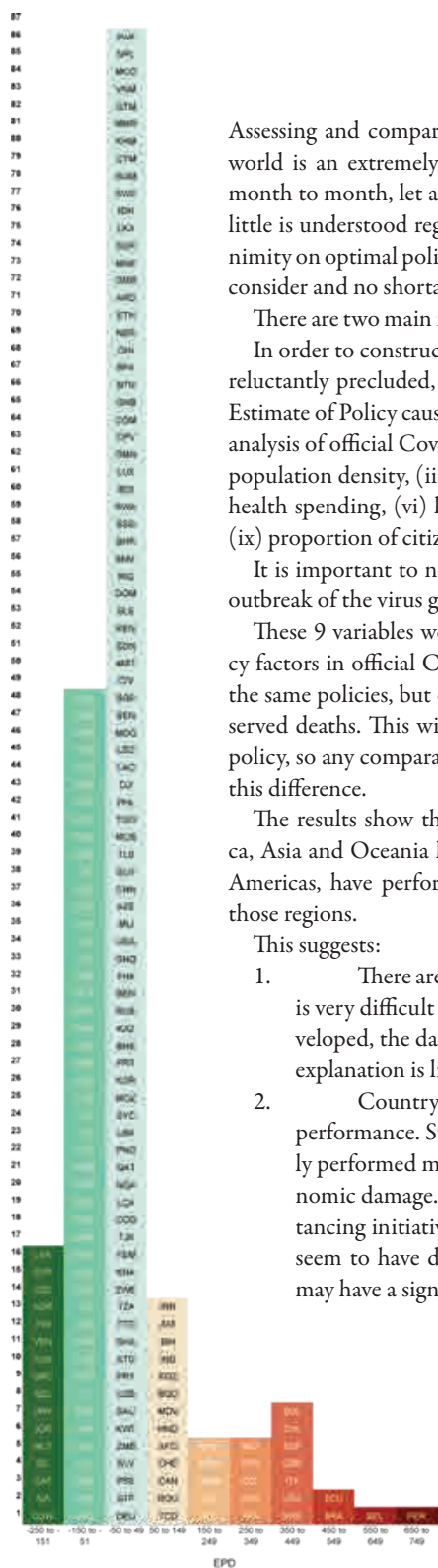
This suggests:

1. There are broad regional themes. These are visible in the map above. It is very difficult to explain quantitatively why these regional themes have developed, the data shows that median age alone does not account for it. Any explanation is likely to involve sociological theories.
2. Country-specific conditions are the most important determinant of performance. Studies demonstrate that governments that took action swiftly performed much better: resulting in fewer deaths and in general, less economic damage. It is just as important to note that citizens taking social distancing initiatives upon themselves, irrespective of government policy, also seem to have delivered outstanding results, indicating that cultural values may have a significant part to play.

This report is divided into two sections.

The first will summarise our current understanding of the disease, discuss the results of the ranking methodology and present a brief outlook.

The second section will discuss in further detail: Appendix I—How the methodology was chosen, the availability and reliability of data, and a simple test of the EPD model; and Appendix II—a collection of alternative-media/conspiracy theories.



EPD full list by 100 point buckets showing how far worst performers are from the average

3. COVID-19—A RECAP

“The virus, which causes the respiratory infection Covid-19, was first detected in the city of Wuhan, China, in late 2019. The outbreak spread quickly across the globe in the first months of 2020 and was declared a global pandemic by the WHO on 11 March.

A pandemic is when an infectious disease passes easily from person to person in many parts of the world at the same time.

Europe and North America saw their first major outbreaks in April but as they began to ease, Latin America and Asia started seeing cases spike.”¹

The onset of Covid-19 elicited complacency in much of the world, derived from past global health scares such as SARS and Ebola, which did not ultimately develop into pandemics. This was abruptly interrupted in March, when footage from Lombardy in Italy showed overflowing hospitals and morgues and widespread panic.

International responses to the pandemic varied significantly from country to country, with each struggling to understand the science of the disease and how best to assess risks with respect to their individual healthcare and economic capabilities. For most countries, action eventually took the form of mandated social distancing measures: a ‘lockdown’.

From the peak of infection in some regions in the spring of 2020, reports showed numbers decline sharply where these measures were applied; but a second wave has begun in countries where they have since been eased.

The main characteristics of the disease widely accepted by consensus are:

1. It kills.
2. It is highly contagious.
3. It is a respiratory virus, subsequently close physical proximity presents risk of infection.
4. The elderly are particularly vulnerable.²
5. Co-morbidities significantly increase vulnerability.³
6. When full medical facilities are available, the disease has a low fatality rate, but unknown morbidity⁴. This rate is higher when healthcare is unavailable⁵, for example, when disease growth surpasses healthcare capacity.
7. To protect healthcare capacity and limit the spread of infection, most countries successfully adopted some form of social distancing lockdown measures. This has, however, resulted in immense economic damage.⁶

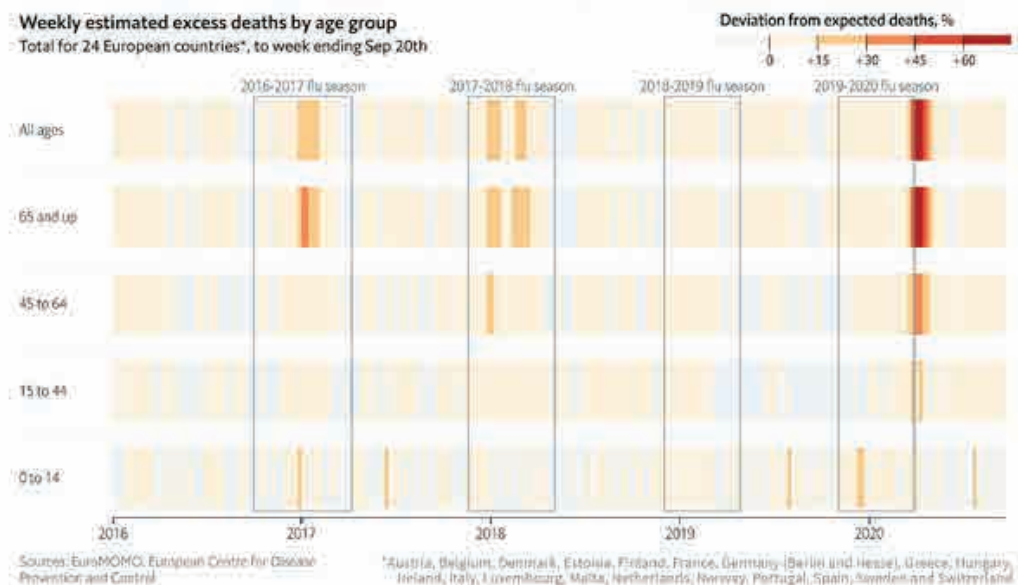
The unknown morbidity in point 6 is worth dwelling upon. In a study of German patients who recently recovered from Covid-19, it was discovered that 78% of patients had cardiac involvement and 60% had

Global coronavirus cases still rising quickly



Source: Johns Hopkins University, national health agencies, data to 5 Oct **BBC**

Age-group (years)	% symptomatic cases requiring hospitalisation	% hospitalised cases requiring critical care	Infection Fatality Ratio
0 to 9	0.1%	5.0%	0.002%
10 to 19	0.3%	5.0%	0.006%
20 to 29	1.2%	5.0%	0.03%
30 to 39	3.2%	5.0%	0.08%
40 to 49	4.9%	6.3%	0.15%
50 to 59	10.2%	12.2%	0.60%
60 to 69	16.6%	27.4%	2.2%
70 to 79	24.3%	43.2%	5.1%
80+	27.3%	70.9%	9.3%



ongoing myocardial inflammation, independent of pre-existing conditions, severity and overall course of the acute illness, or time from the original diagnosis. Early research suggests that people infected with the coronavirus, may experience lung damage and other long-term complications that could persist, even if they don't experience particularly severe symptoms during their illness. Studies in China find that 5-15% of cases are reactivated after recovery.

The table to the left shows hospitalisation and infection fatality rates per age bracket, taken from the Imperial model of 16th March.⁷

The chart⁸ above dispels one of the more common misconceptions about the disease: that its impact has been no worse than a bad flu year. It shows data from 24 European countries covering 350mm people. The baseline is an average over the past ten years. The darker lines show greater excess deaths than normal. It indicates deadly flu seasons in 2017 and 2018, but 2020 is incomparably worse. It is worth noting that although most deaths were of those over the age of 65, the number of deaths amongst 45-64 year olds were 40% higher than normal in early April. This data only takes into account part of the year, under heavily social distancing protocols.

In some parts of the world, there is a perceived absence of dependable guidance on dealing with Covid-19, in part due to the rapidly evolving science of such a young pathogen, but also because main stream media and governments have been accused of repetitive U-turns and disinformation as they try to maintain popularity, claim competency⁹ and retain solvency.

The subsequent vacuum of trust in authority has been a fertile ground for 'alternative' media outlets to provide explanations to people desperate to make sense of the unprecedented upheaval of their lives.

A discussion of some of these alternative theories is included in Appendix II.

If government advice on coronavirus was a road sign



4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study shows that ‘policy’ is critical for dealing with Covid-19 and the model presented here allows for interesting comparisons.

The results indicate: 1. There is considerable Country-specific variation across the world and occasionally sharp contrast between neighbours, particularly in Europe and the Americas. 2. They also indicate that there are important regional homogeneities.

In trying to understand variation, since the numbers never speak for themselves, the following efforts to speak for them will very much be open to debate. 1. Country-specific variations will be much easier to analyse, since Country-specific data is easily obtained. 2. Interpreting regional variations will be much more imprecise, since any sociological or civilisational factors linking countries within regions will be speculative; regional variation is unlikely to be explained by demographics, coronavirus life cycle variability, temporal region or hemisphere.

For the avoidance of doubt: ‘policy’ is used here as broad term covering government interventions, but also individual behaviour. ‘Culture’ is used as a common link between people, transcending division between government and the public; and in the context of regions, between national boundaries.

1. Exploring Country-specific Variation in Policy Outcome

There are robust studies to show that a rapid response¹⁰ to the crisis was critical in saving lives and by extension, the economy. In some cases, delays might be excused by capacity or affordability and in others, might be explained by ineptitude. The importance of delay cannot be overstated. It is estimated in the UK for example, “Every week before lockdown cost us five to eight weeks at the back end of the lockdown”¹¹

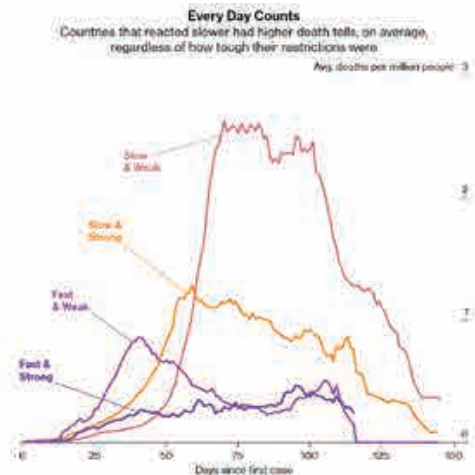
This chart¹² (right) shows how rapid interventions were critical to the death count. For example, Argentina (EPD 23) instituted a stringent lockdown, and enforced closures and checkpoints with punishments of up to two years in prison. Neighbouring Brazil (EPD 461) did the opposite. Taiwan (EPD -74) battle-hardened by their experience with SARS in 2003 and alerted to danger by Chinese social media posts by medical professionals, locked down, deployed effective contact tracing and immediately utilised quarantines. The USA (EPD 373) was slower and weaker than most countries driven by the current cycle of electioneering and cultural paranoia regard-

ing freedoms (at least for a portion of their society). Countries such as Germany (EPD -50) and South Korea (EPD -30) were able to manage their responses with strong testing capabilities and local, rather than national lockdowns. South Korea was amongst the first to offer drive-through testing.

India (EPD 103) compared to Pakistan (EPD 46) is interesting because of the comparable demographics, the main differences being size, political governance and religion. Pakistan¹³ has received international accolade for its policy response of smart lockdowns, demonstrating the intelligent use of accurate data. India on the other hand, accused of undercounting Covid-19 deaths¹⁴ is still deeply into its first wave and so the gap between them is likely to still grow.¹⁵

Jordan (EPD -219) is a case of outlying excellence in its region and is the best global performer amongst countries with a population greater than 10 million. Its success was yet again down to a swift and aggressive response.¹⁶ In the context of a country ill-equipped to deal with and vulnerable to a large outbreak, this was particularly noteworthy. “Jordan holds the position as the second largest host of externally displaced peoples per capita in the world.”¹⁷

Italy (EPD 398) was important as one of the first countries in the western hemisphere to witness the worst of the first wave of the virus, but also one of the first to demonstrate that strict policy could arrest the spread of infection. Sadly, this lesson was not heeded closely, for example, in the UK (EPD 395). The UK response has been characterised by lethargic, confused messaging, corruption, ineptitude¹⁸ and widespread public non-conformity¹⁹. Unlike the localised spread in Italy and Spain, in the UK, infection spread was broad, thanks to returning holiday makers²⁰.



Sweden (EPD 362) is the (only) poster child for those opposed to lockdown measures. It chose soft measures, but performed no worse than some countries with much stricter measures, such as the UK (EPD 395). This position fails to recognise that the critical determinant of UK policy outcome was not strictness, it was timing.

Proponents against lockdowns further claim that Sweden's soft measures should not be assessed on official performance since this is unduly negatively affected by the early strategic error of not protecting senior living homes. There is no evidence to suggest that a policy of shielding older and vulnerable people has been successfully worked, or that any other country's performance wasn't equally disadvantaged. The facts are that Sweden (EPD 362) has performed extremely poorly, whilst its immediate neighbours which instituted rapid and strict measures, performed exceptionally well: Finland (EPD -167), Norway (EPD -160) and even Estonia (EPD -135), Latvia (EPD -151), Lithuania (EPD -139), Poland (EPD -103), Germany (EPD -50) and Denmark (EPD -102).

There has been significant professional opinion within Sweden that has disagreed²¹ with the government strategy. In response, the Swedish government has vigorously defended²² itself on some occasions, but admitted failures²³ on others. It has also expressed surprise at the very limited resultant herd immunity²⁴. Judging Sweden's performance solely on soft government mandate, does not take into account any voluntary public choice to socially isolate. This may be a significant contributory factor as to why performance was not worse in Sweden and might explain the lack of herd immunity. It can be seen how robust this phenomenon can be in the next example.

Japan (EPD -135) is a fascinating case study, illustrating the power of voluntary individual action over state mandate. It has been the best performing of the top 49 most populous countries: It has a population of 126 million which is densely packed into huge cities and has the greatest proportion of elderly in the world. "Greater Tokyo has a mind-boggling 37 million people and for most of them, the only way to get around is on the city's notoriously packed trains."²⁵

In contrast to other success stories, the Japanese government has been criticised for a lazy and half-hearted response, with inadequate testing capacity, even now. It was, on the other hand, quick to recognise the risks of large gatherings, deployed clear messaging and sent free masks out to each household. Japanese laws do not allow for European style

enforcement of lockdown measures and so, interestingly, policy was simply suggestive.

The incredible success of the country in its fight against Covid-19 has been attributed to the quiet determination of the public. Masks have already been common since a 1919 flu pandemic and people are expected to wear them when suffering a cough or cold in order to protect those around them. Their track and trace systems date to the 1950s, their social customs dictate speaking quietly, bowing rather than shaking hands or hugging, and the culture incorporates high standards of personal hygiene²⁶, with frequent hand washing taught from nursery age. Though there is a tenuous suggestion of historical immunity from similar coronaviruses in the past, the evidence suggests this is a triumph owing to culture and the commitment of individuals.

2. Exploring Regional Variation in Policy Outcome



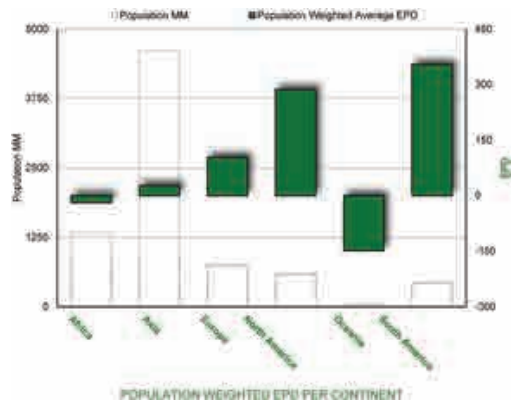
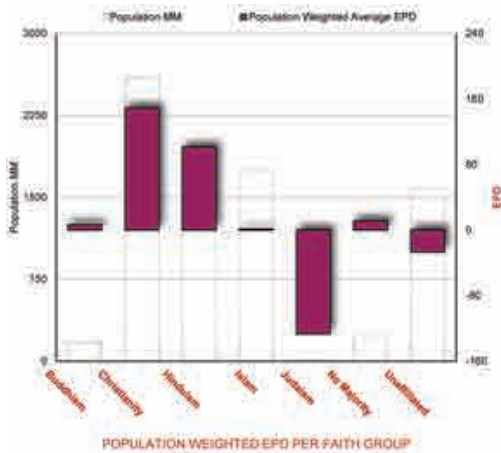
See full map on page 25

It is important to note that regional variations are very real and so are important to consider in order to fully understand what drives differences in policy effectiveness.

Using Defined Criteria

In order to try to explore regional themes analytically, it is possible to use well-defined categories to determine if they reveal noteworthy patterns, for example: (i) Majority Religious Belief and (ii) Continent.

For religious belief, eliminating data points with low sample size (population), leaves Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Unaffiliated (China, Czechia, Estonia, Hong Kong, Japan). The data shows Christian and Hindu countries are worst performing, with Islamic and Unaffiliated countries performing better. How closely a population adheres to the principles of a faith is of course unknown, so any assessments here will refer to adherents rather than faith. Reasons for



better performance are extremely difficult to identify with conviction, but may include:

- Imparting better compliance through better social empathy.
- Better provision of psychological stability to obviate rebellion.
- Better observation of faith principles.
- An overlap with totalitarian regimes that eliminate disobedience.
- An overlap with poverty or war ravaged countries and correspondingly fewer vulnerable elderly.

For continents, again ignoring low population data (Oceania), we see how poorly the Americas have performed, followed by Europe, with Asia and Africa the two better performing regions. The Asian nations did have a degree of preparedness after SARS, from which Oceania will also have benefited, alongside their excellent governmental policies and island isolation.

There has been speculation that these differences are explained by median age. Population weighted average median ages are as follows: Africa 20, Asia 32, Europe 42, N America 35, Oceania 35, S America 31. Whilst this might explain Africa and Europe, it does not explain the Americas. There is also the belief that in Africa, rather than demographics, “early, and aggressive lockdowns [...] on the continent have clearly played a crucial role”²⁷ in disease control.

The results here again confirm regional differences, but the numbers do not explain why.

Using Undefined Criteria

After an analytical attempt at explaining regional differences, further discussion falls into the domain of speculation. Defining what links the countries in

poorly performing regions and what links those in better performing regions is a matter of subjective assessment. This will include any number of civilisational theories on tradition, history, culture, social philosophy, economic theory and so on, which will likely provide interesting material for further debate.

The following is an example of a civilisational theory.

Hypothesis: Cultural Modernity vs Traditionalism Explains General Regional Themes in Covid-19 Policy Efficacy

The atlas of EPD scores and analysis of continental regional variation suggests a demarcation of results between the Americas combined with Europe, and the rest of the world.

In attempting to identify what is common to either region, it is speculated that this split is roughly along the lines of the culturally modern and traditional worlds, with the modern world faring much worse than the traditional one.

In the appendix ‘Testing the Methodology’ (app I, C), the correlation between Covid-19 deaths and GDP per capita was shown as positive. Although this may be related to GDP per capita’s high correlation with median age, median age is only 29% correlated with deaths. This finding is consistent with the modern, richer world performing worse than the traditional, poorer world.

Since government policy is country-specific, this leaves the task of identifying cultural variables affecting public attitudes in each of the modern and traditional worlds.

Since pandemic restrictions are based on social empathy and saving the lives of the weakest, it is speculated that choosing to rebel, except in extenuating circumstance, is driven by two primary and one sub-

ordinate overlapping impulses:

1. Sociopathic Greed—loss of personal opportunity
2. Psychological Frailty—inability to comply to social restrictions
3. The minority belief that policy measures do not protect the weak—alt-media

Why would the modern world engender more of this behaviour?

Hypothesis: The Modern World

Modern capitalistic societies work by creating demand, which in turn is created by convincing an individual of their inadequacy or need. Marketing industries do this by relentlessly bombarding individuals with the message that they are too fat or too ugly, or need new shoes or a phone, etc. The emphasis is on repetitive, plastic, disposable superficiality, in order to continually replenish demand, and is propelled by a popularised me-culture of vanity that integrates with marketing pressure. Pivotal to this system working is the consumer constantly feeling inadequate: this necessarily creates anxiety and imbalance.

Prior to the virus, the modern individual was habituated to escaping this reality by riding with the four horsemen of the secular capitalistic apocalypse: consumerism, inebriation, promiscuity and vanity. With the stable's doors now locked down, introspection becomes unavoidable. If there has been no investment in cultivation of something more substantive, this introspection unmasks the transparency of materiality, revealing an emptiness that spawns the anxiety and imbalance referred to above. This is the experience of modern individuals looking inwards.

Looking outwards: The global Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was a revolt against extreme imbalance caused by institutionalised racial prejudice. It evoked such unprecedented global support by breaching the limits of tolerance in groups, equally disenfranchised by other extreme imbalances in the modern world: the climate, wealth distribution, and power. Adding supposition of corrupt state machinery, media and governments to this sense of extreme injustice, the result for the modern individual is a soul crunching dehumanisation on a mass scale.

So the modern individual sees a crumbling vacuum within, and an all-gobbling machine without. Crushed by these two gigantic grindstones, and struggling to survive, there is no space for empathy, and hence, an unavoidable preponderance of sociopathic greed and psychological frailty.

Hypothesis: The Traditional World

Traditional societies may be somewhat protected from these trends. This may simply be because they cannot afford to join modernity. However, whatever the truth of their philosophies, traditional societies emphasise social responsibility²⁸, social empathy and internal balance, derived from well-worn definitions of human nature. They counsel the ephemerality of material and time—the coal and bellows of modern capitalism.

Looking inwards through rituals, worship, fasting, meditation and pilgrimages, often these societies are well practiced at seclusion and introspection, and so are less prone²⁹ to being unsettled at the horrors of what they might see.

Looking outwards, many traditional societies over the past decades have been subject to wars, despots, xenophobia, and oppression, and so they are likely relatively numb to the extreme macro imbalances that surround us all.

Rebuttal:

There are plenty of counter examples for theories like this, for example, Japan is traditional yet capitalist, and South America is traditional yet has performed terribly. It is unlikely that one civilisation theory will explain all regional variations.

5. OUTLOOK

Despite Covid-19 still being in a nascent stage of discovery, there are important lessons to take forward.

On a state level, certainly early and rapid government intervention has proven to be decisive for the control of infection and restriction of deaths. On an individual level, public cohesive initiatives and culture appear to be as effective.

There are widespread hopes pinned on uncertain future medical discoveries of some form of cure. However, successful global disease control and the experience of achieving this through advanced testing protocols with limited social disruption, in places such as Germany and South Korea, suggest that vastly expanded testing will likely be the most practical and probable strategy in the near future. This will facilitate both rapid state policy and motivate better public compliance.

Finally, a word on current emerging trends.

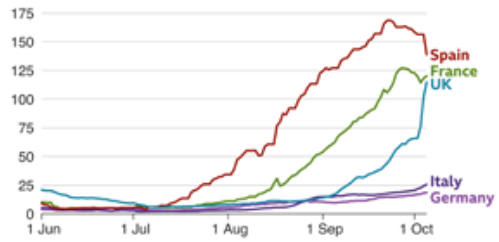
A second wave has begun in many parts of the world³⁰, but has so far demonstrated very different characteristics from earlier in the year—accelerating rates of infection, but far fewer deaths³¹.

There are a few suspected reasons³² for this; but the risk remains that deaths will catch up.

1. Increased availability of testing, finding more, milder and earlier cases—it is likely many more people than we know were infected in the spring, making a comparison moot.
2. The changing age profile of infections—the infection appears to be growing amongst the 20–40 age group which has a low fatality rate³³.
3. Improved care—the medical profession now has some experience of better care as compared to when the disease was new.

Coronavirus cases increasing in European countries in recent weeks

Total cases per 100,000 people by week up to 05 October



Note: Countries do not always release figures every day, which may explain some of the sharp changes in the trendlines

Source: ECDC, data to 5 Oct

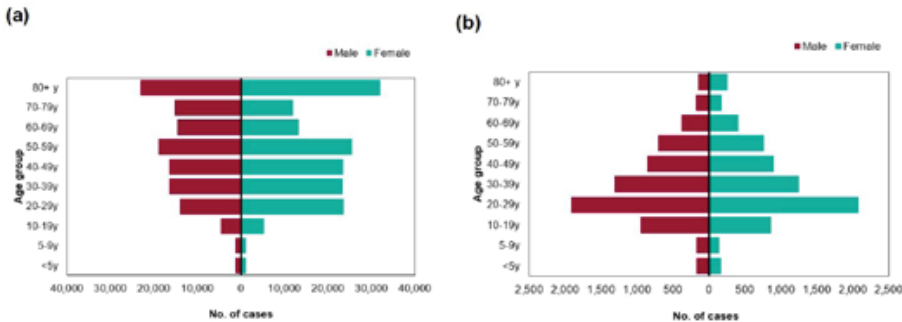


4. Lower viral loads—now that transmission is occurring within communities with some degree of distancing and use of masks as opposed to in hospitals, exposure to lower doses of virus may reduce chances of serious illness.
5. Seasonality—the summer is usually a less dangerous time for virus infection.
6. Time lag—the time it takes for the infections to develop and manifest into deaths, as long as six weeks³⁴.
7. Mutation—it may be that the virus is mutating into a less severe variant, though there is little evidence for this.³⁵

The tragic events of 2020 have sadly caused immense difficulties for millions of people, though inspiration and comfort can be drawn from thousands of stories of genuine heroics: people who have sacrificed so much, including their lives, to help so many others.

Reports and photographs from around the world show that the unprecedented and involuntary pausing of life has reinvigorated the natural world. It also offers humanity a rare opportunity to reassess and reprioritise, which will hopefully illicit similar success.

Figure 2: Age/sex pyramids for laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases tested under Pillar 1 and 2 (a) cumulative number since week 05 (n=287,389) and (b) in weeks 34 and 35 (n=13,820)



APPENDIX I

A. Choosing a Methodology

There are two main measures for Policy Effectiveness: 1) The Economy and 2) Death Rate

1. The Economy

The human cost of Covid-19 related economic collapse is considered to be immense, and importantly for this analysis, is expected to be spread over several years. There is no doubt that this is a critical policy outcome, but at this early stage in the crisis, it is almost impossible to measure.

1. Looking forwards at GDP predictions, expectations are generally for a significant dip in 2020, but for a sharp recovery in 2021³⁶ or 2022. Without knowing more about the disease, the possible depth of a second wave and the extent of the global recession, it is impossible to accurately forecast economic disruption and recovery. These answers will likely be unavailable for months and possibly years. In addition, projections currently available are likely to be subject to considerable revision, and so are far too unreliable to build into a model³⁷.
2. Looking backwards, at reported rather than estimated GDP for Q2, this is only available for 62³⁸ of the 184 countries under considera-

tion. As a single three month snapshot, it is an extremely volatile³⁹ number that is difficult to use with any confidence to assess overall economic performance.

3. Finally and importantly, note that where data is available, countries controlling the outbreak of the virus effectively, generally adopt the best economic strategy too⁴⁰. So a measure of deaths implicitly builds in a measure of economic performance to some extent.

These arguments explain why economic measures were reluctantly precluded from the estimated measure of Policy Effectiveness, and why Estimates of Policy caused Deaths (EPD) were preferred.

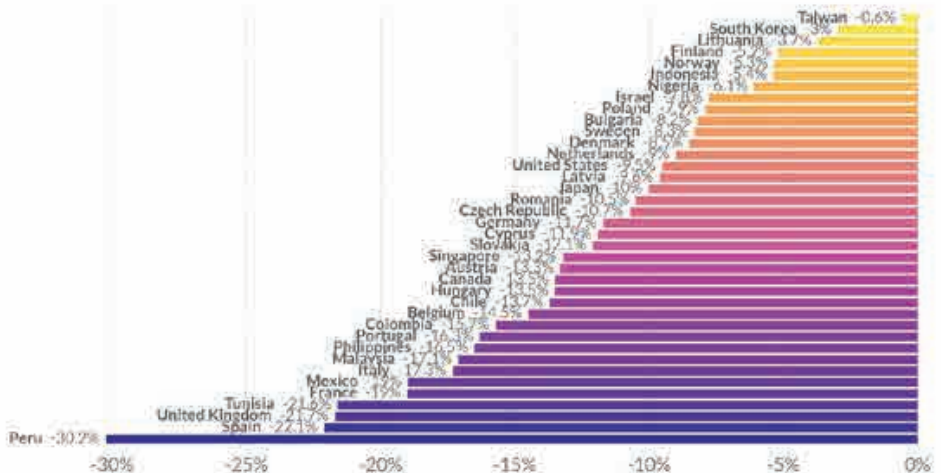
“This chart [below] shows the scale of the recent economic decline across 38 countries. [...] It plots the percentage fall in GDP seen in the second quarter (April—June) of 2020 as compared to the same period last year, adjusted for inflation.

We see that in some countries the economic downturn has indeed been extremely severe: in Spain, the UK and Tunisia, the output of the economy in the second quarter was more than 20% smaller than in the same period last year. This is 4 to 5 times larger than any other quarterly fall on record for these countries. And in Peru the year on year fall was even larger, at 30%.

Economic decline in the second quarter of 2020

The percentage decline of GDP relative to the same quarter in 2019. It is adjusted for inflation.

Our World
in Data



Source: Eurostat, OECD and individual national statistics agencies

Note: Data for China is not shown given the earlier timing of its economic downturn. The country saw positive growth of 3.2% in Q2, preceded by a fall of 6.8% in Q1

In other countries, however, the economic impact has been much more modest. In Taiwan, GDP in the second quarter of 2020 was less than 1% lower than in the same period in 2019. Finland, Lithuania and South Korea all saw falls in their GDP of around 5% or less.⁴¹

“The pandemic is expected to plunge most countries into recession in 2020, with per capita income contracting in the largest fraction of countries globally since 1870. Advanced economies are projected to shrink 7 percent. That weakness will spill over to the outlook for emerging market and developing economies, who are forecast to contract by 2.5 percent as they cope with their own domestic outbreaks of the virus. This would represent the weakest showing by this group of economies in at least sixty years.”⁴²

2. Death Rate

“During the coronavirus pandemic a key question has been: How many people have died because of Covid-19? This seemingly straightforward question is surprisingly difficult to answer.

The complexity lies partly in the different ways this can be measured”⁴³.

It can be measured by registrations on a death certificate; or confirmation by testing, (dependent upon availability of testing); or only in hospitals; or may include faulty diagnosis of Covid-19 when a comorbidity caused death; or may not include people who have died of Covid-19 at home⁴⁴; it might include irregular Covid-19 designations from coroners; and may or may not include death after recovery, inside or outside the cut off period for designation, etc.

In addition to this “a focus on just confirmed and suspected deaths misses out on those deaths from other causes resulting from more indirect effects of Covid-19. For example, deaths can occur when health systems are strained or overwhelmed and unable to provide sufficient or quality care—think of non-Covid-19 patients requiring ICU beds in units already over capacity due to the pandemic. Deaths can also arise from delays in going to the hospital among those needing care due to fear of getting infected during their stay. And lastly there are deaths stemming from Covid-19’s interactions with non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, kidney disease, and others.”⁴⁵

The preferred measure to use is “excess deaths”.

This captures all deaths beyond the average expected for the year, and so captures all the under and over estimates in the various scenarios above. It does include excess non-Covid-19 deaths, but it can be argued that these are largely secondarily associated with the pandemic.

“Excess mortality statistics will only be available for a small number of countries. Excess mortality can only be calculated on the basis of accurate, high-frequency data on mortality from previous years. But few countries have statistical agencies with the capacity and infrastructure to report the number of people that died in a given month, week or even day-to-day. For most low- and middle-income countries, such data is not available for previous years”⁴⁶

The closest useable proxy is official published death numbers⁴⁷, the reliability of which we will discuss in the next section. It is worth noting that although this number is usually less than excess deaths, the graphs are relatively consistent in terms of size and shape.

Delineating policy from non-policy contributions to death statistics

Having settled upon utilising publicly available Covid-19 death statistics, the question arises of how to isolate how many of those deaths are caused by political policy rather than by other factors?

From the list of characteristics of the disease, it is known that age, social proximity, and standards of health increase infection and death, irrespective of political policy. So is it possible to remove their contribution from the official death count? This is what the EPD attempts to do.

The following represents nine non-policy factors (or variables) which may cause deaths: the section on ‘Testing the methodology’ discusses whether these are good choices by calculating how well they correlate with actual death numbers.

1. **Population Density**—indicative of social proximity
2. **Median Age**⁴⁸—virus fatality is age sensitive
3. **Urbanisation**—(percentage of population in urban centres) indicative of social proximity
4. **GDP Per Capita**—a measure of how rich a country is = capability of keeping its citizens safe

5. **Health Spend Per Capita**—better health facilities = lower fatalities
6. **Literacy**—adherence to lockdown restrictions and health guidance
7. **Prevalence Of Overweight/Obese Adults**—proxy for health and comorbidity
8. **Inbound Arrivals/Tourists Per Capita**—more arrivals = more social contact
9. **Proportion Of Population Over The Age Of 65**—virus fatality is age sensitive

To strip out the impact of these factors from the death count, machine learning and regression⁴⁹ is used. This creates a model which predicts expected deaths for given values of those nine variables. The difference between these and actual deaths provides an EPD.

The EPD captures any influence on death other than the nine variables. These influences will include Policy—which it is hoped to capture—together with other contributory factors for example, temperate variations, virus mutations, infection timing, health particularities like Vitamin D levels⁵⁰, and so on.

It is unknown if there are widespread studies showing that these kinds of factors are either quantifiable or make a significant difference to the death count, so for the purposes of this study it will be assumed that Policy is the major component of the EPD.

B. Data—Availability and Reliability

The difficulties of using statistics for a project like this is explained by Professor David Spiegelhalter when he writes⁵¹,

“It is misguided to try to attribute good or bad performance to individual causes. Sweden has done badly and ranks sixth in the league table, just behind Wales. How much of this is due to its liberal measures, avoiding a strict lockdown? And how much is due to the fact that a huge number of Swedes take winter holidays in Spain and Italy, and returned and set off outbreaks, or that (like the UK) its care homes were not properly protected? There are no simple answers. [...] We will need years to properly assess the effect of the epidemic and the measures taken against it.”

However this does not mean that all analysis is without merit. As Tim Harford writes⁵²,

“From the point of view of statistics, [...] disinformation is still out there, as the public understanding of Covid-19 has been muddled by conspiracy theorists, trolls and government spin doctors. Yet the information is out there too. The value of gathering and rigorously analysing data has rarely been more evident.”

He goes on to provide an example of the critical use and misuse of these tools,

“Locking down a week earlier would have saved thousands of lives,” says Kit Yates, author of *The Maths of Life and Death* — a view now shared by influential epidemiologist Neil Ferguson and by David King, chair of the ‘Independent Sage’ group of scientists.

Statistics should, one would hope, deliver a more objective view of the world than an ambiguous aroma. But while solid data offers us insights we cannot gain in any other way, the numbers never speak for themselves.”

Producing a league table that is bullet proof requires a quality and volume of data that is not yet available. However, the idea of Policy as a driver is very much a workable one. In Spiegelhalter’s examples: international travel, arrivals, quarantines and care home regulations—all very much fall under the ambit of Policy.

In this study, the greatest variability of quality of data lies in core death statistics. These numbers are widely available, but there are legitimate concerns over their dependability (there is not much reason to fear the accuracy of data corresponding to the nine variables.) Apart from intra- and inter-country variations in the definitions of death and excess deaths, there are suspicions of corruption, and the withholding of accurate data for political advantage by some countries. “Many authoritarian governments are not transparent with their data generally, and one should not expect that they are transparent in this case” according to Democracy Reporting International’s executive director.⁵³

There is a recognition too that many countries may not have the medical components necessary to test for Covid-19, either through affordability, sanctions or availability⁵⁴; or that they may lack the governance to produce accurate statistical measurements in real time.

Interestingly, accusations of wrong doing are not

limited to the nations at the bottom of ‘Corruption Perception’ indices. The UK at the start of the crisis was accused of mismanaging their way to a shortage of tests, thereby under-reporting cases, and they were probably not alone given the rush for and global shortage of testing kits at the start of the year. During the ongoing USA election season, all manner of accusations of under-testing, and over-testing have been made. France revised its first confirmed cases well after the fact, and so on.

It is worth looking at a map of corruption perception⁵⁵, and comparing it to the map of EPD—there is some overlap. Note though that correlation does not mean causation. There are also similarities with maps of GDP per capita, median age, obesity/overweight, and urbanisation⁵⁶.

The countries featuring most often in the western press for hiding Covid-19 death data, are not particularly surprising: Russia⁵⁷, Iran⁵⁸, and of course, China. India manages to garner a few mentions too⁵⁹. From the Al Jazeera report ‘Data fog: Why some countries’ coronavirus numbers do not add up’: “China—where the pandemic originated—recently escaped a joint US-Australian-led effort at the World Health Assembly to investigate whether Beijing had for weeks concealed a deadly epidemic from the WHO.”, and quoting an interviewee: “US sanctions against Iran, which human rights groups say have drastically constrained Tehran’s ability to finance imports of medicines and medical equipment, could also be a factor.”

The opposite error might also be found on occasion, for example it is thought that Belgium has been particularly generous in allocating Covid-19 to cause of death, which may have led to inflated numbers.

Finally, it is worth mentioning timeline as another possible inconsistency in our data. Each country has undergone its own timeline of Covid-19 first wave deaths. For example, India, Israel and Indonesia appear to be accelerating into their first wave (in the case of Israel, because its first was only a small blip in comparison). Comparing them with a European country which is well past the first wave is not quite an apples-to-apples comparison.

So there are some yellow flags on the core data used for this study, but rankings can easily be adjusted up or down the scale to reflect any doubts. The EPD measure is not bullet proof, but it does represent a large amount of interesting data, and is certainly food for thought. Perhaps a soup rather than a kebab.

C. Testing the Methodology

To test if the nine variables were good choices, and do indeed contribute to actual Covid-19 deaths, a correlation matrix (below) showing how each of them relate to one another can be calculated.

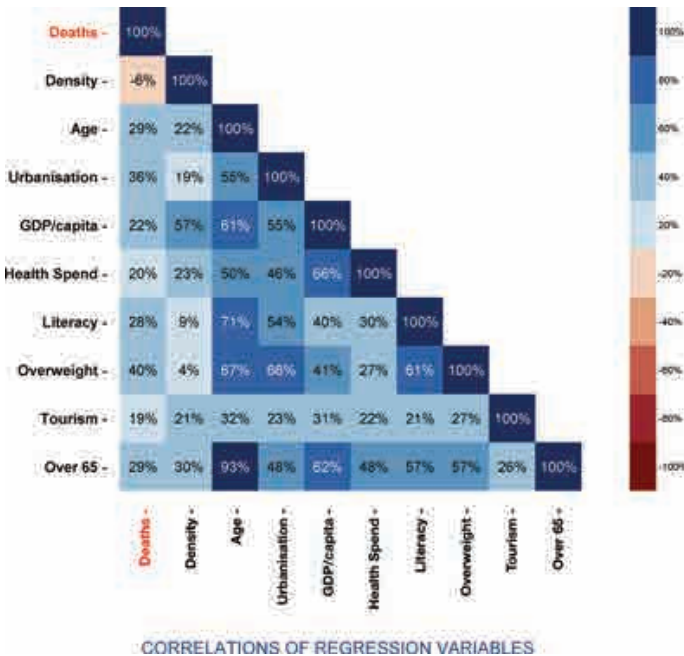
Looking at the correlations of the nine variables with actual deaths (the first column from the left):

Population Density at -6% indicates that it does not capture the preponderance of less than 2m social distancing required for disease spread.

Intuitively, urbanisation ought to be much better at this, and sure enough, correlates at 36%.

Median Age (29%), Over 65s (29%), Overweight/Obesity (40%) and Tourism (19%) all correlate positively with death, as expected. So the greater the value of each of these, the greater the chance of higher Covid-19 deaths.

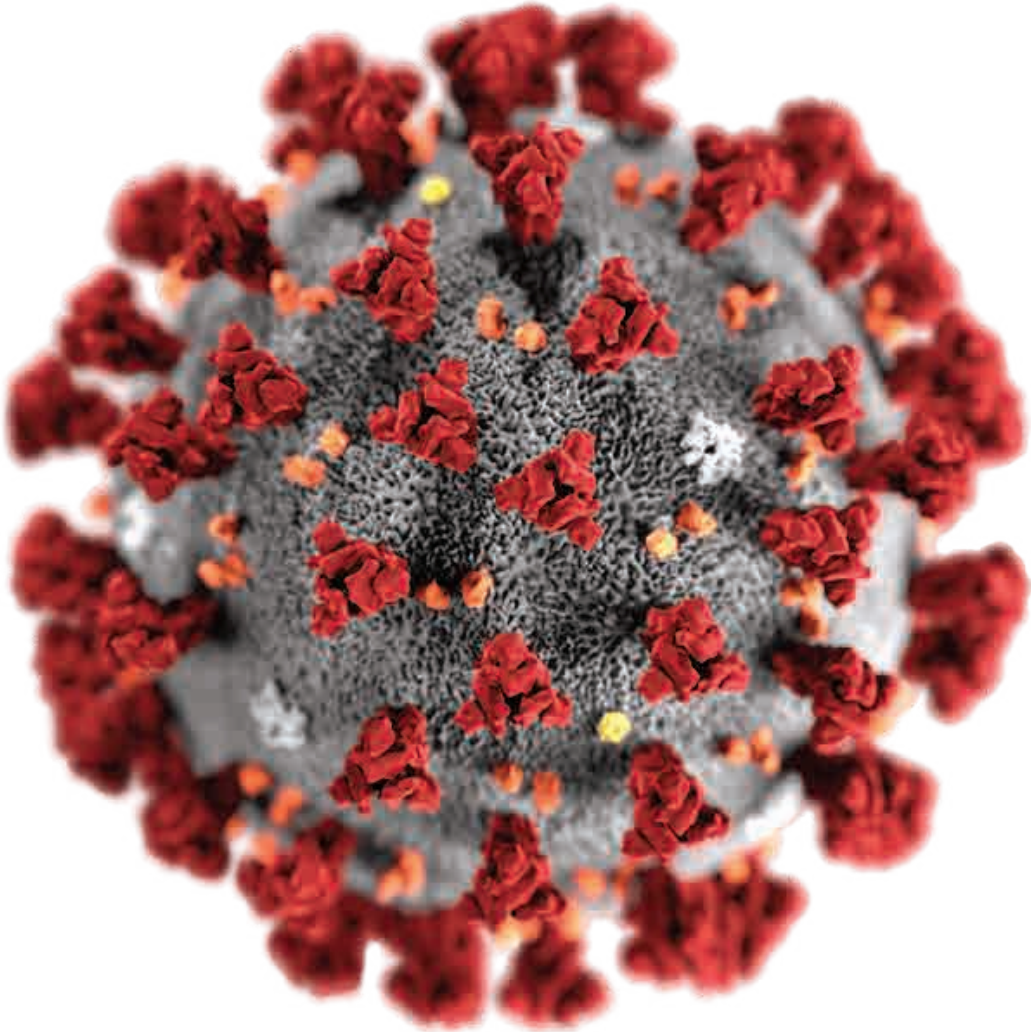
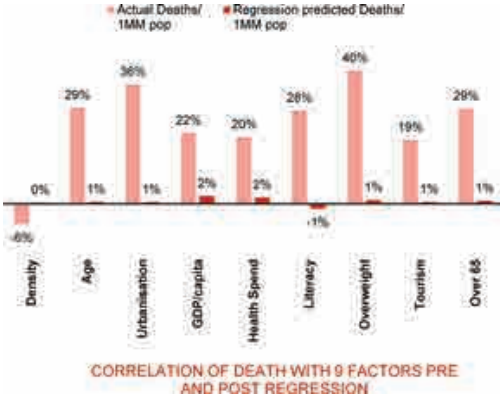
What is surprising is that the matrix suggests the greater the GDP per capita (22%), Health Spend per capita (20%) or Literacy (28%) in a country, counterintuitively, the more likely it is to have higher Covid-19 deaths. This might be explained to some extent by noting that these variables are all well correlated with Age (61%, 50%, 71%) suggesting that people in richer



countries with good healthcare and literacy tend to be countries where people live longer, and so are more exposed to age related disease fatality.

Note that the correlations of the nine variables with death are not particularly high (<40%). This suggests there are other variables which are significant contributors to Covid-19 deaths. The hypothesis of this study is that these other variables are captured by Policy.

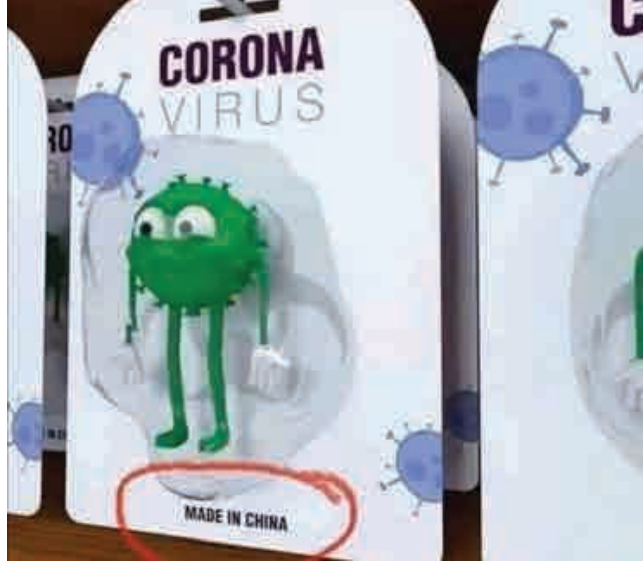
To test if the model has extracted all useful information from the nine factors, a correlation between model predicted deaths to each of those nine factors can be run. This is illustrated here in red, and values close to zero shows the model works well.



SARS-CoV-2 Virus

Popular Alternative Media / Conspiracy Theories

1. The virus is real, but was made in a lab and was released either by mistake, or purposefully as a bioweapon⁶⁰.
2. The pandemic has been planned by a well-known family of financiers who decided to publish all their secret plans back in 2010; they are seeking to depopulate and control the world: it is a “plandemic”.
3. The disease is no more dangerous than the flu and has been purposefully exaggerated to requisition liberties through emergency legislation. Medicine and technology will be forced upon us all for the purpose of control. This is orchestrated by a super class of globalist elite who exist beyond the law. They are involved in paedophile rings, they consume children’s brains to maintain youth and, of course, they devil worship.
4. A high profile tech billionaire philanthropist is trying to use this “plandemic” to control human populations and to secretly use vaccines to insert microchips into all of us.
5. Mainstream medical opinion is either compromised, complicit or ignorant. The same applies to main stream media (“lame stream media”). These so-called-experts cannot be trusted.



6. The rulings to use face coverings to limit large airborne disease carrying droplets are in fact a part of the initiation ritual of a worldwide programme to induct us all into a satanic cult.
7. Masks don't prevent the spread of coronavirus and they pose severe health risks to the person wearing them.
8. Large pharmaceutical firms and politicians have either initiated the pandemic purposefully, or are utilising it to rush through emergency legislation to limit freedom, and to profiteer through preferentially awarded contracts⁶¹ without proper scrutiny⁶².
9. 5G telecommunication technology and towers have caused the coronavirus.
10. Excess deaths this year are due to psychological stress caused by the lockdown, eg suicides, not because of an imaginary virus.
11. Healthcare workers are no more likely to suffer infection than the general populace, proving the infection is not dangerous.
12. If you type “illuminati” backwards into a search engine, and add “.com” you will be directed to the government National Security Agency website of the USA.

It is a worrying symptom of the psychological impact⁶³ of the Covid-19 phenomenon that these kinds of theories are widely proliferating⁶⁴, and that proponents vociferously defend them, engage in vigorous global protests and actively undermine public and professional medical policy.

The following represents a selection of references and opinions which are often disputed or manipulated by alt-media:

- There is an immense amount of evidence to suggest that Covid-19 is responsible for sig-

nificant increases in deaths above five year averages. There are many charts illustrating how extensive this data is for example in *The Economist*⁶⁵. Note that these excess deaths would have likely been much worse had it not been for massive global social distancing interventions.

- It is unclear what extra control is sought by introducing the pandemic. It is beyond doubt that modern state surveillance is already pervasive: face and voice recognition, digital surveillance, Cambridge Analytica, GPS tracking, all with public assent and without disruption.
- It is unclear why a pandemic and new vaccine programme have been orchestrated to secretly inject microchips into everyone, when presumably this could have been slipped into current global childhood vaccination programmes.
- Although main stream media and the pharmaceutical industry has been justifiably criticised in the past, sometimes severely, this does not mean it is all untrustworthy. It is inconsistent for alt-media sources of information to advise trusting no sources of information, except them.
- Masks do reduce risks for coronavirus. Most

evidence cited for the opposite opinion are tested against flu, not coronavirus⁶⁶. In addition, masks are in constant safe use in medical settings.

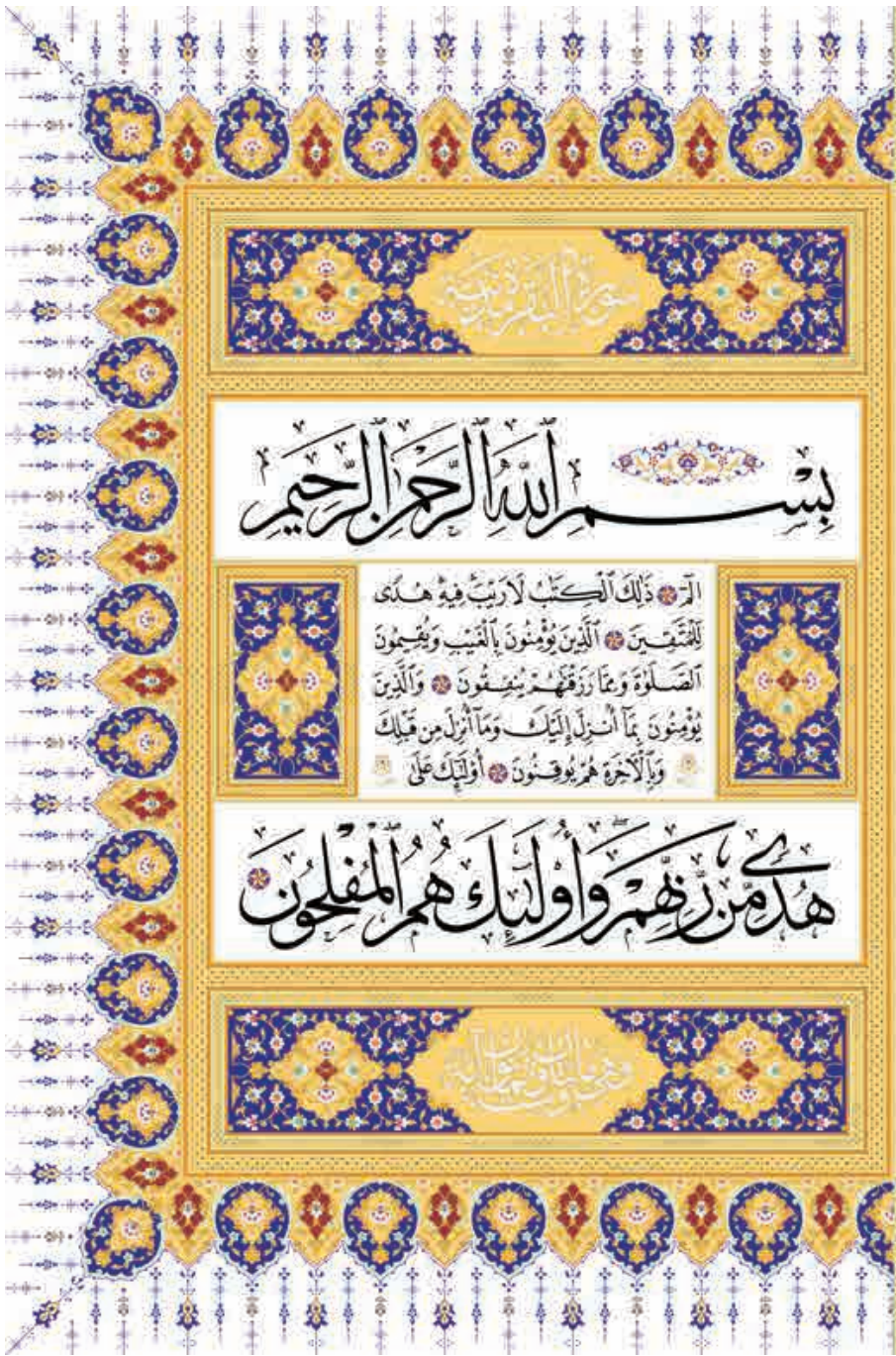
- There is genuine concern about the cost of lockdowns to mental health, its effect on people too frightened to visit hospitals, and the associated economic cost estimated in one article to be as many as 150,000 lives in the UK over the coming years⁶⁷. Compare this to estimates of over 500,000 deaths in the UK in the case of Covid-19⁶⁸. Both of these are comparable projections under the unrealistic but theoretical assumption of no mitigation.
- For context of suicides, consider the UK for illustration: excess deaths are currently about 60,000⁶⁹. Average suicides a year are about 5,500⁷⁰. We would need somewhere close to a 1,000% increase in suicide rates in the country to explain excess deaths—there have been no reports of any significant magnitude of increase.
- Healthcare workers do have a higher mortality than the general population.⁷¹
- Presumably a secret society of uber-powerful global elites and billionaires would choose to fool the world using a method more sophisticated than a redirected domain name.

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ENDNOTES

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 - 4 <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamacardiology/fullarticle/2768916>. <https://www.vox.com/2020/7/6/21314472/covid-19-coronavirus-us-cases-deaths-trends-wtf> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-07/china-study-finds-5-to-15-of-covid-19-cases-are-reactivated> https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-patients-ins-idUSKCN2240HI?fbclid=IwAR2Q_LyoRaMl0f-NmEnIljU0qwCwfH16bLBemEakpvaxjueVfBWnWB-DBDNE.
 - 5 Roughly 30% of hospitalised patients die: in the event of no health facilities, the surviving 70% of survivors are at risk, together with anyone non-Covid-19 who needs healthcare to survive. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/apr/29/study-finds-a-third-of-uk-covid-19-patients-taken-to-hospital-are-dying>; <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m1794> hospitalisation rates are estimated to be roughly 5-10% <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/196573/covid-19-one-five-over-80s-need-hospitalisation/>
 - 6 “Damage to the world’s major economies is four times worse than the 2009 global financial crisis, according to the OECD. Meanwhile, the United Nations has said that up to 265 million people could face starvation by the end of the year because of the impact of Covid-19.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-51235105>
 - 7 <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/medicine/sph/ide/gida-fellowships/Imperial-College-COVID19-NPI-modeling-16-03-2020.pdf>
 - 8 <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2020/07/15/tracking-covid-19-excess-deaths-across-countries>
 - 9 Coronavirus: Lockdown delay ‘cost a lot of lives’, says science adviser <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-52955034>
 - 10 “‘The speed and strength of each country’s response to control initial spreading events and develop the testing capacity needed for operational surveillance seem to have played an important role,’ says Royal Statistical Society president-elect Sylvia Richardson.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-53078368>
 - 11 <https://timharford.com/2020/09/statistics-lies-and-the-virus-five-lessons-from-a-pandemic/>
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 - 16 <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/what-lies-ahead-as-jordan-faces-the-fallout-of-covid-19/> <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/07/16/na071620-inside-jordans-fight-to-tackle-covid19>
 - 17 <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-and-covid-19-effective-response-high-cost>
 - 18 “a group of more than 500 academics published a joint letter, criticising the lack of social distancing restrictions imposed by the government” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-54252272> <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/under-pressure-uk-government-releases-nhs-covid-data-deals-big-tech/> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-53095336>
 - 19 Coronavirus: ‘Rule-breaking Bolton pub crawl’ saw cases rise. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-54205353>
 - 20 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/aug/02/uk-covid-19-excess-deaths>
 - 21 https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidnikel/2020/04/14/sweden-22-scientists-say-coronavirus-strategy-has-failed-as-deaths-top-1000/?utm_campaign=forbes&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_term=Valerie%2F&fbclid=IwAR2XE44pDS6AHU05XYeZY2oFolKk1kvVASjG5fkDZmQ-zmHvAdj1kX5ixk4#4f77d5a47b6c
 - 22 Professor Johan Giesecke: At least 50% of the population of both the UK and Sweden will be shown to have already had the disease when mass antibody testing becomes available. - The correct policy is to protect the old and the frail only. <https://unherd.com/the-post/coming-up-epidemiologist-prof-johan-giesecke-shares-lessons-from-sweden/>
 - 23 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/03/architect-of-sweden-coronavirus-strategy-admits-too-many-died-anders-tegnell>
 - 24 Sweden hoped herd immunity would curb Covid-19. Don’t do what we did. It’s not working. ...The proportion of Swedes carrying antibodies is estimated to be less than 10%, thus nowhere near herd immunity. ...The only example we’re setting is how not to deal with a deadly infectious disease. <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/07/21/coronavirus-swedish-herd-immunity-drove-up-death-toll-column/5472100002/>. Sweden’s top epidemiologist at a loss to explain why herd immunity is going ‘surprisingly slow’. <https://fortune.com/2020/06/17/sweden-herd-immunity-surprisingly-slow/?fbclid=IwAR1IGz2jCYhsCSAR4BMtWfZV1xrBQ7cpvGrQLcC02vQ0JEzYlO387y9t0>
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 - 29 “during meditation, Zen Buddhist monks show an extraordinary synchronization of brain waves known as gamma synchrony—a pattern increasingly associated with robust brain function” <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/zen-gamma/>
 - 30 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-51235105>
 - 31 “And the more this virus spreads the more likely it is to eventually reach and infect someone who may die or be severely harmed by it.” <https://www.vox.com/2020/7/6/21314472/Covid-19-19-coronavirus-us-cases-deaths-trends-wtf>
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 - 34 <https://www.vox.com/2020/7/6/21314472/covid-19-coronavirus-us-cases-deaths-trends-wtf>
 - 35 To know for sure if the odds of dying are falling, we really need to know how many of those who are infected succumb and if this is changing – that is, if the infection fatality rate (IFR) is declining.
- Early estimates put the IFR across populations at between 0.6 and 1 per cent. Some thought this would turn out to be an overestimate, but recent estimates are similar. A statistical analysis by Grewelle and his colleague Giulio De Leo, for instance, suggests that the global IFR so far is 1 per cent. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2248813-why-are-us-coronavirus-deaths-going-down-as-covid-19-cases-soar/#ixzz6ZAIISJ26>

- 36 Bigger GDP falls may trigger larger rebounds as lockdowns are reversed. But some signs show that perceptions of the UK and Spanish governments' mishandling the crisis have resulted in businesses and households reverting to pre-Covid behaviours more slowly than elsewhere. If this is the case, it could undermine the strength of their economic rebounds after the initial bounce in post-lockdown growth fizzles out. <http://blog.oxfordeconomics.com/coronavirus/dont-blame-it-all-on-lockdowns>
- 37 For example, estimated 2021 Indian GDP was recently revised from +7.4% according to the IMF to -11.5% https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEQ/EU/EURO/EUQ/BEL <https://scroll.in/latest/972858/moodys-downgrades-indias-projected-growth-rate-to-minus-11-5-for-2020-21>
- 38 <https://tradingeconomics.com/forecast/gdp-annual-growth-rate>
- 39 Eg The UK contracted 22% in Q2 of 2020, but is projected to grow at 17.5% in Q2 2021
- 40 "Contrary to the idea of a trade-off, we see that countries which suffered the most severe economic downturns – like Peru, Spain and the UK – are generally among the countries with the highest Covid-19 death rate. And the reverse is also true: countries where the economic impact has been modest – like Taiwan, South Korea, and Lithuania – have also managed to keep the death rate low. Notice too that countries with similar falls in GDP have witnessed very different death rates. For instance, compare the US and Sweden with Denmark and Poland. All four countries saw economic contractions of around 8 to 9 percent, but the death rates are markedly different: the US and Sweden have recorded 5 to 10 times more deaths per million." <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-health-economy>
- 41 <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-health-economy>
- 42 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/06/08/the-global-economic-outlook-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-a-changed-world>
- 43 <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-challenges-of-counting-covid-deaths/>
- 44 "Thousands of extra deaths outside hospital not attributed to covid-19". <https://www.hsj.co.uk/commissioning/thousands-of-extra-deaths-outside-hospital-not-attributed-to-covid-19/7027459.article>
- 45 <https://www.statnews.com/2020/08/03/measuring-excess-mortality-gives-clearer-picture-pandemics-true-burden/>
- 46 "this data is most often only available for richer countries that can afford high-quality data reporting systems." <https://ourworldindata.org/excess-mortality-covid>
- 47 Looking at cases rather than deaths is not particularly helpful in this study since positive Covid-19 test cases are a function not only of positive cases, but the capacity for testing available in any particular country.
- 48 Some of the countries where Covid-19 has been deadliest – including the United States and Italy – have populations that skew considerably older than the global average, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of United Nations data. Africa has the youngest population of any region, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/22/populations-skew-older-in-some-of-the-countries-hit-hard-by-covid-19/>
- 49 <https://towardsdatascience.com/introduction-to-bayesian-linear-regression-e66e60791ea7>
- 50 Jacobson's team also suggests vitamin D as a potentially useful Covid-19 drug. The vitamin is involved in the RAS system and could prove helpful by reducing levels of another compound, known as REN. Again, this could stop potentially deadly bradykinin storms from forming. <https://elemental.medium.com/a-supercomputer-analyzed-covid-19-and-an-interesting-new-theory-has-emerged-31cb8eba9d63>
- 51 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/aug/02/uk-covid-19-excess-deaths>
- 52 <https://timharford.com/2020/09/statistics-lies-and-the-virus-five-lessons-from-a-pandemic/>
- 53 <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/06/17/data-fog-why-some-countries-coronavirus-numbers-do-not-add-up/>
- 54 Yemen in denial about Covid-19 - and worse still, there's a fog of mystery over how many are dying. <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-yemen-is-in-denial-about-covid-19-and-worse-still-theres-a-fog-of-mystery-over-how-many-are-dying-12073435>
- 55 <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/06/17/data-fog-why-some-countries-coronavirus-numbers-do-not-add-up/>
- 56 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?view=map> <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/median-age> <https://ourworldindata.org/obesity>, <https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization>
- 57 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/04/st-petersburg-death-tally-casts-doubt-on-russian-coronavirus-figures> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-in-russia-deaths-could-be-much-higher-than-official-tally-new-data-from-moscow-suggest/>. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/06/10/moscow-sees-58-mortality-spike-in-may-as-russias-low-virus-deaths-questioned-a70532>
- 58 Iran cover-up of deaths revealed by data leak. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-53598965>
- 59 India has one of the world's lowest Covid-19 mortality rates. But the numbers don't tell the whole story <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/09/11/asia/india-covid-death-rate-explainer-intl-hnk-scli/index.html>
- 60 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/06/03/exclusive-coronavirus-began-accident-disease-escaped-chinese/>
- 61 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/under-pressure-uk-government-releases-nhs-covid-data-deals-big-tech/>
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- 66 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7263249/>, <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2020/06/stanford-scientists-tribute-to-who-mask-guidelines.html>, <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2020-07-08-oxford-covid-19-study-face-masks-and-coverings-work-act-now>
- 67 "an oncology consultant for 40 years, says he has "never seen such a fall-off in cancer patients". Whereas 30,000 patients a month would typically be diagnosed with cancer, he says it will be closer to 5,000 in April." <https://amp.ft.com/content/0ccaac50-854c-11ea-b555-37a289098206>
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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﴿١﴾ Alif lām mīm. ﴿٢﴾ That Book, in it there is no doubt. A guidance for the God-fearing ﴿٣﴾ who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer; and of what We have provided them expend; ﴿٤﴾ and who believe in what has been revealed to you; and what was revealed before you; and of the Hereafter, they are certain. ﴿٥﴾ Those are upon guidance from their Lord; those are the ones that will prosper.

The Cow, 1 - 5

A page from HM Queen Alia's Mushaf © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

THE HOUSE
OF ISLAM

I. THE HOUSE OF ISLAM

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(with the exception of President Obama's speech)

The religion of Islam is based on belief in the One God (who in Arabic is called Allah). It was founded by the Prophet Muhammad (570-632 CE) in the ancient cities of Makkah and Madinah, in the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula (known as the Hijaz). God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad the Holy Qur'an, the Sacred Book of Islam. The religion thus created, however, was not a new message but simply a final restatement of God's messages to the Hebrew Prophets and to Jesus.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Say ye: we believe in God and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have submitted. (2:136)

Moreover, the Holy Qur'an did not exclude the possibility of revelations other than those that were given to the Prophets mentioned in the Bible (and thus did not exclude the possibility of other genuine ancient religions other than Judaism, Christianity and Islam). God says, in the Holy Qur'an:

Verily we have sent Messengers before thee [O Muhammad]. About some of them have we told thee, and about some have we not told thee . . . (40:78).

And verily we have raised in every nation a Messenger [proclaiming]: serve God and shun false gods . . . (16:36).

THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM

The essence and substance of Islam can be easily summed up by three major principles (which are also successive stages in the spiritual life): Islam (meaning 'submission to God's will'); Iman (meaning 'faith in God'), and Ihsan (meaning 'virtue through constant regard to, and awareness of, God'). The second Caliph, the great 'Umar ibn al Khattab, related that:

One day when we were sitting [in Madinah] with the Messenger of God [the Prophet Muhammad] there came unto us a man whose clothes were of exceeding whiteness and whose hair was of exceeding blackness, nor were there any signs of travel upon him, although none of us knew him. He sat down knee upon knee opposite the Prophet, upon whose thighs he placed the palms of his hands, saying: 'O Muhammad; tell me what is the surrender (Islam)'. The Messenger of God answered him saying: 'The surrender is to testify that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is God's Messenger, to perform the prayer, bestow the alms, fast Ramadan and make if thou canst, the pilgrimage to the Holy House.' He said, 'Thou hast spoken truly,' and we were amazed that having questioned him he should corroborate him. Then he said: 'Tell me what is faith (Iman)'. He answered: 'To believe in God and His Angels and his Books and His Messengers and the Last Day [the Day of Judgement], and to believe that no good or evil cometh but by His Providence.' 'Thou hast spoken truly,' he said, and then: 'Tell me what is excellence (Ihsan)'. He answered: 'To worship God as if thou sawest Him, for if Thou seest Him not, yet seest He thee.' 'Thou hast spoken truly,' he said... Then the stranger went away, and I stayed a while after he had gone; and the Prophet said to me: 'O 'Umar, knowest thou the questioner, who he was?' I said, 'God and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'It was Gabriel [the Archangel]. He came unto you to teach you your religion.'¹

Thus Islam as such consists of 'five pillars': (1) the Shahadatayn or the 'two testimonies of faith' (whose inward meaning is the acknowledgement of God).

(2) The five daily prayers (whose inward meaning is the attachment to God). (3) Giving alms or Zakat—one-fortieth of one's income and savings annually to the poor and destitute (whose inward meaning is the detachment from the world). (4) Fasting the Holy month of Ramadan annually (whose inward meaning is detachment from the body and from the ego). (5) Making the Hajj (whose inner meaning is to re-

1 Sahih Muslim, 'Kitab al Iman', 1, N.I. (The Hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ, like all sacred texts, are written above in italics).

turn to one's true inner heart, the mysterious square, black-shrouded Ka'ba in Makkah being the outward symbol of this heart). Thus also Iman as such consists of belief in all the essential doctrines of religion (and the inner meaning of this is that one should not go through the motions of religion and of the five pillars of Islam blindly or robotically, but rather have real faith and certainty in one's heart). Thus, finally, *Ihsan* as such consists in believing that God always sees us, and therefore that one must be virtuous and sincere in all one's actions. In this connection the Prophet said: '*By Him in whose Hand is my Life, none of you believes till he loves for his neighbour what he loves for himself*'.² In summary, we could say that the essence of Islam is exactly the Two Commandments upon which Jesus said hangs all the Law and the Prophets:

And Jesus answered him, The first of all commandments is...the Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second commandment is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.³

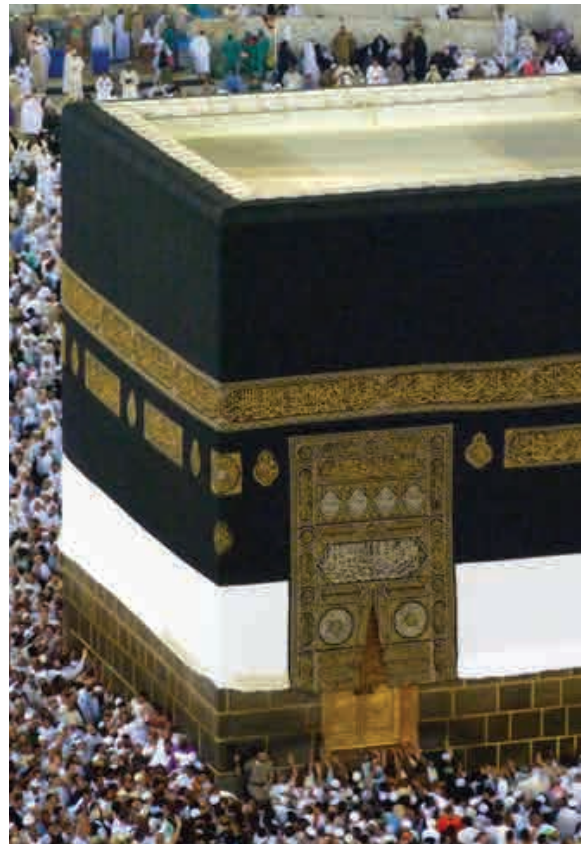
THE CANON OF ISLAM

Islam does not, like Christianity, have a clergy. There is no temporal or even spiritual institute that holds it together or unifies it. So how has it held together—and indeed, flourished—for the last fourteen centuries approximately, when its scholars and temporal policymakers keep changing and dying out over time? How has it remained so homogeneous that the Islam of 1900 CE was doctrinally exactly the same as the Islam of 700 CE? Where have its internal checks and balances come from?

The answer is that Islam has a traditional canon:⁴ a collection of sacred texts which everyone has agreed are authoritative and definitive, and which 'fix' the principles of belief, practice, law, theology and doctrine throughout the ages. All that Muslim scholars (called *ulema* and muftis or sheikhs and imams) have left to do is to interpret these texts and work out their practical applications and details (and the prin-

ciples of interpretation and elaboration are themselves 'fixed' by these texts), so that in Islam a person is only considered learned to the extent that he can demonstrate his knowledge of these texts. This does not mean that Islam is a religion of limitations for these texts are a vast ocean and their principles can be inwardly worked out almost infinitely in practice. It does mean, however, that Islam is 'fixed' and has certain limits beyond which it will not go. This is an extremely important concept to understand, because misunderstanding it, and setting aside the traditional canon of Islam, leads to people killing and assassinating others in the name of religion. The traditional canon of Islam is what protects not just the religion of Islam itself, but the world (including Muslims themselves) from terrorism, murder and oppression in the name of Islam. The canon is Islam's internal check and balance system; it is what safeguards its moderation; it is 'self-censorship' and its ultimate safety feature.

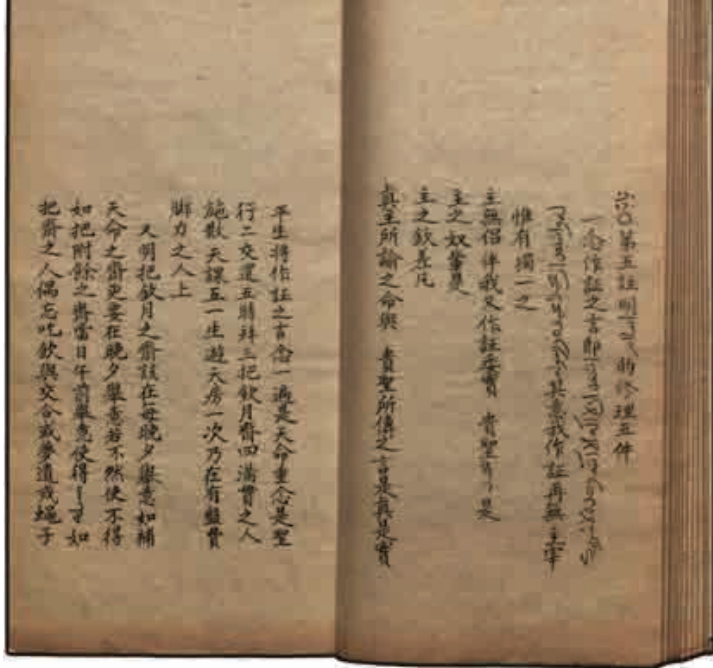
To be more specific, the traditional Sunni Islamic Canon starts with the Qur'an itself; then the great traditional Commentaries upon it (e.g. Tabari; Razi; Zamakhshari/Baydawi; Qurtubi; Jalalayn;



2 Sahih Muslim, 'Kitab al Iman', 18, n. 72.

3 The Gospel according to Mark 12:29–31. (See also Deuteronomy 6:5; and Matthew 22:37–40).

4 Even the English word 'canon' comes from the Arabic word *kanun* meaning 'law' or 'principle'.



Jahiliyya poetry (as a background reference for the semantic connotations of words in the Arabic language). We give a specific (but not exhaustive) list here in order to minimise the possibility of misunderstanding.

ISLAM IN HISTORY

It is evidently not possible to do justice to the role of Islam in world history, thought and civilisation in a few words, but the following paragraph by Britain's Prince Charles attempts it:

'The medieval Islamic world, from Central Asia to the shores of the Atlantic, was a world where scholars and men of learn-

ing flourished. But because we have tended to see Islam as the enemy, as an alien culture, society, and system of belief, we have tended to ignore or erase its great relevance to our own history. For example, we have underestimated the importance of eight hundred years of Islamic society and culture in Spain between the 8th and 15th centuries. The contribution of Muslim Spain to the preservation of classical learning during the Dark Ages, and to the first flowerings of the Renaissance, has long been recognised. But Islamic Spain was much more than a mere larder where Hellenistic knowledge was kept for later consumption by the emerging modern Western world.

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TOP LEFT: Manuscript pages of *A Sketch of the Islamic Law* by Ma Boliang (1640–1711 CE), an influential Islamic scholar from Jining, China. Islamic scholars who authenticated the work include Li Yongshou, Wen Yingshi, Yang Jiu'en, Ma Minggao, and Ma Zhilin.

TOP RIGHT: A manuscript page from *Sahih al-Bukhārī* from the National Library of Bulgaria dated 407 AH (1017 CE).

BELOW: Alhambra Palace in Spain



Not only did Muslim Spain gather and preserve the intellectual content of ancient Greek and Roman civilisation, it also interpreted and expanded upon that civilisation, and made a vital contribution of its own in so many fields of human endeavour—in science, astronomy, mathematics, algebra (it self an Arabic word), law, history, medicine, pharmacology, optics, agriculture, architecture, theology, music. Averroes [Ibn Rushd] and Avenzoar [Ibn Zuhr], like their counterparts Avicenna [Ibn Sina] and Rhazes [Abu Bakr al Razi] in the East, contributed to the study and practice of medicine in ways from which Europe benefited for centuries afterwards.⁵

On 4 June, 2009, US President Barack Obama said the following at Cairo University:

‘As a student of history, I also know civilisation’s debt to Islam. It was Islam—at places like Al-Azhar—that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe’s Renaissance and Enlightenment. It was innovation in Muslim communities that developed the order of algebra; our magnetic compass and tools of navigation; our mastery of pens and printing; our understanding of how disease spreads and how it can be healed. Islamic culture has given us majestic arches and soaring spires; timeless poetry and cherished music; elegant calligraphy and places of peaceful contemplation. And throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality.

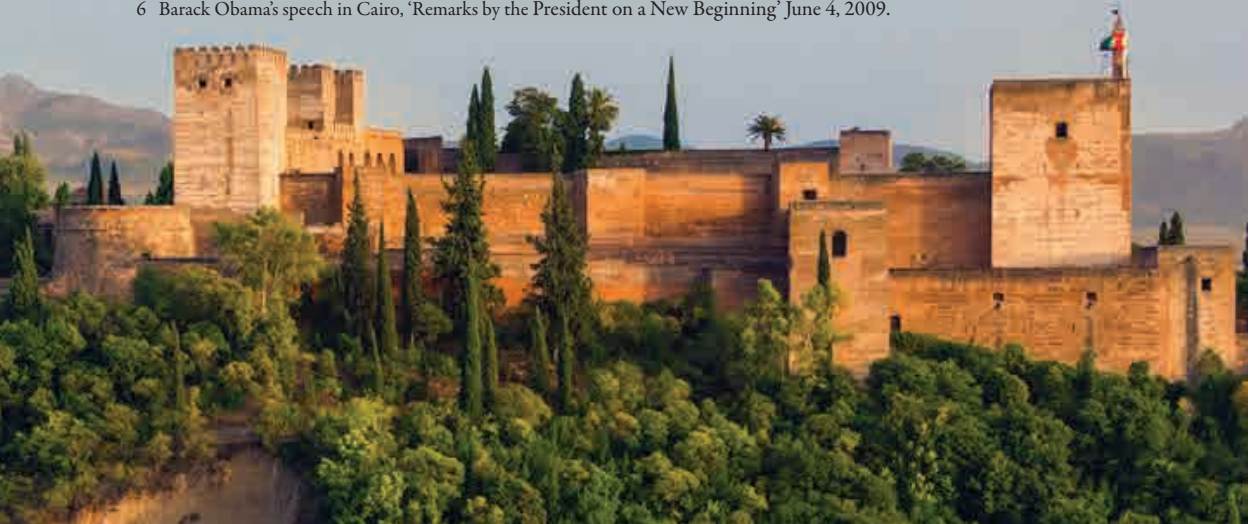
I also know that Islam has always been a part of America’s story. The first nation to recognise my country was Morocco. In signing the Treaty



of Tripoli in 1796, our second President, John Adams, wrote, ‘The United States has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Muslims.’ And since our founding, American Muslims have enriched the United States. They have fought in our wars, they have served in our government, they have stood for civil rights, they have started businesses, they have taught at our universities, they’ve excelled in our sports arenas, they’ve won Nobel Prizes, built our tallest building, and lit the Olympic Torch. And when the first Muslim American was recently elected to Congress, he took the oath to defend our Constitution using the same Holy Koran that one of our Founding Fathers—Thomas Jefferson—kept in his personal library.⁶

5 HRH the Prince of Wales, ‘Islam and the West’, a lecture given at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford on October 27th, 1993, pp.17–18.

6 Barack Obama’s speech in Cairo, ‘Remarks by the President on a New Beginning’ June 4, 2009.



II. MAJOR DOCTRINAL DIVISIONS WITHIN ISLAM

Sunni Theology

1) ASH'ARI AND MATURIDI SCHOOLS: SUNNI ORTHODOXY¹

These two schools of doctrine are followed by the bulk of Sunni Muslims and differ only in minor details.

Ash'ari School: This school is named after the followers of the 9th century scholar **Abu al Hasan al Ash'ari** (874–936 CE) and is widely accepted throughout the Sunni Muslim world. They believe that the characteristics of God are ultimately beyond human comprehension, and trust in the Revelation is essential, although the use of rationality is important.

Maturidi School: This school is named after the followers of the 9th century scholar **Muhammad Abu Mansur al Maturidi** (853–944 CE) and has a wide following in regions where Hanafi law is practiced. They have a slightly more pronounced reliance on human reason.

2) SALAFI SCHOOL

This school was developed around the doctrines of 18th century scholar **Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab** (1703–1792 CE). Salafis have specific doctrinal beliefs, owing to their particular interpretation of Islam, that differentiate them from the majority of Sunnis, such as a literal anthropomorphic interpretation of God. Salafis place a great emphasis on literal interpretation of the Qur'an and *Hadith*, with skepticism towards the role of human reason in theology.

3) MU'TAZILI SCHOOL

This school was developed between the 8th and 10th centuries. Although it is traced back to **Wasil ibn Ata** (d. 748 CE) in Basra, theologians **Abu al Hudhayl Al-'Allaf** (d. 849 CE) and **Bishr ibn al Mu'tamir** (d. 825 CE) are credited with formalizing its theological stance. Mu'tazili thought relies heavily on logic, including Greek philosophy. Although it no longer has a significant following, a small minority of contemporary intellectuals have sought to revive it. Mutazilites believe that the Qur'an was created as opposed to the Orthodox Sunni view that it is eternal and uncreated. Moreover they advocate using rationalism to understand allegorical readings of the Qur'an.

¹ Orthodoxy in Islam is based on verse 2:285 of the Holy Qur'an, and has been best defined by the historical 2005 international Islamic consensus on the 'three points' of the Amman Message (see: the Amman Message at the end of this section)

Shia Theology

1) THE TWELVER SCHOOL

The infallibility (*'Ismah*) of the Twelve Imams descended from the family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*) who are believed to be the spiritual and rightful political authorities of the Muslim community (*Umma*). The twelfth Imam, the Mahdi, is believed to be in occultation to return in the future.

2) ISMA'ILI SCHOOL

The Qur'an and *Hadith* are said to have truths lying with a single living Imam, descended directly from the Prophet. Also known as 'sevens' for their belief that Isma'il ibn Ja'far was the seventh leading-Imam of the Muslim community.

3) ZAIDI SCHOOL

The infallibility of the Twelve Imams and the notion of occultation are rejected in favour of accepting the leadership of a living Imam. The Imamate can be held by any descendant of the Prophet (*Sayyid*). Also known as 'fivers' by other Muslims for their belief that Zayd ibn Ali was the fifth leading-Imam of the Muslim community.

Ibadi Theology

IBADI SCHOOL

Ibadis believe that God created the Qur'an at a certain point in time, and that God will not be seen on the Day of Judgment. They also believe in the eternal nature of hell for all those who enter it.

III. IDEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS

TRADITIONAL ISLAM

(90% of the world's Muslims)

Also known as Orthodox Islam, this ideology is not politicized and largely based on consensus of correct opinion—thus including the Sunni, Shia, and Ibadi branches of practice (and their subgroups) within the fold of Islam, but not groups such as the Druze or the Ahmadiyya, among others.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

(9% of the world's Muslims)
(8% Salafi; 1% Ikhwan)

This is a highly politicized religious ideology popularised in the 20th century through movements within both the Shia and Sunni branches of Islam—characterised by aggressiveness and a reformist attitude toward traditional Islam.

ISLAMIC MODERNISM

(1% of the world's Muslims)

Emerging from 19th century Ottoman Turkey and Egypt, this subdivision contextualized Islamic ideology for the times—emphasizing the need for religion to evolve with Western advances.

IIIA. TRADITIONAL ISLAM

SUNNI

(90% of the world's traditional muslims)

The largest denomination of Muslims referred to as *Ahl as Sunnah wa'l Jama'h* or 'people of the prophetic tradition and community'—with emphasis on emulating the life of the last Prophet, Muhammad.

SCHOOLS OF SUNNI ISLAMIC LAW

Hanafi

(45%)

Named after the followers of Imam Abu Hanifa (699–767 CE/ 89–157 AH) in Iraq.

Shafi'i

(28%)

Named after the followers of Imam al Shafi'i (767–820 CE/ 150–204 AH) in Madinah.

Maliki

(15%)

Named after the followers of Imam Malik (711–795 CE/ 93–179 AH) in Madinah.

Hanbali

(2%)

Named after the followers of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (780–855 CE/ 164–241 AH) in Iraq.

SHIA

(9.5% of the world's traditional Muslims)

The second-largest denomination of Muslims referred to as *Shiatu 'Ali* or 'the party of Ali,' the fourth caliph of Islam and first Imam in Shi'ism.

BRANCHES OF SHIA ISLAM

Zaidis (Fivers)

(Less than 1%)

Named after the followers of Imam Zaid ibn 'Ali (695–740 CE) in Madinah.

Twelvers

(8%)

Named after the followers of Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (702–765 CE/ 83–148 AH) in Madinah.

Isma'ilis (Seveners)

(Less than 0.5%)

Named after the followers of Muhammad ibn Ismail (746–809 CE/128–193 AH) in Madinah.

SCHOOLS OF ISLAMIC LAW FOR TWELVER SHIA

Usuli

99% of Twelvers. This dominant school favors the use of *ijtihad*, independent legal reasoning, with an emphasis on four accepted collections of *Hadith*. Derive legal opinions from living *ayatollahs*, or *mujtahids*, whose rulings become obligatory. *Taqlid*, the practice of following rulings without questioning the religious authority, is a core tenet of this school. The name Usuli is derived from the Arabic term *usul* meaning 'principle'.

Akhbari

Akhbaris reject the use of *ijtihad* or reasoning, and do not follow marjas who practice *ijtihad*. They also prohibit exegesis of the Qur'an. Derive legal rulings from the Qur'an, Hadith, and consensus. The name Akhbari is derived from the Arabic term *akhbar* meaning 'traditions'. They can trace their roots to the followers of Muhammad Amin Astarabadi (d. 1627 CE). Akhbaris continue to exist to this day, although in small, concentrated pockets, particularly around Basra, Iraq.

Ibadi

(0.5% of the world's traditional Muslims)

The Ibadi school has origins in and is linked to the Kharijites, but the modern day community is distinct from the 7th century Islamic sect. It was founded after the death of Prophet Muhammad and is currently practiced by a majority of Oman's Muslim population. Also found across parts of Africa.

MYSTIC BROTHERHOODS

Although reliable statistics are not available for the millions of Muslims who practice Islamic mysticism, it has been estimated that 25% of adult Sunni Muslims in 1900 CE participated in these brotherhoods as either *murids* (followers of the Sufi guide of a particular order) or *mutabarrikîn* (supporters or affiliates of a particular Sufi order).

SUNNI ORDERS

Naqshbandiyya

Founded by Baha al Din Naqshband (d. 1389 CE) in Bukhara, modern day Uzbekistan. Influence: popular from China to North Africa, Europe and America.

Qadiriyya

Founded by scholar and saint 'Abd al Qadir al Jilani (1077–1166 CE) in Baghdad, Iraq. Influence: stretches from Morocco to Malaysia, from Central Asia to South Africa.

Tijaniyya

Ahmad al Tijani (d. 1815 CE) who settled and taught in Fez, Morocco. Influence: major spiritual and religious role in Senegal, Nigeria, Mauritania and much of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Shadhiliyyah

Founded by the Moroccan saint Abu'l-Hassan al Shadili (d. 1258 CE). Influence: most influential in North Africa and Egypt.

Kubrawiyya

(d. 1221 CE) from Khawarzm, modern day Uzbekistan. Influence: mostly present across Central Asia.

Suhrawardiyya

Founded by Persian scholar Abu Najib Suhrawardi (d. 1168 CE) in Iraq. Influence: a strong presence in India.

Chishtiyya

Founded by the Persian saint Mu'in al Din Chishti (d. 1236 CE) Khurasan. Influence: highly influential in India.

Mawlawiyya

A Turkish order founded by the Persian saint and poet Jalal al Din Rumi (d. 1273 CE). Influence: mainly in Turkey.

Rifa'iyya

Founded by Ahmad ibn 'Ali al Rifa'i (d. 1182 CE) in southern Iraq. Influence: widely practiced across the Muslim world with a strong presence in Egypt.

Yashrutiyya

Founded by 'Ali Nur al Din al Yashruti (d. 1892 CE) in Palestine. Influence: strong presence in Syria and Lebanon.

Badawiyya

An Egyptian order founded by the Moroccan saint Ahmad al Badawi (d. 1276 CE), considered by many as the patron saint of Egypt. Influence: active role in Egypt and the Sudan.

Khalwatiyya

A Turkish order founded by the Persian saint 'Umar al Khalwati (d. 1397 CE). Influence: wide presence in the Balkans, Syria, Lebanon and North Africa.

SHIA ORDERS

Irfan

Irfan, which means 'knowing' in Arabic and 'most beautiful and knowledgeable person' in Pashto, is Shia mysticism. **Mulla Sadr al Din Muhammad Shirazi** (1571–1636 CE) from Iran is considered a leading Shia theorist of *Irfan*.

IIIB. ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

SUNNI

Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood, or Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimeen is a transnational Sunni movement, with no particular ideological adherence. It is the largest political opposition organisation in many Arab states, particularly in Egypt where it was founded in opposition to colonial rule by Hassan al Banna in 1928. Al Banna originally sought to revive Muslim culture from its position of exploitation under colonial rule, through charitable and educational work, to bring Islam into a central role in people's life. Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966 CE) was also a leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 50s and 60s.

Wahhabism/Salafism

Wahhabism/Salafism are terms used interchangeably to refer to a particular brand of Islam. Salaf, meaning predecessors, refers to the very early practice of Islam by Muhammad and his immediate successors. Salafism seeks to revive the practice of Islam as it was at the time of Muhammad and can be critical of too much emphasis being placed on thinkers from after this period. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhab (1703–1792 CE) was an important figure in the resurrection of this ideology therefore Salafism is often simply known as Wahhabism.

SHIA

Revolutionary Shi'ism

Revolutionary Shi'ism is an ideology, based on the teachings of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989 CE), which shares many similarities with Marxist revolutionary thought. Khomeini believed that the only way to secure independence from colonial or imperial forces was through the creation of a Shia state, under the idea of Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist). This means that all politics is subject to the opinion of the Supreme Leader who is responsible for the continued success of the revolution. It is only practiced in Iran.

IIIC. ISLAMIC MODERNISM

Islamic modernism is a reform movement started by politically-minded urbanites with scant knowledge of traditional Islam. These people had witnessed and studied Western technology and socio-political ideas, and realized that the Islamic world was being left behind technologically by the West and had become too weak to stand up to it. They blamed this weakness on what they saw as 'traditional Islam,' which they thought held them back and was not 'progressive' enough. They thus called for a complete overhaul of Islam, including—or rather in particular—Islamic law (*sharia*) and doctrine (*aqida*). Islamic modernism remains popularly an object of derision and ridicule, and is scorned by traditional Muslims and fundamentalists alike.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشْوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ



تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشْوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ



لَا تَفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ۝



أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَايِسُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۝ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا إِلَى شِطْرَيْنَا مَا مِنَّا مَعَهُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ۝ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آسَأُوا الصَّلَاةَ



بِالْهُدَىٰ فَإِن بَحِثْ بَحِثُكُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ۝

As for the disbelievers, alike it is for them whether you have warned them or have not warned them, they do not believe. ۞ God has set a seal on their hearts, and on their hearing; and on their eyes is a covering; and for them there will be a mighty chastisement. ۞ And some people there are who say, 'We believe in God and the Last Day'; but they are not believers. ۞ They would deceive God and the believers; and only themselves they deceive; and they are not aware. ۞ In their hearts is a sickness; and God has increased their sickness; and there awaits them a painful chastisement because they used to lie. ۞ When it is said to them, 'Do not corruption in the land,' they say, 'We are only putting things right.' ۞ Truly, they are the agents of corruption, but they perceive not. ۞ When it is said to them, 'Believe as the people believe,' they say, 'Shall we believe as fools believe?' Truly, they are the foolish ones, but they know not. ۞ When they meet those who believe, they say, 'We believe'; but when they go apart to their devils they say, 'We are with you; we were only mocking.' ۞ God [Himself] mocks them, leaving them in their insolence, bewildered. ۞ Those are they who have bought error for guidance; so their commerce has not profited them; nor are they guided.

THE TOP 50

The Top 50

1. HE President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
President of the Republic of Turkey (6)
2. HM King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud
King of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques (4)
3. HE Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2)
4. HM King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein
King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,
Custodian of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem (5)
5. HE Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani
Scholar and Deobandi Leader (1)
6. HM King Mohammed VI
King of Morocco (7)
7. HH General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan
Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces (3)
8. HE Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani
Marja of the Hawza, Najaf, Iraq (8)
9. HE Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz
Scholar and Director of Dar Al Mustafa, Tarim, Yemen (9)
10. Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda
Scholar and Preacher (11)
11. HH Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamid Al-Thani
Emir of Qatar (12)
12. HE President Joko Widodo
President of Indonesia (13)
13. HE Sheikh Dr Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb
Grand Sheikh of the Al-Azhar University,
Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Mosque (14)
14. HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah
Scholar and President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies (15)
15. HE Imran Khan
Prime Minister of Pakistan (16)
16. HE President Muhammadu Buhari
President of Nigeria (17)
17. HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa
Former Grand Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt (18)
18. Professor KH Said Aqil Siradj
Chairman of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama (19)
19. HRE Amirul Mu'minin Sheikh As-Sultan Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III
Sultan of Sokoto (20)
20. Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah
Secretary-General of Hezbollah (21)
21. Sheikh Habib Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri
Preacher and Director General of the Tabah (22)
22. Sheikh Hamza Yustuf Hanson
Teacher and Co-Founder of Zaytuna College (23)
23. HRH Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud
Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia (24)
24. Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse
Leader of the Tijaniyya Sufi Order (25)
25. Sheikha Munira Qubeysi
Leader of the Qubeysi (27)

26. HE Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal Al-Sheikh
Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (26)
27. Maulana Mahmood Madani
Leader and Executive Member of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, India (28)
28. Sheikh Mustafa Hosny
Preacher (29)
29. Sheikh Usama Al-Sayyid Al-Azhari
Scholar (30)
30. HH Shah Karim Al-Hussayni
The Aga Khan IV, 49th Imam of Ismaili Muslims (31)
31. Sheikh Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi
Head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (32)
32. Habib Luthfi bin Yahya
Preacher (33)
33. Sheikh Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi
Leader of the Houthi (34)
34. Sheikh Mahmud Effendi
Scholar and Preacher (35)
35. Maulana Tariq Jameel
Scholar and Preacher (36)
36. Sheikh Moez Masoud
Preacher and Televangelist (37)
37. HE President Halimah Yacob
President of Singapore (38)
38. Sheikh Rached Ghannouchi
Tunisian Politician (39)
39. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi
Scholar (40)
40. Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr
Philosopher and University Professor (41)
41. Sheikh Uthman Taha
Calligrapher (43)
42. Mohammed Salah
Footballer (44)
43. Sheikh Muqtada Sadr
Scholar and Political (45)
44. Maulana Nazur ur-Rahman
Amir of Tablighi Jamaat, Pakistan (50)
45. HE President Mahmoud Abbas
President of Palestine (46)
46. Dr Aref Ali Nayed
Scholar (47)
47. Dr Timothy Winter (Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad)
Islamic Scholar (48)
48. HE Sheikh Ibrahim Salih
Islamic Scholar, Nigeria (Hon Men)
49. Dr Mohamed Bechari
French activist (49)
50. Amr Khalid
Preacher (Hon Men)

* The number in brackets indicates last year's position.

THE TOP 50 AND HONOURABLE MENTIONS LISTED BY CATEGORY

Although the influence of the Top 50 straddles many categories and cannot be limited to just one or another category, it can be insightful to place them into more general categories. To the Top 50 we have added the Honourable Mentions and have chosen three general categories into which to place them: 1. Rulers and Politicians, 2. Scholars and Preachers and 3. Social Issues, Media, Social Media, Arts, Culture and Sports.

Rulers and Politicians

1. HE President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
2. HM King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud
3. HE Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei
4. HM King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein
5. HM King Mohammed VI
6. HH General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan
7. HH Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamid Al-Thani
8. HE President Joko Widodo
9. HE Prime Minister Imran Khan
10. HE President Muhammadu Buhari
11. Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah
12. HRH Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud
13. HH Shah Karim Al-Hussayni
14. Sheikh Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi
15. HE President Halimah Yacob
16. HE Rached Ghannouchi
17. HE Sheikh Muqtada Sadr
18. HE President Mahmoud Abbas
19. HE Ismail Haniyeh
20. HE Anwar Ibrahim
21. HE Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad
22. HE Sadiq Khan

Scholars and Preachers

1. HE Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani
2. HE Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani
3. Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz
4. Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda
5. HE Professor Dr Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb
6. HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah
7. HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa
8. Professor Dr KH Said Aqil Siradj
9. HRE Amirul Mu'minin Sheikh As-Sultan Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III
10. Sheikh Habib Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri
11. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson
12. Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse
13. Sheikha Munira Qubeysi
14. HE Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal Al-Sheikh
15. HE Maulana Mahmood Madani
16. Sheikh Mustafa Hosny
17. Sheikh Usama Al-Sayyid Al-Azhari
18. Sheikh Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi
19. Habib Luthfi bin Yahya
20. Sheikh Mahmud Effendi
21. Maulana Tariq Jameel
22. Sheikh Moez Masoud
23. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi
24. Prof Seyyed Hossein Nasr
25. Maulana Nazur Rahman
26. HE Dr Aref Ali Nayed
27. Prof Timothy Winter (Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad)
28. HE Sheikh Ibrahim Salih
29. Dr Amr Khalid
30. HE Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Jawadi Amoli
31. HE Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq Fayadh
32. HE Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Sabouni
33. Prof M Din Syamsuddin
34. Prof Akbar Ahmed
35. Dr Ingrid Mattson
36. Aminu Ado Bayero

37. Mufti Abul Qasim Nomani
38. Sheikh Nuh Keller
39. Dr Muhammad Al-Arifi

40. Dr Zakir Abdul Karim Naik
41. Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri
42. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Sudais

Social Issues, Arts, Tech, Culture and Sports

1. HE Sheikh Uthman Taha
2. Mohammed Salah
3. Mohamed Bechari
4. Ahd Tamimi
5. Loujain Al-Hathloul
6. Malala Yousufzai

7. Salman Khan
8. Maher Zain
9. Sami Yusuf
10. Sadio Mane
11. Khabib Nurmagomedov



Calligraphy by Mothana Al-Obaydi © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

Country: Turkey

Born: 26 Feb 1954 (age 66)

Source of Influence: Political

Influence: President of 84.6 million Turkish citizens

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (6)

2019: (1)

2018: (5)

“We are followers of a long established tradition which has, throughout history, considered social, cultural and religious differences as richness.”

2nd

largest standing military force in NATO

18

UNESCO World Heritage Sites



1

His Excellency

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

HE President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

President of the Republic of Turkey

HE Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was the Prime Minister of Turkey for 11 years, winning three consecutive elections with a majority (2002, 2007 and 2011), before becoming Turkey's first popularly-elected president in August 2014 and then securing a second term in the 2018 election. During his terms, Turkey has seen unprecedented economic growth, constitutional reform, and a re-emergence as a major global power. All this, combined with his unapologetic voice on the world stage and support of Muslim issues, have won over Muslims world-wide.

President: Erdoğan secured 52.5% of the vote in the 2018 presidential election (electoral turnout was 86%), and thereby avoided a second-round runoff. This was a continuation of his remarkable popularity and success at the ballot box over the past two decades. During his time as president he has pushed for more powers for his post, a move not welcomed by all, and criticised by many as signs of wanting excessive power. He has lost support from key members of his own party and been criticised for cracking down on the media.

Taste of Defeat: When President Erdoğan returned to the leadership of the AKP in 2017 he expected to continue his amazing streak of victories in the 2019 local elections. This time, the AKP lost not only Istanbul, for the first time in 25 years, but also five of Turkey's six largest cities. The Turkish government ordered a re-election in Istanbul, but the AKP fared even worse in the re-run elections in June. The state of the economy, mental fatigue with AKP rule as well as a well-organised and united opposition were all factors in this defeat.

Failed Coup Ramifications: The failed coup of 15 July 2017, which led to about 200 deaths, has led to huge ramifications as Erdoğan looks to root out all those involved. He has squarely laid the blame of orchestrating the coup on Fethullah Gülen, and has led an all-out attack on Gülen's organisations and supporters. There has been a major crackdown on many sectors with about 160,000 civil servants be-

ing dismissed in various state institutions, with over half from the education sector. Also, 50,000 people remain in detention with this number continually rising as authorities press ahead with regular raids.

Hagia Sophia:

Hagia Sophia, built in 537 as the patriarchal cathedral of Constantinople, was converted into the Fatih Mosque after Sultan Mehmed II conquered the city in 1453. In 1935 and in line with his effort to erase Turkey's Islamic identity, Atatürk converted Hagia Sophia into a museum. In July 2020, Erdoğan reversed Atatürk's decision and reclassified Hagia Sophia as a mosque, a decision celebrated by most Muslims.

Soft Power: The soft power of the Turkish film industry has played a large part in growing Turkey's influence throughout the Muslim world. Historical dramas about Sulayman the Magnificent and Sultan Abdul-Hamid II were hugely popular in the Arab world, but the drama about Ertuğrul, (*'Diriliş: Ertuğrul'*) the legendary father of the founder of the Ottoman Empire has intensified and broadened this influence. Leaders of other Muslim countries have not only urged their citizens to watch it, but have also taken it as a model with which to develop their own indigenous dramas.

Between the US and Russia: Ties with the US have strained considerably since Turkey decided to purchase the Russian S-400 defence system instead of the Patriot surface-to-air missile system. The US responded by suspending Turkey from the F-35 jet programme and holding up other arms deals.

Covid-19: Turkey's response to Covid-19 has been swift and decisive. Travel restrictions started in February, schools and universities started closing in March; a curfew was imposed on the elderly (over 65) and vulnerable; wearing masks in public places became mandatory in April and economic stimulus packages were launched in May.



Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 31 December 1935 (age 84)

Source of Influence: Political

Influence: King with authority over 35 million residents of Saudi Arabia and approximately 14 million pilgrims annually.

School of Thought: Moderate Salafi

2020: (4)

2019: (2)

2018: (2)

“He who believes that the Qur’an and Sunnah are obstacles in the path of development or progress has not read the Qur’an or did not understand the Qur’an.”

268 billion

barrels of proved crude and natural gas reserves.

25th

son of Ibn Saud, founder of Saudi Arabia



۞ 2 ۞

His Majesty

King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud

HM King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud

King of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

HM King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud was proclaimed the seventh king of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in January 2015, after the passing of King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz. He had previously held the position of Crown Prince since June 2012. King Salman's influence comes from being the absolute monarch of the most powerful Arab nation and is manifested by the role Saudi Arabia plays in three critical areas: 1. having the two holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, which millions of Muslims visit throughout the year; 2. exporting crude oil and refined petroleum products, which ensures its central international role; and 3. propagating Islam through its huge da'wa network, which makes its influence felt in all Muslim countries. On June 21st, 2017, King Salman appointed his son, Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz as Crown Prince of the Kingdom.

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques: HM King Salman has significant influence in the global Muslim community through his custodianship of the two holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. Makkah is the main pilgrimage site for 1.9 billion Muslims. Each year approximately 4 million pilgrims perform the Hajj. In addition to this, approximately 10 million pilgrims (including Saudi residents and GCC citizens) perform the umrah, 'the lesser Hajj', throughout the year. A multi-billion dollar expansion to the two mosques is well under way.

Controller of Oil Reserves: HM King Salman reigns over a land of massive crude oil reserves—Saudi Arabia has approximately 20 percent of the world's proven oil reserves—making him a key player in the global petroleum industry.

Head of the World's Largest Da'wa Network: King Salman is also head of the most extensive da'wa network of missionary Muslims in the world, promoting the Salafi brand of Islam. Salafism is historically rooted in Saudi Arabia, and owes its global spread to the financial backing of Saudi Arabia. Its violent offshoots have meant that Saudi Arabia itself is a target

for them and in an effort to combat this extremist ideology, King Salman launched the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (GCCEI) in an inauguration ceremony attended by US President Donald Trump during his first trip to the Middle East.

Successful Governor: King Salman was governor of Riyadh Province from 1955-60 and from 1963-2011. During that period, he oversaw the development of the capital city Riyadh from a small town into a thriving city of more than 7 million people. He played a major role in attracting capital projects and foreign investment into his country and improved political and economic relationships with the West. He built up a strong reputation for having an efficient and corruption-free administration.

Military Action: In March 2015, King Salman launched a nine-state coalition bombing campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen. The campaign is cited as curbing Iranian influence in the region, but it has also tarnished Saudi's international reputation as it continues to bomb the poorest nation on earth. The conflict has become even more complicated as cracks appear in the coalition, notably with the UAE, who are backing a new faction.

Key Appointments: The transfer of power from the sons of the founder of Saudi Arabia, King Abdul-Aziz, to the new generation, which some feared would be an issue that would split the country, has been remarkably smooth so far. HRH Prince Muhammad bin Salman is the second Crown Prince from the new generation appointed by King Salman. This has brought changes in law which have had monumental social effects, changes such as allowing women in Saudi Arabia to move freely and drive, and the promotion of cinemas and music concerts.

Covid-19: The Hajj was all but cancelled as only 1,000 residents were allowed to perform the pilgrimage. Strict lockdown measures and travel restrictions have been enforced.



Country: Iran

Born: 16 July 1939 (age 81)

Source of Influence: Political, Administrative

Influence: Supreme Leader of 84.3 million Iranians

School of Thought: Traditional Twelver Shia, Revolutionary Shi'ism

2020: (2)

2019: (4)

2018: (4)

“Today we see the signs of this thirst for the message of Islam, which is the message of monotheism, the message of spirituality, the message of justice, the message of human dignity.”

70%

of Iran's population is under 30 years old.

21

published books



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His Eminence

Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei

HE Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei is the second Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He was born in Mashhad and studied in the leading Iranian religious seminary in Qom before becoming involved in the struggle with the Pahlavi Regime in the sixties and seventies. He was a key figure in the revolution in 1979 and served as President between 1981-1989 before succeeding Ayatollah Khomeini as Supreme Leader upon the latter's death. He has vocally supported most of the unrest in the Arab World, likening it to the Iranian Revolution.

Supreme Leader, Velayat-e Faqih: Khamenei's current influence stems from his powerful position as a religious leader, which gives him a unique role in political affairs. His job is to enact the Velayat-e Faqih—the guardianship of the jurist. In real terms this means a system where scholars of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) have a controlling say in the political affairs of the state. The rule of the jurist was a concept created by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, based on ideas that have run through Iranian political history since the time of Shah Ismail—who was the first to make Shia Islam the national religion of Iran in the early 16th century under the rule of the Safavids. It was conceived as a way of safeguarding the Iranian nation from tyranny; giving the final say in all matters to a group of religious scholars, the Council of Guardians. This Council is headed by a chief arbitrator—the Supreme Leader.

Leader of Shia Revolution: Khamenei gains much of his influence in Iran from his role as a leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran was forged out of the 1979 Revolution. Combating what many saw as the tyrannical rule of the Shah, Khamenei joined the Society of Combatant Clergy that staged demonstrations mobilising many of the protests leading to the Shah's overthrow. After the revolution in 1979, Khamenei was one of the founding members of the Islamic Republic Party, and

a member of the assembly of experts that was responsible for drafting Iran's new constitution.

Sunni-Shia Reconciliation: On September 2, 2010 Khamenei issued a historic fatwa banning the insult of any symbol that Sunnis hold to be dear, including but not limited to the companions and wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). This fatwa was received with great appreciation by the Chancellor of Al-Azhar University, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayyeb.

Sanctions: Since 1979, the United States has used sanctions to try to influence Iran's policies, including Iran's uranium enrichment program. The sanctions have had a detrimental effect on many aspects of life in the country. In 2015, Iran and the P5+1 (the US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany) agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which limited Iran's nuclear activities and allowed international inspectors in return for the lifting of economic sanctions. This agreement worked for 4 years before President Trump unilaterally withdrew from it and subsequently imposed stricter sanctions on Iran and secondary sanctions for countries still buying Iranian oil. The Iranian economy has been hit hard with the currency losing about 60% of its value against the dollar and a very negative IMF economy prediction.

Current Issues: The USA's decision to pull out of the nuclear deal and re-impose sanctions has put further strain on the economy. Iran's role in the Syria and Yemen conflicts and how it maintains its relationships with the Arab world are further key issues that require Khamenei's lead. The US assassinated Major General Qasem Soleimani in January 2020 and although Iran replied by firing missiles at a US base in Iraq, this issue seems far from resolved for many.

Covid-19: After initially suggesting the virus was part of a military attack, lockdowns and social distancing measures were introduced and pilgrimages, marches and large religious ceremonies were banned.



Country: Jordan

Born: 30 January 1962 (age 58)

Source of Influence: Custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Influence: King with authority over 10.5 million Jordanians; outreach to Traditional Islam

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (5)

2019: (3)

2018: (3)

“Today, for the world’s people to know each other, we need real dialogue. That means speaking honestly, listening carefully, and acting on the positive values we all share.”

41st generation

direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

26 miles

of coastline



۞ 4 ۞

His Majesty

King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein

HM King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein

King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Custodian of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem

HM King Abdullah II is the constitutional monarch of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Arab Army. He is also the Custodian of the Muslim and Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem.

Location: King Abdullah is not the leader of a rich or populous country, nor is he a religious scholar, but what makes his role vital is being the linchpin to the central cause of the Islamic world: the issue of Palestine and Jerusalem, and his being the Custodian of the Muslim and Christian Holy Sites there. There are over 12 million Palestinians in the world, 3 million in Jordan itself, around another 5 million in the occupied territories and Israel, and 2 million in Gaza. As Palestine is not recognised as a state by the whole international community, the responsibility for an equitable peace falls largely on its next-door neighbour Jordan, and on King Abdullah II in particular, especially as his family have been the hereditary Custodians of the holy sites from before the creation of the state of Jordan itself. Moreover, in the face of increased pressure to dissolve the very notion of Palestinian identity; dissolve UNRWA and illegally and unilaterally grant Jerusalem to Israel, King Abdullah has been the only voice of influence actively—but responsibly—resisting this catastrophe for the Islamic world. Moreover, Jerusalem is as holy to Muslims as it is to Jews and Christians, and its loss would represent a grievance based not only on justice but on faith to all the world's 1.9 billion Muslims, a situation with explosive potential consequences, to say the least.

Lineage: King Abdullah II is a 41st generation direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through the line of the Prophet's grandson Al-Hasan. The Hashemite Dynasty is the second-oldest ruling dynasty in the world, after that of Japan. As the current bearer of the Hashemite legacy, HM King Abdullah II has a unique prestige in the Islamic World, in addition to his being the custodian of the Muslim and Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem (and of course Jordan itself).

Longevity: King Abdullah II is now the longest-serving Arab ruler (and still in his 50s). His father King Hussein himself ruled for 47 years and was the longest-serving Arab leader when he died in 1999.

Support for Jerusalem (Al-Quds): HM King Ab-

dullah II is the custodian of Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem, the sacred compound which contains Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. HM is also the custodian of Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. He has strongly supported the upkeep and renovation of these sites.

Reformer: HM King Abdullah's progressive vision for Jordan is based on political openness, economic and social development, and the Islamic values of goodwill and tolerance. Under his reign Jordan has witnessed sweeping constitutional changes (one third of the Constitution was amended), and political and social reforms aimed at increasing governmental transparency and accountability.

Islamic Outreach: In response to growing Islamophobia in the West in the wake of 9/11 and rising sectarian strife, King Abdullah II launched the Amman Message initiative (see "www.ammanmessage.com" on page 75), which was unanimously adopted by the Islamic World's political and temporal leaderships. King Abdullah II is also credited with the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought's most authoritative website on the Holy Qur'an and Tafsir (see "Altafsir.com" on page 194). He also founded the World Islamic Sciences and Education University in Jordan (www.wise.edu.jo) in 2008. In 2012, King Abdullah II set up integrated professorial chairs for the study of the work of Imam Ghazali at the Aqsa Mosque and Imam Razi at the King Hussein Mosque. And in 2014, he established a fellowship for the study of love in religion at Regent's Park College, Oxford University.

Majalla Law: 80% of Jordan's laws are based on the Ottoman Majalla and hence on traditional Hanafi Shari'a. Jordan has a Chief Mufti; official Muftis in every province; Army and Police Grand Muftis and Shari'a Courts for all personal status issues for Muslims. Yet it has Orthodox-Priest-run courts for its native Christian population in Christian personal status issues, and Jordan guarantees Christian seats in the Parliament and de facto at every level of government. It has civil law for all citizens and additional tribal laws and customs for tribesmen and tribeswomen.

Interfaith Outreach: HM King Abdullah II is also lauded as an interfaith leader for his support of the 2007 A Common Word initiative (see "A Common

Word” on page 145). He was also the initiator and driving force behind the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week Resolution in 2010 (see “UN World Interfaith Harmony Week” on page 180). In 2014 HM King Abdullah hosted HH Pope Francis in Jordan (having previously hosted both HH Pope Benedict XVI and HH Pope John Paul II). In 2015 the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ on Jordan’s River Bank was unanimously voted a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Thus, at the same time that DA’ISH was destroying Syria and Iraq’s historical and archaeological treasures, King Abdullah was preserving not just Muslim Holy Sites, but Christian Holy Sites and universal historical treasures as well.

Safe Haven: Jordan has around 2 million registered and unregistered refugees from Syria and Iraq and other regional conflicts (such as Libya and Yemen), in addition to around 2 million refugees from the Palestine conflict. Despite its paucity of resources,

Jordan has welcomed and accommodated a staggering number of refugees and is seen by many as the most stable country in a turbulent region. It has the highest percentage of refugees of any country in the world.

Templeton Prize Winner 2018: HM King Abdullah was awarded the 2018 Templeton Prize, the most prestigious prize in the world in religious affairs. He is the second Muslim, and the first statesman, ever to be granted this honour. The prize recognises those who have “made an exceptional contribution to affirming life’s spiritual dimension”. The judges mentioned in particular the King’s work in promoting intra-Islamic religious harmony, reclaiming the narrative from extremists, as well as between Islam and other faiths.

Covid-19: Jordan imposed swift and strict lockdowns and has managed to control the spread so far.



THE AMMAN MESSAGE



www.AmmanMessage.com

[T]he best resource for those who wish to travel along the straight path in their words and their actions, and in their spiritual and religious life.

— The Grand Sheikh of the Azhar, Sheikh Mohammed Sayyid Tantawi رحمته الله, 2006.

The Amman Message started as a detailed statement released the eve of the 27th of Ramadan 1425 AH / 9th November 2004 CE by H.M. King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein in Amman, Jordan. It sought to declare what Islam is and what it is not, and what actions represent it and what actions do not. Its goal was to clarify to the modern world the true nature of Islam and the nature of true Islam.

In order to give this statement more religious authority, H.M. King Abdullah II then sent the following three questions to 24 of the most senior religious scholars from all around the world representing all the branches and schools of Islam: (1) Who is a Muslim? (2) Is it permissible to declare someone an apostate (*takfir*)? (3) Who has the right to undertake issuing *fatwas* (legal rulings)?

Based on the fatwas provided by these great scholars (who included the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Ayatollah Sistani, and Sheikh Qaradawi), in July 2005 CE, H.M. King Abdullah II convened an international Islamic conference of 200 of the world's leading Islamic scholars (*ulema*) from 50 countries. In Amman, the scholars unanimously issued a ruling on three fundamental issues (which became known as the 'Three Points of the Amman Message'):

- They specifically recognised the validity of all 8 *mathhabs* (legal schools) of Sunni, Shia, and Ibadhi Islam; of traditional Islamic Theology (Ash'arism); of Islamic Mysticism (Sufism), and of true Salafi thought, and came to a precise definition of who is a Muslim.
- Based upon this definition they forbade *takfir* (declarations of apostasy) between Muslims.
- Based upon the Mathahib they set forth the subjective and objective preconditions for the issuing of *fatwas*, thereby exposing ignorant and illegitimate edicts in the name of Islam.

These Three Points were then unanimously adopted by the Islamic World's political and temporal leaderships at the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit at Makkah in December 2005. And over a period of one year from July 2005 to July 2006, the Three Points were also unanimously adopted by six other international Islamic scholarly assemblies, culminating with the International Islamic Fiqh Academy of Jeddah, in July 2006. In total, over 500 leading Muslim scholars worldwide—as can be seen on this website—unanimously endorsed the Amman Message and its Three Points.

This amounts to a historical, universal and unanimous religious and political consensus (*ijma'*) of the Ummah (nation) of Islam in our day, and a consolidation of traditional, orthodox Islam. The significance of this is: (1) that it is the first time in over a thousand years that the Ummah has formally and specifically come to such a pluralistic mutual inter-recognition; and (2) that such a recognition is religiously legally binding on Muslims since the Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) said: My Ummah will not agree upon an error (Ibn Majah, *Sunan*, Kitab al-Fitan, Hadith no. 4085).

This is good news not only for Muslims, for whom it provides a basis for unity and a solution to infighting, but also for non-Muslims. For the safeguarding of the legal methodologies of Islam (the *mathahib*) necessarily means inherently preserving traditional Islam's internal 'checks and balances'. It thus assures balanced Islamic solutions for essential issues like human rights; women's rights; freedom of religion; legitimate jihad; good citizenship of Muslims in non-Muslim countries, and just and democratic government. It also exposes the illegitimate opinions of radical fundamentalists and terrorists from the point of view of true Islam. As George Yeo, the Foreign Minister of Singapore, declared in the 60th Session of the U.N. General Assembly (about the Amman Message): "Without this clarification, the war against terrorism would be much harder to fight."

Country: Pakistan

Born: 5 October 1943 (age 77)

Source of Influence: Scholarly, Lineage

Influence: Leading scholar for the Deobandis and in Islamic finance.

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni (Hanafi, Deobandi)

2020 (1)

2019: (6)

2018: (7)

"Nothing destroys one's respect in the hearts of others more than greed."

143 books

authored in Arabic, English, and Urdu

3 thousand

schools affiliated with Darul 'Uloom



۞ 5 ۞

His Eminence

Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani

HE Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Leading Scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence and Finance

Justice Sheikh Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani is a leading scholar of Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic finance. He is considered to be the intellectual head of the Deobandi School of Islamic learning, as well as an authority outside of the Deobandi School. He served as Judge of the Shari'at Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan from 1982 to May 2002. He specialises in Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence and financial matters.

Deobandi De facto Leader: Usmani is very important as a figurehead in the Deobandi movement—one of the most successful of the Islamic revivalist initiatives of the past century. His views and fatwas are taken as the final word by Deobandi scholars globally including those at the Deoband seminary in India. Usmani was born in Deoband, India, to Mufti Muhammad Shafi (the former Grand Mufti of Pakistan) who founded the Darul 'Uloom, Karachi, a leading centre of Islamic education in Pakistan. He has authority to teach hadith from Sheikh al-Hadith Mawlana Zakariya Khandelawi amongst others, and he traversed the spiritual path of Tasawwuf under the guidance of Sheikh Dr Abdul Hayy Arifi, a student of the great revivalist scholar of India, Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. His students in the thousands are spread across the globe, especially in the Indian subcontinent, central Asia and many Western countries. It is estimated that over 65% of all madrassas in Pakistan are Deobandi as well as 600 of the 2000 mosques in the UK. Deobandis consider themselves orthodox Hanafi Sunnis.

Leading Islamic Finance Scholar: Usmani's other influence comes from his position as a global authority on Islamic finance. He has served on the boards, and as chairman, of over a dozen Islamic banks and financial institutions, and currently leads the International Sharia Council for the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) in Bahrain. He is also a permanent member of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy of the

Organization of the Islamic Conference, one of the highest legal bodies in the Muslim world.

Writer: He has translated the Qur'an both into English and Urdu. He is the author of a six-volume Arabic Hadith commentary on Sahih Muslim. He is the Chief Editor of both the Urdu and English monthly magazine *Albalagh*, and regularly contributes articles to leading Pakistani newspapers on a range of issues. His legal edicts (fatwas), written over the period of 45 years, are published in 4 large volumes. He has authored more than 80 books in Arabic, English, and Urdu.

New Works: He is directly supervising *The Hadith Encyclopaedia*, a masterful, pioneering compilation which will provide a universal number to each Hadith in a manner that will make referencing any Hadith as easy as it is to refer to an ayat of the Qur'an. The Encyclopaedia will be over 300 volumes. A second major work recently published is entitled *The Jurisprudence (Fiqh) of Trade*. The book concludes with a proposed Code of Islamic Law of Sale of Goods and Transfer of Property, which serves as a powerful call to action for regulators and standard setting organisations alike.

Assassination Attempt: On March 22, 2019, as Mufti Taqi was on his way to deliver a Friday sermon, gunmen riding three motorbikes opened fire on his and an accompanying car. The Mufti, his wife and two grandchildren (a girl aged seven and boy aged five), miraculously survived the shower of bullets untouched, but two people lost their lives and a further two were severely injured. The Prime Minister of Pakistan condemned the attack as did scholars and politicians across the board. As of yet, no one has claimed responsibility for carrying out the attack.

Covid-19: The Mufti has argued for keeping the mosques open—this situation demands prayers—but has asked the vulnerable to stay at home and has stressed the need for extra measures to be in place at mosques to minimise transmission of the virus.



Country: Morocco

Born: 21 August 1963 (age 57)

Source of Influence: Political, Administrative, Development

Influence: King with authority over 37 million Moroccans

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni, Maliki

2020 (7)

2019: (5)

2018: (6)

“But what is freedom? For me, it is the respect of the other and the respect of the law. Freedom is not anarchy.”

1631^{CE}

the year the Alaouite dynasty was founded

90

thousand tonnes of dates exported annually



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His Majesty

King Mohammed VI

HM King Mohammed VI

King of Morocco

HM King Mohammed VI is a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his family has ruled Morocco for close to 400 years. He is also constitutionally the Amir Al-Mu'minin, or Commander of the Faithful, thereby combining religious and political authority. King Mohammed VI is lauded for his domestic reform policies and pioneering efforts in modernising Morocco and countering terrorism. He tackles issues of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion at home, and has improved foreign relations. King Mohammed VI influences the network of Muslims following the Maliki school of Islamic jurisprudence, and is a leading monarch in Africa.

Four-Hundred Year Alaouite Dynasty: The 400 year-old Alaouite dynasty traces its lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It takes its name from Moulay Ali Cherif, who became Prince of Tafilalt in 1631. It sees itself as a continuation of the Andalusian Golden Age of Islam, which was characterised by peaceful co-existence, intellectual and cultural exchange and development.

Influence on Maliki Network: Morocco is home to the oldest university in the world, Al-Karaouine. This university is the centre of the Maliki school of jurisprudence. Since early in his reign, King Mohammed VI has implemented the Mudawana family law code that gives rights to women in divorce and property ownership, as well as citizenship to children born from non-Moroccan fathers. He has also commissioned the Islamic Affairs Ministry to train women preachers, or Morchidat, who are now active chaplains to Moroccans across the globe.

Huge Influence over Muslims in Africa: King Mohammed VI leads the largest African monarchy, with a population of 32 million. Besides political links, Morocco maintains strong spiritual ties with Muslims all over Africa. Morocco is the site of the tomb of a highly revered Sufi sheikh, Mawlana Ahmed ibn Mohammed Tijani Al-Hassani-Maghribi (1735-1815 CE), the founder of the Tijaniyya Sufi order,

whose shrine attracts millions from across the continent. Morocco is also recognised as a source for the spread of Islam through West Africa.

The Marrakesh Declaration: The King invited hundreds of the Islamic world's leading scholars to gather for a 3-day summit in Marrakesh in January 2016 to address the question of the treatment of religious minorities in Muslim-majority communities. Basing themselves on the Charter of Medina, also known as the Constitution of Medina, which was drawn up by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself, they issued calls for majority-Muslim communities to respect minorities' "freedom of movement, property ownership, mutual solidarity and defence". HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco delivered the inaugural address and pointed to the history of Islam's co-existence with other religions. This showed how Islam has enshrined the rights of religious minorities, and promoted religious tolerance and diversity. (see page 152)

Support for Jerusalem (Al-Quds): The King and indeed all Moroccans show strong support for Palestinians and for Jerusalem. The Moroccan link with Jerusalem has been strong since Salah Al-Din's son endowed the Magharbeh Quarter, next to the Buraq Wall, to North African pilgrims in 1193. This 800 year-old quarter was demolished by the Israeli authorities in 1967 after they captured East Jerusalem.

Reform: King Mohammed VI has implemented major reforms in response to the Arab Spring protests. These have included a new constitution which has transferred many powers to a freely and fairly elected government. The gradual reforms of the King have been hailed as a model for other Arab countries to follow.

Covid-19: Morocco imposed strict lockdowns, including curfews, and travel restrictions with air and sea borders closed for months. Eight cities barred people from entering or leaving.



Country: UAE

Born: 11 March 1961 (age 59)

Source of Influence: Administrative, Development, Philanthropy

Influence: Military and political leadership

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (3)

2019: (15)

2018: (15)

“We have to ensure the new generation is equipped with knowledge and science so they can represent our competitive advantage in front of the whole world. Our only choice is quality.”

\$2.3 billion
allocated for defence spending
in 2019

20%
of Abu Dhabi's population is
Emirati



His Highness

**General Sheikh Mohammed
bin Zayed Al-Nahyan**

HH General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan is the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, as well as next in line to be President of the United Arab Emirates. He is the third son of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the widely respected first President of the UAE who ruled from independence in 1971 until his death in 2004.

Military Leadership: Sheikh Mohammed has transformed the military capabilities of the UAE not only through buying military hardware (over 80 F-16 jets), but also by developing the UAE's own industry, both hardware and special forces. All of these have also been deployed in various conflicts including Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen. The UAE is an important centre for global weapons trading hosting the world's largest defence expos.

Influence in the US and Beyond: Sheikh Mohammed had an excellent relationship with President Obama until the US-Iran nuclear deal was brokered. With the arrival of President Trump, Sheikh Mohammed has found someone who again listens to his views and, by increasing his lobbying power in the US, he has managed to have his views heard on Iran, the Muslim brotherhood, Palestine and the support of a young Saudi prince. Further, Sheikh Mohammed has shown that he is his own man by following policies that the US does not support publicly: the support of Libyan general Khalifa Haftar and the blockade on Qatar. Involvement in other key issues show that the UAE is punching above its weight in international affairs. Its involvement in Yemen has become increasingly complex with a recent split with Saudi policy meaning their respective proxies on the ground fighting each other as well as local forces and proxies of Iran. The humanitarian disaster in Yemen is of an immense magnitude with many voices squarely laying the brunt of blame on UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Abraham Accords: The UAE (along with Bahrain) formalised relations with Israel by signing the Abraham Accords Peace Treaty at the White House in

September 2020. With the Israeli Prime Minister and President Trump in attendance, this represents a major step forward for the 'Deal of the Century' and could pave the way for many Arab countries to follow suit. Palestinians and their supporters are outraged and have labelled this a sell-out of their cause.

Economic Development: With Abu Dhabi sitting on the 10th of the world's proven oil reserves, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan maintains immense political influence in the Muslim World as a leading member of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company—which directs development efforts for the UAE's role in the oil and gas industries. He also controls one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds (700 billion dollars). He has overseen a construction boom which includes man-made islands, entertainment parks and museum franchises of the Louvre and Guggenheim.

Sustainable Development and Conservationist: Sheikh Mohammed has been a champion of sustainable development in Abu Dhabi as an advocate for the implementation of green technologies. He pledged \$15 billion for the development of clean energy through solar, wind and hydrogen power. He is also a keen falconer and is committed to protecting falcons and other species in the region.

Philanthropy and Tolerance: Sheikh Mohammed has donated billions of dollars to various causes, including DH55 million to the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, and purchasing vaccines in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The UAE is home to a diverse workforce and has been keen to show respect to other religions and cultures. It has allowed various houses of worship to be built. The first synagogue will be complete by 2022. The country hosted Pope Francis on a recent trip. It has also created a "Ministry of Tolerance" and declared 2019 the official "Year of Tolerance."

Covid-19: Strong and swift measures including lockdown, school closures and travel restrictions. Widespread disinfecting procedures were instigated.



Country: Iraq

Born: 4 August 1930 (age 90)

Source of Influence: Scholarly, Lineage

Influence: Highest authority for 21 million Iraqi Shia, and also internationally known as a religious authority to Usuli Twelver Shia

School of Thought: Traditional Twelver Shia, Usuli

2020: (8)

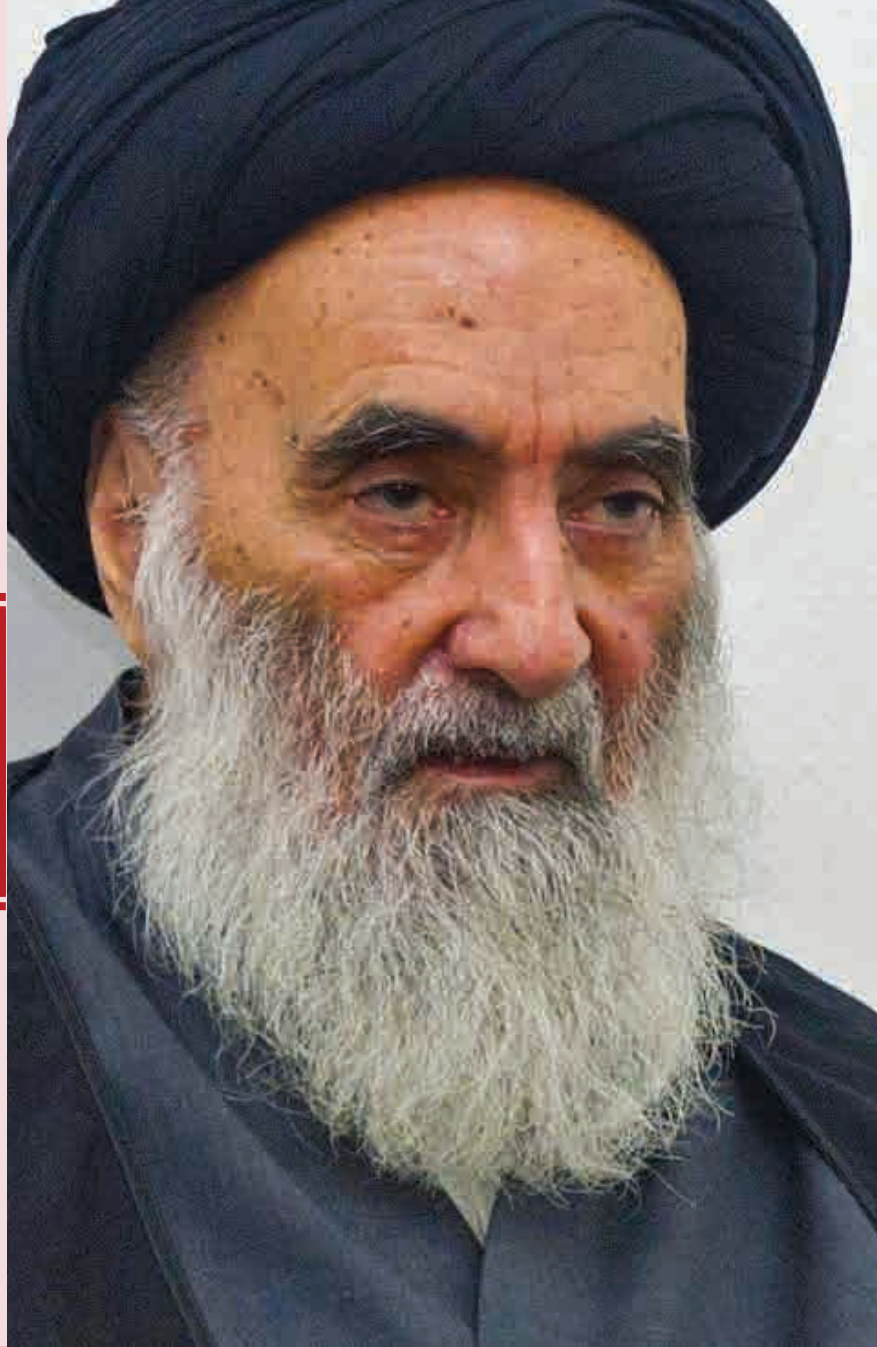
2019: (7)

2018: (8)

“The sons of the Iraqi people demand a political system based on direct elections and a constitution that realises justice and equality for everyone.”

49 thousand
students supported annually

31 years old
when he became a *mujtahid*



His Eminence

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani

HE Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani

Marja of the Hawza

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani is the prime *marja*, or spiritual reference for *Ithna Ashari'a* (Twelver) Shia Muslims. He is the leading sheikh of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq and the preeminent Shia cleric globally. Sistani is one of the most respected of the *marjaiyya*—the highest position of authority in the Usuli school of Twelver Shia fiqh.

Preeminent Shia Cleric and *Marja Taqlid*: Sistani's influence in the Twelver Shia sect stems from his scholarly lineage and education, which have enabled him to reach the status of *marja taqlid*—the highest status in the Usuli branch of Twelver Shia Islam. *Marja taqlid* means literally one who is worthy of being imitated—placing Sistani in a position of great authority over Twelver Shia Muslims. Sistani is descended from a family of religious scholars, and was educated in the leading institutions in Iran. He later went to Najaf, Iraq to study under the Grand Ayatollah Abu Al-Qasim Al-Khoei. On Khoei's death in 1992, Sistani took over as grand ayatollah, inheriting Khoei's following. He soon rose to become the leading cleric in Iraq. With the opening of Iraqi shrines to Iranian tourists, Sistani is gaining a following outside of Iraq.

Financial Influence: Sistani also has very significant financial clout. As a *marja* his followers give him a religious tax (*khums*, Arabic for one-fifth). The redistribution of this tax for the common good is one of the key roles of a *marja*. Much of this remittance is redistributed through the Al-Khoei Foundation—

the largest Twelver Shia development organisation in the world that maintains a network of educational and humanitarian establishments for both Shia and non-Shia Muslims.

Quietist Influence: Significantly, Sistani is against the idea of *Velayat-e Faqih*, suggesting Shia clerics should not get involved in politics. Paradoxically this approach has afforded him very strong influence as a religious leader unsullied by politics. Ali Sistani has used his position of quietist authority to wield influence also as a peacemaker in turbulent, post-invasion Iraq. At a time when Sistani was losing support to Sheikh Muqtada Al-Sadr, he showed his sway by arranging a lasting deal between Sadr and US forces at the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf in 2005—a deal that secured the Shrine and pushed for an American retreat. Sistani was vocal about encouraging Iraqis to participate in the 2010 parliamentary elections. He strongly condemned the Baghdad church attack in October 2010 and also advised Iraqi security forces to take more responsibility for the protection of Iraqi citizens. He has identified eliminating political corruption and improvement of public services as the main issues of the day outside. He has also issued strong statements against DA'ISH, calling on Iraqis to unite against the militants. Sistani rarely meets officials but made an exception for Iran's President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif in March 2019.



Country: Yemen

Born: 27 May 1963 (age 57)

Source of Influence: Scholarly, Spiritual leader and Preacher, Lineage

Influence: millions of traditional Muslim followers globally

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni (Shafi'i, Ba-Alawi Sufi)

2020 (9)

2019: (8)

2018: (10)

“Be true in your relationship with the Sovereign Creator, for He is the greatest one with whom you could relate in all your affairs and states. Know that He cares for those who turn to Him; relieves difficulties for them; is there for them in every circumstance, condition and change; and He shelters them in His Mercy, Grace, Pardon and Forgiveness.”

15

is the age at which he started teaching and doing da'wah.

1993^{CE}

is the year Dar Al-Mustafa was founded.



ۉ

His Eminence

Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz

HE Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz

Director of Dar Al-Mustafa

Habib Umar bin Hafiz is well-known for his Prophetic lineage and status as one of the most influential religious scholars alive today. His influence through scholarship and preaching is vast in the Middle East, Indonesia and East Africa especially. He is also incredibly influential through his leadership of the Ba Alawi Sufi movement. He has been touring South East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Europe and the US regularly in the past few years in response to his growing following there.

Study: Habib Umar received all his early education in the city of his birth, Tarim, at the hands of his father, the Mufti of Tarim and other revered scholars. In 1981, the situation became untenable for him to stay in South Yemen due to the communist regime and so Habib Umar migrated to the city of Al-Bayda in North Yemen where he continued his studies.

Cultivation of Scholarship: Habib Umar founded and runs Dar Al-Mustafa, a centre for traditional Islamic scholarship that currently hosts an array of international students, in Tarim, Yemen. Many of the graduates have gone on to become leading figures worldwide. He has joined the ranks of the world's leading Muslim academics and scholars as a signatory of 'A Common Word Between Us and You', a document that builds bridges between the Muslims and Christians. He has also spoken at Cambridge University on the need for such a dialogue. He has authored several books, such as *Al-Dhakirah Al-Musharrafah*, which is a summary of obligatory knowledge for every Muslim, three short hadith compilations and a summary of the third quarter of Imam Al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*. His mawlid compositions, *Al-Diya' Al-Lami'* and *Al-Sharab Al-Tabware*, are recited in gatherings throughout the world.

Da'wah and Humanitarian Efforts: Habib Umar is noted for his da'wah efforts, with significant visits to the USA and Europe. He has also partnered with Muslim Aid Australia as founder of Yemen-based NGO Al Rafah Charitable Society to address issues of poverty, hunger and lack of sufficient health care that affect areas of Tarim. His students, most notably Habib 'Ali Al-Jifri (see page 109), who established the Tabah Foundation, and Habib Kadhim Al-Saqqaf, are luminaries in their own right. He has a substantial following on social media, via Muwasala, an organisation founded by his students to "promote the scholarly teachings of the blessed tradition of

Hadramawt."

Ba Alawi Tariqa: The Ba Alawi have been centred in the region of Hadramaut, Yemen, for over a thousand years. They have produced outstanding figures of scholarship and piety and are well known for their missionary work, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia. The Tariqa has now spread to all parts of the world and is famous for using the *Ihya* of Imam Ghazali as a basis of their teachings.



Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 14 December 1956 (age 63)

Source of Influence: Scholarly, Media

Influence: 53 published books, supervised IslamToday.net, and reached millions through TV

School of Thought: Moderate Salafi

2020: (11)

2019: (10)

2018: (11)

“You cannot call yourself patient until you are willing and able to bear things that you have no wish to bear.”

2017_{CE}
the year he was arrested

53
books written



﴿ 10 ﴾

Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda

Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda

Saudi scholar and educator

A leading Saudi sheikh, Salman Al-Ouda is a former hard-line cleric turned advocate of peaceful co-existence. He became hugely influential due to his innovative reach in the Muslim World propagated via IslamToday.net and his persistent efforts at ministering to the needs of the global Muslim community. In September 2017, Al-Ouda was arrested by Saudi authorities along with twenty other Saudi clerics for tweets that were seen as offensive to the State. He is still imprisoned (including months of solitary confinement) and awaiting trial.

Key Scholar of Salafi Network: Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda is a leading scholar of the Salafi movement having notable influence in the movement due to his use of multiple modes of education (the Internet, audiovisual media, and print) to educate the large body of Salafi Muslims in the Islamic sciences. Sheikh Al-Ouda's website brings together a diverse range of Islamic scholars and educators to provide guidance in Islamic thought. He was imprisoned between 1994-1999 for calling for reforms within the country but softened his stance upon release. He is identified with the Sahwa movement, calling for peaceful political reform, more role for the clergy in politics and an opposition to western troops based in the peninsula. His hugely influential website, IslamToday.net—a Saudi-funded website dedicated to providing Islamic educational resources in English, Arabic, French and Chinese, seems to have been shut down. He was active on social media until his arrest and still has 22 million followers.

Ambassador of Non-violence: In an effort to distance himself from alleged connections to perpetra-

tors of terrorism, Al-Ouda is outspoken about the importance of inculcating love and mercy as opposed to violence (except in valid cases of self-defence) in the daily lives of Muslims. As a prominent member of the International Union for Muslim Scholars, he led the delegation in talks with Arab heads of state regarding the need for them to unite in opposition to Israel's siege of Gaza in early 2009. He has strongly condemned DA'ISH. He also called for peace and unity between members of the GCC and Qatar.

Arrested on Charges Against the State: Al-Ouda was arrested in September 2017 and charged for what ostensibly seems to be nothing more than tweets urging Saudi and Qatar to end a diplomatic rift. He had earlier voiced concerns about Saudi's human rights record, but perhaps his true crime has been not to publicly endorse and support the recent changes happening in Saudi Arabia. Al-Ouda has been held in punishing conditions, often in solitary confinement and detained incommunicado.

Unjust Arrest: With the public prosecutor calling for the maximum penalty to be implemented, there have been serious fears that Al-Ouda could be executed at any time. There has been outcry from a whole range of organisations about what is seen as a grossly unjust imprisonment, trial and possible sentence. The International Union of Muslim Scholars, the European Muslim Forum and Amnesty International have all called on the Saudi government to hold a fair trial or release Al-Ouda and his two compatriots; Sheikh Ali al-Omari and Sheikh Awad al-Qarni.



Country: Qatar

Born: 3 June 1980 (age 40)

Source of Influence: Political

Influence: Ruler of richest country per capita in the world

School of Thought: Sunni, Muslim Brotherhood

2020 (12)

2019: (19)

2018: (21)

“Suffering and injustice pave the way for terrorism to flourish. Evil actors will twist religious dogmas to poison the minds of desperate people.”

25 billion
barrels of crude oil reserves

\$124_k
per capita



❧ 11 ❧

His Highness

Emir Sheik Tamim bin Hamid Al-Thani

HH Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamid Al-Thani

Emir of Qatar

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani became the Emir of Qatar at the age of 33 after his father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, abdicated in June 2013. Qatar is the richest country in the world with a GDP per capita of \$63,505. It has under 400,000 citizens whilst the rest of its population of three million are expatriate workers. It is the top exporter of liquefied natural gas and the site of the third largest natural gas reserves in the world.

Family: Sheikh Tamim is Sheikh Hamad's fourth son and was chosen as Crown Prince in August 2003. His mother is the powerful Sheikha Moza, who still plays a prominent public role as an advocate for social and educational causes.

Education: Sheikh Tamim completed his studies at a private school in UK before going on to graduate at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst (in 1998). During his time as Crown Prince (2003-13), Sheikh Tamim had exposure to a wide-range of posts including security (he was deputy commander of the armed forces), economics (chairman of the Qatar Investment Authority) and sports. He supervised Qatar's successful bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Expectations: Qatar exploded onto the world scene under his father's reign, and expectations are that Sheikh Tamim will try to consolidate these achievements. Packing a punch far above its weight has led

to neighbouring countries questioning the purpose of so many initiatives. He has had to repair relations with other Gulf countries over supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and defend Qatar's world image over the treatment of labourers in Qatar.

Blockade: In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt cut all relations with Qatar and imposed trade and travel bans. This drastic action resulted from various claims that Qatar was supporting terrorism and had violated a 2014 agreement with GCC countries. Its good relations with Iran and its hosting of Al-Jazeera TV network are also factors in this tense situation which has seen foodstuff imported from Iran and Turkish soldiers called in to help safeguard Qatar assets. A further complicating factor in this family feud is that Qatar hosts the largest American base in the Middle East and all the blockade partners are close allies of the US. Over two years of the blockade seems to have made little impact, with the Emir enjoying good international relations and continuing foreign investment.

Covid-19: Strong and swift measures including lockdown, school closures and travel restrictions. Widespread disinfecting procedures were instigated and healthcare upgraded.



Country: Indonesia

Born: 21 June 1961 (age 59)

Source of Influence: Political

Influence: Leader of 274 million citizens and residents of Indonesia

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (13)

2019: (16)

2018: (16)

“Indonesian Islam is not Arabic Islam; it does not have to wear a robe, it does not have to wear a turban... The most important thing is the substance, that is the morality of Islam—robe, trousers, sarongs, no matter that.”

Over

17 thousand

islands in Indonesia

700

languages spoken in Indonesia



❧ 12 ❧

His Excellency

President Joko Widodo

HE President Joko Widodo

President of Indonesia

Joko Widodo, or Jokowi as he is popularly known, was re-elected President of Indonesia in the April 2019 elections, winning 55.5% of the vote and will serve his second and final term until 2024. Running against an opponent who questioned his Islamic credentials, President Widodo selected Ma'ruf Amin as running mate. Ma'ruf Amin is leader of the Indonesian Ulema Council, the country's top Muslim clerical body.

Background: President Widodo is the first Indonesian president not to be from the military or the political elite. He comes from a humble background of Javanese descent. His father had a small furniture business, which often couldn't make ends meet. They struggled to put him through university, where he graduated in the field of forestry. After graduation, Widodo worked for three years in the forestry service of a state enterprise in Aceh before returning to his family business.

Successful and 'Clean' Politician: Widodo was the mayor of Surakarta before becoming the governor of Jakarta in September 2012. As a successful mayor, he enjoyed a close relationship with his constituents. He focused on promoting the city as a centre of Javanese culture, but also developed the public transport system, healthcare and business relations with the community. He forged a reputation for being a 'clean' politician, avoiding the charges of corruption and nepotism which plague most politicians.

Governor of Jakarta: His political success continued with his election as governor of Jakarta. He was

equally successful as governor, making meaningful reforms in education, public transportation, revamping street vendors and traditional markets, and implementing flood control.

Presidential candidacy: Various awards (3rd place of the 2012 World Mayor Prize, one of the 'Top 10 Indonesian Mayors of 2008') testified to his success as mayor and governor, and there was little surprise when Megawati Sukarnoputri, the former President of Indonesia, chose Widodo to be the presidential candidate of the PDI-P party. He has also enjoyed the support of many musicians and artists (he himself is reported to enjoy heavy metal music), and this helped him greatly on his presidential campaign.

Blusukan Culture: President Widodo has become well-known for impromptu visits to see and hear directly from people in local communities. This has allowed him to directly address their concerns and criticisms, allowing him to develop a strong personal relationship with the public.

Future Prospects: Although economic growth has not been as expected, strong investment in infrastructure and social services ensure that Widodo still enjoys strong support amongst the populace. He is also still seen as an honest leader and oversaw a successful 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta.

Covid-19: Slow response and initial concern about effect on economy meant social distancing and other measures came in late. Also difficult to implement given the size of the country.



Country: Egypt

Born: 6 January 1946 (age 74)

Source of Influence: Administrative

Influence: Highest scholarly authority for the majority of Sunni Muslims, runs the foremost and largest Sunni Islamic university

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (14)

2019: (9)

2018: (1)

"It is necessary to present Islam the way it is, the way it respects others, the way it believes in others and grants them freedom of religion."

50th

Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar

970^{CE}

the year Al-Azhar University was founded.



13

His Eminence

Sheikh Dr Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb

HE Sheikh Dr Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb

Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar University, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Mosque

Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb was appointed as Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar in March 2010, after the passing of his predecessor, Dr Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi. Tayyeb was formerly the president of Al-Azhar for seven years and prior to that, served for two years as the most powerful cleric in Egypt as its Grand Mufti.

Scholarly Influence: His scholarly influence as a leading intellectual of Sunni Islam spans the globe. He has served as the Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Aswan, and the theology faculty of the International Islamic University in Pakistan. He has also taught in universities in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

Political Stance: Over the past years of political uncertainty and unrest in Egypt Tayyeb has attempted to hold the middle way. He has been outspoken against the Muslim Brotherhood for their exploitation of Islam as a political ideology whilst also resisting calls of President Abdel Fatah El-Sisi for a “religious revolution” and efforts to “renew Islamic discourse”. Such efforts included the suggestion to revoke the verbal divorce law in Egypt. Al-Azhar wholly rejected the President’s plan, calling the law an “undisputed practice since the days of the Prophet Muhammad.” Tayyeb has been active in trying to diffuse the influence of DA’ISH, organising many initiatives and conferences. He has also tried to improve foreign relations and met with many foreign religious leaders and heads of states (including the Pope and Queen Elizabeth).

Advocate of Traditional Islam: Sheikh Tayyeb has emphasised his mission to promote traditional Islam since becoming Grand Sheikh. He has stressed the importance of teaching students about Islamic heritage—considering Al-Azhar graduates as ambassadors of Islam to the world. In an age where the claimants to authoritative Islam seem to be on every corner, Sheikh Tayyeb has both the institute and the personal skills to authentically claim to be a representative

of traditional Islam, Islam as practiced by the majority of Muslims throughout the ages. On 29 August 2016 during the World Islamic Conference held in Grozny, Chechnya, Sheikh Tayyeb defined the Sunni community (Ahl Sunnah wa Jama’a) as those who follow Imam Abul-Hasan Al-Ash’ari and Imam Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi and the scholars of Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi’i jurisprudence, as well as the moderate scholars of Hanbali school. He also included the Sufis following in the way of Imam Al-Junayd.

Leader of Al-Azhar University: Sheikh Tayyeb leads the second-oldest university in the world, where teaching has continued without interruption since 975 CE. Al-Azhar represents the centre of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence. It is a key institution that issues authoritative religious rulings and has provided extensive Islamic education to Egyptian and international students since its inception over a millennium ago. This history makes it a bastion of Sunni traditionalism. The university is considered one of the most prominent Islamic educational institutions and the foremost centre of Sunni Muslim scholarship worldwide.

Administers Al-Azhar Education Network: Al-Azhar is currently the largest university in the world, having risen from a group of three schools in the 1950s to its current state with 72 feeder schools, with close to 300,000 students studying there at any one time. Including schools that are part of Al-Azhar waqf initiatives, there are close to two million students. The graduates of Al-Azhar have great respect as religious leaders within the Muslim community, and this makes the head of Al-Azhar an extraordinarily powerful and influential person.

Covid-19: In April 2020, the Council of Senior Religious Scholars of Al-Azhar issued a fatwa declaring that any public gathering during the pandemic, even for the purpose of worship, constitute a contravention of the Sharia law. Mosques remained closed for 5 months.



Country: Mauritania

Born: 1935 (age 85)

Source of Influence: Scholarly

Influence: Significant influence as a leading contemporary scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence.

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni (Maliki)

2020 (15)

2019: (11)

2018: (9)

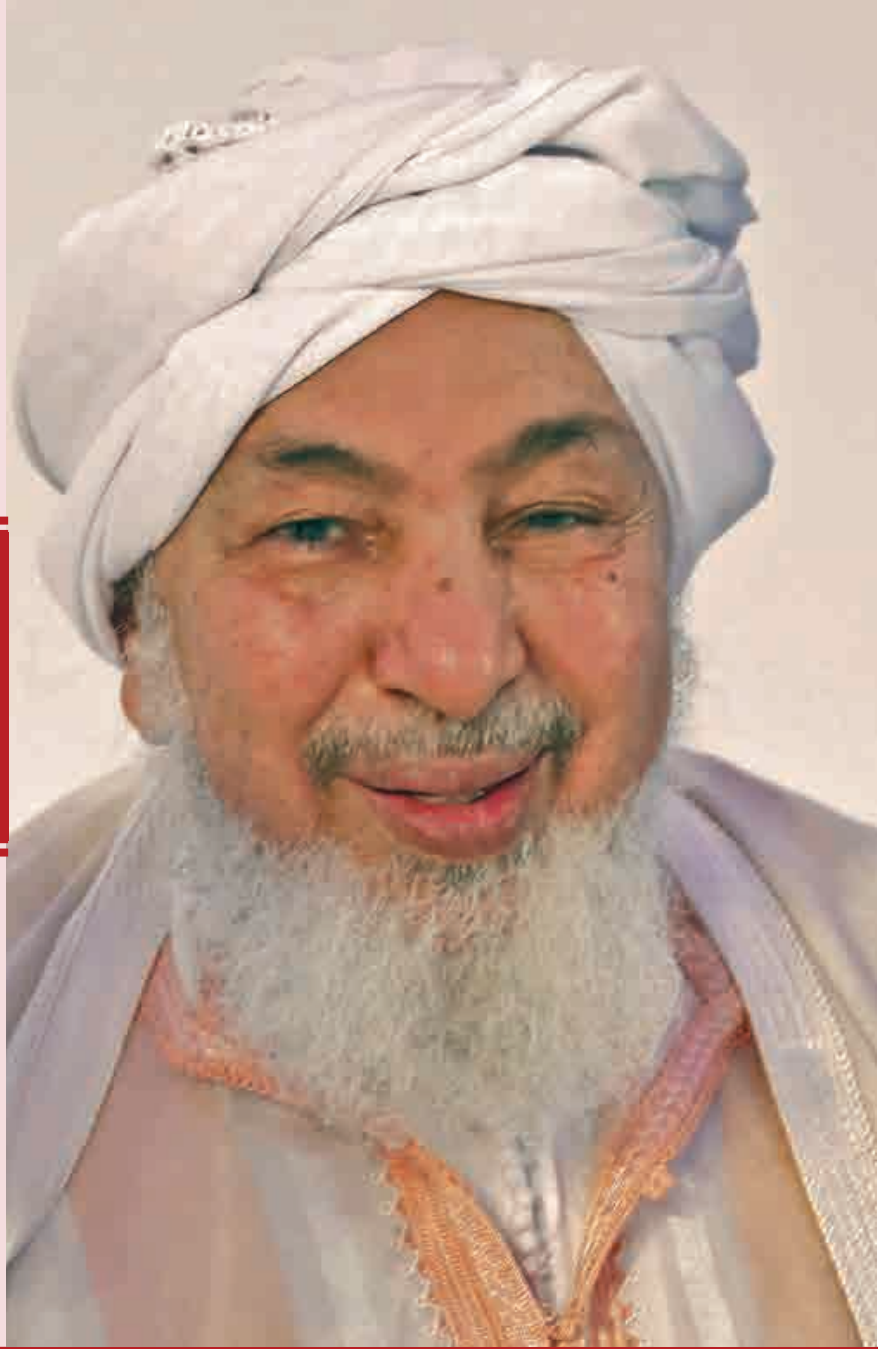
“War is sometimes a necessity that arises out of specific conditions between conflicting states as a result of one’s aggression and belligerence. Hence, war in Islam is not acceptable, except out of necessity, in extenuating circumstances. Islam does not call to war. Islam invites to peace.”

4

different ministerial posts held

700

Muslim scholars who attended the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies



۞ 14 ۞

His Eminence

Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah

HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah

President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies

Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah's influence is derived from his scholarship, piety and preaching. Uniquely, all of the different sects and schools of Muslims respect him as a scholar. A testament to this is the notable fact that whilst he is not a Salafi, the Saudi government promulgates his fatwas as authoritative. He is an instructor at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah and was the deputy head of the Union of Muslim Scholars having previously been a Judge at the High Court of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Head of Sharia Affairs at the Ministry of Justice. He was appointed chair of the recently formed UAE Fatwa Council.

Education: Sheikh bin Bayyah was raised in a household famous for its scholars, and his father, Sheikh Mahfoudh bin Bayyah, was the head of the Conference of Mauritanian Scholars established after the country's independence. Sheikh bin Bayyah studied in the Mauritanian centres of learning known as *Mahadhir*, in which all the sacred sciences were taught including: jurisprudence, legal theory, syntax, language, rhetoric, Qur'anic exegesis and its auxiliary sciences, and the science of Prophetic tradition.

Diplomat: As a member of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy or *Al Majma' al Fiqhi* of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Sheikh bin Bayyah is at the forefront of the legal arm of a dynamic organisation with a permanent delegation to the United Nations.

Author: Having written numerous texts, Sheikh bin Bayyah's scholarly explorations have gone global through speaking engagements that draw crowds of tens of thousands. He has spoken at length about the endurance of the Islamic legal tradition and also

written extensively on rulings for Muslims living as minorities in foreign lands, or *fiqh al aqaliyyaat*.

Activist: In June 2013, Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah visited the White House where he met with senior advisers and aides to President Obama. He called for the protection of the Syrian people and the Muslim minority in Myanmar. Also, he met with Bill Gates during the Global Vaccine Summit in Abu Dhabi in April 2013. He recently initiated the 'Muslim Council of Elders' which embraces leading scholars (including the Sheikh of Al-Azhar), and presided over a large gathering of religious scholars at a forum entitled 'Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies', which has now been established as an organisation (based in the UAE). He has been criticised for accepting support from the UAE, which is currently involved in several regional conflicts.

The Marrakesh Declaration: Sheikh Abdallah bin Bayyah led around 250 Muslim religious leaders, in addition to approximately 50 non-Muslim religious leaders, in a three day summit in Marrakesh entitled: 'The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities: Legal Framework and a Call to Action'. The summit used the original Charter of Medina, drawn up by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself, as a basis for addressing the current crisis of religious minorities in parts of the Muslim world. With extremists committing violence in the name of Islam against other religions, as well as against most Muslims, it was necessary to voice the position of normative Islam vis-à-vis religious minorities through a gathering of its leading scholars. The summit concluded with the release of the 750-word *Marrakesh Declaration* (see page 152).



Country: Pakistan

Born: 5 October 1952 (age 68)

Source of Influence: Political

Influence: Leader of 222 million Muslims in Pakistan and major influence on the Pakistani diaspora

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (16)

2019: (29)

2018: (450)

“No one who fears failure or criticism has ever achieved anything significant in life.”

6

UNESCO World Heritage sites

70%

world's total football production



15

His Excellency

Prime Minister Imran Khan

HE Imran Khan

Prime Minister of Pakistan

Imran Khan became the Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2018 amid huge expectations that he could bring the country forward on issues of governance, accountability and reduction of corruption. He has endured a tough start; the economy is fragile, reforms to financial systems are slow and there are questions asked about the influence of the army on his government.

A Long Journey: When the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won the 2018 General Elections, it was the culmination of a 22 year journey for Imran Khan. He had founded the PTI in 1996 hoping to oust the 'political mafias' ruling Pakistan. He garnered national support over the next two decades and in 2013 had become the second largest in the country by popular vote, before eventually winning in 2018.

Corruption: A major crackdown on corruption has seen a former prime minister and a former president both imprisoned on charges of corruption. Having the money returned to the nation is proving to be more difficult although some progress has been made with local businessmen who benefitted enormously through contacts within previous administrations. He has also pursued cutbacks in any extravagant government expenditure, himself setting a personal example.

Economy: He managed to avert a default on the balance of payments by securing loans from allies and then reluctantly from the IMF (he had pledged not to go to the latter). This was the country's 13th IMF bailout since the 1980s. With economic growth slower than expected, the currency dropping by 15% and inflation rising to 10%, the economy is in crisis. One of his major challenges is to increase the tax base in a country where tax evasion is the norm.

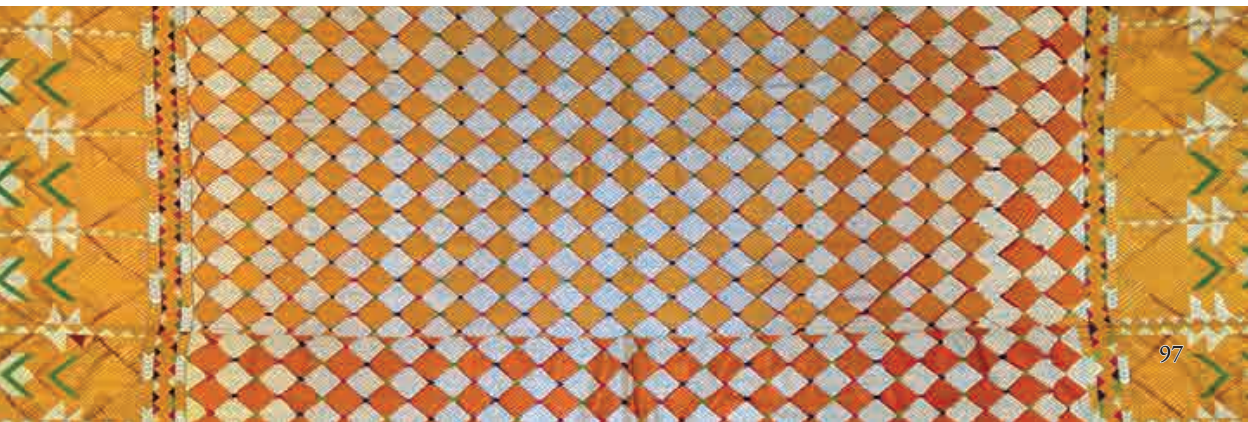
International Relations: Early on, he stated his in-

tentions to develop much better relations with India. But with military incidents never far away and with India virtually annexing Kashmir, it is difficult to see how peaceful relations will develop. He was accredited internationally for returning a captured Indian air force pilot who had been shot down during an incursion into Pakistan. He has pushed the development of the Kartarpur Corridor, which will allow Indian Sikh pilgrims the opportunity to make a pilgrimage, visa-free, to their holiest site. The site is 5km from the Indian border and represents a major opportunity for cooperation. He has managed to re-establish good relations with the US and Gulf states, but has been criticised for not speaking out against the treatment of the Uyghurs by the Chinese government, one of Pakistan's closest allies.

Past Projects: Imran Khan started fund raising for a cancer hospital soon after his mother died from cancer in 1985. His appeal within Pakistan and to the diaspora Pakistani community raised enough funds to open the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre in 1994, in Lahore. It is a hugely successful project with 75% of patients receiving free treatment. He also spearheaded a successful project to build Namal University, which provides scholarship assistance to over 90% of its students.

A Sporting Legend: Prior to entering politics, Imran Khan played professional cricket for 22 years and is recognised as one of the game's finest all-rounders. His ability to lead and unite an often disparate team culminated in Pakistan winning the 1992 world cup. It is this ability and success that many hope can be replicated in the political field.

Covid-19: Pakistan has received international accolade for its policy response of smart lockdowns, demonstrating the intelligent use of accurate data.



Country: Nigeria
Born: 17 December 1942 (age 78)
Source of Influence: Political
Influence: President of Nigeria
School of Thought: Traditional Sunni
2020 (17)
2019: (17)
2018: (19)

“Religion must never be used as an excuse to divide us, oppress others or gain unfair advantage.”

55.2 years
the average life expectancy

250
ethnic groups in Nigeria



16

His Excellency

President Muhammadu Buhari

HE President Muhammadu Buhari

President of Nigeria

President Muhammadu Buhari won his second term as President of Nigeria in February 2019, beating his rival by more than three million votes.

Military Past: President Buhari began his military career at the Nigerian Military Training School of Kaduna in 1963. He was involved in military counter-coups in 1966 and 1975, and the coup of 1983 which overthrew the democratically elected government and resulted in him being head of state for two years. During these years, he gained fame for his all-out war against corruption and indiscipline, a reputation he has since kept. In 1985 he was overthrown and kept in detention for 3 years.

Anti-Corruption Presidential Candidate: President Buhari ran as the main opposition candidate in the presidential elections of 2003, 2007 and 2011, all ending in defeat, before winning in 2015. His platform was built around his image as a staunch anti-corruption fighter and his reputation for honesty and incorruptibility. He is considered an icon by the Muslims of northern Nigeria, but enjoys nationwide respect due to his stance on corruption.

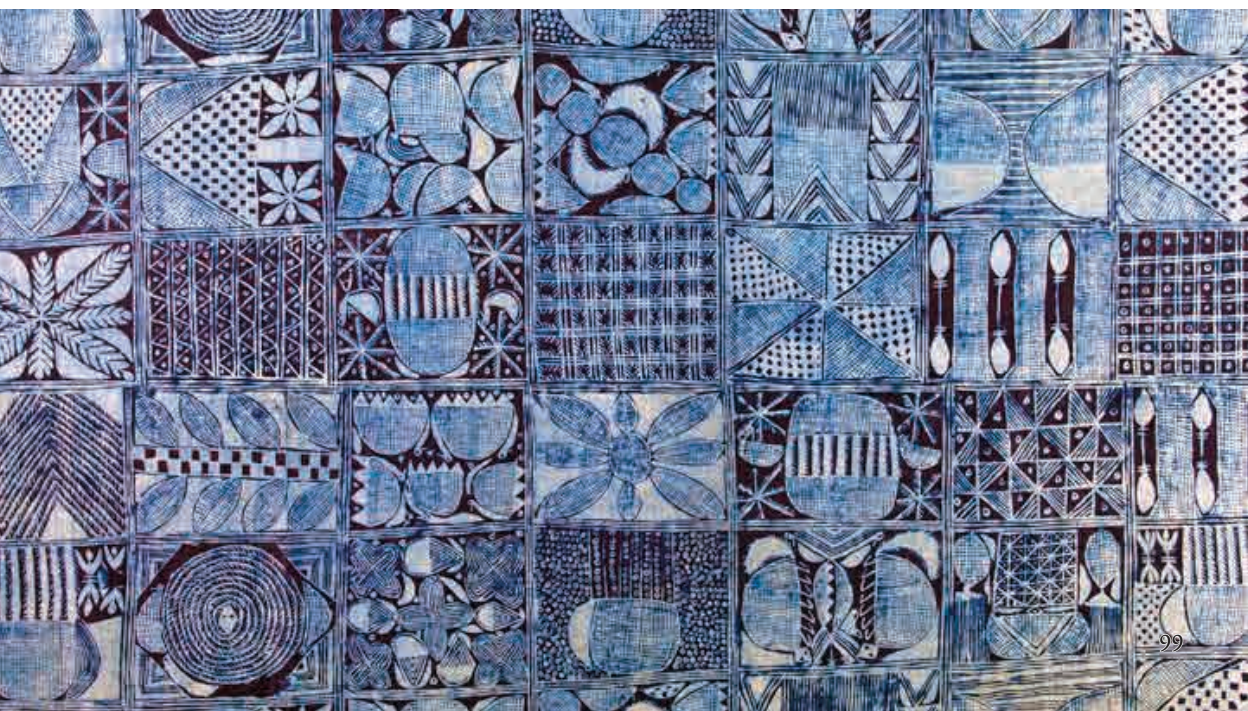
Fighting Boko Haram: The President has put defeating Boko Haram on top of his agenda. Boko Haram's actions have consistently caused international outrage, and the President has publicly committed to stop the terror attacks. In July 2014, he escaped a suicide bombing attack that killed over 50 people. On

6 May 2017, Buhari's government secured a release of 82 out of 276 girls kidnapped in 2014, in exchange for five Boko Haram leaders. President Buhari met with the released Chibok girls before departing to London, UK, for a follow up treatment for an undisclosed illness; health concerns continue.

Economy and infrastructure: President Buhari was the first chairman of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and was the mastermind behind the construction of 20 oil depots throughout Nigeria, a project involving over 3200 kilometres of pipelines. Both the Warri and Kaduna refineries were built under his leadership. He also established the blueprints for the country's petro-chemical and liquefied natural gas programmes.

Environment: President Buhari is an active environmentalist who has drafted several plans to preserve wildlife in Nigeria. He has also exerted great efforts on the conservation of nature in Nigeria; such as controlling the logging industry by ensuring that double the number of trees felled are replaced by loggers. He has also worked on restricting the Ecological Fund Office so it can deliver on environmental challenges.

Covid-19: A combination of extremely low average age, very low obesity, and low urbanisation have all helped to stave off a disaster, with the country reporting low death rates.



Country: Egypt

Born: 3 March 1953 (age 67)

Source of Influence: Scholarly, Political

Influence: Legal authority for 90.7 million Egyptian Muslims

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020: (18)

2019: (18)

2018: (20)

“In Egypt, a civil state means a modern nationalist state that is compatible with Islamist provisions.”

53 million
views on his YouTube channel

4.3 million
followers on social media



﴿ 17 ﴾

His Eminence

Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa

HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa

Former Grand Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Sheikh Ali Gomaa is the former Grand Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt. He is one of the foremost Islamic scholars in the world. Despite retiring from the post of Grand Mufti of Egypt in 2013, Gomaa has remained active on many fronts and his counsel is more in demand than ever before.

Egypt's Weight in Islamic Scholarship: Gomaa's scholarly influence is derived from his position at the centre of many of the most significant institutions of Islamic law in the world. Before becoming Grand Mufti, Gomaa was a professor of jurisprudence at Al-Azhar University—the second oldest university in the world, founded in 975 CE—Gomaa also served as a member of the Fatwa Council. He is currently a member of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, the highest institute of Islamic law in the Organization of the Islamic Conference—an intergovernmental organisation for Muslim-majority countries. Gomaa has authored over 50 books, as well as hundreds of articles.

Visit to the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque Controversy: On April 18th, 2012, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, with HRH Prince Ghazi of Jordan, broke what had been a 45-year taboo in some parts of the Islamic World (propagated notably by Qatar-based Sheikh Al-Qaradawi) and visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque in order to pray there and support the beleaguered Muslim community in Jerusalem. The visit was viewed as controversial in Egypt, but set off a change of public opinion in the

Islamic World that continues to this day. The Grand Mufti also visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was much appreciated by the Christian community of Jerusalem.

Personal Popularity: Gomaa was exceedingly popular as a mufti and remains ever popular since his retirement, although some of his political statements and pro-military government stance after the Egyptian Revolution have tempered this support somewhat. Apart from appearing on popular broadcasts and satellite television programmes, he also revived the practice of informal 'knowledge circles' at the Al-Azhar Mosque. At his very well-attended Q&A sessions after his Friday sermons, Gomaa makes a point of taking on anyone who tries to simplify or distort Islamic teachings without knowledge of its traditions. This has made him extremely popular with those who vehemently oppose political Islam as well as also making him a target for some extremist Islamists. He recently escaped an assassination attempt outside a mosque in Cairo.

Popularised and Simplified Fatwas: Gomaa has immense legal influence through his advocacy of Islamic religious edicts (fatwas). When he was Grand Mufti of Egypt, he modernised the process of issuing fatwas in the country. He did this by overhauling the Dar Al-Ifta organisation into a dynamic institution with worldwide reach, based on a fatwa council and a system of checks and balances.



Country: Indonesia

Born: 3 July 1953 (age 67)

Source of Influence: Administrative, Political, Education

Influence: Leader of approximately 40 million members of the Nahdlatul Ulama

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (19)

2019: (20)

2018: (22)

"You know who you are, so don't try to pretend otherwise in front of others."

Over

40 million

members in Nahdlatul Ulama

1926^{CE}

is the year Nahdlatul Ulama was founded.



❧ 18 ❧

Professor

KH Said Aqil Siradj

Professor KH Said Aqil Siradj

Chairman of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama

Dr KH Said Aqil Siradj is the leader of Indonesia's largest independent Muslim organisation and one of the world's most influential Islamic organisations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), or 'Awakening of Scholars'. Siradj guides millions through his work with the NU.

Head of Expansive Network: The Nahdlatul Ulama boasts an expansive network that covers 30 regions with 339 branches, 12 special branches, 2,630 representative councils and 37,125 sub-branch representative councils across Indonesia. This network practices the doctrine of *Ahl assunah wal Jama'ah*, which is Arabic for 'people of the Sunnah (practices of the Prophet Muhammad) and the community'. They base their practices on the traditional sources of Islamic jurisprudence—mainly the Qur'an, Hadith, and major schools of law. Among its aims are the propagation of Nahdlatul Ulama's message and also an expansion of its already extensive network of members in Indonesia. This is the basis of many of the organisation's social reform efforts. With a solid structure of central and regional boards, branch and special branch boards, and various advisory councils, Siradj sits at the top of this influential Sunni movement.

Model of Traditionalism: With a mainly rural membership base, the Nahdlatul Ulama distinguishes itself from other Islamic organisations in Indonesia by positioning itself as a premier organisation of tra-

ditional Islam—with an emphasis on education and political engagement based on Islamic principles.

Social Service: The Nahdlatul Ulama has made substantial charitable contributions to Indonesian society in the fields of educational development, healthcare, and poverty alleviation. Siradj, like his predecessors, propagates the Nahdlatul Ulama as an organisation that is geared toward establishing a secular nation-state based on a body of modern and moderate Muslims—with agenda items such as anti-corruption laws and social reform measures that are deeply rooted in Islamic principles.

Human Rights Activism: Prior to his role as Nahdlatul Ulama chairman, Siradj served on Indonesia's National Commission for Human Rights. Only a few weeks into his position as chairman of the country's largest Muslim political party, and after violent clashes erupted in different churches across the country, Siradj made strong statements condemning the discrimination against Christian minority groups in Indonesia.

Educational Reform: Siradj has an extensive academic background in the Islamic sciences and regards education as a tool for development. He founded the Said Aqil Centre in Egypt, a study centre that focuses on developing Islamic discourse, particularly in the Arab World.



Country: Nigeria

Born: 24 August 1956 (age 64)

Source of Influence: Lineage, Development, Administrative

Influence: Central figure for 98.7 million Nigerian Muslims

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni, Maliki; linked to the Qadiriyyah Sufi order by lineage

2020 (20)

2019: (21)

2018: (23)

“Every Nigerian ought to promote unity in their communities regardless of their religious differences.”

70 million

Muslims look to His Royal Eminence as their spiritual leader

1804_{CE}

is the year the Sokoto Caliphate was founded



﴿ 19 ﴾

His Royal Eminence

Amirul Mu'minin Sheikh As-Sultan
Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III

HRE Amirul Mu'minin Sheikh As-Sultan Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III

Sultan of Sokoto

Amirul Mu'minin Sheikh as Sultan Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III is the 20th Sultan of Sokoto. As Sultan of Sokoto, he is considered the spiritual leader of Nigeria's 85.5 million Muslims, who account for roughly 50 percent of the nation's population. Although the position of Sultan of Sokoto has become largely ceremonial, the holder is still a central figure for Nigerian Muslims.

Military Man: Sa'adu Abubakar succeeded his brother, Muhammadu Maccido, who died in a plane crash in 2006. Prior to this he had served in the military, including commanding African peacekeepers in Chad. He retired as Brigadier General and was serving as Defense Attache to Pakistan when he became Sultan.

Lineage Back to Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio: The Sultan of Sokoto is the spiritual leader of Nigeria's enormous Muslim community. He gains this position by lineage. Abubakar is the 20th heir to the two-century-old throne founded by his ancestor, Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio. Dan Fodio (1754-1817 CE) was a scholar, leader of the Maliki school of Islam and the Qadiri branch of Sufism, and Islamic reformer of the nineteenth century. Dan Fodio believed that Islam should have a more central role in the life of the people of West Africa and led an uprising to institute the changes he sought. His figure and his writings are a very important chapter in the history of Islam in

West Africa, and Abubakar, by lineage, holds a key place in West African Islam, and particularly for the Fulani and Hausa people who followed Dan Fodio.

An Illustrious Family: The position currently does carry with it some weight—though largely ceremonial since British colonial rule diminished its political significance. Much of this clout is derived from the respect that was earned by Siddiq Abu Bakar Dan Usman—17th Sultan and father of Abubakar—who held the Sultanate for over fifty years. The rule of Abubakar's father from 1938 to 1988 earned the position significant social capital and popularity with ordinary Muslims.

Administrative Power: Abubakar holds important administrative influence in Nigerian religious life. Abubakar is the titular ruler of Sokoto in northern Nigeria and is also the head of the Nigerian National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. Leadership of this council means that the Sultan of Sokoto remains the only figure that can legitimately claim to speak on behalf of all Nigerian Muslims. This role has become increasingly influential over the years with a rise in interreligious tensions between Nigeria's Muslim majority north and Christian-majority south.

Current Issues: The Sultan has started many initiatives to counter and reduce the influence of Boko Haram. He has also worked to strengthen Muslim-Christian ties by inviting an international joint Muslim Christian Delegation to visit Nigeria.



Country: Lebanon

Born: 31 August 1960 (age 60)

Source of Influence: Political, Development

Influence: Political leader of 1–2 million Lebanese Shia and supporters of his resistance to Israel

School of Thought: Revolutionary Shi'ism

2020: (21)

2019: (23)

2018: (25)

“Let the entire world hear me. Our hostility to the Great Satan is absolute.”

1992^{CE}

the year he assumed office of Secretary General of Hezbollah

Over

45 thousand

active duty troops and reservists in Hezbollah



20

Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah

Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah

Secretary-General of Hezbollah

Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah is serving his sixth term as the current and third Secretary-General of Hezbollah (the Party of God). Hezbollah is a Twelver Shia Islamic political party, social and paramilitary organization based in Lebanon which seeks social justice through Islamic ideals.

Military Power: Hezbollah remains a de facto security force in southern Lebanon, and its military presence is felt throughout the country. The military successes Nasrallah had in the late nineties are seen as the main factor for Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, and the repulsion of Israeli forces in July 2006 earned Nasrallah many more supporters. Hezbollah fighters have been key in strengthening the Syrian regime during the Syrian civil war, and their presence there has pushed out DA'ISH but draws reactions from Israel. Hezbollah has continued to develop its arsenal, and as well as developing accuracy, latest estimates include at least 100,000 rockets and missiles.

Social Services: Hezbollah has also won significant grassroots support by cultivating a social welfare system that provides schools, clinics and housing in the predominantly Shia parts of Lebanon. These welfare

activities are run with efficiency and rival those carried out by the state, giving the organisation even broader appeal. It also runs Al Manar—an influential television station.

Popularity: His popularity peaked just after the 2006 conflict with Israel, when many Sunni Muslims looked to him as a figure of defiance against Israel. Since the Syrian conflict, however, many if not all of these supporters have left him because of his support of the Syrian (Alawi) regime against the Syrian people, the majority of whom are Sunnis. His claim that the Syrian conflict is not sectarian in essence is not one that many Sunni Muslims agree with. He is widely seen as one of the main victors of the Syrian conflict. Nasrallah recently declared “victory” in the Syrian war, adding that what remained was “scattered battles.”

Current Issues: Nasrallah has been very critical of recent peace initiatives with Israel and recently met with Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, during the latter's first visit to Lebanon in 30 years. Also, the aftermath of the huge blast in Beirut in August 2020 is still unfolding.



Country: Yemen

Born: 16 April 1971 (age 49)

Source of Influence: Scholarly, Lineage, Philanthropy

Influence: Preacher, Social Issues

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (22)

2019: (24)

2018: (28)

“The function of religion means that faith is a lamp in our lives which illuminates the path for people.”

2005^{CE}

the year the Tabah Foundation was founded

11 years

study under Habib Abdul-Qadir Bin Ahmad al-Saqqaf



21

Sheikh Habib Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri

Sheikh Habib Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri

Director General of the Tabah Foundation, UAE

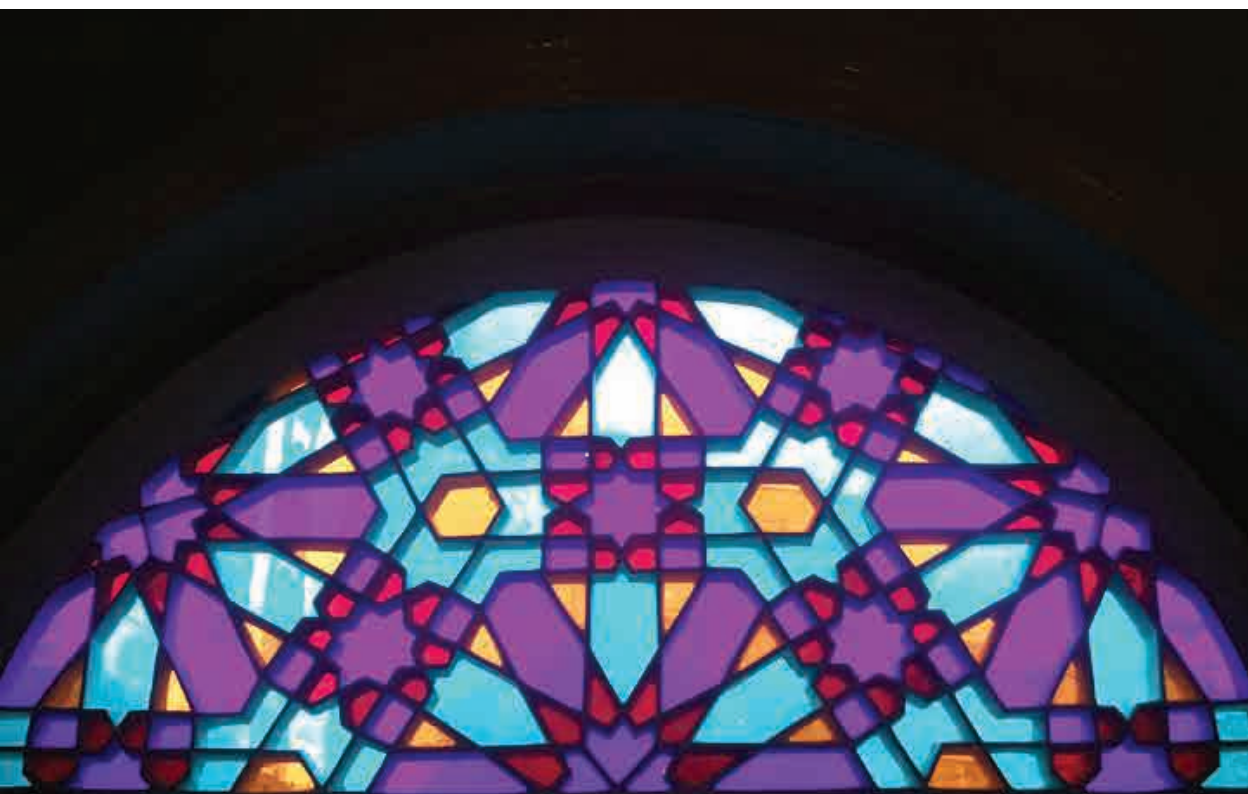
Tracing his lineage to the family of Ali, the fourth Caliph of Islam and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Habib Ali Zain al Abideen Al-Jifri is a leading Islamic scholar and prominent speaker in the Muslim world. Al-Jifri is Director General of the Tabah Foundation in the UAE, member of the board of Dar al-Mustafa in Yemen, member of the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan, and affiliated with various other international Islamic organisations.

Sufi Guide: As a Ba Alawi Sufi, Al-Jifri is part of a tradition that has been based in Yemen for approximately 800 years. His numerous teachers include the late scholars and spiritual masters Habib Abdul-Qadir bin Ahmad Al-Saqqaf and Habib Ahmad Mashhur bin Taha Al-Haddad. Habib Ali often teaches at Dar al Mustafa in Tarim, Yemen, and also travels all over the world meeting his students and giving lectures. Al-Jifri's counselling is also in demand, and his spiritual insights have left a huge impression on many. His guidance is based on incorporating as

much of the sunnah into one's daily life as one can.

Think Tank: Al-Jifri founded the privately-funded philanthropic Tabah Foundation for Islamic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi, a young non-profit institution that is a source of reputable work in Islamic research and thought. It applies traditional religious principles to analyse contemporary issues. Some of these have inevitably become controversial such as when he made some statements against popular revolutions during the Arab Spring for his belief that the preservation of peace and reducing bloodshed is paramount.

World-Wide Following: Habib Ali's popularity has grown enormously over the past few years with almost 15 million followers on different social media platforms, plus half a million subscribers on his YouTube channel. His inspirational speeches often leave many in tears, and his smile and gentleness touch all who meet him. Despite not speaking English, he is in huge demand by English-speaking Muslims.



Country: USA

Born: 1 January 1958 (age 62)

Source of Influence: Preacher, Social Issues

Influence: Scholarly. Leading Islamic voice for English-speaking Muslims

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (23)

2019: (23)

2018: (27)

“Everyone’s a believer when things are going fine. The real faith is when one becomes patient with tribulations.”

17

the age when he became Muslim

2008_{CE}

is the year he co-founded Zaytuna College



22

Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson

Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson

Teacher and Co-Founder of Zaytuna College

Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson is one of the most influential Islamic figures in the Western world. He is seen as one of the foremost authorities on Islam outside of the Muslim world. He is a co-founder and current President of the Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California, the first and only accredited Muslim liberal arts college in the USA.

Islamic Scholar: Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson converted to Islam in 1977 when he was only 17 and spent many years studying Arabic, Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy with some of the Muslim world's most prominent and well-respected teachers. He spent most of his time in the UAE and then Mauritania, where he met and lived with one of his closest teachers, Sheikh Murabit Al-Hajji. He returned to the USA in 1987 and studied nursing before transitioning to a full-time Imam at the Santa Clara Mosque.

Speaker and Educator: Sheikh Hamza is a much sought-after speaker. He has given thousands of lectures to public audiences and is interviewed regularly by the media. He has spread traditional Sunni orthodoxy in the West through his popular speeches and his teaching at short intense study programmes such as Deen Intensive, Rihla and RIS. He has been the inspiration for a whole generation of English-speaking

Muslims to study Arabic and Islamic sciences. He has taught and inspired many of them to become teachers in their own right, and more importantly help forge a confident and faithful Islamic identity in the troubling times of the 21st century.

Advisor: He advises on Islamic Studies to several US universities, and is also on the board of advisors of George Russell's One Nation, a national philanthropic initiative that promotes pluralism and inclusion in America. He works closely with Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah and serves as vice-president for two organisations the Sheikh is president of: the Global Center for Guidance and Renewal, and the UAE-based Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. He has been called on to give advice by the US government and this has opened him up to attacks from certain quarters of the Muslim community.

Attacks: He has lately been the subject of another sustained and vicious character assassination campaign, mainly emanating from Muslim Brotherhood sympathisers. Yet he remains one of the most beloved scholars in the world, and arguably the most intellectually widely-read and formidable Western Muslim scholar in the world. Characteristically he has not defended himself.



Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 31 August 1985 (age 35)

Source of Influence: Political

Influence: De facto ruler of Saudi Arabia

School of Thought: Moderate Salafi

2020 (24)

2019: (13)

2018: (13)

“The biggest danger of this terrorism and extremism is the tarnishing of the reputation of our beloved religion. We will not allow this to happen.”

6th

son of HM King Salman

\$49 billion

military spending in 2020



23

His Royal Highness

Crown Prince Muhammad bin
Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud

HRH Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud

Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia

HRH Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman Al-Saud is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, all at the tender age of 35.

Rapid Appointments: At the beginning of 2015, Prince Muhammad bin Salman was largely unknown in political and diplomatic circles. Since his father's accession to the throne in January 2015, Prince Muhammad has been swiftly appointed to a number of powerful positions. He was first appointed Minister of Defence, and also named Secretary General of the Royal Court. Then Prince Muhammad was named the chair of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs, and was given control over Saudi Aramco by royal decree. In June 2017, he was appointed as Crown Prince of the Kingdom following his father's decision to remove Prince Muhammad bin Nayef from all positions.

Military Challenges: As Minister of Defence the young prince has to deal with many key military issues which Saudi Arabia is currently involved in. He is perhaps most personally identified with the air campaigns against Houthi strongholds in Yemen. Saudi Arabia is also supporting the monarchy in Bahrain, and arming the anti-Assad forces in Syria. His ascension to the role of Crown Prince coincided with geopolitical tensions among members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the cutting of diplomatic ties with Qatar, which has subsequently turned into a full blockade.

Catalyst of Change: The Crown Prince has been linked to major changes taking place in the Kingdom: allowing women to drive, hold their own pas-

ports and move independently, the (re)opening of cinemas and holding of pop concerts, a crackdown on corruption (including the arrest of princes and prominent businessmen), and the proposal to float Saudi Aramco to mention a few.

Vision 2030: As Chairman of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs, Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman launched "Vision 2030", a comprehensive, multi-year plan for the future of Saudi Arabia. The ambitious plan seeks to revitalise the Saudi economy by bolstering the Kingdom as a global investments powerhouse, and moving away from oil-dependency as the largest source of national income. It also seeks to strengthen government efficiency and the promotion of a "tolerant, thriving, and stable Saudi Arabia that provides opportunity for all."

The Khashoggi Assassination: Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi was a prominent journalist and Saudi Arabian dissident who was assassinated at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October 2018. Forced into exile from Saudi Arabia in 2017 because of his criticisms of authoritarian rule and foreign policy, Khashoggi had many enemies in high places. Although the Saudi government denied any knowledge of the murder, they were later forced to admit that their officials had been involved, but didn't go as far as the CIA who concluded that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had ordered Khashoggi's assassination. The murder of Khashoggi within an internationally recognised place of sanctuary adds further to the horror of the crime and has diminished the international standing of the Crown Prince.



Country: Senegal

Born: 1955 (age 65)

Source of Influence: Lineage, Scholarly

Influence: Spiritual leader of around 100 million Tijani Muslims.

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni (Maliki, Tijani)

2020: (24)

2019: (22)

2018: (18)

“You can only go to Paradise or to Hellfire, and you have to work for Paradise in this life. This is the way, and here, is the place to work for reward in the Hereafter.”

Over

1 million

Sufi adherents under his guidance

1781 CE

is the year the Tijani Tariqa was founded



24

Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse

Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse

Leader of the Tijaniyya Sufi Order

Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse is the spiritual leader of the Tijaniyya Sufi order. The Tijaniyya is the largest Sufi order in Western Africa, and its leader commands a following of millions, who see him as their guide to true Islam.

Leader of Tijani Muslims: Cisse became leader of the Tijaniyya following the death of his elder brother Sheikh Hassan Cisse in 2008. He is the Imam of the Grand Mosque in Medina Baye, Senegal, which is one of Western Africa's key positions of Islamic leadership. Tijani Muslims are located throughout Western Africa and further afield. As an order, Tijanis give allegiance to their sheikh giving him significant influence as a leader.

Education and Activities: Sheikh Tijani Cisse (b. 1955) studied Qur'an, Arabic and classical texts with both his father, Sheikh Ali Cisse, and his legendary grandfather, Sheikh Ibrahim Niassé. He then continued his studies at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, studying Arabic and *Usul Al-Din* (theology). Upon completing his studies in Egypt, he travelled extensively throughout Africa, the Middle East and America attending numerous conferences and participating in religious debates. He also managed to edit and

publish several important works, including Sheikh Ibrahim's *Kashif Al-Ilbas*.

Posts: In 2001, Sheikh Tijani Cisse was appointed Senegal's General Commissioner for the Hajj. In 2006, he was again recognised by Senegalese President Aboulaye Wade and appointed a Senegalese "Special Missions Ambassador", a position he holds until the present time. He has also received Senegal's distinguished award, the *Ordre de Merite* (1993).

Descendent of The Tijaniyya Founder: The Tijaniyya is a Sufi order founded by Ahmad al Tijani Hasani, an Algerian, in the late 18th century. As the spiritual leader of the Tijaniyya, Cisse is considered to be the bearer of a spiritual inspiration called the *Fayda Tijaniyya* ('flood' or 'overflow of spiritual grace'), giving him authority to carry on the teachings of Ahmad al Tijani Hasani. Because of this position, some Tijani Muslims refer to Cisse as the reviver of the Sunnah. The Tijanis are characterised by strict following of the sunnah, recitation of spiritual litanies (*awrad*) individually and in gatherings and an emphasis on developing the inward relationship with God.



Country: Syria

Born: 1933 (age 87)

Source of Influence: Scholarly, Educator

Influence: Spiritual leader of more than 75,000 students in Damascus alone

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

2020 (27)

2019: (27)

2018: (29)

Over

50 years

teaching Islamic studies to women

37 thousand

female students in Syria study in Qubeysiat circles



25

Sheikha Munira Qubeysi

Sheikha Munira Qubeysi

Leader of the Qubeysi Movement

Munira Qubeysi is the head of the largest women-only Islamic movement in the world. It offers Islamic education exclusively to girls and women. Qubeysi commands around 80 schools in Damascus alone, teaching more than 75,000 students. She is one of the most significant Islamic scholars in the world; her movement focuses on learning the Qur'an and six Hadith collections by heart. Qubeysi is arguably the most influential Muslim woman in the world, albeit in great discretion.

Background and Growth: Munira Qubeysi is the daughter of a merchant from the Hauran region in Syria. She was born in 1933 and grew up in al-Muhajirin district in Damascus. She attended government schools as a child, eventually entering the Faculty of Science at the University of Damascus. After graduation, she worked as a teacher. At that time, she attended lessons of Sheikh Ahmed Kufaro, who later became the Grand Mufti of Syria. However, after some differences, she continued her studies under Sheikh Abdul Karim al-Rifai. She entered the Faculty of Islamic Sciences at the University of Damascus, studying under Sheikh Mustafa al-Siba'i, who was leader of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, and Professor Issam al-Attar, who succeeded al-Siba'i. Although she studied under several teachers, she carved her own path while maintaining good relations with the various Muslim intellectual communities in Damascus. After the Ba'athist coup in Syria, Sheikha Qubeysi focused all her efforts on women's religious education—even to the point of refusing to marry—establishing what is now generally known as the “Qubeysiat”.

Female Muslim Order: At a time when meetings of Islamic organisations are proscribed in Syria, Sheikha Qubeysi's network, the Qubeysiat, has legally been permitted to host classes and meetings in mosques since 2006—although they had been operating as a secret society long before that time. Members of the Qubeysiat are provided a unique role within Arab society as scholars and teachers exclusively catering to the needs of Muslim women, providing a forum to address religious questions and discuss religious issues. Due to some of her followers coming from wealthy and influential families, Qubeysi's movement has been able to spread globally as well as affect changes in Syria. Under Bashar Al-Assad, restrictions around wearing hijab were relaxed. During the Syrian Civil War the Qubeysiat have grown extensively and enjoy good relations with the regime. Among their new responsibilities conferred by President Assad is near exclusive control over the country's youth Qur'anic memorisation program conducted in every mosque.

Milestones in Islamic Education: Qubeysi is influential as the leader of an incredibly successful educational movement. The religious education of women had previously been neglected so the emergence of a female-specific educational initiative has become very popular, making the Qubeysiat, in numbers, the leading Islamic movement in Syria. Qubeysi's students are also at the forefront of a significant achievement in Islamic history in regards to education—no less than 70 Qubeysiat have memorised nine canonical books of Hadith with extensive chains of narration.





HE Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal Al-Sheikh
 Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Country: Saudi Arabia
Born: 30 November 1943 (age 77)
Influence: Grand Mufti of Saudi and the global network of Salafis
School of Thought: Salafi



Maulana Mahmood Madani
 Secretary General of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind
Country: India
Born: 3 March 1964 (age 56)
Influence: Scholarly, Political, Administrative. 12 million members of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind
School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

26

Rank (2020): 26
 Rank (2019): 26
 Rank (2018): 17

27

Rank (2020): 28
 Rank (2019): 32
 Rank (2018): 36

As the Grand Mufti, Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal Al-Sheikh has the highest position of religious authority in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is an Islamic scholar based in Makkah and has influence as a leading cleric of the expansive global movement of Salafi Muslims.

Salafi Lineage: The Aal Al-Sheikh family in Saudi Arabia traditionally controls the religious and justice establishments. They are descended from Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792), the founder of Wahhabi and Salafi thought, and for 250 years have been closely associated and intermarried with the ruling Al-Saud family.

Head of Sunni Jurisprudential Committees: Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Aal Al-Sheikh is chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars, a scientific consultative commission composed of leading Sunni specialist scholars of Sharia (Islamic law). He is recognised for his influence in enforcing a distinct view of Islamic tradition. In 2008, he publicly criticised Muslim televangelists who encouraged Muslims to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. He has also been robust in his condemnation of Turkish soap operas sweeping the Arab World, calling them distracting practices.

Central Figure of Global Salafi Movement: As Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al-Sheikh is the leading religious figure of the Saudi based network of Salafi Muslims. The rulings derived by Al-Sheikh are based heavily on a literal reading of the Qur'an and emphasise the need to strip away past interpretations that have become a part of Muslims' lives. The movement he leads is characterised by an authoritative stance on Islamic religious practice. He has described DA'ISH as 'evil' and called them 'the number one enemy of Islam'. In 2017, he received praise from an Israeli minister for labelling Hamas a terrorist organisation.

Maulana Mahmood Madani is the Secretary General of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH) and has gained influence for his forthright condemnations of terrorism and unfaltering support of the Indian Muslim community.

Lineage: Maulana Mahmood's grandfather Maulana Syed Hussain Ahmad Madani was a great scholar of Islamic theology, teaching Hadith in Medina, and Deoband. He was the President of the JUH until his death in 1957 and was then succeeded by his son Asad Madani (the father of Maulana Mahmood), who was President until his death in 2006.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH): JUH was established in 1919 by leading Deoband scholars who argued for the concept of composite nationalism, believing that a nation should not be formed on the basis of one factor only (e.g. religion, ethnicity etc), but rather be based on many factors. Maulana Mahmood has striven to keep this concept alive amid all the turmoil of nationalistic politics in India. After graduating from Deoband in 1992 he became actively involved in the JUH, organising conferences and meetings across the country which saw a rapid rise in membership. He became the General Secretary of JUH in 2001, and continued to invigorate the organisation. When his father passed away in 2006, a dispute arose between him and his uncle around the leadership of the organisation.

Activism: He has striven for Muslim rights in India and been outspoken in his opposition to the misuse of the term jihad as a tool of terrorism in India. Following fatal bomb blasts in 2008, he mobilised Darul Uloom Deoband institutions to host events condemning terrorism as inherently un-Islamic. This had a major impact in the community. He has been at the forefront of relief work (earthquakes in Gujarat and Kashmir), health and social development (Kashmir).

Sheikh Mustafa Hosny

Televangelist

Country: Egypt

Born: 28 August 1978 (age 42)

Influence: Preacher

School of Thought: Traditional
Sunni



Sheikh Usama Al-Sayyid

Al-Azhari

Scholar

Country: Egypt

Born: 16 July 1976 (age 44)

Influence: Scholarly

School of Thought: Traditional
Sunni



Rank (2020): 29

Rank (2019): 34

Rank (2018): 37

28



Mustafa Hosny is a televangelist and Islamic preacher who presented his first show in 2004 and has gone on to become a household name.

Changing careers: Mustafa Hosny started his career in sales after obtaining a BA degree in Business from the Ain Shams University in Egypt. He changed careers to become a full-time preacher after he received a Certification from the Institute of training preachers, an affiliate of the Ministry of Awqaf (Egypt).

Preacher: Mustafa Hosny delivers sermons and lectures worldwide and currently presents more than 13 programs on TV and radio channels. He also delivers weekly sermons and lectures at Yousef El Sahaby and El Hosary mosques as well as delivering the Friday sermons at Al Bilal Mosque compound in Mokattam twice a month in Cairo.

Humanitarian: Some of his activities include combating drug addiction amongst youth. He is a supporting member for the Children's Cancer Hospital campaign in Cairo, and delivers seminars and campaigns for the "Life Clear of Smoking Association" in Egypt. He also supports blood donation campaigns.

Social Media: He has nearly 57 million followers on different social media platforms in addition to 2.5 million subscribers on YouTube. His YouTube videos have over 287 million views. His daily advice and softly spoken words endear him to the public and account for his continued influence.

Rank (2020): 30

Rank (2019): 35

Rank (2018): 39

29



Sheikh Usama Al-Sayed Al-Azhari is an Azhari scholar, preacher, an academic and a Senior Fellow of Kalam Research & Media. He teaches Hadith, Logic, and Islamic Creed at the renowned Al-Azhar Mosque's Riwaq Al-Atrak in Cairo, Egypt. He also holds a teaching post in the Faculty of Usul Al-Din and Da'wah at Al-Azhar University, Egypt.

Scholar: Sheikh Usama was chosen by the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, to deliver the Friday sermons on his behalf in the Sultan Hassan Mosque. He has studied with many esteemed scholars from all over the Islamic world, acquiring numerous authorisations (*ijazaat*) all testifying to his accepted position in the unbroken-chains of transmission known as *isnad* essential in the field of Islamic sciences and scholarship.

Peace Activist: He is considered to be one of the most influential voices calling for and working towards reaching new understandings founded on the Islamic tradition and in ways that accommodate the contemporary condition. In this regard, he has presented a number of original and fresh ideas attempting to renew authentic Islamic outlooks, through his publishing and scholarly contributions. Some of the ideas include, creating a relational map of Sharia sciences and their relationship with other circles of sciences, creating "Islamic hermeneutics", reviving the tradition of auditing religious sciences and transmitting them through a chain of transmission as a criterion of authenticity, and the Qur'anic accommodation of different civilizations, amongst others.



HH Shah Karim Al-Hussayni
 The Aga Khan IV
Country: France
Born: 13 December 1936 (age 84)
Influence: Leader of Nizari Ismailis
School of Thought: Modernist Shia, Ismaili, Nizari



HE Sheikh Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi
 Senior Muslim Scholars
Country: Egypt
Born: 9 September 1926 (age 94)
Influence: Leading scholar
School of Thought: Sunni, Muslim Brotherhood/Salafi

30

Rank (2020): 31
 Rank (2019): 36
 Rank (2018): 40

Shah Karim Al-Hussayni, also known simply as the Aga Khan (Imamate: 1957-present), is the leader of the Shia sect of Muslims known as the Nizari Ismailis. For 10–15 million Nizari Ismaili Muslims the Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary Imam, with lineage descending back to Ali, the cousin of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Hereditary Leader of Ismailis: The Aga Khan, a hereditary title bestowed upon the Imam by the Shah of Persia in the mid-nineteenth century, derives his position of authority from his lineage. At the age of 21 the Aga Khan bypassed his father and uncle to become the fourth Aga Khan and 49th Imam, a choice that his grandfather made because he felt the community needed a leader ‘who has been brought up and developed during recent years and in the midst of the new age, and who brings a new outlook on life to his office.’

Unparalleled Philanthropist: The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a collection of development and humanitarian agencies working in areas of poverty. The network is widely known for its architectural and cultural work, including projects that revitalise historic cities. Some projects include the renovation of the Old City of Aleppo and the Al-Azhar Park in Cairo. The Aga Khan’s foundation maintains a strong and enduring presence in developing countries—building health care capacity, promoting economic development in rural areas and helping improve educational opportunities. The AKDN is particularly influential in Central Asia, where it works in areas that are often neglected by other organisations. The period from July 2017 to July 2018 was designated the Diamond Jubilee Year of the Aga Khan’s 60th year of reign.

31

Rank (2020): 32
 Rank (2019): 30
 Rank (2018): 33

Yusuf al-Qaradawi is a preeminent Egyptian scholar. Articulate and widely read, he is one of the most famous Islamic scholars of our time. He recently stepped down as president of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS).

Return to Egypt: In February 2011, Qaradawi returned to Egypt after a 30 year exile and addressed a crowd of over a million people at Tahrir Square during Friday prayers. He addressed all segments of Egyptian society (including the Copts and the military) and called for unity and a return to civilian rule.

Leading Figure of the Muslim Brotherhood: Qaradawi is the intellectual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. He has twice turned down offers to be their leader—in 1976 and 2004—preferring to be free of institutional restrictions. As early as 1997 he stated categorically that he was not a member of the Brotherhood. Earlier in his life, Qaradawi was jailed three times for his relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood and subsequently stripped of his Egyptian citizenship in the 1970s—driving him to seek exile in Qatar. Qaradawi has been sentenced to death in absentia by an Egyptian court along with over 100 other Egyptians affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, an organisation banned in Egypt. Meanwhile, Interpol removed Qaradawi from its “Wanted” list in 2017.

Fatwas: Qaradawi vocally supported the ‘Arab Spring’ movements issuing fatwas for the killing of Colonel Gaddafi, and fatwas against the Assad regime in Syria. He also issued a fatwa condemning the overthrow of Morsi, saying that it was an obligation to continue to support Morsi. He advised El-Sisi to remain neutral and protect the legitimate rule of government. Finally, he criticised the Sheikh Al-Azhar for supporting a rebellion against the ruler of a country.

Habib Luthfi bin Yahya

Preacher

Country: Indonesia

Born: 10 November 1947 (age 73)

Influence: Scholarly, Spiritual Guide

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni



Sheikh Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi

Leader of the Houthi

Country: Yemen

Born: 22 May 1979 (age 41)

Influence: Political

School of Thought: Traditional Shia



Rank (2020): 33

Rank (2019): 37

Rank (2018): 41

32



Habib bin Luthfi is currently: *Ra'is 'Amm of the Jam'iyyah Abli Thariqah Al-Mu'tabarah Al-Nab-dliyyah* (Head of the Association of Recognised Sufi Orders), Head of MUI Middle Java, and the spiritual leader of the Ba Alawi tariqa in Indonesia.

Ba Alawi: The Ba Alawi are descendants of the Prophet ﷺ who migrated to Hadramaut in Yemen early on in Islamic history. They played a major role in bringing Islam to the Far East, including Indonesia and Malaysia, and they hold high prominence to this day. They emphasise the importance of inward sincerity coupled with the study of religious sciences, especially as espoused by Imam Ghazali.

Seeker of Knowledge: Habib Luthfi started his quest for knowledge early in life, and first studied under the tutelage of Ba Alawi teachers in Indonesia. He then travelled to Makkah and Madinahh for further education and received authorisation (*ijaaza*) in all the traditional fields of learning including hadith, and sufism (*tasawwuf*). His authorisation to be a spiritual master comes from more than one tariqa (spiritual brotherhood).

Spiritual Guide: He has established thousands of schools, mosques and zawiyahs in Indonesia, and has a following numbering millions. He emphasises spiritual practices, especially the recitation of litanies (*awraad*).

Rank (2020): 34

Rank (2019): 38

Rank (2018): 42

33



Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi is the current leader of the Houthi political, religious and militant movement in the Sa'dah governorate in Yemen.

Houthi: The Houthi movement was established in 1992 by Hussein Badr Al-Din Al-Houthi, a Zaydi Shia'a scholar and anti-Wahhabi who had written a number of books criticising Wahhabism and the leading authorities of Yemen. The Zaidis ruled most of Yemen for over 1,000 years until 1962. They believe that Muslims should be ruled only by a descendant of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, whom they call an Imam.

Leader: Abdul-Malik has made major changes in Yemen through tactical and strategic plans that have enabled him to reach the position where he is today. In 2007, he founded the Al-Minbar website and in March 23, 2012 he launched Al-Masirah TV channel.

Taking Yemen: Abdel Malik emerged as a leader after the February 2011 uprising. The Houthi authority seized control over Saada and Jawf provinces in March 2011. Then in 2014, the Houthis seized control over the Demag region in the Saada and Amran provinces and in September 2014 they stormed the capital Sana'a, seizing a large number of ministries and military facilities. He has driven Al-Qaeda out of the regions which the Houthis have taken.

Humanitarian Toll: Since 2015, they have been subject to aerial bombing by a Saudi-led coalition. This bombing of one of the world's poorest countries has led to 12,000 civilian deaths and a humanitarian crisis which has left around 70 per cent of the population (27 million) reliant on humanitarian aid and over a million people infected by cholera. The UK in particular has come under international criticism for its supply of weapons which are being used in the bombardment.



Sheikh Mahmud Effendi

Scholar and Preacher

Country: Turkey

Born: 1929 (age 91)

Influence: Scholarly, Preacher

School of Thought: Sunni



Maulana Tariq Jameel

Scholar and Preacher

Country: Pakistan

Born: 1953 (age 67)

Influence: Scholarly, Preacher

School of Thought: Sunni, Tablighi Jamaat

34

Rank (2020): 35

Rank (2019): 39

Rank (2018): 43

Sheikh Mahmud Ustaosmanoglu, also known as Sheikh Mahmud Effendi, is one of the most popular Islamic teachers in Turkey today. He emphasises the Sunnah and is well-known for having revived many of the Sunnah practices.

Life: Sheikh Effendi became a *hafiz* (one who has memorised the Qur'an) at the tender age of 6. He then started studying Arabic and Persian at first, and then went on to study the Islamic Sciences. Sheikh Effendi was appointed imam of the Ismail Agha mosque in Istanbul in 1954, where he remained until he retired in 1996.

Preaching: He began delivering spiritual and ethical guidance from 1960 following the death of his Shaikh Ali Haydar Efendi. He devoted three weeks per-year to teach people across Turkey and made several missionary and educational tours in several countries, including Uzbekistan, India, Germany and the United States. He has a Qur'an tafsir (commentary) named *Ruhu'l Furkan* in Turkish.

Students: He has millions of followers and has established various religious, social and charity organisations such as the Marifet Association, the Federation of Marifet Associations and Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaah Confederation. Although he himself has moved to the suburbs of Istanbul, his stronghold is still the Fateh area where his followers are easily recognised by their traditional dress. He emphasises service to humanity on the basis of sincerity. Despite being confined to a wheelchair and unable to give talks, he is still sought out for his blessings by people ranging from the layman to the highest powers in the land.

35

Rank (2020): 36

Rank (2019): 40

Rank (2018): 44

Maulana Tariq Jameel is a prominent Deobandi scholar who is also one of the most popular preachers in Pakistan. He belongs to the Tablighi Jamaat group and his lectures focus on the subject of self-purification, avoidance of violence, observance of Allah's orders and pursuing the way of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Background: After completing pre-medical studies, Maulana Tariq was admitted to the King Edward Medical College in Lahore. It was there—under the influence of members of the Tablighi Jamaat—that his focus changed to Islamic Education. His Islamic training is from Jamia Arabia, where he studied Qur'an, Hadith, Sufism, logic, and Islamic jurisprudence. Maulana Tariq's background in the sciences allows him to explain Islamic matters in a way that appeals to modern urban Muslims. Additionally, his simple lifestyle and eloquence in Urdu, as well as his fluency in Arabic, catapulted his fame across the Muslim world.

Tablighi Jamaat: Tablighi Jamaat is a political missionary movement founded by Muhammad Ilyas Al-Kandhlawi in India 1927. It focuses on encouraging Muslims not to neglect the basic practices of their faith. It has informal affiliations with the Deobandi movement but targets a more general audience. The sub-continent diaspora have carried its message to nearly every country in the world and its adherents number in the millions. It has annual gatherings in Pakistan and Bangladesh which number in the millions.

Influence: In addition to running a madrasa in Faisalabad, Pakistan, Maulana Tariq has delivered thousands of lectures around the world. He has been very effective in influencing all types of the community ranging from businessmen and landlords to ministers, actors, and sports celebrities.

Moez Masoud

Televangelist

Country: Egypt

Born: 27 February 1978 (age 42)

Influence: Preacher

School of Thought: Sunni



HE President Halimah
Yacob

President of Singapore

Country: Singapore

Born: 23 August 1954 (age 66)

Influence: Political

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2020): 37

Rank (2019): 31

Rank (2018): 32

36



Moez Masoud is an Egyptian preacher, television and radio presenter, and activist who focuses on the fields of contemporary spirituality, interfaith dialogue, and Islam in the modern world.

Religious and academic work: Founder of *Al-Tareeq Al-Sabbh* (The Right Way) Institute, Masoud is trained in the Islamic sciences and is currently a research affiliate at the University of Cambridge. His writings are primarily centred around religious identity and spiritual quest, as well as religious radicalization. He has spoken at such key global events as the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos.

Media and Social Media: His engagement in media has been significant since 2007 when his first Arabic TV show debuted, and by now his programs and appearances have acquired millions of viewers across the Arab world. His Ramadan broadcast, "*Khutuwat Al-Shaytan*," was widely viewed across the Arab world. In 2017, Masoud produced the Egyptian film "Clash" which has been hailed as "one of the most telling depictions of modern Egypt yet filmed" and the film was selected to represent Egypt in the Oscars' 2017 Best Foreign Language Film category. Masoud has a following of over 25 million on various social media sites, including YouTube videos, Facebook and Twitter. Masoud participated in the brief post Tahrir "Egyptian National Dialogue" and has continued that dialogue on socio-political issues in Egypt from within the perspective of traditional Islam. In 2019 he announced production of a film about the Christchurch mosque shootings, in which 51 people died. It will be entitled *Hello, Brother*, the words spoken by one of the victims.

Rank (2020): 38

Rank (2019): 41

Rank (2018): 45

37



Halimah Yacob became Singapore's eighth, and first female, President in September 2017 when she was elected unopposed.

Election: A former speaker of Parliament she gave up her parliamentary seat and position with the ruling People's Action Party to run for President. The government's criteria for the current President, including that the President must be an ethnic Malay, meant that Yacob was unopposed and became President unelected, a process which has drawn some criticism. She is the first ethnic Malay President.

Background: Halimah Yacob comes from humble beginnings, being raised by her Malay mother after her Indian father passed away when she was eight years old. Her mother struggled to raise her five children and Halimah almost neglected her school studies because of the need to help out at home. She was successful at school and continued to obtain her law degree and master's in law from the National University of Singapore. She then went on to work at the National Trades Union Congress before becoming Director of the Singapore Institute of Labour Studies.

Political career: She entered politics in 2001 and a decade later was appointed Minister of Community Development, Youth and Sports and later on Minister of Social and Family Development. She was elected Speaker of Parliament in 2013, becoming the first woman to hold the post. As President she has promoted initiatives for supporting a cohesive society, strengthening interfaith and recognising all workers who contribute to Singapore's growth. She has a strong international profile, regularly meeting world leaders.



Sheikh Rached Ghannouchi

President of Ennahda Party

Country: Tunisia

Born: 1941 (age 79)

Influence: Political, Scholarly

School of Thought: Sunni



Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi

Scholar and Spiritual Guide

Country: Syria

Born: 7 May 1963 (age 56)

Influence: Scholarly

School of Thought: Sunni

38

Rank (2020): 39

Rank (2019): 28

Rank (2018): 30

Ghannouchi is one of the world's leading Islamic thinkers and one of the most influential Tunisian politicians in the post-revolution transition period. He was elected speaker of the parliament in November, 2019.

Politics: Ghannouchi co-founded The Ennahda Movement ('Renaissance') in the 1970s and was imprisoned several times before being forced into exile. The Ennahda is a political party based on Islamic values resembling the Christian Democratic political parties in Europe. It supports the concept of a multi-party democracy. In 2012 he received the Chatham House Prize for "the successful compromises each achieved during Tunisia's democratic transition" and in 2016 he received the Jannalal Bajaj Award for "promoting Gandhian values outside India".

Post Arab Spring: With the fall of President Ben Ali, Ghannouchi returned to Tunisia in January 2011 having spent 20-years in exile. He led the Ennahda (Renaissance) Party to victory in the October 2011 national elections. In 2014, Ghannouchi quit government and handed power over to a technocratic government. When elections were held later that year, Ennahda, without Ghannouchi leading them, came second to the Nidaa Tounes party. The 2019 elections produced a deeply fragmented parliament with the government collapsing just 5 months into its term. Ghannouchi, who was elected speaker of parliament, narrowly won a vote of confidence in July 2020.

Countering terrorism: Ghannouchi has stated that the widespread phenomenon of terrorism in the Arab region is due to corruption in the economic, social and political sectors. He is acutely aware of the bloodshed in neighbouring Algeria and is keen to avoid having only binary options of identity available. He also believes that whoever wants to fight extremism must do so in moderation by following the Tunisian model.

39

Rank (2020): 40

Rank (2019): 42

Rank (2018): 47

Sheikh Al-Yaqoubi is a widely respected religious scholar who also has a significant spiritual following worldwide. He was appointed as member of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute of Islamic Thought in 2016.

Background: Sheikh Al-Yaqoubi was born in Damascus and was trained in Islamic studies by his father, who was an Imam and instructor at the Grand Umayyad Mosque. Sheikh Al-Yaqoubi followed in his father's footsteps teaching in the same mosque, and becoming a world renowned Islamic scholar of theology, jurisprudence, and Hadith. He is widely-recognised as one of the reliable authorities for the issuing of fatwas in Islam.

Against Extremism: He was one of the first scholars to speak against DA'ISH, denouncing its atrocities and showing that its actions are un-Islamic. His book *Refuting ISIS* (now in eight languages), has become an essential reading, providing theological arguments against the extremists and calling on the mainstream, traditional followers to combat them. His criticism of the Syrian government's response to protests made his stay in Syrian untenable, and so he had to flee the country, eventually seeking refuge in Morocco where he is still based.

Educator: As a teacher, he has trained several hundred Imams and teachers who work in the Arab World, the West, in the Far East and South Africa. As a spiritual guide, he focuses on the spiritual well-being of Muslims and gives personal spiritual instruction to his disciples, of which he has a significant following in Europe and the USA. He is a charismatic public speaker in both Arabic and English (he also speaks Swedish) and one of the most powerful voices of Islam making a huge positive impact via his public talks, writings and numerous media appearances worldwide. His public teaching includes readings of the entire collection of hadith in Sahih Bukhari.

Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr
Philosopher and University Professor
Country: United States of America
Born: 7 April 1933 (age 87)
Influence: Scholarly
School of Thought: Traditional Shia



HE Sheikh Uthman Taha
Calligrapher
Country: Syria
Born: 1934 (age 86)
Influence: Calligrapher
School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2020): 41
Rank (2019): 43
Rank (2018): 49

40



Rank (2020): 43
Rank (2019): 45
Rank (2018): HM

41



Seyyed Hossein Nasr is University Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University. He remains one of the most influential Muslim scholars in the world for his work on Islamic tradition and philosophy. He is the only Muslim to be included in the Library of Living Philosophers and has written over 50 books and over 500 articles.

Background and career: Nasr was born in Iran and raised in a house of scholars and physicians. He was sent to school in the USA, won a scholarship to MIT for undergraduate studies in physics and obtained a doctorate in the history of science and philosophy from Harvard. He returned to Iran in 1958 where he swiftly rose through academic ranks to become Vice-Chancellor of Tehran University and then President of Aryamehr University. The 1979 Iranian revolution forced Nasr to leave Iran and so he settled in the USA.

Reviver of Tradition: Nasr's work has covered the most important areas of contemporary Muslim thought from classical Islamic philosophy, Islamic science, Sufism, and critique of modernity to inter-faith relations, Islam–West relations, and the environmental crisis. Nasr was the first Muslim scholar ever to be invited to give the prestigious Gifford Lectures, which were later published as *Knowledge and the Sacred*. Nasr's work has been ahead of its time in predicting the disastrous consequences of the environmental crisis. Books such as *The Encounter of Man and Nature* (1968) critique the rise of a secular, modern conception of nature as inert matter to be conquered by modern technology, and attempt to revive a sacred notion of nature.

Legacy: For Nasr, the quest for knowledge, specifically knowledge which “liberates and delivers him from the fetters and limitations of earthly existence,” has been and continues to be the central concern and determinant of his intellectual life.

Uthman Taha is an internationally acclaimed Arabic calligrapher who has hand-written the Mushaf Al-Madinah, which is the copy of the Qur'an issued by the King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an.

Background: Sheikh Taha was born in 1934 near Aleppo, Syria. He developed a passion for calligraphy when very young, but had to wait until he moved to Damascus (where he studied a BA in Sharia at Damascus University) before he met the chief calligrapher in Syria, Muhammad Badawi Al-Diyarani, and the Iraqi calligrapher, Hashim Al-Baghdadi. He then travelled to Istanbul, where he met the most celebrated calligrapher of the time, Hamid Al-Amidi, from whom he received certification.

Copying the Qur'an: The written copy of the Qur'an is known as a Mushaf, and it took Taha approximately three years to copy one out. He wrote his first copy in 1970 and in total has written out over 10 copies. The most significant one was the one assigned to him in 1988 by the King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an in Madinah. This copy is the one printed by the King Fahd Complex and distributed to millions of pilgrims every year. It is the most common copy of the Qur'an available worldwide. Taha has copied out six different textual variants including *Warsh* (used in Morocco and Algeria), *Hafs* (worldwide), *Duri* (Africa and Sudan), and *Qalun* (Libya).



Mohamed Salah

Footballer

Country: Egypt

Born: 15 June 1992 (age 28)

Influence: Celebrities and Sports

School of Thought: Sunni

42

Rank (2020): 44

Rank (2019): 46

Mohamed Salah is an Egyptian football player of global fame.

International Player: Salah started his career in the Egyptian Premier League in 2010 before moving to Switzerland, UK, Italy and then UK again. Salah enjoyed the most successful season of his career with Liverpool FC in 2017/18. He broke many records and won many accolades. He also helped Egypt qualify for the World Cup. The 2018/19 season saw more success with Liverpool FC being runners-up in the English Premier League, and crowned 2019 European Champions and World Club Champions. The 2019/20 season saw the end of a 30 year wait for Liverpool to become champions of the English league again.

Popularity: His affable nature and polite manners have won him many fans across the globe, and none more so than in his native country of Egypt where he has donated to various charitable causes. In the March 2018 Egyptian Presidential elections, over a million people struck out the two names vying for the presidency and inserted Mohamed Salah's name, making him an unofficial runner up in the election. His down to earth nature has shown itself in chance meetings with fans and acts of kindness towards those in need. He has over 66 million followers on social media and now has a wax model in Madame Tussauds.

Singing in the Terraces: His footballing exploits during his time at Liverpool FC have had the unprecedented effect of football fans singing positive songs about Muslims. "If he's good enough for you, he's good enough for me. If he scores another few, then I'll be Muslim too. Sitting in the mosque, that's where I wanna be! Mo Salah-la-la-la, la-la-la-la-la-la."



Sheikh Muqtada Sadr

Scholar and Politician

Country: Iraq

Born: 4 August 1974 (age 45)

Influence: Political, Social Issues

School of Thought: Shia

43

Rank (2020): 45

Rank (2019): 47

Rank (2018): 450

The son of the late Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Sadiq Al-Sadr, and son-in-law of Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr, Muqtada is a highly influential leader who inherited control over large social institutions that served millions in the slums of Baghdad.

Serving the Poor: He has concentrated on serving Iraq's poor Shia Muslims and has had complete freedom to work in many parts of Iraq, especially Sadr City, a district in Baghdad named after his father. He provides healthcare and access to food and clean water. He has raised issues of corruption, high unemployment and poor government services.

Politics: He gained prominence after the US invasion of Iraq by creating the Mahdi Army, an armed insurgency movement that formed its own courts and system of law enforcement. This is now known as Saraya Al-Salam. Through it he has concentrated on campaigning against corruption in Iraq, criticising the government openly about this. He has worked for Shia-Sunni unity, and in 2017 called for Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad to step down and met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

King-Maker: In the May 2018 elections, Al-Sadr allied with the communist party, and their Sai-roon coalition won the most seats, making him the king-maker in Iraq's new government. The campaign rhetoric focused on corruption and tried to cut across sectarian platforms. Rejecting influence from both USA and Iran, he has focused on bringing disparate Iraqi parties together. He has continued his criticism of corruption within the Iraqi government.

HE President Mahmoud Abbas

President of the Palestinian National Authority
Country: Palestine
Born: 15 November 1935 (age 85)
Influence: Political. A founder of Fatah, leading peace negotiator.
School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2020) 46
Rank (2019) HM
Rank (2018) 26

44



Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, is the President of the Palestinian National Authority, and chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Politics: President Abbas is one of the few surviving founder members of Fatah - the main political grouping within the PLO. He has always been committed to pursuing an independent Palestinian state through negotiations and was one of the principal architects of the Oslo peace process. He accompanied Yassir Arafat to the White House to sign the Oslo Accords. He was elected President of the PNA in 2005 in what was due to be a four-year term. No elections have been held since then, and so he remains President.

Treaty with Jordan: President Abbas signed a historic agreement with King Abdullah II of Jordan confirming the Hashemite Kingdom's custodianship over the Holy Sites of Jerusalem. This treaty makes formal a situation which has existed since 1924, and it will not merely avoid any disputes between Jordan and Palestine, but will more importantly enable both countries to jointly legally protect the Holy Sites in Jerusalem against Israeli (official or unofficial) incursions, physical destruction and illegal annexation.

Key Issues: President Abbas has been vocal in his opposition to the 'Deal of the Century', refusing promises of billions worth of investment. This in a context of no political progress for the Palestinian situation, aid cuts of hundreds of millions of dollars by the US and an economy in ruins. The financial crisis has led to deep salary cuts which in turn have fuelled further unpopularity to his rule. However, the recent UAE-Israeli normalisation deal has given a common cause for all Palestinian factions to condemn and seek unity against.

Maulana Nazur Rahman

Amir of Tablighi Jamaat
Country: Pakistan
Born: 1929 (age 91)
Influence: Preacher,
Administration of Religious Affairs
School of Thought: Sunni



Rank: (2020) 50

45



Maulana Nazur Rahman is the fourth Amir of the Pakistani Tablighi Jamaat. He succeeded Hajji Abdul-Wahhab who passed away in November 2018, aged 96.

New Leader: A change of leadership changes nothing for the Pakistan chapter of the Tablighi Jamaat—a transnational Islamic organisation dedicated to reminding Muslims of their duty to fulfill their religious obligations. Maulana Nazur was the Deputy Amir and one of three people named by the previous Amir as contenders for the position of Amir upon his demise.

Missionaries: As Amir, or leader of Pakistan's Tablighi Jamaat, Maulana Nazur Rahman's influence spans globally due to the organisation's emphasis on missionary work. It is active in over 150 countries and famously involves people in small groups travelling to Muslim communities reminding individuals about their religious duties. This act of da'wa or exhortation towards fulfilling religious duties is seen as a cornerstone of the faith and has enabled it to acquire a massive membership base. The Tablighi Jamaat has close ties with the prominent Islamic institution Darul Uloom Deoband, in India. It is where the founder, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhelvi, studied before establishing a following in Pakistan.

Mass Appeal: Among the throngs of Pakistanis, diaspora South Asians, and others who carry the flag of the Tablighi Jamaat are notable Muslim leaders. In Pakistan alone, prominent politicians, actors, and sports stars all publicly show allegiance to the group. This is done easily because the TJ is wholly apolitical. It is identified as a spiritual revivalist movement. It condemns violence and distances itself from any militant groups. Annual gatherings in Raiwind, Pakistan draw close to 2 million people, and those in Biswa, Bangladesh attract over 3 million.



Dr Aref Ali Nayed
 Scholar
Country: Libya
Born: 1962 (age 58)
Influence: Scholarly, Political.
 Influential figure in Libyan government.
School of Thought: Sunni



Dr Timothy Winter (Sheikh Abdal-Hakim Winter)
 Scholar
Country: UK
Born: 1960 (age 60)
Influence: Scholarly, Preacher,
 Administration of Religious Affairs
School of Thought: Sunni

46

Rank (2020) 47
 Rank (2019) 48
 Rank (2018) 50

Dr Aref Ali Nayed was the first Libyan Ambassador to the UAE for Libya's National Transitional Council and led the Libya Stabilisation Team in 2011. He is a leading scholar in the field of Islamic Theology, Philosophy, and Muslim-Christian Relations, the founder and director of Kalam Research & Media (KRM) and the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS).

Scholar: Nayed is currently a Visiting Senior Research Affiliate of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. He was also a former professor at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (Rome), and a former professor at the International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC, Malaysia). Prior to the Libyan revolution he lectured on Islamic Theology, Logic, and Spirituality at the restored Uthman Pasha Madrasa in Tripoli, Libya, and supervised graduate students at the Islamic Call College in the country.

Political Leader: Nayed's other strengths have not gone unnoticed, and when he first submitted his resignation from the post of Ambassador to the UAE, it was rejected, and he was asked to take the position again. He is viewed in many circles as a man of integrity, wisdom, strength and diplomatic foresight—virtues that are needed at the highest level to put Libya back on track. In 2017, Nayed launched a new movement for change in Libya named Ihya Libya ("Reviving Libya") which centred around a comprehensive vision for Libya, and managed to galvanise various social fabric and civil society groups into a political consortium. Ihya Libya aims to create a stable, prosperous and democratic country. Dr Nayed is one of the leading figures in the Libyan diplomatic, social fabric, and political landscapes and is a leading Presidential/Prime Ministerial candidate in the coming elections in Libya.

47

Rank (2020): 48
 Rank (2019): HM
 Rank (2018): HM

Professor Timothy Winter, also known as Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad, is an academic who has been actively involved in numerous initiatives in the UK over the past four decades.

Academic: He is currently the Sheikh Zayed Lecturer of Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Divinity at Cambridge University and Director of Studies in Theology at Wolfson College. He has published and contributed to numerous academic works on Islam and among his best known works are translations from Imam Ghazali's *Ihya*, a series of aphorisms (*Commentary on the Eleventh Contentions*) and his recently released book, *Travelling Home: Essays on Islam in Europe*.

Educator: He is the founder of the Cambridge Muslim College, which has offered Diploma courses for British Darul Uloom graduates and now has an accredited BA programme which promises to graduate religious leaders who are confident, competent and conversant with the issues of the age. He is a much sought after speaker and contributes regularly to the media (fluent in several languages). Hundreds of YouTube videos of his lectures and talks form an important source of knowledge for English-speaking Muslims.

Cambridge Mosque: Professor Winter has been the main force behind the decade long project to build the Cambridge Central Mosque. The mosque represents an authentic Islamic design contextualised to its location and times. It is Europe's first eco-mosque, having been designed with a high degree of environment sustainability. It also incorporates a café, and meeting rooms for use by the whole community. The mosque opened in April 2019 and looks set to take its place as an iconic standard for all places of worship in the country.

HE Sheikh Ibrahim Salih

Scholar

Country: Nigeria

Born: 12 May 1938 (age 82)

Influence: Scholarly,

Administration of Religious Affairs

School of Thought: Sunni



Mohamed Bechari

Political Leader

Country: France

Born: 16 April 1967 (age 53)

Influence: Political,

Administration of Religious Affairs

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2020): HM

Rank (2019): HM

Rank (2018): HM

48



Sheikh Dr Ibrahim Salih is currently the head of the Supreme Council for Fatwa and Islamic Affairs in Nigeria and recently became a member of the 'Muslim Council of Elders' which embraces prominent scholars.

Early Studies: Sheikh Ibrahim was born in Borno State in north-eastern Nigeria in 1938 and started his quest for knowledge at a very young age by accompanying his father, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Salih bin Yunus Al-Nawwy. He lost his father at the age of seven, and so completed his initial studies at the Supreme Islamic Institute in Nigeria and then studied at the hands of renowned scholars in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, India, Pakistan, Senegal, Niger and Sudan.

Scholar: Sheikh Ibrahim lectures in the fields of Tafsir Al Qur'an (exegesis) and the Hadith as well as Islamic Sciences, Jurisprudence and ethics. He has over 100 written works. He has held and still heads several significant positions, some of which are: Founder and mentor of the Islamic renaissance Organization, Adviser to the Federal Government on its Islamic Affairs since 1992, Assistant Secretary-General for African Affairs in the World Islamic People's Leadership 1989 and many more.

Current: He recently opened the Sheikh Sharif Ibrahim Saleh Islamic Centre, which will focus on teaching and research. Its aim is to "promote a better understanding of contemporary challenges and how to face and handle such challenges in today's world."

Rank (2020): 49

Rank (2019): 50

Rank (2018): HM

49



Dr Mohammed Bechari, born in Morocco, is a leading prolific and dynamic public figure in the landscape of European Islam. He heads a variety of organisations that seek to better represent French and European Muslims to wider society as well as working to empower their own communities.

Head of Organisations: He is the Secretary General of the UAE-based World Muslim Communities Council, president of the French National Federation of Muslims, one of the leading entities organising Islam in France. He is also the secretary general of the Islamic European Conference, a Europe-wide umbrella organisation that seeks to be a single entity representing European Muslims at the European level. Bechari is the founder of the Avicenna Institute in Lille and member of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) in Vienna.

Scholar and Awards: Bechari has written many books and taken up visiting professor posts at several international universities. He was awarded the King Abdullah II Award for Excellence of the First Class as well as The Medal of Sciences and Arts of the First Class from the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Outspoken: Bechari has been outspoken against those who would incite hatred and violence. He has included not only DA'ISH in this category but also any Imams who preach hatred in French mosques. He has been keen to win Islam back from the distorted image portrayed by terrorists. He has voiced his beliefs against DA'ISH and Al-Qaeda who promote terrorism and have distorted the image of Islam worldwide. During an interview on Dubai TV in 2016, he went as far as saying that Imams who incite and "preach hatred in the mosques" should be deported.

THE TOP 50 INS & OUTS

THE INS

- HE Sheikh Ibrahim Salih (HM) to 48
page 129
- Amr Khalid (HM) to 50
see left

THE OUTS

- HM Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al-Sa'id, Sultan of Oman (10) passed away — رحمته الله
page 220
- HE Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia (42) to Hon Mentions
page 133



And mention the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself [exclusively] to Him with complete devotion.

The Enshrouded One 73 : 8

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Dr Amr Khalid
Preacher and Social Activist
Country: Egypt
Born: 5 Sept 1967 (Age 53)
Influence: Media, Popular multimedia preacher with highly visited website and social network following.
School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

50

Rank (2020): HM
Rank (2019): 33
Rank (2018): 35

Amr Khaled has been a televangelist to the Islamic world since 1998. He communicates through his TV shows and web campaigns using Islamic ethics as a way to inspire, foster community development, tolerance and inter-cultural relations.

Popular Media Figure: Part of Khaled's influence derives from the fact that he appeals to the common person. He holds a degree in accounting, and has no formal religious education; wears suits and ties, and has a clean-shaven face except for a trimmed moustache—everything you do not expect from a Muslim preacher. Khaled is credited with the launch of the first Muslim reality TV show *Mujaddidun* on Dubai Television. His website is translated from Arabic into nearly twenty languages and his videos have racked up over 155 million views on YouTube. He has over 45 million subscribers on his various social media.

Community Development: Khaled's goal is to encourage community development in the Muslim world by its own people with religious faith as the guiding inspiration—something he believes should be linked to interfaith dialogue, tolerance and moderation. The break-up of communities is something Khaled sees as responsible for the malaise in the Muslim World, and something he believes puts the future of young people in jeopardy. One program he launched to realise this objective of community development was *Life Makers*, which had the stated goal to encourage youth to work in charity. The show was a great hit and expanded into one of the most famous charity organisations in Egypt.

HONOURABLE
MENTIONS

HE Grand Ayatollah
Abdullah Jawadi Amoli

Scholarly

Country: Iran

Born: 1933 (age 87)

Grand Ayatollah Amoli is a leading theologian and interpreter of the Qur'an. He is a prolific scholar having published over 300 articles and books. He is most well-known for his commentary of the Qur'an the *Tafsir al Tasnim*, which has been widely lauded by his peers. Amoli has remained a very public figure throughout his career, having led a diplomatic mission to the USSR, and continues to speak publicly on current affairs.



HE Grand Ayatollah
Mohammad Ishaq Fayadh

Scholarly

Country: Iraq

Born: 1930 (age 90)

Grand Ayatollah Fayadh, originally from Afghanistan, is one of the four marjas of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq—one of the two most important seats of learning in Twelver Shi'ism. Fayadh is known for his quietist approach to politics and is well-respected especially amongst the Shia population of South Asia.



Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-
Sabouni

Scholarly

Country: Syria

Born: 1 January 1930 (age 90)

Al-Sabouni is influential because of his easy-to-read, simplified commentaries of the Holy Qur'an. They are now thought of as some of the most popular short commentaries in history after those of Jalalayn, Baydawi, Ibn Kathir and Ibn Juzayy. One of al-Sabouni's most influential commentaries is the *Tafsir Ayat Al-Ahkam*, an exploration of the Qur'anic verses that pertain to legal rulings.



Prof Dr M Din Syamsuddin
Scholarly

Country: Indonesia

Born: 31 December 1958 (age 62)

Professor Din Syamsuddin served as chairman (2005-2015) of the largest modernist Islamic organisation in Indonesia, the Muhammadiyah. He also served as chairman of the Indonesian Council of Ulema and is currently acting as chairman of its Advisory Council. He is a member of Group of Strategic Vision Russia – Islamic World, Chairman of the World Peace Forum and President of the Inter Religious Council – Indonesia. He was recently re-elected for another five-year term as President of the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP). Syamsuddin is still very active in interfaith and intercultural dialogue and was appointed the Special Envoy for Religious Harmony by President Widodo.



Prof Dr Akbar Ahmed

Scholarly

Country: Pakistan

Born: 15 January 1943 (age 77)

Professor Dr Akbar Ahmed is the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, DC and the former Pakistani High Commissioner to the UK and Ireland. In addition to his academic and public sector careers, Ahmed has produced a number of noteworthy films and authored more than a dozen award-winning books. He produced the Jinnah Quartet and feature film, Jinnah (1998). He was awarded the 2017 Sir Syed Day Lifetime Achievement Award for excellence in Poetry, Literature, Arts and the Sciences and declared the 2017 Scholar/Teacher of the Year of the American University School of International Service. Ahmed was awarded the Diplomatic Leadership Award in 2019 from PakPac USA for outstanding academic endeavor. He has produced two films: 'Journey into America' and 'Journey into Europe', which are both accompanied with books with the same titles.



Dr Ingrid Mattson

Scholarly

Country: Canada

Born: 24 August 1963 (age 57)

Dr. Ingrid Mattson is the London and Windsor Community Chair in Islamic Studies at Huron University College at Western University in Canada. Previously she had worked for 14 years as Professor at the Hartford Seminary in Hartford, and served as Director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. In 2001 she was elected Vice President of ISNA and in 2006 she was elected president. She is the author of the highly acclaimed *The Story of the Qur'an*. In late 2018, Dr. Mattson founded a major project to uphold the sacred inviolability (*hurma*) of those who enter Muslim spaces from exploitation and abuse by those holding religious power and authority. The Hurma Project is conducting research, education, training and protocols for professional oversight for imams, chaplains, mosque boards and others.



Ismail Haniyeh

Political

Country: Palestine

Born: 29 January 1962 (age 58)

Haniyeh was elected as the leader of Hamas' political bureau in May 2017 after his predecessor, Khaled Mashal, had completed his two terms in office. Haniyeh has been a senior political leader of Hamas for over 20 years and led Hamas to a shock win over Fatah in the 2006 elections. He served as one of two disputed prime ministers of the Palestinian National Authority. After being dismissed by President Mahmoud Abbas, Haniyeh continued to exercise prime ministerial authority in the Gaza Strip until 2014 when Hamas and Fatah agreed on a reconciliatory deal. Haniyeh is a popular figure in Gaza, where he lives, and has broadened the appeal of Hamas in Gazan politics.



HE Anwar Ibrahim

Political

Country: Malaysia

Born: 10 August 1947 (age 73)

Datuk Seri Ibrahim Anwar was the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1993-98 and was then widely expected to succeed Tun Mahathir Muhammad. A falling out between the two led to Anwar being jailed on controversial charges. He spent the following two decades being charged, imprisoned, freed and in-exile. In 2015, a new opposition coalition named the Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope) was formed with Anwar as the de facto leader. The coalition won the 2018 elections and the chair of the alliance, Mahathir Muhammad became Prime Minister and pledged to release Anwar from prison and step down within two years. After being released from prison, Anwar waited for nearly two years for Tun Mahathir to hand over the premiership to him. Mahathir's resignation and the collapse of the coalition thwarted Anwar and allowed current Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to assume power.



HE Mahathir Mohamad

Political

Country: Malaysia

Born: 10 July 1925 (age 95)

Mahathir is a dominant political figure. In his first tenure as Prime Minister (1981-2003) he won five consecutive general elections as well as seeing off party rivals to the leadership. After retiring for many years, Mahathir registered a new political party in 2017 and joined the coalition Pakatan Harapan (Pact of Hope) which went on to win the 2018 elections with Mahathir becoming prime minister. At 94 years old, he was the world's oldest sitting head of government. He was expected to serve in this role for a year and then allow Anwar Ibrahim to succeed him. He was the key figure behind the transition of Malaysia's economy from being agricultural-based into a newly industrialised market econ-



omy. He is noted for his support for liberal Muslim values and has established Islamic institutions such as the International Islamic University of Malaysia. Mahathir has been criticised for his record on civil liberties and for the trials and tribulations that his former Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, endured after being sacked by Mahathir in 1998.

Sadiq Khan

Political

Country: United Kingdom

Born: October 8, 1970 (age 50)

Sadiq Khan, the son of a London bus driver, was elected the Mayor of London in May 2016, with a huge personal mandate. His journey to arguably one of the highest posts in the UK included being a human rights solicitor, chair of the human rights group Liberty, councillor for Wandsworth, and then MP for Tooting from 2005-2016. He is a member of the Labour Party and served as Minister in two posts in Gordon Brown's government as well as serving in Ed Miliband's shadow cabinet in more senior ministerial posts. Much has been made of his British Pakistani ethnicity as well as him being Muslim, but he has stressed that those parts of his identity merely strengthen his willingness to serve all parts of society. He has worked to build cohesion among London's diverse communities. President Trump has attacked him via tweets with Khan replying that the President has become a poster-boy for the far-right.



Aminu Ado Bayero

Administration of Religious Affairs

Country: Nigeria

Born: 1961 (age 59)

Aminu Ado Bayero became the 15th Emir of Kano on 9 March 2020. His father had been the 13th Emir (1963-2014) but was succeeded by a nephew, who was dethroned by the Kano state government in 2020. The emir of Kano is historically the second most important Muslim position in Nigeria after the Sultan of Sokoto. The emir of Kano serves as the leader of the Tijani sufi order in Nigeria.



Mufti Abul Qasim Nomani

Administration of Religious Affairs

Country: India

Born: 14 January 1947 (age 73)

Maulana Mufti Abul Qasim Nomani is the current Mohtamim (Vice-Chancellor) of Darul Uloom Deoband in India. He was elected as Mohtamim on 23 July 2011 succeeding Maulana Ghulam Muhammad Vastanvi. The Deoband Darul Uloom is where the Deobandi school was established and it is still the centre worldwide, having some 7,000 students. Mufti Abul Qasim Nomani graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband in 1967 and was appointed as Member of Majlis Shura (Governing Body) of Darul Uloom in 1992.



Sheikh Nuh Keller

Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Jordan

Born: 1954 (age 66)

Sheikh Nuh Keller's Reliance of the Traveller is the first Islamic legal work translated into a European language to receive certification from the Al-Azhar University. He also possesses a number of *ijazas* in various disciplines, most notably as an authorised sheikh of the Shadhiliyyah Sufi order. He teaches students from his zawiyah in Jordan as well as at annual gatherings all over the world.



Dr Muhammad Al-Arifi

Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 16 July 1970 (age 50)

Dr al-Arifi is a well-known scholar and lecturer from Saudi Arabia. He is a founding and honorary member of various *dawa* organisations, as well as being a member of their advisory committees. He is also a Professor in King Saud University of Riyadh. He takes a special interest in Hadith literature and has received licenses for the chains of transmission for various Hadith texts from a number of scholars. He has over 45 million followers on social media.



Zakir Abdul Karim Naik

Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: India

Born: 18 October 1965 (age 55)

Zakir Abdul Karim Naik is a popular preacher and comparative religion specialist in the mould of the legendary Ahmed Deedat. He hosts huge public events where he speaks on all aspects of Islam and answers questions from the audience. Naik challenges leaders of other faiths to public debates that are broadcast around the world on Peace TV—a satellite channel that he helped to found. He is also the founder of the Islamic Research Foundation, which runs United Islamic Aid. In 2015, he was awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Services to Islam. Since 2016 he has been resident in Malaysia, but is being investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on incitement to terror and money laundering charges. India has requested extradition so he might stand trial on those charges.



Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas

Attar Qadiri

Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Pakistan

Born: 12 July 1950 (age 70)

Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri is a leader of the Qadiriyyah, Radaviyyah, Attariya branch of the Qadiriyyah Sufi order. Qadiri is a widely-respected sheikh with a significant global following which is supported by the Madani TV Channel. In 1981, the Sheikh founded Dawat-e-Islami, a Sunni Barelwi revivalist movement with hundreds of thousands of followers in Pakistan and over 180 other countries. It centres on the propagation of Islamic knowledge and manages two main activities: the Jamia-tul-Madina chain of religious schools, and the non-commercial Madani TV channel. Religious background: Sheikh Muhammad Qadiri studied for 22 years under the former Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Sheikh Mufti Waqar ud Din Qadri Razavi. He has authored over 30 books, including *Faizan-e-Sunnat* on the merits of good deeds. The Sheikh's fame is matched by his humility; his most famous quote is, "I Must Strive to Reform Myself and the People of the Entire World."



Ahed Tamimi

Social Issues

Country: Palestine

Born: 31 January 2001 (age 19)

Ahed Tamimi is a 19 year old Palestinian who has become a globally recognised icon for resistance to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. She confronted Israeli soldiers who entered her yard in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh, and then proceeded to slap and kick them. Her mother was recording the incident and later the video went viral. A few days later, at night, the Israeli army's own camera documented soldiers entering her house, handcuffing and arresting Tamimi. She was then subject to interrogation, a fate common to most Palestinian youth living under occupation, detained for three months and sentenced to eight months in jail. Her mother was also imprisoned but never charged. Ahed was released after serving eight months as a political prisoner and received worldwide support for highlighting the oppressive life faced by Palestinians.



Loujain Al-Hathloul

Social Issues

Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 31 July 1989 (age 31)

Al-Hathloul is a Saudi women's rights activist and currently a political prisoner. She was a fierce critic of the law forbidding women to drive in Saudi Arabia and she used social media to challenge this and the male guardianship system. In 2014, she was detained for 73 days after she attempted to drive into Saudi Arabia from the United Arab Emirates. A year later, Al-Hathloul attempted to stand in the local elections, which marked the first time Saudi women were allowed to vote, but was ultimately barred. She was detained again in 2018, but this time she was tortured and held in prison without charges or trial for 10 months, but then charged the following year with attempting to destabilise the kingdom. Her trial was postponed due to the Covid-19 lockdown and put on hold indefinitely. Her husband, a Saudi stand-up comedian had also been forcefully returned from Jordan to Saudi Arabia and is currently also under arrest.



Malala Yousufzai

Social Issues

Country: Pakistan

Born: 12 July 1997 (age 23)

Yousufzai's rise to prominence began tragically when the Taliban shot her in a school bus for encouraging girls to go to school in Swat.

After the assassination attempt, Malala was flown to England, where she recovered and continued her schooling. She received high-profile support for her campaign to ensure that all children worldwide be schooled. In 2013, Yousufzai addressed the UN, received the prestigious Sakharov Prize, and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, which she co-received in 2014 at the age of 17, thereby becoming its youngest-ever recipient. She has been granted audiences with royalty and world leaders, and this along with her high-profile international exposure has led some in her native Pakistan to question whether she has overreached. She has just graduated from Oxford University and published her second book.



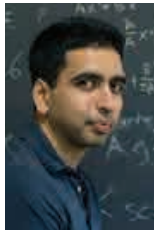
Salman Khan

Science & Technology

Country: United States of America

Born: 11 October 1976 (age 44)

Salman Khan is a pioneer of online learning, having founded the Khan Academy in 2008. The online educational website features more than 5,500 mini-lectures, free of charge, to anyone in the world. The videos are hosted on YouTube and teach a variety of subjects, such as: mathematics, history, healthcare, medicine, finance, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, economics, cosmology, organic chemistry, American civics, art history, macroeconomics, microeconomics, and computer science. They are available in several languages through subtitle translations. The Khan Academy channel on YouTube has more than 5.8 million subscribers and the Khan Academy videos have been viewed more than 1.8 billion times. Khan published his international best seller, *The One World School House*, in October 2012.



Maher Zain

Arts & Culture

Country: Sweden

Born: 16 July 1981 (age 39)

Multi-platinum award-winning Swedish singer, songwriter and music producer of Lebanese origin, Maher Zain is a household name across global Muslim audiences. Maher's debut album *Thank You Allah* reached the number one spot on Amazon's World Music charts. He is the most popular Muslim artist on social media with 37 million fans and the most viewed Muslim artist on YouTube with over 6 billion views. Maher has performed in over 100 charity concerts across 35 countries and is a high profile supporter of UNHCR.



Sami Yusuf

Arts & Culture

Country: United Kingdom

Born: 19 July 1980 (age 40)

Sami Yusuf is an internationally renowned composer, producer, vocalist and master musician who has created a revolution in the music industry. Sami Yusuf's compositions are often inspired by traditional musical systems and mystical poetry that enlightens and inspires the listener. For the past several years, his focus has been on revivifying and promoting musical heritage through his works and through the creation of a platform for intercultural artistic dialogue. Performing at sold-out venues on six continents, his music appeals to all age groups, ethnicities and beliefs across the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America. With downloads of over a billion, Sami Yusuf has released nine studio albums to date, has over 40 million albums sold, and has 15 million followers across his social media platforms. The artist is also known for his extensive involvement in global charitable initiatives and is currently Goodwill Ambassador for the UN World Food Programme.



Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Al-Sudais

Qur'an Reciters

Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 10 February 1960 (age 60)

Al-Sudais is the chief of the Imams at the Grand Mosque of Makkah. He memorised the Qur'an at the age of 12, and studied Shari'ah at Riyadh University, Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, and Umm al Qura University. Al-Sudais is also popular for his sermons and stance on peaceful conflict-resolution. In 2005, he was named by the Dubai International Holy Quran Award (DIHQA) Organising Committee as its 9th annual "Islamic Personality Of the Year" in recognition of his devotion to the Qur'an and Islam. In 2017, Al-Sudais supervised the film *One Day In The Haram*, a film about the Haram in Makkah, told through the eyes of the workers.



Sadio Mane

Celebrities & Sports

Country: Senegal

Born: 10 April 1992 (age 28)

Sadio Mane is current African footballer of the year and globally renowned as one of the best footballers in the world. He started his career in France before moving to Austria, and then coming to the EPL to first join Southampton in 2015 and then transferring to Liverpool in 2016. He has been instrumental in Liverpool's success, winning the Champions League in 2019 and then ending a 30 year wait to win the Premier League in 2020. He also played for the Senegal team which reached the 2020 African nations cup final. He is seen making dua (supplication) before the start of each match and performs the sajdah (prostration) every time he scores a goal. He is well known for his modest and humble personality, and has donated significant amounts of his personal wealth to charity and in particular to develop the infrastructure in his home town of Sedhiou.



Khabib Nurmagomedov

Celebrities & Sports

Country: Russia

Born: 20 Sept 1988 (age 32)

Khabib Nurmagomedov is a mixed martial artist. As well as being the youngest Russian wrestler in history to compete in the UFC he is also the first Russian and Muslim to win a UFC title. He is the current Lightweight UFC champion and holds the longest undefeated streak in MMA history with 28 wins and counting. He won a high profile fight with Conor McGregor but was involved in a brawl immediately following the fight which led to both fighters being banned for several months. On his return to the ring in September 2019 he beat the interim champion. He is ethnically from the Russian republic of Dagestan and has chosen the nickname 'the eagle' to pay homage to this region. This has won him great support amongst many Muslim youth not only in Dagestan but also in Chechnya and other ex-soviet Muslim majority countries. His appeal is not limited to these as he has managed to transcend ethnic complexities and become one of Russia's most popular sportsmen.



What God has willed

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

فَإِذَا فَلَاحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ اللَّغْوِ مُعَصِّمُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ
فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِزُجُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الْأَعْلَىٰ أَرْجَاهِهِمْ
أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنَدَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَمِنْ بَنِي سَعْدِ
وَوَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَوَاللَّهِ كَذِبًا لَمْ يَعْلَمُوا ﴿٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ
وَعِبَادِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٨﴾

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ

هُمُ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ سَلْسَلَةٍ مِنْ
طِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نَظْفَةً فِي فَؤُوقِ مَكِينٍ ﴿١١﴾ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا
النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُنْفُوسَةَ
عِظْلًا فَكُنُوزًا أَلْبَاطًا ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّعْجَةَ حَمَلًا ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا مَا أَحْرَبَ
فَتَرَاكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَمَّا بَعَدَ ذَلِكَ لَنَسِيُونَ ﴿١٣﴾
ثُمَّ لَمَّا كَفُرُوا قِيمَةً تَبِعُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ

سَبْعَ طَرِيقٍ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ Indeed prosperous are the believers, ﷻ those who in their prayers are humble, ﷻ and who shun vain talk, ﷻ and who fulfil payment of alms, ﷻ and who guard their private parts, ﷻ except from their spouses, and what [slaves] their right hands possess, for then they are not blameworthy. ﷻ But whoever seeks [anything] beyond that, those, they are transgressors. ﷻ And who are keepers of their trusts and covenants. ﷻ And who are watchful of their prayers. ﷻ Those, they are the inheritors ﷻ who shall inherit Paradise, wherein they will abide. ﷻ And We certainly created man from an extraction of clay. ﷻ Then We made him a drop in a secure lodging. ﷻ Then We transformed the drop [of semen] into a clot. Then We transformed the clot into a [little] lump of flesh. Then We transformed the lump of flesh into bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed be God, the best of creators! ﷻ Then indeed after that you die. ﷻ Then on the Day of Resurrection you shall surely be raised.

THE 450 LISTS

🌀 The Lists 🌀

Scholarly

page 141

These scholars, thinkers, and educators are well-respected leaders who have made significant contributions to the study and cultivation of Islamic knowledge and Muslim culture.

Political

page 153

These leaders possess high positions of power over substantial groups of people and exert influence from their status, reputation, or political clout.

Administration of Religious Affairs

page 162

These agents of change are responsible for founding and/or directing institutions that influence the religious affairs of Muslims.

Preachers & Spiritual Guides

page 170

Preachers rely on charisma to inspire millions through multimedia while spiritual guides traditionally teach through live study circles and individualised directives to their disciples.

Philanthropy, Charity & Development

page 177

These activists work in the field, affecting the world through poverty alleviation programmes, emergency aid, charitable giving, sponsorships of various initiatives for people and communities to become self-reliant.

Social Issues

page 181

These individuals address various social issues such as health, education, women's rights, the environment, human rights and conflict resolution.

Business

page 190

These entrepreneurs head and direct key organisations in the business world pushing innovation and financial development forward.

Science & Technology

page 195

These are the main figures from the world of science and technology.

Arts & Culture

page 199

These are artists and cultural ambassadors whose work has become part of people's daily lives.

Qur'an Reciters

page 207

The recitation of the Qur'an is a special art that is valued by Muslim communities across the world. The word al-Qur'an literally means 'the recitation' referring to its origins as an oral text.

Media

page 208

In an age of impulsive news and innovative media, these personalities have garnered influence from their activity in the media world.

Celebrities & Sports Stars

page 212

These instantly recognisable figures have a huge public following due to their prominence in popular culture and sport.

Top Extremists

page 216

These individuals are responsible for heinous acts and controversial statements that are rejected by Muslim orthodoxy, separating them clearly from others engaged in armed conflict.

Middle East and North Africa

ALGERIA

Cherif, Ambassador Prof Dr Mustafa

Professor Mustapha Cherif is a philosopher and researcher specialising in international relations and dialogue between cultures. Cherif has written numerous works on religion, civilization and dialogue between cultures. He has held many senior academic and diplomatic positions including Algerian Minister of Higher Education and ambassador to Egypt. He was awarded the UNESCO-Sharjah prize for Arab Culture and the Ducci Foundation peace prize in 2013.

BAHRAIN

Yaquby, Nizam

Nizam Yaquby was trained in the Islamic sciences in Bahrain and Makkah before going on to study at McGill University. He sits on a plethora of Sharia advisory boards including Morgan Stanley, Arab Banking Corporation, Citigroup Inc, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Barclays, BNP Paribas, Credit Agricole CIB, Dow Jones Islamic Index, Lloyds TSB, and HSBC Amanah. A highly sought-after expert with an immense breadth of experience with the Muslim community, Yaquby has received several awards, including the Euromoney Award for Outstanding Contribution to Islamic Finance and the Zaki Badawi Award for Excellence in Sharia Advisory in 2008.

IRAN

Amoli, Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Jawadi

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 132

Dabashi, Prof Hamid

Hamid Dabashi is the Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York. He has written extensively in major publications and peer reviewed journals on a variety of topics including religion, literature, cinema and philosophy. He founded *Dreams of a Nation*, a Palestinian Film Project, dedicated to preserving and safeguarding Palestinian Cinema. He

is also a public speaker, a current affairs essayist (contributing opinion pieces regularly to the Al Jazeera website), and a staunch anti-war activist.

Damad, Ayatollah Dr Seyyed Mostafa Mohaghegh

Damad is one of very few high-level clerics in Iran to have been educated in international law in the West. Damad is a forceful advocate for a more progressive interpretation of Sharia. He is a very well-respected scholar, Dean of the Department of Islamic Studies at The Academy of Sciences of Iran, and a professor of Law and Islamic Philosophy at Tehran University. In October 2010, at the Pope's behest, he addressed the Synod in the Vatican, stressing the Muslim view towards Christians as one of friendship, trust, and mutual understanding. He was honoured as a prominent figure of humanities in Iran at the 8th Farabi International Award ceremony in 2017.

Shirazi, Grand Ayatollah Nasir Makarim

Grand Ayatollah Shirazi is a leading theologian teaching at the Qom Seminary, one of the two most important centres of learning for Twelver Shia. He is most influential for his *Tafsir Al-Amthal*, which is a very popular, simplified commentary of the Qur'an. He has also spearheaded the creation of schools and magazines devoted to young people. He has been outspoken in his support for Palestinians. His official website (www.makarem.ir) is in six languages.

Sobhani, Ayatollah Jafar

Sobhani is a leading member of the Council of Mujtahids at the Qom Seminary, one of the two most important centres of learning in Twelver Shiism. He is the director of the Imam Sadiq Institute, Iran and was previously a member of the Society of Seminary Teachers at Qom. His work in all areas of the Islamic sciences is widely known and receives critical attention. Sobhani is a prolific writer, having published over 300 scholarly works.

IRAQ

Fayadh, Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 132

Hakim, Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Said

Grand Ayatollah Hakim is one of the four marajas of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq, and, accordingly, is one of Iraq's most important Shia clerics. His family is very prominent in Iraq, holding key positions in Shia social and religious organisations and also in government. Hakim leads around five percent of the Iraqi Shia population. His influence stems partly from his relationship to Grand Ayatollah Mohsen Al-Hakim, a former religious leader of the Twelver Shia in Iraq.

Al-Najafi, Grand Ayatollah Bashir

Grand Ayatollah Bashir Al-Najafi is one of the four *marjas* of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq, and one of Iraq's most powerful Shia clerics. As a *marja* of the Hawza in Najaf, Iraq's premier Shia institution, Najafi holds a position of immense authority. Najafi, originally from Pakistan, holds less sway amongst Iraq's population than the other *marajas* but has significant clout in South Asia. His website (www.alnajafy.com) is available in five languages.

Al-Qaradaghi, Prof Ali Mohyi Ali

Professor Ali is the Vice-President of the European Council for Fatwa and Research and the Chairman of the Supreme Consultative Council for Bringing Islamic Madhahib Closer Together of ISESCO, in addition to many other professional positions. He has written more than 30 works.

Al-Sadr, HE Ayatollah Al-Faqih Seyyed Hussein Ismail

HE Ayatollah Al-Faqih Seyyed Hussein Ismail Al-Sadr is the most senior Shia cleric in Baghdad, Iraq. He heads the Ayatollah Seyyed Hussain Ismail Al-Sadr Foundation Trust, which runs humanitarian, development, and peace and reconciliation projects in Iraq. His role as a social leader and humanitarian has increased significantly during the recent hostilities in Iraq. The issue of reconciliation and dialogue between Iraq's different religious and ethnic communities has featured heavily in the Ayatollah's recent efforts.

JORDAN

Khasawneh, HE Sheikh Abdul Karim

Sheikh Khasawneh has served Jordan in his capacity as a religious scholar and mufti in various roles. He is a former mufti of the Jordanian Armed Forces, served as the Grand Mufti of Jordan between 2010-

2017, and was reappointed to this post in 2019. Khasawneh is also a member of the Jordanian Ifta Council and member of the board of the World Islamic Sciences and Education University.

LEBANON

Qabbani, Dr Mohammad Rashid

Mohammad Rashid Qabbani is the former Grand Mufti of Lebanon and the country's leading Sunni scholar. Qabbani speaks out regularly against sectarianism and violence. He is an important voice in a region where tensions can easily escalate.

MOROCCO

Abdurrahman, Prof Dr Taha

Taha Abdurrahman is a Moroccan philosopher famous for his work on the creation of an ethical humanistic modernism on the basis of the ethics and values of Islam. Abdurrahman has won the Moroccan Book Prize twice, and was awarded the ISESCO Prize for Islamic Philosophy in 2006. He is the president of the Wisdom Circle of Thinkers, Morocco, and a member of the International Union of Muslim Scholars.

OMAN

Al-Khalili, HE Sheikh Ahmad

Sheikh Al-Khalili is the Grand Mufti of Oman. He was born and lived in Zanzibar until the end of the al-Said rule (1964) and then moved to Oman along with many others of Omani heritage. He is a strong advocate for religious tolerance and works hard to ensure harmony between the different religious schools of thought in Oman.

PALESTINE

Abu Sway, Prof Mustafa

Professor Abu Sway was appointed as the first holder of the Integral Chair for the Study of Imam Ghazali's Work at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa and at Al-Quds University in 2012. He has been professor of Philosophy and Islamic Studies at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, Palestine, since 1996. He taught at the International Islamic University in Malaysia (1993-96) and was a visiting Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University, as well as a Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies at Bard College, NY.

Nusseibeh, Prof Sari

Sari Nusseibeh comes from one of Jerusalem's oldest and most prominent families. He is a professor of philosophy and a leading intellectual. He served as president of the Al-Quds University in Jerusalem for more than twenty years. In 2008, Nusseibeh was voted the 24th in a list of Top 100 Public Intellectuals by Prospect Magazine (UK) and Foreign Policy (US).

Al-Tamimi, Justice Sheikh Dr Tayseer Rajab

Al-Tamimi is a leading scholar and the Chief Islamic Justice of Palestine. Popular as an outspoken thinker and leader on Palestinian-Israeli relations, Al-Tamimi is also the head of the Palestinian Centre for Religion and Civilization Dialogue.

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Awni, Dr Hatim

Dr Hatim Al-Awni is the General Supervisor of International Committee for the Support of the Final Prophet (ICSFP). He has also served in a number of academic and political capacities, including the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia for two separate terms. While his academic research includes dozens of publications, perhaps his greatest contribution is the awakening of Salafi introspection in Saudi Arabia. His widely-read articles have pointed out clear connections between militant extremism and core Salafi texts. He also writes extensively on rapprochement between Islamic schools of thought, particularly between Salafi and Traditionalist (Ash'ari and Maturidi) approaches.

Al-Fawzan, Sheikh Salih Bin Fawzan

Sheikh Al-Fawzan is considered to be the most senior scholar of the Salafi movement in Saudi Arabia. He is a member of the council of senior scholars and committee for fatwa and research. He has authored over 35 books and is one of the major Muftis in the country.

Al-Madkhali, Sheikh Rabee Ibn Haadi 'Umayr

Sheikh Rabee Ibn Haadi 'Umayr Al-Madkhali is one of the most radical thinkers in the Salafi movement. He is an influential writer and speaker whose influence has led to an independent faction within Salafism. Al-Madkhali's adherents are known as Madkhali Salafis and make up one of the most significant and influential branches inside the Salafi movement. A former head of the Sunnah Studies Department at the Islamic University of Madinah, Al-Madkhali is a

scholar who has authored over 30 works in the fields of Hadith and Islamic disciplines.

Al-Saffar, Hasan Musa

Hasan Musa Al-Saffar is a Saudi Shia reformist leader who has made significant progress in communicating with Salafi leaders and other senior officials in Saudi Arabia. This is important as sectarian tensions throughout the Muslim world have risen with increased Sunni-Shia hostilities in Iraq.

SYRIA

Al-Nabulsi, Dr Mohammed Ratib

The son of a well-known Syrian religious scholar, Dr Al-Nabulsi has represented Syria all over the world in many Islamic conferences. Muslims know him through the lessons, orations, symposiums, and interviews broadcast on radio and television. He has written a number of Islamic books, many of which have been translated into English. In addition to studying in his native Syria, he also has studied in Ireland and France.

Al-Sabouni, Sheikh Mohammed Ali

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TUNISIA

Djait, Hisham

Hisham Djait is a well-known pan-Arab intellectual from Tunisia. A professor of history at the University of Tunis, he has written important works such as *Al-Fitna* and *L'Europe et l'Islam*, and was chosen by the Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing in Beirut as the Cultural Personality of the Year for 2016. In 2019 he received the rank of Grand Officer in recognition for all of his academic and intellectual production.

Sub-Saharan Africa

ERITREA

Said, Sheikh Faïd Mohammed

Sheikh Faïd Mohammed Said was raised in Eritrea, where he was educated by Sheikh Hamid, the Senior Judge of the Shari'ah Court in Asmara. He later moved to Madinah al Munawarah, where he continued his studies under Sheikh Atiyah Mohammed

Salim, the Resident Scholar of Masjid ul Nabawwi and Senior Judge of Madinah. Since that time Sheikh Faid has been invited to lecture all over the world, particularly in Canada, Germany, the Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UK. He has also headed Almadina College, a centre of learning in London.

ETHIOPIA

Idris, Hajji Omar

Haji Omar Idris is a mufti and leader of Ethiopian Muslims, who represent 40% of Ethiopia's population. Widely respected, he is a proponent of Muslim unity and was elected as President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council in May 2019, marking the first peaceful transition of leadership since the council was formed. Haji Idris is also President of the Fatwa and Dawa Councils.

GAMBIA, THE

Jah, Ambassador Prof Dr Omar

Jah is an important figure in the Muslim community of Gambia and in Gambian scholarship on Islam. Jah was the former Gambian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Secretary of the Muslim Scholars Council of Gambia, and Acting Vice-Chancellor at the University of Gambia. After more than a decade at the University of Gambia, he is now the Pro-Vice Chancellor at the Islamic University of Technology (IUT) Dhaka, Bangladesh, where he was appointed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

NIGERIA

Ahmed, Dr Ibrahim Datti

Dr Ibrahim Datti Ahmed is the President-General of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN). The SCSN is the focal Islamic religious institution that deals with Sharia in Nigeria and is also a representative body of Nigeria's Muslim scholars. Recently, the SCSN has petitioned for fair treatment of Muslim military officers and has spoken out against prejudice and violence against Muslims. He has been touted as a mediator between Boko Haram and the government.

Zakzaky, Sheikh Ibraheem

Sheikh Ibraheem is the leading force behind the most influential Shia movement in Nigeria and heads its Islamic Movement. The movement has witnessed rapid growth and is based on the model of Hezbol-

lah, focusing on social services, education, charity, etc, but also including military training. In December 2015, the Nigerian Army raided his residence in Zaria, massacred hundreds of his followers, killed three of his sons and held him under state detention before being released. He was arrested again but the court hearing has been repeatedly delayed, partly due to his illness.

SOUTH AFRICA

Desai, Mufti Ebrahim

A prominent and world renowned scholar, Mufti Desai has been issuing fatwas in various fields for more than 25 years. He runs the Darul Iftaa Mahmudiyah in Sherwood, Durban – South Africa where he trains students to become muftis. He also issues fatwas through the askimam.org website. He is an Islamic finance expert who serves as sharia advisor to various Islamic financial institutions.

Esack, Farid

Farid Esack is a traditionally trained scholar who is also a successful academic in modern universities. He has authored many famous written works on Islam and is arguably the world's leading Islamic Liberation Theologian. He was appointed as gender equality commissioner by Nelson Mandela. Through the organisation, The Call of Islam, Esack played a leading role in the struggle against apartheid. He is an advocate of interreligious solidarity, against all forms of injustice and has worked extensively to support Muslims infected with HIV. He is currently Head of the Department of Religion Studies at the University of Johannesburg and has been a professor at Harvard University. In 2018 he was awarded the Order of Luthuli (Silver), South Africa's highest civilian order for his contribution to scholarship and work for justice.

Moosa, Ebrahim

Ebrahim Moosa is the Mirza Family Professor of Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies in the Keough School of Global Affairs, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, and in the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame. His interpretive and historical research on questions of tradition, ethics, and law includes two monographs as well as several edited and co-edited books. His prize-winning book *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination*, was awarded the Best First Book prize in the History of Religions by the American Academy of Religion.

A Common Word

www.acommonword.com

The 'A Common Word Between Us and You' initiative (ACW) was launched on October 13th, 2007 initially as an Open Letter signed by 138 leading Muslim scholars and intellectuals (including such figures as the Grand Muftis of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Oman, Bosnia, Russia, and Istanbul) to the leaders of the Christian churches and denominations of the entire world, including His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. In essence it proposed, based on verses from the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible, that Islam and Christianity share, at their cores, the twin 'golden' commandments of the paramount importance of loving God and loving one's neighbour. Based on this joint common ground, it called for peace and harmony between Christians and Muslims worldwide, who together comprise over 55% of the world's population. ACW was and is an extended global handshake of interreligious goodwill, friendship and fellowship and consequently of world peace.

ACW is a document which uses religion as the solution to the problems of interreligious tensions. By basing itself on solid theological grounds in both religions—the twin Commandments to love God and love the neighbour—ACW has demonstrated to Christians and Muslims that they have a certain common ground (despite irreducible theological differences) and that both religions require them to have relations based on love not on hatred.

During the ten years since its launch ACW has become arguably the most influential interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians in history. It has provided a common ground on which thousands of Muslim and Christian religious leaders have been brought together through:

- Initiating a multitude of conferences, seminars, workshops, training programs, and university courses in Jordan, the Vatican, the USA (Yale University, Georgetown University and the College of William and Mary, Fuller Theological Seminary, ISNA, Oregon, Virginia, South Carolina, New Orleans), the UK (Cambridge University, Oxford University, Heythrop College and Lambeth Palace), Oman, Malaysia, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, the UAE, the Brookings Institute in Qatar, the Mediterranean Dialogue of Cultures, Germany (the Munich School of Philosophy), the World Council of Churches in Switzerland, the Philippines, and Australia.
- Being the subject of books, articles, PhDs and over 74 dissertations and reports.
- Founding the regular [every 3 years] Catholic-Muslim

Forum, which was first held at the Vatican in 2008, at the Baptism Site, Jordan, in 2011, and at the Vatican in November, 2014.

- Giving rise to a variety of other events, activities, initiatives and even legislative bills.

Thus HH Pope Benedict XVI, said of it (during the First Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum held at the Vatican, November 4–6, 2008):

“The Open Letter ‘A Common Word between Us and you’ has received numerous responses and has given rise to dialogue, specific initiatives and meetings, aimed at helping us to know one another more deeply and to grow in esteem for our shared values.”

Equally, HG Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said of it (in 2010):

“The appearance of the A Common Word [Open Letter] of 2007 was a landmark in Muslim-Christian relations and it has a unique role in stimulating a discussion at the deepest level across the world.”

Insofar as Muslim-Christian relations are concerned, Professor Miroslav Volf of Yale University said of it (in 2011):

“The A Common Word Initiative is the most significant initiative in Muslim-Christian relations since *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council.”

And in so far as Muslim initiatives towards Christians are concerned, Professor David F. Ford (Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge, U.K. and Director of the Cambridge Interfaith Program) said of it (in 2011):

“The Open Letter A Common Word Between Us and You (2007) was probably the single most important initiative ever taken by Muslim scholars and authorities towards Christians.”

The A Common Word initiative was awarded the UK's Association of Muslim Social Scientists Building Bridges Award of 2008; Prince Ghazi, Habib Ali Al-Jifri and Grand Mufti Mustafa Ceric were awarded Germany's Eugen Biser Award for it in 2008, and Prince Ghazi was awarded the St Augustine Award for Interreligious Dialogue in the Mediterranean (Milan, Italy, 2012) and the Interfaith Harmony and Tolerance Prize by the International Islamic University of Malaysia, *Jamia Ma'din* and the National Unity and Integration Department, Malaysia.

He is the author of *What is a Madrasa?* (2015). Moosa is also regarded as a prominent public intellectual. In 2007 he was invited to deliver the King Hasan Lecture (Durus Hasaniyyah) to HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco in Arabic. He currently directs the Madrasa Discourses project, advancing scientific and theological literacy amongst young theologians (madrasa graduates) in South Asia.

UGANDA

Mamdani, Mahmood

Mamdani is the Herbert Lehman Professor of Government in the Departments of Anthropology and Political Science at Columbia University in the United States, and Director of Makerere Institute of Social Research in Kampala, Uganda. In 2008, Mamdani was named one of the world's top 20 intellectuals by Foreign Policy (New York) and Prospect (London) magazines. He is the former president of the Council for Development of Social Research in Africa in Dakar, Senegal. Mamdani is well-known for his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War and The Roots of Terror*, which became significant in liberal policy circles in the US.

Asia

AZERBAIJAN

Pashazade, Sheikh ul-Islam Haji

Allahshukur Hummat

Pashazade is the Grand Mufti of Azerbaijan, the elected mufti of the Caucasus region, and the chairman of the Religious Council of the Caucasus. Pashazade is also the world's only Sunni-Shia Grand Mufti, giving each group fatwas according to their madhab, reflecting Azerbaijan's Sunni-Shia mix. He co-chaired the World Summit of Religious Leaders, held in Azerbaijan in April 2010. He has been spear-heading Azerbaijan's initiatives of promoting dialogue between faiths within the region and internationally.

INDIA

Khan, Wahiduddin

Wahiduddin Khan, founder of Centre for Peace and Spirituality, is an Islamic scholar who advocates peaceful coexistence, interfaith dialogue, and social harmony. He has authored over 200 books on Islam,

prophetic wisdom, spirituality and coexistence in a multi-ethnic society. Many of his works expound on the Islamic position on modernity, secularism, democracy and freedom of speech. Khan's English translation of the Qur'an is widely acknowledged as simple, clear and easy-to-read. Internationally recognised for his contributions to world peace, he has received, among others, the Demiurgus Peace International Award, Padma Bhushan and Sayyidina Imam Al-Hassan Ibn Ali Peace Award by the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. Khan has launched Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation and Quran Foundation to make people aware of the true message of the Qur'an. He is also the co-founder of Goodword books, a popular publisher of books on Islam.

Nadvi, Rabey Hasani

Nadvi is an Islamic scholar and a bilingual author of around 30 books in both Arabic and Urdu. His influence emanates from being the fourth president of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Rector of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, and a founding member of Rabita Aalam-e-Islami, Makkah Mukarramah. He is also the president of multiple Islamic centres and academies.

Nadwi, Bahauddeen Muhammed Jamaluddeen

Dr. Bahauddeen Muhammed Jamaluddeen Nadwi is the founding vice chancellor of Darul Huda Islamic University, Kerala, India. He has authored a number of books, treatises, edited volumes, and translations in Arabic, English and Malayalam spanning Qur'anic sciences, Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, education, Sufism, Comparative Religion, Arabic Language and Literature, and Islamic History. He is the Editor in Chief of an international Journal of Islamic studies, and a member of regional (Kerala), national, and international organisations.

INDONESIA

Bisri, Kyai Haji Achmad Mustofa

Kyai Haji Achmad Mustofa Bisri is widely revered as a religious scholar, poet, novelist, painter, and Muslim intellectual. A graduate of Al Azhar, he is a former Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Supreme Council and has strongly influenced the NU's (Nahdlatul Ulama) social and political development over the past thirty years. He heads the prestigious Raudlatul Tholibin Islamic Boarding School in Rembang, Central Java. Mustofa Bisri's role in combining

spirituality with artistic expression is widely admired in Indonesia, where he is regarded as a cultural icon. Often called the 'President of Poets' he is celebrated for his courage in defending artistic and religious freedom in the face of radical onslaughts.

Maarif, Syafii

Maarif is one of Indonesia's most famous scholars whose political comments regularly attract significant attention. This former president (1998-2005) of the Muhammadiyah organisation is actively involved in interfaith and peace movements both domestically and internationally, largely through his Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity. In 2008 he won the prestigious Magsaysay Award for guiding Muslims to embrace tolerance and pluralism. He was also recognised for his role in promoting interfaith dialogue and religious harmony at the Habibie Awards. Maarif is also a professor of history at the National University of Yogyakarta and a productive author and columnist.

Syamsuddin, Prof M Din

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MALAYSIA

Al-Akiti, Dato Dr Muhammad Afifi

Al-Akiti is a scholar, trained theologian, and philologist. He is a lecturer of Islamic studies with the Faculty of Theology at Oxford University. He is internationally acclaimed for his 2005 fatwa "defending the transgressed by censuring the reckless against the killing of civilians", written in response to the 7 July London bombings, which was praised by scholars of Islam and gained a massive readership on the Internet. Al-Akiti was appointed Privy Councillor to the State of Perak, Malaysia by the Crown Prince of Perak. In 2012, he was the sole recipient of the Darjah Dato's Paduka Cura Si-Manja Kini (DPCM) which carries the Malaysian title of "Dato" in the Sultan of Perak Birthday Honours List.

Al-Attas, Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib

As a scholar of Islam, Tan Sri Syed Naquib has made significant contribution to the contemporary world of Islam in the domains of the Islamisation of contemporary knowledge and of Muslim education. He was responsible for the conceptualisation of the Islamic University, which he initially formulated at the First World Conference on Muslim Education, held in Makkah (1979), and founded and directed

the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC). Tan Sri Syed Naquib has written extensively in the fields of Islamic philosophy, theology and metaphysics, history, literature, art and civilisation, religion and education. He is among the few contemporary scholars who is thoroughly rooted in the traditional Islamic sciences, being a competent master in theology, philosophy, metaphysics, history, and literature.

Bakar, Dr Osman

Osman Bakar is currently Al-Ghazali Chair of Islamic Thought at ISTAC-International Islamic University Malaysia and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Science at University of Malaya. He was formerly Distinguished Professor at Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies (SOASCIS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia Chair of Southeast Asian Islam at the Prince Talal al-Waleed Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Dr Bakar is author and editor of 38 books and numerous articles on various aspects of Islamic thought and civilization, particularly Islamic science and philosophy and interreligious and inter-civilizational dialogue. His writings have been translated into many languages. He has served as advisor and consultant to a variety of international academic and professional organisations, including UNESCO, the Qatar Foundation, and The European Science Foundation. He was awarded a Datukship by the Malaysian King in 2000.

Kamali, Prof Mohammad Hashim

Kamali was dean and professor at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and the International Islamic University in Malaysia. Kamali is currently Founding CEO of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies in Malaysia. He is the world's leading expert on comparative studies between Islamic and modern law, and one of the most prolific producers of quality scholarship on Islam in the world today. Kamali received the King Abdullah II bin Hussein International Award for the year 2010 in recognition of his intellectual and academic contributions towards serving Islam and Muslims. In February 2010, he worked on the new constitution of Somalia.

PAKISTAN

Ahmed, Prof Akbar

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 132

Hashmi, Dr Farhat

Dr Farhat Hashmi is an influential Islamic teacher, public speaker, and scholar. She is a prominent name in the burgeoning field of the role of women in Islam. In addition to the academic aspects of Islamic teachings, Hashmi also focuses on its relatable and practical aspects, thereby ensuring that her message resonates with a multitude of women across the globe. She holds a PhD in Hadith Sciences from the University of Glasgow, Scotland. She is the Founder of Al-Huda International, a non-profit institute founded in 1994. Al-Huda promotes Islamic learning and serves in the field of social welfare, and has branches across Pakistan as well as internationally.

Najafi, Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Hussain

Grand Ayatollah Hussain Najafi is the only *marjas* in South Asia. Based in the Sargodha district of the Punjab province in Pakistan, he was the first scholar from that country to be given the status of *marji'yya* and is one of only two ayatollahs from Pakistan.

Al-Qadri, Sheikh Dr Tahir

Shaykh Tahir al-Qadri is a professor of law and the founder of Minhaj ul Qur'an International Worldwide and the Minhaj Welfare Foundation. Al-Qadri has authored some 450 published works and given more than 6,000 lectures on various subjects which are aired on international satellite channels. In March 2010, Qadri issued a 600-page fatwa declaring that terrorists and suicide bombers are unbelievers. He has continued to be outspoken against terrorists. His attempts to lead popular revolts against the Pakistani government has led to a fall in his standing. He is based in Canada.

Europe

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Ceric, Sheikh Dr Mustafa

Dr. Mustafa Ceric is considered one of the most influential Muslim leaders of current times. Schooled at the Gazi Husrev Beg Madrassa in Sarajevo, Al-Azhar University and the University of Chicago (PhD in Islamic Studies), he became an Imam in Zagreb in 1987 and was the Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1999-2012. Dr. Ceric is an advocate of cross-cultural engagement as well as a peace activist. In 2006, he issued the 'Declaration of

European Muslims' stating that European Muslims are dedicated to the common values of law, tolerance, democracy and human rights, the value of life, faith, freedom, property, and dignity. In 2008, Dr. Ceric led the Muslim delegation of the 'A Common Word' initiative to the Vatican, which included a meeting with the Pope. Dr. Ceric is currently the President of the World Bosniak Congress as well as an active member of many local and international scientific organisations and societies.

Karic, Dr Enes

Dr Enes Karic is a professor of Qur'anic studies and history of the interpretation of the Qur'an at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo. He previously served as the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1994-1996. Dr Karic has written extensively on the Qur'an and Islamic studies in English and Bosnian, and has delivered lectures worldwide. He has also won literary awards for his novels, which have been translated into many languages.

RUSSIA

Gaynutdin, Mufti Sheikh Ravil

Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin is a Moscow-based Muslim scholar. Among various academic roles, he is Grand Mufti of Russia and Chairman of the Union of Muftis of Russia. He is probably the single most important figure in the schema of Russian Islam. As a member of the Russian president's Council for Coordination with Religious Organizations, he is a key figure in relations between the Kremlin and Russia's Muslim population.

SWITZERLAND

Ramadan, Dr Tariq

Ramadan is a pre-eminent European Muslim intellectual and author on Islam in public life. He is a professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies at Oxford University, as well as holding academic positions at other institutions worldwide. In February 2018, Ramadan was accused of raping two women (a third charge was dropped) and was arrested in that same month pending his trial. The French justice system has come under scrutiny for the way it has treated Ramadan since then, denying him bail and putting him in solitary confinement where his physical health has deteriorated (he suffers from multiple scler-

rosis). The testimony of one of his accusers has been discredited. Prominent activists (e.g. Noam Chomsky) have signed petitions calling for Ramadan to be treated fairly.

TURKEY

Kalin, Dr Ibrahim

Ibrahim Kalin, PhD, is a senior advisor to the President and Presidential Spokesperson. Dr Kalin is the founding director of the SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research based in Ankara, Turkey and served as its director from 2005 to 2009. He is a fellow at the Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Dr Kalin has published widely on Islamic philosophy, relations between Islam and the West, and Turkish foreign policy.

Karaman, Prof Dr Hayrettin

Karaman is one of the most prominent scholars of Islam in Turkey, and the pre-eminent scholar of Islamic law (Sharia) there. He publishes popular academic texts extensively and writes a weekly column in the newspaper *Yeni Safak (New Dawn)*. His long career in academia has garnered him much respect. At the pinnacle of his career, Karaman was a dean at Turkey's premier university, Marmara University. He left this position at the height of the headscarf controversy in 2001.

UNITED KINGDOM

Abdel Haleem, Prof Muhammad

Professor Muhammad Abdel Haleem is a much loved professor of Islamic Studies at SOAS, University of London, and editor of the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*. He was appointed an OBE in 2008 in recognition of his services to Arabic and interfaith understanding. Born in Egypt, Abdel Haleem memorised the Qur'an (this was a prerequisite for entry to Al-Azhar university) before starting his further education. He has many publications including a widely acclaimed translation of the Qur'an.

Hellyer, Dr Hisham

A noted scholar of Politics, International Studies and Islamic Studies in the West and Muslim communities worldwide, Dr Hellyer's professional career includes senior positions with the Carnegie Endowment, Brookings, and the Royal United Services Institute. A professor at the Raja Zarith Centre for Advanced

Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation (CASIS) at the University of Technology, Malaysia, Dr Hellyer has also held academic affiliations with Harvard, Warwick, the American University (Egypt), and Cambridge Muslim College. A prominent nonpartisan public intellectual in the West and the Muslim world, he regularly writes in the international press. Dr Hellyer's books include *"Muslims of Europe: the 'Other' Europeans"*, *"A Revolution Undone: Egypt's Road Beyond Revolt"*, *"A Sublime Path: the Sufi Way of the Makkani Sages"* (co-author), and *"The Islamic Tradition and the Human Rights Discourse"* (editor).

Mangera, Dr. Mufti Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf

Dr. Mufti Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf Mangera is a British Muslim scholar educated in both the Islamic and Western traditions. He memorised the Qur'an by heart and studied with accomplished scholars in the UK, South Africa, India, and Syria. He holds a PhD from SOAS and has served as an imam in the UK and USA. He is the founder of Whitethread Institute, a post-graduate institute for Islamic scholars, and he works on scholarly publications through White Thread Press (www.whitethreadpress.com) with many of his lectures being available on www.zamzamacademy.com.

Nadwi, Sheikh Dr Mohammad Akram

Sheikh Dr Mohammad Akram Nadwi is one of the most important Islamic scholars in the Western world today. He has a doctorate in Arabic Language and has authored and translated over 30 titles on Arabic, jurisprudence, Qur'an, and Hadith. He travels extensively, and his courses and lectures have a worldwide following. His biographical dictionary of women scholars in Islamic history (over 40 volumes) is now being published by al-Rabitah al-Muhammadiyah li al-ulama in Rabat. A revised edition of the English translation of the introductory volume *al-Muhaddithat* was published in 2013. He is the subject of the best-selling book: *"If the Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Quran"* (2015).

Pirzada, Shaykh Muhammad Imdad Hussain

Shaykh Muhammad Imdad Hussain Pirzada has served the global Muslim community for nearly half a century. He is a leading voice in literature, education and training of scholars, and community and charity work. His books guide on educational, religious, and current issues in multiple languages accessible to scholars and wider society. His 5-volume commentary

'*Qur'an: The Sublime Word*' is acclaimed worldwide in Arabic, Urdu and English. In 2019, he was honoured at the Imam Bukhari Complex in Samarqand to complete his 10-volume commentary '*Bukhari: The Sublime Tradition*'. Both works are the first to be written in English in the western world. Through Jamia Al-Karam, the institution he founded in 1985, hundreds of male and female British Muslim scholars have studied under his tutelage, who today serve as Imams, chaplains, teachers and community leaders. He is founder of Muslim Charity, a leading international relief and development NGO, and he is president of the World Organisation for Al-Azhar Graduates (UK).

Sardar, Ziauddin (new)

Sardar has been described as "Britain's own Muslim Polymath" by *The Independent* newspaper. He is an award-winning writer who specialises in Muslim thought, futurology, science and cultural relations. He has authored and edited over 50 books and written for various journals (*Nature*, *New Scientist*) and newspapers. He has worked on numerous ground-breaking initiatives representing British Asian and Muslim communities, producing programmes for national TV. He has taught at UK universities and worked overseas as advisor to Anwar Ibrahim (then Education Minister of Malaysia) and in Saudi Arabia. He currently edits the *Critical Muslim* and has recently established the Centre for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies.

North America

CANADA

Mattson, Dr Ingrid

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Abd-Allah, Dr Umar Faruq

Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah (Wyman-Landgraf) studied Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Chicago. In 1984, he was appointed to the Department of Islamic Studies at King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah, where he taught Islamic studies and comparative religion for several years. During the time he spent in Jeddah, Dr. Abd-Allah was able to study with a number of traditional scholars. He returned to the United States in 2000 to work with the

Nawawi Foundation (Chicago), where he remained for more than a decade. He then taught Islamic Studies at Darul Qasim Institute (Chicago) from 2012 to 2013. He currently works under the auspices of The Oasis Initiative (Chicago). He is engaged in independent research, writing, lecturing, and teaching across the United States, Canada, Europe, West Africa, and elsewhere with a focus on Islamic theology, spirituality, law and legal theory, and history.

Huda, Qamar-ul

Qamar-ul Huda is the Founding Director of the Conflict, Stabilization, and Development program at the Center for Global Policy, a think-tank in Washington, DC. He served as a senior policy advisor to former US Secretary of State John Kerry's Office of Religion and Global Affairs. Dr. Huda is the editor of *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam* and the author of *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis*. His studies and writings—which have been published in international journals and newspapers—are geared toward examining religious identities, comparative ethics, the language of violence, conflict resolution, non-violence in religion and religious education. He is an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University, an expert for the UN Alliance for Civilizations, worked at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and contributed to seeding the field of conflict resolution and peace studies in South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Jackson, Sherman

Jackson is the King Faisal Chair in Islamic Thought and Culture and professor of Religion and American Studies and Ethnicity, and the Director of the Center for Islamic Thought, Culture and Practice (CITCAP) at the University of Southern California. He is a well-respected scholar and author of works dealing with Islam, Sharia, and the African-American Muslim community. Jackson is the co-founder of the American Learning Institute for Muslims (ALIM) and is featured on the Washington Post-Newsweek blog On Faith and the Huffington Post. He is a former member of the Fiqh Council of North America and a former professor of Law, Near Eastern Studies, and Afro-American Studies at the University of Michigan.

Qadhi, Dr Yasir

Yasir Qadhi is one of very few professors of Islamic studies who is also a classically trained scholar.

Currently he is the Dean of The Islamic Seminary of America, the Resident Scholar of the Memphis Islamic Center, and a professor at Rhodes College, in Memphis, TN. He has established a reputation as a cleric who appreciates the cultural impact that Muslims have to face in the US. He is also renowned for reaching out to media outlets and mainstream Americans of different religions to promote a better understanding of Islam, and to challenge stereotypes about Muslims in the US.



I seek refuge in Allah from the outcast Shaitan.

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The Marrakesh Declaration

www.marrakeshdeclaration.org

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

Executive Summary of the Marrakesh Declaration
on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly
Muslim Majority Communities

25th-27th January 2016

WHEREAS, conditions in various parts of the Muslim World have deteriorated dangerously due to the use of violence and armed struggle as a tool for settling conflicts and imposing one's point of view;

WHEREAS, this situation has also weakened the authority of legitimate governments and enabled criminal groups to issue edicts attributed to Islam, but which, in fact, alarmingly distort its fundamental principles and goals in ways that have seriously harmed the population as a whole;

WHEREAS, this year marks the 1,400th anniversary of the Charter of Medina, a constitutional contract between the Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and blessings be upon him, and the people of Medina, which guaranteed the religious liberty of all, regardless of faith;

WHEREAS, hundreds of Muslim scholars and intellectuals from over 120 countries, along with representatives of Islamic and international organisations, as well as leaders from diverse religious groups and nationalities, gathered in Marrakesh on this date to reaffirm the principles of the Charter of Medina at a major conference;

WHEREAS, this conference was held under the auspices of His Majesty, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, and organised jointly by the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs in the Kingdom of Morocco and the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies based in the United Arab Emirates;

AND NOTING the gravity of this situation afflicting Muslims as well as peoples of other faiths throughout the world, and after thorough deliberation and discussion, the convened Muslim scholars and intellectuals:

DECLARE HEREBY our firm commitment to the principles articulated in the Charter of Medina, whose provisions contained a number of the principles of constitutional contractual citizenship, such as freedom of movement, property ownership, mutual solidarity and defence, as well as principles of justice and equality before the law; and that,

The objectives of the Charter of Medina provide a suitable framework for national constitutions in countries with Muslim majorities, and the United Nations Charter and related documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are in harmony with the Charter of Medina, including consideration for public order.

NOTING FURTHER that deep reflection upon the various crises afflicting humanity underscores the inevitable and urgent need for cooperation among all religious groups, we

AFFIRM HEREBY that such cooperation must be based on a "Common Word," requiring that such cooperation must go beyond mutual tolerance and respect, to providing full protection for the rights and liberties to all religious groups in a civilised manner that eschews coercion, bias, and arrogance.

BASED ON ALL OF THE ABOVE, we hereby:

Call upon Muslim scholars and intellectuals around the world to develop a jurisprudence of the concept of "citizenship" which is inclusive of diverse groups. Such jurisprudence shall be rooted in Islamic tradition and principles and mindful of global changes.

Urge Muslim educational institutions and authorities to conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that addresses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism, leads to war and chaos, and results in the destruction of our shared societies;

Call upon politicians and decision makers to take the political and legal steps necessary to establish a constitutional contractual relationship among its citizens, and to support all formulations and initiatives that aim to fortify relations and understanding among the various religious groups in the Muslim World;

Call upon the educated, artistic, and creative members of our societies, as well as organisations of civil society, to establish a broad movement for the just treatment of religious minorities in Muslim countries and to raise awareness as to their rights, and to work together to ensure the success of these efforts.

Call upon the various religious groups bound by the same national fabric to address their mutual state of selective amnesia that blocks memories of centuries of joint and shared living on the same land; we call upon them to rebuild the past by reviving this tradition of conviviality, and restoring our shared trust that has been eroded by extremists using acts of terror and aggression;

Call upon representatives of the various religions, sects and denominations to confront all forms of religious bigotry, vilification, and denigration of what people hold sacred, as well as all speech that promote hatred and bigotry; AND FINALLY,

AFFIRM that it is unconscionable to employ religion for the purpose of aggressing upon the rights of religious minorities in Muslim countries.

Marrakesh

January 2016 ,27th

Middle East and North Africa

EGYPT

El-Sisi, HE President Abdel Fattah

Former Field Marshal Abdel Fattah Saeed Al-Sisi removed Egypt's first democratically elected president (Mohamed Morsi) from power in 2013. Outbreaks of violence ensued across Egypt that included the death of many hundreds of protesters at the hands of pro-military police at Raba'a Al-Adawiya Square in Cairo. Sisi then ran for the office himself and was sworn into office as President of Egypt on 8 June 2014, having earlier that year resigned from his post as the Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces. Sisi has inherited a politically and economically battered Egypt, with a weak infrastructure, plummeting currency, and violent insurgency and unrest in Sinai. Under Sisi, Egypt has enjoyed excellent relations with members of the Arab League, most notably with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Sisi supported the blockade on Qatar as well as the GCC-led military intervention in Yemen. He has publically supported the Assad regime in Syria and has called on the Palestinian people to make peace with Israel in his UNGA speech in September 2017, promising the Israeli people "Egypt's unwavering support."

IRAN

Ebtekar, Dr Masoumeh

Dr Ebtekar was the first female Vice President of Iran in 1997. A scientist, journalist, and politician, she frequently writes on environmental, political, social, and women's issues in Persian and English. She is one of the founding members of the reformist Islamic Iran Participation Front and served as Head of Environmental Protection Organization under Rouhani and Khatami. Her accolades include the Energy Globe Foundation Honorary Lifetime Achievement Award, being named one of the seven 2006 Champions of the Earth by the United Nations Environment Program, and one of 50 environmental leaders by *The Guardian* newspaper. In 2016 Dr Ebtekar was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Political Science by the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies,

Seoul, Korea. In August 2017, Ebtekar was appointed as Women Affairs' Vice President.

Jafari, Major General Mohammad Ali

General Mohammad Ali Jafari has been the Chief Commander of the Iranian Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution (also known as the Revolutionary Guard) since 2007. It is a 300,000 strong elite faction of the Iranian armed forces separate from the armies that report directly to the *Velayat-e Faqih*. The Revolutionary Guard Corps occupies cabinet positions, parliament seats, and controls an extensive business empire, which it partially used to fund and direct Shia movements abroad such as Hezbollah and the Mahdi Army. Because of this, Jafari has a significant degree of influence in Iraq and Lebanon.

Rouhani, HE President Hassan

In Iran's 2017 presidential elections, Hassan Rouhani was re-elected with an increased electoral mandate, the third incumbent Iranian president to enjoy such a political accomplishment. He was pivotal in negotiating the 2015 Iran nuclear deal framework with the USA and other world powers. Rouhani has held many high-level positions such as the deputy speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis – Iranian Parliament), and the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council. Rouhani is also an accomplished scholar and has written 20 books in Persian, Arabic, and English.

Zarif, Mohammad Javad

Mohammad Javad Zarif is the current Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. After studying diplomacy and law in the USA, he moved back to Iran in 1980, where he has held significant diplomatic and cabinet posts. As someone with intimate knowledge of the USA at the heart of the current Iranian government, he is key to building bridges. Zarif has recently accused the US of "creating domestic chaos" in Iran after Trump broke the US nuclear deal with Iran. He has recently met with Chinese diplomats to enhance trade deals with China.

IRAQ

Barzani, Masoud

Barzani entered the political arena at the young age of 16 under the wing of his late father the Kurdish nationalist leader Mustafa Barzani and became the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in 1979. He had a major role in shaping the new Iraq through his political position and by becoming a member of the Iraqi Governing Council in April 2004 after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. He has been the main force fighting DA'ISH and is adamant about establishing an independent Kurdish state. He was President of the Iraqi Kurdish Region from 2005-2017, but had to resign because of fierce regional opposition to the referendum he held in September 2017 for Kurdish independence (there was overwhelming support for an independent Kurdistan). There are approximately five million Kurds living within the Kurdish region in Iraq, 14.5 million in Turkey, 6 million in Iran, and less than 2 million in Syria.

ISRAEL

Salah, Sheikh Raed

Raed Salah is the head of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel. He is widely respected in the Islamic world as a religious leader. From 1989 to 2001, Salah also served as the mayor of Umm Al-Fahm, an Israeli-Arab city. He is frequently arrested and imprisoned by the Israeli government and in February 2020, a court in Israel sentenced Salah to 28 months in prison for "inciting to terror".

JORDAN

Abu Rashta, Ata

Ata Abu Rashta is the global leader of the Islamic political party Hizb ut-Tahrir. Having worked closely with the organisation's founder, Taqiuddin Al-Nabhani, Abu Rashta gained prominence in Jordan during the First Gulf War when he contested the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In 2003, he became the leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Hizb-ut Tahrir is popular in the Levant, the former Soviet Union, South and Southeast Asia, and Western Europe.

HRH Crown Prince Hussein Al-Abdullah

Named Crown Prince in 2009, HRH Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah is the eldest son of His Majesty King Abdullah II, making him heir to the throne. HRH holds the rank of First Lieutenant in the Jor-

danian Armed Forces, and has accompanied his father on several military and political occasions. His efforts to develop the Jordanian youth community started with the Haqeq (achieve) initiative, an activity targeting school-aged children. In 2015, Crown Prince Hussein became the youngest person to chair a UN Security Council meeting and in 2017 he delivered Jordan's address at the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

KUWAIT

HH Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al

Ahmad Al Sabah (new)

HH Emir Sheikh Nawaf served as Crown Prince from 2006 until the passing of his half-brother, HH Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in September 2020. Prior to that he had served as Home Minister for a decade and then Defence Minister from 1988. After the Iraqi invasion of 1991, he served as Social Affairs and Labour Minister. He is now 83 years old and his ascension was quite straightforward, as was the selection of the new Crown Prince, Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

LIBYA

Haftar, Khalifa

Khalifa Haftar rose to prominence after the uprising against the late General Gaddafi, and was the person who announced that the Libyan government had been suspended. A leading figure in Libya's military establishment, Haftar became a major general in the Libyan Army in 2011. Haftar's Libyan National Army is at odds with the UN recognised government and seized control of Libyan oil ports in 2018. The UAE, Egypt, and Russia continue to support Haftar whereas the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) is headed by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and supported by Turkey and Qatar.

OMAN

HRH Sultan Haitham bin Tariq (new)

Sultan Haitham bin Tariq ascended to the throne on the 11th of January, 2020 after the passing of his cousin, Sultan Qaboos bin Said. Previously, Sultan Haitham served as the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and as Minister of Heritage and Culture from 2002, a position he held until his inauguration as Sultan of Oman. In his first speech to his nation, Sultan Haitham, promised to "follow

the path of Sultan Qaboos and build upon it.” Sultan Haitham is a passionate sportsman and was the first to head the Oman Football Association in the early 80’s. He is also chairman of the “2040 Oman Vision” and was described by the economist as “outward-looking and Western-oriented.”

PALESTINE

Haniyah, Ismail

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 133

Mashal, Khaled

Khaled Mashal was Hamas’ politburo chief from 2004-2017, when he stepped down after reaching the end of his term limit. His term began after the Israeli assassinations of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and Abdel Aziz Al-Rantisi in 2004 and ended in a peaceful transition to Ismail Haniyeh. Mashal saw the organisation through multiple attempts at a roadmap to peace and a major Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip. Mashal has been recognised for his persistence with Hamas’s effort. His determination is combined with a unique effort at diplomacy. Mashal has shown a willingness to negotiate with Israel to return to the 1967 borders and grant Palestinians a right of return, while importantly implying the necessary existence of the State of Israel, despite Hamas’s historic denial of that possibility. Mashal has been one of the most direct, and candid leaders in dialogue and confrontation with Israel and this has garnered international recognition.

SUDAN

Abdalla, Asma Mohamed

Asma Mohamed Abdalla became Sudan’s first female Minister of Foreign Affairs in early September 2019 in Sudan’s Transitional Cabinet. Previously she had served as ambassador and worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before being dismissed after the 1989 coup d’etat which brought Omar al-Bashir to power. She left Sudan and lived in exile, doing work for IS-ESCO and UNICEF amongst other organisations. During the 2018–19 Sudanese protests, Abdalla joined the Forces of Freedom and Change.

Al-Mahdi, Imam Sayyed Al Sadiq

Al-Mahdi is the president of the moderate National Umma Party and the imam of the Al-Ansar Sufi order. He was Prime Minister of Sudan from 1966-67 and from 1986-89 before the government was

overthrown and he was forced into exile. Al-Mahdi returned to Sudan in January 2017 and is working to restore peace and democracy in Sudan. He derives a significant portion of his authority from the fact that he descends from Muhammad Ahmad, who claimed to be the Mahdi. He is also the author of a number of scholarly works.

SYRIA

Al-Assad, HE President Bashar

Al-Assad is president of the Syrian Arab Republic. Since 2011, the civil war between the regime and an assortment of groups (mainly gathered under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army) has resulted in approximately 450,000 people being killed, six million displaced internally, and about five million having fled the country in a humanitarian crisis which is also having a destabilising influence on neighbouring countries.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

Sheikh Khalifa Al-Nahyan is the president of one of the fastest-growing nations in the world. Under his leadership, the UAE has seen significant economic growth, and the renaming of the Burj Dubai to Burj Khalifa is considered a symbol of Al-Nahyan’s financial power. He has made substantial donations to many health institutions around the world, and finances a major housing programme in the Gaza Strip. He has also inaugurated Warner Bros Plaza at Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi, the first indoor Warner Bros themed amusement park as part of his continued drive to make the UAE a prime tourist destination.

HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum

HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum is the constitutional monarch of Dubai, as well as the Prime Minister and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates. In 1995, as Crown Prince of Dubai, his chief objective was to make Dubai a resort and business destination. To that end, he helped develop the Palm Islands, the Burj Al-Arab hotel, the Burj Khalifa skyscraper, the Dubai World Cup and the Godolphin Stables. He has also launched multiple charity initiatives from Dubai, such as ‘Dubai Cares’, which has reached over 18 million beneficiaries in 53 countries since its inception in 2007. He has 19 million followers on different social media platforms.

Al-Qassimi, Sheikha Lubna

Sheikha Lubna bint Khalid bin Sultan al-Qassimi is the UAE's Minister of State for Tolerance. She was the first woman to hold a ministerial post in the UAE, where she served as the Minister of Economy and Planning from 2000-2004. In 2000, she founded Tejari, the Middle East's first business-to-business online marketplace which now has franchises in Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. In March 2014, she was appointed President of Zayed University.

Sub-Saharan Africa

CHAD

Deby Itno, HE President Idriss

Deby is the President of Chad and heads the Patriotic Salvation Movement. He took power in 1990, leading a predominantly Muslim army. Muslims make up around 55.7 percent of Chad's 13.2 million people. Deby holds great domestic authority through his ability to consolidate power in Chad, a country that was previously affected by a high frequency of coups d'état. He participated in the negotiated peace agreement in February 2010 between the rebel groups of the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudanese government. There has been growing unrest over economic conditions, corruption and proposed constitutional changes that would allow Itno to stay in power until 2033. Chad was one of the countries to be placed on the US travel ban list.

SOMALIA

Adan, Fowsiyo Yusuf Haji

Fawsiyó's influence stems from the fact that she was the first woman to be named Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia. She had a significant role in revitalising the Somali economy by recovering national assets that were frozen, as well as signing an agreement with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan for bilateral cooperation. A similar agreement was also signed with China. Fowsiyó launched a TV channel named RAAD TV aimed at providing a better image of the unstable and war-torn Somalia.

Dayib, Faduma

Dayib is a development expert and a social change activist. In 2016, defying many death threats, she be-

came the first woman to run for President of Somalia. Despite pulling out at the last minute due to corruption, she has nevertheless raised awareness on the monumental roles Somali women continue to play in peacebuilding and statebuilding since independence. Born in Kenya to illiterate parents, she didn't learn to read and write until she was 14. At 17, she managed to get to Finland and completed two masters degrees before winning a fellowship to study public administration at Harvard.

Asia

AFGHANISTAN

Ahmadzai, HE President Ashraf Ghani

The former Finance Minister and Chancellor of Kabul University, Ashraf Ghani, assumed the office of President of Afghanistan on 29 September 2014 and after months of uncertainty following elections in 2019, he was sworn in as President for a second five-year term on 9 March 2020. Previously, he had worked at the World Bank from 1991 to 2001. After the September 11 attacks, he engaged intensively with the media, appearing regularly on NewsHour, BBC, CNN and US-based National Public Radio.

Akhundzada, Mullah Haibatullah

Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada was named as Taliban leader after a US drone strike killed the previous leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. Akhundzada is known primarily as a religious leader who ran religious schools from which many Taliban have graduated. He has recently spoken about the need for national reconciliation.

AZERBAIJAN

Aliyev, HE President Ilham

Aliyev is the current president of Azerbaijan and Chairman of the New Azerbaijan Party. He came to office in 2003 (succeeding his father) and has won three subsequent elections with voter shares of over 80%. Not being outwardly religious, his advocacy of a moderate cultural Islam is representative of the demands of the population of the country. Azerbaijan, with a population of 9.8 million Muslims (over 80% are Shia Muslim) is an active member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

BANGLADESH

Wazed, HE Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Sheikh Hasina Wazed began her fourth term as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in 2019 after her party won 288 of the 300 parliamentary seats in the elections. She served her first term from 1996-2001, becoming the first Bangladeshi Prime Minister since its independence to complete its entire term. She has survived assassination attempts, corruption charges and vote-rigging allegations. Poverty alleviation has become a priority for one of the poorest but most populous Muslim countries. Wazed is the daughter of Mujibur Rahman, the first president of Bangladesh.

CHINA

Kadeer, Rebiya

Kadeer is the de facto leader of the movement for social justice for the 15-million-strong Uyghur ethnic-population of China. She was formerly a successful businesswoman and philanthropist in China but was imprisoned in 1999 for leaking state secrets and now lives in exile in the United States. Before her arrest, Kadeer was running the 1,000 Families Mother's Project which helped Uyghur women start businesses. She now presides over both the World Uyghur Congress and the Uyghur American Association. She is well-known for her work in Europe and North America publicising the plight of the Uyghur ethnic group, and is partially responsible for raising the issue both in China and abroad. The Chinese government sees Kadeer as an agitator. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

INDIA

Farooq, Dr Mohammad Umar

Dr Farooq inherited the 14th Mirwaiz (traditional preacher of Muslims in Kashmir) in 1990 at the age of 17 after the assassination of his father. At the young age of 20 he became Chairman and Founder of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, a grassroots coalition of pro-freedom parties in Jammu and Kashmir. He has raised the Kashmiri problem at the UN, the EU parliament, and the IOC, advocating dialogue with both India and Pakistan so that the aspirations of the Kashmiri people may be realised. He has been under house arrest since August 2019.

INDONESIA

Matta, Anis

Anis was the president of the Justice Party (PKS) from 2013-2015 after having been the Secretary-General of PKS for four consecutive terms (1998-2013). He has spoken on the need for interfaith dialogue, and campaigns on the basis of conservative values. In 2019 he co-founded the Gelora Party, of which he is currently chairman.

Subianto, Lt Gen Prabowo

Lt Gen Prabowo Subianto was appointed Defense Minister in 2019. He has been General Chair of the Gerindra Party since 2014. He ran for the vice presidency in 2009, and for president in 2014 and 2019, where he was defeated both times by Joko Widodo. In 2019, his supporters protested the election results, leading to violence, but the supreme court decided in Widodo's favour. Prabowo's military past has prompted mixed reactions from various organisations.

Sukarnoputri, Megawati

Megawati Sukarnoputri is the daughter of Indonesia's first President, Sukarno. She served as vice-president from 1999-2001 and then became Indonesia's first female president (from 2001 to 2004) and the fourth woman to be the leader of a Muslim-majority nation. She is the current head of the PDI-P party.

MALAYSIA

Ibrahim, HE Anwar

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 133

Mohamad, Mahathir

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 133

Wan Ismail, Datuk Seri Wan Azizah

Datuk Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia (the first woman to serve in that position) from 2018-2020. Wan Azizah served as a government doctor for 14 years before deciding to support her husband, Anwar Ibrahim, when he was appointed the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1993. Since then, her political journey has been largely defined by his struggles. Following the dismissal and arrest of her husband in 1998, Wan Azizah moved full-time into politics, forming political parties, alliances and winning seats at general elections.

PAKISTAN

Bajwa, General Javed

General Qamar Javed Bajwa is the current Chief of Army Staff (COAS) of the Pakistan Army having been appointed so in 2016, ahead of two more senior generals, by then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. His tenure of the post was extended for another 3 years by the current Prime Minister, Imran Khan, in August 2019, something which critics point to as further evidence of who is really controlling Pakistan. Others have welcomed the move as necessary in the current climate.

Fazlur Rahman, Maulana

Maulana Fazlur Rahman is the Secretary-General of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal coalition of religious parties in Pakistan's parliament. He is also the president of the Deobandi religio-political organisation, Jamiat Ulema-Islam, or Assembly of Islamic Scholars. Fazlur Rahman leads one of two main branches of the expansive organisation which is a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan. He is widely respected as a dedicated scholar of Islam and is a seasoned politician. In March 2018, he became head of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal and in August 2018 was nominated as a Presidential candidate.

Sharif, Nawaz

Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif served as Prime Minister of Pakistan on three occasions: from 1990-1993, from 1997-1999 and from 2013-2017. On the last occasion he was forced to resign over corruption charges and in 2018 was convicted of corruption. He received a ten year sentence and spent two months in prison before the Pakistan High Court suspended the sentence (the same happened to his daughter, Maryam). Sharif was then found guilty of fresh corruption charges and an accountability court sentenced him to seven years in prison and fined him \$25 million. He was allowed to leave for London to receive medical treatment in November 2019 and has yet to return to Pakistan.

PHILIPPINES

Gutoc-Tomawis, Samira

Samira Gutoc-Tomawis is a strong advocate for Muslims in Mindanao. She has particularly strong support in Marawi City, where she runs relief missions to civilians still suffering the results of the five month battle in Marawi between government forces and

DA'ISH supporters in 2017. She has been critical of the delayed rehabilitation of the city ravaged by the war and the continued imposition of martial law in Mindanao. She served as a member of the Regional Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and a member of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission. She was awarded the 2018 N-Peace Award for her activism by the United Nations Development Programme.

Misuari, Nur

Nur Misuari is a revolutionary leader of the Bangsamoro. He began his campaign for better treatment of the people of Mindanao through the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) in the 1970s, which later became the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Under Misuari's leadership the MNLF challenged the government until the Tripoli Agreement was negotiated in 1976. Misuari and members of the MNLF were charged in connection to the deadly 20-day attack in Zamboanga city in September 2013, which left nearly 200 people dead, but in 2016, Misuari was granted a temporary suspension of his arrest and asked for his help in the peace negotiations in Mindanao. In late 2019, President Duterte appointed Nur Misuari as Special Economic Envoy on Islamic Affairs to the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

SINGAPORE

Rasheed, Zainul Abidin

Rasheed is Singapore's Ambassador to Kuwait and the Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Middle East. In 2017, he was appointed to the Board of Trustees at the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore. He previously served as Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for Singapore and mayor of the city-state's North Eastern district. Rasheed's activities focus on Singapore's diplomatic relations with the Muslim world and sharing Singapore's expertise in inter-cultural and inter-religious relations with nations that have substantial Muslim populations. Rasheed is widely known domestically, having held numerous positions of leadership throughout his career in journalism, organised labour, and representation of Singapore's large Muslim community.

TAJIKISTAN

Rahmon, President Emomali

HE President Emomali Rahmon has been President of Tajikistan since 1992, winning his fourth term in office in 2013. He has been a supporter of Tajiki cultural roots, changing his name in 2007 from Rahmonov to Rahmon following a decree that banned Slavic names endings and other Soviet-era practices. Many of his family hold senior government roles.

TURKMENISTAN

Berdimuhamedow, HE President

Gurbanguly Mälikgulyewiç

Berdimuhamedow has been the President of Turkmenistan since 2006. He is a moderate Muslim traditionalist who has sought to normalise life in Turkmenistan after the more unorthodox religious beliefs of his predecessor Niyazov. In the 2017 elections, he was re-elected with 97% of the vote.

Europe

KOSOVO

Jahjaga, Atifete

Jahjaga was Kosovo's youngest and first woman president from 2011 until 2016. After earning a law degree from the University of Prishtina in 2000, she continued her studies in the UK and the USA. She then served in various governmental positions including the rank of Major General for the Kosovo Police.

NETHERLANDS

Aboutaleb, Ahmed

Ahmed Aboutaleb has served as Mayor of Rotterdam since 2009. Born in Morocco and arriving in the Netherlands at the age of 15, Aboutaleb also served as State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment. He has balanced the racial and interfaith tensions that exist in Rotterdam. He has recently been confirmed as mayor for a third term.

RUSSIA

Kadyrov, HE President Ramzan

Ramzan Kadyrov is the President of Chechnya and the son of the former president, rebel leader, and muf-

ti, Akhmad Kadyrov. In 2016, Kadyrov was re-elected with nearly 98% of the vote. He has overseen a massive reconstruction of Chechnya, and has held several important international Islamic conferences in Chechnya, including one that attempted to define Sunni Islam in 2016.

TURKEY

Davutoğlu, Ahmet

Ahmet Davutoğlu was Prime Minister of Turkey from 2014, before differences with President Erdoğan saw him resign in 2016. He is a political science academic who was appointed ambassador, chief advisor to the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister in rapid succession. In 2019, Davutoğlu resigned from the AKP and launched a new political party, the Future Party, becoming its first leader.

UNITED KINGDOM

Khan, Sadiq

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 134

Warsi, Lady Sayeeda

Baroness Warsi was Britain's first Muslim Cabinet Minister. From May 2010 to September 2012 she was the Co-Chairman of the Conservative Party, and a Minister without Portfolio in David Cameron's Cabinet. She was Minister of State for Faith and Communities and Senior Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. She resigned from her post in August 2014, citing her disagreement with HM Government's policy over the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict. Baroness Warsi is now involved in a number of charities and educational institutions, and remains a powerful voice on the issue of Islamophobia. In 2017, Baroness Warsi's published her first book, *The Enemy Within: A Tale of Muslim Britain*.

Oceania

AUSTRALIA

Husic, Ed

In 2010, Ed Husic became the first Muslim to be elected to the Australian Federal Parliament. When Kevin Rudd announced the Second Rudd Ministry in 2013, Husic was named as Parliament Secretary to the

Prime Minister. Taking his oath on the Qur'an, Husic became the first Muslim sworn in to the Australian federal government frontbench. With his rise in political prominence came growing Islamophobic abuse directed toward him. In May 2019 he announced that he would step down from the Shadow Cabinet.

North America

CANADA

Nenshi, Naheed

Naheed Nenshi is the mayor of Calgary, the most popular politician in Canada (prior to the election of Justin Trudeau), and was elected World Mayor of the Year in 2014. He is the first visible-minority and Muslim mayor in Canada. He has publicly defended Muslims, including the right of an immigrant woman to wear niqab during her citizenship ceremony in 2015. He has been attacked by the political and religious right for being a Muslim and has been susceptible to the usual Islamophobic attacks. He has made a huge impact on creating a positive image for Muslims in Canada. In 2017, Nenshi was re-elected as Mayor and was awarded the Honorary Peace Patron by the Mosaic Institute for his contributions to strengthening the fabric of Canada.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Carson, Andre

André Carson was the second Muslim to be elected to the US Congress. He was first elected to Congress in 2008, and is now serving his sixth two-year term as representative of Indiana's 7th congressional district. He converted to Islam in the 1990s.

Ellison, Keith

Keith Ellison was the first Muslim to serve in the US Congress. He represented the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota from 2007-2019 before deciding to run for attorney general rather than congress. He was duly elected as the 30th Attorney general of Minnesota becoming the first Muslim in the US to win statewide office. Ellison has been an outspoken advocate for American Muslims, and his trips to the Muslim world have garnered international support for his outreach to the Muslim world.

Khera, Farhana

Farhana Khera is the President and Executive Director of Muslim Advocates, an independent, non-sectarian legal advocacy organisation that has had a tremendous impact on the trajectory of civil rights for Muslims and others. Previous to this she was Counsel to the US Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Property

The Muslim Council of Elders

www.muslim-elders.com

The Muslim Council of Elders is an independent international body that was established on 21 Ramadan 1435 Hijri (18 July 2014) in order to promote peace in Muslim communities. The goal of the Muslim Council of Elders is to create secure societies that respect knowledge and scholars; to encourage dialogue, tolerance, respect for others, and peace; to restore the role of scholars by using their expertise to improve muslim societies; and to help eliminate causes of fragmentation and promote conciliation.

The council consists of Muslim scholars, experts and dignitaries known for their wisdom, sense of justice, independence and moderateness. They work together to promote peace, to discourage infighting, and to address the sources of conflict, divisiveness, and fragmentation in Muslim communities.

Based in the United Arab Emirates' capital, Abu Dhabi, the council is the first institutional body that aims to bring the Islamic nation together by extinguishing the fire that threatens Islam's humanitarian values and tolerant principles, and putting an end to the sectarianism and violence that have plagued the Muslim world for decades.

The Muslim Council of Elders was formed as a result of the recommendations of The Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, and it is a joint initiative by Grand Imam Sheikh Dr Ahmad al-Tayyib, the Sheikh of al-Azhar, and the forum's chairman scholar Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah.

Rights. She focused substantially on the Patriot Act, racial and religious profiling, and other civil liberties issues raised by the government's anti-terrorism policies after September 11, 2001.

Omar, Ilhan

Born in Mogadishu, Somalia, to a Somali father and Yemeni mother, Omar came to the USA in 1995 at the age of 13 in 1995. She excelled in studies and started work as a community nutrition educator whilst also working as a campaign manager. She is the Director of an association that advocates for women from East Africa to take on civic and political leadership roles. She has been the US Representative for Minnesota's 5th congressional district since 2019, (having received the largest percentage of the vote of any female candidate for US House in state history). She is vocal in her support for the working class, students, the environment, Palestinians and other caus-

es. President Trump has tweeted against her on numerous occasions and she has received death-threats from white supremacists.

Tlaib, Rashida

Born in the USA, Rashida Tlaib won the Democratic nomination for the US House of Representatives seat from Michigan's 13th congressional district in 2018 and was unopposed in the general election thus becoming the first Palestinian-American woman, and joint first Muslim woman, in Congress. She has previously served in the Michigan state house (2009 to 2014), and was the first Muslim woman ever elected to the state's legislature. She has been arrested on several occasions for her political stance; once was against President Trump and one more recently at a pro-labor rally supporting union rights for fast food workers.



Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Might, [exalted is He] above what they allege! ﷻ And peace be to the messengers. ﷻ And praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

Those Who Set The Ranks, 180 - 182

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ADMINISTRATION OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Middle East and North Africa

EGYPT

Allam, Shawki Ibrahim Abdel-Karim

Allam is the 19th Grand Mufti of Egypt (succeeding HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa). In February 2013, he was elected by Al-Azhar's Council of Senior Scholars, headed by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayeb. His election by peers was unprecedented, as the Grand Mufti had previously been chosen by the President of Egypt. Allam is also a professor of Islamic jurisprudence and law at the Al-Azhar University, and has written more than 25 works, many of which address issues pertaining to women.

Badie, Dr Mohammed

Dr Mohammed Badie succeeded Mohammad Mahdi Akef as the 8th Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood in January 2010. Following the military coup against Morsi's leadership, he was one of many Muslim Brotherhood leaders arrested. Badie—whose son was shot dead during one of the counter-protests against the coup—was sentenced to death in April 2015 along with 13 other senior Muslim Brotherhood members. In 2017, the Cassation Court accepted the appeal of Badie and 49 other defendants against their death sentences. He is currently serving multiple life sentences in prison.

IRAN

Rashad, Prof Ali Akbar

Professor Ali Akbar Rashad founded the Islamic Research Institute for Culture and Thought, and has been its president since its establishment in 1994. He is a philosopher and a scholar in the field of Philosophy of Religion and Islamic studies. In addition to translations and ongoing research, he has written over 35 books and 69 articles. He is also active in international scholarly activities and conferences, particularly in the field of interfaith dialogues.

MOROCCO

Al-Tawfiq, Ahmad

Al-Tawfiq is the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in Morocco and a strong supporter of Sufi groups. He is a writer for the Association of Moroccan Authors for Publication, as well as the Vice President of the Moroccan Association for Historical Research. Al-Tawfiq is an advocate of interfaith dialogue, and is currently on the Board of World Religious Leaders for The Elijah Interfaith Institute.

PALESTINE

Hussein, Muhammad Ahmad

Hussein was appointed the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 2006. Previously, he had been the manager and imam of the Blessed Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. He is an outspoken critic of Israeli occupation, and has personally defended the Al-Aqsa Mosque from settlers and the Israeli army. In July, 2018, Hussein issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims from selling or transferring any land in Palestine to Jews.

Sabri, Sheikh Dr Ekrima Sa'id

Sabri is the head of the Supreme Islamic Council and former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine. He remains an imam of the Blessed Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, where he preaches regularly. Sabri is well-respected in Palestine for his forthright views on Israel. In August, 2018, Sabri was awarded the International Islamic Human Rights Award in Iran.

SAUDI ARABIA

Altwajiri, Dr Abdulaziz Othman

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajiri was the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), and ex-officio Secretary General of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW) 1991-2019. Dr Altwajiri is an accomplished academic, a senior lecturer, and an eminent writer and poet. He also established the Supreme Council of Education, Science and Culture, an alliance designated for work outside of the Islamic world. Dr Altwajiri is also a

staunch advocate of cultural dialogue and the alliance of civilizations.

Al-Issa, Dr Mohammad ben Abdel Karim

Dr Al-Issa was appointed secretary-general of the Muslim World League in 2016. Prior to that he had served as Minister of Justice and Head of the Supreme Council for Justice. The Muslim World League is an NGO which was founded in 1962 and is based in Makkah. It propagates Saudi teachings worldwide as well as carrying out social work. Al-Issa visited the Vatican in 2017 where he met the Pope and in 2020 led a delegation of Islamic scholars to visit Srebrenica in Bosnia, and Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland.

Al-Malik, Dr Salim M.

Dr Salim M. Al-Malik was appointed as the new Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in May 2019 (replacing Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). Dr Salim M. Al-Malik has a PhD in Allergy and Clinical Immunology, and a PhD in Pediatrics. He has previously held various senior positions in Saudi Arabia. ISESCO is based in Rabat, Morocco and strives to strengthen cooperation among member states in educational, scientific, and cultural research, making Islamic culture the focal point of educational curricula at all levels.

Al-Othaimeen, Dr Yousef Ahmad

Dr Yousef Ahmad Al-Othaimeen was made the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in November 2016. Al-Othaimeen was the Minister of Social Affairs for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 2007 to 2015. He holds degrees from Ohio University (1982), and the American University in Washington DC (PhD in 1986). In March, 2018, Al-Othaimeen met with the Pope to discuss the migration crisis and the plight of the Rohingya.

Sub-Saharan Africa

KENYA

Khalifa, Sheikh Mohammed

Khalifa is the organising secretary of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya. He encouraged Kenyans to campaign peacefully in the 2017 general elections and to engage in politics on the basis of issues rather than along tribal affiliations.

MOZAMBIQUE

Cheba, Sheikh Muhamad Aboulai

Cheba is the provincial director of 139 registered madrasas (Islamic schools), where pupils start learning about HIV/AIDS as early as six years of age. He raises awareness about the disease and sees mosques as the perfect place for the dissemination of such knowledge. HIV/AIDS affects roughly 15 percent of the adult population of Mozambique.

NIGERIA

Ahmad, Abdrahman Olanrewaju

Shaykh Abdrahman Olanrewaju Ahmad is the National Missioner of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, a 96-year-old Islamic organisation established for the purpose of educational, moral, and social development for Muslims. The organisation boasts millions of members, with its achievements spanning Nigeria's faiths and ethnicities.

Ajibola, HE Prince Bola

HE Prince Bola Ajibola is the former head of the Nigerian High Commission in London and the president and founder of the Islamic Mission for Africa. He also served as a judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague between 1991 and 1994. In 1994, Prince Bola Ajibola was appointed a member to the Permanent Court of Arbitration with respect to the court's deliberations on the land dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon. He also served as the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of Nigeria, as well as being the former President of the Nigerian Bar Association. He is the founder, proprietor, and president of the Board of Trustee of Crescent University in Abeokuta. Currently he serves as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria (MUSWEN).

Bayero, Aminu Ado (new)

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 134

Oloyede, Prof Ishaq Olanrewaju

Professor Ishaq Olanrewaju Oloyede is the Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council. He also serves as the President of the Association of African Universities (AAU), and is the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin.

Sanusi, Alhaji Dr Sanusi Lamido

In 2014, Sanusi succeeded his late uncle Dr Ado Bayero to become The 14th Fulani Emir of Kano, the second highest Muslim authority in the land (the Sultan of Sokoto being the first). However, in March 2020 he was dethroned by the Governor of Kano on grounds of showing disrespect towards government institutions. He has accepted this and asked his followers to recognise the new 15th Emir. Sanusi is the former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (2009-2014) and a respected Islamic scholar who has won numerous awards. He has pointed out corruption in previous governments, pushed for an end to child marriage and been a target for Boko Haram.

SENEGAL

Mbacke, Serigne Sidi Al Moukhtar

Serigne Sidi Al Moukhtar Mbacke was appointed leader of Senegal's Mourid Brotherhood in January 2018 after the death of his predecessor, Serigne Cheikh Sidy Mokhtar Mbacke who died at the age of 94. He becomes the eighth caliph of the brotherhood which was established by the sufi Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba, who died in 1927 and is buried in Touba. It is estimated that over a sixth of all Senegalese are members of the tariqa, and it is particularly influential in the economic and political spheres. The Grand Magal of Touba is a pilgrimage of millions who converge on Touba to celebrate the life and teachings of Amadou Bamba.

Asia

CAMBODIA

Adam, Zakaryya

HE Zakaryya Adam is a member of the Parliament of Cambodia and serves as a member of the Commission on Education, Youth, Sport, Religious Affairs, Culture and Tourism. He previously held the position of Secretary of State in the Ministry of Cults and Religions. In addition to his government service, he serves as Vice President of the Highest Council for Islamic Religious Affairs, Vice President of the Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation (CMDF), General Secretary for the Cambodian Islamic Centre (CIC), and as a director of Cambodian Islamic Voice Radio. Adam has translated the Qur'an and other Islamic books from Arabic into Khmer. He is also the author of a Melayu-Khmer dictionary.

CHINA

Faming, Hassan Yang (new)

Hassan Yang Faming is the President of the China Islamic Association. A conservative estimate numbers 30 million Muslims from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The Hui are the most populous but the Uyghur have the greatest concentration in the Xinjiang region, where internment camps hold over a million Muslims in a bid to 're-educate' them. The 'sinicization' of Islam has stepped up in relentless fashion in the last few years.

INDIA

Ahmad, Sheikh Abubakr

Sheikh Abubakr Ahmed is the General Secretary of the All India Muslim Scholars Association, Founder and Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Markaz Saqafathu Sunniyya, one of the leading educational and humanitarian institution in India. He is often referred to by his epithet Abul Aytam (Father of Orphans) for his service of orphans and the destitute. He advocates peaceful co-existence, social harmony and its international propagation and has set up thousands of cultural centres and educational institutes in India. Sheikh Abubakr has authored and published more than 60 books on a variety of topics in Arabic, Urdu and Malayalam.

Al-Bukhari, Sayyid Ibrahimul Khaleel

Sayyid Ibraheemul Khaleel Al Bukhari is the founder and chairman of Jamia Ma'din (Ma'din Academy), Kerala, India. It's an umbrella body of various educational and charity ventures where 25,000 students are enrolled for different courses from primary to research level. He is an advisor to the International Interfaith Harmony Initiative, Malaysia; the vice president of the Muslim Educational Board of India, New Delhi; General Secretary of Kerala Muslim Jama'at, the apex body of Muslim community in the Kerala; the President of Sunni Management Association. He is also the Managing Editor of *Armonia Journal* (armoniajournal.com) and has penned 22 books in various languages. Since 1986 he has been leading the Annual Ramadan Prayer and Peace Conference, the largest Muslims gathering in India in the holy month of Ramadan, in which around half a million people take a pledge against terrorism and alcoholism.

Kandhalvi, Maulana Saad

Maulana Saad Kandhalvi is the great-grandson of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, the founder of the Tablighi Jamat (TJ) missionary movement and the grandson of its second ameer. He is currently the head of the TJ centre in Nizamuddin, New Delhi, India. A recent falling out with other leaders has led to some clashes between rival followers and a fatwa issued by Deoband criticising Maulana Saad's leadership has led to further ramifications worldwide including at Biswa Ijtema, Bangladesh, the second largest religious congregation of Muslims after Hajj.

Nomani, Mufti Abul Qasim

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 134

Noorie, Maulana Shakir Ali

Maulana Noorie is the President of Sunni Dawate Islami, a non-political religious organisation in Mumbai, India. Under his leadership, through various religious events, including full-day congregations at state and national levels, the organisation has succeeded in reviving Sunni Islam in India. In particular, the Annual Congregation is one of the largest Sunni Muslim assemblies held in India, attracting around 300,000 people annually into the heart of Mumbai, India's financial capital. The mission has been growing yearly with thousands of members and volunteers across states joining the organisation. Noorie has established schools that provide both modern and religious education, thereby providing a platform for a new generation of Muslim leaders in India.

Owaisi, MP Janab Asaduddin

Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi is an eminent Indian parliamentarian, and has served as President of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) since being elected in 2004. Under Owaisi's stewardship, the party won seven assembly seats in each of 2009 and 2014. In 2014, he was also elected to the 16th Lok Sabha (House of the People). An outspoken parliamentarian, Owaisi has been instrumental in persuading the Indian government to establish the Ministry of Minority Affairs to look after the welfare of religious minorities in India, including Muslims. He has over five million social media followers.

Ul-Hassan, Maulana Zuhair

Maulana Zuhair Ul-Hasan is a leader of the Tablighi Jamat (TJ) group. He was born and raised in Nizamuddin, New Delhi and completed his Islamic studies in Saharanpur. His late father Zubair Ul Hasan was

one of three leaders appointed as members of the leadership council. The TJ has faced unprecedented divisions of late with Maulana Zuhair's followers clashing with followers of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, over who leads the TJ.

INDONESIA

Achar, Miftahul

Miftahul Achar became the *Rais 'Aam* (supreme leader), of the country's largest Muslim organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) after the resignation of Ma'ruf Amin (now vice-president of Indonesia). The NU was established in 1926 and claims a 90 million membership. It is a charitable body funding schools and hospitals as well as organising communities to help alleviate poverty. The majority of its leaders promote *Islam Nusantara*, a moderate and compassionate approach.

Amin, Maruf

Maruf Amin was the running mate of Joko Widodo in the 2019 general elections and is now the Vice-President of Indonesia. He is an Indonesian Islamic scholar who was chair of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia and general guide of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the world's largest Islamic organisation (he resigned in late 2018). Amin's early education was at a boarding school established by NU founder Hasyim Asyari, before receiving his bachelor's degree in Islamic philosophy. He then started his lifelong activities of working in *dawa* (religious propagation) and politics, finding success in both.

Nashir, Dr KH Haedar

Dr KH Haedar Nashir was elected as Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Movement in 2015. He previously served in a variety of other roles in the organisation, which has approximately 30 million members. The Muhammadiyah Movement focuses on promoting moral and spiritual ideals through various social activities. It strongly opposes syncretism, but promotes interfaith relations.

Staquf, Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil

Yahya Cholil Staquf serves as General Secretary of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Supreme Council. As the world's largest Muslim organisation—with over 50 million members and 14,000 madrasahs—the Nahdlatul Ulama adheres to the traditions of Sunni Islam, and teaches that the primary message of Islam is universal love and compassion. Sheikh

Yahya also serves on HE President Joko Widodo's Presidential Advisory Council, where he advises the President on religious, domestic and international affairs. Sheikh Yahya co-founded the US-based organisation Bayt ar-Rahmah li ad-Da'wa al-Islamiyah Rahmatan li al-'Alamin (The Home of Divine Grace for Revealing and Nurturing Islam as a Blessing for All Creation), to serve as a hub for the expansion of Nahdlatul Ulama operations in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

MALDIVES

Saeed, Mohamed Shaheem Ali

Dr Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed is a hafiz of the Qur'an, a licensed lawyer, and former Chancellor of Islamic University of Maldives (IUM). He resigned from his post as the Minister of State for Islamic Affairs of the Republic of Maldives in 2015 and left politics altogether in 2017. Dr Saeed was central to the establishment of the Maldives Hajj Corporation, the Maldives Islamic Bank Pvt Ltd, and a waqf fund. He is a member of the Sharia Advisory Council of the Central Bank of the Maldives. Dr Saeed has authored many articles and books on religious issues and has spoken at forums in nine countries.

PAKISTAN

Naqvi, Ayatollah Sayed Sajid Ali

Ayatollah Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi leads the Shia Ulama Council (previously called Tehrik-e-Jafaria (TJP) of Pakistan). He was chosen by the Supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei, to lead Shia Muslims in Pakistan and is now his religious representative.

Ul-Haq, Siraj

From humble beginnings, Haq has worked his way up to senior leadership positions in both religious and political parties. He is a former finance minister of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in Pakistan, resigning in protest at US drone strikes. In 2019, Haq was re-elected Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, one of the most influential Islamic movements in Pakistan. In 2015, he was elected to the Parliament of Pakistan parliament as the Senator of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He became the Vice President of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal in March 2018.

SRI LANKA

Mufthi, MIM Rizve

Mufti M.I.M. Rizwe is the President of the All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU), the supreme body of Islamic theologians in Sri Lanka. Inaugurated in 1924, ACJU boasts a 7,500-strong membership of scholars while an executive committee of 33 senior Scholars run the organisation's 155 branches throughout the island's 24 Districts. Mufti Rizwe is a specialist in the field of Islamic Jurisprudence, and was instrumental in bringing Islamic insurance, interest-free banking and Halal certification to Sri Lanka. His other contributions that have benefited the Sri Lankan community at large include the Maktab Preliminary Islamic Education System, Careline Islamic Counseling, and Mahmood Institute for Skill Development of Ulama.

TAJIKISTAN

Abdulkorizoda, HE Saidmukarram

Saidmukarram Abdulkodirzoda is the state-selected Grand Mufti and thus head of Tajikistan's Muslims, most of whom are Sunnis, and whose tradition includes following the Hanafi school in matters of jurisprudence and the Naqshbandi spiritual path. They belong to the Persian-speaking Tajik ethnic group who share a language, culture, and history with Afghanistan and Iran.

UZBEKISTAN

Alemov, HE Usman

Alemov has been the Grand Mufti of Uzbekistan since 2006. He is respected for his moderate stance and proven record in coping with extremists in the Samarkand region where he was formerly a mufti. Alemov was instrumental in making Tashkent the ISESCO Capital of Islamic Culture for 2007.

Europe

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Kavazovic, Husein

Husein Kavazovic has been the 14th *Raisu-l-ulama* (Grand Mufti of Bosnia) since 2012. Kavazovic had pushed for cooperation with other religious communities and a wider "incorporation of women into the

work of the Islamic religious community”. His sphere of influence is primarily with the community of 2.5 million Bosniak Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Bosniak diaspora, who number approximately 1.5 million. He speaks Bosnian, Arabic, and English.

BULGARIA

Hadzhi, Mustafa Alish

Hadji is Bulgaria’s Chief Mufti. Bulgaria has been referred to as “Istanbulgaria” because of the importance of Turkish-Bulgarian relations. Hadji is the leader of the Muslim community in a predominantly Christian state with a large influx of Muslims. He defended his community from extreme nationalists who went so far as to attack mosques and worshippers.

GERMANY

Köhler, Ayyub Axel

Köhler is former chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany. Ayyub Axel Köhler has written numerous articles, primarily for Islamic magazines such as *Al Islam* of the Islamic Centre of Munich, and *Al Fajr* of the Islamic Centre of Hamburg. He also published newsletters for the Muslim League around the issue of the integration of Islamic ways of life into German society.

ITALY

Pallavicini, Imam Yahya Sergio Yahe

Pallavicini is an important figure in the religious life of Italian Muslims as well as in European relations with the Muslim world. He is Vice President of *Comunit Religiosa Islamica* (The Islamic Religious Community), Italy, the Chairman of the ISESCO Council for Education and Culture in the West, and an advisor for Islamic affairs to the Italian Minister of Interior. Pallavicini is also the imam of the Al-Wahid Mosque of Milan in Via Meda, where he organises the training of imams in Italian. His father was the late Abd Al-Wahid Pallavicini, the noted preacher and head of the Ahamadiyyah Idrissiyah Shadhiliyyah brotherhood in Italy.

KOSOVO

Ternava, Sheikh Naim

Naim Ternava is the Grand Mufti of Kosovo. He is the leading religious figure in Kosovo, which emerged

after an ethno-religious war resulted in widespread loss of life and destruction. Ternava is a key figure in the attempts of the country’s Muslim population to overcome the horrors of war. He was instrumental in the creation of the Inter-Religious Council Organization for Interfaith Relations.

RUSSIA

Nasibullahoglu, Mufti Cafer

Cafer Nasibullahoglu is the imam of the St Petersburg Mosque. He is also the Mufti of St Petersburg, home to close to one million Muslims. His diverse congregation consists of Muslims of Tatar, Kazakh, Uzbek, Tajik, and Arab origins, among others. The sermon at St Petersburg mosque is often conducted in Arabic, Tatar, and Russian.

UNITED KINGDOM

Ahsan, Dr Muhammad Manazir

Dr Muhammad Manazir Ahsan is the Chairman, Board of Trustees, The Islamic Foundation, and Rector, Markfield Institute of Higher Education, Leicester, UK. He has published and lectured extensively on Islam and Muslims in Britain. He is also the Editor of *The Muslim World Book Review*, a quarterly journal devoted to analyzing the latest publications on Islam and the Muslim World. He has chaired several major Muslim and interfaith organisations in the UK. He received an MBE in 2000 on the Queen’s Birthday Honours List for his contribution to interfaith and community activities.

Shah Naqavi, Dr Sayyid Amjad H.

Dr Shah Naqavi is the founder and Dean of the Shi’ah Institute, located in Bloomsbury, London. He is an accomplished scholar and author who has overseen the development of the Shi’ah Institute into an internationally renowned academic institution, which has many high-end scholarly book series and numerous publications to its name, and a Fellowship of more than 70 scholars –from some of the most renowned universities around the world. Dr Shah Naqavi champions good relationships amongst Islamic schools of law and doctrine. He is currently engaged with numerous academic projects, including an English literary translation and Arabic critical edition of the *Nahj al-Balaghah*. Dr Shah Naqavi is a Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Hertfordshire, U.K., a lifetime honour, which he has held since March 2016.

Oceania

AUSTRALIA

Alsuleiman, Imam Shady

Imam Shady Alsuleiman is the president (second term) of the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), which represents over 200 member Imams from each of the Australian States and Territories. It is also the body that elects the Mufti of Australia. Alsuleiman is an Australian born Imam who has strongly connected with the Muslim youth and helped integrate the Muslim community with wider Australian society. He's an international speaker with many followers on social media.

NEW ZEALAND

Ghani, Dr Anwar

Dr Ghani has been President of the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) for 12 years. He is now leading national and international relations of FIANZ. His work in leading FIANZ has been considerable, building bridges with the government, New Zealand's population as a whole, and leaders of other faiths. He has been a strong advocate of community engagement for creating a more connected societies. He was invited to be the first Muslim leader to be a patron of New Zealand Royal College of Police. Dr Ghani's was awarded with a title of Member of New Zealand Order of Merit by the government of New Zealand.

North America

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Crane, Dr Robert

Since its founding in 2001, Dr. Crane has been the Chairman of the Center for Understanding Islam and Muslims which has produced the influential textbook, 'Islam and Muslims: Essence and Practice'. Between 2012-2015 Dr. Crane was a professor in the Qatar Foundation's Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies and Director of its Center for the Study of Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies. Earlier in his career, under President Nixon, he was appointed Deputy Director for Planning in the National Security Council, and under President Reagan he was the US

Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, charged with initiating two-track diplomacy with leaders, including Tunisia's Shaykh Rachid al Ghannouchi, in branches of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Ghazi, Drs Abidullah and Tasneema

Dr Abidullah Ghazi—a prominent writer, speaker, and poet—is cofounder of the IQRA' International Educational Foundation, along with his wife Dr Tasneema Ghazi. IQRA' is a non-profit organisation that creates Islamic studies textbooks and educational materials especially for children. The institution has produced a complete system of Islamic education for part-and full-time schools and a comprehensive madrasa-integrated program for the Singapore madrasa system. IQRA's programs and educational materials are used in the US and worldwide.

Mohammed II, W. Deen

Warithudeen Mohammed II is the eldest son of Imam W Deen Mohammed. He is President of The Mosque Cares, a charitable organisation established by Imam W Deen Mohammed. The organisation sponsors classes in Qur'anic Arabic and financial literacy, as well as informational sessions in health and nutrition, and business and entrepreneurial initiatives.

Caribbean

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Ali, Imam Yacoob

Ali is the president of the largest and most influential Muslim organisation in Trinidad and Tobago, the Anjuman Sunnat ul Jamaat Association (ASJA), founded in 1936. Ali's organisation runs numerous schools and focuses on the importance of education for Muslim youth.

South America

ARGENTINA

Hallar, Muhammad Yusuf

Hallar is an active figure in Argentina, and is involved in community development for Muslims. He has conducted comprehensive research on Muslims

in Latin America and holds a number of positions including Secretary-General of the Islamic Organization of Latin America and the Director of the Office of Islamic Culture. He is also a member of the Expert Committee on Minority Rights for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

BRAZIL

Bukai, Sheikh Mohamad

Shaykh Mohamad Bukai was born in Syria and studied in the University of Azhar. He has been living in São Paulo since 2007 and is known for his soft speech, kind nature and splendid character. He has previously served as Shaykh of the Liga Islâmica do Pari and is the imam of the Mesquita Brasil in São

Paulo and director of religious affairs of the União Nacional das Entidades Islâmicas. His page on Facebook often airs live transmissions of his Friday Khutbas as well as short videos on Islam.

ECUADOR

Suquillo, Prof Juan

Professor. Juan Suquillo is the president and co-founder of the Islamic Centre in Quito. He received the "National Hero" award in recognition for his services to Ecuador. He is also the general secretary for the Interfaith Council CONALIR fighting for religious rights and antidiscrimination. His books in Spanish have been popular and Suquillo is regarded as a bridge and reference for Latino Muslim leaders and scholars.



Recite: In the Name of your Lord Who created

The Clot 96 : 1

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PREACHERS & SPIRITUAL GUIDES

Middle East and North Africa

ALGERIA

Belkaid, Sheikh Abdellatif

Sheikh Abdellatif is well-known in Algeria, Egypt, and Europe as a spiritual teacher and leader of the Hibriyya tariqa. He inherited his father's spiritual gifts. The sheikh's students include many highly-placed officials in the Algerian government, as well as the famous Egyptian scholar, Sheikh Sha'rawi, before the latter's death.

Al-Khairi, Sheikh Abdul-Nacer

Sheikh Abdul-Nacer is a master of the Shadhili tariqa, and has a wide following in his native Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Malaysia, and various European countries, where his students come from all walks of life. He emphasises the recitation of the Qur'an, as well as abundant salawaat (praying for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). He is a descendant of the famous Sufi of Prophetic lineage, Abdul Salam ibn Mashish of Morocco.

EGYPT

Abdelkafy, Sheikh Dr Omar

Abdelkafy is an Egyptian preacher and da'wa practitioner. A well-respected hafiz of the Qur'an, he is also the director of the Qur'anic Studies Centre at the Dubai International Holy Qur'an Award. In addition to working in his native Egypt, he travels abroad to help Muslim communities, working specifically with the Muslim community in Canada.

IRAQ

Kubaisi, Sheikh Dr Ahmed

Kubaisi is a very popular Sunni cleric and preacher in Iraq. He advocates the end of foreign occupation in Iraq and the institution of an Islamic state. To this end, he is a spokesperson of the Sunni Ulema Council, an important association of Sunni Muslim scholars in Iraq. Kubaisi leads prayers that are televised worldwide from the state mosque of Abu Dhabi.

JORDAN

Keller, Sheikh Nuh

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 134

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Arifi, Dr Muhammad

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 134

Al-Qarni, Dr Aaidh

Dr Aaidh Al-Qarni is a prominent Saudi scholar, author, and activist preacher, best known for his popular self-help book *Don't Be Sad*. Dr Al-Qarni has garnered a substantial following through a preaching career which spans various modes of broadcast media. He recently apologised on Saudi TV for his past preaching, calling his prior understanding of Islam 'hardline' and apologising for his past ties with Qatar. He said that he now agreed with the Islamic understanding of Crown Prince MBS.

Al-Shugairi, Ahmad

Al-Shugairi is a televangelist with a huge following around the world. He is at the forefront of a religious revivalist movement that is affecting young people across the Middle East. While he is best known for his TV program *Khawatir* (2005-2015), Al-Shugairi is also the founder of the youth-centric coffee shop, Andalus Cafe. With no formal Islamic training and an MBA, his popularity comes from repackaging a balanced understanding of Islam for his throngs of fans of all ages. He has over 45 million fans across social media platforms.

YEMEN

Al-Zindani, Sheikh Abdul Majeed

Al-Zindani is an active Yemeni politician and preacher. He is the founder of Iman University in Yemen, the founder of the Commission on Scientific Signs in the Qur'an and Sunnah in Makkah, the Chairman of the Shura Council of the Islah party (the Yemeni Congregation for Reform), and the head of the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen. He has been a vocal critic of terrorism and any killings of civilians. At the same time, he is an outspoken critic of US policies, declaring that jihad against any army that invades Yemen

is self-defence and the right of its citizens. The US Treasury labelled him a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) for his indirect association with al-Qaeda. Despite that, he has supported the Saudi policy in Yemen although there are reports that he is now under house arrest in Saudi Arabia.

Sub-Saharan Africa

GHANA

Sharubutu, Sheikh Dr Nuhu Usamanu

Sheikh Dr Osman Nuhu Sharubutu is an Islamic scholar, National Chief Imam of Ghana, member of the National Peace Council and founder of The SONSET Fund and IPASEC. He has worked tirelessly on religious, social and educational issues, helping to promote disadvantaged and vulnerable communities in Ghana. This has enabled him to transcend religious boundaries and be respected by all sectors of the country.

NIGERIA

Bauchi, Sheikh Tahir Usman

Now in his mid-80s, Sheikh Tahir Usman Bauchi of the Tijaniyya Sufi order is celebrated for his Qur'anic schools which specialise in producing *huffaz* (memorisers) of the Qur'an. His public exegesis of the Qur'an, delivered in Hausa every year during the month of Ramadan, attracts thousands. Additionally, millions of West Africans listen to it on the radio or buy recordings. He has critically engaged with puritanical Islamic schools of thought since the early 1980s. In July 2014, he escaped a suicide bombing attack which killed 23 people.

Katsina, Sheikh Yakubu Musa

Sheikh Yakubu Musa Katsina is a popular preacher in Nigeria. He is also the leader of the Izala revivalist sect in Katsina. The Izala, or Jama'at Izalatil Bid'awa Iqamatus Sunnah (Movement Against Negative Innovations and for Orthodoxy) is an activist Sufi brotherhood that calls for a return to the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and a true practice of Islam. Hailing from Katsina, the predominantly Muslim city in northern Nigeria, Sheikh Katsina is outspoken against corruption in the country.

ZIMBABWE

Menk, Mufti Ismail Musa

Dr Ismail Menk is the Mufti of Zimbabwe under the Majlisul Ulama Zimbabwe, an Islamic educational and welfare organisation that caters to the needs of the country's Muslims. Mufti Menk is very well-known internationally and is invited frequently to give lectures. His ability to relate religious principles to contemporary settings has made him particularly influential amongst the Muslim youth. His eloquence and humour have endeared him to many non-Muslims as well. He currently has a combined online following of more than 16 million.

Asia

INDIA

Azmi, Hazrat Allama Maulana Qamaruzzaman

Maulana Azmi is the Khalifa of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi's son. He is a prolific speaker and, according to the Times of India, has millions of followers worldwide. At the age of 18 he established Al-Jameatul-Islamia, which is now recognised as one of India's top Islamic universities. For over 50 years, he has been building organisations, institutions, mosques, colleges, and universities around the world.

Madani, Maulana Syed Arshad

Madani is the President of the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, a group which strongly opposed the creation of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan. In 2006, Maulana Syed Arshad Madani succeeded his brother, Maulana Syed Asad Madani, but since 2008, the group has been split into two factions. Maulana Arshad is also a noted scholar. He is a professor at the Dar Uloom, Deoband, as well as having served as Director of Studies there. He also supervises much social work and heads a number of Islamic seminaries and bodies and is an adviser to eight international Islamic schools.

Naik, Dr Zakir Abdul Karim

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 135

Saifuddin, Syedna Mufaddal

Saifuddin is the 53rd Dai Al-Mutlaq (Unrestricted Missionary) of the Dawoodi Bohras, a subgroup within the Mustaali, Ismaili Shia branch of Islam.

He succeeded—but not without dispute—to the office after his father, Syed Mohammed Burhanuddin, passed away in 2014. In 2017, he inaugurated the 14-acre Nairobi campus of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, a Dawoodi Bohra institute of higher learning. Kenyan President Kenyatta awarded him the Elder of the Order of the Golden Heart as a result. He also met Egyptian President El-Sisi in 2016 and donated 10 million EGP to the Long Live Egypt fund. He is the spiritual leader of 2-5 million people living in 100 countries.

Shuaib, Sheikh Dr Thaika

Sheikh Dr Thaika Shuaib of Tamil Nadu is a polyglot Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and author. He is the head of the Arusiyya branch of the Qadiri Sufi order. His 880-page research work, *“Arabic, Arwi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu”*, sheds light on the cultural, political, social, spiritual, and educational activities and achievements of the Arwi Muslims of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu in their respective countries and abroad. In May 1994, he became the first Tamil Muslim to receive the National Award for Outstanding Arabic Scholar from the then-President of India, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma. In April 2016, the seventh President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, felicitated him for his services rendered to Islam and for his promotion of religious harmony.

INDONESIA

Gymnastiar, Abdullah Aa Gym

Abdullah Gymnastiar, more commonly known as Aa Gym (Elder Brother Gym), was for a long time Indonesia's most popular preacher. With his style of modern, youthful, enjoyable preaching, he built a substantial following and a large media empire. His regular audience boasted over 80 million Indonesians and had an approval rating that peaked at 91%, leading to Gymnastiar being courted by several political parties as a potential vice president nominee. In 2006 Gym announced a polygamous marriage and immediately saw a huge backlash from his mainly female audience: his ratings dropped and his commercial enterprises took a huge hit. Over the past several years, Gymnastiar has been slowly regaining his popularity using his unique preacher/performer style: he is an attractive, funny, and charismatic man who tells engaging stories and sings nasheeds (religious songs). He has over 16 million fans on social media.

Shihab, Quraish

Quraish Shihab is an Indonesian expert on Qur'anic exegesis who regularly preaches on national television. He is noted as a progressive scholar who teaches Qur'anic exegesis using context and simple language. He is an author of many Islamic books, including *Tafsir Al-Misbah*. He served as Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs in 1998 and also as Chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council since 1984. Shihab was also a director of State Islamic University, Syarif Hidayatullah, 1992-1998. He was awarded a medal for his achievements by Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly in 2020.

MALAYSIA

Awang, Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi bin

Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi bin Awang is the current President of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party or PAS. He was recently appointed as the Prime Minister's Special Ambassador to the Middle East with ministerial status. He is also the Vice President of the International Union of Muslim Scholars. He was former Chief Minister of the state of Terengganu in Malaysia from 1999-2004, Member of Parliament for Marang Terengganu, and a state lawmaker for Rhu Rendang. He has written several books related to democracy and politics in Islam. Awang's Friday morning lectures at Rusila Mosque draw thousands of people.

MrGlani, Sheikh Dr Mahmoud

Born in Medina to a family of prophetic lineage, Sheikh MrGlani himself belongs to the Shadhili Sufi tariqa but strongly emphasises the need to recognise all authentic Islamic Sunni Sufi tariqas and sheikhs. His teachings emphasise the need to establish love for the Prophet. To this end, he has founded a number of *zawiyas* around the world to re-establish the practice of regular and abundant dhikr and sala-wat. For the past several years, he has been delivering a series of widely-attended public lectures titled “Divine Gifts on the Path to Allah” in major Malaysian cities and universities. He encourages people around the world to rediscover and practice their core human values, to oppose colonial and oppressive thinking, and to espouse mutual respect and tolerance among followers of all the heavenly religions.

PAKISTAN

Bukhari, Khanum Tayyaba

Bukhari is one of very few female religious scholars in Pakistan that has significant influence. She is a sought-after speaker who excels in six languages: Urdu, Arabic, Persian, English, Punjabi, and Sirai-ki. She also has a large following in Europe, North America, and Australia. Ms Bukhari is the founder of Bukhari Relief Foundation, a well-known, non-governmental charitable organisation that helps people all over Pakistan who have been displaced by major natural disasters.

Ghamdi, Javed Ahmad

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi is a Pakistani public intellectual and Qur'an scholar. He is the founder of Al-Mawrid Institute of Islamic Sciences and its sister organisation, Danish Sara. He was a member of the Council of Islamic Ideology and in 2009, Ghamidi was awarded *Sitara-i-Imtiaz*, the third highest civilian honour of Pakistan. He appears regularly on TV shows and has a large middle-class professional following.

Qadiri, Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas Attar

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 135

SINGAPORE

Alattas, Syed Hassan bin Muhammad bin Salim

Syed Hassan, more affectionately known as Habib Hassan, has been a pillar of strength and unity in building religious harmony in Singapore and throughout Southeast Asia. He has condemned acts of terrorism and has been the force behind bringing Islam together with other religions in Singapore. In 2015, during Singapore's 50th National Day, he was conferred one of the highest awards by the Singapore Government in recognition of his outstanding work and contributions toward building a harmonious nation.

Europe

BELGIUM

van Ael, Sheikh Sulayman

Sheikh Sulayman van Ael is the founder of The Ark Institute, an educational institution based in Lon-

don. After becoming Muslim at the age of 18, he travelled the world to seek knowledge and gained *ijazah* (teaching licenses) in various disciplines from scholars from Sudan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Jordan (where he received *ijazah* from the Grand Mufti of Amman to give religious verdicts). He graduated from Rotterdam University with a BA in Theology and MSc in Islamic Counselling. He lectures extensively and has appeared on CNN and Al Jazeera. His multi award-winning Belgian national television documentary, *My Jihad*, was translated into 12 languages. As a scholar who resonates with young and old alike, Sheikh Sulayman is a powerful, dynamic and credible voice for the emerging formation of a confident, faithful identity of Islam in Europe.

GREECE

Metso, Mufti Djemali

Mufti Djemali Metso was one of the Muftis in Greece's Western Thrace cities of Komotini and Xanthi who were retired compulsorily by the Greek government recently. The Western Thrace region of Greece is home to a Muslim Turkish minority of around 150,000 people, and Mufti Metso had served the community for over 30 years in his capacity as Mufti of Komotini. He still enjoys a close relationship with the community, who look upon him as not only a Mufti but as a spiritual leader.

TURKEY

Gülen, Fethullah

Fethullah Gülen is a preacher, thinker and educator, who assumed the leadership of the Nurcu religious movement—started by Said Nursi (1878—1960 CE). He enjoyed huge support among all of Turkey's religious population until he was accused of orchestrating the attempted coup of 15 July 2016, and his organisations and supporters subsequently bore the brunt of Erdoğan's crackdown. Many of his followers and supporters in state institutions, such as the police, judiciary and education, have been targeted and removed from their posts (over 500,000 people have been detained since the coup). Turkey has formally asked the United States to extradite Gülen.

Haqqani, Sheikh Mehmet Adil

Sheikh Mehmet Adil Haqqani is the Sheikh of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Order established by his father, the celebrated Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani. He is the eldest son of Sheikh Nazim, and was born and

raised in Damascus, Syria, while his father was studying there under his own sheikh. With an uncanny resemblance to his father, and a soft, humble approach, Sheikh Mehmet has won over thousands of his father's students.

Topbaş, Osman Nuri

Osman Nuri Topbaş is an author, philanthropist, and spiritual leader of a Naqshbandi Sufi order based in Istanbul. His group is known as Eronkoy (named after the town where he was born) and, like other sufi groups in Turkey, focuses heavily on charitable work. He has written works in history, literature, religious sciences, and poetry. Translations of his works span 43 languages, including English.

UNITED KINGDOM

Ali, Sheikh Hasan

Sheikh Hasan Ali is a popular preacher and reputable figure in London. In addition to volunteering his expertise at local mosques, community centres, and secondary schools, he contributes to local interfaith programs and various community events. He is the founder of Safar Academy and holds a master's degree in Educational Psychology in addition to his Islamic training.

As-Sufi, Sheikh Dr. Abdalqadir

Sheikh Dr Abdalqadir as-Sufi, a Sheikh of the Darqawi-Shadhili-Qadiri Tariqa, entered Islam with the Imam of the Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez, Morocco in 1967. His spiritual inheritance comes from Sheikh Muhammad ibn al-Habib of Meknes and Sheikh Muhammad al-Fayturi of Benghazi. Sheikh Abdalqadir has been responsible for the most far-reaching and successful Islamic *dawa* of the modern era, founding mosques in England, Spain and South Africa. As a result, communities of his students can be found across the world. His writing encompasses well over 20 books, as well as many essays and articles, covering various topics. Perhaps most notable has been his call for the proper implementation of zakat, a return to just forms of trade, the revival of Imam Malik's legal school and his emphasis on correct and coherent community and family dynamics. He has initiated the translation and publication of translations of the Qur'an into various languages, as well as numerous classical works of Islam, including the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik and *Ash-Shifa* of Qadi 'Iyad.

Babikir, Sheikh Ahmed

With his gentle and warm disposition, Sheikh Babikir is a popular figure in the UK. He studied Islamic Sciences in Sudan and is fully authorised in a host of Islamic disciplines, including fiqh, hadith, creed, and Sufism. He holds an undergraduate degree in mathematics and a Masters in Management from the University of London. He has contributed widely to UK society through social, charitable, and educational initiatives. He was the headmaster of Islamic Primary School for many years, and is currently the Director and Founder of Rumi's Cave, a community hub in West London.

Nakshawani, Ammar

Dr Sayed Ammar Nakshawani is an Islamic Scholar and a popular speaker. Having completed his undergraduate studies at University College, London and his PhD at the University of Exeter, he went on to study at the Islamic Seminary in Damascus, Syria. He was a visiting scholar at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge and then moved to the USA to become the inaugural holder of the Imam Ali Chair for Shii Studies and Dialogue among Islamic Legal Schools at the Hartford Seminary. Dr Nakshawani is a former associate at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer center for Science and International Affairs.

North America

CANADA

Philips, Dr Abu Ameenah Bilal

A notable Jamaican-Canadian Muslim convert and Islamic scholar, Dr Bilal Philips is founder of the first accredited Islamic university in India in 2009: Preston International College, Chennai. However he is most notably the founder and chancellor of the Islamic Online University AKA International Open University (iou.edu.gm), which currently has over 450,000 registered students studying accredited English-medium degree courses in Islamic Studies (Sharia), Education, Psychology, Banking and Finance, IT and Business Administration, and a BA in Arabic language and literature. The IOU has the distinction of having the most diverse student body of any university in the world. Dr. Bilal also reaches mass Muslim audiences through his television appearances on global satellite channels like Peace TV,

Huda TV, and Islam Channel as well as through his official Facebook page. He has over eight million social media followers.

Rabbani, Sheikh Faraz

Sheikh Rabbani is the founder, education director, and an instructor at SeekersGuidance Canada, an educational institute featuring a very popular Q&A service, online courses, and occasional retreats. In August 2011, he helped launch SeekersHub in Toronto with affiliated branches being developed in Australia and elsewhere. He was formerly a central figure with SunniPath, and has continuously been at the vanguard of effectively utilising the latest web technologies and services to teach Islam in the West for over a decade. He serves as a partner and legal advisor with StraightWay Ethical Advisory.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Kabbani, Sheikh Muhammad Hisham

Sheikh Kabbani established the American branch of the Haqqani Educational Foundation, dedicated to the promotion of the fundamental Islamic teachings of tolerance, respect, and peace. Since Sheikh Muhammad Nizam Adil's death in 2014, Kabbani has become the leader of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi Order. In 1991, Kabbani moved to the United States and has since founded 23 study and meeting centres in the United States and Canada as well as an Islamic retreat centre in Michigan focusing on spreading Sufi teachings.

Khan, Nouman Ali

Nouman Ali Khan is the founder and CEO of Bayyinah and serves as a lead instructor for several programs including Dream, traveling seminars and Bayyinah TV. Nouman served as a professor of Arabic at Nassau Community College until 2006 when he decided to take Bayyinah on as a full-time project. Since then he has taught more than 10,000 students through traveling seminars and programs. With millions of social media followers, Nouman is one of the most influential young western scholars. He has retained this influence despite being recently embroiled in controversy about aspects of his personal life.

Al-Ninowy, Sheikh Dr Muhammad bin Yahya

Sheikh Dr Muhammad al-Ninowy is a Syrian-American scholar and author based in Atlanta, Georgia, whose lineage is traced back to the Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Al-Ninowy

is considered a scholar in hadith. In addition to a PhD in Islamic studies, he also holds a bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of Illinois, and a Doctor of Medicine degree. He is the founding director of Madina Institute and Seminaries, the Center for Non-Violence and Peace Studies, and the charitable organisation Planet Mercy, globally. Al-Ninowy is also leading a reformist Rifa'i Shadhili Sufi school aiming to completely realign Sufi principles, litanies, and practices to the Qur'an and Sunnah in an effort to revive the school of Tasawwuf of Ahl al-hadith. His latest release is: *The Book of Love*; a reflection on Islam from the perspective of love

Shakir, Imam Zaid

Zaid Shakir is a senior faculty member and co-founder of Zaytuna College, Berkeley, California, the first accredited Muslim undergraduate college in the USA. Shakir accepted Islam in 1977 while serving in the United States Air Force. He obtained a B.A. in International Relations and later earned his MA in Political Science. In 2001, he graduated from Syria's Abu Noor University with a BA in Islamic Studies. He is one of the nation's top Islamic scholars, a voice of conscience, and a compelling force for the improvement of race relations for non-Muslims in America. He co-founded the New Brunswick Islamic Center, formerly Masjid al-Huda in NJ, Masjid Al-Islam in New Haven, CT., and more recent the Lighthouse Mosque, in Oakland, CA. He had the immense honor of leading the funeral prayer for the late boxing champion and human rights icon, Muhammad Ali. Inspired to work with religious groups on sustainable living and climate change, he is a Green Faith partner in action for the earth. Imam Zaid recently assumed leadership of Muslim Alliance in North America (MANA).

Suleiman, Omar

Imam Omar Suleiman is the President of the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research and a professor of Islamic Studies at Southern Methodist University. He started his journey of Islamic learning in the year 2000 and studied in various countries in the Middle East as well as Malaysia. He has become a hugely popular speaker, delivering regular online lectures which have reached millions as well as writing frequently for various media outlets. In the 2000s, he was noted on a national level as being a strong advocate of community service, interfaith dialogue, and social justice, and was awarded for his outstanding civic achievement by the Mayor and City Council of New Orleans in 2010.

Wahhaj, Siraj

Siraj Wahhaj is Imam of the Al-Taqwa Mosque in Brooklyn, a prolific lecturer, community activist, the leader of the Muslim Alliance in North America, and former Vice President of ISNA. He first became famous for his successful efforts in fighting drugs and crime in his neighbourhood. In 1991, he became the first Muslim to recite the Opening Prayer of the Qur'an (Al-Fatiha) at the US House of Representatives. Brooklyn Borough President, Marty Markowitz, proclaimed August 15, Siraj Wahhaj Day in honour of his "lifetime of outstanding and meaningful achievement."

Webb, Imam Suhaib

Suhaib Webb is a graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma with a background in Education from the College of Sharia, Al-Azhar University. Imam Suhaib has served various communities in North America and is currently the founder of SWISS. On December 1, 2011, Webb was inaugurated as the Imam of the Islamic Society of Boston's Cultural Center (ISBCC) the largest Islamic centre in New England. He helped raise \$20,000 for widows and children of firefighters killed in the 9/11 attacks. He has spoken out against radical clerics that seek to prey on insecure youth and their American identities. He frequently shares advice, lessons and "SnapWas" on his SnapChat. He currently resides in New York serving as Scholar-in Residence at the Islamic Center at NYU.

Caribbean

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Hosein, Sheikh Imran

Sheikh Imran N Hosein is an Islamic scholar specialising in contemporary interpretations of Islamic eschatology. Having given up his career as a diplomat in 1985 to dedicate his life to the mission of Islam, Sheikh Imran is a tireless missionary who often travels for 2-3 years at a time in the cause of Islam and calls for Muslims to retreat to faith-based eco-villages until such time as Imam Mahdi appears. He is also a respected commentator on international monetary economics, and advocates the establishment of 134 free-markets and currency with intrinsic value as a means of savings and aversion of a pending collapse of the "world of paper money." He has very popular

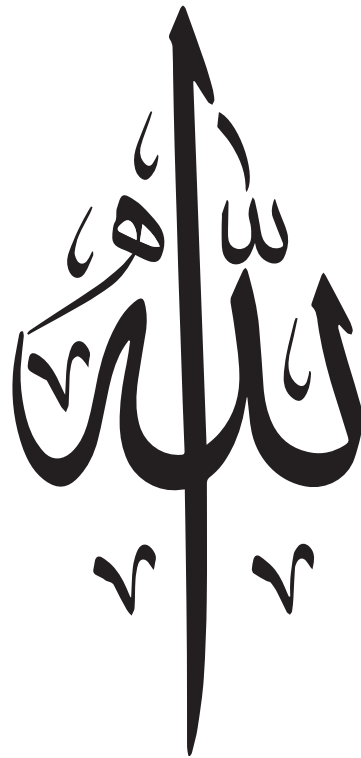
videos on YouTube with millions of views, especially related to eschatology politics, and the economy.

South America

BRAZIL

Hammadeh, Sheikh Jihad

Shaykh Jihad Hammadeh has a long history of contributions to dawah in Brazil. His educational background includes a theological course at the Islamic University of Medina, a bachelors in History and a masters in Social Communication. Besides being vice-president of the União Nacional das Entidades Islâmicas, he presides over two other islamic institutions. He regularly appears on national TV in Brazil and other media outlets speaking about Islam and has also worked as a consultant for two Brazilian soap operas on the theme of Muslims and Muslim-majority countries.



PHILANTHROPY, CHARITY & DEVELOPMENT

Middle East and North Africa

IRAQ

Al-Khoei, Sayyed Jawad

Sayyed Al-Khoei is the Secretary General of the London-based Al-Khoei International Foundation, an international charity promoting the welfare of Shia communities throughout the world. He spends his time between the UK and his native Iraq. As a researcher in Islamic Affairs, Sayyed Jawad has authored various studies and articles on the religious minorities in Iraq and the need for interfaith dialogue.

JORDAN

HM Queen Rania Al-Abdullah

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah is the wife of HM King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein, but is also in her own right an educational activist with global appeal. Through sheer hard work, she has developed one of the largest virtual followings of any Muslim in the world (over 33 million followers), and she defends and humanises Islam and Arab causes in-and to-the West as effectively as any Muslim scholar in the world. She is the initiator and key leader behind the launch of several educational initiatives such as the Jordanian Madrasati, 'My School', a project for the development of Jordan's public school system. In 2017, Queen Rania received the Global Trailblazer Award and the Fellowship Award from "Fashion for Relief", in recognition of her humanitarian efforts towards children caught in conflict.

LEBANON

Al-Sadr, Rabab

Rabab Al-Sadr is a social and human rights activist, and a philanthropist. She is a dynamic thinker and is the President of the Imam Al-Sadr Foundation, one of the most successful humanitarian organisations working in Lebanon. The foundation's projects focus on training, development, and poverty alleviation across Lebanon. She is the sister of Imam Musa al-Sadr.

QATAR

HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned

Her Highness Sheikha Mozah is the mother of the current Emir of Qatar, and Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. The Foundation has brought some of the leading US university programs to Qatar. It also promotes international research, and provides scholarships around the world. Sheikha Mozah also serves as the President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and is Vice Chairperson of both the Supreme Education Council and the Supreme Health Council. She plays a very active role in promoting a wide range of issues at home, in the Gulf region, and internationally.

SAUDI ARABIA

AbuSulayman, Muna

Muna AbuSulayman was the first Saudi woman to become an iconic TV personality and is internationally recognised as a leader in the fields of philanthropy, media and social impact. She is one of the founding co-hosts of the social issues show Kalam Nawaem, which was ranked number one across the Arab World for eleven years in a row. She was also chosen as the first Saudi UN Goodwill Ambassador for the UNDP as well as a Young Global Leader at the World Economic Forum in the same year while managing one of the largest Muslim foundations. Recently, AbuSulayman has successfully launched, managed, and scaled multiple businesses and is running a Social Impact investment fund and consultancy that focuses on finding "Big Ideas that Work" to solve problems in education, gender inequalities, sustainability and social cohesion.

Al-Madani, Dr Ahmad Mohamed Ali

Al-Madani is the President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which aims to provide short and long-term solutions to poverty alleviation in the Muslim world. The IDB is the principal financing institution of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Al-Madani is keen on taking the IDB to the next level of excellence with Vision 1440H, a plan

that aims at alleviating poverty, eradicating illiteracy, providing better health facilities to people, strengthening ties with the private sector and NGOs, and women's development. Previously, al-Madani served as the Deputy Minister of Education in Saudi Arabia, and as Secretary General of the Muslim World League. He currently serves as a Member of the Board of Trustees of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

HH Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi

Sheikh Sultan is the ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah. He had the educational vision to start University City in 1997, which included the American University of Sharjah, the University of Sharjah, and other colleges. Since then, his vision has inspired neighbouring emirates and countries to emulate his endeavour of bringing world-class university education to the region. He is known for his philanthropic activities and has endowed chairs for Arabic and Islamic studies in Western universities (e.g. Exeter University). He is also an accomplished poet and an academic.

Sub-Saharan Africa

SOUTH AFRICA

Sooliman, Dr Imtiaz Ismail

Sooliman is the founder of the Gift of the Givers Foundation. It is the largest disaster relief organisation of African origin on the African continent. His organisation has delivered over \$103 million in aid to 41 countries around the world. The organisation has also designed and developed the world's first and largest containerised mobile hospital, which has been deployed in Bosnia. It also runs 24 development projects in South Africa and Malawi. He was awarded South Africa's Order of the Baobab for distinguished service in April 2010. In 2016, he received the Global Citizen Award from Henley and Partners in London.

Asia

INDIA

Prenji, Azim

Prenji is an Indian business tycoon and philanthropist who is the Chairman of Wipro Limited, a leader in the software industry. In 2011, he was awarded Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award by the Government of India. In 2013, he signed the Giving Pledge, agreeing to give away at least half of his wealth and has given away billions in charity since then. The Azim Prenji Foundation supports programs that reach more than 2.5 million children. It also pledged \$134 million towards providing aid for the Covid-19 pandemic.

Qasmi, Maulana Badruddin Ajmal

Maulana Badruddin Ajmal is a prominent Indian businessman who runs the Ajmal Group of Companies, which sells attar perfume, oils, and textiles. He is a proponent and member of various social service organisations and is also a scholar of Islam, having studied at the Darul Uloom Deoband. Qasmi is also a politician who founded the Assam United Democratic Front political party. He is noted for his contributions to charitable hospitals, orphanages, and educational institutions, including a women's science college.

INDONESIA

Bagir, Haidar

Haidar Bagir is the founder and Director of Mizan, a large publishing company that significantly shapes the development of Islamic discourse in Indonesia. Bagir has founded and lectured in many educational institutions, and his philanthropic contributions include work on community development. He has written extensively on sufism.

MALAYSIA

Al-Bukhary, Syed Mokhtar

According to *Forbes*, Syed Mokhtar al-Bukhary is one of the top ten richest Malaysians. He owns a variety of companies including the Malaysian Mining Corporation, a behemoth that has been awarded multiple, multi-billion dollar projects. He was recently awarded a 5G contract from the government, showing his political connections. He has established

many humanitarian projects including rebuilding the lives of Afghan refugees, helping Pakistan's tsunami victims, and establishing an AIDS hospital in Uganda. He also supports many educational foundations.

PAKISTAN

Edhi, Bilquis

The wife of the late Abdul Sattar Edhi, Bilquis Edhi is a professional nurse and philanthropist in her own right. She runs several non-profit organisations for orphans, widows, and elderly people. Serving the nation for more than 50 years, she is known by the honorific title "Mother of the Nation". In 2015, she received the Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice.

Rizvi, Prof Dr Adib

Dr Rizvi is one of Pakistan's leading humanitarians, having established the largest free health organisation in Pakistan. He works as a doctor and an administrator at SIUT in Karachi, which was founded in 1971 as an eight-bed unit but is now the largest health organisation in Pakistan. SIUT provides free and comprehensive services in urology, nephrology, transplantation, and liver-related diseases. He is the recipient of many awards for his life's work.

SINGAPORE

Faizal, Mohamed

Mr Mohamed Faizal is a passionate champion of educational initiatives who has conceived of scholarship programs specifically targeted at lower-income students. He has received the President's Volunteerism and Philanthropy Award, being the second Muslim in its history to receive it. Many in Singapore's Muslim community consider him the foremost jurist on the MUIS Appeal Board, the city-state's highest body of Islamic law. He is the only Muslim Senior Counsel in Singapore.

Europe

UNITED KINGDOM

Al-Banna, Dr Hany

Al-Banna founded Islamic Relief, the largest Western-based international Muslim relief and development NGO. Established in 1984, the organisation provides assistance in over 30 countries worldwide. Queen Elizabeth honoured Al-Banna's work, giving him an OBE for his services to the community. In 2015, Islamic Relief signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union, formalising a partnership to tackle poverty on the continent.

Ismail, Sufyan

Sufyan Ismail is an award-winning entrepreneur and philanthropist whose enterprises have been featured in The Sunday Times Top 100 listings. Having retired from business in 2014, aged 38, he founded MEND (Muslim engagement and development) to tackle Islamophobia. MEND engages in media monitoring, advocacy in Parliament, works with police forces, local councils and most importantly, empowers grassroots Muslim communities. Today, MEND employs dozens of staff members across 5 offices nationally. Over 40,000 Muslims have sat through MEND's Islamophobia presentations and around 3,500 people have been trained on its media/politics masterclasses. The World Economic Forum and EU's Parliament magazine commended MEND.

UN World Interfaith Harmony Week

www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com

In September 2010, His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan proposed a World Interfaith Harmony Week at the Plenary session of the 65th United Nations General Assembly in New York. This was a call to establish a week every year where people of all faiths, and those of no faith, would promote the message of *'Love of God, and Love of the neighbour'*, or *'Love of the Good, and Love of the Neighbour'*. The Draft Resolution for the World Interfaith Harmony Week was later written and presented by HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, Chief Advisor to King Abdullah II for Religious and Cultural Affairs and Personal Envoy of King Abdullah II, before the United Nations General Assembly where it was unanimously adopted on 20 October 2010.

UN Resolution A/65/PV.34; the World Interfaith Harmony Week, as it is called, recognises the first week of February of every year as a time when people of all faiths, and those of no faith, work together to promote and celebrate religious and cultural understanding and cooperation, to address each other in favourable terms drawn from their own traditions and to accept and respect 'the other' based on the foundations of *'Love of God, and Love of the Neighbour'*, or *'Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour'*. Remarkably the World Interfaith Harmony Week excludes no one and includes and unites everyone.



The HM King Abdullah II World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize

The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan established the World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize in 2013 to recognise the three best events or texts organised during the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week (first week of February) which best promote the goals of the World Interfaith Harmony Week. Prizes are awarded to each event or text that is judged to have been most successful in promoting interfaith harmony and impacting religious understanding. Since 2014, this prize has been known as the King Abdullah II World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize. The prizes are:

- | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| First | \$25,000 and a gold medal |
| Second | \$15,000 and a silver medal |
| Third | \$5,000 and a bronze medal |

In 2017, over 1,000 events held in over 50 countries were registered on the site. They were arranged by groups as diverse as government agencies, social groups, schools, private individuals and of course the numerous interfaith organisations that exist worldwide.



Middle East and North Africa

EGYPT

Karam, Dr Azza

Dr Azza Karam is the secretary general of the World Conference of Religions for Peace. She previously served as the senior advisor on social and cultural development at the United Nations Population Fund, and was a senior policy research advisor at the United Nations Development Program, where she coordinated the Arab Human Development Reports. She also holds the endowed professor position of Religion and Sustainable Development at Amsterdam's Vrije Universiteit.

IRAN

Ebadi, Shirin

Shirin Ebadi is a lawyer who, in 2003, became the first Iranian to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She is the founder of Children's Rights Support Association and has defended and supported the rights of children and women. Ebadi lectures about the human rights situation in Iran and espouses a liberal view of Islam appreciated by many Muslim feminists. Since the presidential elections of 2009, she has been forced to live in exile (in London) while her husband is barred from travelling out of Iran.

MOROCCO

Al-Soufi, Nawal

Nawal al-Soufi won the UAE 'Arab Hope Maker' prize in 2017 and was rewarded with 1 million AED. She was rewarded for her passion and dedication to helping refugees. She arranged rescue missions for an estimated 200,000 Syrian refugees fleeing across the Mediterranean Sea. She was selected as one of the 2018 Muslim Persons of the Year for the Muslim 500 publication.

PALESTINE

Abu Elaish, Dr Izzeldin

Izzeldin Abu Elaish is a Palestinian physician and internationally recognised peace and human rights

activist devoted to advancing health and educational opportunities for women and girls in the Middle East. He is also known for using health as a vehicle for peace. Dr Abu Elaish's book, *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey*—the story of his loss of his three daughters, Bessan, Mayar, and Aya, and their cousin Noor to Israeli shelling in 2009 and his subsequent transformation—has achieved critical acclaim. Published in 2010 and translated into 17 languages, the book has become an international best seller. It is a testament to his commitment to forgiveness as the solution to conflict, and the catalyst towards peace. He has received a number of national and international awards for his work, including The Public Peace Prize in 2014.

Abu Sarah, Aziz

Aziz Abu Sarah is a Palestinian activist who is globally recognised for his work on peace and conflict resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He is a former Executive Director of the Centre for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. He was named as National Geographic Explorer in 2011, being among only a handful of Arabs and Muslims to receive that distinction. He was the First Intercultural Innovation Award winner, an award issued in partnership by the UN-AOC and BMW. Aziz is also a columnist for *Alquds* Newspaper and has published articles at the *New York Times*, *Haaretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, *Alarabiya*, *Daily Star* and Middle East online and others. He regularly provides analysis for television news programs.

Al-Faqih, Judge Kholoud

Faqih made history when she became the first female sharia judge in the Middle East (in Ramallah, Palestine). She has travelled internationally to speak about her struggles in succeeding in a male-dominated field, and has become an inspiration to many women outside the Middle East as well. She ranked number 10 in the 100 Most Powerful Arab Women in 2012 by *CEO Middle East* and *Arabian Business* magazines. An award-winning documentary, *The Judge*, was made about her life in 2018.

Al-Hroub, Hanan

A school teacher from occupied Palestine who won The Global Teacher Prize in 2016, Hanan Al-Hroub

started teaching traumatised children who had faced violence, or whose parents had been shot in front of them. Hanan Al-Hroub instilled confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to live a normal childhood. She published a book entitled *Play and Learn* that includes educational games that help children overcome the challenges they face.

Tamimi, Ahed

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 135

QATAR

Al-Thani, Dr Abdulla bin Ali

Dr Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani is the President of the new Hamad Bin Khalifa University in the State of Qatar, and is Chairman of the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE). Dr Abdullah, a member of Qatar's ruling family and a former university professor, is the man at the centre of many of Qatar's educational initiatives, and is leading the way to transform Qatar's education system.

Al-Thani, Sheikhha Aisha bint Faleh bin Nasser

Sheikha Aisha al-Thani is the founder of the Doha Academy and board member of Reach Out to Asia, Qatar. She is also a member of the Qatar Supreme Education Council, the highest education authority in Qatar. She is a modernist development thinker who promotes a more pronounced and well-judged engagement with people of faith. Sheikha Aisha's perspective resonates with the more concerted efforts by humanitarian organisations to look at the networks of people of faith as a solution to practical development problems.

SAUDI ARABIA

Badawi, Samar

Samar Badawi is a Saudi Arabian human rights activist. She has been arrested several times, imprisoned and been subject to a travel ban. She has campaigned for women driving, women voting and other women and human rights issues. She has received international recognition for her activism. Her recent arrest in 2018, alongside fellow activist Nassima al-Sadah, prompted a defence from Canada and then a response from Saudi Arabia leading to a major diplomatic falling out between the two countries. Saudi Arabia has expelled Canada's ambassador, and frozen trade with Canada.

Al-Hathloul, Loujain (new)

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 135

Obaid, Thoraya Ahmed

Thoraya Obaid is one of the few Saudi women on the Shura Council. She was formerly the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, the world's largest multilateral fund for population assistance. She was the first Saudi national to head a UN agency and was also Chair of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the principal interagency organisation for coordinating management matters within the UN. She underlined religion and culture as important aspects for the agency's development work.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Barakat, Maha

Maha Barakat was announced Director-General of the recently established Frontline Heroes Office (The Fakh Al Watan Office) which aims to support all frontline workers in the UAE. She also serves as the Board Chair of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, having previously been the Director General of the Health Authority Abu Dhabi from 2013-2018. Prior to that she worked at the Imperial College London Diabetes Centre which she founded in Abu Dhabi. She was awarded an OBE in 2010 and given the Imperial College Medal in 2013. An outstanding academic with a PhD from Cambridge University, she serves on various boards and committees related to research, quality and development issues in the medical field.

Mattar, Dr Maryam

Dr Maryam Mattar is Director General of the Community Development Authority (CDA), a newly launched Dubai government authority that takes responsibility for setting up and developing frameworks for social development. She is also the founder and Executive Director of two non-profit civil associations: UAE Down's Syndrome Association and UAE Genetic Diseases Association. She has also initiated several national community outreach programs such as UAE Free of Thalassemia by 2012 and established a number of wellness centres. She received the Arab Women's Pioneer Award for Health Innovation 2019.

YEMEN

Karman, Tawakkol

Karman was one of three women jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. She is a Yemeni journalist and activist who has regularly led protests against the government. Over the past several years, she has campaigned for the release of political prisoners and advocated freedom of expression and other human rights. These activities have caused her to be jailed several times. She has repeatedly called for an end to US drone strikes in Yemen. More recently, she has spoken out against both the Houthi coup and the “the Saudi-UAE occupation” of Yemen.

Sub-Saharan Africa

BURKINA FASO

Aboubakary, Maiga

Aboubakary is the Secretary General of the Burkina Faso Islamic Organization for Population and Development. His organisation promotes family planning in mosques around the country. The tremendous growth rate in Burkina Faso has put great strain on the economy there and threatens to sharpen the already serious problem of poverty.

BURUNDI

Nkunduwigwa, Haruna

Nkunduwigwa is the Secretary General of the Muslim Community of Burundi. He has been working recently to battle the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Burundi with other faith leaders by raising awareness and asking people to “stay clean”. HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Burundi, affecting close to 20 percent of the urban population and nearly 10 percent of the rural population.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Abdoulaziz, Sheikh Sarba

Abdoulaziz is the leader of the Association Soulatine pour les Actions de Bienfaisance. He works in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso on the development of the Muslim community and the fair treatment of Muslims. He has been active at major international conferences that deal with the problem of Islamophobia.

GAMBIA, THE

Bensouda, Fatou

Bensouda is Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, being the first African woman to hold such a position. She has been the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor since June 2012, after having served as a Deputy Prosecutor in charge of the Prosecutions Division of the ICC since 2004. She is the former Attorney General and Minister of Justice of The Gambia.

GHANA

Ibrahim, Sheikh Mustapha

Sheikh Mustapha Ibrahim is a religious scholar who has written over twenty books. He is among the few Islamic scholars in Ghana who have had the benefits of both classical Islamic training (the madrasa study circle) and the modern secular model. He founded the Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services (ICODEHS) in 1996 to help reduce the high level of poverty in the society and empower the less privileged. In collaboration with several partner NGOs in the Arab and Muslim world, ICODEHS' humanitarian footprints have spread throughout Ghana and into about 10 countries in West Africa.

MALAWI

Chabulika, Sheikh Dinala

Chabulika is the Islamic Information Bureau's national coordinator. He is known as an Islamic rights activist and has taken it upon himself to present the need to address social issues as religious duties. Chabulika works on health and exploitation issues as well as building bridges with non-Muslims in Malawi. He also fought against the forced teaching of religious texts to school children.

NIGER

Mindaoudou, HE Dodo Aichatou

Mindaoudou is a former Nigerien Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, and African Integrity. She has served the government since the mid-1990s and is also the former Secretary-General for the Network for Rural Law. Ms Mindaoudou has written extensively about economic development and women's issues. She is one of the most senior-level women politicians in West Africa having been the UN Spe-

cial Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) from 2013-2017.

NIGERIA

Ashafa, Imam Muhammad

Ashafa is the co-director of the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre in the city of Kaduna (Northern Nigeria), a leading task force that resolves conflicts across the country. He works with Christian Pastor James Wuye to promote peace between religions. Previously, both leaders encouraged hatred of others, but they changed their ways after being injured and affected by inter-religious violence. Pastor Wuye and Imam Ashafa have gained a worldwide audience and intense interest in their story by speaking about their successful work in resolving conflicts. In April 2013, they were awarded the first prize in the World Interfaith Harmony Week by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman, Jordan.

SENEGAL

Kane, Zeinaba

Zeinaba Kane is the President of Women of the Rassemblement Islamique du Sénégal (*Alwahda*), the largest Islamic organisation in Senegal, having over 40 Islamic associations operating within it. Kane works on the improvement of living conditions for rural women in Senegal. She has written many articles and is frequently interviewed by the media. From 2002-2008 she was the President of Women for the Association of Muslim Students in Senegal.

Niasse, Sheikh Mariama

Sheikha Mariama Niasse is a revered scholar and leader who is known as the "Khadimatul Qur'an" (Servant of the Qur'an) for establishing one of the largest and most widely known Qur'an schools in West Africa. The "Dar Al-Quran Ecole Sheikha Mariama Niasse" in Dakar houses 1,300 students from preschool to secondary and instructs Arabic, French and Islamic studies alongside Quranic education. She is the granddaughter of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, one of the founders of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and one of the greatest icons of the Tijaniyya Sufi order in the 20th century. Sheikha Mariama carried her father's legacy of providing Islamic traditional knowledge and spiritual guidance to thousands of people in West Africa, especially women. She is also well-known for her influence over local and regional

politics, and for negotiating conflicts between Senegal and Iran, as well as Senegal and Sudan.

SOMALIA

Elmi, Asha Haji

Asha Haji Elmi is a peace activist and a member of the Federal Parliament of Somalia. In 2008, she won the Right Livelihood Award (known as the alternative Nobel Prize). She is an activist for women's rights and formed the Six Clan 125 movement when women were excluded from the peace process in Somalia that involved the five traditional clans. Elmi is also the founder of Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC) and campaigns internationally against female genital mutilation in Somalia and in other areas of Africa.

Asia

AFGHANISTAN

Joya, Malalai

Malalai is a well-known activist, writer, and a former politician from Afghanistan. She was a Parliamentarian but was later dismissed for publicly condemning the Afghan Parliament. She was the first ever to speak against the democratically elected Karzai administration and its western supporters, specifically the United States. Her actions have received international acclaim. She was listed in the 100 Most Influential People of 2010 as well as in the Guardian's top 100 women. She is renowned for her attempts to teach women and girls to read and write in the refugee camp where she resided during the Soviet-Afghan war, later to be smuggled back to Afghanistan at the age of 16 to set up a secret school for girls.

Samar, Dr Sima

Sima Samar is a medical doctor who lived as a refugee for over a decade. She established the Shuhada Clinic to provide health care for fellow Afghan women refugees in Pakistan. Upon her return to Afghanistan she served as Minister of Women's Affairs of Afghanistan (2001 to 2003). She has established an institute of higher education and carries on human rights works both nationally and internationally. In 2019, she was appointed Special Envoy and State Minister for Human Rights and International Relations in Afghanistan.

BANGLADESH

Hossain, Dr Hameeda

Dr Hossain has published many books and articles relating to human rights and women's issues in Bangladesh and around the world. She is a founding member of Ain o Salish Kendra, a legal aid and human rights organisation.

Sultana, Razia

Razia Sultana is a Bangladeshi lawyer and human rights activist who has worked tirelessly for the Rohingya people. She interviewed hundreds of Rohingya women and published their accounts of sexual violence by the Burmese security forces. She is a coordinator of the Free Rohingya Coalition (FRC) and a director of the Arakan Rohingya National Organization's (ARNO). She won the International Women of Courage Award 2019.

Yunus, Mohammad

Mohammad Yunus is the founder of the Grameen Bank. He developed the concept of microcredit for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. His efforts focus on creating economic and social development, helping the impoverished escape poverty by providing loans on terms suitable to them, and teaching them sound financial principles. Yunus' work has been recognised by many international organisations, including the King Hussein Foundation, Jordan, and UNESCO. In 2012, he was named the Chancellor of Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland. In 2016, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appointed him to the High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, which was co-chaired by presidents François Hollande of France and Jacob Zuma of South Africa.

CHINA

Tohti, Ilham

Ilham Tohti is the most renowned Uyghur public intellectual in the People's Republic of China. For over two decades he has worked tirelessly to foster dialogue and understanding between Uyghurs and Chinese. Frequently harassed and arrested, in 2014 he was sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of separatism. Much of the evidence against him included his teaching materials and interviews with foreign journalists. Current reports estimate over a million Uyghurs have been detained in internment camps undergoing 're-education' and forced abortions and

sterilisation as the intensity of the Chinese crackdown on Muslim practice in the eastern region continues. There are estimated to be over 10 million Uyghurs living in the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang (East Turkestan).

INDIA

Bano, Bilkis (new)

Bilkis Bano known popularly as Dadi (grandmother) is an 82 year old woman who inspired protests in India against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), both of which discriminate against Muslims. Her Gandhian style of protest attracted thousands of mainly Muslim women in the Delhi locality Shaheen Bagh and continued unabated for 100 days until a Covid-19 lockdown was enforced. The Indian government's arrests and assaults on the protests are another front in the battle for India's soul (Gandhi vs RSS – Hindu Nationalism) and democracy.

Khan, Dr Saniyasnain

Dr Khan has been a prolific writer of children's books. He established Goodword Books in 1999 and has published over 100 titles. His books focus on Islamic themes and have been translated into many languages. He is a regular contributor of articles in various newspapers and magazines as well as hosting a weekly TV show.

Ramzan, Dr Mubeena

Dr Mubeena Ramzan educates and empowers women in Kashmir. She runs the Jamia Islamia Mahdul Muslimat, based in Sopore and in Srinagar and also heads a socio-religious organisation, Ansar un Nisa. The former institute graduates *aalimabs* (religious scholars) whilst the latter provides a helping hand to the needy, would-be brides, widows, orphans and also establishes vocational training centres.

MALAYSIA

Anwar, Zainah

Anwar is the co-founder and Director of Musawah: A Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family. Prior to this, she founded and was Executive Director of Sisters in Islam, an organisation committed to gender issues and increasing respect for women. She is a journalist who has contributed to the *New Straits Times* and *The Star*—the country's two main newspapers—and has written

a book about Islam in Malaysia. She addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos and delivered a keynote address titled Islam, Human Rights, and Activism at Harvard University. *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast* named Anwar one of the 150 women “Who Shake the World”.

MYANMAR

Mohibullah, Mohammed

Mohibullah is the chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH), one of the leading organisations giving voice to the Rohingya refugees. Following a crackdown by the Myanmar military, 730,000 Rohingya fled Rakhine state for Bangladesh in August 2017. The UN described the action as “textbook ethnic cleansing”. Efforts to repatriate the refugees have failed so far as firstly, returnees lack a sufficient guarantee of safety, and secondly, their villages have been systematically destroyed.

NEPAL

Siddiqui, Mohammadi

Mohammadi Siddiqui is a pioneer female Muslim politician, social worker, and human rights activist. She established the Fatima Foundation in 2003 to ensure Muslim women’s rights on two related fronts: the personal daily struggle of women against discrimination, and the social and legal practices that influence women’s independence and access to basic rights. The foundation organises Muslim women’s groups and works with religious scholars and women leaders to educate women and raise awareness of their rights in order to advocate for the practice of actual Islamic law and ensure social justice for women. The foundation also publishes books and translations of the Qur’an in the local language and provides services to the victims of domestic violence.

PAKISTAN

Mazari, Muniba

Muniba derives her strength from the tragic car accident that took place when she was 21 which left her wheelchair bound. Since then, she’s been a pioneering voice heard in different countries around the world. Being a motivational speaker through TEDx, Entrepreneurs’ Organization (EO), Young Presidents’ Organization (YPO), VCon Malaysia, Vcon Dubai and several others. She was the first Pakistani

woman to become a UN Good Will Ambassador and the first wheel-chair using model. In June 2019, Muniba was appointed by the current Prime Minister, Imran Khan, to be a part of Pakistan’s first ever National Youth Council.

Yousafzai, Malala

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 136

PHILIPPINES

Rasul, Santanina Tillah

The first Muslim woman elected to the Senate of the Philippines, former Senator Santanina Tillah Rasul is also the founder and Chair of the Magbassa Kita (Let us Read) Foundation Inc, which focuses on literacy and education. She is noted for her work on women’s empowerment, effective civil service, improved literacy for the Muslims of Mindanao, and equitable treatment of Muslims of the Philippines. She authored much landmark legislation, including the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act that empowered women. She also allocated development funds for women’s initiatives and opened the Philippine Military Academy to women. A peace champion, she was a member of the government panel during the peace talks with the Moro National Liberation Front that led to a peace agreement that was signed in 1996. In 2019 she was conferred the *Tandang Sora Award*.

Rasul-Bernardo, Amina

Amina Rasul-Bernardo, an advocate for peace and democracy, is President and co-founder of the Philippine Centre for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and a columnist with BusinessWorld. Appointed Director of the Mindanao Development Authority, she was a member of the cabinet of former President Fidel V Ramos, former Commissioner for Women, former Director of the Development Bank of the Philippines, and Director of the Philippine National Oil Corporation. She led the organisation of the National Ulama Conference of the Philippines and the Noorus Salam (Light of Peace), a national network of ustadzas and Muslim women civil society leaders. She also led the development of an Islamic Model for Peace Education for Mindanao. The UN Act for Peace Programme named her the Mindanao Peace Champion in 2010. In 2013, she won second prize in the World Interfaith Harmony Week.

SRI LANKA

Ismail, Jezima

An educator for over three decades, Jezima Ismail is the Chairperson of People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), President Emeritus and Founder of the Sri Lanka Muslim Women's Conference (SLMWC), Founder and Chairperson of the Academy of Adult Education for Women (AAEW), Member of the Board of Management for the Center for Human Rights at the University of Colombo, Coordinator of the Muslim Women's Research and Action Forum, Vice President of the Girl Guides Association, and a member of the Board of Directors of Helpage in Sri Lanka. In 1989, the Government of Sri Lanka conferred on her the title of *Deshabandhu*, the third highest national honour.

Marsoof, Justice Saleem

Supreme Court Judge Saleem Marsoof was sworn in as the Acting Chief Justice before President Mahinda Rajapaksa in May 2013. Justice Marsoof is a former judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka and former President of the Court of Appeals. He is an award-winning lecturer on law and the development of legal studies, as well as a prolific author with a special interest in law reform in Sri Lanka.

THAILAND

Sabur, M Abdus

Sabur is the Secretary General and co-founder of the Asian Resource Foundation and the Asian Muslim Action Network. He is also Co-director of the School of Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation in Bangkok. In the 90s, Sabur served as coordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (AC-FOD). He has edited a number of publications on peace and dialogue in Southeast Asia, including: *Understanding Human Rights: Perspectives from South Asia*, *Interfaith Conference on the Culture of Peace*, *Globalization and Asian Perspectives for an Alternative Development*, and *Towards Peace in Multi-Ethnic Asia*.

Europe

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mahmutćehajić, Prof Dr Rusmir

Rusmir Mahmutćehajić is a Bosnian academic, author, and former statesman. Considered one of Bosnia's leading intellectuals and public figures, he is the foremost advocate of the idea of a diverse Bosnia. A scholar of the Muslim intellectual tradition and a contributor to contemporary Muslim thought and the liberal interpretation of Islam, Professor Mahmutćehajić has served his country as Deputy Prime Minister and as Energy Minister through the process of independence and much of the war (1991-95). For the past 15 years, he has been President of International Forum Bosnia, which is dedicated to the development of critical intelligence and a plural society in Bosnia. He is the author of more than 20 books in Bosnian, some 12 of which have been published in multiple languages, and author of several hundred academic articles and essays.

UNITED KINGDOM

Begg, Moazzam

Moazzam Begg is a British Pakistani who was held without charge by the US for 3 years in the notorious Bagram and Guantanamo Bay detention centres. After much public outcry he was finally released in 2005, and in 2010, the British Government announced an out-of-court financial settlement for their complicity in the whole affair. His book, *'Enemy Combatant'* details the abuse carried out at the detention centres. He is outreach Director of CAGE, an advocacy organisation which looks at, amongst other issues, how international anti-terror measures are eroding human rights.

Henzell-Thomas, Dr Jeremy

Dr Henzell-Thomas has been a major force as a writer, editor, lecturer and advisor in the campaign to reform education in the Muslim world and the way Islam tends to be treated in Western educational circles. He founded the Book Foundation, served as first Chair of FAIR (UK Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism) and now serves as Associate Editor of *Critical Muslim*. He was instrumental in advising Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal on funding the establishment of centres of Islamic Studies at two British universities and supported the newly established

post of Readership in Islamic education at Warwick University. He remains a Research Associate at the Centre of Islamic Studies at Cambridge, serves as an Executive Committee member of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists UK and is a Fellow at the Royal Society of Arts. His most recent publication is *Rethinking Reform in Higher Education: From Islamization to Integration* (co-authored with Ziauddin Sardar.)

Qureshi, Khawar

Khawar Qureshi QC is one of the world's leading advocates on international arbitration, administrative and constitutional law, public international law and commercial litigation. He was the youngest advocate ever to have appeared before the International Court of Justice in 1993 for Bosnia's genocide case against Yugoslavia. From 1999 to 2006, he remained one of only 20 barristers which the UK government had appointed for representing it in civil matters. He routinely appears at the International Court of Justice, most recently as the counsel for Pakistan in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case, the Indian spy convicted on charges of terrorism, espionage and sabotage. Qureshi has taught at Cambridge University, Kings College and the University of London.

Oceania

AUSTRALIA

Chowdhury, Sheikh Tawfique

Chowdhury is the Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Mercy Mission, one of the world's fastest growing Muslim social enterprises. Its premier program is the AlKauthar Institute (alkauthar.org), which offers courses in Islamic disciplines to the general public through a medium that is accessible to working professionals. When AlKauthar initially launched in 2005, its offerings were limited to Australia. AlKauthar Institute has since spread its reach across the Western world, South Africa, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia. A medical doctor by profession, Tawfique studied Islamic theology in Medina, specialising in Islamic finance, personal law, and Islamic medical ethics. He also runs a successful multinational IT company, and is a corporate trainer and business coach to many successful people worldwide.

North America

CANADA

Kutty, Faisal

A leading North American Muslim lawyer, Faisal Kutty is outspoken on issues of human rights, Islamic thought and anti-terror legislation. He is principal lawyer at Kutty and Associates, a respected Toronto law firm with an international client base. He co-founded the Canadian Muslim Civil Liberties Association and served as its first legal counsel and previously served as the vice chair and legal counsel to the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations (now renamed the National Council of Canadian Muslims). He is a widely invited public speaker and has written numerous op-eds, academic articles, papers, reviews and essays on topics ranging from national security to religion and law. He has taught at law schools in the USA and Canada and is associate professor of Law Emeritus at Valparaiso University. His TEDx talk on "Why Conversations Matter" was well received.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Awad, Nihad

Nihad Awad is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). CAIR is the most prominent Muslim lobby group in the US and is frequently sought out by the media and politicians for the Islamic perspective on events. Awad is one of the signatories of A Common Word Between Us and You and participates regularly in the US Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Awad coordinated the formal release of the Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi, signed by over 120 leading Muslim scholars and academics, which rejected the extremist teachings promoted by DA'ISH.

Beydoun, Khaled

Khaled A. Beydoun is a scholar on Islamophobia, civil liberties and constitutional law. He lectures frequently and regularly writes for media outlets. His 2018 book, *American Islamophobia: The Roots and Rise of Fear* has been published to wide-acclaim. He serves as an Associate professor of Law at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville School of Law of Law, and currently serves on the US Commission for Civil Rights. In a Twitter campaign, Beydoun asked his



God is Great

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

followers to "Boycott the 2022 Olympics in Beijing China — where a Uighur Muslim genocide is currently taking place".

Khan, Salman

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 136

Magid, Imam Mohammed

An outstanding figure in interfaith activities, Imam Magid is the Executive Director and Imam at the ADAMS Centre in Virginia, and former President of ISNA. He is an advocate for youth and women, and serves on the FBI's Muslim, Sikh, and Arab Advisory Committee. In recognition of his efforts toward interfaith bridge building, Imam Magid was among the ten Washingtonians of the Year in 2010 presented with Washingtonian Magazine's award for outstanding leadership. He has served as an advisor to many in Washington, including President Obama.

Mogahed, Dalia

Dalia Mogahed is the Director of Research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. She was previously a senior analyst and Executive Director at the Gallup Centre for Muslim Studies, as well as the Director of the Muslim West Facts Project. President Obama appointed her to serve on the Advisory

Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, making her the first hijab-wearing Muslim woman to hold a White House position. Mogahed has also held high positions in the US-Muslim Engagement Project and is co-author of the book *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*.

Sarsour, Linda

Linda Sarsour is an American-Palestinian, human rights and social justice activist, and a campaigner against increasing Islamophobia in the United States. Sarsour is the Executive Director of the Arab American Association of New York and Senior Strategist for the Campaign to Take on Hate. She is also the co-founder of the Muslim Democratic Club of New York, the first of its kind in New York City. Her numerous distinctions include: the White House's Champion of Change, the New York City Council's Shirley Chisholm Women of Distinction Award, and CAIR's inaugural American Muslim of the Year. Linda has also written for—and been featured in—local, national, and international media on issues related to Arab-Muslim American communities, immigration, criminal justice issues, and Middle East affairs. In March 2020, Simon and Schuster published Sarsour's autobiography, *We Are Not Here to Be Bystanders*.

Middle East and North Africa

BAHRAIN

Al-Zayani, Afnan

Afnan al-Zayani is the CEO of Al-Zayani Commercial Services (AZCS), a multimillion dollar corporation. She is responsible for the passing of personal status laws in Bahrain that ensure the protection of Muslim women's rights in divorce and custody proceedings, something she oversaw during her leadership of the Bahrain Businesswomen's Society (BBS). Subsequently, Al-Zayani led the Middle East and North Africa Businesswomen's Network. In 2010, she received the Leadership in Public Life Award from Vital Voices, a women's empowerment organisation. In 2016, she was honoured by the IWEC Foundation at the annual conference in Belgium.

EGYPT

Helal, Lobna

Lobna Helal was appointed by a Presidential decree as Deputy Governor of Egypt's Central Bank in 2016 after having served as the first woman to serve on its board, as Second Deputy Governor from 2011-2013. Helal also holds key positions such as the deputy chair of the Egyptian Banking Institute and recently joined Telecom Egypt's board.

IRAN

Ansari, Anousheh

Anousheh Ansari is Chairman, CEO, and co-founder of Prodea Systems, a private US-based company offering technological solutions for businesses. In 2006, she became the first privately-funded woman, and first Iranian, to explore space. In 2015, the National Space Society awarded Ansari the Space Pioneer Award for her service to the space community. She received an Honorary Doctorate of Science from Utah Valley University. In 2017, Ansari co-represented Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi at the 89th Academy Awards, accepting the Oscar on his behalf for his film *The Salesman*. Farhadi did not attend himself due to his opposition to President Trump's immigration ban.

JORDAN

Abu-Ghazaleh, Talal

Abu-Ghazaleh is the Chairman and founder of the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization. He is credited with introducing the concept of intellectual property to the Arab World. Abu-Ghazaleh has been selected as Deputy Chairman of the UN Global Compact, as well as being appointed by the UN as Chair of UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development. He is the only person who is not from one of the G8 countries, to be listed in the IP Hall of Fame in Chicago, US.

KUWAIT

Al-Bahar, Shaikha

Shaikha Al-Bahar is the Deputy CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait, valued at over \$79 billion in total assets. She is in charge of loans, investment banking, marketing, and treasury. Al-Bahar is also Chairperson of Al-Watany Bank of Egypt, Vice Chair at NBK Capital (a subsidiary of the National Bank of Kuwait), and sits on the board of the International Bank of Qatar. She studied at Harvard Business School, Stanford, Duke, and California University.

Al-Ghunaim, Maha

Al-Ghunaim is a pivotal figure in Arab and Kuwaiti banking and finance. In 1998, she founded Global Investment House, one of the most renowned companies in the Arab World. She is well-known for taking the company international and onto the London Stock Exchange in 2008, making it the first Kuwaiti company to be listed there. The firm is also listed on the Kuwait, Dubai, and Bahrain stock exchanges.

MOROCCO

Bouhia, Hynd

Hynd Bouhia is CEO of Global Nexus, a management investment fund focusing on clean energy and innovation. Prior to this she was the General Director of the Casablanca Stock Exchange. In 2004, the then Prime Minister of Morocco appointed her as his economic advisor. Bouhia was also a Special Assistant to the World Bank's Vice President for Middle East and North Africa, specifically in economic,

technical, and diplomatic issues. She was inducted into John Hopkins Society of scholars in 2018.

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Amoudi, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Ali

Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Ali Al-Amoudi has a portfolio of businesses in oil, mining, agriculture, hotels, hospitals, finance, operations, and maintenance in various countries including Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia. His charitable and philanthropic works are substantial, especially in Ethiopia. In November 2017, al-Amoudi, alongside several Saudi princes and other billionaires, was detained in an anti-corruption crackdown. He was eventually released in January 2019.

Bin Laden, Bakr

Bakr bin Laden, half-brother of the deceased Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, is the Chairman of the Saudi Binladin Group. Revenue of his company is estimated at \$6 billion. His company is responsible for construction projects in the Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Mecca, such as the expansion and the jamarat projects. The group has been involved with several major projects in the country, including the King Abdullah Economic City, the King Abdul Aziz International Airport, and the King Saud University. In November 2017 he was detained, along with several Saudi princes and billionaires, on an anti-corruption drive. He spent three months at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh before being released in January 2018.

HRH Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal Al-Saud

Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal is a member of the Saudi royal family who built his fortune through entrepreneurship and investment in real estate and the stock market. His philanthropic contributions are wide-ranging and include a contribution of \$20 million to found the Centre for Christian-Muslim Understanding at Georgetown University, which remains one of the key institutions globally working on Christian-Muslim relations. In November 2017, he was one of several Saudi princes and billionaires detained on an anti-corruption drive. He spent three months at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh before being released in January 2018. In April 2020, Al-waleed Philanthropies allocated \$30m to the battle against Covid-19.

Olayan, Lubna

Lubna Olayan is internationally recognised as Saudi Arabia's top businesswoman. She was Chief Executive Officer of the Olayan Financing Company, and a board member for organisations such as Saudi Hollandi Bank, Rolls Royce, and Citigroup, among others. She was reappointed in January 2020 to serve a three year term at Saudi British Bank, and assumed the position after the merger between SABB and Alawwal Bank.

SUDAN

Ibrahim, Dr Mohamed "Mo"

Mohamed Ibrahim—more commonly known as Mo Ibrahim—is a Sudanese-born entrepreneur currently based in the UK. A successful telecommunications businessman, he founded one of Africa's largest cellular phone companies, Celtel. He came into prominence for establishing the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership in 2017, an award that provides the recipient a \$5 million initial payment, plus \$200,000 annually for life. The prize was conceived as a way to promote good governance and curb corruption by African leaders seeking financial security when they leave office. The prize is believed to be the world's largest, surpassing the \$1.3 million Nobel Peace Prize.

SYRIA

Alchaar, Dr Mohammed Nedal

Alchaar is the Secretary General of the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), an independent international non-profit organisation. It is supported by its 200 members—mostly banks and financial institutions—from 45 countries around the globe. It is one of the key organisations creating standards for the Islamic banking industry.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Alabbar, Mohamed Ben Ali

Mohamed Ben Ali Alabbar is a member of the Executive Board of the Government of Dubai and the Director of the Department of Economic Development. Under his leadership Dubai has been one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. He has been successful in increasing the financial regulations requiring transparency, making Dubai a more attractive place to invest and do business in. He is one of

the main assistants of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, and is the Chairman of Emaar, one of the world's largest real estate companies. *Arabian Business* ranked him as the world's fourth most powerful Arab.

Al-Gurg, Raja

Raja al-Gurg is Managing Director of the Easa Saleh Al-Gurg Group LLC (ESAG). Al-Gurg is the first Emirati woman on the board of HSBC Bank Middle East Limited and is also on the advisory board of Coutts Bank, the wealth management division of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group. She also plays an active role in several philanthropic, social, and women's societies, including serving as Deputy Chair of the Dubai Healthcare City Authority and President of the Dubai Business Women Council. Her autobiography: *Raja Al Gurg - An Autobiography* was published at the end of 2019.

Al-Jaber, Fatima

Al-Jaber is an Emirati businesswoman and Chief Operating Officer of the Al-Jaber Group. She supervises more than 50,000 employees and manages around \$4.9 billion in assets. She is also a regular speaker at economic conferences. Al-Jaber was the first ever Emirati woman to be elected to the Board of Directors at the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce in December 2009. She has received many awards and has been featured in *Forbes* and *Arabian Business*.

Sub-Saharan Africa

KENYA

Merali, Naushad

Merali is a business tycoon who has helped the commercial development in Kenya. He is best known for owning three of Kenya's major companies: Sasini Ltd, battery manufacturer Eveready East Africa, and Sameer Africa. He is also chairman of the mobile carrier Bharti Airtel's Kenya operations. Merali appeared in Africa's 50 Richest 2015 by *Forbes*.

NIGERIA

Dangote, Alhaji Aliko

Dangote is the Chairman and CEO of the Dangote Group, the largest industrial group in Nigeria. In January 2009, Dangote was honoured for being the

leading provider of employment in the Nigerian construction industry. In 2011, Dangote was also awarded Nigeria's second highest honour, Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) by the President of Nigeria. As a philanthropist, he has donated to the National Mosque, the Presidential Library, and a host of charities. In March 2020, Dangote donated 200 million Naira towards curbing the spread of Covid-19 in Nigeria.

Asia

BRUNEI

HM Sultan Hajj Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Sultan of Brunei Darussalam Waddaulah

HM Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah has been the Sultan of Brunei since 1967. Following the death of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 2016, the Sultan is the wealthiest monarch in the world. His official residence has over 1,800 rooms and he maintains a car collection in the thousands. He owns many properties (via the Brunei Investment Authority) in the UK including the famous Dorchester Hotel. He is estimated to be worth \$20 billion.

INDONESIA

Indrawati, Sri Mulyani

Sri Mulyani Indrawati is one of a few Indonesian policymakers with an international profile. During her time as Finance Minister, Southeast Asia's largest economy became one of the 20 leading economies in the world and one of the fastest growing economies in the region, partly thanks to a combination of sound economic policies and a stable political environment. She was appointed Managing Director of the World Bank in 2010, where she served until 2016.

MALAYSIA

Bin Hashim, Tan Sri Muhammad Ali

In addition to being mayor of one of Malaysia's most successful industrial townships for a period of 26 years, Tan Sri Muhammad Ali Bin Hashim served as President and CEO of Johor Corporation for more than 28 years. He is currently the President of the Malaysian Islamic Chamber of Commerce (DPIM) and has been awarded Malaysia's Ma'al Hijrah Appreciation Award. His three books speak about how

to realise the highest levels of social responsibility and environmental sustainability standards while integrating Islamic aspirations into business practice, thereby aligning them with the objectives of the *Maqasid Al Sharia*.

Europe

TURKEY

Sabancı, Güler

Sabancı is a renowned, award-winning Turkish businesswoman and the chairperson of the family-controlled Sabancı Holding, a \$25 billion industrial and financial corporation, the second largest in Turkey. Ban Ki-moon appointed Sabancı as a member of the Board of United Nations Global Compact, the UN's highest-level advisory body involving business, civil society, labour, and employers' organisations. She was recently honoured with the David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award for her philanthropic contributions.

Ulukaya, Hamdi

Hamdi Ulukay is the founder and CEO of the multi-billion dollar yogurt business, Chobani. He immigrated to the USA in 1994, purchased a yoghurt factory in 2005 and developed his own recipe based on his Kurdish ancestry and the eastern Turkish farm he grew up in. He has developed a humane working culture for his 2,000+ employees. He focused on employing from the local community as well as refugees and has given his employees a 10% stake in the company. He has won numerous awards.

UNITED KINGDOM

Aziz, Asif

Asif Aziz is the founder and Chief Executive of Criterion Capital, which manages a £2 billion property portfolio across London and the South East of England. He has made significant charitable contributions across a range of sectors in the UK, and is currently chair of the Aziz Foundation, which runs a huge postgraduate scholarships program for British Muslims. He is also a key donor to girls' educational projects in Malawi.

Randeree, Shabir

Randeree is a hugely successful entrepreneur and philanthropist and was recognised for his efforts with a CBE. He is the Chairman of DCD Group, Deputy Chairman of Al Baraka Bank South Africa and founder director at IBB Bank plc. He is the Chair of Mosaic (founded by HRH Prince of Wales) and involved in a number of other educational institutes. He has served on Government Task Forces and in 2016 was inaugurated as the new chancellor of the University of East London. In 2020 he was elected the new Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Woolf Institute.

Shafik, Nemat

An active economist who has held significant positions in international organisations, Shafik became Director of the London School of Economics in September 2017. She was the youngest ever Vice President of the World Bank, at the age of 36, served as the Bank of England's Deputy Governor of Markets and Banking, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and Permanent Secretary of the United Kingdom Department for International Development. She has written extensively on the fields of globalisation, emerging markets and private investment, international development, the Middle East and Africa, and the environment. She was granted the title Dame Commander of the British Empire in the June 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours. In 2020, she was permanently selected as a member of the British House of Lords.

Oceania

AUSTRALIA

Yassine, Talal

Yassine has spent 20 years in business, politics, and charity work. He is the Founder and Managing Director of Crescent Wealth, the world's first Sharia-compliant pension fund. Talal also serves as the Chairman of First Quay Capital and LandCorp Australia and serves on the Board of the Whitlam Institute Limited, a Prime Ministerial Board connected to the University of Western Sydney. He is a Director of Finocracy Ltd (USA) and the Responsible Finance Initiative (UK). His previous positions include a number of high-profile public sector roles. Talal is a Professorial Fellow with the Crawford School at the

Australian National University and an adjunct professor with the Business School at the University of Western Sydney.

North America

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

El-Erian, Mohamed

El-Erian's career started at the International Monetary Fund, where he worked for 15 years and served as Deputy Director. He also served as Managing Director at Citigroup in London and PIMCO, a global investment management firm and one of the world's largest bond investors, where he was CEO and CIO. He is currently Chief Economic Adviser at Allianz, the world's largest insurance company, and President-Elect of Queens' College Cambridge. In 2012, President Obama appointed him Chair of the

Global Development Council. El-Erian contributes to major economic publications such as *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg*, *Business Insider*, CNN, and *Foreign Policy*, which named him on the list of the "top 100 Global Thinkers" for four years in a row. He has authored two New York Times bestselling books, sits on several boards, and received various professional and philanthropic awards.

Khan, Shahid

Khan moved to the USA from Pakistan in 1967, aged 16, graduated in Industrial Engineering and since then has gone on to become a billionaire businessman. His main company is Flex-N-Gate, which manufactures components for companies in the automobile industry. It currently has a revenue of over \$6 billion and a workforce of 13,000 employees. He is also the owner of the American national football league team, the Jacksonville Jaguars and the English football team, Fulham.

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Altafsir.com is a completely free, non-profit website providing access to the largest and greatest online collection of Qur'anic Commentary (tafsir or tafseer), translation, recitation and essential resources in the world.

It was begun in 2001 by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan, being the brainchild of HRH Prince Ghazi, the Chief Advisor for Religious and Cultural Affairs to H.M King Abdullah II. Today the website is fully operational in Arabic and English and provides the original Arabic texts of 150 or more books of Qur'anic Commentary, Interpretation and Explanation (tafsir or tafseer), recitation (tajwid) tutorials and Hadith collections, and other fields, pertaining to the study of Qur'anic exegesis. Translations of the meanings of the Qur'an are currently available in 24 different languages, and in several cases more than one translation is available. The site also includes audio Qur'an recitations; resources on Qur'an syntax; resources on the Contexts of Revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl); resources on the meanings of words found in the Qur'an, and other works on the Qur'anic sciences. It contains over a million pages of Qur'anic Commentary and translation. Some of the texts presented here exist only as manuscripts and have never previously been published in book form despite their historical importance and influence. Altafsir.com is thus a complete website for the study of the Qur'anic Sciences.

In addition to presenting the standard Classical and Modern Commentaries on the Holy Qur'an (tafsir or tafseer) texts of all eight schools of jurisprudence, the site also contains works of various mystical, philosophical, linguistic and theological currents. Moreover, the first time in one place, comparative studies between the Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, Ja'fari, Zaydi, Ibadi and Thahiri schools can be carried out complete with multi-screen displays and search programs.

In 2012 altafsir.com added the highly praised *Love in the Holy Qur'an* as a free downloadable pdf, and received 8 million visits bringing the total number of visits to over 27 million visitors.

In 2013, the Prince Ghazi Trust for Qur'anic Thought put up a sister website with a special emphasis for mobile devices. You can now read tafsir wherever you go by visiting www.GreatTafsirs.com and downloading the app for Android or iOS.

Over
133 MILLION
visitors to altafsir.com

Middle East and North Africa

EGYPT

El-Baz, Farouk

Farouk El-Baz is a geologist who worked with NASA on the selection of landing sites on the moon and the training of Apollo astronauts in visual observations and photography. He is well-known for applying satellite images to groundwater exploration in arid lands. The Geological Society of America established two awards in his honour: the Farouk El-Baz Award for Desert Research (1999) and the Farouk El-Baz Student Research Award (2007). He has received numerous honours and awards, including Egypt's Order of Merit (First Class). El-Baz ranked no. 51 in the Power 100 of Arabian Business. In 2019, NASA named an asteroid after Farouk El-Baz in recognition of his outstanding scientific contributions.

El-Naggar, Zaghoul

El-Naggar is an Egyptian geologist and scholar who writes and speaks on science and the Qur'an. He is a fellow of the Islamic Academy of Sciences, and is well-respected by the global scientific community for his work in geology. He has published close to 200 academic articles and scientific studies. He also works for the Arab Development Institute.

IRAN

Salehi, Dr Ali Akbar

Dr Ali Akbar Salehi was appointed Head of the Atomic Energy Organization in Iran in July 2009 after the resignation of Gholam Reza Aghazadeh. Salehi is an academic and politician who has been involved in developing Iran's nuclear energy program since before the Islamic revolution in 1979. He transitioned to leading the Atomic Energy Organization after serving as a permanent representative of Iran with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Salehi was part of the 2015 Geneva Iran P5+1 nuclear talks to discuss technical aspects of Iran's nuclear program.

JORDAN

Dajani, Prof Rana

Rana Dajani is a professor of molecular biology and strong advocate for science education for women. She has also founded the initiative, "We Love Reading", which develops change makers through reading aloud. This earned her the Jacobs social entrepreneurship award 2018. In 2017 she was selected by Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study as a fellow of the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University. In 2019, Dr Dajani won the Arab Science and Technology Foundation Award in service of the advancement of science and technology.

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Namankany, Dr Abeer

Dr al-Namankany made history when she developed a new standard for measuring patient anxiety and treating it with drug-free psychotherapy, thereby protecting patients from the risks of general anesthesia and the side-effects of sedatives. She is the winner of six distinguished clinical and research awards from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry, the Emirates Medical Association, and others. In addition to her brilliant medical career, Dr al-Namankany is also a social activist and a defender of women's and children's rights.

Sindi, Hayat

Hayat Sindi is a pioneer in the field of medical science with a number of significant groundbreaking scientific contributions. She is Advisor to the President of Saudi Arabia's Islamic Development Bank Group on Science, Technology and Innovation. She was the first female member of the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia, the first Saudi to complete her studies at Cambridge University in the field of biotechnology, and the first Arab to complete a doctoral degree in the field. She was ranked by *Arabian Business* as the 20th most influential Arab in the world and the ninth most influential Arab woman in 2012. Sindi has been appointed by UNESCO as a Goodwill Ambassador in recognition of her efforts in promoting science education in the Middle East. Her other distinctions include membership at the Clinton Global

Initiative 2014 and receiving the Leadership in Civil Society prize.

Asia

INDONESIA

Mumpuni, Tri

Tri Mumpuni spent 15 years improving rural communities in Indonesia through electrification initiatives based on developments with micro-hydro-electric power plants. Her influential work, which offers economic incentives for implementation of the micro-hydro system, has been applied in 65 villages across Indonesia and a village in the Philippines. She was presented with the Award for Community Power at the Ashden Awards in 2012. Mumpuni is the Executive Director of IBEKA, a non-profit organisation whose mission is to promote community development via the provision of local energy, mainly hydroelectricity, and also clean water. She pioneered a community private partnership model to build small power plants equally owned by the community and private sector, and is responsible for introducing an energy garden to remote villagers.

MALAYSIA

Shukor, Dr Sheikh Muszaphar

Dr Shukor, an orthopedic surgeon by profession, was the first Malaysian in space. He was selected as one of two astronauts to be trained at Star City in Russia and was subsequently selected to be the astronaut to further Malaysia's Angkasawan program, which sent him to the International Space Station in 2007. Images of him praying and celebrating Eid increased his popularity in the Muslim world. His launch also prompted the Malaysian National Fatwa Council to issue specific rulings regarding observance of religious obligations (praying and fasting) while in space. In 2010 Shukor was appointed as one of the ambassadors of Malaysia's national reading campaign to encourage literacy among children.

PAKISTAN

Atta-Ur Rahman, Prof

Atta-Ur Rahman is the Coordinator-General of the OIC's COMSTECH, the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the

promotion and cooperation of science and technology activities among the OIC member states. In 1999 he became the first Muslim scientist to win the UNESCO Science Prize. In 2013, in recognition of his work in the field of science, the largest Malaysian university, Universiti Teknologi Mara, named its Research Institute of Natural Products after Professor Atta-ur-Rahman. He was given the International Cooperation Award, the highest award of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in 2014. In 2016, he was elected as Emeritus Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, thereby becoming the first scientist from the Islamic world to be bestowed this honour. The same year, Professor Rahman was appointed Co-Chairman of a United Nations Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation covering the member countries of UNESCAP.

Khan, Dr Abdul Qadeer

Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan is the scientist who brought nuclear technology and nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan in the 1970s. Pakistan is the first and only Muslim-majority country to have nuclear weapons. This has made him a figure of great international interest. He has continued to use his financial success and stature to improve the quality of education in Pakistan through building educational institutions for metallurgical engineering.

Saif, Umar

An award-winning scientist, entrepreneur, innovator, and a tech tycoon, Dr Saif studied at Cambridge and was a core member of the \$50 million Project Oxygen at MIT. He created the first startup incubators in Pakistan: the Saif Center of Innovation. He is also the founding Vice Chancellor of the Information Technology University in Punjab and is one of the main forces behind the IT ecosystem in Pakistan. The MIT Technology Review named Saif in its list of the "World's Top Young Innovators for the year 2011", and he was named "Young Global Leader" by the World Economic Forum in 2010. In recognition of his services to the country, in 2014 the Government of Pakistan conferred on him the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz* (Star of Excellence), one of the highest civilian awards in Pakistan. In 2017, he received the British Council Alumni Award for Professional Achievement. In 2019 he received an investment directly from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop innovative Artificial Intelligence models for data collection.

Siddiqi, Irfan

Irfan Siddiqi is an award-winning pioneering scientist who is best-known for the development of the Josephson bifurcation amplifier. He was born in Karachi and moved to the USA where he studied at Columbia, Harvard and Yale universities. He is Director of the Advanced Quantum Testbed and professor of Physics at the Quantum Nanoscience Laboratory (established by him) and the Department of Physics at the University of California, Berkeley.

THAILAND

Dahlan, Prof Dr Winai

Professor Dr. Winai Dahlan is the Founding Director of the Halal Science Center Chulalongkorn University (HSC) in Thailand, named the Best Innovation in the Halal Industry and the world's first Halal Science Institution by Malaysia's the Halal Journal. HSC promotes halal industry and commerce through digital platforms namely SPHERE, HALPLUS, etc and scientific regional cooperation with halal laboratories in Indonesia, Malaysia and worldwide. Dr Winai Dahlan has produced many intellectual properties and written more than 50 books and several thousand articles on science and nutrition.

Europe

FRANCE

Guiderdoni, Dr Bruno Abd al Haqq

Dr Guiderdoni is an astrophysicist and French convert to Islam. A specialist in galaxy formation and evolution, he has published more than 140 papers and organised several conferences on these subjects. Guiderdoni serves as Director of the Observatory of Lyon. Besides his extensive writings on science, he has also published around 60 papers on Islamic theology and mysticism and is now Director of the Islamic Institute for Advanced Studies.

TURKEY

Sancar, Aziz

Sancar was co-awarded (along with Tomas Lindahl and Paul Modrich) the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2015 for his work on DNA repair. His contributions over the years have shed light on the processes of aging, causes of cancer and how cells work. Sancar stud-

ied at Istanbul University before moving to the USA where he is currently a professor at the University of North Carolina. He is also a co-founder of a foundation which promotes Turkish culture and supports Turkish students in the USA (the Aziz and Gwen Sancar Foundation). He is the 2019 recipient of the Hyman L. Battle Distinguished Cancer Research Award.

İmamoğlu, Ataç

İmamoğlu is an award-winning physicist whose alma mater include the Middle East Technical University in Istanbul and Stanford. He was a professor at the University of California and then the University of Stuttgart before moving to this current position as head of the research group on Quantum Photonics, at ETHZ (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology), Switzerland. His academic interests are quantum optics, semiconductor physics, and nonlinear optics.

UNITED KINGDOM

Al-Hassani, Dr Salim

Dr Salim al-Hassani is a former professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, and the celebrated author of 1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World, a best-selling account of scientific and technological developments in Islamic history. Dr Al-Hassani also serves as the Chairman and Founder of the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation. The Foundation partners with the Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation, a British charity which showcased the 1001 Inventions Global Touring Exhibition across the UK, United States, and Turkey in 2010.

North America

CANADA

Ghilan, Mohamed

Mohamed Ghilan is a Canadian Muslim who has managed to combine a high degree of learning of modern science and traditional Islam. Born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to parents from Sudanese and Yemeni backgrounds, he attended high school and university after immigrating to Canada. In 2007 Mohamed began his full time studies in the Islamic Tradition after having made connections with several

Muslim scholars. In May 2015, Mohamed earned a PhD in neuroscience at the University of Victoria, where he studied synaptic plasticity in Huntington's disease, as well as the effects and molecular mechanisms of stress on the brain in Fragile X syndrome. He hopes his research can eventually be used to develop new therapies which can be used to assist individuals with movement disorders or intellectual disabilities. He is currently completing a medical degree at the University of Queensland.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Elgamal, Taher

Taher Elgamal, widely known as the "father of SSL (Secure Sockets Layer)", is a world-renowned Egyptian-American cryptographer. In addition to being the driving force behind SSL, the technology used to secure web browsing online, his work is also used as the basis for Digital Signature Algorithm (DSA) adopted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology as the Digital Signature Standard (DSS). He is a recipient of the RSA Conference 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award and received The 2019 Marconi Prize with Paul Kocher.

Khan, Mehmood

Dr. Mehmood Khan recently joined Life Biosciences as their Chief Executive Officer and member of board of directors. He was the former PepsiCo Vice Chairman and Chief Scientific Officer. He previously consulted for the Mayo Clinic on diabetes and other diseases and was President of Takeda Pharmaceuticals. He is one of the world's leading thinkers in food, nutrition, and innovation. Dr Khan sits on numerous boards.

Siddique, Teepu

Professor Siddique is a neurologist and scientist known for his ground-breaking discoveries concerning genetic and molecular abnormalities. He was head of the team that discovered the cause behind the mysterious and deadly disorder known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). He studied at Dow Medical College in Karachi, where he earned his medical degree in 1973 before moving to the USA. He was a professor of neurology and cell and molecular biology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine before becoming director of the university's division of neuromuscular medicine.

Ying, Jackie

Professor Jackie Y. Ying, heads the NanoBio Lab at the Agency for Science, Technology and Research in Singapore. She received her PhD from Princeton University and was professor of Chemical Engineering at MIT before becoming the Executive Director of the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN), Singapore. Her interdisciplinary research is focused on nanostructured materials and systems for catalytic and biomedical applications. She has authored over 350 articles and has over 170 patents issued or pending. In 2017, she was awarded the Abdeali Taybali Lifetime Achievement Award by Speaker of Parliament Halimah Jacob and also was named a Fellow of the United States National Academy of Inventors (NAI). In 2018 she was awarded the TÜBA Academy Prize.



Praise be to God

Calligraphy by Mothana Al-Obaydi © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

Middle East and North Africa

ALGERIA

Mosteghanemi, Ahlam

Ahlam Mosteghanemi is a best-selling author who has won numerous prizes, including the Naguib Mahfouz Prize for *Memory in the Flesh*, a novel about Algeria's struggle against foreign domination and the problems that plagued the emerging nation after its independence. Written in Arabic, the book has sold over a million copies. She earned her PhD at the Sorbonne in France and now lives in Beirut. She is the first contemporary Arab author to sell millions of copies of her work and dominate book charts for years in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, and the UAE. In 2016, she was named UNESCO Artist for Peace. She has over 14 million social media followers.

EGYPT

Al-Aswany, Alaa

Alaa Al-Aswany is the recipient of many distinguished international literary honors and awards. His novels are acclaimed in the field of contemporary literature, selling millions of copies in three dozen languages and adapted into film and theater performances. Al-Aswany reached international literary acclaim with his ground-breaking 2002 novel *The Yacoubian Building*. Through the prism of a fashionable downtown Cairo building, he exposes the corrupt dealmaking and exploitative relationships of power in Mubarak's Egypt. His latest novel *The Republic, As If*, published in 2018, is set during the events of Egypt's 2011 revolution. Al-Aswany is the author of seventeen books—novels, short story collections, and compendiums of his articles. He has taught and lectured at universities and leading cultural institutions around the world. A leading democracy advocate, his op-eds have appeared in such influential publications as *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *the Financial Times*, and *The Guardian*. Al-Aswany pens a weekly column for Deutsche Welle's Arabic news site and is fluent in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish.

Badreya, Sayed

Badreya is an Egyptian-born actor who played significant roles in a number of Hollywood films such as *Iron Man* and *The Dictator*. His production company Zoom in Focus emerged with the purpose of showing the world the Arab-American story. Much of his efforts in this regard have been publicised in prominent news networks such as The New York Times, BBC, ABC, and Fox News.

El-Wakil, Abdel

Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil is an international architect and a contemporary icon of Islamic architecture. A student of the famous Hassan Fathy, El-Wakil has designed over 50 buildings around the world, including one for the Prince of Wales. He is the two-time recipient of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and received first prize for the design of contemporary mosque architecture in Riyadh.

IRAN

Alidoosti, Taraneh (new)

Taraneh Alidoosti was named as one of the best actresses of the decade by Film Monthly Magazine and was the youngest person ever to win the Crystal Simorgh for Best Actress. She starred in *The Salesman* which won the Oscar for best Foreign Language Film in 2017. She boasts over 6 million followers on different social media networks. She recently received a suspended sentence for criticising the Iranian government.

Farhadi, Asghar

Asghar Farhadi is an awarding winning Iranian film director and screenwriter. He has won two Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film for his films *A Separation* (2012) (becoming the first Iranian to win an Oscar) and *The Salesman* (2016), as well as receiving a Golden Globe Award and numerous other awards. He famously did not attend the 2017 Academy Awards citing President Trump's travel ban as reason. He sent two famous Iranian Americans to receive the Oscar on his behalf. In his movies, Farhadi explores the depths and complications of everyday relationships and themes of jealousy and trust in an evocative way and often includes strong female leads.

Majidi, Majid

Majid Majidi is an Iranian film director whose films have won many international awards. His *Children of Heaven* was nominated for Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards. In August 2015, he released the first part of an intended trilogy on the life of the Prophet, with *Muhammad: The Messenger of God* being the most expensive film in Iranian movie history (\$40 million).

Nazeri, Shahram

Shahram Nazeri is a world-famous icon of classical Persian, folkloric Kurdish, and Sufi music. Hailed as "Iran's Pavarotti" by the Christian Science Monitor, Nazeri has released over 40 recordings to date and performed in major venues worldwide. In 2014, Nazeri received France's National Order of Merit.

JORDAN

Al-Baghdadi, Abbas Shakir Al

Abbas Al-Baghdadi is one of the world's foremost experts in Islamic calligraphy. Born in 1951 in Baghdad, he has had a distinguished career as a calligrapher and teacher of calligraphy. He adheres strictly to the rules of classical calligraphy and is averse to modern calligraphy, especially when its practitioners do not master the art in its traditional form. He is well-known for the balance, clarity, and majesty of his works.

LEBANON

Assaf, Roger

Roger Assaf is a prominent Lebanese director, actor, and playwright. With his actress wife Hanane Hajj-Ali, he co-founded the Al-Hakawati Theatre Company and the Shams Cultural Cooperative for Youth in Theatre and Culture, an organisation providing underprivileged individuals with a forum for self-expression through drama.

MOROCCO

Lalami, Laila

Laila Lalami is an award-winning novelist and essayist. Her many books include *The Moor's Account*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. Her opinion pieces and political commentary appear regularly in the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation*, and *the New York Times*. She has received a British Council Fellowship, a Fulbright Fellowship, and a Guggenheim Fellowship, and has been honored by the World

Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader. She is currently a professor of creative writing at the University of California at Riverside.

QATAR

Al-Thani, HE Sheikha Al-Mayassa

Sheikha al-Mayassa is the Chairperson of Reach Out To Asia, an NGO under the Qatar Foundation that contributes to the development of societies in Asia, including the Middle East. Its specific area of emphasis is improving the quality of both primary and secondary education in addition to achieving some of the goals of UNESCO's Education For All (EFA) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). She is the Chair of the Board of the Qatar Museums Authority and has spearheaded Qatar's recent massive investment in art. She was named as the most powerful person in the art world by *Art and Auction* magazine.

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Esa, Majed

Al-Esa has produced several music videos which have gone viral online. The video 'Hwages' highlights issues faced by women in Saudi Arabia and has already more than 32 million views on YouTube. His previous video was the dance hit 'Barbs', which has over 62 million views. Al-Esa is connecting to the younger generation of Saudis and his videos are causing concern in more conservative circles.

Sub-Saharan Africa

MALI

Keita, Salif

Known as the "golden voice of Africa", Salif Keita is an Afro-pop singer-songwriter from Mali. His West African music is combined with influences from Europe and the Americas. In 1977 Keita received a National Order Award from Guianese President Sekou Toure. His music is very popular in the Francophone world, and more broadly in Europe. After a 40-plus-year career and having produced over 25 albums, Keita released his final album '*Un Autre Blanc*' in October 2018.

NIGER

Souleymane, Mahamadou (new)

Mahamadou Souleymane, known as Mdou Moc-tar, is a Tuareg songwriter, musician and actor from Agadez, Niger who became famous through a music trading network of cell phones and memory cards in West Africa. He is one of the first musicians to perform modern electronic adaptations of Tuareg guitar music. He reached a global audience when Sa-hel Sounds released his music on the Music from Sa-haran Cellphones: Volume 1 compilation. His fifth studio album *Ilana* (The Creator), released in 2019 to international acclaim, has been called "the most fiery psych-rock of the 21st century" and one of "the 25 best psychedelic rock albums of the 2010s". He also has the starring role in the 2015 film *Akoumak Tedalat Taha Tazoughai*, which translates as "Rain the Colour of Blue with a Little Red in It". It is the world's first feature film in a Tuareg language.

SENEGAL

N'Dour, Youssou

Youssou N'Dour became Senegal's Minister of Tour-ism and Culture in April 2012. He is a world-famous composer, singer, percussionist, and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. In 2005, N'Dour received a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Mu-sic Album for his album *Egypt*. In 2011, N'Dour was awarded an honorary doctoral degree in music from Yale University. In 2013, N'Dour won a share of 174 Sweden's \$150,000 Polar Music Prize for promoting understanding between faiths as well as for his music.

SOUTH AFRICA

Bhikha, Zain

Zain Bhikha is a South African singer-songwriter and a pioneer performer of English nasheed songs. He is a much-loved household name amongst Mus-lims worldwide. He is also known for his collabora-tive efforts with other prominent Muslim entertain-ers, including Yusuf Islam and Dawud Wharnsby-Ali. Bhikha also writes and directs plays as well as holding creative expression workshops conducted specifically within schools. He has released over ten albums in his career spanning twenty-five years.

Asia

AFGHANISTAN

Hosseini, Khaled

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965. Following the USSR invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, his family was granted political asylum in the United States. Hosseini earned a medical degree in 1993. In March 2001, while practicing medicine, Hosseini began writing his first novel, *The Kite Run-ner*, which launched his literary career, and today, Hosseini is one of the most recognised and bestsell-ing authors in the world. His books, *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*, have been published in over seventy countries and sold more than 40 million copies worldwide. In 2006 Khaled was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Inspired by a trip he made to Afghanistan with the UNHCR, he later established The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a nonprofit, which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. He lives in Northern California with his wife and two children.

AZERBAIJAN

Qasimov, Alim

Alim Qasimov is an Azerbaijani musician and one of the most recognised singers of Islamic folk music in the world. In 1999, he was awarded the prestigious International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize. Qasi-mov has recorded nine albums and performed in many concerts around the world. According to *The New York Times*, Alim Qasimov is simply one of the greatest singers alive. Back in 2010, Alim Qasimov was nominated for the United States National Public Radio's "50 great voices" series.

CHINA

Noor Deen, Haji (Mi Guang Jiang)

Haji Noor Deen Mi Guang Jiang is a renowned mas-ter of Arabic calligraphy. He was born in Yucheng in the Shandong Province of China in 1963. In 1997, Haji Noor Deen was awarded the Certificate of Ar-bic Calligrapher in Egypt, the first Chinese person to be honoured with this prestigious award. His work has been displayed—often as the first Chinese-Ara-bic artist—in galleries and museums around the world, including the British Museum, the Asian Art

Museum of San Francisco, the National Museum of Scotland, and the Center for Government and International Studies (CGIS) at Harvard University. The focus of his work is in writing Arabic using a combination of traditional Chinese calligraphic brushes with quick organic strokes in order to uniquely fuse both the Chinese and Arabic arts. Also, he was awarded the Dubai Islamic Economy Development Centre 2016 Islamic Economy Award in the category of Islamic Arts in 2016.

INDIA

Azmi, Shabana

Azmi has been described as one of India's finest actresses of film, television, and theatre. She has been involved in over 120 movies, both in Hindi and foreign languages, many to international acclaim. During her extraordinary career, Azmi won the National Film Award for Best Actress five times and garnered several international honours. She has also received four Filmfare Awards. In addition to her successful career, Azmi is a social activist and supports issues such as women's rights, child survival, and fighting AIDS and injustice in real life via the use of mainstream media. She was appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for India by the United Nations Population Fund in 1998. She is also a member of Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament. She was conferred with an honorary doctorate by TERI University in 2014.

Khan, Aamir

Aamir Khan is one of the leading stars of Bollywood. His phenomenal success has won him awards in India and acclaim abroad. His film *Lagaan* was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars while his venture *Dhoom 3* was the highest-grossing Bollywood film of all time. He is also a UNICEF brand ambassador, promoting child nutrition. He performed Hajj in 2012.

Rahman, Allah Rakha

Rahman is a prolific composer, record producer, and musician for the Indian film industry. In 2011, Time described him as the world's most prominent and prolific film composer. He is the first Indian to receive a Golden Globe Award and two Academy Awards for the soundtrack of *Slumdog Millionaire*, a movie for which he also received two Grammy Awards. He was named CNN IBN Indian of the Year for 2009. In 2004, Rahman was appointed the Glob-

al Ambassador of the Stop TB Partnership, a World Health Organization project. A street was named in his honour in Markham, Ontario, Canada in November 2013. In 2014, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Berklee College of Music.

INDONESIA

Nadia, Asma

Asma Nadia is a prolific Indonesian author, song writer, and an international public speaker who has written over 56 books, including short stories, novels, and nonfiction on topics such as self improvement, instilling sakinah in the family, parenting, and motivational books. Ten of her books have been made into movies, and 4 books became TV Series. She is also a producer for Islamic Movies, a columnist for *Republika Daily* newspaper since 2011 and a hijab traveler who's been to 69 countries and 485 cities. Nadia also established the I Can Write Community which aims to help young writers and has opened 262 libraries around Indonesia for unprivileged children and youth.

Rosa, Helvy Tiana

Helvy Tiana Rosa, a prominent literary writer who has written more than 60 books in various genres. Her works have been translated into several international languages, and a few titles have been made as movies. In more than 30 years of her career in writing, Helvy has won 50 national and international awards in literacy and women empowerment. Helvy founded the writing community Forum Lingkar Pena (FLP) in 1997 which has spread to over 200 cities in Indonesia and abroad and given birth to many popular writers, especially in the Islamic literary genre. Currently, Helvy is the Vice Chairperson in Art and Culture division of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Board of Ulama).

MALAYSIA

Hamidun, Hafiz

Hafiz is currently the most influential nasheed singer in the Far East. He is a multi-platinum award winner with approximately 4 million followers on social media. His albums have sold more than five million copies and have more than 300 million streams. Besides being a nasheed singer, Hafiz Hamidun is also an award-winning music producer and music arranger.

Nurhaliza, Dato' Siti

Dato' Siti Nurhaliza binti Tarudin is a Malaysian singer who has won numerous musical awards. She has also been honoured for her contributions in charitable venues, and was one of the recipients of the Icon of Malaysia Award.

PAKISTAN

Ismail, Al-Hajj Siddiq

Al-Hajj Siddiq Ismail is a world-renowned naat and hamd reciter, philanthropist, and spiritual leader. He has been reciting for the past 50 years in over 10 languages. Ismail has performed in the presence of presidents, prime ministers, governors, chief ministers, and foreign dignitaries. He was presented with Pakistan's national award, the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz*, and the prestigious Pride of Performance Award, which he donated to the victims of Swat and Malakand.

Obaid-Chinoy, Sharmeen

Obaid-Chinoy is an internationally acclaimed journalist, filmmaker and activist. Initially known for her film work highlighting women's rights, she has gone on to win two Oscars, six Emmy awards for her films (three personally), the Livingston Award for Young Journalists and become the first artist to co-chair the World Economic Forum. The Government of Pakistan has honoured her with the *Hilal-i-Imtiaz*, the second highest civilian honour of the country, and Canada has awarded her a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. Sharmeen holds a bachelor's degree from Smith college and two master's degrees from Stanford University.

Parveen, Abida

Abida Parveen is an internationally acclaimed vocalist, often referred to as "the Queen of Sufi mystic singing". She is the only woman to reach this level of influence in devotional music. She specialises in traditional ghazals, and often performs before stadium-sized audiences across South Asia and globally. In 2017, she was designated a Peace Ambassador by SAARC. In 2020, Parveen received the PISA Lifetime Achievement Award as well as the national accolade, the *Nishan-e-Imtiaz*.

Qadri, Muhammad Owais Raza

With millions of followers, Qadri is considered a legend in the field of naat recitation. He is known for his passionate performances as well as his beautiful voice. A devout Muslim, he is particularly vocal on

the subject of his love for the Prophet Muhammad. He has over 4 million followers on social media and his Youtube videos have over 180 million views.

Europe

IRELAND

O'Connor, Sinéad

Sinéad O'Connor is an international pop star who has achieved platinum and Grammy success since the late 1980s. Her signature shaved head and powerful voice make her instantaneously recognisable. Outside of singing, her views and actions have also attracted much attention. She holds strong political, social and religious views and was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1999 with a church not affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church (an institution she has heavily criticised). In October 2018, aged 51, she converted to Islam and took the name Shahada Sadaqat. Almost a year later, she returned to the stage after a 5 year hiatus and performed her most famous hit '*Nothing Compares 2 U*'—dressed in a red abaya and matching hijab—to rave reviews.

NETHERLANDS

El Mouhandiz, Rajae

Rajae El Mouhandiz is a Dutch-Moroccan-Algerian poet, singer, composer, producer, performing artist and founder of the record label Truthseeker Records. After being the first Moroccan to study at a Dutch conservatory, El Mouhandiz left classical music to follow her own artistic path, seeking to incorporate her cultural roots. Rajae produces Maghreb pop, soul and jazz and has released the albums *Incarnation*, *Hand of Fatima*, the EP *Watani* and the single *Gracefully*. Her short docu-film *HOPE!* was nominated for the NFF prize. Rajae is also an Ariane de Rothschild Legacy Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship and Cross-Cultural Dialogue and advises the Dutch government on art policy.

SWEDEN

Zain, Maher

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 136

TURKEY

Duzyatan, Engin Altan

Engin Altan Duzyatan is a Turkish actor who plays the starring role in the hit Turkish drama: *'Dirilis Ertugrul'* (*'Resurrection Ertugrul'*) which is about the legendary father of Osman the First, the founder of the Ottoman Empire. The series centres around the migrations of the Kayi Tribe and their struggles against betrayal from within as well as battles against the Templars, the Mongols, Crusaders and the Byzantine Empire. It also gives a prominent role to the famous mystic Ibn al-Arabi. The series has captivated audiences not just in Turkey, but also huge numbers in the Middle East as well as Muslims in the West. Engin is also well-known for his charitable works in Africa where he has set up access to clean drinking water for over 100,000 people.

Pamuk, Orhan

Pamuk is one of Turkey's most prominent writers and was the first ever Turkish Nobel laureate. His ten novels to date have been translated into over 60 languages and sold more than 13 million copies. His novels explore many aspects of Turkey's rich culture past and present as well as philosophical questions. As an academic and intellectual, his voice is important nationally and internationally and he has voiced opinions on Kurds, Armenia and the current presidency. He teaches at Columbia University, USA.

Yalcin, Rabia

Rabia Yalçin is a Turkish fashion designer. Her creations represent a synthesis of local and international cultures and are inspired by the opulence of her homeland's Ottoman past. With her line Rabia 177 Yalçin Haute Couture, Yalçin has a strong presence in the European fashion scene.

Çelebi, Master Hasan

Master Hasan Çelebi is an eminent Turkish calligrapher who is hailed for his classical Ottoman calligraphy style. His exhibitions have been featured globally, and he is celebrated for his restoration of calligraphic panels in mosques around the world, from the Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi in Medina to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.

UNITED KINGDOM

Ahmed, Riz

The multi-talented Riz Ahmed continues to advocate for a variety of issues ranging from fundraising for Syrian and Rohingya refugees to highlighting the lack of positive representation of Muslims in the media in the British House of Commons. Riz has quickly become a household name through his acting work in films such as *Star Wars: Rogue One*, *Nightcrawler* and 2018's *Venom*. In 2017 he became the first Muslim man to take home an Emmy for acting after his critically acclaimed performance in HBO's *The Night Of* (for which he was Golden Globe and SAG nominated). All these achievements, alongside his continuous and outspoken activism led to Riz being listed in *Time Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2017. In March of 2020, Ahmed released a new music album, *The Long Goodbye*, to critical acclaim.

Islam, Yusuf

Formerly known as Cat Stevens, Yusuf Islam is a globally influential British musician and singer-songwriter. In 1977, he converted to Islam and left the music industry for educational and philanthropic causes. His international fame and high regard have probably made him the single most influential figure in the field of arts and culture in the Muslim world. He made a gradual return to music over the past five years with his latest albums *An Other Cup* and *Roadsinger*. Islam is a vocal opponent of terrorism and extremism, and in 2004 was recognised with the Man of Peace award by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Committee. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2014. Islam received three distinctions in 2015: the Global Islamic Economy Award, the Steiger Award, and BBC's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2019, Islam was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Sanders, Peter

Peter Sanders has been a professional photographer for over fifty years. He began his career in the mid 1960's photographing the iconic musicians of that time including Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison and the Doors, the Rolling Stones and many others. He first photographed the Hajj in 1971 and has continued to photograph in the Kingdom for nearly fifty years. He regularly undertakes international photographic workshops 'The Art of Seeing' with young people throughout the world. He continues

to act as a translator of Islam to those interested in acquiring a greater understanding and to encourage broader and deeper interactions between people of different races and faith

Yusuf, Sami

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 136

North America

CANADA

Wharnsby, Dawud

A Canadian singer-songwriter, poet, performer, educator, and television personality, Dawud Wharnsby is best known for his pioneering efforts in the musical/poetic genre of English-language nasheed and spoken word.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Aden, Halima

Halima Aden is a trailblazer in the world of fashion and beauty. She was the first ever contestant to wear a hijab and burkini in a USA pageant. She was the first hijab-wearing model to be signed by a major modelling agency and the first to appear on *Allure* and *Vogue's* covers. In 2019 she became the first model to appear in Sports Illustrated magazine wearing a hijab and burkini. A far cry from her birth in a Kenyan refugee camp to Somali parents.

Friedlander, Shems

Shems Friedlander—writer, artist, film maker, photographer and educator—has published his 10th book, *Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi's Forgotten Message*. The book contains interactive digital content via QR codes. Among his other books are *Winter Harvest*, *Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes* and *When You Hear Hoofbeats Think of a Zebra*. Friedlander has recently been appointed Emeritus Professor at the American University in Cairo where he taught graphic design and painting for 20 years. He has won over 30 awards for graphic design. Friedlander has also written two monodramas and his documentary films have been shown at film festivals in the US and abroad.

Henry, Aisha Gray

Aisha Gray Henry is the Founder and Director of the charitable foundation and publishing company

Fons Vitae, which is currently engaged in bringing out Ghazali's *Ihya* in English for parents and teachers as well as adapting it to accommodate children's workbooks, school curricula, and an instructional DVD. *The Book of Knowledge* and *The Principles of the Creed* educational sets are available and in use internationally with Purity and Prayer nearing completion. Included is a children's interactive website www.GhazaliChildren.org, a pilot school project and prison program. Translations into Urdu, Arabic, and Malay are underway. The Fons Vitae Ghazali Project has been launched with great acclaim in Morocco, Canada, Indonesia, England, and the USA so far.

Wilson, Willow (new)

Wilson is a writer and artist, notable for her works such as *Alif the Unseen*, which won the World Fantasy Award in 2013 and comic series, *Ms. Marvel*, featuring a Muslim teenager who becomes a superhero, which won the Hugo award for best Graphic Novel in 2015. Wilson has received multiple awards and nominations throughout her career and is currently contributing to Neil Gaiman's Sandman comic book series.

Youssef, Ramy (new)

Ramy, a comedian, actor and writer is best known for his eponymously titled show which explores an Egyptian-Muslim family navigating the various challenges of reconciling their religious and cultural identity within 21st Century America. The show, which Ramy created, co-wrote, executive produced and played the titular role, won him the Golden Globe Award for best actor in a tv series (musical or comedy) ahead of Hollywood heavyweights like Paul Rudd and Michael Douglas. A second series of *Ramy* debuted in 2020, adding multiple Oscar winner Mahershala Ali to the cast.

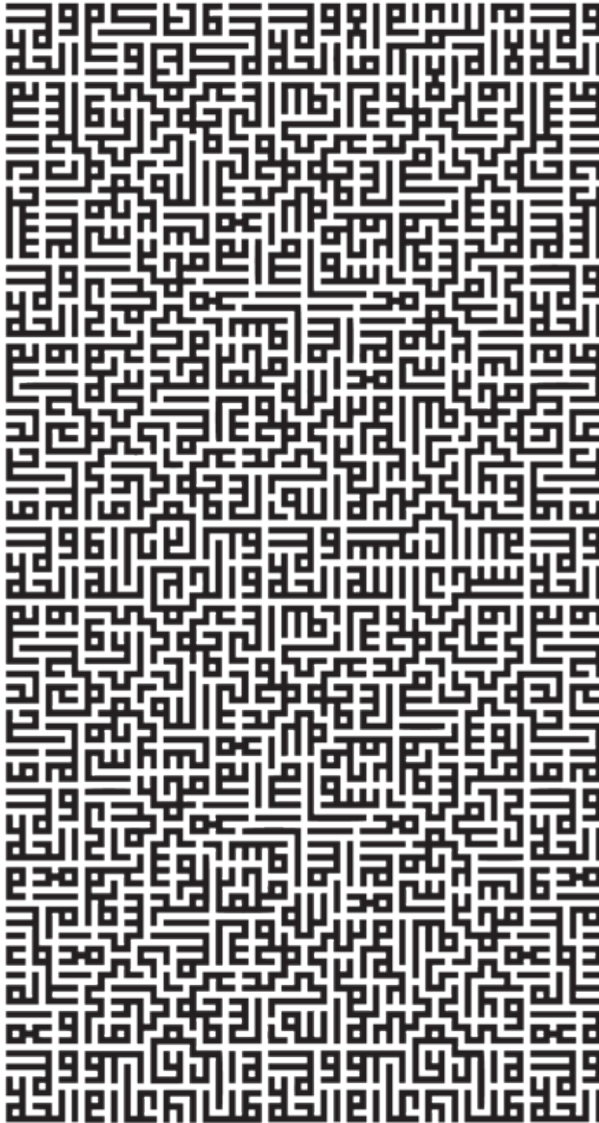
Zakariya, Mohamed

A machinist by training, American-born Mohamed Zakariya is a classically educated Islamic calligrapher who earned diplomas in three calligraphic scripts from the Research Center for Islamic History, Art, and Culture in Istanbul. His work has been collected and displayed worldwide, including most recently at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar. Zakariya designed Eid holiday stamps for the US Postal Service in 2009, 2011 and 2013. He has been featured in several movies, including the 2002 PBS documentary *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*. Zakariya is represented by Linearis Art.

GUYANA

Shah, Ryhaan

Ryhaan Shah is considered to be among the best contemporary writers in Guyana and the Caribbean, best known for her 2005 novel *A Silent Life*. Shah is also an active public figure as the president of the Guyanese Indian Heritage Association. She came under criticism for race baiting in Guyana's 2015 election.



QUR'AN RECITERS

Middle East and North Africa

KUWAIT

Al-Afasy, Sheikh Mishary bin Rashid

Al-Afasy is an imam at Masjid Al-Kabir in Kuwait, and also a *nasheed* artist. He has gained international acclaim through his innovative use of technology to promote Islam through two satellite channels, a website (www.alafasy.me), and videos on YouTube. He has more than 36 million fans on social media.

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Ajmi, Sheikh Ahmad Ali

Al-Ajmi is a Qur'an reciter from Khobar Province in Saudi Arabia. Prior to gaining prominence for his recitation style as an imam at mosques in Khobar and Jeddah, he studied Qur'anic interpretation in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Al-Ghamdi, Sheikh Saad ibn Said

Al-Ghamdi has served as imam to Muslim communities across the globe, and is currently the imam of Kanoo Mosque in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Al-Ghamdi studied *usool al-deen* (fundamentals of Islam) and *isnad* (hadith transmission), and is recognised as an influential Saudi theologian. In 2009, he was appointed by Royal Decree as a co-imam for the *taraweeh* prayers in the Al-Haram Al-Madani in Medina.

Al-Mueaqly, Sheikh Maher bin Hamad

Al-Mueaqly is an imam at the Grand Mosque in Makkah. He left his career as a mathematics teacher to become a scholar in Makkah and is now a popular preacher and teacher of Qur'anic studies.

Al-Shatri, Sheikh Abu Bakr

Al-Shatri is a leading reciter of the Qur'an. Although he studied accounting, he became increasingly influential for his recitation of the Qur'an at international Islamic events, particularly across the Middle East and in Saudi Arabia. He is now based in London.

Al-Shuraim, Sheikh Saud Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad

Al-Shuraim is a leading reciter of the Qur'an known for his unique recitation style across the world. He formally studied *usool al-deen* (fundamentals of Islam) in Saudi Arabia before becoming a teacher, and subsequently became imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah. He recently created a Twitter account which had close to 3 million followers before it was deleted.

Al-Sudais, Sheikh AbdulRahman

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 137

Asia

INDONESIA

Ulfah, Hajjah Maria

Hajjah Maria Ulfah is an internationally acclaimed reciter of the Holy Qur'an, and is the first woman to win an international Qur'an recitation competition. She has popularised the Egyptian style of recitation, and currently serves as Director of the Women's Department at Institut Ilmu Al-Quran in Jakarta. She also lectures at the Islamic University of Indonesia.

Middle East and North Africa

EGYPT

Howeidy, Dr Fahmy

Howeidy is one of the leading columnists in the Arab World. He writes for the Egyptian daily *Al-Abram*, where he is the Deputy Editor-in-Chief; his articles, however, are syndicated to seven other Arabic publications. Howeidy is influential both through his popularity and the fact that he has highlighted issues concerning Muslim communities outside the Arab World in ground-breaking work on Chinese, Bosnian, and Senegalese Muslims, among others. Muslims appreciate and respond well to Howeidy's use of Islam as a frame of reference in his articles.

Mansour, Ahmed

Ahmed Mansour is a journalist and TV presenter for Al Jazeera best known for his coverage of wars, most prominently in Iraq and Afghanistan from where he published more than 1000 reports. He is also the presenter of a widely watched TV program *Bela Hodod* (Without Borders) and *Shabed Ala Al-Asr* (A Witness to History). He was arrested in Berlin at the request of the Egyptian government, but was later released. Mansour has published 25 books.

JORDAN

Al-Fares, Ola

Al-Fares is a Jordanian lawyer, TV presenter and journalist currently working for the MBC channel. She has over 11 million followers on various social media outlets and has won several awards including: Young Arab Media Professionals Award (2009), Best Jordanian Media Award (2009), Creative Youth Shield (2010), Jordanian Model for Successful Youth (2011) and Arab Woman Of The Year (2015). She is considered to be one of the most influential media figures in the Arab world.

KUWAIT

Al-Mutawa, Dr Naif

Dr Naif Al-Mutawa is founder and CEO of Teshkeel Media Group, and creator of the popular Islam-

ic-themed comic series *The 99*. *Forbes* named The 99 one of the top 20 trends sweeping the globe. He has been named as one of WEF's Young Global Leaders for 2011. In addition to having authored multiple children's books, Al-Mutawa holds a PhD in clinical psychology and has practiced in the field for many years.

Suwaidan, Sheikh Dr Tareq

Tareq Suwaidan is the CEO and owner of Gulf Innovation Group in Kuwait, and was the General Manager of Al-Resalah Satellite TV. An entrepreneur and TV personality, his shows ranking among the highest in the Middle East, Suwaidan is also prominent as a motivational speaker and author of books on Islam. He uses the *Seerah* as a source for leadership and strategic skills.

PALESTINE

Khanfar, Wadah

In 2006, Khanfar became Al Jazeera's Director General. During his eight-year tenure at the helm, the network transformed from a single channel into a media network. During this period, the Arab world witnessed historic transformation, including the Arab Awakening. Khanfar, who resigned from the network in September 2011, has been named as one of *Foreign Policy's* Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2011 as well as one of Fast Company's Most Creative People in Business of the year. Khanfar has a diverse academic background with postgraduate studies in philosophy, African studies, and international politics. He is currently the President of Al Sharq Forum.

Omer, Mohammed

An award-winning journalist, Mohammed Omer has been credited with reporting on the crisis in Gaza for major media outlets including the Washington Report on *Middle East Affairs*, *Al Jazeera*, the *New Statesman*, Pacifica Radio, *Electronic Intifada*, and *The Nation*. He was raised in the Rafah refugee camp and, despite calamities faced by his family—his father was imprisoned, his teenage brother was killed, and his mother was injured in a demolition—he dedicates himself to journalism and reporting on the crisis. He is the recipient of the 2008

Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism. He is the author of *Shell Shocked: On the Ground Under Israel's Gaza Assault*, a book that received testimonials from a wide range of well-known authors, including Noam Chomsky.

QATAR

Al-Ruwaini, Nashwa

Al-Ruwaini worked for Qatar TV and MBC before establishing her own production company, Pyramedia Ltd. Pyramedia is one of the largest and most successful production companies in the region, producing some of the highest rated TV shows, including the Million's Poet and Prince of Poets TV competitions on Abu Dhabi TV, as well as her self-titled Nashwa talk show on Dubai TV. *Forbes* listed her among The Top 100 Most Powerful Arab Businesswomen 2020 while the *Hollywood Reporter* selected her as one of the 25 Most Powerful Women in Global TV.

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Ibrahim, Waleed bin Ibrahim

Waleed al-Ibrahim is the chairman of Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC). He founded MBC in London in 1991 as the first independent Arabic satellite TV station. In 2003, he launched Al Arabiya, a 24-hour news channel. MBC now includes 11 channels catering to all viewers in Arabic, English, and Persian. In November 2017, he was detained, along with several Saudi princes and billionaires, on an anti-corruption drive. He spent three months at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh before being released in January 2018. The government of Saudi Arabia arranged to acquire 60 percent of MBC, leaving the remaining 40 percent of the company in al-Ibrahim's hands.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Al-Awadhi, HE Najla

HE Najla Al-Awadhi is a former Member of Parliament (the Federal National Council) of the United Arab Emirates and a distinguished media pioneer in the Middle East. She is one of the first women in the history of the UAE to become an MP, and also holds the distinction as the youngest parliamentarian in the UAE. During her four-year term in parliament, she served on the Education, Youth, Media and Culture Committee. Al-Awadhi is also the first Arab woman to hold a chief executive post in a state-run

media organisation. With a particular focus on television, she served as the Chief Executive Officer of Television Channels at Dubai Media Incorporated.

Al-Kaabi, Noura

Noura bint Mohammed Al-Kaabi has been the Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development for the United Arab Emirates since October 2017. Previously she was the Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs from February 2016 to October 2017. Educated in the UAE and London, she has a broad range of experience and has been recognised for her efforts. As of March 2018 she is a board member of the UAE National Media Council, Image Nation, the Abu Dhabi Sports Council and the United Arab Emirates University.

Asia

AFGHANISTAN

Mohseni, Saad

Mohseni is a successful businessman, as well as the founder and head of the Moby Group, Afghanistan's largest media company. The Moby Group has interests in television, radio, print, production, online news services, directories, IT&T, and retail. In 2011, *Time* Magazine named him one of the world's most influential people.

CHINA

Hoja, Gulchehra

Gulchehra Hoja was a prominent figure in various Chinese media, including producing and hosting the first TV programme in Uyghur for children. With the Chinese crackdown on anything Uyghur, her image was banned on Chinese media and she was forced to flee the country. She has continued to speak out for the rights of the Uyghurs despite huge personal loss; 25 members of her family are currently held in 're-education' camps which aim to remove all traces of Uyghur identity and replace it with the majority Han culture. This policy extends to those Uyghurs who are also not in camps by having Han Chinese officials forcibly live in Uyghur houses and report on 'unChinese' behaviour. In 2020, Hoja received the Courage in Journalism Awards by the International Women's Media Foundation.

INDONESIA

Mohamad, Goenawan

Goenawan Mohamad is a writer, editor, activist and award-winning journalist. He is the founder and editor of *Tempo Magazine*, Indonesia's most widely circulated weekly. His criticisms of the regime resulted in the magazine being forcibly closed twice by President Suharto's New Order administration. He has 1.39 million followers on Twitter.

PAKISTAN

Hamid, Zaid

One of the most influential television and social media personalities in Pakistan, Zaid Hamid is a security consultant and strategic defence analyst by profession. He is also a popular political commentator, and is the founder of *Brass Tacks*, a Pakistani think tank on global politics. He hosts multiple, highly popular TV series on Geo-politics, Islamic philosophy, Muslim history, and Dr Iqbal's vision for Pakistan. He maintains a huge audience within Pakistani society, with millions of followers on social media, especially among the youth and Armed Forces. In 2015, he was arrested by Saudi authorities while on Umrah because of his opposition to the proposed Pakistani participation in the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen. He was released shortly afterwards after aggressive intervention by Pakistani Army.

Iqbal, Salman

Mr Salman Iqbal owns ARY Digital Network, the largest media network in Pakistan. The network's reach covers Pakistan, the Middle East, Europe, North America, and many other regions of the world. He is recognised as an independent media voice in Pakistan and one of the most powerful and influential media personalities in the Muslim World.

Shakil-ur-Rahman, Mir

Shakil-ur-Rahman is the owner of the Independent Media Corporation, Pakistan's largest media conglomerate. The Geo TV network and Jang Group are both under this umbrella organisation. Shakil-ur-Rahman is also President of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society and the Chief Executive and Editor-in-Chief of the Jang Group, which publishes a number of newspapers and magazines in Urdu and English. Shakil-ur-Rahman was arrested on 12 March 2020 on allegations of land fraud; his deten-

tion has been used by critics of Prime Minister Imran Khan as an attack on freedom of press.

Europe

UNITED KINGDOM

Hasan, Mehdi

Mehdi Hasan is a leading Muslim political journalist whose analysis and comments on contemporary issues find resonance with many Muslims, especially the younger generation. He has worked as political editor for *Huffpost UK*, hosted Al Jazeera English's *Head to Head* and other weekly interview and discussion programs. He is also a columnist and senior contributor at *The Intercept*. He has recently announced joining NBC's new streaming channel, the Peacock hosting his own show, *The Mehdi Hasan Show*, which will continue to feature his characteristic insightful reporting and probing interviews that hold people in power to account and understand events in a wider context.

Husain, Mishal (new)

Husain has worked as a producer and presenter for the BBC for more than 20 years. As well as being a newsreader for BBC TV and BBC Radio, Husain has hosted high-profile shows which have seen her interview figures such as Boris Johnson, San Suu Kyi, and Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. She has won a variety of awards including the Broadcaster of the Year Award at the London Press Club Awards in 2015. She is a judge for the Amnesty International Media Awards and is an ambassador for the charity Mosaic which supports young people from deprived communities. She has recently written a book entitled "*The Skills: From First Job to Dream Job—What Every Woman Needs to Know*", which has been described as "the ultimate handbook for women".

Omaar, Rageh

Rageh Omaar is a television news presenter and writer who was stationed in Iraq and South Africa. He was the world affairs correspondent for the BBC from 1991-2006, when he moved to Al Jazeera English. At AJE, he presented the documentary series *Witness* and hosted his own show called *The Rageh Omaar Report*. In 2013, Omaar became a special correspondent and presenter for ITV News, reporting on a broad range of news stories and producing spe-

cial, in-depth reports. He also occasionally presents the ITV Lunchtime News including the ITV News London Lunchtime Bulletin and the ITV Evening News.

North America

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mohyeldin, Ayman

Ayman Mohyeldin is an MSNBC anchor, analyst, and morning show host. He has interviewed world leaders, politicians, and diplomats, including President Erdoğan after the failed coup attempt in Turkey. He reported on DA'ISH in Iraq, Syria, Europe, and Turkey. He participated in the network's coverage of the 2016 US Presidential Elections. Mohyeldin was previously an international correspondent. He covered the Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine, the revolutions of the Arab Spring, and the attacks on the US Consulate in Benghazi, where he was one of the first journalists to report the situation. His coverage of the 2014 Israeli War was widely cited and praised. Prior to joining NBC News, Mohyeldin was a correspondent for Al Jazeera English. From 2008-2010, he was the only foreign broadcast journalist based in the

Gaza Strip, and during the 2008-2009 War on Gaza, he was the only American journalist reporting live from Gaza.

Oz, Dr Mehmet

Dr Oz hosts a hugely popular television show which focuses primarily on medical issues and healthy living. He first came to prominence in 2004 with appearances as a health expert on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. A cardiothoracic surgeon and a Columbia University professor, he is a proponent of alternative medicine and often draws upon his Turkish heritage when giving advice. He has co-authored, with Michael F. Roizen, six New York Times best sellers, and has a regular column in *Esquire* magazine amongst others.

Zakaria, Fareed

Fareed Zakaria is one of the United States' foremost public intellectuals. He hosts CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS" and is a Washington Post columnist. Prior to this, he was Editor-at-Large for *Time Magazine* and Editor of *Newsweek International* and *Foreign Affairs*. His book, *The Post-American World: Release 2.0*, is an expanded version of his international best-seller. In 2013 he became one of the producers for the HBO series *Vice*, serving as a consultant.



I seek forgiveness in God

Calligraphy by Mothana Al-Obaydi © FreIslamicCalligraphy.com

CELEBRITIES & SPORTS

Middle East and North Africa

EGYPT

Aboutrika, Mohamed (new)

Aboutrika is regarded as one of the best African football players of all time having lifted 28 major titles, including three Africa Cup of Nations titles over his 16-year career. He has also been named UNDP Goodwill Ambassador and is widely followed, having almost 10 million fans on different social media outlets. He has criticised African fans for excessively following European football clubs and for European football not acknowledging African leagues, but merely using the talent of their players.

PALESTINE

Assaf, Mohammed

Mohammed Assaf won first place in the popular TV program Arab Idol 2013 after his final performance of *Ali al-Keffiyeh* (Raise Your Keffiyeh), a nationalistic Palestinian song and de facto anthem which has now garnered over 90 million views. Raised in Khan Yunus refugee camp in the Gaza strip, he has become the face and voice of Palestinian youth and the epitome of its peoples suffering. Assaf became UNRWA's Goodwill Ambassador, was named Ambassador of Culture and Arts by the Palestinian National Authority, and was given a position with diplomatic standing by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. He has over 18 million fans on social media.

Sub-Saharan Africa

SENEGAL

Mane, Sadio (new)

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 137

Asia

CHINA

Lei, Wu

Wu Lei was the youngest football player to appear in the Chinese league at the age of 14 years and went on to become the all-time top goal scorer for Shanghai SIPG with 169 goals. In 2019 he transferred to Espanyol in La Liga and his debut attracted 40 million viewers in China. He is ethnically Hui, which has a population of around 10 million. They are composed of mainly Muslim Chinese who emigrated from Persia and Turkey during the time of Mongol rule in China.

MALAYSIA

Yusof, Vivy (new)

Vivy Yusof is an entrepreneur, a fashion icon and a social media influencer with millions of followers. She co-founded the international e-commerce fashion company Fashion Valet and the dCK group, which focuses on hijabs. She has won multiple prestigious awards, including in the fields of entrepreneurship and social media. Her popular show 'Love Vivy' which follows her life as a mother, and businesswoman is in its third season.

Europe

FRANCE

Pogba, Paul

Pogba was the most expensive footballer in the world when he moved to Manchester United from Juventus for £89 million in 2016. A talented midfielder, he was part of France's 2018 winning World cup side and scored in the final. Pogba was born to Guinean parents and is one of a growing number of European Muslim football players who rank among the best in the world. He has more than 51 million followers on social media. He has frequently documented his visits to Makkah on social media.

Zidane, Zinedine

Zinedine Zidane is a French footballing legend of Algerian descent. Born in a poor neighbourhood of Marseilles, he went on to become one of the greatest footballers ever, winning all major prizes at personal, club, and country level and winning player of the year three times. In 2018, Zidane, managing Real Madrid, became the first manager in the history of football to win three consecutive UEFA Champions League titles. A few days after the victory, he resigned as Real Madrid coach. After Real Madrid's poor performance the following season, Zidane' returned and won the La Liga for the second time in his managerial career. His modest character has endeared him to the wider public.

GERMANY

Özil, Mesut

A key member of Germany's World Cup 2014 winning team, this Arsenal playmaker of Turkish descent was awarded the Bambi award in 2010 for being a prime example of successful integration into German society. In 2018, after receiving criticism for posing with Turkey's President and Germany's poor World cup performances, Ozil announced his retirement from international football. He said "I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose.". He has a massive social media following—one of the highest in the world among sportspeople with a staggering 81 million online fans. He received backlash from the Chinese government after vocally speaking out against mistreatment of the Uyghur population.

RUSSIA

Nurmagomedov, Khabib

Please read bio in Honourable Mentions, page 137

UNITED KINGDOM

Farah, Mohamed

The most successful British athlete ever, Farah won the gold in the 5000m and 10,000m at the 2012 and 2016 Olympic games as well as 6 other global golds. Born in Somalia but raised in the UK from the age of 7, Farah has captured the hearts of the British public with his hard work, success, smile and warm personality. He is a popular role model to follow for people from all over the world, especially in the Muslim world. He was awarded a CBE in 2013 and knighted in 2017, the year he announced his retirement from

track running. His winning celebration, the 'mobot' is mimicked internationally.

Hussain, Nadiya

Since winning the BBC's The Great British Bake Off in 2015, Nadiya Hussain has gone from being the most famous British baker to being a columnist, author and television presenter. She has produced a popular documentary giving an insight into Bangladesh, her country of origin, as well as a TV cookery series. She has become a household name and instantly recognisable face in the UK, Bangladesh and for Muslims worldwide. She was bestowed the honour of being asked to produce a cake for the 90th birthday celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II.

Oceania

NEW ZEALAND

Williams, Sonny

Sonny Williams is an international rugby player and former heavyweight boxing champion of New Zealand. Williams converted to Islam in 2008, and is the first Muslim to play for the legendary All Blacks. In 2013, he was judged the World's Best Rugby League player at the annual RLIF Awards. He memorably gave away his World Cup winner's gold medal to a young supporter just after the 2015 final.

North America

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Kareem, Abdul-Jabbar (new)

Abdul-Jabbar played 20 seasons for the Milwaukee Bucks and the LA Lakers and in 1996 was honored as one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History. In 2012, Abdul-Jabbar was selected by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to be a US global cultural ambassador. In 2016, ESPN named him the second best player in NBA history (second to Michael Jordan). In 2016, President Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Abdul-Jabbar has written multiple books and essays, and has acted in television series and movies. He has also taken on activism in his later years, speaking out against Islamophobia and other forms of social injustice.

Tyson, Mike (Malik Abdul Aziz) (new)

Tyson won his first title in 1986 at 20 years old making him the youngest heavyweight champion in history. His dominance in the ring faded as his wild personal life grew out of control leading him to serve 3 years in prison where he converted to Islam. After his release, he went on to regain his WBC and WBA titles, becoming one of the few men to do so. He retired in 2006 and was inducted in both the International Boxing Hall of Fame and the World Boxing Hall of Fame. After his retirement, Tyson went on to publish books and act in television and movies. In 2012, he launched a foundation for troubled youth. Though he has had episodes of controversial behavior after retirement, his sincerity to trying to uphold the values of his religion and improve himself morally and spiritually inspire millions. In 2020, Tyson confirmed that he is working towards a return to the boxing ring.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ Say: 'He is God, One. ﷻ God, the Self-Sufficient, Besought of all. ﷻ He neither begot, nor was begotten. ﷻ Nor is there anyone equal to Him.'

The Unity, 1 - 4

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ Say: 'I seek refuge in the Lord of the Daybreak, ﷻ from the evil of what He has created, ﷻ and from the evil of darkness when it gathers, ﷻ and from the evil of the women-blowers on knots, ﷻ and from the evil of an envier when he envies.'

The Daybreak, 1 - 5

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ Say: 'I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, ﷻ the King of mankind, ﷻ the God of mankind, ﷻ from the evil of the slinking whisperer, ﷻ who whispers in the breasts of mankind, ﷻ of the jinn and mankind.'

Mankind, 1 - 6

سُورَةُ الْاٰخِلَاقِ نَكِيَةٌ وَهِيَ الرَّبْعُ اَلْيَسْتِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ * اللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ * لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ *
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ *

سُورَةُ الْاٰخِلَاقِ نَكِيَةٌ وَهِيَ الرَّبْعُ اَلْيَسْتِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

قُلْ اَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَاقِ * فَمِشْرَ مَا خَلَقَ * وَمِشْرَ
مَا غَاسِقًا اِذَا وَقَبَ * وَمِنْ مَشْرِ النَّفْثِ اِذَا اَلْمَعْتَدُ *
وَمِنْ مَشْرِ حَاسِدٍ اِذَا حَسَدَ *

سُورَةُ الْاٰخِلَاقِ نَكِيَةٌ وَهِيَ الرَّبْعُ اَلْيَسْتِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
قُلْ اَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ * مَلِكِ النَّاسِ * اِلٰهِ
النَّاسِ * مِنْ مَشْرِ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ *

الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

TOP EXTREMISTS

Middle East and North Africa

EGYPT



Al-Zawahiri, Ayman

Ayman al-Zawahiri has been the leader of Al-Qaeda since the killing of Osama bin Laden. Born into a prosperous medical family in Egypt, he completed medical studies and set up a clinic. In the 80's he was already part of the Islamic Jihad group in Egypt and was arrested and tortured in prison. He went on to become the leader of Egypt's Islamic Jihad, which he merged into al-Qaeda in 1998. He emerged as bin Laden's personal advisor and physician. He is often credited with being the "real brains" of Al-Qaeda. Despite a huge US bounty on his head, he has managed to evade capture and with the demise of DA'ISH he may move to the fore again.

JORDAN



Al-Maqdisi, Abu Muhammad

Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi (born Isam Muhammad Tahir Al-Barqawi) is a Jordanian-Palestinian Salafi leader who became a mentor for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi-the founder of Al-Qaeda in Iraq- while they were in prison together. Al-Maqdisi's writings are still a source of inspiration for many Salafi-Jihadis despite his criticism of the extreme violence of al-Zarqawi and other jihadis. He is especially known for his book in which he declared takfir on the Saudi regime. Al-Maqdisi was recently found guilty on terrorism charges and sentenced to five years in prison by a Jordanian court.

SYRIA



Al-Julani, Abu Muhammad

Al-Julani is the current Emir and founder of the Syrian militant group now known as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). This group was formed in 2017 with the merging of several other militant groups. It is the main force fighting the Syrian regime and until recently was allied to al-Qaeda. It formally renounced links with al-Qaeda in July 2016 in an attempt to show that the group is focused on regime change in Syria alone, and does not have wider regional goals.

Sub-Saharan Africa

NIGERIA



Shekau, Abubakar

Shekau is the head of Boko Haram, a terrorist group in Nigeria that has carried out a number of atrocities. He speaks Hausa, Arabic, and English, and claims to have undergone theological training. He has appeared in videos posted online, most notably after the kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls in April 2014. In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to DA'ISH and stepped up their terror attacks, including a massacre of over 150 Muslims praying in mosques during Ramadan. In August 2016, DA'ISH appointed Abu Musab Al-Bar-

nawi as the group's new leader, but Shekau refused to recognise Barnawi's authority. Unconfirmed reports of Shekau's death are regularly disproved every few months.

SOMALIA

Umar, Ahmad

Ahmad Umar, also known as Abu Ubaidah, has been the Emir of al-Shabaab since 2014, after US airstrikes killed the previous emir (Ahmed Abdi Godane). When Umar became advisor to Godane in 2013, he purged al-Shabaab of its foreign fighters, and oversaw all the domestic policies of the group. Umar adheres to takfiri ideology and strives to fulfill Godane's vision for al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab still carry out terrorist attacks in Mogadishu, Somalia, despite the presence of thousands of Somalia government as well as African Union troops. They have targeted hotels and resorts as well as Ugandan and Kenyan troops.



Asia

INDONESIA

Bashir, Abu Bakar

Abu Bakar Bashir is an Indonesian Muslim cleric and leader of the Indonesian Mujahedeen Council (MMI). He was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment at his third trial in June 2011 on charges of planning and encouraging terrorist operations. In August 2014, he publicly pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, leader of DA'ISH, and his declaration of a caliphate.



There is no god except You! Glory be to You! I have indeed been one of the wrongdoers

The Prophets, 87

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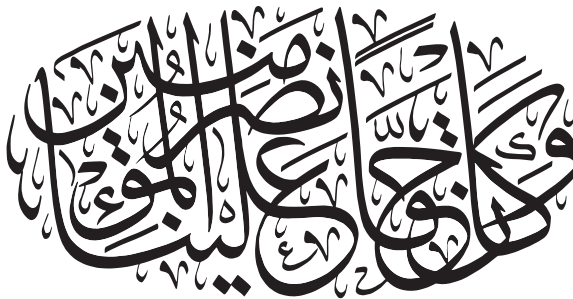
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And it was ever incumbent upon Us to give victory to the believers.

The Romans 30 : 47

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THE OBITUARIES

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي الْمُلْكَ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مَا أُرِيدُ فَأَنْزِلْ عَلَيَّ الْكِتَابَ
 فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنِّي مُسْلِمٌ وَاحِقٌ لِّلْآخِرَةِ
 وَالْأُولَىٰ

My Lord, indeed You have given me of sovereignty and You have taught me the interpretation of events. Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in this world and the Hereafter. Take me to You in submission and join me to the righteous

Joseph 12 : 101

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreIslamicCalligraphy.com

HM Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al-Sa'id

Top 50

Country: Oman

Born: 18 November 1940

Died: 10 January 2020



Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al-Sa'id, the 14th descendant of the Al-Bu Sa'idi dynasty, ruled for over 40 years as Sultan of Oman. He revolutionised and modernised Oman, transforming it from a poor, isolationist nation into a land closely-linked with the African continent and devoted to economic development, regional stability, and religious tolerance.

Sultan Qaboos raised the Omani standard of living by building up Oman's school system, health care, infrastructure, and economy. Within the last two decades, he introduced political reforms; including a bicameral representative body, a basic law, universal suffrage, and a supreme court.

Moreover, despite Oman's relative lack of oil and gas compared to other Gulf States, Qaboos invested his country's wealth so that all citizens are guaranteed free education up to the doctoral level; free healthcare, free land, soft loans for building homes, jobs and social security for the disabled, orphans and widows. Sultan Qaboos helped build or restore thousands of mosques at his personal expense, the grandest being the Sultan Qaboos Mosque, which can accommodate up to 20,000 worshippers.

Qaboos was a discreet but strong supporter of moderate Islam and created a unique Islamic culture in Oman that has carefully combined the best of traditional Islam with the benefits of the modern world. Sultan Qaboos promoted culturally-specific Islamic dress, art, architecture and education, and was a keen advocate of environmentalism. Qaboos also supported the non-Muslim population through the

construction of Catholic and Protestant churches in the country as well as Hindu temples. Sultan Qaboos was globally recognised for his diplomatic leadership in the Persian Gulf region.

HH Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Political

Country: Kuwait

Born: 16 June 1929 (age 91)

Died: 29 September 2020



HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Sabah was the fifth Emir of Kuwait and the Commander of the Military of Kuwait. He had previously been Foreign Minister for 40 years, from 1963 to 2003, making him one of the longest-serving foreign ministers in the world. During his role as Foreign Minister, he restored Kuwaiti international relations after the Gulf War as well as restoring the country after the Iraqi invasion. During his reign as Emir of Kuwait, he instituted one of the strongest press freedom laws in the Arab world. He also sponsored the 27-article UN resolution 2178 that focuses on eliminating DA'ISH.

Emara, Mohamed

Scholarly

Country: Egypt

Born: 10 June 1974

Died: 28 February 2020



Dr Emara was an intellectual and scholar who authored over 70 books. He was a member of the Al-Azhar Al-Sharif Islamic Research Academy, The International Institute for Islamic Thought, and The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. He was chosen to be part of the team re-writing the Egyptian constitution before the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Dr Emara was outspoken in his views against Western intervention and influence over the Muslim world, calling upon all Muslims to unite and form an Islamic State under moderate Islamic rule. He resigned from his post as Chief Editor of Al-Azhar Magazine in 2015.

Hendricks, Sheikh Seraj

Scholarly

Country: South Africa

Born: 1956

Died: 9 July 2020

Sheikh Seraj Hasan Hendricks was an internationally recognised leading Islamic scholar who was appointed khalifa of the distinguished al-Sayyid Muhammad b. 'Alawī al-Mālikī. He was Resident Sheikh of Azzawia Institute in Cape Town, and holder of the Maqasid Chair at the International Peace University of South Africa. He was previously head of the Muslim Judicial Council's Fatwa Committee (which often led to him being described as the 'Mufti of Cape Town'), lecturer in fiqh at the Islamic College of Southern Africa (ICOSA), and lecturer in the Study of Islam at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Sheikh Seraj was a member of the Stanlib Shari'a Board, and chief arbitrator (*Hakīm*) of the Crescent Observer's Society. Sheikh Seraj was actively engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa during the 80's and early 90's.



Hoffman, Ambassador Dr Murad

Scholarly

Country: Germany

Born: 6 July 1931

Died: 13 January 2020

Hoffman was an author and Muslim intellectual, respected by both Muslims and non-Muslims. He was a prominent former German diplomat and author of several books on Islam, including *Journey to Makkah* and *The Future of Islam in the West and the East*, published in 2008. Many of his books and essays focus on Islam's place in the West and the United States, specifically in light of the post-9/11 climate.



Guangyuan, Imam Chen Chen

Administration of Religious Affairs

Country: China

Born: 1932

Died: 11 May 2020

Guangyuan was the Grand Imam of China, President of the Islamic Association of China, and President of the Chinese-Islamic Institute. He was an ethnic Hui, born in Hebei Province, China in August 1932 and studied Islam from a young age in various mosques across Northern China.

He served in different mosques and Muslims communities in China, and from 2001 to 2016, Chen served three terms as President of Islamic Association of China, President of Chinese Islamic College, and President of Beijing Islamic College. He was also a well-established scholar of Islamic studies and a calligrapher.



Al-Rajhi, Sulaiman Abdul Aziz

Philanthropy, Charity & Development

Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 30 November 1928

Died: 27 May 2020

Al-Rajhi owned the world's largest organisation for Islamic banking and finance, Al-Rajhi Bank. In 2012, Al-Rajhi received the King Faisal International Prize for dedicating half his fortune to charity. He also ran the SARR Foundation: a network of charities and research organisations.



Abdi, Dr Hawa

Social Issues

Country: Somalia

Born: 17 May 1947

Died: 5 August 2020

For more than two decades, Dr Hawa Abdi provided humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable victims of the civil war in Somalia. She saved tens of thousands of lives in her hospital while simultaneously providing an education to hundreds of displaced children at the Waqaf-Dhiblawe school. Dr Abdi ran a 400-bed hospital with the help of her daughters Deqo and Amina, who are also doctors, on her own savings and donations. She provided food and clean water, ran a school and a women's education centre, and campaigned against female genital mutilation.



In 2012, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her work in serving displaced persons and the rural population, as well as providing equal access to healthcare, education, and food security for all. In 2014, Abdi received the Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award: Freedom from Want in Middelburg, the Netherlands.

Abed, Sir Fazle Hasan

Social Issues

Country: Bangladesh

Born: 27 April 1936

Died: 20 December 2019



Sir Fazle Hasan Abed was founder and Chairman of one of the largest non-governmental organisations in the world, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). It was established over 40 years ago and now has more than 140 million students in nine countries at all levels and ages.

He was awarded the WISE Prize (established by the Qatar Foundation) in 2011 in recognition of his life's work of bringing basic primary education to some of the world's poorest communities, from Afghanistan to South Sudan. He won many awards including the prestigious 2018 LEGO Prize for his contribution towards improving children's lives and the Laudato Si' award for creating opportunities for millions of people living in poverty.

Nahdi, Fuad

Social Issues

Country: United Kingdom

Born: 1957

Died: 1 April 2020



Fuad Nahdi was a pioneering and award-winning journalist, campaigner, thinker, and interfaith activist whose contributions spanned three decades. He was Executive Director of the Radical Middle Way, an organisation that has harnessed positive religious narratives to encourage civic engagement, promote positive social action, and empower relevant religious leadership to build resilience to violence and extremism. In 2014, Nahdi became the first Muslim to address the General Synod of The Church of England.

Lootah, Haj Saeed

Business

Country: United Arab Emirates

Born: 1923

Died: 28 June 2020



Haj Saeed Lootah was an accomplished entrepreneur, businessman, philanthropist, and visionary community leader. In 1975, Haj Saeed set up the first commercial Islamic bank in the world: Dubai Islamic Bank. He built his own construction company into a business empire that has holdings in almost all economic sectors. He maintained high ethical and Islamic standards throughout all his companies. He was granted honorary degrees from universities in the USA and Russia. Haj Saeed was also presented with EFICA Lifetime Achievement Award for contribution to Islamic banking.

Tablawi, Sheikh Mohammad

Qur'an Reciters

Country: Egypt

Born: 14 November 1934

Died: 5 May 2020



Tablawi was the Deputy of The Association of Qur'an Reciters and the main reciter of Al-Azhar University. He gained popularity in the Middle East after studying at Al-Azhar and reciting the Qur'an on Egyptian television in 1956. He was widely recognised as a leading reciter of the Qur'an.

Al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr

Top Extremists

Country: Iraq

Born: 28 July 1971

Died: 26 October 2019



Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was the leader of DA'ISH and responsible for numerous massacres and atrocities. Their heyday seems to be over as they have lost all territory they held in Syria and Iraq. A video posted in early 2019 was the first video of him in five years. The message acknowledged the losses of DA'ISH, and stated that this is expected in a war of attrition. He named a successor – Abdullah Qardash. He died during a US raid in the Idlib Province in October 2019, and his body was buried at sea.

Durkee, Sheikh Abdullah Nooruddeen

Preacher & Spiritual Guide

Country: USA

Born: 11 October 1938

Died: 14 October 2020



(Obituary written by Dr Saiyad
Nizamuddin Ahmad)

Shaykh Abdullah Nooruddeen Durkee passed away in his home on Green Mountain on the 25th of Muharram, which also marks the martyrdom of al-Imam al-Sajjad Zayn al-Ābidīn Alī Ibn al-Husayn (*Alayhis Salam*) in the year 95 H. I first came to know Sidi Nooruddeen in the summer of 1990. It was the beginning of a deep friendship that lasted for some thirty years until his death. The following is a biographical sketch of my dear friend along with some personal observations.

Shaykh Abdullah Nooruddeen was a pioneer in spreading Islam in the United States of America and has the distinction of being perhaps the very first American-born sufi Shaykh. He was granted *khilāfab* in the Shādhilī Tariqah in 1975 by the Cairene Shaykh Ibrahim al-Battāwī who was also a professor at Al-Azhar University.

Prior to his acceptance of Islam in al-Quds at the hands of Shaykh Muhammad Alī al-Jamal al-Rifāī in 1969, Sidi Nooruddeen had played an important role in introducing the teachings of many Eastern sages and spiritual masters from various Traditions to Americans who were intensely seeking spiritual fulfillment and guidance in the 1960s. Through the community near Taos, New Mexico, known as Lama which he co-founded (along with his wife at the time, Asha, and Jonathan Altman) he established what would become a very active hub for serious seekers of wisdom and enlightenment. The community at Lama was founded for the awakening of consciousness in a drug-free, vegetarian, and heavily work oriented routine which included daily early morning meditation. Sidi Nooruddeen also designed and built the buildings of Lama. Through Lama Sidi Nooruddeen came to be associated with the Zen master Joshu Sasaki Roshi, the Tibetan meditation masters Kalu Rinpoche as well as Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Pir Vilayet, Murshid Sam Lewis and Baba Ram Dass (Richard Alpert), to name the most prominent figures. Sidi was instrumental in presenting the teaching of Ram Dass (a disciple of Neem Karoli Baba) in the form of a book which came to be regarded as a “classic” and continues to be in print since its original publication in 1971, namely *Be Here Now* whose unique design

was the product of Sidi Nooruddeen’s genius. After this, Sidi wrote a work entitled *Seed* which was similar in design and presentation to *Be Here Now*. It was published in a limited edition of only 5,000 copies in 1973 by Sidi and presented the spiritual practices of numerous religious traditions. It contains one of the earliest accounts of the Muslim prayers.

However, Lama was not the only community which Sidi Nooruddeen established. In 1979 he was instrumental in founding the first proper Islamic community in America in the form of a town named in Abiquiu, New Mexico dubbed ‘Dar al-Islam’ which continues to exist. Dar al-Islam was built on a plan and design of Sidi Nooruddeen. Its unique domed architecture of hand-made adobe mud-brick in the style pioneered by Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy (d. 1989) was also a unique contribution of Sidi Nooruddeen.

By the time I met Sidi he had already left Lama and had subsequently spent time studying Arabic and Kulliyat al-Sharīa in Makka’s Umm al-Qurā University, where he spent the years 1971–1974. I met him on the day of Id al-Adhā, 10 Dhū al-Hijjah 1410 in Cairo at the home of Suleiman Abdullah Schleifer, who at the time was professor of Mass Communication at the American University of Cairo (AUC) and himself a very old friend of Sidi Nooruddeen. When I was introduced to Sidi he asked what I was doing in Cairo. When I told him that I had come to Cairo to pursue my own studies in Arabic and AUC he asked what my other interests were and I told him sufism. He asked me what I had read about it and I mentioned I had been reading *al-Madrasat al-Shadhiliyya* by Shaykh Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd. To my delight he told me that he was working on a translation of it along with some other related works and most importantly the *ahzāb* of Sidi Abul-Hasān al-Shādhilī, the founder of the order. These were ultimately published as *Orisons* (1st edition 1411/1991) and *Origins* (1433/2012). The latter in particular remains the only dual-language edition with extensive commentary of any collection of the devotional texts of any sufi *tariqa*. *Orisons* and *Origins* represent the most authentic presentation of sufi praxis and doctrine of any *tariqa* in the English language. These two works are surpassed in significance only by his beautiful edition of the Holy Qur’ān with Arabic text, his own English translation, and employing a very user friendly and phonetically accurate transliteration system of his own ingenious design. This work, known as the *Tajwidī Qur’ān*, has enabled millions of people around the world to begin reciting the sacred Arabic

sounds of the Allah's last revelation. The accurate recitation of the Qur'an on a regular daily basis year-round occupied a central place in the teaching of the Shaykh and one to which he zealously held himself until he departed this world. Indeed, he was the one who found me a *tajwid* teacher in Cairo, the *wali* Shaykh Abul-Majd, Imam of Jāmi' al-Adawiyya. The recitation of the Qur'an as well as the *ahzāb* of the Sidi Abul-Hasan, and the invocation of the Divine Name (and other practices all set out in detail in his *Orisons*) were taught by Sidi in a profound way. He saw all of this, especially the recitation of the Qur'an as a means of return to the Origin, *ta'wil* in Arabic. Sidi Nooruddeen was especially fond of the visionary recital of Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi al-Maqtul known as *The Tale of the Occidental Exile* which likens the condition of the spiritual seeker as an exile in the land where the Sun sets, the occident, and it is the task of the seeker to return to his home in the land where the Sun rises, the orient, from which the Sun of spiritual illumination shines forth. In this he drew heavily on the teachings of numerous masters presented in the writings of Henry Corbin, especially *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, *Temple and Contemplation*, and *L'Archange empourpre* his copies of which he had bound in beautiful honey-hued leather. Sidi Nooruddeen saw the condition of all seekers as one of exile in this world and the Way of *tasawwuf* as "the way back." However, he was aware of the ascendancy of a kind of "debased Islam" which denied this precious legacy along with the corrosive influence of modern "civilization". he writes in *Orisons* (p. 4):

"There is also the current of the increasingly dominant and expansive secular world civilization

which, among other things, debases through moral, spiritual, and metaphysical relativism, all values to the lowest common denominator in order to provide the illusion of 'democratic' understanding which offers a sentimental, and metaphysically non-consequential ecumenism whose aim is the reduction and, ultimately, the destruction of Divine [and hence rigorous, essential and absolute] Revelation and the Traditions which derive from it, to a folkloric atavism in order that it may be replaced by a synthetic and syncretic *weltanschauung* which will accommodate and advance the "progress" of the new world 'order'."

In contrast, he spoke of the Way of *tasawwuf* in *Orisons* (p. 99) as:

"On one hand stand the literalists, the modernists, the fundamentalists who would reduce everything to a matter of form, ordinance and law and on the other hand the cultists, new agers, and pseudo-sufis who would transform everything into metaphor, symbol and spirit; the *Mutasawwif* stand in the center for they are the people of the Heart, the people of the Middle Way, in accord with: '*We have appointed you the nation of the centre [ummati wasatatan] (2:143)*.' It is they who, almost alone in the world today, insist upon the fullness of the Revelation and the fullness of the Sunnah and reject any and all hints that the Reality which Allah speaks is solely symbolical, allegorical or metaphorical."

May Allah have mercy on the soul of Shaykh Abdullah Nooruddeen Durkee and grant him a place in the Garden in close proximity to the Ahl al-Bayt to whom he was so devoted.



Surely we belong to God, and to Him we will return

The Cow, 156

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‘Read in The Name of Thy Lord’

by Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi

The first word of the Holy Qur’an that was revealed, ‘Read’, (*Iqra’* أَقْرَأْ) (Qur’an: 96:1), brought the command to read ahead of any other religious command. We might imagine a series of commands that may seem to some people more important than ‘Read’, such as ‘pray’, ‘endure’, or even ‘fight’. It is important to understand why Allah ﷻ specifically chose this word to be the first to be revealed. It is not a random choice: as we know, the Holy Qur’an is matchless. We also know that it is a preserved book that will remain forever unchanged, and every word of it has its own significance not only during the time of its revelation, but until the end of time as well.

The command, ‘Read’ was revealed to a nation of Arabs who did not have a holy book like Jews and Christians: this is why they were described as ‘*Ummiyyin*’ (Qur’an: 62:2) which literally means ‘illiterates’. Reading and writing, though known in pre-Islamic Arabia, was not that popular nor a common practice.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself is described as ‘the unlettered Prophet’ ‘*al-Nabiyy al-Ummiyy*’ (Qur’an 7:107), but for him that was part of the preparation for his job as a Messenger of God and as a recipient of the final revelation. God made it clear in the Holy Qur’an (29:48), ‘You never read a book before nor wrote one with your hand. Otherwise, the deniers would have valid doubts.’

It is more understood now why the first command had to be ‘Read’: in order that the recipients not take their unlettered Prophet as a model in this quality of his or continue in the carelessness of the Arabs of the pre-Islamic era regarding learning.

Allah ﷻ wanted Muslims not only to start reading and writing but to start exploring the unknown. The verses that follow the above-quoted verse continue to speak of learning: ‘Read in the name of thy Lord who created. Created mankind out of a clot of congealed blood. Read as thy Lord is the Most Bountiful. He taught via the use of the pen. Taught man that which man did not know.’ (The Holy Qur’an 96:1-5). Surprisingly, five of these fifteen words to be first revealed have to do with learning: ‘read’, ‘name’, ‘taught’, ‘pen’, and ‘know’, with “‘read’ and ‘taught’ repeated.

It should be noted that when the archangel Jibril addressed the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in the cave of Hirā’ with the word, ‘Read’, he did not present him with a book in which he could read. In fact, the uni-

verse is meant to be the book, created beings are its pages, and the detailed Divine miracles in them are its lines. Furthermore, the verb *iqra’* (read) usually requires an object, e.g. ‘read this passage’ or ‘Read your Book’ (Qur’an 17:14), but in this case, the verb ‘Read’ comes without an object in order to broaden the scope of reading and leave it open so that every reader applies it in the way that is most relevant to him or her.

The emphasis of the Qur’an on learning did not stop there: the elements of reading and writing were mentioned in several chapters of the Qur’an that were revealed early in Mecca. Here are a few examples:

1. “By the Pen and what they write’ (68:1);
2. ‘And by a written Book in an open parchment’ (52: 1-3);
3. ‘Say, O My Lord, increase me in knowledge’ (20: 114).

More over, the root *kataba* (to write) and its derivatives are mentioned in the Qur’an three hundred and twenty times. The Qur’an, by warning that it is not a collection of fables, such as in 25:5, draws a clear line distinguishing between the type of knowledge it brought to humanity and the mythological stories the Arabs inherited from their ancestors: ‘they say, “these are legends of ancient people of which he asked to be written and then read for him morning and afternoon—to memorise.”’

The Qur’an makes it clear that ‘Learned people and unlearned people are never equal! Indeed people of intellect will understand’ (39:9), and that reading books is not the only method of learning. The Qur’an encourages reflection and contemplation in the following quotes:

1. ‘Look at what is the heavens and the earth’ (10:101);
2. ‘In this there are great signs for people who reflect’ (30:21, 39:42, 45:13);
3. ‘The parables we set are not to be understood but by intellectuals’ (29: 43).

All these verses were sent down in Mecca as part of the Divine Revelation when Muslims were still struggling to establish themselves as believers in Allah in a pagan society that not only opposed them but also oppressed them. Despite this, the Qur’an goes beyond the scope of this battle of belief versus disbelief to draw their attention to the battle of knowledge versus ignorance. So Islam came to open the minds



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and the hearts of its followers in order to enrich their souls with the sweet pleasures of belief and satisfy their minds with the great fruits of learning.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ strengthened the love for learning, thinking and exploring in his community in several ways. For instance, he assigned teachers to the children of Medina to teach them reading and writing, encouraged some of his companions to learn foreign languages, posed quizzes, imported material such as leather to be used for writing, and sent some of his companions to the city of Jerash, Jordan, then under the Byzantine authority, to study sophisticated weaponry. And over a period of twenty three years, over thirty scribes worked for him, writing down Divine revelation, the treaties and truces, his letters to the rulers with whom he corresponded, as well as to his deputies and his instructions.

In its following generations, the Muslim Ummah pursued the way of knowledge in all of its aspects, not limiting themselves to the narration of sacred texts and engagement in their interpretations, but also embracing all branches of science such as: medicine, chemistry, biology, zoology, astronomy, and even mechanics. So, in a couple of hundred years, during the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn (813-833 AD), Muslims did not only build the most powerful empire, but the most advanced civilisation for which humanity is indebted forever.

What went wrong? And why are Muslims now part of the 'third world' or 'the developing world'? Some pious preachers speak of the sins of Muslims

being the cause, but some Muslims have always been sinful. This is why Allah declared that He is Oft-Forgiving and that 'My Mercy encompasses everything' (Qur'an 7:156). Some other 'zealous' Muslims speak about the lack of having an Islamic state that rules according to the *Sharia*, judging all current Muslims states as non-Islamic and all of the employees in their governments as apostates. Thus, they try to destroy what has been left of peace and prosperity in the Muslim world. Neither piety nor zeal solve the problem as they are based on emotions and spontaneous reactions. The disease of Muslims lies deep behind a facade of luring symptoms such as poverty, unemployment, or even sins or deviation. There was probably no time in the history of Islam with more deviation than the golden days of the Abbasids, with sects appearing and spreading. Yet that did not prevent from the advancement of research and the leaving behind a harvest of accomplishments in manuscripts that scholars until now have not had enough time to study or publish.

The first Divine command was 'Read', but do we read? The answer to this question presents the first challenge the Muslim Ummah is facing today. We are believers in Allah ﷻ but we do not read as He commands us. Muslim nations around the world are the least likely to read, buy books, or go to public libraries. It is not a common scene in the Muslim world to see someone on a bus or train reading a book. And while phones and iPads now replace books among the youth, they are mainly a means to play games and

engage with social media. Of the 1,750,000 books published this year worldwide, the Muslim world has less than 10% even though Muslims, according to 'Worldmeters.info' are 23.2% of the world's population. I would not be surprised if it is found that the majority of books printed in the Muslim world are religious. This is good when they produce learned believers, but when they produce ignorant or fanatical believers, it goes against the very principles which Islam tried to establish, i.e. peace and civilisation.

Islam wanted more than a group of true believers: Islam wanted to establish a civilisation, to advance science, to transform societies from ignorance to learning; from anarchy to law and order; from transgression to justice. Islam wanted a new phase in the history of humanity where the connection between the heavens and Earth produces the most perfect combination between what is Divine and what is Worldly.

Sheikh Al-Yaqoubi was born in Damascus and was trained in Islamic studies by his father, who was an Imam and instructor at the Grand Umayyad Mosque. He is a widely respected religious scholar who also has a significant spiritual following worldwide. Background: Please see bio on page 124.

Time for Humanity to Reckon with Itself

by Shaykh Faid Muhammad Said

In the midst of a global pandemic in which the 'silent killer', Coronavirus disease, has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, humanity finds itself grappling with another pandemic, one that refuses to be eradicated and has grown louder and, in so many ways, more lethal than the microbe for which there is still no proven vaccine.

Turmoil, violence, soul-searching and counter-arguments have followed the recent events, ignited by the killing of George Floyd, the Black man suffocated by a white police officer in Minneapolis, USA, in May 2020. The death has resulted in flashpoints of protest across Europe and is symptomatic of the fact that racism today is real and is by no means a uniquely American issue.

Hundreds of thousands globally have, paradoxically, ignored global quarantine regulations to mobilise in support of equality and calls for justice—against violence, against systemic racial inequality, against historic grievances and implicit bias—in cities across the world.

Each cause and demand deserves a full analysis of its own, while overlapping and sometimes competing perspectives attempt to explain these grievances.

The knots that tie these grievances are to do with numerous structural elements of our society that have been established over our history. This much is undeniable and universally acknowledged. These acknowledgements range from genuine apologies and affirmations of support to panicked revocations that have invited counter-protests.

The issues at the heart of our current situation—accepted and practised everyday racism—will not disappear through rage-filled destruction, but only when our selves are reckoned with.

Is there potential for hope when it is claimed that we cannot fix systems that are not working or not fit-for-purpose due to historic evolution? Are there imaginative solutions when it is claimed that the contemporary turmoil is the result of absent leadership at the level of the state, institutions and organisations?

The task is huge and requires sincere joint efforts, not least because of the demands for racial equality and an end to racial oppression speak to notions of human rights, civil rights and cultural traditions. Our backgrounds and experiences make us who we are and determine why it is imperative to find common ground for a real conversation about race.

We cannot—as proven by ongoing events—achieve equality, peaceful coexistence, social accommodations and political settlements unless we sincerely believe in the oneness of humanity. The Islamic tradition is fundamentally at one with secular traditions in proclaiming the universality of humankind. It valorises the centrality of benevolent justice and cooperation between all humans, and its Prophets and sages have, from the dawn of mankind, warned against intolerance and discrimination in all its forms, not least racial. Differences of culture, language and national affiliation, as well as preservation of heritage and tradition, are all accepted as contingent on time and place. At the same time, Islamic



The ruins of Miqat al-Juhfa, Saudi Arabia—the stopping point for pilgrims from the north and west to enter ihram.

tradition censures racism and those tendencies that promote intolerance and animosity and generate cycles of violence.

Unfortunately, there has probably never been a time in history when humanity has not witnessed racial prejudice burning in a corner of the world—fuelling hatred and chauvinism—stemming from claims of supremacy. All too often, that supremacy is attained, or seen as attainable, by violence and subjugation of an Other—whether imagined or realised through propaganda.

Racism and intolerance have claimed the lives of millions of people in globe-spanning wars and are ongoing in many parts of the world to this day: wars fought over resources that continue to shrink even as consumption increases with concomitant harm to the planet's ecosystems.

Accordingly, divine scripture cautions humanity against straying: “*Should He not know what He created? And He is the Subtle, All-Aware*”¹ Diversity and difference, then, is a sign, not an aberration of Divine will: “*Had God so willed, He could have made you all one entity, but He allows whom He will to go astray and guides whom He will, and ye will indeed be asked of what ye used to do*”²

Within Muslim communities, of course, many supposed adherents have pursued and continue to pursue actions that are contrary to the tenets of Islam. Needless to say, the actions of an extremist minority have done much to tarnish the reputation of

the majority who accept the studied literature of Islam and its fountainhead, the Prophet Muhammad, as the authentic and incorruptible representation of Islam in all aspects of universal humanity.

And indeed, in the heroic figure and in the assertion of the Prophet as the “*master of mankind*”—understood as the authentic exemplar—Muslims simultaneously acknowledge and confess the contrary tendencies of intolerance and racial discrimination that Muslims both propagate and are subjected to. The whole world, not least Muslims who claim the Prophet as the true exemplar, urgently needs to rediscover and reclaim the true principles of Islam that reject discrimination in all forms and embrace tolerance and universality of humankind. For Muslims, certainly, it entails rediscovery and reclamation from iconoclasts and opportunists (those outside of the ‘fold’ of Islam), a moment to reappraise and embrace universal values in the service of imaginative solutions to the contemporary crises.

It was such an embrace of universal humanity and civil rights that empowered the disadvantaged to gain equal rights and shared spaces in which to prosper. We know from the Hadith literature about Salim, Mawla Abu Hudaifah, a freed slave, and his rise to prominence, which is all the more enlightening in the context of sixth-century Arabia. A Persian captive sold into slavery as a young boy, Salim wound up in Makkah where he was freed and adopted by Abu Hudaifah, an elder of Makkah's stratified society.

1 Surat Al-Mulk: 14

2 Surat Al-Nahil: 93



Photo by Peter Sanders, see bio on “Sanders, Peter” on page 204

Whenever challenged about his origins, Salim would respond that he did not know his father’s name. In the culture of patronymic lineage, he was variously referred to as “Salim the son of Abu Hudhaifah” and as “Salim the former slave of Abu Hudaifah”. This latter epithet was by no means derogatory as one might assume, viewed from a twenty-first-century perspective. Rather, it signified and valorised his new-found prominence, a slave and an outsider who was now the adopted son of a leading Makkan. Such was the transformation of Arabia’s Muslim community with the advent of Islam, that Salim was the first to lead congregational prayers in Madinah in an early phase of migration. The Prophet, still holding out in his native Makkah, had not then made his own migration to Madinah. The new immigrant community from Makkah then being warmly received and quartered among the Madinans included among its ranks Umar ibn al-Khattab, the future second Caliph of Islam. A scholarly Makkan prince in his own right, Umar had no qualms about being led by a former slave, an outsider who could not even attest the name of his biological father. A detailed and studied depth is important here: Salim leading the prayer was not merely a contingency whereby the pious stepped aside for one individual. Umar’s presence alone demonstrates it was more than a pious thought: it was previously unthinkable that a youth—a freed slave and an adopted one at that—would be put forward ahead of his father. Seniority was everything in

Arabian society. Numerous strands: race, social status and heredity, are here eroded in the layered story of Salim. And we would still not fully grasp the immensity of Salim’s role—and the implications for social cohesion—if we think in terms of facile assumptions about “the imam at the mosque”. In the context of the nascent Muslim community in Madinah, in the Prophet’s absence, Salim Mawla Abu Hudaifah’s role as prayer-leader effectively made him deputy leader of the senate assembly. Such is the transformative power of a sincere embrace of racial equality and ideas of assimilation and social cohesion.

The equality of humankind is central to Islam, and all other principles flow from it: spiritual notions of ‘piety’ and ‘integrity’ are none other than moral uprightness and earnest loyalty, the terms by which we judge social relations and civic responsibilities in modern societies. Thus the Qur’an states: “*O mankind! Behold! We have created you from male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct.*”³

And in his famous farewell speech the Prophet declared: “*O people, indeed your Lord is one, and you are born of one [biological] father. In truth, there is no virtue of Arab over the non-Arab and non-Arab over the Arab, or white over black or black over white, except in piety [...].*”⁴

Islam, then, understood in its authentic interpretations, elevates the importance of the human

3 Surat Al-Hujuraat: 13

4 Musnad Ahmed: 22978

being without differentiating by religion, colour or race. The Qur'an puts heavy stress on this over and over, for example: *"Indeed We have honoured the children of Adam. We carry them over land and sea and have made provision of good things for them, and have elevated them above many of those whom We created with distinction."*⁵

And let us remember that those who may or may not have been adversaries are nonetheless deserving of respect, of common decency and dignity. Hence, the Prophet stood up as a gesture of respect when a Jewish funeral bier passed in his presence; when questioned about doing so, he said: *"Is it not a human soul?"*⁶ Within Islam, of course, there is no greater precept concerning race relations than in the Prophet's choice of Bilaal, an Abyssinian, as his muezzin, a supreme expression of the divine declaration, *"The noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct."*⁷ In stark terms, the muezzin's role in a Muslim community is to sound the call to prayer. But in spiritual terms, the muezzin is far from being a mere functionary, for the Prophet, said *"muezzins will have longer necks on the Day of Resurrection,"*⁸ meaning they will *"stand tall in the first rank of humanity"*; one might say the nobility referred to in the Hadith quite easily implies anyone who *"enjoins all that is good and calls to success."*

Islam is, in fact, unequivocal about postures of racial superiority, and this is primarily due to that *"masterly way"* of the Prophet that Muslims praise in hymn and pious invocation but have not necessarily absorbed. The Prophet, ever quick to set an example and show the superior way, untangled the knots of racial, tribal and ethnic divisions whenever he encountered them. Thus, when Abu Dhar insulted Bilaal in racial terms, he was severely reprimanded by the Prophet: *"You still have the traces of the [era of] ignorance, Abu Dhar!"*⁹ Abu Dhar, of the Ghifar tribe, was a *"Companion"*, one of the generation revered as the Prophet's contemporaries and close associates who helped disseminate the Divine Message. He was also human. He was not infallible but he was, like all of the Companions, quick to mend his ways and make amends. In the same vein, disagreement between the Madinan Ansars and the Muhajir Makkans escalated

from a war of words that alluded to tribal differences and almost resulted in armed conflict. The Prophet, accompanied by a group of Makkkan immigrants, approached the contending parties and reminded them, *"And you are Muslims! Dear God! Dare you propagate ignorance when I am among you? And this after God guided you to Islam, honoured you by rooting out prejudices, saved you from darkness and united you! Then will you turn back to your ignorant old ways?"*¹⁰

The Ansar and the Muhajirin duly embraced, embarrassed by their lapse, the collective shame heightened by the fact of the Prophet's role as peacemaker. The Prophet, after all, was a Muhajir; the Muhajir, after all, had found refuge and security in Madinah. Far from taking sides, let alone favouring his fellow Makkans, the Prophet maintained social cohesion by reminding all of the collective honour and the higher, noble values.

The Prophet, of course, was in lockstep with scriptural exhortations concerning racial division and ethnic or tribal discord: Thus, according to Jubayr ibn Mutam, the Prophet said: *"He who calls towards tribalism is not from amongst us, he who fights for tribalism is not from amongst us, and he who dies upon tribalism is not from amongst us."*¹¹

The Prophet would no longer merely discourage or rebuke as he had done with Aws and Khazraj or Abu Dhar: he had drawn a thick double-red line.

Accordingly, God says: *"If ye obey him, ye will be guided aright."*¹²

To follow the Prophet, then, is to follow that masterly way, the all-inclusive way.

And the all-inclusive way is none other than God's Way. In the Hadith Qudsi, or Divine Hadith that sit between collected Revelation and collected Hadith-Sayings, Abu Dharr – the Ghiffarian previously censured—narrates from the Prophet that God says: *"O My servants! I have forbidden oppression for Myself, and so I have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another. O My servants! All of you are astray except those whom I have guided, so seek guidance from Me and I shall guide you. O My servants! All of you are hungry except those whom I sustain, so seek sustenance from Me and I shall sustain you. O My servants, all of you are naked except those whom I*

5 Surat Al-Israa: 70

6 Saheeh Muslim: 961

7 Surat Al-Hujuraat: 13

8 Saheeh Muslim: 387

9 Saheeh Muslim: 1661

10 Saheeh Al-Bukhari: 3518

11 Sunan Abu Dawud: 5121

12 Surat An-Noor: 54

have clothed, so seek to be adorned by Me and I shall adorn you. O My servants! You commit sins by day and by night, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I shall forgive you. O My servants! You will not attain harming Me so as to harm me, and you will not attain benefitting Me so as to benefit Me. O My servants! If the first of you and the last of you, and the humans of you and the jinn of you, were all as pious as the most pious heart of any individual amongst you, then this would not increase My Kingdom an iota. O My servants! If the first of you and the last of you, and the humans of you and the jinn of you, were all as wicked as the wickedest heart of any individual amongst you,

then this would not decrease My Kingdom an iota. O My servants! If the first of you and the last of you, and the humans of you and the jinn of you, were all to stand together in one place and ask of Me, and I were to grant all their request, then that would not decrease what I possess, except what is decreased of the ocean when a needle is dipped into it.”³

It is time to challenge ourselves to look both inward and outward in order to channel our despair and rage into a commitment to work together towards equality, tolerance and social cohesion in the path of God, who is the Lord of us all.

Sheikh Said was raised in Eritrea, where he was educated by Sheikh Hamid, the Senior Judge of the Shari’ah Court in Asmara. He later moved to Madinah al Munawarah, where he continued his studies under Sheikh Atiyah Mohammed Salim, the Resident Scholar of Masjid ul Nabawwi and Senior Judge of Madinah. Please see bio on page 143.

13 Saheeh Muslim: 2577

Islam in China and the Challenge of Sinicization of Religion—Past and Present

by Osman Bakar

INTRODUCTION

As a government policy, Sinicization of foreign religions has been promulgated and enforced during several different periods of China’s history. From China’s traditional perspective, only two of its religions are acknowledged as indigenous, namely Taoism and Confucianism.¹ These two religions were born in China, Taoism in the sixth century BC founded by Lao Tzu (b. c. 604 BC) and Confucianism in the same century founded by Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC).² The other major Chinese religions – Buddhism, Islam and Christianity – are all foreign in the sense they originated from outside the country. Buddhism, which originated from India, entered China in the first century CE, mainly via the Silk Route. Islam, which originated from the Arabian Peninsula, came to China in the seventh century during the Tang dynasty (618 – 907) through trade and dip-

lomatic missions. Christianity came to China from the West in the early seventeenth century through Jesuit missionaries, although the religion itself was of Middle Eastern origin.³ From China’s own historical experience, it is possible for a foreign religion to be accepted as a “national teaching” upon having gone through a long historical process of Sinicization as were the cases with Buddhism and Islam. Following its Sinicization during the late Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644), its first ever, Islam in China came to be officially recognised as the fourth national teaching coming after Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

SINICIZATION OF RELIGION: ITS MEANING

The idea of Sinicization of a foreign religion needs a little explanation. The word Sinicization and other words pertaining to China like Sino and Sinologist

1 In Communist China Confucianism is not officially recognised as a religion. Rather it is treated as a philosophy. In my view, Confucianism is both a religion and a philosophy. For my detailed arguments, see Osman Bakar, ‘Confucius and the Analects in the light of Islam,’ in Osman Bakar and Cheng Gek Nai, eds., *Islam and Confucianism: A Civilizational Dialogue* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC-IIUM Publications, 2019), new edition, pp. 73 – 86.

2 According to Chinese tradition, Lao Tzu was an older contemporary and teacher of Confucius.

3 Eastern Christianity, of the Nestorian branch, arrived much earlier during the Tang dynasty.

are derived from the Arabic word for China (*al-Sin*) and its adjective *sini*, meaning Chinese or with Chinese characteristics. The adjective *sini* was Latinised into *sinicus* or *sinae* that were understood to mean 'of Chinese origin or having Chinese characteristics.' Thus, the modern term Sinicization⁴ conveys the meaning of 'making something Chinese in form and/or character or changing or modifying it by Chinese influence.' As applied to a foreign religion, Sinicization would then mean the process whereby the religion in question is subjected to changes or modifications as dictated by the need to be in conformity with the Chinese cultural and political norms.

UNDERSTANDING PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S 'SINICIZATION OF RELIGION' POLICY

Sinicization of religion is currently a national issue in China, since it is now an integral component of the present government's policy on religion. It mainly affects Islam and Christianity, but Buddhism is also affected to a certain degree. It is to be noted, however, that in China it is not Christianity per se that is accorded the status of officially recognised religion but rather two of its main branches, namely Catholicism and Protestantism, which are treated as two distinct and separate religions. Between the two, it is Catholicism that encounters more difficulties with the Chinese authorities by virtue of the long-strained Sino-Vatican relations arising especially from the contested issue of appointment of Chinese bishops.⁵ Since the four religions have followers all over the globe and there exist deep bonds of faith between their respective followers in China and those outside the country, Sinicization of religion has aroused serious concern throughout the world. Quite clearly, Sinicization of religion has also become an international issue.

China's new policy of Sinicization of religion was decreed by President Xi Jinping during his address at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Par-

ty on October 18, 2017.⁶ Leaders of all the officially recognised religions in China were invited as special guests to the Congress. However, his reference to the policy of Sinicization of religion was brief. He merely provided the main outlines of what may be termed his policy on religion, of which Sinicization is the core element. There are four major points in his policy outlines that he wants the Party to understand and implement.⁷ **First**, the Party should "uphold the principle that religions in China must be Chinese in orientation, and provide active guidance to religions so that they can adapt themselves to socialist society." **Second**, the Party has to "rigorously protect against and take resolute measures to combat all acts of infiltration, subversion, sabotage, as well as violent terrorist activities, ethnic separatist activities and religious extremist activities to safeguard national security." **Third**, as major steps to develop socialist society and the rule of law, the Party should work for "the flourishing of a socialist consultative democracy" through the "consolidation of the patriotic front and the adoption of new approaches to works related to ethnic and religious affairs." And **fourth**, to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics the Party has to "undertake a thorough analysis of issues and provide policy guidance in ethnic and religious affairs."

It is quite clear from the above summary of the part of Xi's speech dealing with religion that the whole purpose of his Sinicization of religions policy is to guide them in their contributory role in the development of socialist society with Chinese characteristics. To speak of socialist society means that one has also to speak of the societal values that it is championing and that are directing its development. It is, therefore, possible to say that Xi has introduced the new religion policy in the name of safeguarding "socialist core values" with Chinese characteristics. Since Communism is China's official national ideology, the intention to preserve "socialist core values" with Chinese characteristics is quite logical. Apparently, Xi has been thinking aloud for quite some time

4 The first known use of the word 'sinicize' was in 1889.

5 The contentious issue of who has the right to appoint bishops – whether it is the Holy See or Beijing – has split Chinese Catholicism into two factions: one is the Catholic Church comprising mainly the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the Bishops' Conference for the Catholic Church in China that are independent of the Vatican and recognised by the government; the other is the "underground" or unregistered church but recognised by the Holy See.

6 President Xi delivered his three and a half hour-long address during the opening session of the Congress in his capacity as Secretary-General of the Communist Party. His address content that covered a wide range of policy issues has been dubbed by political commentators the "Thoughts of Xi Jinping."

7 This four-point summary of the part of Xi's speech on his religion policy was published in *Weyan Zhongjiao*, a Wechat official account of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA), China immediately after the speech was over. See Li Yuan, 'At the Congress Xi reaffirms Sinicization of religions under the Communist Party', *AsiaNews.It*, October 19, 2017. In 2018 SARA was dissolved and absorbed into the United Front Work Department, an authority directly under the Communist Party.



One of the few Uyghur mosques dating back to the 10th century CE not destroyed in Xinjiang

about the need for Sinicization of religion. He first mooted the idea of Sinicization of religion at the Central United Front Work Meeting held in 2015. Since the United Front Work is an apparatus of the Communist Party, the significance of the occasion was not lost. He wanted the Party to take charge of the Sinicization of religion agenda. But his campaign to strengthen the Communist Party's grip on religion began in earnest only after he attended the 2016 National Conference on Religious Work. At that Conference, Xi was reported to have "provided a series of new thoughts and views as well as new requirements on religious works and mapped out a series of important decisions."⁸ His main message to the Conference was that the Party should take an active role in "guiding religions to adapt to the socialist society."⁹ This message sums up the Communist philosophy of Sinicization of religion, which is "adaptation to the socialist society" through the preservation of "socialist core values." In the words of Ying Fuk-tsang, Director of the Divinity School at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Sinicization of Religion would be "the core religious theory for socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era."¹⁰

It is quite clear that the main motive underlying Xi's Sinicization of religion policy is political and only secondarily cultural. The political motive in question stems from the perception that in the new twenty-first century religion has indeed emerged as the single most important factor that could challenge and even undermine the hegemony of socialist thought in the country. The motive is viewed as political, since it is grounded on the issue of the need to meet existing challenges to the supremacy of the country's political ideology. In this context, religion is seen by the ruling Communist Party as a serious challenge in two main respects. First, religion is linked to separatism, which mainly refers to the Buddhist separatist movement in Tibet and the Uyghur Muslim separatist movement in Xinjiang. And second, religion is making a big revival in the post-Mao era.¹¹ In both respects, religion is perceived as a threat to national security. In the former case, Buddhism and Islam are respectively implicated in the separatisms in Tibet and Xinjiang for their roles as sources of inspiration and empowerment. From the perspective of the Chinese leadership, to not contain the two separatisms would only undermine China's

⁸ The report was contained in an article published in *Qiushi*, a top-level bimonthly journal on Communist political theory run by the Party's Central Committee. See "Theory and innovative practice on religious work since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012," *Qiushi*, September 15, 2017, quoted by Li Yuan, 'At the Congress Xi reaffirms Sinicization of religions...'

⁹ See Cristina Maza, 'Communist China President Xi Jinping now wants to control religion too,' *Newsweek*, 24 October 2017; <http://www.newsweek.com/china-xi-jinping-unveils-plans-nationalizing-religion-691610>.

¹⁰ Li Yuan, 'At the Congress Xi reaffirms Sinicization of religions...'

¹¹ For an informative study on religious revival in post-Mao era, see Hongyi Harry Lai, 'The religious revival in China,' *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 18 (2003), pp. 40 – 64.

territorial integrity. Acting tough, the government “has cracked down heavily on Muslim and Buddhist groups suspected of separatism.”¹² In the latter case, the conviction shared by the leadership is that uncontrolled religious revival would only weaken, if not spell death for, the national ideology. As their argument goes, the religious worldview and the socialist worldview embraced by the Communist Party are diametrically opposed to each other. Furthermore, religion has a wider appeal. The present Sinicization of religion policy needs to be understood in the light of these perceived challenges and threats to the Chinese socialist ideology. And it is an indirect admission that the national ideology is not strong enough to withstand the challenge posed by societal forces unleashed by the country’s religious revival phenomena.

Xi’s Sinicization of religion policy is, for all intents and purposes, a declaration of control of the Communist Party on religious life and thought in China. When the President speaks of the Party “giving guidance” to religions in adapting themselves to the socialist ideals, many people inside and outside China hasten to interpret the phrase as “exercising control.” Inside China itself, its religious communities generally believe in this interpretation. They have a real fear that the policy would be a licence for the Party leadership at all levels to control their religions. Their fear is quite justified, for they have already seen in recent years a new wave of controls and suppressions on their intellectual freedom and religious activities, including religious education in mosques and churches and spiritual life in monasteries. As they see it, whatever religious freedom they have gained during the last several decades of religious revival is now being curtailed. They go on to argue that they could not see how they could interpret guidance in a better light than control when, in traditional Chinese Communist practice, the two words always mean one and the same thing.

Outside China, many individuals and organisations greeted Xi’s policy statement on Sinicization of religion policy with a similar concern about the fate of religious freedom in the country. But still, for the sake of argumentation, we could give Xi the benefit of the doubt. He should be given the chance to prove the point that, although he has entrusted the Communist Party with the task of providing guid-

ance to the officially recognised religions, he actually has in mind the idea of partnership between the Party and religious leaders in the development of a socialist society in the Chinese mould. We all know too well that religion is the traditional enemy of the Communist creed. But he need not continue with that tradition. The third point in his Sinicization of religion policy emphasises the need for “the adoption of new approaches to works related to ethnic and religious affairs.” His “new approaches” are still awaited. Hopefully, these new approaches would include a genuine dialogue between the Party and the religious communities on the issue of Sinicization of religion and the role of religion in a socialist society. Such a dialogue would be in line with Xi’s idea of promoting “the flourishing of a socialist consultative democracy.” He has to be committed to such a dialogue if he is indeed keen to have a “religious theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era” that was highlighted by Ying Fuk-tsang. Moreover, if Xi has envisaged an internationalization of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which he describes as “blazing a new trail” for other developing countries seeking to modernise and preserve their sovereignty,¹³ and also deliberated on the theme of “building a human community with a shared future,”¹⁴ then he has to come to terms with religion, which anyhow is already acknowledged as a major influential force in the new century, both at home and abroad. However, until his new approaches to religion are made clear to the public, critics will continue to view the Sinicization of religion policy as nothing more than a state instrument to control and suppress religions in China.

IMPLICATIONS OF XI’S SINICIZATION POLICY FOR ISLAM IN CHINA

The rest of this essay is now devoted to the discussion of the implications of Xi’s Sinicization of religion for contemporary Islam and its possible responses to the policy in the light of what the religion went through during the Ming-Sinicization era. Xi’s Sinicization of religion covers both issues that are common to all the religions and issues that are particular and specific to each religion. The idea of the Party mapping out important strategies for the different religions has been

12 Cristina Maza, ‘Communist China President Xi Jinping now wants to control religion too.’

13 For a critical essay on Xi’s perspectives on internationalization of socialism with Chinese characteristics see Daniel Tobin, *How Xi Jinping’s New Era Should Have Ended US Debate on Beijing’s Ambitions*, A Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Report dated May 2020.

14 On the Xi-inspired discourse on the theme see *On Building a Human Community with a Shared Future* (Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, 2019).

emphasised by the United Front Work Department. In the light of this Party strategic planning, Chinese Muslim leaders and intellectuals are strongly advised to come up with their own strategy on how best to respond to the current Sinicization of religion policy that would best serve the present and long-term interests of the Muslim community. They would first of all need to conduct a thorough study of the Ming-Sinicization policy and its overall impact on Islam of the time. The findings of such a study could be of great help to them in their challenging task of undertaking the right responses to the Xi-Sinicization of religion policy.

Ming-Sinicization policy is known to have opened up a new chapter in the history of Islam in China. It impacted almost every aspect of Muslim life and thought. The religion underwent a thorough indigenization and assimilation into the Chinese cultural milieu to become at once a truly national religion and a distinctive branch of the global Muslim *ummah*. The most visible impact of this Sinicization was particularly in mosque architecture, calligraphy, dress culture, cuisine, health and medical practices, and even religious discourse. Not all of the Muslim cultural and religious elements that were Sinicized turned out to be negative or that ended up in being considered as anti-Islamic. For example, the traditional Chinese mosque, which was influenced by indigenous religious architecture, was not considered as un-Islamic just because it is dome-less. On the contrary, just as the dome, a characteristic feature of Middle Eastern mosques, has been given a religious significance in mosque architecture by virtue of the symbolism of earth as a mosque and the sky as the dome that is found in Islamic teachings, so has the multilevel roof structure of the traditional Chinese mosque been given a likewise religious significance but, in this case, by virtue of it symbolising a multi-layered cosmos. Commonalities between traditional Chinese and Islamic cosmologies facilitated the indigenization of mosque architectural designs.

Until more recent times, the traditional Chinese mosque architectural heritage was generally accepted as being in conformity with Islamic built cultural values. Today, however, due to ignorance of tradition and modern influences, there are clashes of preferences, either for mosques with domes or the traditional domeless ones, with the authorities getting dragged into the dispute as they naturally prefer the latter in line with the Sinicization policy.

But an even more meaningful impact of Ming-Sinicization policy was the indigenization of Muslim religious and philosophical discourse through its adoption of Confucian concepts and terminology. Not only did Muslim scholars during the Ming-Sinicization era have to write in Chinese, but also in Confucian terms. A Muslim religious discourse with Confucian characteristics was thus set in motion that subsequently helped generate a national "Islam-Confucianism dialogue." This particular aspect of Chinese Muslim historical experience of Ming-Sinicization could serve as a useful guide to contemporary Muslims in their difficult task of having to come to terms with Chinese socialism of the Xi era. If discovering the common ground between Islam and Confucianism proved to be helpful to Muslim responses to Ming-Sinicization policy, there is a strong reason to believe that finding a common ground between Islamic social philosophy and Chinese socialism could work wonders for contemporary China.

A dialogue between Islam and socialism is not new to the Muslim world. It now appears that Xi's new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics is about to rekindle dialogues between these two major thought systems of the world. We are quite sure that Chinese Muslims in particular would welcome such a dialogue, since it is of great importance to their own country. But for Xi himself, he probably realises that, for a good number of reasons, he could not find a better dialogue partner than the Muslim world to discuss the international dimension of his Chinese socialism policy and its global implications.

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The Rise of Fascism in India Threatens its Minorities & its Survival

by Dr Muhammad Gumnāmi

This article is about Indian Muslims, who form one of the largest Muslim population-blocs in the world (estimates range from 140-190 million). They also form the largest minority in India (10-14%), and they and other smaller minorities like the Christians, are threatened today by the rise of militant Hindutva ('Hindu nationalism'). The article will explain the Nazi inspired roots of 'Hindu nationalism', its transition into the mainstream from the 1990s, and how its persecution of minorities is creating the conditions for the break-up of India.

The Republic of India was formed in 1947, following an unfortunate partition of the sub-continent into multi-denominational, secular-democratic India and an Islamic Pakistan. It was unfortunate because it led to heavy bloodshed and the forced migration and death of millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Neither India nor Pakistan have recovered fully from it, and Indian Muslims are trapped by the shadows of partition, which now seem to be extending. Between 1947 and 1990, low intensity firestorms of violence erupted sporadically against Muslims in India, but it was generally not planned by the government. However, from the 1990s, organised pogroms and attempts to delegitimise the citizenship of Indian Muslims have been coordinated by a major party in power, which has fascist notions of citizenship derived directly from Nazi Germany.

WHAT CAUSED THE BLOODY PARTITION OF INDIA IN 1947?

The blame lies with the British, Hindus and Muslims. The British encouraged separate electorates, a bit like in South Africa, so that Hindus and Muslims would not unite as Indians against them. Before the British, the Muslim minority had ruled India for about 800 years, from about 1100 to 1857. Islam came to South India (in the state of Kerala) through trade with the Arabs and in the North through conquest by Afghan and central Asian Turks. Eventually, the conquerors settled, and made India their home. Some Muslim rulers even intermarried with the Hindus, and what is called 'Muslim rule' was a Mughal-Hindu Rajput alliance, built partly through matrimony. The bulk of the common Muslims were not of Afghan and central Asian Turk stock, but were Hindus who had converted. Although there was some fighting between

Muslim and Hindu rulers, it was often opportunist as was the custom of the times. Before Islam, Hindu rulers frequently fought each other and after 'Muslim rule', there are many examples of rulers of Muslim kingdoms in India fighting one another. The British encouraged the simplification of local history such that Hindus came to believe that Muslims who ruled were totally alien to the land. At the same time, as the movement for Indian independence started with the Indian National Congress in 1885, and the British saw it was led by Hindus, they encouraged the feeling in Muslims that if the British left, the Hindus would persecute them.

From 1925, some Hindus set up militant and fascist organisations like the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu Mahasabha, who were very directly inspired by Hitler's model for minorities. They conceived of an India where Muslims and Christians would be non-citizens. The Muslims at that time were 35% of the population. Although the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha were not mainstream, and India's great leaders of the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, and the Indian National Congress party, eschewed a Hindu state, both on grounds of principle and practicality, the threats issued by these fringe groups against Muslims could not be totally ignored. The Muslim League which had been set up originally only to safeguard Muslim representation, finally pushed for a separate state, due to the Hitlerian models advocated by the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha. The Hitlerian solutions for minorities can be found in the writings of M.S. Golwalkar and V.D. Savarkar, the key leaders of these two Hindu groups. Their writings are freely available on the internet. In fact, Savarkar coined 'The Two Nation Theory' stating Hindus and Muslims of India were two incompatible 'nations' Eventually, the Muslim League also adopted this theory. For these Hindu groups, this theory meant one territorial nation for Hindus, and the Muslim minority in concentration camps. For the Muslim League, it meant creation of a separate state for Muslims.

Prominent Hindu historians such as R C Majumdar and A K Majumdar confirm, '... one factor was responsible to a very large extent for the emergence of the idea of Partition of India on communal lines, this was the Hindu Mahasabha...' (*Struggle for Freedom*, 1969, page 611). The Congress too had a few but



Jawaharlal Nehru (left) and Mahatma Gandhi in discussion at the All-India Congress, Bombay, July, 1946

prominent people like Sardar Patel, Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai, who spoke of India exclusively as a Hindu nation, and this alienated many Muslims from joining Congress. When a minority is 35%, it is unwise to exclude it. Eventually, the communal passions and riots instigated by both Hindu and Muslim groups finally persuaded the British that partition was the only solution. The British and indeed the Congress acceded to the Muslim League's demand for a separate state that is Pakistan.

The Indian Muslims however were divided: one set definitely wanted partition and Pakistan, and this group was led by Mohamed Ali Jinnah, and another set called the Nationalist Muslims was led by Maulana Azad. Azad was among the top four leaders of the Congress and he did not want India partitioned, presciently saying that it would not solve the communal problem, and it would merely lead to a system of hostages – the Muslim minority would be a hostage in Hindu majority India, and the Hindu minority

would be hostage in a Muslim majority Pakistan. However, his view did not prevail, and India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947. As partition involved bloody migrations of Muslims from India to Pakistan, and the Hindus and Sikhs to India, the trauma has stayed embedded in northern India and Pakistan, even to this day, 73 years afterwards.

To put the matter in perspective, the savagery at the time of India's partition, with its ethnic cleansing, religious and racial intolerance, and identity politics was not peculiar to India, or to Muslims and Hindus. Although, there is the effort today in India to portray Muslims as uniquely recalcitrant, then and now, as if that was the cause of partition, the problem of entwined ethnic groups which do not accept each other, exists in many places. For example, at the same time as India's partition, in the period 1933-1945, similar butchery was conducted in Europe with the rise of German Nazism, and concepts of racial supremacy. German ultra-nationalism excluded

Jews and 6 million were exterminated. The Germans invaded the Soviet Union under the belief that the Russians and Slavs were inferior races, leading to the death of 20 million Soviets. After the Soviet Union, Britain and the US defeated Hitler in 1945, Germany was shattered and divided into two countries. Germany also lost its Prussian territories in a sort of reverse ethnic cleansing. Germans living with other communities in eastern pockets (like Prussia, Pomerania, Sudetenland, Silesia and Konigsberg), were attacked and killed, and survivors were asked to leave and re-locate in mainland Germany, while these areas became part of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. This was decided by the three victorious allies and Germany having waged war, had no choice but to comply. These were all Christian countries but identity politics in areas with mixed populations led to war, massive deaths and migration of people. Thus, the re-drawing of borders as happened in the Indian sub-continent is nothing new, and it has happened elsewhere, and the fault cannot be solely laid at Muslim intransigence in India. Europe has recovered and moved on as in 1990, Germany signed 'The Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany' with the Soviet Union, the US, France and the UK, stating that it would accept the new borders and give up all claims on the Prussian territories it lost, in exchange of re-unification of the two Germanies. The ceded territories became part of Poland and the Soviet Union. Oddly, the creation of the EU and Polish membership has allowed Germans to live, if they want, in the Prussian territories they lost. Such a move to settle borders and create a confederation of states with free movement has not occurred between India and Pakistan even after 73 years; Kashmir is claimed by both countries, and is the cause for the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan, and Hindus and Muslims in India.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE, CREATION OF PAKISTAN, AND ASSASSINATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI BY THE RSS

Mahatma Gandhi who had initiated a non-violent struggle for Indian independence was assassinated in 1948 by a Hindu fanatic who had been a member of the RSS. The RSS believed that the Hindu majority's mob violence could have settled matters more favourably for Hindus, had not Gandhi checked the Hindus using his spiritual appeal for non-violence. In their eyes, Gandhi 'appeased the Muslims' at the expense of the Hindus. The RSS was banned in 1948 as

a result of their role in Gandhi's murder and Indians accepted that at the time.

Despite the loss of Gandhi, India however recovered due to the great leadership of Pandit Nehru. Nehru rejected historical revanchism and he guided the Hindu public away from the desire to take revenge against Muslims left in India. He believed that India needed to catch up in science, technology and modern governance, and should not revert to mediaeval blood feuds. Fortunately for India, Nehru lived on for 17 years after independence and he laid the foundations of a modern, secular, democratic state. Amongst his achievements was the integration of Indian Muslims and winning their commitment and loyalty to the new state. Unfortunately for Pakistan, Jinnah died soon after its founding, and the country drifted into the hands of a military dictatorship soon after.

India's recovery was slow. Among developing countries, it was remarkable in managing a very linguistically and religiously diverse country through secular-democratic institutions. This was achieved in the Nehruvian era. India's economic progress was relatively slow. Nehru could not rely on the West after the experience of western colonialism, and therefore India decided to chart a non-aligned course. India made strides in nuclear technology, steel and food production, and it even built the capacity to launch satellites. The Muslims also made huge contributions in Nehru's India. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a rocket engineer, who was a by-product of the merit-based system that Nehru brought, became the project director who put India's first satellite into a geo-stationary orbit. Dr. Kalam had been groomed and trained by scientists like Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Satish Dhawan. In that period, being a Muslim was not a bar to attainment and holding high posts. Indian Muslims were also unique in having access to an English-based education from the 1900s. They had the first 'Muslim university' that taught in English, namely the Aligarh Muslim University. At the same time, the Indian Muslims were used to working with other communities like Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, and hence they were the least isolationist and most accommodative amongst the Muslims of the world. By and large, Indian Muslims have been moderate, and ex-President Bush noted that although India had the second largest Muslim population of any country, not a single Indian Muslim was found fighting for the Taliban. Generally, they have not been involved in terrorist attacks in western countries, which is another unfortunate fall out of the Gulf war.

DECLINE OF SECULAR DEMOCRACY IN INDIA AFTER 1990, AND THE EMERGENCE OF HINDUTVA

By the 1990s, the scene began to change for the worse in India, with the rise of 'Hindutva', a term coined originally in the 1920s by the Hitler admirer, Savarkar. The western press uses a more understood term, 'Hindu nationalism', for Hindutva. Indian critics sometime use the term 'majoritarianism' to describe the Hindutva mind set – that is, 'the Hindus should only have rights as they own the nation, and this is justified because they form the majority'. Perhaps Nehru was more to the point when he defined Hindutva as 'fascism, Hindu style'.

After lying dormant for 40 years, from the mid-1980s, Hindutva was re-awakened and led by L.K. Advani. Advani was a refugee politician, an RSS member, originally from Karachi (now in Pakistan). The RSS, which had been sidelined after their role in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi, began to sense the possibility of reviving their dream of a Hindu supremacist nation run along Hitler's model. The RSS had by then created a political front, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which stood in elections. In 1992, Advani, the leader of the BJP, organised Hindu mobs

to raze the Babari masjid (constructed by the Muslim emperor, Babar, around 1530 AD), claiming the mosque had been built after razing a Hindu temple which marked the spot where the Hindu god Rama was born. The claim that Babar razed a mosque was not substantiated, and nor did it require proof for much of the Hindu public. This led to riots and violence against Muslims. It must be noted that a Congress government was ruling the country at that time, but the then PM Narasimha Rao, did not have the spine to confront Hindu mob rule, fearing it would increase support for Advani. Rao had been a RSS member in the 1930s (although he was in Congress), so it was held by some that he connived with the RSS-BJP and allowed the felling of the mosque. The triumphalism and feeling of victory over the Muslims following the demolition of the Babari masjid led to the BJP slowly clawing its way from 2 seats in parliament to eventually forming a coalition government (and later a majority government). The Hindus were led to believe the destruction of the mosque was a rightful reclamation.

The pattern for getting power was set from the Babari masjid demolition: the BJP could get electoral support by playing an anti-Muslim card, portraying Muslims as anti-nationals who had despoiled Hindu

Narendra Modi paying homage to Vinayak Savarkar, one of the founders of Hindutva philosophy



glory during 800 years of Muslim rule. Advani also undermined the Indian state by making Hindus feel secularism was at their expense and somehow it had 'pampered Muslims'. The Congress was backed into a corner and did not take a strong stand against Advani, not prosecuting for mob violence. The 1990s were India's equivalent to the Weimar Republic phase of Germany (in the period 1920-1933). These were the years before Hitler achieved a majority after running a campaign of hate, violence and intimidation, with a divided and weak opposition. Similarly, the Indian state and opposition in the 1990s had started to wither, and was not strong enough to defend constitutional norms, and law-and-order, and this allowed the fascists to grow in the coming years.

THE HINDUTVA LED COALITION GOVERNMENT OF VAJPAYEE (1998-2004)

From the 1990s onwards, the slow poisoning of Hindu minds against Indian Muslims was carried out by the RSS and BJP. However, their progress to a majority with complete control did not occur immediately. The BJP passed through a stage where they had to form a coalition government under the 'moderate' Vajpayee who was also an RSS member. The Vajpayee coalition government ran between 1998 and 2004, and while it was BJP led, it did not have the majority to lay the foundations of a Hindu Hitlerian state.

However, the trend for persecution of Muslims and Christians was already apparent. A militant Hindu group called Bajrang Dal burnt alive an Australian missionary and his son. The Christians were accused

of 'forcible conversions'. The 'moderate' PM Vajpayee did not comment, while his hard-line Home Minister Advani gave a blank slate to Bajrang Dal, declaring it was not a criminal organisation. This trend has continued: the BJP gets affiliated Hindu extremist groups to attack minorities, and then says it had nothing to do with it. Afterwards, it shields the attackers.

During the Vajpayee period, the BJP-dominated state of Gujarat had a state election in 2002, in which Narendra Modi was running for re-election as the Chief Minister. The opinion polls predicted a defeat for Modi. Then, Modi, the RSS, and the other militant Hindu groups, worked together to engineer a major Hindu-Muslim riot in 2002 in Gujarat, in which Muslims were blamed for burning a train (without any proof), and then Hindu mobs were allowed and encouraged to run amok and carry out a pogrom in which 2,000 Muslims were killed. It was reminiscent of Hitler's Reich Kristallenacht in which Jewish shops and habitations were burnt by mobs aided by fascist paramilitary groups, while the police looked on. The pretext for the attacks was the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris, by a 17-year-old Polish Jew. Gujarat 2002 was the same model. Vajpayee, the PM, turned a blind eye and shielded Modi. As a result of the polarisation from the pogrom, the Hindus voted for Modi to be re-elected in 2002 as Chief Minister of Gujarat. Clearly, attacking minorities bought Hindu votes to the BJP. At the time, the RSS ominously warned that 'Gujarat was the laboratory of Hindutva' and it (the pogrom against Muslims) would be repeated elsewhere.

The return of Congress in 2004-2014, the period of high economic growth, leading to the notion that

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), an Indian right-wing, Hindu nationalist, paramilitary volunteer organisation.



India was emerging as another economic superpower.

In 2004, the Vajpayee government lost the national election, and this led to the return of a Congress-led government with Dr Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister. He had two terms as PM, from 2004-2014, and this period was the golden age of the Indian economy. Under Dr. Singh, India's economy grew at 8-10%. Under him, India even weathered the 2008 global crisis, and a prosperous middle class of 300-400 million was created. The western press even wrote that India was a challenger to China, a new Asian tiger. Singh's politics were not divisive, and they focussed on economic growth and enablement. The Hindu-Muslim clashes receded into the background, and even Muslims felt the BJP persecution of the preceding years was an aberration. However, despite the economic growth achieved, there were charges of corruption, not against Singh, but members of his government, and the BJP started playing a combination of anti-corruption and anti-Muslim plank, to win the Hindus.

With Vajpayee gone, and Advani side-lined, the RSS and BJP called on Modi, the Hindu hardliner and organiser of the pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat, to lead their campaign in the general election of 2014. Now, Modi talked only about economic development in the campaign, but his reputation as a 'Hindu nationalist' who stands up to Muslims, had already been cemented in 2002 by the pogrom he organised in Gujarat. His reputation as a Hindu strongman led to a landslide victory for the BJP in the 2014 national election. It had a majority at last—to implement the RSS vision of a Hindu supremacist state, whose main ethos was driven by economic and political destruction of Muslims in India.

THE RETURN OF THE BJP IN 2014 WITH A MAJORITY, AND THE START OF BLATANT PERSECUTION OF MINORITIES

After the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, Modi had a visa ban imposed on him by the EU and the US. However, as soon as Modi became PM in 2014, the western countries had to remove the travel ban as he was an elected head of state. Even Obama feted Modi. While Modi as PM reduced direct anti-Muslim rhetoric, he outsourced that to the BJP and RSS cadre. Modi's first term (2014-2019) saw a spate of attacks on Muslims and Christians – there was a *ghar wapsi* programme (reconversion to Hinduism). Muslims were attacked allegedly for cow slaughter (the cow is a holy animal for Hindus in northern India). Vigilantes lynched Muslims over cows, and grisly video clips of the murders were circulated on WhatsApp. An 8 year old Kashmiri Muslim girl, Asifa Bano, was gang-raped by a Hindu priest, his son, nephew and police, in a temple, and then murdered. Afterwards, the BJP and RSS Hindus marched to support freedom for the rapists. Christians were also attacked and their churches vandalised.

Modi managed to allow his cadres freedom to do all this, but he followed a foreign tour programme to western countries, Arab countries, and to the Far East. The western countries still held to the hope that Modi when in power would become moderate. The image of India with a galloping economy and market with purchasing power, still reined. Some Gulf States even awarded Modi their highest awards – it seems they had not caught on yet to Modi's anti-Muslim programmes at home.



Modi however did two things that crippled the Indian economy: a demonetisation of the Indian currency that led to destruction of the informal sector of the economy, and a Goods and Services Tax which was complicated and poorly implemented. Despite crashing the Indian economy, so assiduously built by Dr. Singh in the preceding years, Modi's support amongst Hindus did not dwindle; the 'Hindu strongman' image carried all.

THE BJP WITH MODI RETURNS IN 2019 WITH A BIGGER MAJORITY, AND ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION TO CREATE A HINDU STATE AND DISENFRANCHISE THE MUSLIMS

Despite the economic failures of his first term, Modi won a second term in 2019 – with an even bigger majority. This was partly due to a short cross-border confrontation with Pakistan which mysteriously occurred just before the 2019 general election. The cross-border air strike against alleged terror camps was accepted by the Hindu majority as successful (although it was disbelieved internationally), and it reinforced Modi's image of a strong Hindu who stands up to Muslims.

In Modi's second term, armed with an even larger majority in 2019, matters took a very serious turn for Indian Muslims. A plan for a Hitler-style reduction of the Muslim citizens was unveiled. It started due to a perceived problem of illegal Bangladeshi migration to Assam in the north east of India, which was allegedly changing the Hindu-Muslim population ratio. The government brought a National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam to decide between bona fide citizens and illegals. The documentation asked to prove citizenship were birth certificates, and parent's birth certificates. Detention centres or concentration camps started to be built in Assam for those without the citizenship document. Once sent to the concentration camp, the inmate would have no recourse to justice or law as the person was stateless.

The problem for many rural people of past generations was that there were no birth certificates. When the NRC was completed for Assam, the result was embarrassing: more Hindus than Muslims were deemed illegals due to lack of the required documents of citizenship. The plan had been to extend the NRC to the whole of India, but seeing that more Hindus than Muslims would be deemed stateless, the government sought a way out.

In 2019, the Modi government created a Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which claimed it was providing humanitarian refuge to persecuted minorities from three Muslim countries: Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. This allowed Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Christian refugees from these three countries to apply for citizenship – but it expressly denied Muslims. Citizenship based on selective exclusion was reminiscent of the Nazi Germany's Nuremberg Race Laws. However, the purpose was not really a concern for persecuted minorities in the three Muslim countries. The purpose was eventually to link the CAA with the NRC. The CAA provided a loophole for Hindus left out of the NRC due to lack of documents (birth certificates), to obtain citizenship by claiming they were persecuted refugees from the neighbouring countries. That option would be denied for bona fide Muslim citizens who could not provide the certificates for citizenship. The combined CAA-NRC would then act to send Muslims selectively to concentration camps, and from thereon, it would be a step to a Hitlerian style genocide, that the RSS has always wanted.

STUDENT AND WOMEN'S PROTESTS AGAINST THE PLAN TO DISENFRANCHISE MUSLIMS WITH THE CAA-NRC

Realising the existential danger from the CAA-NRC plan, in 2019, students from Indian universities and women launched an all-India protest movement. It was a non-cooperation movement in the Gandhian style. Although initiated by Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians joined the protest marches and sit-ins. The movement had the potential to reclaim India's pluralist ethos of the days of Nehru and Gandhi, from the clutches of fascism. There was a deadlock for several months and in its frustration with the sit-ins in Delhi, the BJP government and the RSS organised a riot and pogrom against Muslims in Delhi in Feb. 2020 – paradoxically when it was hosting Trump in Delhi. The Delhi pogrom was done to intimidate the Muslims over the CAA-NRC protests.

The matter was heading for a prolonged civil confrontation with possibility of major government violence against citizens. The BJP had full control of the police and the paramilitary RSS could raise Hindu mobs to beat up Muslims. Ironically, what saved India was the outbreak of Covid-19. This caused the anti-CAA/NRC sit-ins to disperse and the government was also forced to divert its attention toward

Covid-19 and its economic fallout.

THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19 IN FEB. 2020, AND USING COVID-19 AS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK MUSLIMS

Instead of planning to tackle Covid-19, the hate spewed out against Muslims by the BJP government's officials and their media, continued with redoubled vengeance in new ways. The spread of Covid-19 was blamed on a Muslim Tablighi conference. Some Indian TV channels said Muslims were engaged in a 'corona jihad'. Muslims became targets for attacks and some were denied treatment in hospitals in northern India. These messages were also spread by WhatsApp and Twitter. Some Hindus in Gulf countries like the UAE and Kuwait, influenced by the constant brainwashing of Hindu extremist groups, also started sending hate messages against Muslims and Arabs, accusing them of engaging in a 'corona jihad' against Hindus. This caught the attention of the UAE's Princess Hind Al Qassemi, who ironically was an Indophile, an admirer of Gandhi, and someone who appreciated Hindu culture. She initiated steps to deport those engaged in using social media to send hate messages. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia also

followed suit. This incident brought to the attention of Arab countries and their media that India had changed and was not what they had imagined, and a militant Hindu culture had taken over, which sustained itself on a virulent platform that vilified Muslims and Arabs.

The poor handling of Covid-19, and the economy (which Modi had already shattered in his first term), led India into a free fall. Gone was the period of growth of Dr Singh's days. The outside world is slowly realising that India is not an emerging tiger, or an investment destination. India has been consumed by the fires lit by fascism.

On top of this, Modi's India received another blow when China entered India and took some land. This too had occurred in Modi's second term when Hindu nationalism got carried away and repealed Article 370 of the Indian constitution, by which Muslim-majority Kashmir had been given a special status, in lieu of its accession to India in 1947. The plan was to allow non-Kashmiris to settle in Kashmir and change its demographic status, in the Israeli style. One of Modi's hard-line ministers, Amit Shah, also issued a declaration that India would forcibly take back land he felt belonged to India, but was in Pakistani and Chinese hands. This led to China launching a border skirmish in which India lost land.

Protests against the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)



Thus, due to Covid-19, China, and the parlous state of the economy, the BJP government has not been able to concentrate of late on its plan to disenfranchise Muslims politically and economically. But this is a temporary lull, necessitated by circumstances. The RSS is a state within the state, and the BJP is run according to its precepts of a Hindu nation. That is, a society run on the Hindu caste system, and a Nazi-derived model of citizenship. India is held back by its twin problems: Hindu caste system and Hindu communalism (sectarianism).

NOT ONLY SURVIVAL OF MUSLIMS AND MINORITIES IS AT STAKE, INDIA'S SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE

How matters pan out for India remains to be seen. Fascism has failed everywhere and India will be no exception. In the case of Nazi Germany, it waged war on Europe and had to be destroyed and reconstructed by Britain, the US and the Soviet Union. Germany recovered due to the reconstruction of society through the elimination of propaganda and propagation of hate in schools, the judiciary, police and all organs of the state. In the case of Yugoslavia, when Serb fascism took grip, the country broke into seven countries. To cite Asian examples, the RSS-BJP combination in India would like to imitate for Indian Muslims, Myanmar's expulsion of Rohingyas, or imitate China's policies with Uyghurs (stamp out Uyghur culture through violence and settling Han Chinese in Xinjiang). Imitating China's model against the Uyghurs will also not work in India. India will lose its democracy and not attain the economic and military power of the Chinese.

Unless Indians get a grip on fascism, the outcome will be like Yugoslavia. It is possible that Indians will eventually launch a civil disobedience movement in the Gandhian style to contest the RSS-BJP's fascism. India surprised the world with that approach when it demanded independence from Britain. Indians will have to do the same and demand a ban on the RSS. The hopeful side is that unlike the Chinese, the Indian intelligentsia have experience of secular democracy and liberal values, and they will get organised in India and abroad to contest fascism.

It will be wiser if Hindus realised that Indian Muslims are an asset for them, and can be used to help bring a final settlement between India and Pakistan. Indians should be seeking inspiration from their own historical personages, like the Mughal Emperor Akbar, who managed to rule successfully because he

understood that to govern India, its two largest communities, Hindus and Muslims, have to be carried along. Following the RSS's Hitler model can only result in the same outcome for India as Germany's destruction. India's best course of action is to negotiate a settlement with Pakistan and Kashmiris, and work towards the creation of a European Union style confederation in South Asia, with free movement of people.

WHAT SHOULD OTHER COUNTRIES DO ABOUT THE ONWARD MARCH OF FASCISM IN INDIA AND THE PLANNED GENOCIDE OF INDIAN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS?

The Indian Muslim minority is not like the Rohingya and the Uyghurs and it would be foolhardy for the rest of the world to look the other way. Other countries need to realise it is financially risky (as well as morally unworthy) to invest in India under the RSS-BJP. They need to study the RSS literature written by its founders like M.S. Golwalkar and see their admiration for Hitler's model for minorities. Western countries in particular should be able to see where fascism will lead India. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Walter Lindener, the German ambassador to India, visited the RSS quarters to understand more about the RSS. It was shocking that the ambassador of the country that spread misery to Europe with Nazism, sought understanding of a Hindu group which wants to run India according to Hitler's model. Perhaps this reflects the rise of neo-Nazism

Trump and Modi embrace



in Germany. It is a cruel irony that Germans want to learn about Nazism now from a Hindu group of the 1920s. Likewise, the US Consul General in Mumbai, David J. Rank, attended a ceremony in Feb. 2020 to honour the RSS's founder, Hegdewar. The US was the country that fought to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany.

Western countries should realise if concentration camps are used in India, there will be protests and eventually civil war, and it will lead to refugees and even confrontations between Indians and Pakistan-

is settled in western countries, where they are both present in large numbers. Western countries will not be immunised against these problems, the problems of India and Pakistan will spill into the West.

Gulf and Arab countries also need to realise that the RSS has been collecting funds in their countries to persecute Muslims in India. Instead of rewarding Modi with awards, they should be aware that the fallout of this persecution will affect their countries and so they must reject the proponents of fascism in India today.

Due to the exceptional security threats in India currently, where students have been imprisoned, journalists killed, citizenship and visas revoked, the author has asked for his real name to be undisclosed in the publication.

The Unfinished Business of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

by Imam Zaid Shakir

During these days when America finds itself in the throes of a racial justice reckoning, we would do well to remember the work of Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. King is perhaps most well-known for his soaring oration, symbolised by his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, delivered before a sweltering throng at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. Dr. King, however, was far more than a moving orator. He was a formidable intellectual, an effective organiser and a passionate advocate for the freedom of his people. These qualities combined with his oratorical abilities to make him an individual oppressive political powers came to both despise and fear.

For all that he was able to accomplish in the context of the Civil Rights struggle and in advancing the rights and dignity of African Americans, Dr. King realised that his work was not complete, neither in the South, nor in the North, as his painful experience in Chicago underscored. To a certain extent, his unfinished work is larger than the Civil Rights struggle, that work revolves around what he identified as the evil triplets of racism, materialism and militarism. Decisively combating these evils is a daunting challenge; some might even describe it as nearly impossible. Dr. King realised, however, that with the help of God, all things are possible, and he thus never lost hope that we could overcome these forces. As people of faith, this should be our firm belief.

Our Muslim community is one whose existence, contrary to popular misconception, is predicated on the establishment of peace. It is a community that

came into existence as a multiracial force and lists anti-materialism as one of its foundational principles (“renounce the world and God will love you”). I believe that we have been divinely prepared to take up the torch held aloft so courageously by Dr. King and dedicate ourselves to the completion of his work. This is absolutely critical for the wellbeing of our nation and the world, for as long as those evils rip through the waters of our collective humanity, the dehumanising violence they give birth to will follow in their wake.

In his powerful but oftentimes overlooked speech, “Why I Oppose the War in Vietnam,” delivered at the Riverside Church in Manhattan on April 4, 1967, Dr. King showed how these three evils are connected and how they combine to make the United States, in his words, “...the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.” The fact that such violence continues, unabated, should cause all of us to reflect deeply on why we as a society have not done more to address it. The gut-wrenching violence we visited upon Vietnam has directly afflicted Afghanistan and Iraq and indirectly defines the fate of nations like Yemen, Somalia, Syria and Palestine. I believe one of the reasons we have done so little to arrest that violence is because we as a nation are so effective in denying its existence. In the words of a popular song, “Memories may be beautiful and yet what’s too painful to remember we simply choose to forget...” As a society, we find it far too easy and convenient to simply forget the painful horrors of native genocide, chattel

slavery, Jim Crow and its accompanying brutalities, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan or the next place whose name might be added to this list. Dr. King forces us to remember these horrors and the violence they birthed—through the brilliance of his oration, the seriousness of his struggle and the testimony of his death.

The following quote from Francis Fitzgerald's vivid chronicling of the Vietnam War, "Fire in the Lake," serves to both awaken us to the magnitude of American violence and also the tragedy of how easy it would be to replace Vietnam with Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria or Yemen and find that it would be an apt description of any of those places. She writes:

In the refugee camps and isolated villages people die of malnutrition and the children are deformed. In the cities, where there is no sanitation and rarely any running water, the adults die of cholera, typhoid, smallpox, leprosy, bubonic plague, and their children die of the common diseases of dirt, such as scabies and sores. South Vietnam knows nothing like the suffering of India or Bangladesh. Comparatively speaking it has always been a rich country and the American aid has provided many people with

the means for survival. But its one source of wealth is agriculture and the American war has wreaked havoc on its forests and paddy lands. It has given great fortune to the few while endangering the country's future and forcing the many to live in the kind of "poverty, ignorance and disease" that South Vietnam never knew before. Still, the physical destruction, perhaps, is not the worst of it. The destruction of an entire society—"That is, above all, what the Vietnamese blame the Americans for," said one Vietnamese scholar. "Willfully or not, they have tended to destroy what is most precious to us: family, friendship, our manner of expressing ourselves." ... "Physical death is everywhere but it is the social death caused by the destruction of the family that is of overriding importance."

One could realistically ask why mention these things at this time? Why should we even care when we can do little or nothing to change such monstrous realities? I would respond that his nonviolent opposition to the stultifying violence of our country is the very essence of Dr. King's life and work. Collectively, with the help of Allah, we can begin to change the regime perpetuating that violence. I would respond

Martin Luther King Jr (left) meets Malcolm X in Washington DC following a Senate hearing on the 1964 Civil Rights Act



to the above queries with a different set of questions. Namely, how many more innocent societies have to be destroyed before we as a people say enough is enough? What type of world do we wish to leave our children? Is it one where the situation described in “Fire in the Lake” becomes so common that it does not even prick their consciences? Have we become so blinded by the American dream that we can no longer see the accompanying global nightmare that helps to make it possible?

Some would say that the mere mention of such issues is overwhelming for the average person and could lead to a type of socio-psychiatric paralysis. One the beautiful features of Islam is that it allows us to recognise our limitations while still maintaining a principled opposition to wrong. By so doing we are able to escape becoming socio-political zombies. Our Prophet (peace and blessings of Almighty God upon

him) wisely stated, “If one of you sees something wrong, let him change it with his hand. If unable to do so, let him speak out against it. If still unable to do so, let him hate it in his heart, and that is the weakest manifestation of faith.”

Thus, if one finds himself or herself unable to do something lawful and practical like joining the likes of the Quakers, the Catholic Workers or other institutions with a long history of nonviolent anti-war activism in this country, or founding a similarly oriented Muslim group, let him or her speak out against it at every forum and via every medium available. If even that is not possible, then let them hate it in their hearts. Doing so is the least we can do to honor the life, legacy and sacrifice of Dr. King, and hopefully, it will serve as a first step in our moving to finish the work he so valiantly started.

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Faith-Based Harmony through Peaceful Engagement in Participative Pluralism: An American Experiment

by **Dr. Robert D. Crane**

Two thousand years ago, the great Roman philosopher, Cicero, warned, “Before you discuss anything whatsoever, first define your terms”. He was talking about what today we call paradigms of thought and about what may become the strategy of paradigm management in a coming age of Artificial Intelligence.

The major split and cause of disharmony both within and among religions and nations are two exclusivist paradigms of thought, namely, ideological traditionalism and ideological progressivism. Ideology by definition is a closed system of thought. If one adds the suffix “ism” to any concept, such as “Islam”, it connotes a degeneration of this concept into an ideology. “Islamism” and “Islamist” automatically constitute threats to democracy and to the larger concept of a “democratic republic” envisioned by the Founders of the “great American experiment” in liberty, the United States of America.

“Tradition” can refer to the enlightened heritage of an organic nation that gives rise to common values in the present and common hopes for the future. This is the opposite of modern “nation-building”, which by definition requires the destruction of organic nations in order to impose a secular substitute known as a “sovereign state”. The official definition of sovereignty, as I learned it when I was the founder and president of the Harvard International Law Society, is the secular power to control more than 50% of a given territory.

“Progress” similarly is like a chameleon, because it can refer to envisioning, articulating, and applying compassionate justice in society, whereas in its progressivist form it can refer to either oligarchical socialism or oligarchical capitalism and their end games of totalitarian oppression. The solution to such paradigmatic chaos can be its opposite in harmony through peaceful engagement in participative

pluralism through progressive tradition and traditional progress.

Another major cause of disharmony and conflict is failure to distinguish between the concepts or paradigms of liberty and freedom. Liberty is our freedom to seek guidance from divine revelation in the religion of our choice (*haqq al yaqin*), from studying the natural laws of the quantum universe (*ain al yaqin*), and intellectual effort to understand where these two support each other (*ilm al yaqin*), because if these two endeavors conflict in the pursuit and practice of compassionate justice, then one has misunderstood at least one of them. Freedom, on the other hand, can be self-centered as an obsession to do whatever one wants, including worship of oneself as a false god, which contradicts one's purpose of existence.

In my introductory talk at the First International Youth Forum of the World Muslim Communities Council on December 7-8, 2019, sponsored by the UAE's Ministry of Tolerance, I introduced a three-step progression from "tolerance", which can mean merely, "I won't kill you yet", to "diversity", which can mean merely peaceful coexistence without cooperation, to "peaceful engagement through participative pluralism", meaning, "We welcome you, because we have so much to learn from each other".

Such harmony requires a fundamental shift from a threat mentality to an opportunity mentality. The best way to counter the appeal of terrorists and other "nabobs of negativism" is to promote compassionate justice, as best developed in recent decades through the *maqasid al shari'ah* or ultimate purposes of Islamic jurisprudence and through their application in the governing paradigm of a republic.

The eight *maqasid* (purposes), or *dururiyat* (essentials), or *kulliyat* (universals) that I have developed over the decades consist of four guiding principles at the level of ontology and epistemology and four principles of application at the level of axiology. The guiding principles are respect for: 1) *haqq al din*, freedom of religion; *haqq al nafs*, the sacredness of the human person; 3) *haqq al nasl*, the sacredness of human community as a derivative from its individual members; and 3) *haqq al mabid*, environmental justice. The four principles for application are *haqq al mal*, economic justice; 2) *haqq al hurriyah*, political justice; 3) *haqq al karama*, gender equity; and 4) *haqq al 'ilm*, freedom of thought, publication, and assembly.

The role of a republic in the Islamic *maqasid al shari'ah* is summarised in the *maqsad*, political justice, *haqq al hurriya*. This consists of three princi-

ples: 1) *khilafa*, which is the responsibility of both the rulers and ruled to search for transcendent truth through revelation, critical thought, and applied justice; 2) *shura*, which is consultation with each other by both the rulers and the ruled; and 3) *ijma*, which is the responsibility of the ruled to seek consensus as a means to govern the governors.

The challenge today is to overcome the superficiality of both ideological traditionalism and ideological progressivism by pursuing the principles and thought that have always inhered in the best of tradition in very world religion.

The principal mentor of America's founders was Edmund Burke, who headed the minority Whig party in 18th-century England, and, as part of the Scottish Enlightenment, advocated a republic as superior to a democracy. He supported the American colonists' demands for economic justice against mercantilist exploitation and oppression by the English Parliament. The colonists double-crossed him, however, when they abandoned his movement for reform and instead revolted against the English monarchy as part of a system of government, though they did not oppose the monarchy as such until the revolution was well underway.

In the paradigm of a republic, tradition governs through the constant search for higher truth (cosmology), for transcendent justice as a derivative thereof (epistemology), and for practical application through virtue and institutional reform (axiology).

This is the opposite of a secular democracy, which is based in fact, though not in theory, on the principles of power, personal prestige, plutocracy, and privilege. In a republic, popular elections are an important tool of governance to pursue mutual consultation between the government and the people as a means for the people to develop a consensus on what they want.

In an Islamic republic, and perhaps especially in a Christian one, instead of policies alternating between aggression and timidity and between revolution and reaction, we need grand strategies guided by realism, restraint, and principled reform, including reform of dysfunctional institutions.

In any country governed by a republic reflecting the essence of every world religion, we need both love of each other and love of country, because this is programmed (*fatir* and *fitra*) into our human nature, which is designed for each person and community to give rather than to take in life (*infaq*), though this must be activated from an early age through integral and integrative education.

To love our country, our country must be lovely. Those who want ordered freedom want goodness, truth, and beauty. We should love principles but despise closed-circuit ideologies. We must cherish the individual person as a distinct and unrepeatable center of dignity (*haqq al nafs*), including the principle of proliferating variety. This principle of peaceful engagement in participative pluralism, in turn, is based on the cultivation of virtue (*akhlaq* in Islamic jurisprudence) and self-government by promoting decentralization through federalism or through its sublimation into an advanced form of confederalism.

Thomas Jefferson summarised the vision of America's founding men and women when he declared, "No people can be liberated and free unless they are properly educated. Proper education consists of teaching

and learning virtue. And no people can remain virtuous unless both the personal and public lives of the individual are infused with awareness and love of Divine Providence". Divine Providence was another term for the paradigm of "theism", which recognises that the ultimate consciousness in reality both created and sustains the universe and everything in it. This is distinguished from "deism", in which God may have created the universe like a clock-maker but then disappeared from the scene forever, so that, in effect, man can become his own god.

We read in the Jewish Bible, "What does the Lord require of you? but to do Justice and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8), recognising that God is the best Planner.

Dr. Crane is the Chairman of the Center for Understanding Islam and Muslims. Earlier in his career, under President Nixon, he was appointed Deputy Director for Planning in the National Security Council, and under President Reagan he was the US Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. Please see bio on page 168.

Islam and Evolution: The Curious Case of David Solomon Jalajel

by Shoaib Malik

The field of Islam and Evolution has been steadily developing over the past few decades, and we are beginning to see a healthy spectrum of opinions on the matter. I wrote a brief review of the spectrum in the last Muslim 500 2020 edition,¹ but this isn't the only review of the topic that is available in the literature.² So I will not be reviewing that spectrum again. Instead I will be focusing on a particular proposal by David Solomon Jalajel. He wrote two works relevant to Islam and Evolution. One was a book that he published in 2009 by the name of *Islam and Biological Evolution: Exploring Classical Sources and Methodologies*.³ The second was an article he published with the *Yaqeen Institute* in 2018 with the title *Tawaqquf and Acceptance of Human Evolution*.⁴ The focus on Jalajel is due to two reasons. First, he brings forward a very unique proposal which marks him out in the vast array of opinions that Muslim thinkers have come up

with. Second, unfortunately, his proposal has been misunderstood and misrepresented by myself. In this article I seek to rectify and clarify his proposal.

The structure of this article is as follows. First, I shall briefly remind us what the general principles of evolution are and zoom in on the main contentions which irk Muslims. Second, I shall elucidate Jalajel's contribution as clearly as possible and highlight its novelty. Third, I shall clearly point out where I misunderstood Jalajel and clearly retract my earlier characterisation of his proposal.

WHAT IS EVOLUTION?

Paradoxically, evolution is a relatively simple idea but one that is sometimes difficult to explain because it requires a lot of careful elaboration and a lot to corroborate it. Suffice to say that I shall not be repeating

1 Shoaib Ahmed Malik. 2020. "Evolution and Islam - A Brief Review." In *The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims, 2020*, edited by Abdallah Schleifer, 207–12. Amman, Jordan: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre. You can find it online on the following link: https://www.academia.edu/40537232/Evolution_and_Islam_A_Brief_Review

2 Nidhal Guessoum. 2016. Islamic Theological Views on Darwinian Evolution. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. Accessed on the 1st of January 2020. <https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/>

3 David Solomon Jalajel. 2009. *Islam and Biological Evolution: Exploring Classical Sources and Methodologies*. Western Cape, South Africa: University of the Western Cape.

4 David Solomon Jalajel. 2018. "Tawaqquf and Acceptance of Human Evolution." *Yaqeen Institute*. Accessed on the 8th of August 2020. <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/dr-david-solomon-jalajel/tawaqquf-and-acceptance-of-human-evolution/>

university textbook material here. Instead I will be offering a very brief sketch of what evolution is. The idea rests on three very simple proposals:⁵

1. Deep time
2. Common descent
3. Natural selection and random mutation

Let us review each in order.

Deep time is simply the idea that the age of the universe should be thought of in terms of millions or billions of years. By contrast, some Jewish and Christian theologians in history conceived the age of the Earth in terms of thousands of years. However, advances in geology forced a complete revision of the matter. The current understanding is that the universe is around 14.5 billion years old with the Earth being around 4.5 billion years old.

Common descent is pretty much an extension of our family tree to the entire biological kingdom. All of us come from a mother and a father who in turn have their own mother and father and so on. When we identify connections in the family we see them through a family tree. Common ancestry is the notion that we have a family tree of all the biological entities of the world, including humans. So humans came from a previous species, who in turn came from a previous species all the way back to the earliest life form(s). So humans are connected to the rest of the biological world.

Natural selection and random mutation are the engines of evolution. To explain this, we need to understand genes. All biological entities have genes. These are the basic building blocks that govern our physical manifestations. There are genes responsible for your eyes, your hair colour, your height, your aptitudes, etc. They are the blueprints of who we are. But notice that when parents have kids they sometimes look similar, sometimes very different, and sometimes in between. It varies from one kid to another. This is because when parents have kids, the genes of each one mix to produce the genes of the offspring, and this results in various combinations. With this in mind we can now proceed with explaining natural selection and random selection. Let's start with the latter. Random mutation is the idea that certain mutations occur in the genes which leads to changes in the physical manifestation of the entity. A crude example would be a gene mutation that changes your

eye colour. Now imagine at the very beginning of life on earth (billions of years ago). Those entities, whatever they were, started to reproduce and over time had offspring. However, over a large timespan we get so much *accumulative variation* that they end up becoming different. They might even change so radically that they become different species. So random mutation allows variation to arise, which results in creating different species. Natural selection is simply the idea that biological entities with traits better suited to their environment will have more offspring and pass on those traits. Other disadvantageous traits will not be passed on as much and may ultimately disappear altogether. The combination of natural selection and random mutation is what drives evolution. While much more can be said – and I apologise to the reader if this is too succinct – space prevents me from going further than this.

Generally, Muslims have three issues with evolution. First, Muslims have an issue with human evolution due to the story of Adam and Eve in the Qur'an. After all, the Qur'an and hadith give a clear impression that Adam was a miraculous creation. Second, Muslims have an issue with the idea of chance. Does God play dice? Third, evolution is automatically equated to atheism. I have co-authored a paper that thoroughly deals with the second and third concerns so I will not repeat that here.⁶ The real concern is the first one, and this will be the primary worry when reviewing Jalajel's proposal.

JALAJEL'S CONCEPT OF *TAWAQQUF*

To appreciate the proposal which Jalajel advances, it will help us to contextualise it against a background of pre-existing opinions. Some Muslims clearly reject evolution outright, i.e. the whole theory, because they see it as being at fundamental odds with Islam. This could be due to their seeing the science as flimsy or because of religious reasons. So they don't accept an iota of what evolution has to say. These are *creationists*. Then there's the other side of the spectrum with people who wholeheartedly accept evolution and believe the scriptures should be reinterpreted to accommodate an evolutionary reading. These are *committed evolutionists*. Then we have some people in between who provide some nuance. Sheikh Nuh

⁵ There are many books one can find on the topic of evolution. For the uninitiated reader I recommend Brian Charlesworth and Deborah Charlesworth. 2003. *Evolution: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. For a richer account see Thomas Fowler and Daniel Kuebler. 2007. *The Evolution Controversy: A Survey of Competing Theories*. Michigan: Baker Academic.

⁶ Shoab Ahmed Malik and Elvira Kulieva. 2020. "Does Belief in Evolution Entail *Kufr* (Disbelief)? Evaluating the Concerns of a Muslim Theologian." *Zygon*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12620>.

Ha Mim Keller and Sheikh Yasir Qadhi make a useful distinction between non-human evolution and human evolution, which entails that everything is a product of evolution except for humans.⁷ So in other words they believe that humans are an exception to the process of evolution. Conveniently, let's call them *human exceptionalists*. Jalajel fits in none of these categories, but to see why, we need to unpack his ideas, which we shall now do.

Jalajel makes it very clear that he is advancing a proposal extrapolated from the methodology of the Sunni theological schools of Islam. These include Ash'arism, Maturidism, and Atharism. If these schools are taken as the prism through which the discussion is viewed, Jalajel argues we can arrive at an opinion that doesn't warrant such a harsh and frankly unnecessary rejection of evolution. But what about Adam? Jalajel determines that the Sunni hermeneutical methods he is examining cannot provide a reading of scripture with Adam having parents. In other words, Adam is a miraculous creation and was born without any parental agency. This is an uncontroversial position in the Sunni schools because such Muslims believe that miracles are possible. God can do whatever He pleases. But if Adam is born without a father and without a mother, then how can this be reconciled with evolution? It is at this juncture that Jalajel utilises the principle of *tawaqquf*, which is his novel contribution.

The term *tawaqquf* needs unpacking. Generally, this means suspension of belief. So, for example, when you are stuck on a question with multiple answers, and all of them seem plausible such that you don't decide to answer there and then, then you are doing *tawaqquf*. Now when it comes to Islamic scripture it should be made clear that the term *tawaqquf* has two usages: one in the field of Islamic Law and the other in the field of theology. The first usage is to refrain from making a judgement due to being unable



Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise, from the Persian book, Falnama (Book of Omens)

to resolve conflicting evidence. It is a form of vacillating. It is temporary, while waiting for evidence or an argument that will tip the scales in favour of one possibility or another.⁸ An example of this is when we have two conflicting hadiths. A particular hadith scholar may not know how to do it so he reserves judgement. But this doesn't eliminate the possibility of another scholar coming along and being able to reconcile the two. So in this type of *tawaqquf* a solution is *determinable*. This should be contrasted with theological *tawaqquf*, which is an obligatory, permanent epistemological stance of declaring a matter unknowable, e.g. when the scriptures are totally silent about something.⁹ For instance, consider the case of dinosaurs. Islamic scripture makes no claim either for or against dinosaurs. So one cannot argue a case for or against dinosaurs *on behalf of scripture* since it is silent on this matter. Thus to argue for or against di-

⁷ Ibid, 6. Also see footnote 26.

⁸ Omar Farahat. 2019. *The Foundation of Norms in Islamic Jurisprudence and Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 177.

⁹ Badr Ghamdi. 2016. *al-Tawaqquf fil-'Aqidah*. London: Takween, 32.

nosaurus *through or by scripture* is erroneous and *haram* because you are claiming something on behalf of God, which He Himself hasn't said. To make the implications of this matter clearer, it is *haram* to say Islam denies dinosaurs but it is also *haram* to state that belief in dinosaurs is mandatory in Islam. Both are unwarranted scripturally. I have been using dinosaurs as an example in this instance but one can think of several variations, e.g. quantum mechanics, the colour of angels' wings, the periodic table, teleportation etc. In contrast to the first type of *tawaqquf*, this second kind is *indeterminable*.

So the obvious question at this stage is: now what? If Islamic scripture neither negates nor affirms dinosaurs, how do we as Muslims deal with them? According to this second kind of *tawaqquf*, since there is no defining answer, as we have nothing to go by, whether you accept dinosaurs, don't accept dinosaurs, or suspend making any judgement on the matter, makes no difference whatsoever. All are valid *possibilities* since they are all *compatible* with Islamic scripture! The same thing goes with the periodic table and other things not mentioned in the Qur'an and hadiths. The take-home message with the second kind of *tawaqquf* is that you cannot affirm nor negate some things using scripture because scripture itself isn't saying anything. If so, all options are *possible* to take up since all are *compatible* with Islamic scripture.

With these ideas in place, we can now understand how Jalajel advances his novel proposal. Generally, Muslims assume that Adam is the first human being. So the origin of humanity is generally thought to have started with Adam. Sheikh Keller and Sheikh Qadhi are examples of proponents of this opinion. They are human exceptionalists precisely because they believe Adam was the first human being and was born miraculously, and therefore humans can never be a product of evolution, i.e. human exceptionalism. Jalajel uniquely divorces the connection between the *creation of Adam* with the *start of humanity*. In this narrative, when Adam descended to Earth from heaven (as opined by the majority of scholars), the Qur'an doesn't affirm nor negate the idea of there being already existing humans on earth. In other words, the Qur'an is silent on there being humans on earth prior to Adam's descent. If this is the case, we have to adopt theological *tawaqquf* on this issue. This en-

tails that there is equally the possibility of there being humans prior to Adam's descent and there not being humans prior to Adam's descent. *Both are valid possibilities* since Islamic scripture is silent on the matter. If we go by this argument, then there is a plausible scenario of Adam descending to Earth while there are pre-existing humans on Earth who were created through the process of evolution! Adam and his family *could or couldn't have* (again, *tawaqquf*) mingled with these other humans, leading to established lineages right up to our time, with the former possibility allowing for all people thereafter to share in common descent with all life on Earth as well as a lineage going back to Adam. The point here is that Adam is a miracle beyond doubt because of scripture. *But scripture doesn't deny the possibility of co-existing humans at the moment of Adam's descent who could be a product of evolution*. So it would be incorrect to call Jalajel's account human exceptionalism, but it would also be incorrect to describe this position as evolutionism in the sense of rejecting the possibility of any miraculous occurrences altogether. I see his position as providing a new category in the spectrum, which I have termed *Adamic exceptionalism*.¹⁰ Jalajel, in an online interview¹¹ on my YouTube/FB series *Academic Access*¹², rejects this label, arguing that since "Adam" is not a point of scientific enquiry, but one of faith, he is not included in the theory of evolution, so he cannot be excepted from it. He says the term would only make sense if Adam had explanatory relevance to human origins or negated the possibility of common descent, which, due to *tawaqquf*, belief in Adam does not entail.

To make sure Jalajel's conclusions are understood, the following questions should help summarise it more clearly:

1. **Does Jalajel's thesis reject Adam's miraculous creation?**

No. He makes it very clear that this cannot be scripturally compromised.

2. **Does Jalajel's thesis reject Adam as the first human?**

It neither rejects nor affirms this. Islamic scripture makes it unclear whether he was the first human being. So it is possible that he was but it is also possible that he wasn't. We have to adopt theological *tawaqquf*.

10 Malik and Kulieva, "Does Belief in Human Evolution Entail *Kufr* (Disbelief)?" 16.

11 FEIISP. 2020. *Tawaqquf and Human Evolution with Dr. David Solomon Jalajel*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/9Xplz2T6QJ0> Accessed on the 8th of August 2020.

12 Academic Access is a live, YouTube show that is run by my institution, FEIISP. We host academics from all walks of life on various topics. To see our YouTube page you can go on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZMAE1au9Y8sfPyiMZv8nQ> You can also find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FEIISP>

3. **Does Jalajel's thesis reject evolution, specifically common ancestry?**

No.

4. **Does Jalajel's thesis include Adam in the evolutionary process?**

No. But science is blind to miracles. So science isn't in the business of denying Adam's existence to begin with.

MY MISREADING

Having presented Jalajel's proposal I now wish to retract my statements in my earlier publications in which I grossly mischaracterise Jalajel's proposal. On two accounts I have called Jalajel a creationist (in table formulations) because I assumed that he rejected human evolution. I have said this in my previous

chapter in Muslim 500 2020 edition¹³ and my monograph with *Kalam Research and Media* on Islam and Atheism.¹⁴ As a point of interest to the reader, there are others who have also understood Jalajel's proposal in a similar manner.¹⁵ I want to make it explicitly clear that my attribution of creationism to Jalajel's proposal in both of these works was wrong.¹⁶ As part of academic integrity one must concede when one is mistaken which is why I happily retract my earlier statements. Having carefully re-read Jalajel's book, and having interviewed him on my show (*Academic Access*), I now believe that Jalajel has by far one of the most innovative proposals that safeguards both the Islamic narrative and respect for the natural sciences. It is right up there with the proposal developed by Sheikh Yasir Qadhi and Dr. Nazir Khan.¹⁷

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13 Malik. "Evolution and Islam - A Brief Review," 210.

14 Shoaib Ahmed Malik. *Islam and Atheism: A Contemporary Discourse*. Abu Dhabi: Kalam Research and Media. You can find it online on the following link: https://www.academia.edu/38565039/Atheism_and_Islam_A_Contemporary_Discourse

15 Nidhal Guessoum. 2011. "Islam and Biological Evolution: Exploring Classical Sources and Methodologies By David Solomon Jalajel." *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 22(3): 476-479; Anwer Suleman Mall. 2011. "Islam and Biological Evolution: Exploring Classical Sources and Methodologies, David Solomon Jalajel: Book Review." *Journal for Islamic Studies*, 30(1): 109-112; Guessoum. 2016. *Islamic Theological Views on Darwinian Evolution*, 7.

16 In my most recent publication I rectified my representation of Jalajel. See Malik and Kulieva, "Does Belief In Human Evolution Entail *Kufr* (Disbelief)?" 16.

17 Yasir Qadhi and Nazir Khan. 2018. "Human Origins: Theological Conclusions and Empirical Limitations." *Yaqeen Institute*. Accessed on 8th of August 2020. <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/nazir-khan/human-origins-theological-conclusions-and-empirical-limitations/>

On Fitrah, Morality, Nature, and Equivocation

by Moustafa Elqabbany

WHAT IS FITRAH?

The *fitrah* of something is its nature, instinct, constitution, or disposition. The trilateral root that *fitrah* derives from—*فطر*—means to split (and by extension, to emerge). Thus, breaking one's fast is called *fitr* because the mouth is opened for food. Similarly, desert truffles (and mushrooms by extension) are called *fitr* because of the distinctive cracks in the soil that form when they are ready for harvest. The appearance of something out of nowhere (like desert truffles out of the cracked earth), or its creation, is also derived from the same root. As such, Allah calls Himself *Fātir al-Samāwāt wa al-Ard* ("The Creator of the Heavens and Earth") in the Qur'an.

HOW DOES FITRAH COMPARE TO NATURE?

Before discussing *fitrah* vis-à-vis nature, it is important to understand equivocation and its role in muddling logical arguments. Equivocation is the use of a word or expression in more than one sense in a single argument. An example would be:

Premise A: *Nothing is better than a rib eye steak.*

Premise B: *A hamburger is better than nothing.*

Conclusion: *A hamburger is better than a rib eye steak.*

The issue here is that the meaning of "nothing" changed from the first premise to the second. As such, the conclusion is false. Similarly, in relation to morality, the word "nature" is used in two distinct manners.



The cracked desert ground indicating the location of a truffle

The *fitrah* of something is how it was created, or **its** nature. This is distinct from Nature, which approximately means the elements and systems of the world that are not the result of human action, such as flora, fauna, and ecosystems. Thus, those who say that homosexuality is natural are referring to Nature. Those who say that it is unnatural are referring to the **transcendent nature** of man, or *al-Fitrah* (literally, “the nature/disposition”, meaning the disposition that Allah has decreed for us). In the first sense of “natural”, morality is our nature. In the second sense, morality is not natural: it is supernatural.

WHY ISN'T MORALITY NATURAL?

Materialism—the belief that the physical world exists to the exclusion of anything supernatural—provides little basis for morality. Just as psychologists have tried to place the entirety of the mind inside the brain, ignoring the spirit, people searching for morality have ended up empty-handed whenever their core assumption has been that only the physical world exists. If that were the case, then why would we care about anything that does not benefit our physical existence? Dying parents and crippled children are a waste of resources. Rape and theft are “natural” (in the sense of Nature) ways to fulfill one’s physical needs, spread one’s DNA, and obtain a livelihood. It

only takes a few moments’ reflection to realise that, as humans, we all innately know that acting “natural” is not in our nature. Human rights and humanity are real, and if our world view cannot explain them, then it is necessary to augment it such that it can.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ mentioned a number of distinctive practices related to sound human nature (*sunan al-fitrah*). These include acts that are altogether “unnatural”, such as removing hair from the armpits and pubic regions. Perhaps the most telling, though, is circumcision: man’s physical constitution, in the most personal and intimate way, is cut and pruned to be in harmony with Allah’s commandment. In other words, man’s nature requires that he sever a part of himself, physically and spiritually, from Nature.

THE SOURCE OF MORAL RULINGS

If Nature is not a source of moral rulings, then what about man’s nature (*fitrah*)? Can that be a source of moral rulings? In *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din*, Imam Ghazali informs us that truth can sometimes be repugnant, and that people’s innate dispositions (*tibā’*) can sometimes view falsehood as good. If that is true, where does this leave us with respect to *fitrah*, our innate nature? Can a sound *fitrah* coexist with an incorrect perception of good and evil?

Human *fitrah* is the transcendent, innate nature that Allah creates in the hearts of mankind. *Fitrah* remains intact in all people who have not been corrupted, including young children and some of those unreached by Revelation. The *fitrah* of mankind imbues them with the desire to be morally upright but not the knowledge of its particulars. Thus, while *fitrah* entails that we are moral beings at our core, it does not entail knowing how to be moral. One can be of sound *fitrah* yet be ignorant of what the moral course of action is in a particular situation.

Excluding the knowledge of **how** to be moral from the requirements of *fitrah* addresses three issues:

1. Legal particulars have changed over time: previous Prophets had different laws. So if their followers were upright and Muslims are also upright, it means that the particulars of being upright can change. If they behaved according to the *fitrah* and Muslims do too, that means that particulars are not part of the definition of *fitrah*, but a practical consequence of its application.

2. Excluding knowledge of the particulars of how to be morally upright from the definition of *fitrah* allows for the existence of non-Muslims never reached by the message of Islam yet who remain true to their *fitrah*.
3. This view is consistent with the understanding that good and evil (*husn wa qubh*) are not intrinsic: left to their own devices, people will differ on what is good or evil. The source of good and evil is Revelation and nothing else. But receiving knowledge of Revelation is not part of the definition of *fitrah*, so the knowledge of moral particulars, which can only come from Revelation, is not part of the definition of *fitrah*, which even young children possess.

Finally, *fitrah* is transcendent because it is not (just) about physical survival: it entails the need to be morally upright, sometimes despite the physical cost. Morality is not a natural concept: it is supernatural. So human nature necessitates the existence of a metaphysical realm that effects morality.

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Modern Islamic Education: Principles and Values

by Muhammad Ziyad Batha

STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE IN ISLAM

All praise is due to Allāh, the One and Only, the Eternal and Absolute, the Owner of all knowledge and Possessor of all attributes of perfection. Truly, all praise is due to the All-Merciful, Who created mankind, inspired them with speech, taught them by the pen that which they did not know, and Who continuously inspires mankind to think, develop and progress in knowledge and innovation.

Abundant benedictions and salutations be upon the noblest of Allāh's creation, the most sublime in beauty and character, the epitome of perfection, the exceptional teacher, our Master Muhammad ibn 'Abdillāh – and upon his pure and chaste family, his blessed companions, and those who follow them until the last day.

Being the one true religion of the one true deity, the teachings of Islām have demonstrated for man-

kind a perfect framework of living that leads people to a completely balanced and successful system of life.

A core part of this holistic framework is the implementation of effective and wholesome education, as people without education are like buildings without foundations: ready to crumble at any moment and at the mercy of every gust of troubling wind. Being a religion that seeks to develop people to be the best versions of themselves in terms of spiritual and professional excellence, Islam has greatly emphasised the importance of effective and wholesome education in order to achieve this, in terms of both theory and practice. This concept can be understood from various verses of the Qur'ān and sayings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

In Sūrah al-Baqarah, Allāh Most High informs us that the distinctive mark of human beings over the angels is knowledge. Allāh Most High says:

*He taught Adam all the names of things
(al-Baqarah, 2:31)*

In the very first revelation, Allah chose to initiate the holy mission of the Noble Messenger ﷺ by addressing him with words commanding him to 'Read!'. Concurrently, the Noble Messenger ﷺ is also instructed to acknowledge that Allāh Most High is the ultimate teacher and inspirer. Allāh Most High said:

﴿۱﴾ اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿۲﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿۳﴾ اِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿۴﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿۵﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿۶﴾

Read! In the name of your Lord who created; He created man from a clinging form; Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One; who imparted knowledge by means of the pen; He taught man what he did not know. (al-A'laq, 113:1-5)

In Sūrah al-Zumar, Allāh Most High also says:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

Say, 'How can those who know be equal to those who do not know?' (al-Zumar, 39:9)

As for prophetic guidance concerning learning and education, the Noble Messenger ﷺ has greatly emphasised the importance of seeking knowledge, irrespective of time, place, source or gender. The Noble Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said: "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim" (*Ibn Mājah*, 224)

He ﷺ is also reported to have said: "Whoever travels a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise" (*Muslim*, 2699)

There are also many other verses and prophetic narrations that indicate the general importance of knowledge and education.

HISTORICAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

When considering education, many Muslims in the modern age will generally divide the sciences into two broad categories: secular and religious knowledge. These two categories are conventionally regarded by the masses to be completely separate entities,

with no or very little relation to each other. However, when analysing these sciences with a historical lens, we will find that whilst Islām has certainly recognised the distinct nature of the study of both secular and Islamic sciences, it has also not drawn drastic differentiation between the two categories in terms of worth and has regarded the study of both to be praiseworthy and commendable when the intention of study is pure and correct. In fact, the 'secular' sciences were studied in the past as an aid to faith and religion, allowing a person to recognise the Creator through the amazing nature of the creation being studied. This is why in classical Islamic universities such as the Qarāwiyyīn (the first degree-granting university in the world, founded in 859 C.E by Fatimah al-Fihri in Fez, Morocco), the prestigious al-Azhar in Egypt, and certainly the Dar al-Ulūm Deoband in India, seekers of knowledge were instructed in the sacred sciences as well as subjects such as philosophy, physics, astronomy, and medicine, amongst many other sciences. This approach led to Muslims constantly being at the forefront of invention and innovation, with many ground-breaking findings, pioneering discoveries, and phenomenal achievements that have had a huge impact on the world originally being attributed to Muslim scholars. To provide just a few examples; al-Zahrāwī, 'the father of surgery', published a 1500-page illustrated encyclopaedia of surgery that was used in Europe as a medical reference for 500 years; the great Muslim physicist Ibn al-Haitham discovered the camera obscura phenomenon and the concept that humans see objects by light reflecting off of them and entering the eye; the Persian polymath Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwarizmī developed the concept of algebra, which was named after his famous ninth-century treatise *Kitāb al-Jabr wa l'Muqābalah* which translates roughly as 'The Book of Reasoning and Balancing'; in ninth-century Spain, 'Abbas ibn Firnās was the first person to make a real attempt to construct a flying machine and fly; and the first public hospital with wards and teaching centres was the Ahmad ibn Tulun hospital, founded in 872 in Cairo to provide free care for anyone who needed it.

In the context of the modern age and institutions of today, we will find that the majority of modern Islamic seminaries and higher religious learning institutions have done away with this classical approach and are now more focused on pure instruction in the specific religious sciences. This change has been made for several understandable reasons, such as a shift in educational dynamics and in fulfilling the assumed needs of the times.

THE ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN BRITAIN

Amongst European countries, the state with arguably the strongest Islamic education system is the United Kingdom. The roots of the Islamic educational institutions in Britain can be traced back to the mass migration beginning in the 1960s of South Asian Muslims to the UK, primarily for economic reasons, but also because of a sense of loyalty to the British Empire after the devastating impact of two world wars. Currently, there are broadly four types of Islamic education institutes in the UK, all catering to different demographics:

The Makātib: At a basic level, the early Muslim subcontinent migrants to the UK made it a priority to establish masājid with internal evening maktab/madrassah systems. Children between the ages of six to 15 years of age attend these two-hour weekday evening classes (traditionally from 5-7 pm) that run parallel to standard state education and teach them the basics of their religion. These makātib have been continuously developing and evolving over the years, with many now offering flexible timings and options. A recent development for the makātib was the gradual phasing out of older material from South Africa and the subcontinent in favour of implementing new and engaging syllabi produced in Britain by British ‘Ulamā. These new syllabi and programmes have been specially developed in tandem with modern educational pedagogy in order to produce suitable material and training that promotes relevant and effective learning for children living in the U.K.

The Dār al-Ulūm: ‘Dār al-Ulūm’ is an Arabic expression that translates as ‘house of knowledge’. The *Dar al-Ulūms* play a major role in the British Muslim religious landscape, with a rich educational legacy stretching back to the 1970s and beginning with the establishment of Darul Ulūm Al-Arabiyyah Al-Islamiyyah, better known as Darul Ulūm Bury, which is the oldest Islamic seminary in the United Kingdom, founded by the late Shaykh Yusuf Motala. This was closely followed by the establishment of the Dar al-Ulūm Dewsbury in 1982. The staple of these institutes is that they teach memorisation of the Qur’an as well as adapted forms of the *Dars Nizāmi* syllabus imported from the subcontinent. Today approximately 30 institutes are teaching the *Dars Nizāmi* syllabus in the UK, with those full-time institutes that cater to the secondary 11+ sector offering GCSEs and Advanced (A) levels. With the constant development of these institutions, many other courses are being facilitated for students, with one notable institute organising teacher training and finance courses for advanced students. Thousands of students have graduated from these institutes with the titles of *Huffāz*, *Qurrā* and ‘Ulamā.

Islamic Schools: A later development was the Establishment of Muslim faith schools that focused on teaching the standard secular GCSE syllabus whilst at the same time inculcating in them the character and religiosity to live as proud Muslims in wider society. The main difference between these schools and the *Dar al-Ulūms* is that the *Dar al-Ulūms* mainly aim to produce Islamic scholars and leaders, whilst the schools aim to produce general Muslims who are

The Islamic College, an Islamic college in London



both academically and spiritually strong, becoming ambassadors of Islam and valuable members of British society.

Educational Institutes: General institutes providing courses and education to the masses on various Islamic subjects. These are sometimes based in masājid, and sometimes in separate settings such as a university or private campuses.

Some students from the UK seeking Islamic education have and continue to choose to leave the UK and travel abroad for the acquisition of knowledge at traditional seats of knowledge and universities, particularly in Arabic-speaking countries. Popular destinations over past years have included: Egypt (home of Al-Azhar University), Yemen (Home of Dār al-Mustafa and other seats of learning such as the controversial Salafist institute Dār al-Hadīth in Damaj), Syria (a hub of scholars and institutes such as the Ma'had al-Fath al-Islāmi before the ravaging war), Mauritania (home of many an awesome scholar and the late sage Shaykh Murābit al-Hāj), Saudi Arabia (home of the popular Madinah University and other institutes), Turkey (particularly Istanbul after the migration of many Syrian scholars there due to the civil war), India (where the first Dar al-Ulūm in Deoband and its many offshoots remain), Pakistan, Jordan, Morocco, South Africa, and other destinations.

SHARED VALUES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Despite the varying styles of education, instruction and syllabi, most Islamic institutes in the world can be united upon their overall purpose of producing individuals who excel in knowledge, character, and outreach. Different institutes have expressed these common values in different words and terms. For example, the Dar al-Mustafa institute, founded in 1993 by al-Habīb 'Umar ibn Hafīz and his associates in the city of Tarīm (Yemen), has constituted its three aims in a superb manner:

Ta'lim (Education): The dissemination and acquisition of authentic knowledge at a distinguished standard.

Tazkiyah (Reformation): To use knowledge as a means to purify the soul from spiritual diseases and ailments, and refining character by learning and following the teachings found in the Qur'an and Sunnah, particularly the Prophetic examples of moral conduct and noble demeanour.

Da'wah (Outreach): To preach and propagate the messages of Islām by various means and avenues,

using the Prophetic model of mercy, good manners, truthfulness and sincerity.

Another example of the adaption of these common aims in the western world can be found in the emphasised values of influential UK seminary Dār al-Ulūm Leicester, who have introduced an intriguing ethos of *Learn, Practise, Serve*. This ethos is one and the same as that of Dar al-Mustafa and other like institutes with only the phrasing being changed appropriately.

We have presented here just two examples. However, by studying the core aims, ethos and values of most Islamic institutions globally it will be realised that the concept of these three core aims are shared by one and all, though some institutes may word things differently and place more emphasis on certain goals. Due to these slight variances, different institutes will each use their own methods and means to reach these overall goals bearing in mind social and cultural factors. Therefore, whilst the aims are similar on paper, an institute based in the West may use a very different approach to instilling these values in students than an institute based in the Middle East. Let us now examine each of these principles in slightly more detail.

• Education

Education has two core components: teaching (*ta'lim*) and learning (*ta'allum*). For an educational system to be regarded as effective, both these components need due care and attention. It is the duty of the teacher to implement transformative Islamic education, all the while ensuring that learning is happening on the side of the students. A teacher may employ different strategies to judge this, such as formative and summative assessment. Professor Abdullah Sahin (Senior Lecturer at the University of Warwick) has presented 10 principles to follow whilst trying to implement transformative Islamic education:

1. Having safe learning environments and trusting relationships;
2. Learner-led experience of nurture, care and empowerment;
3. Effective Islamic literacy: knowledge and understanding of faith;
4. Spirituality and intelligent faith development: encouraging values of respect, empathy and appreciation of diversity;
5. Fostering imagination and respecting the agency of the learner;
6. Recognising the developmental identity needs and contextual reality of learners;
7. Reflective, inspiring pedagogies of learning by heart and inculcating a love of learning, build-

- ing confidence;
8. Teachers as facilitators, not mere instructors/trainers;
 9. Human flourishing, not top-down pushing of information; and
 10. Learners connecting/integrating their experience of home, school and society.

An interesting fact about these and other pedagogical principles is that they are not only found in modern pedagogic theory but can also be extracted from the noble life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (sīrah).

A brilliant work that demonstrates this is *Al-Rasūl al-Mu'allim wa Asālibuhu fi 'l-Ta'līm*, authored by the late Syrian Muhaddith Shaykh 'Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah, which has been translated into English as 'Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: The Teacher'. In this outstanding work, the noble author studies the teaching methods of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the effectiveness of which can be gauged by the tremendous impact he had on his Companions and the world at large. The author demonstrates that the teaching methods of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ incorporated analogies, similes, anecdotes, diagrams, interactive dialogue, humour, repetition, continuous evaluation, physical contact, gestures, and customisation, amongst others. The author draws a fascinating conclusion that despite the Messenger of Allah ﷺ being unlettered, he was one worthy of being called the perfect teacher. This is a unique proposition, as the Prophet's role as a teacher is an often-forgotten dimension from his multi-dimensional life. We know him as the final Prophet, the final Messenger, and a mercy to the worlds, but how many acknowledge and remember him as the great teacher?

• Reformation

This area is one that mandates deep discussion and thought. However, a brief synopsis of what would be desired is that learners are not only taking Islamic knowledge in theory but are observing and implementing the practical teachings in their personal and social lives. The famous Arabic proverb states:

علم بلا عمل كجسد بلا روح

The example of knowledge that is not practised upon is that of a body without a soul

Hence it is desired that students practice upon their knowledge in order to become upright and successful individuals. This whole process is also known as 'Tarbiyah', which has been defined by the elev-

enth-century Muslim scholar al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī in his significant work *Al-Mufradāt fi Gharib al-Qur'ān* as:

إنشاء الشيء حالا حالا إلى حد التمام

Allowing an object to grow stage-by-stage until it reaches a state of perfection

An educator hopes to inspire their students to practice upon their knowledge, so that as they climb the stages of knowledge, they simultaneously climb the stages of spirituality and upright character until they reach a platform of excellence (*ihsān*) by the will of Almighty Allāh. It is only such figures who will be able to truly fulfil the rights of sacred knowledge and lead the Muslim nation (*ummah*) successfully.

• Outreach

After having learnt and practised, the final aim would be for students to pass on their knowledge and use it to benefit others. This forms the basis of the concept of da'wah, which is a much-emphasised concept in the religion. Allāh Most High says:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي

Say (O Muhammad), 'This is my way: based on clear evidence, I, and all who follow me, call [people] to God! (Yūsuf, 12:108)

Allāh Most High also says:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

[O Prophet!], call [people] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. And debate with them in the most courteous way (an-Nahl, 16:125)

Allāh Most High also says in *Sūrah Fussilat*:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّن دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

And whose words are better than someone who calls (others) to Allah, does good, and says, "I am truly one of those who submit." (Fussilat, 41:33)

The Noble Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said: "Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 3461)

These Qur'anic injunctions as well as the many prophetic narrations, of which one has been provided above, clearly indicate the importance of inviting to the religion of Allah. However, this inviting (*da'wah*) does not have to be by direct speech only but can take many forms. In addition to giving talks and having conversations about faith, indirect *da'wah* could be done by actions such as being generally polite, carrying a constant smile, helping the elderly and sick, honouring one's neighbour, volunteering in the community, and other similar activities. These types of actions can be just as effective as a conversation in order to attract people to the Islamic faith, as people are usually judged more based on actions than empty speech. As the English maxim truthfully states: *actions speak louder than words*.

MOVING AHEAD

Looking towards the future of Islamic educational systems, each type of institution must continue to function and operate in its own right, as each type of institution appeals to and caters for different Muslim demographics. It is not feasible that one single model be pushed whilst others are disregarded, as this would trample on the legacy of the great thinkers who brought these different models to our shores and thereby positively influenced the lives of all Muslims in some way or another. However, it is important that these institutions do not become stagnant and complacent upon what they already achieved, but that they continue to progress and develop their systems by learning and adopting the latest educational models and concepts. This can be aided by implementing a robust reflection culture in all institutions, where all staff from management to teachers are constantly reflecting on how to improve themselves and the institution in whatever roles they have, in order to fulfil the purpose of their respective roles. If stakeholders are allowed to stop reflecting and become comfortable in their positions, this opens the door to drops in standards and complacency, which is extremely detrimental. As Muslims we need to be proactive and not reactive, and address issues at the root before they

become difficult to address. There also needs to be a sense of accountability, as ultimately those in these roles are questionable before the Muslim Ummah who have trusted them in these positions, and Allāh Most High who has placed them in these positions.

It is also important that the various institutions learn to collaborate and establish links, as the ultimate goal of academic and spiritual excellence for every young Muslim can only be realised when the educational system as a whole is robust and in sync. Collaboration also helps in seeing the larger picture, as sometimes being confined to our own small circles can contribute to lack of vision and insight into the true needs of society.

Based on the above principles, every institution, whether it be a Dār al-'Ulūm, maktab, school, university, or any other type of institution, will be able to continue to progress and make the appropriate adaptations and changes that society demands. If the appropriate developments are not undertaken, we will begin to see the value of institutions dropping in the eyes of people and their gradual fading into irrelevance. At such a juncture it is extremely difficult to then make the changes that should have been made a long time before and regain repute. The principle of being proactive and not reactive is key.

In conclusion, if today's educators and learners are to hold these values dear and continue developing ways of realising them in the face of societal and social changes, they can trust in themselves and Allāh Most High that they will continue to thrive and succeed, armed with an education that reflects the true nature of the reality that Islam has come to proclaim.

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Will This Generation of British Muslim Leaders Achieve Half as much as Their Predecessors?

by Sufyan Gulam Ismail

*'You will never discover new Oceans until you
have the courage to lose sight of the shore'*

André Gide

*Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a
people until they change what is in themselves*

Surah Ar-Ra'd v 13

INTRODUCTION

On the face of it, the record of British Muslims is tough to beat. Muslims started arriving on British shores in significant numbers from the 1960s and 70s onwards. Since then, this three-million strong community (barely 5% of the UK population)¹ has established over 2,000 Mosques and prayer spaces,² approximately 200+ Muslim schools,³ provision of Halal food in nearly every corner of the country, 9% of students at university now from a Muslim background compared to 7% for the general population,⁴ a growing club of Muslim millionaires and even a couple of billionaires, over 10% of Doctors disclosing their faith in the NHS are Muslim, part of over 40,000 Muslims powering the NHS,⁵ the 'Muslim Pound' contributing over £30Bn to UK GDP,⁶ Muslim Charities raising over £500m per annum (according to The Muslim Charities Forum), thus making Muslims the most charitable community in the UK as per an ICM survey by Just Giving⁷ and a

growing band of informed Muslim Parliamentarians too. Complementing these MPs is the ever-growing power of the Muslim Vote, with an estimated 10% or more of voters in 83 constituencies being Muslim - around 13% of all Parliamentary seats.⁸ In fact, the list above is by no means an exhaustive one, and it would appear that British Muslims have even conspired in making 'Chicken Tikka Masala' the nation's favourite food!

THE UNDERLYING REALITY TODAY— AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

The current crop of Muslims, particularly Muslim leaders, are performing far less impressively at so many levels. For example, in the Muslim charity sector, one major charity had years of compliance failings which resulted in much of the previous Board being replaced and a new CEO appointed too. Another major charity conspired in a bizarre 'reverse coup', whereby the second in command appeared to engineer the departure of the founder, only for the second in command to then resign himself and the founder returning. Another household charity name was subjected to a hatchet-job by an Islamophobic journalist—his investigation also uncovered anti-Semitic facebook posts by two Board Members (before they became trustees), resulting in their resignation once the charity discovered them. This list is by no means exhaustive.

In the Muslim advocacy sphere, The British Mus-

1 Aisha Gani. 2015. "Muslim Population in England and Wales Nearly Doubles in 10 Years," *The Guardian*. Accessed September 23, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/11/muslim-population-england-walesnearly-doubles-10-years>

2 Wazir, Burhan. 2018. "The Changing Shape Of Britain's Mosques", *The New Statesman*. Accessed September 23, 2020, <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/art-design/2018/06/changing-shape-britain-s-mosques>

3 "Faith Schools In The UK—Religion Media Centre". 2018. *Religion Media Centre*. Accessed September 23, 2020, <https://religionmedia-centre.org.uk/factsheets/faith-schools-in-the-uk/>.

4 Adams, Richard. 2020. "Muslim Students Less Likely To Be Awarded Top Class Degrees", *The Guardian*. Accessed September 23, 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/mar/18/muslim-students-less-likely-to-be-awarded-top-class-degrees>.

5 NHS Statistics. 2019. "NHS Workforce Statistics - September 2019 - NHS Digital". *NHS Digital*. Accessed September 28, 2020 <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics/september-2019>

6 Bennett, Asa. 2013. "Muslims Add Over £31 Billion To UK Economy". *Huffington Post*. Accessed September 23, 2020 https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/10/29/uk-muslims-economy_n_4170781.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ-29vZ2xLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAANgiUmPm1uSCq05nPHkd80fDASmMp3hBPemRhTDwwbfOV1-P7nfRR_Ty-lyuPhbPmb3J7ECsgziyRKM0Tv1_q5Uw8vigopKAG-IABRGQfLzehF-MjkgSkGzqSx4UYC4k_1ZQeLFlf9IIBpa9mZbxUrd-V17n8oQopKY10YRjmRPMt.

7 Blatresh, Marwan. 2013. "Muslims Most Charitable Among Other Faiths In Britain". *Kuwait News Agency*. Accessed 23 September, 2020. <https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2450036&Language=en>.

8 "Power Of The Muslim Vote And Muslim Voting Patterns". 2017. *MEND*. Accessed 23 September, 2020. <https://www.mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Power-of-the-Muslim-vote-and-Muslim-voting-patterns.pdf>.

lim community has insufficiently funded organisations like The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), meaning that it lacks enough core staff needed by an Umbrella body, and that projects such as The Centre for Media Monitoring and MCB's involvement in 'Visit my Mosque' lack the guaranteed security of long-term survival let alone future growth. In fact, if we compare MCB's annual income to that of Stonewall, a key (UK based) player in the LGBTQ community, MCB's core annual funding is not even 10% of Stonewall's annual income.⁹ What makes matters worse for the MCB is that for over a decade successive UK Governments have deliberately had little or no engagement with it. This is poor form on behalf of the Government of the day and ultimately nobody benefits long-term.

In the Mosques/Scholarly sphere, Ulema (Islamic Scholars) tend to graduate from traditional seminaries (*Darul ulooms*), with an excellent understanding of traditional Islamic sciences; however, they also need supplementary education on 'every day' matters, such as financial issues, responding to Islamophobic attacks, counter terror legislation concerns, etc. Effective leadership is also hampered by the never-ending feuds amongst Mosque-committees and long-standing concerns about whether they adequately represent the communities they serve, with the exclusion of women being a perennial complaint. The Cambridge Muslim College is offering an accredited BA to produce a 'more informed Imam'.

Consider the following challenges faced by the Muslim Community which require urgent corrective action:

46% of Muslims live in the **10% most deprived** local authority areas in Britain.¹⁰

Muslims are **paid between 13-21% less** than their Secular counterparts.¹¹

50% of **women wearing the hijab** feel that they

have missed out on progression opportunities due to wearing their hijab.¹²

15.2% of prisoners are Muslim, around 3 times pro-rata the UK Muslim Population.¹³

Between March 2016-March 2017, **143,920 Tweets** were sent from the UK that are considered to be derogatory and **anti-Islamic**—this amounts to 393 a day.¹⁴

The number of **Islamophobic hate crimes** in London increased **32% between 2016/17 and 2017/18**, with the Metropolitan Police recording 1,665 Islamophobic crimes between April 2017 and March 2018.¹⁵

Analysis from the Equality and Human Rights Commission has shown that a British Pakistani male is **52 times more likely to be stopped** and questioned at an airport than a white male, and **154 times more likely to be detained**.¹⁶

There are plenty of noble endeavours and initiatives in the Muslim community aimed at tackling the above, but they need more resources. They include Muslim Youth Helpline, Islamophobia Response Unit (MEND), Centre for Media Monitoring (MCB), Prevent Watch, National Zakat Foundation, PHSE Schools' Islamophobia Materials by MEND, British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA), and more.

SHORTCOMINGS OF MUSLIMS ORGANISATIONS, LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS

Let's start off with the positives. The Islamic Worker/Activist/CEO is as passionate as they are emotional, as dedicated as they are resourceful. Islamic workers also often accept considerable pay-cuts to do what they strongly believe in. They work with a sincerity and commitment which the average employee simply

9 "Stonewall Equality Ltd - Full Accounts". 2020. *Stonewall.Org.Uk*. Accessed 23 September, 2020. <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/02412299/filing-history>

10 "British Muslims In Numbers". 2020. *MCB*. Accessed 23 September, 2020 https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf.

11 Zack Adesina and Oana Marocico, "Is It Easier to Get a Job If You're Adam or Mohamed?" 2017. *BBC News*. Accessed September 23, 2020, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-38751307>.

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16 Travis, Alan. 2013. "Asian People 11 Times More Likely To Be Stopped At UK Borders, Analysis Finds". *The Guardian*. Accessed September 23, 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2013/dec/05/asian-people-stopped-uk-borders-analysis>.

could not match in a corporate context.

There are however, a whole plethora of challenges faced by Islamic Organisations, Muslim Activists, managers, Leaders, etc. I've tried to detail a few below:

Starting with Muslim Charities, they have a huge budget to recruit the best talent. But what they need to appreciate is that the best talent **at times** may well exist **outside** the Muslim community. How many heads of Muslim Charities can you genuinely identify who have run other mainstream Charities or run large corporate organisations? Very few, if any, is the simple answer. For Muslim Charities, this means a far wider 'executive search and selection' process at recruitment stage.

Often Muslim organisations (typically *not* the major charities) pay/can only afford to pay, less than market rate which sadly reflects in the quality of the recruitment. Budgetary constraints often exacerbate the consequences of this with investment absent to upskill the employee in key administrative and organisational disciplines. Consequently, many of these employees who have come into Muslim organisations with limitless 'heart and soul' and talent too, quickly become disheartened due to 'minimal fruits of their labour' being visible and evident. This contributes to high staff turnover in Muslim organisations.

There's a desperate and urgent need for a **training agency** with a specific focus on Muslim organisations aiding them with everything including guidance on governance, maximising female and youth participation, financial responsibility, sustainability, embracing the online and digital world, conflict management internally and so much more.

Islamic workers also at times struggle to divorce their emotions and Islamic ideological biases (which we all carry), from the dispassionate clarity needed to correctly make a key organisational decision. For example, a charity considering a partnership with a controversial entity in a very needy geographical area; or a Muslim organisation speaking on a platform with other speakers hostile to Muslims. Far too often, disagreements and conflicts arise due to tough decisions like these and internal feuding results in people leaving the organisation. I recommend that Muslim organisations set up the **equivalent of an ACAS-type entity** - the arbitration service whereby an independent third party opines an intended fair outcome for all.

An important point to note here is that Organisations like IHRC, MEND, MCB, CAGE, Ramadan Tent Programme (RTP) and others are not intended

to be 'Tarbiyyah' (Islamic guidance) type organisations. They may well generally operate within Islamic norms, but their primary objectives are not at all to boost the Islamic knowledge or spirituality of their member. Instead, these organisations are very often dedicated to tackling Islamophobia, representing community interests, Iftaars with non-Muslims, etc. The problem here though is that some Muslim Activists really can't tell the difference. They will insist on imposing norms from *Tarbiyyah* type organisations, say Al-Maghrib or even the local Mosque, into the dealings of Muslim human rights organisations like MEND. So, all the way from seating provisions for men and women at events to the type of speakers allowed on platforms can all get hugely convoluted and controversial.

MANAGING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

Beyond the Muslim Charities' space and with the exception of a few large Mosques/Community organisations such as East London Mosque for example, there really aren't many Muslim organisations with many full-time employees. The remainder of organisations are heavily reliant on volunteers supporting a smaller core employee base. I am talking about the likes of UKIM, IFE, MEND, MAB, CAGE, MCB, etc. Most of these have a handful of staff members and rely very heavily on ad hoc volunteer support. This can be hugely challenging.

For obvious reasons, my experience of volunteer management lies more with MEND than any other organisation. Here are some of the things we have done to maximise volunteer output and retention. I believe they are applicable to most organisations powered mainly by volunteers:

- **A Volunteer's journey through your organisation**—A volunteer must have a bespoke journey in your organisation which maximises 1) Their Interests, 2) What they have time for and, perhaps even 3) What they are well-suited to do. For example, some people join MEND purely to help roll out its materials tackling Islamophobia in schools; others would rather spend their time ensuring the right candidate is elected at the upcoming election. Everyone's different!
- **Decentralise your key resources**—Don't centralise all information flow and access to materials. Trust volunteers with a username/password and make accessible technical ma-

terials and presentations to key volunteers in the field via an intranet system on your website—we created the ‘Working Group Zone’ at MEND for this purpose.

- **Progressing volunteers**—Retain your volunteers by progressing them up the organisational ladder, and give those committed/talented enough seats on your Board/Governing entity. MEND created a ‘Volunteer Progression Plan’ which gives each volunteer a clear pathway through the organisation to the top, achievable in around 3 years. The progression plan assesses volunteers on key technical content, their active role/responsibility in the organisation, as well as their presentational skills. ‘Salesforce’, the corporate software is used effectively to regularly track everyone’s progression.
- **Bespoke Presentations** - Presentations are simply not a ‘one size fits all’ solution. We must develop bespoke presentations to help convince the meeting’s attendee, e.g. a potential donor, a possible volunteer, an MP, etc. Everyone has different trigger points which motivate them into action and bespoke presentations need to capitalise on these.
- **Create Social Bonds**—Your organisation is only as good as the well-being of its staff and volunteers. Whilst the cause may have attracted them into your organisation, this may not be enough to keep them there. Out-of-hours socials, Annual Volunteers Award evenings, dinners, regular quizzes and more outside the office, are key to breaking down personal barriers in the office.

KEY LESSONS WORTH LEARNING AND INCORPORATING

- **Being an ‘outcome led’ organisation** - There are many forms that Muslim organisations or indeed any NGO can take. It can focus on research and policy, become lobbyists, or even community activists. Whatever the decision, make it at inception and stick to it. If you are a community activist organisation then all departments’ output has to be executed through the prism of **change on the ground**.
- **A clear USP and Mutual cooperation**—Focus on your USP, what you are good at and were set up to do! Be creative too if needed - for example; sadly not enough Muslims may

be interested in a Government Bill about improving animal welfare, but if that same bill were presented as a threat to the supply of Halaal Meat in the UK, you can be sure most Muslims would become interested in it!

- Two frustrations British Muslims often express about Muslim organisations is **duplication in activity** and a **lack of co-operation** amongst what are seen as similar players. Duplication is an allegation often levied at Muslim charities when Muslims think ten different charities are collecting for the same cause, incurring unnecessary admin costs. I don’t share this thinking; competition is healthy and it is pure idealism to think everyone will merge into one outfit. What I do however believe strongly in, is specialism, cooperation, and niche markets. Perhaps the Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) is best placed to ensure charities **share knowledge of field operations, don’t duplicate resources**, and optimise community funds.
- The second point is ‘Mutual co-operation’. Often Muslims see numerous Muslim organisations tackling the same issue. For example, when it comes to concerns over counter terror law/PREVENT, I can name you at least five organisations off the top of my head (CAGE, PreventWatch, MCB, IHRC and MEND) all working in this space. There is a clear need for **forums/steering committees** to be developed in areas such as the Preservation of Halaal Meat, Muslim Schools, Niqab, Counter Terror, and much more. These forums would be composed of the key players in that space and allow for pooling of resource, collective research, PR and joint lobbying, all to maximise impact.
- **Financial sustainability** - Muslim Charities and Muslim Schools possess obvious sources of income. It’s not so easy for the rest of our community’s organisations. The rest tend to focus on surviving via a combination of Endowments, Corporate Donors, Paid Content, Online Fundraisers, Conferences, Grants, and memberships/general donations. The key issue here is that fundraising to ‘stay alive’ often becomes the main priority of so many Muslim organisations and hence hugely detracts from working on their core cause itself. Muslim organisations should aim to achieve financial independence, ideally via an endow-

ment or monthly standing orders as soon as possible, to avoid fundraising becoming a never-ending objective

- **The Movement versus the Flamboyant Individual** - Over the last 25 years, who has been the most impressive politician or individual? Many people asked would reply—'President Barack Obama'. I wouldn't. So much of Obama's legacy has been fully reversed or dramatically scaled back by President Donald Trump within a matter of months since he became President. Think of things like The Iran Nuclear Deal, The Trans-Pacific Partnership, affordable healthcare (Obamacare), the US' commitment to climate change (specifically the Paris Climate Accord) and more have been nullified or hugely jeopardised under Trump. So, Obama's ultimate impact could well have been short-lived.
- Now let me ask you another question—how influential do you think the LGBTQ movement has been over the last 25 years? When one considers the huge change in societal attitudes towards homosexuality, and even institutional embracing of the LGBTQ identity, then the answer has got to be 'very successful' in terms of impact. In fact, in recent years, the UK has featured very highly on the ILGA rankings assessing LGBTQ-friendly countries.¹⁷ The leading UK organisation in this sphere is Stonewall. I therefore ask, can you name the head of Stonewall (or the predecessor) without resorting to Google? Probably not; and therein lies my point. Stonewall is well-funded, focused, intelligently organised, and above all, **a movement**, not an individual. That's why, its agenda does not die when one person leaves. For all of Obama's extraordinary eloquence and talk of change, America (in so many ways) is not in a markedly better position today versus when he took over. Ultimately, long-lasting change, is far more likely to come from well-structured, influential organisations rather than interpersonally-gifted, eloquent leaders.
- **The Era of convenience—keep 'action' simple!** - We are living in an unprecedented era

of information being thrown at us from every angle. There's no end of opinion we are asked to embrace. What I've learned painfully is that no matter how compelling your cause, unless you make the 'action for change' simple, you are not likely to get the 'buy-in'. By way of example, at the inception of the recent Covid crisis, the government proposed a bill, which in theory, took away the right for religious minorities like Muslims and Jews to not have their bodies cremated if graveyards were inundated with corpses and had to resort to mass burials. Naz Shah MP tabled an amendment aimed at giving Muslims further protections under this legislation. MEND highlighted this in a simple electronic action alert which resulted in over 17,000 people going through to its page and lobbying their MP to support the amendment.¹⁸

- **The test of relevance to your audience** - Very often, Muslim organisations do things because we've always done them, especially in a particular way; and we lack the creativity to do things differently. When Steve Jobs looked at the Nokia Mobile phone with British designer Sir Jonathan Ives, they were not interested in replicating Nokia's phone, or even improving it. They asked themselves—what do people really want? Just a phone, or the ability to listen to music on their phone too, to book train tickets, map software, the latest news, transact with their bank, pay their bills and so much more? Thereafter was born the single most important invention of the last 100 years, the smartphone—it has completely revolutionised our lives and most of us couldn't live without it! Lesson—Be relevant to your audience!

OUR ENEMIES AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

To be honest, I never worry much about our right-wing enemies. There can be a few striking benefits to being attacked by the right-wing mob. These include, your core support galvanising behind you, a greater cross-organisational conviction to produce more

¹⁷ "Country Ranking | Rainbow Europe". *Rainbow-Europe.Org*. Accessed September 28, 2020. <https://rainbow-europe.org/country-ranking>.

¹⁸ "DECEASED MUSLIMS COULD BE FORCEFULLY CREMATED UNDER EMERGENCY CORONAVIRUS BILL - Muslim Engagement And Development". *Muslim Engagement And Development*. Accessed September 23, 2020. <https://www.mend.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts/covid19-bill/>.

output and ensure your detractors know they have not succeeded, improving on your weaknesses which the ‘Mob’ highlights and perhaps the attack is even an opportune time to find out who **your friends really are** and **willing to defend you** when the chips are down! Don’t worry, wear it as a badge of honour!

The bigger issue is institutional Islamophobia; perhaps most vividly seen by government boycotts of Muslim organisations. Over the past decade, many western Governments, including our own, have had little or no dealing with truly mainstream Muslim community organisations. This is completely unacceptable and ultimately in nobody’s best interests.

SUCCESS STORIES IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

So, which organisations can the Muslim community look up to as ‘The Gold Standard’?

In my view, ‘World Class’ achievement bears certain hallmarks, including the **presence of an institution, not just an individual**, essential **technical knowledge** of the organisation (and the industry it operates in) institutionalised and codified into **training** at every level, total **independence** from the **founder** or ‘founding team’, **financial sustainability**, a clear track record of **proven success** in its sphere of influence and commanding the respect of those it serves, significant numbers of **staff**, well-trained, with a **clear journey** to the top of the organisation too. It’s not an exhaustive list, but certainly some of the key ingredients.

My list of ‘World-Class’ organisations/players would include:

- *The Tauheedul Islamic/Star Academies Trust*—In January 2020, for the fourth year running, Government league tables confirmed that students make more progress at Tauheedul Islam Girls’ High School (TIGHS) than at any other school in the country.¹⁹
- *The East London Mosque and IFE Project*—Over many decades, these inter-connected institutions have nurtured and ‘graduated’ hundreds of talented young British Muslims who have gone on to take leading posts in Muslim organisations nationally.
- *The late Maulana Yusuf Motala & The Deoband movement*—With hundreds of Islamic seminaries and Mosques under his guidance/supervision, he has institutionalised ‘an Islam-

ic upbringing’ to hundreds of thousands of Muslims daily via the centuries-old Deobandi syllabus.

- *Islamic Relief and Dr Hany El Banna*—Dr Hany, a living legend and the founding father of Muslim charities in the UK (his baby is Islamic Relief), which is still the leading Muslim charity in the UK, having raised hundreds of millions of pounds for its humanitarian and development projects, with over 2,000 staff globally working in over 40 countries. Since 1984, the charity has helped over 120 million people
- *The late Hafiz Patel and the Tablighi Jamaat movement*—A global Islamic movement worked around its legendary ‘6 points’ agenda which may well trace its origin to the Deobandi movement, but ultimately can operate anywhere, and every year sends tens of thousands of Muslim Brits in to ‘Jamaats’ across the world thereby playing an incredible role in preserving their faith and that of those in the communities they visit.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS?

In just 6 years, MEND (Muslim engagement and development) has experienced significant growth to become a (Muslim) household name, now with over 30 staff and hundreds of volunteers across 8 offices nationally. It works with Mosques, Schools, Universities, Women’s organisations, Police Forces, Politicians, non-Muslim communities and more across the UK, in a truly focused manner dedicated to positive change. It has a proficient, well-resourced research and policy team, a large community operation which has empowered over 40,000 British Muslims in the fields of media and political engagement and even has a fully-fledged Islamophobia Response Unit dedicated to defending Muslim victims of hate crime and Islamophobic employment discrimination having dealt with nearly 700 cases to date. The challenge for British Muslims is to ‘**make Islamophobia history**’. The cornerstone of conquering this challenge is undoubtedly a grass-roots, national Muslim Community movement. MEND represents the most significant development by British Muslims to date in that respect.

Any strategist would likely agree that the key ingredients are present within MEND; however, it

¹⁹ “Students Celebrate Exceptional GCSE Results”. 2020. *Tauheedul Islam Girls’ High School*. Accessed September 23, 2020. <https://www.tighs.com/news-story/students-celebrate-exceptional-gcse-results-2/>.

needs dramatic upscaling in virtually all its departments for it to be considered for the list above. Until then, it continues to be a ‘work in progress’.

Mehdi Hasan is also very interesting for this purpose. Many heads of Muslim organisations, politicians etc speak on Muslim affairs in the press, but none is anywhere near Mehdi’s calibre. Mehdi needs to ‘institutionalise’ his extraordinary know-how and excellent delivery to benefit Muslims for generations to come. Just like many of the players mentioned above have done.

THE ROAD AHEAD—4 MACRO INSTITUTIONS AND A 15-POINT STRATEGIC CHECKLIST

What follows are 4 Macro recommendations and a checklist of 15 Micro assessments for Muslim organisations, hopefully with a view to organisational improvement insha’Allah.

The 4 ‘Macro’ Community Recommendation

1. **Forums/Co-ordination groups**—There is a clear need for **forums/steering committees**, bringing together stakeholder organisations, in areas such as ‘Preservation of Halaal Meat, Muslim Schools, Education and Muslims, Counter Terror’ and much more.
2. **Professional Industry training Body**—This **training agency** with a specific focus on Muslim organisations will aid them with everything including governance guidance, maximising female and youth participation, financial accountability, sustainability, embracing the online and digital world, conflict management internally, security and compliance and so much more.
3. **Arbitration Service**—Similar to ACAS, this would hear out contentious issues from both parties and then opine on a fair solution for all. The accredited mediator should be paid a professional rate financed by our ‘Industry’ generally (as a levy) or at least the feuding entities.
4. **Community Endowment/Strategic financial support**—This is something which, in the first instance, Muslim Entrepreneurs should contribute towards and launch. This endowment should be dedicated towards funding organisations which are critical to the Muslim community e.g. Women’s organisations, media start-ups, film-makers etc, but

can’t seem to raise sufficient funding from it. This body should also house a strategic fundraising support unit with a small group of individuals, proficient on securing fundraising for Muslim organisations and dedicated to sharing their expertise.

Muslim charities (generally set up for overseas aid), are often still able to spend part of their budget on UK causes—this could be a potential funding avenue for above.

The 15 ‘Micro’ Organisational Assessments—Checklist:

1. **Vision and USP**—What does success really look like for your leadership, staff, clients, donors or followers? Are you really working towards it or just *your* view of it?
2. **Mission**—What are the key stepping stones to getting to the above? Have you laid them down clearly in the eyes of your staff and supporters so everyone understands the journey ahead?
3. **Leadership**—For Muslim Charities, have you paid for the best senior management your budget allows? Have you looked outside the purely Muslim community space?
4. **Structure and Governance**—Is your structure optimised to achieve your objectives? A charity may have to go with Trustees and a conventional community body with a national council. MEND operates a hybrid corporate and community governance system allowing leadership to move at speed with operational matters within an agreed Manifesto by the wider nationally-elected council.
5. **Compliance**—Have you carried out (or hired a professional firm to carry out), a detailed assessment of risks in your organisation, particularly internal risks e.g. social media posts, deficient employment contracts, risk of your donor base being stolen/GDPR issues etc?
6. **Employee progression**—Do all employees have a clear progression plan in the organisation which covers (at least) three elements—1) Salary, 2) Role progression, 3) CPD/PDP.
7. **Volunteer management**—If you are heavily reliant on volunteers, do you have a volunteer progression programme which nurtures them through the ranks to the top?
8. **Financial sustainability**—For organisations who can’t live off donations, Gift Aid etc, do you have your financial future guaranteed to

- afford you focus on core work today?
9. **Individuals v an organisation**—Are you independent of your Founder(s) in every way?
 10. **Lack of Duplication and Mutual co-operation**—See Macro point above
 11. **Strategic Digital communications**—Are you using these to maximum effect on Social Media Platforms, Salesforce, Intranet, info-sharing comms, etc?
 12. **Muslim entrepreneurs**—Do you have at least one successful Muslim entrepreneur sitting at the core of your Board/Trustee Panel with clear operational input?
 13. **The Social Bond**—Are your staff regularly socialising outside of hours with Senior management?
 14. **The Era of convenience**—Are all your stated objectives, e.g. donations, lobbying MPs etc easy to implement?
 15. **Learning from your mistakes**—Do you have mechanisms in place to learn from your mistakes or complaints? When an employee leaves do you have exit interviews to learn about how you could have done things better?

SUMMARY

I close with this message to Muslim leaders. We've come to the end of our journey reading this article and perhaps the beginning of your organisation's 'new normal'. You have nothing to fear but fear itself. Begin with the end in mind - what truly is your vision and your dream? Make it happen insha'Allah. For a thousand men who can speak, only one can think. For a thousand men who can think, only one has true strategic vision. You have to strive to be that person insha'Allah.

"The biggest danger to us all is not that we aim too high and fail, but that we aim too low and Succeed."

—Michaelangelo

Dedication—To my Parents, without whose tireless sacrifices and unwavering love, I would never have had such a happy and blessed upbringing. May Allah SWT always protects them, Ameen.

Sufyan Gulam Ismail is an award-winning entrepreneur and philanthropist. He built numerous businesses over the years specialising in financial services, private equity and real estate before formally retiring from full-time business activity to focus on philanthropic adventures with a key focus on tackling Islamophobia. Please see bio on page 179.

The Hagia Sophia

By Faisal Kutty

TURKEY CAN STILL SALVAGE THE HAGIA SOPHIA DECISION TO SHOWCASE THE TOLERANT FACE OF ISLAM

In July of this year, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan turned back the Hagia Sophia museum in Istanbul - originally founded as a cathedral - into a mosque. The edict came after Turkey's highest administrative court ruled that the government can revoke an 80-year old decree making it a museum.

Turkish President Recep Erdoğan had promised last year that he would reconvert it to a mosque. He did not need the court approval but sought it as a way to gain "an aura of legitimacy" said Aykan Erdemir, former Turkish parliamentarian. The President made

the announcement within days of the court's ruling.

Completed in 537 AD, Hagia Sophia served as the home of the Eastern Orthodox Church for nearly 900 years with the exception of a brief tenure as a Catholic cathedral in the 13th Century during the Fourth Crusade. It also hosted all of the imperial ceremonies and was seen as the crown on the Byzantine city of Constantinople. After Fatih Sultan Mehmed II routed the Byzantines and ransacked the city in 1453, the Ottomans converted the church into a mosque.

The Ottomans added to the grandeur and majesty for the next 500 years, but they also defaced or plastered over Orthodox symbols and artwork. The Hagia Sophia served as the main mosque in the newly renamed city of Istanbul until completion of the



The Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque, photographed in the 1890s before Atatürk turned it into a museum

Blue Mosque in 1616. Its influence on the architecture of the mosques in the city and around the world is undeniable.

With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, its status changed again when the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, closed religious institutions as part of his secularization drive. Religious buildings including the Hagia Sophia, were transformed into museums in 1934.

With the revival of Muslim religious identity in and the growth of political Islam in the latter half of the century, the calls to reconvert the Hagia Sophia back into a mosque began to be heard. In recent years, Turkish nationalists joined the religious and large groups began regularly demonstrating at the gates of the building every May 29, the anniversary of the Ottoman conquest. Some have gone as far as to claim that it is a holy site for Muslims akin to the mosques in Makkah, Medina, and Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. The calls reached a fevered pitch at the end of

May, when the President opened a grand show featuring religious recitations and a light show to mark the 567th anniversary of the conquest. For the first time in 80 years, a qari recited the Qur'an—chapter titled the Conquest—inside the Hagia Sophia.

SHORT-SIGHTED DOMESTIC POLITICAL PLOY WITH LONG- TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

A supporter of the cause in his youth, President Erdoğan remained quiet for the most part on the issue since coming to power and even publicly opposed the calls once, advising proponents to fill the Blue Mosque next door for prayers first. His position changed just before the March 2019 Istanbul municipal elections when polls predicted that his ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party would lose the city to the current mayor Ekrem Imamoglu. He told a rally at the time that the Hagia Sophia will be turned

into a mosque in response to President Donald Trump's support of Israel's designation of Jerusalem as its capital.

As Turkey watchers have observed, this appears to be nothing short of a political ploy to satisfy the majority of Turks who support the move, and to distract attention from the country's weakening economy and the pandemic. In fact, Ertuğrul Gunay, a former member of the President's cabinet, has openly accused the President of exploiting the issue for political ends. There may be some potential short term domestic political gains but in exchange for some long-term damage to both domestic and international relations.

The head of the Eastern Orthodox Church based in Istanbul, known as the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, condemned the move. The Church in Russia, home to the world's largest Orthodox Christian community, also made their objections known. The decision has also prompted international criticism, from religious and political leaders worldwide. The Greek Orthodox Church of the United States declared recently that it was petitioning the United Nations to pressure Turkey to protect Orthodox Christianity's cultural heritage following the conversion. The Church said that it was pressing UN special rapporteurs in the areas of cultural rights, minority rights, and freedom of religion and beliefs to hold Turkey accountable "for its deliberate policies to erase the cultural heritage of Orthodox Christians."

There is a strong basis to argue that a decision like Sultan Mehmet's initial decision to usurp the church is contrary to Islamic rules. The Prophet Muhammed in his rules of engagement made it clear that places of worship were not to be disturbed in war. Clearly, taking over an existing church after victory goes well beyond disturbing.

In fact, this also goes against the precedent set by the second caliph of Islam, Umar ibn al-Khattab. According to historians Edward Gibbons and Ibn Khaldun, in 638 after Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, surrendered Jerusalem to Umar, when time for the afternoon prayers arrived, Sophronius invited Umar to pray in the rebuilt Church of the

Holy Sepulchre. Umar declined, and prayed outside the church. Upon finishing, the Caliph reportedly informed the Patriarch that he did not pray in the church because he feared that Muslims may claim the church in the future as a mosque because of his prayer.

Proponents had attracted widespread support by framing the issue as one of national sovereignty and not one of human rights, cultural rights, international norms or even religious rights.

"This decision is a national matter. International players should not get involved," said Ozturk Yilmaz, who is also a former member of the Turkey's main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), which was established as a pro-secular party by Atatürk.

Athens has been a vocal opponent and wrote UNESCO about the proposed change. The interference by a sworn enemy had served to consolidate support across the political spectrum. With Erdoğan even asking how Greece could dictate what Turkey did in this context when Greece has limited mosques in the country.

The fact remains that this is not an exclusive domestic issue. The site is now one of Turkey's most visited tourist attractions attracting 3.7 million visitors a year and contains invaluable medieval mosaics, including depictions of Christ, the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and other rare portraits and artefacts. The 1,500-year-old iconic, domed building sitting in Istanbul's Fatih district, on the west bank of the Bosphorus is a UNESCO World Heritage site. UNESCO deputy director Ernesto Ottone Ramirez says a letter was sent to Turkish authorities advising them that the Convention on World Cultural Heritage required approval from a UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee before any steps can be taken.

The first Jumua or Friday Prayers in 80 years in the facility took place on July 24th. A better solution—still possible—would have seen the structure maintained as a museum co-existence and adding separate dedicated spaces for Muslims and Christians to pray. Such a museum would not only be a much needed symbol of co-existence but would have also offered President Erdoğan a diplomatic solution to appease his domestic base.

Faisal Kutty is an associate professor and director of the International LL.M. Program at Valparaiso University Law School in Indiana and an adjunct professor at Osgoode Hall Law School of York University in Toronto. He is also counsel to the Toronto-based Kutty & Associates law firm. Please see bio on page 188

BOOK REVIEWS



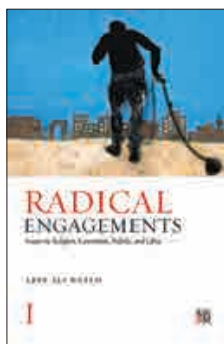
Abdal Hakim Murad

Travelling Home: Essays on Islam in Europe
Quilliam Press

Review by Jocelyne Cesari

Travelling Home is a unique book which combines spiritual testimony with sharp insights on the current condition of Islam and Muslims in the West. It is written from the heart and is a magnificent example of the tremendous resources of the Islamic tradition to respond to the challenges of extremism,

terrorism, populism and Islamophobia. The author provides a unique perspective to guide the new Muslim generations by showing that moral strength and search for beauty are more powerful than retaliation and anger if one is to be and remain in the Path of God. It is also a must-read for all the Europeans who struggle to make sense of the reality and legitimacy of Muslims in their midst.



Aref Ali Nayed

*Radical Engagements: Essays on Religion, Extremism,
Politics and Libya*
Kalam Research and Media

Review by Qamar-ul Huda, PhD

This is extremely important set of essays by a leading Libyan theologian, diplomat, scholar, and thinker who analyzes a wide range of pressing societal maladies. Amb. Aref Ali Nayed contemplates upon a new Libya; one that is beyond fascism, totalitarianism, or governed by unruly militias and Muslim Brotherhood networks sponsored by foreign countries. Rather, he meticulously explores holistic issues: from the narrowing Salafi interpretations of theology to modern challenges in *kalam* studies; from crisis of applied ethics to a *real* appreciation of historical theological works; from experiencing horrific atrocities of DA'ISH to trauma healing and reconciliation with the environment we inherited.

This is an extraordinary set of essays and speeches by Aref Ali Nayed because he poetically weaves a quilt of monumental thinkers including Sidi Ahmad Zarruq, Issac Newton, Imam al-Shatibi, Sheikh Ibn Ashur, Ernst Bloch, Hannah Arendt, Viktor Frankl,

and Immanuel Kant (and more) to illustrate a global interconnected philosophy of interconnectedness and yet-to-be conscious. He eloquently reminds the reader that the '*ilm al-tazkiya* is inherently tied to each school of thought which cannot be disconnected from any historical interpretation, rather we need to remember and celebrate it.

For a Libyan scholar and diplomat who witnessed the fall of Gaddafi's tyrannical rule and then witness the descent of Libya into chaos with foreign fighters, ISIS militants and tribalism, Aref Ali Nayed advocates a *shukr al-ni'ma* (appreciating gifts) with *uluw al-himma* (having exalted visions or aims). On the onslaught of militants killing civilians, he states "those who inflict omnipresent trauma, we need to develop omnipresent compassion and peace, and create a blessed neighborliness aiming to live together." This is a phenomenal book filled with jewels of insight, wisdom, and a powerful vision to reconcile pain with compassion.



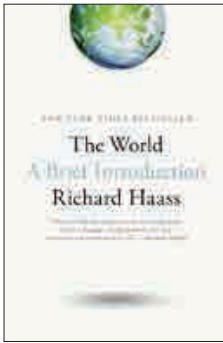
Mustafa al-A'zami

An Introduction to Sahih al-Bukhari
Turath Publishing

Sahih al-Bukhari is unsurprisingly the most widely recognised book among Muslims after the Qur'an. Curious readers of Bukhari's magnum opus are often left with burning

questions that lie beyond its contents. Who was Imam Bukhari? How and why did he write the Sa-

hah? How was it transmitted? Are there any reliable extant manuscripts of the work? In this introduction, Dr. Mustafa al-A'zami answers these questions in a simple and accessible manner. It looks at the biography of Imam Bukhari, details of his teachers, students, transmitters and his critical modus operandi in compiling his Sahih, and details of the Sahih's various transmissions and codices.



Richard Haass

The World: A Brief Introduction
Penguin Press

Review by Qamar-ul Huda, PhD

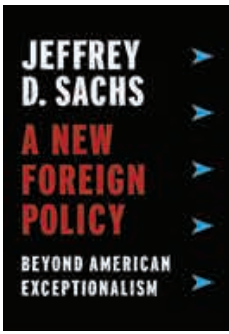
The World: A Brief Introduction is about how the global order shifted toward liberal democracy and a rules-based system for international relations. This is not an academic scholarly book, but it is written for the popular audience who wants to learn about modern trends in economics, diplomacy, geopolitics, and the factors that have shaped the global system.

Richard Haass is the president of Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) and veteran diplomat who worked in US government for forty years. Haass was director of the Policy Planning Office for the Department of State, where he was a principal advisor to Secretary of State Colin Powell. Heavily criticised for the invasion of Iraq and inconsistent policies with Afghanistan after the September 11th attacks on America, Haas would then serve as US envoy to the Northern Ireland.

The book primarily covers the rise of the Western

state system, the Cold War, and their impact on geopolitics. Haass examines how globalisation as a phenomenon impacted trade, finance, migration, climate change, capitalism, nationalism, and technology. The emergence of power politics and popular nationalism challenges the liberal democracy institutions. Haas points out the US role in shaping liberal democracies and capital markets during and after the Cold War. In midst of these geopolitical and economic shifts, there are concerns of terrorism, cyber-attacks, insurrections, and the mismanagement of natural resources.

Haass cautions about America's retreat in global leadership which opens the door for Chinese dominance and their influence over the global liberal democratic order. The reader who is not familiar with current trends in global affairs will learn a great deal from an American author who has immense experience in governance and diplomacy.



Jeffrey D Sachs

A New Foreign Policy: Beyond American Exceptionalism
Columbia University Press

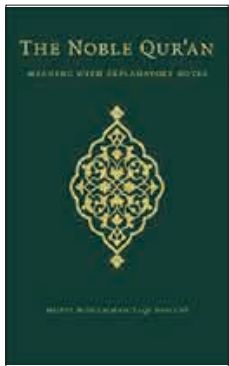
Review by Qamar-ul Huda, PhD

Jeffrey D Sachs is a renowned sustained development, anti-poverty, and macroeconomics expert who wrote *A New Foreign Policy* as a robust criticism against the Trump's administration 'America First' policy. Since the end of World War II, Sachs argues, the world order was more organised with an engaged America not an America solely occupied with its own national interests. This shift in retreating as a global leader will have powerful ripple effects on mass migration, poverty, environmental disaster, and political upheaval.

Sachs served as a Special Advisor to the UN General-Secretary Ban Ki-moon on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and previously advised

UN General-Secretary Kofi Annan on the Millennium Development Goals. He is university professor at Columbia University who teaches in the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) is a proponent of the UN as a medium for resolving conflicts.

A New Foreign Policy carefully demonstrates how the American exceptionalism politics will downgrade a world order built on cooperation, multilateralism, and interconnected economies. Sachs argues the American exceptionalism adopted as a truism across American political parties has pushed America in unwinnable wars and become a hegemonic power in various regions of the world. This book is a bold vision for America to rethink, self-evaluate and self-examine its role in the world to reinforce collaboration and active engagement.



Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

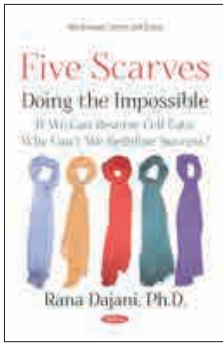
The Noble Qur'an - Meaning with Explanatory Notes
Turath Publishing

Meticulous attention and care has been taken to prepare this new edition of *The Noble Qur'an*, with meaning and explanatory notes by Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani. A new careful rendition of the Qur'an, in clear modern English, with an abundance of brief yet informative explanatory notes. There is a brief introduction to each *Surah* in a very simple and easy to understand format.

It's not often you find English translations of the Qur'an done by a scholar who has himself been teaching Islamic traditional sciences for over half a century. With this in mind it is evident that he understands the subtle meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. He has also previously supervised the entire English translation of *Ma'ariful Qur'an*.

The deluxe edition is elegantly bound in ther-mo-leather with gold-blocking and foil embellishments. Specially illuminated medallions have been placed in the margins to designate the start of a new *Surah* or a new *Juz*. The clear and beautiful typeset text of the Qur'an is based on the Madinan *Mushaf* while retaining the useful features of the Indian Sub-continent copy.

An English transliteration and translation of the supplication is included as is a detailed 20 page index.



Rana Dajani

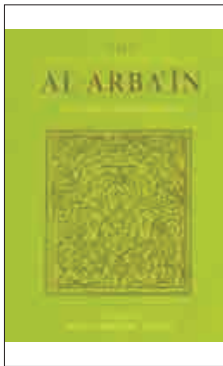
Five Scarves: Doing the Impossible—If We Can Reverse Cell Fate, Why Can't We Redefine Success?

Nova Science Publishers

Rana Dajani's *Five Scarves: Doing the Impossible—If We Can Reverse Cell Fate, Why Can't We Redefine Success?* is an exploration

of the intersections between gender, race, religion, and science told through the eyes of one of the world's leading Muslim women scientists. Dajani, a Professor of Molecular Biology at the Hashemite University of Jordan, points to the 2006 discovery of induced pluripotent stem cells which allowed researchers to reverse engineer embryonic life forms, and asks us why a similar breakthrough might not be possible in the pursuit of gender equality. Seeking a paradigm shift in the fight against women's oppression, Dajani makes the case for radically transforming the social institutions, cultures, and customs of our world to fully validate and support all women.

The reader is led through the many phases of Dajani's dizzying life journey, from the bustling world of Amman, to the quiet neighborhoods of Iowa City, back through Jordan's universities, schools, and refugee camps, and into the halls of Harvard, Cambridge, Grenoble, and the United Nations. The author wears five scarves, those of a mother, teacher, scientist, social entrepreneur, and feminist. Her story tells of all the challenges she's faced and the innovations she's made in everything from genetic analysis and science pedagogy, to grassroots social change and Islamic perspectives on evolution. Finally, Dajani offers a provocative and far-reaching meditation on the fight for women's liberation today and what it would take to build a truly equal and humane society.



Mufti Shabbir Ahmed Sahib

40 Hadiths on The Virtues of Sham And Its People

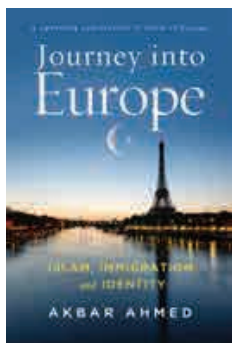
Turath Publishing

Sham is an area which encompasses modern day Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, parts of Northern Egypt, parts of Southern Turkey and parts of Western Iraq. A land sanc-

tified by the Qur'an itself and blessed in the prayers of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), Sham is a region of momentous importance and consequence, and is now a witness to violent convulsions and turmoil. In this indispensable collection, the author presents forty hadith about Sham, its virtues with a short commentary and biographies

of the Companions who lived and died here.

The author Sheikh al-Hadith Mufti Shabbir Ahmed Sahib is one of the leading scholars of the UK. He teaches the sciences of hadith, Quranic exegesis and jurisprudence at Dar al-Ulum Al-Arabiya Al-Islamia in Bury, Manchester and serves as its Grand Mufti. He studied under many distinguished scholars, most notably Sheikh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Yunus Jawnpuri in Saharanpur, India. He also has authorisations in the hadith sciences from Sheikh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya Sahib (May Allah have mercy on him). His students include many of the leading scholars of the UK.



Akbar Ahmed

Journey into Europe: Islam, Immigration, and Identity
Brookings Institution Press

Review by Frankie Martin

Journey into Europe: Islam, Immigration, and Identity examines Islam in Europe and the place

of Islam in European history and civilization. It was based on fieldwork across the continent over a four-year period to ten countries including Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the UK, France, and Italy. We again interviewed the range of society including politicians, religious leaders such as grand muftis, archbishops, and chief rabbis, and migrants recently arrived in Europe from their perilous journey across the Mediterranean. The study examined the rich history of Islam in Europe including the Muslim impact on Spain—in which Muslims arrived in the 8th century

and fostered a pluralistic society incorporating Jews, Muslims, and Christians—Sicily, and the Balkans. The study also delves into the many contributions Muslims made to Europe in areas including culture, music, art, architecture, mathematics, science, and philosophy. Like *Journey into America*, the study examined the diverse Muslim population in contemporary Europe, their relationship to European identity and other religious communities, and the ways in which coexistence might be built and strengthened. It was also, like *Journey into America*, accompanied by a documentary film which was screened at film festivals, universities, and on television around the world.

نَدِّعُ النَّاسَ مِنَ الشَّرِّ
فَإِنَّهَا صَدَقَةٌ نُصَدِّقُهَا
عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

“Spare people your evil. That is a charity which you bestow upon yourself.”

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 10, Hadith 9

Calligraphy by Haji M AbdulJaleal Nasreddin

MAJOR EVENTS

Major Events

2019

SEPTEMBER

- 1 • Saudi-led coalition air strikes on Yemen city of Dhamar kills more than 100 people according to the Red Cross.
- 6 • Jais raids Shia Muslim event at Gombak, arrests 23. Those arrested were brought to the Islamic complex at Gombak and were told that they were being investigated under sharia law for opposing the fatwa on the practice of Shi'ism.
- 7 • US President Donald Trump says he has cancelled a secret meeting with the Taliban for peace talks at Camp David.
- 10 • Iranian woman Sahar Khodayari dies after setting herself on fire during her trial, for entering a stadium disguised as a man in Tehran.
- 11 • B. J. Habibie, 3rd President of Indonesia (1998-99) who liberalised Indonesia's press and political party laws, dies of heart failure at 83.
- 14 • Drone attack on Abqaiq oil plant in Saudi Arabia takes out half of country's oil production and 5% of the world's. Yemen Houthi rebels claim responsibility.
- 16 • Erdoğan, Putin, Rouhani meet to find resolution to the Syrian civil war.
 - India arrests Kashmir leader Farooq Abdullah under controversial law that allows authorities to imprison someone for up to two years without charge or trial.
- 18 • Saudi Arabia's Defense Ministry says Iran was to blame for drone attack on Saudi oil facilities.
- 20 • Rare Egyptian political protests take place against corruption in President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi's government in Tahrir Square, Cairo and elsewhere.
- 21 • Skies turn red over Jambi province, Indonesia, as worst illegal forest fires since 2015 burn more than 800,000 acres, creating respiratory problems for a million people.
- 24 • Protests in Indonesia turned violent, leading to the death of 27 people. West Papua has faced rising violence since August.
 - 5.8 magnitude earthquake in northern Pakistan kills at least 10 and injures 300.
- 25 • Hazzaa al-Mansoori becomes first Emirati in space and first Arab astronaut to travel to the International Space Station (and only the third Arab to travel to space), travelling on Russian Soyuz-MS 15 spacecraft.
- 29 • Houthi rebels from Yemen claim they have killed 500 Saudi soldiers and captured 2,000 along with military a convoy in Najran region, Saudi Arabia.

OCTOBER

- 5 • 99 Iraqis have died and 4,000 injured in protests over 5 days against living conditions, unemployment and corruption according to human rights group.
- 9 • Turkey launches airstrikes on Kurdish forces in Northern Syria after US President Donald Trump announces decision to pull back US forces.
- 10 • 3,500 women are the first to be allowed to attend a football match in Iran for a World Cup qualifier in Tehran, since the Islamic revolution.
- 13 • Kurdish forces make a deal with Syrian army for them to patrol border areas in north east Syria to combat Turkish offensive after US President Donald Trump pulls out US forces.
- 14 • Tunisian presidential election won by academic Kais Saied defeating media mogul Nabil Karoui.
 - British Duke and Duchess of Cambridge arrive in Pakistan to begin a 5-day royal tour.
 - Hundreds of forest fires break out in western Lebanon, killing three and prompting calls for international help.

- 17 • Turkey agrees to a ceasefire in Northern Syria for 5 days to allow withdrawal of Kurdish troops, after talks between US VP Mike Pence and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
- 19 • Millions of pilgrims made their way on foot to the Iraqi city of Karbala on Saturday for the Shiite pilgrimage of Arbāeen, regarded as the largest annual public gathering in the world.
- 21 • World's oldest natural pearl, 8,000 years old, announced discovered during excavations at Marawah Island, near Abu Dhabi, UAE.
 - Lebanon government approves economic reforms after 5 days of protests, largest in a decade.
- 22 • Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan agree to jointly control former Kurdish territory in Northern Syria.
- 24 • Bangladesh sentences 16 men to death for the murder of Nusrat Jahan Rafi, who was set on fire after accusing a teacher of inappropriate behavior.
- 26 • Raid by US Special Forces kills ISIS founder Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Syria.
- 29 • Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigns after two weeks of nationwide protests and an economic crisis.
- 30 • Kashmir officially loses their autonomous status, their flag and their constitution, as India brings it under federal control.
- 31 • Gas canister explodes on a train in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan killing at least 70 and injuring 30.
 - Jihadist group Islamic State names Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Qurashi as its new leader after US special forces kill its former leader.

NOVEMBER

- 3 • Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil producer Saudi Aramco, the world's most profitable company, announces its plans to go public.
- 6 • 17 people die in attack on a checkpoint by Islamic State militants on Tajikistan's border with Uzbekistan.
- 9 • India's Supreme Court rules in favor of Hindus over Muslims in dispute over who has right to holy site in city of Ayodhya.
 - Kartarpur corridor opens allowing Sikh worshippers from India to access holy site of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan without a visa.
- 10 • Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announces the discovery of a new oil field with an estimated 53 million barrels of oil in Khuzestan province.
 - Death toll in demonstrations in Iraq reaches 319, with 15,000 injured since Oct 1 according to Iraqi human rights organisation.
- 12 • Israeli forces kill senior commander of Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant group in the Gaza Strip with Palestinian militants setting off retaliatory rockets at Israel.
- 15 • Pakistan becomes the 1st country to introduce a vaccine against typhoid, targeting 10 million children
- 16 • Iran shuts down its internet for five days to suppress news of national protests.
- 17 • Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei labels protesters "thugs" after unrest over higher gasoline prices brought Tehran to a standstill day before.
- 18 • Secretary of State Mike Pompeo reverses US policy regarding Israeli West Bank settlements as illegal after 24 years.
- 19 • As many as 106 have died over five days in protests across 21 Iranian cities according to Amnesty International, just 12 deaths reported by the government.
- 21-22 • 22 killed in displacement camp in attack by Syrian government in Idlib province, Syria.
- 23 • Sumatran rhino officially declared extinct after last known specimen, 25-year-old Iman, dies in Borneo.
- 24 • Data leaked from Chinese high-security Muslim Uighur security camps, housing 1 million people, show systematic brainwashing in western Xinjiang region.
- 26 • 6.4 magnitude earthquake centred on Durres strikes Albania, with at least 51 killed and hundreds injured.

- 28 • Iraqi security forces open fire on protesters killing at least 25 in Nasiriya a day after the Iranian embassy in Najais is burnt down.
- 29 • Terrorist knife attack at Fishmongers Hall by London Bridge, kills two and injures three, attacker previously imprisoned for 2012 terror offence.

DECEMBER

- 1 • Iraqi parliament approves resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi after weeks of unrest and 400 deaths.
- 4 • The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019, in India is cleared by the Union Cabinet for introduction in the parliament, redefining its citizenship criteria to exclude Muslims. Violent protests erupt in Assam and other areas in the state.
- 6 • Saudi state-owned oil company Saudi Aramco raises a record \$25.6 billion in its first public share offering, makes it the world's most valuable company at \$1.7 trillion.
- 9 • US officials “deliberately misled” the public on progress of the Afghanistan war, hid that it was a lost cause, according to The Washington Post analysis of the “Afghanistan Papers”.
- 10 • Citizenship Amendment Bill passes with 311 members voting in favour and 80 against.
- 11 • Militants attack army base in Ates, Niger, killing at least 71. Islamic State claim responsibility.
- 13 • Turkish football star Ozil criticises Muslim silence over Uyghurs.
- 14 • Protests against India's new citizenship bill that excludes Muslims, erupt across major cities, killing at least five.
 - The Shaheen Bagh sit-in protests against CAB begin in New Delhi, large composed of women and led by 82-year-old Bilkis, and will continue for 101 days, until their arrest and forcible removal from the site by Delhi Police.
- 16 • Kentucky's Muslim Population Prepares for First-Ever Muslim Day at the State Capitol.
- 17 • Former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf sentenced to death in absentia for high treason.
- 19 • Indian police issued a complete ban on protests in several parts of India.
- 22 • The Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot held a protest march against CAB termed the “Samvidhan Bachao Rally” which was attended by around 300,000 people.
- 28 • Jihadist fundamentalist group al-Shabaab sets off a truck bomb in Mogadishu, Somalia, killing at least 84 people and wounding over 150.
- 31 • Iraqi militiamen and protesters breach the outer wall of the US embassy in Baghdad following US airstrikes against Kataib Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed Iraqi militia, on December 29.

2020

JANUARY

- 1 • Pro-Iranian protesters end siege of US Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq.
- 3 • US airstrike kills top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani.
 - More than 100 Uyghur graveyards demolished by Chinese authorities, satellite images show.
- 4 • Over 100,000 march in southern India to protest citizenship law.
 - Floods and landslides caused by torrential rain in Jakarta, Indonesia, kill at least 53.
- 5 • Iran pulls out of the 2015 nuclear deal, will not limit its uranium enrichment.
 - India: Protests, Attacks Over New Citizenship Law.
- 8 • Iran launches missile strike on Irbil and Al Asad bases in Iraqi housing some American troops in retaliation to assassination of General Qasem Soleimani.
- 10 • Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said passes away.
 - The Citizenship Amendment Act came into force.
- 15 • More than 200,000 people joined the Anti-CAA protests in Mangalore.

- 23 • Muslim player Sonny Bill Williams 'to refuse to wear' Super League gambling logo on shirt.
- 28 • US President Donald Trump releases his Middle East peace plan alongside Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House.
- 30 • Minnesota pastor apologises after calling Muslims a 'threat' in sermon.

FEBRUARY

- 1 • Locusts swarm across East Africa leads Somalia to declare national emergency, largest in 25 years.
- Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, appointed the new Prime Minister of Iraq by President Barham Salih after 4 months of protests.
- 11 • Snow falls in Baghdad, Iraq, for only the second time in a century.
- At least 15 Rohingya Muslims killed when boat sinks off coast of Bangladesh.
- The UK's first ever Muslim LGBT+ Pride festival.
- Malaysia's largest Islamic bank launches first overseas branch in Dubai.
- 12 • Ahmadiyya Muslims celebrating 100th year of spirituality in US.
- 14 • More than 800,000 people displaced from their homes in north-western Syria amid assault by Syrian pro-government forces on last rebel stronghold.
- 18 • Ashraf Ghani declared the winner of Afghanistan's presidential elections five months after the vote, fraud allegations meant recounting.
- Macron announces measures against 'Islamic separatism'.
- 20 • London Central Mosque stabbing: Man is arrested.
- 21 • Muslims in Germany call for action against far-right groups.
- 24 • Malaysia's 94-year old Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad resigns only to be reinstated later in the day as interim Prime Minister.
- 25 • Iran emerges as new coronavirus hotspot, recording 95 cases and 11 deaths as a deputy health minister that appeared on TV confirmed also infected.
- New Delhi streets turn into battleground, Hindus vs. Muslims.
- Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian president (1981-2011) who was ousted during the Arab spring, dies at 91.
- 26 • Saudi Arabia bars overseas pilgrims from accessing religious sites of Mecca and Medina because of coronavirus fears for 1st time in living memory.
- In New Delhi, days of deadly violence and riots.
- 27 • UN demands 'unfettered access' for China Uighur region visit.
- 28 • Muslims are not able to visit holy sites in Saudi Arabia because of coronavirus.
- 29 • US and Taliban sign deal to end 18-year war in Afghanistan in Doha, Qatar. US and NATO allies will withdraw their troops after 14 months if deal kept.

MARCH

- 1 • Turkey launches major offensive against Syrian government in northern Syria after 36 Turkish soldiers killed in air and artillery strikes 3 days earlier.
- Muhyiddin Yassin sworn as Malaysian Prime Minister by Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah.
- First known coronavirus Covid-19 case identified in New York, a health care worker returning from Iran.
- 2 • Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan says Turkey can not longer enforce 2016 deal with EU to stop migrants entering Europe, warns millions may try.
- 3 • Iran releases 54,000 people from prison to avoid spread of coronavirus as country reports 77 deaths and 2,300 cases including two dozen MPs.
- 4 • Saudis ban Muslim pilgrimage in Mecca over fears about Covid-19.
- 15 • Massive economic losses expected if Covid-19 closes down Hajj.

- 22 • Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei refuses American coronavirus Covid-19 help, refers to conspiracy theory that it was manufactured by the US.
- 26 • Covid-19: Christians, Jews and Muslims join in prayer in Jerusalem.
- Christchurch mosque gunman Brenton Tarrant pleads guilty to all 51 murders in New Zealand.
- 29 • Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari orders a lockdown in the cities of Lagos and Abuja after the country records 97 Covid-19 cases and one death.
- 30 • Three Muslim doctors become first medics in UK to die from coronavirus.

APRIL

- 7 • BBC broadcasts Muslim prayers on radio for the first time.
- 8 • Saudi-backed coalition fighting Houthi fighters in Yemen calls for a ceasefire after five years to stop the spread of coronavirus Covid-19.
- 12 • OPEC and other major oil companies agree to the largest-ever drop in production to stabilise world prices.
- 19 • Turkey passes Iran to become the Middle Eastern country with the most coronavirus Covid-19 cases with 86,306 infections, Iran continues to have the most deaths.
- 24 • Covid-19 makes Muslims change Ramadhan tradition.
- 29 • A mile-wide asteroid named 1998 OR₂ passes within 3.9 million miles of Earth.

MAY

- 2 • Pope Francis joins Muslim leaders in calling for world day of prayer to end the coronavirus.
- 6 • Former intelligence chief Mustafa al-Kadhimi sworn in as new Iraqi Prime Minister, 3rd to be nominated in six months.
- 9 • Sri Lankan Muslims urge government for burial for Covid-19 victims.
- 12 • Militants storm a hospital and a funeral in Kabul, Afghanistan, shooting about 40 people dead including new mothers and their babies.
- 25 • Erdoğan Vows to Defend Palestinians Against Israel's 'Annexation Project' in Holiday Message to US Muslims.
- 21 • Mosques go virtual during a Covid-19 Ramadan.
- 22 • Pakistan International Airlines flight crashes near Jinnah International Airport in Karachi killing 97 with just two survivors.
- 27 • Locust swarms in western and central India worst since 1993 after spreading from Pakistan and Iran and due to extreme weather.
- 28 • Iranian President Hassan Rouhani calls for new protections for women after the 'honor killing' of a 14-year old by her father.
- 31 • Iyad al-Hallak, a 32-year old disabled man was fatally shot by police officers in the Old City of Jerusalem.

JUNE

- 1 • Saudi Arabia, Israel negotiating Temple Mount control.
- Temple Mount reopens amid growing tensions in Jerusalem.
- Saudi Arabia reopens 90,000 mosques, as part of the second phase of lifting the coronavirus restrictions in the country.
- Bangladeshi Muslim American women running for office.
- 2 • Indonesia cancels this year's Hajj trip.
- Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque re-opened to worshippers on Sunday after a two-and-a-half month coronavirus closure.
- 11 • Bodies of 46 migrants recovered off the coast of Tunisia after a boat capsized a few days before.

- 21 • Saudi Arabia bans international visitors from making the Islamic Hajj pilgrimage in 2020 due to coronavirus.
- 24 • Covid-19 pandemic worsens dramatically in Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, with 25% mortality according to the UN.
- 26 • New York Times says Russia secretly offered bounties to Taliban-linked forces to kill US and coalition troops in Afghanistan.

JULY

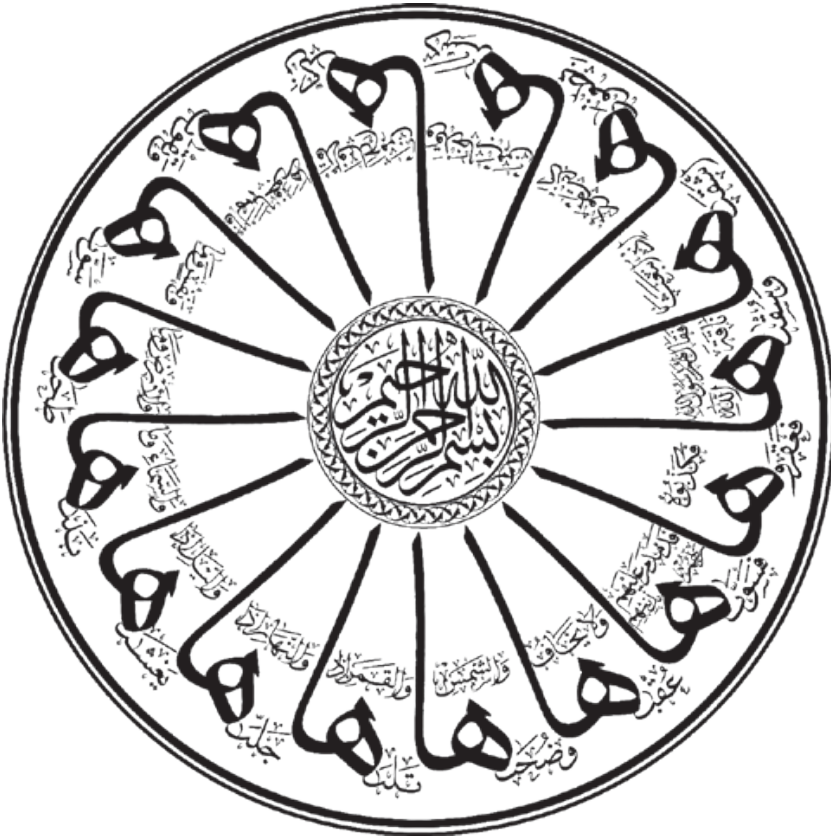
- 1 • WHO says Middle East at "critical threshold" with coronavirus Covid-19 cases over 1 million, 80% of deaths in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- Word record drug haul of 14 tonnes of amphetamines seized by Italian police in Salerno worth \$1.1 billion. Thought made in Syria by Islamic State.
- 6 • Uighur exiles urge the International Criminal Court to investigate Beijing for genocide and crimes against humanity.
- 10 • Hagia Sophia turned into a mosque by decree issued by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
- 19 • First Arab interplanetary mission, the Mars "Hope" orbiter launches on board Japanese H-2A rocket from Tanegashima Space Center.
- 21 • Former Sudanese leader Omar Hassan al-Bashir goes on trial in Khartoum for the 1989 coup that toppled the government.
- 28 • Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak found guilty of corruption, sentenced to 12 years and fined nearly \$50 million.
- 29 • Scaled back Hajj pilgrimage begins in Saudi Arabia with no foreigners.

AUGUST

- 2 • Islamic State stages a jail break at a prison in Afghan city of Jalalabad, placing bombs at its entrance, results in 20 hour gunfight, 29 deaths and over 300 prisoners at large.
- United Arab Emirates starts up the Arab world's first nuclear power station at the Barakah plant.
- 3 • Number of Iranian Covid-19 deaths triple that of government tally, showing 42,000 have died instead of 14,405, according to BBC Persian Service investigation.
- 4 • Huge explosions at the port of Beirut, Lebanon, kill more than 200 and leave over 6,000 thousand people injured.
- Video of a Uighur model imprisoned in a camp in Xinjiang is released on social media.
- 5 • Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the cornerstone for a new Hindu temple at Ayodhya Ram to replace a previous Muslim mosque.
- 10 • Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab announces his government is resigning, less than a week after massive industrial explosions devastated Beirut.
- 12 • Yemen authorities say at least 172 people died in floods caused by torrential rains, which have also destroyed historic buildings in Sanaa, a Unesco World Heritage Site.
- 13 • Israel strikes historic deal with the United Arab Emirates to normalise relations, Israel suspends plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.
- 14 • Uighur group urges IOC to reconsider 2022 Beijing Winter Games venue.
- 16 • At least 17 people killed in attack on beach resort in Mogadishu, Somalia, by al-Shabab group.
- 26 • At least 100 people killed in flash floods in the city of Charikar, Afghanistan, with 500 houses destroyed.
- 27 • Australian terrorist Brenton Tarrant sentenced to life without parole, for the killing of 51 mosque worshippers in Christchurch, New Zealand, 1st time the country imposes the sentence.
- 31 • Singer Akon lays first stone for Akon city, futuristic solar-powered city to be built in Senegal, saying will be real-life version of Wakanda in "Black Panther".

SEPTEMBER

- 8 • Two ex-Myanmar soldiers testify they were ordered to rape and kill Muslim Rohingya villagers, 1st public confession of army-directed crimes against Rohingya.
- 14 • Jakarta, Indonesia's biggest city of 10 million, imposes widespread restrictions again, amid warnings the healthcare system is on the verge of collapse.
- 18 • Earliest dated evidence for the human species in the Arabian Peninsula as fossilised footprints 120,000 years old uncovered in Saudi Arabia's Nefud Desert.
- 24 • Reports of China expanding its Uighur detention centers, with more than 380 suspected facilities housing 1 million people in Xinjiang.
- 25 • 18 people in a government convoy killed by Islamist militants in Borneo State, Nigeria.
- 27 • Border fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan forces over disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh kills at least 23.



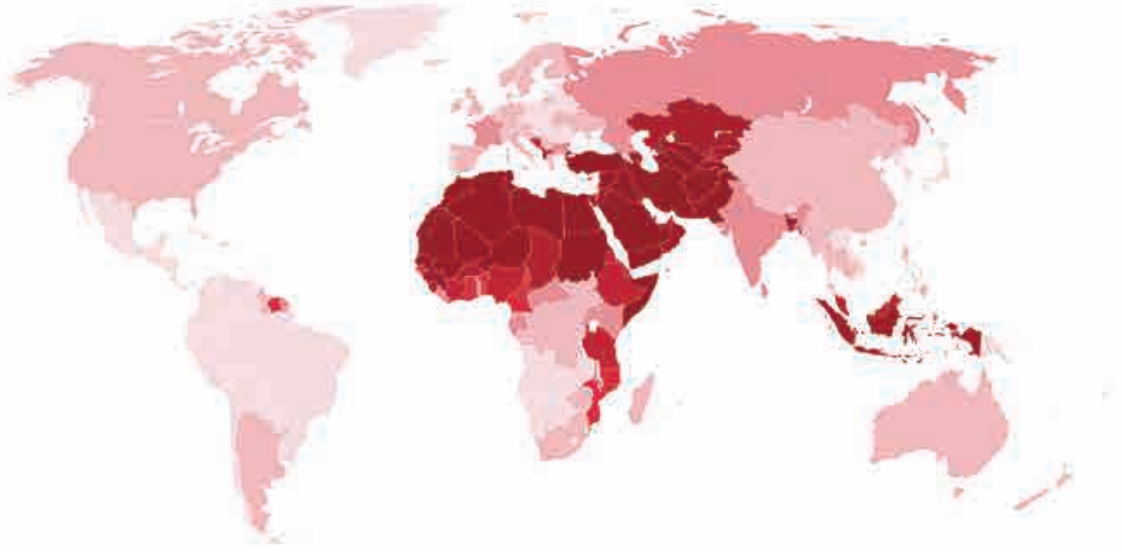
In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ By the sun and her morning light, ﷻ and [by] the moon when it follows her, ﷻ and [by] the day when it reveals her, ﷻ and [by] the night when it enshrouds her. ﷻ By the heaven and the One Who built it, ﷻ and [by] the earth and the One Who spread it, ﷻ and [by] the soul and the One Who proportioned it, ﷻ and inspired to discern its vices and piety. ﷻ Successful indeed will be the one who purifies it, ﷻ and he will indeed have failed he who eclipses it. ﷻ Thamūd denied because of their rebellious nature, ﷻ when the most wretched of them was dispatched. ﷻ But then the messenger of God said to them, [This is] the she-camel of God, so let her have her drink! ﷻ But they denied him, then hamstrung her. So their Lord closed in on them because of their sin, and meted it equally [among them]. ﷻ And He does not fear the consequence of it.

The Sun, 1 - 16

Calligraphy by Mothana Al-Obaydi © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

APPENDIX I
Population Statistics

World Muslim Population



Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Afghanistan	39,167,565	99.7	39,050,062
Albania	2,876,968	58.8	1,691,657
Algeria	44,065,744	99	43,625,087
American Samoa	55,159	< 0.1	< 55
Andorra	77,298	1.9	1,469
Angola	33,148,806	0.2	66,298
Anguilla	15,039	0.2	30
Antigua and Barbuda	98,146	0.3	294
Argentina	45,306,817	1	453,068
Armenia	2,964,711	< 0.1	< 2965
Aruba	106,887	0.4	428
Australia	25,579,377	2.6	665,064
Austria	9,020,090	7.9	712,587
Azerbaijan	10,163,642	99.2	10,082,333

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Bahamas	394,251	0.1	394
Bahrain	1,718,011	70.2	1,206,044
Bangladesh	165,129,207	90.4	149,276,803
Barbados	287,468	1.3	3,737
Belarus	9,448,502	0.5	47,243
Belgium	11,603,037	5.5	638,167
Belize	399,586	0.2	799
Benin	12,210,330	27.7	3,382,261
Bermuda	62,217	0.8	498
Bhutan	773,889	1	7,739
Bolivia	11,715,931	0.2	23,432
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3,275,471	51	1,670,490
Botswana	2,364,545	0.9	21,281
Brazil	212,962,916	0.2	425,926
British Virgin Islands	30,285	1.2	363
Brunei	438,602	79	346,496
Bulgaria	6,934,762	15	1,040,214
Burkina Faso	21,060,868	61.5	12,952,434
Burundi	11,988,494	4.15	497,523
Cambodia	16,781,355	1.8	302,064
Cameroon	26,726,889	28	7,483,529
Canada	37,830,743	3.2	1,210,584
Cape Verde	557,608	2	11,152
Caribbean Netherlands	26,288	0.5	131
Cayman Islands	65,929	0.2	132
Central African Republic	4,852,525	8.9	431,875
Chad	16,555,715	51.8	8,575,860
Chile	18,984,959	0.2	37,970
China	1,440,801,464	1.8	25,934,426
Colombia	51,028,475	1	510,285
Comoros	874,650	98	857,157
Congo	5,555,283	10	555,528
Cook Islands	17,568	0.6	105

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Costa Rica	5,106,578	< 0.1	< 5107
Côte d'Ivoire	26,557,203	43	11,419,597
Croatia	4,098,631	1.5	61,479
Cuba	11,324,789	0.1	11,325
Cyprus	1,200,338	25.4	304,886
Czech Republic	10,714,248	0.2	21,428
Denmark	5,797,623	5.4	313,072
Djibouti	991,878	98	972,040
Dominica	72,033	0.2	144
Dominican Republic	10,877,087	< 0.1	< 10877
DR Congo	90,313,494	10	9,031,349
Ecuador	17,715,439	< 0.1	< 17715
Egypt	102,858,645	8.4	86,401,262
El Salvador	6,494,921	1	64,949
Equatorial Guinea	1,415,763	10	141,576
Eritrea	3,559,657	23	818,721
Estonia	1,326,771	< 0.1	< 1327
Ethiopia	115,743,682	3.4	39,352,852
Falkland Islands	3,508	0.3	11
Faroe Islands	48,497	0.7	339
Fiji	898,181	6	53,891
Finland	5,543,001	2.7	149,661
France	65,311,826	8.8	5,747,441
French Guiana	296,711	0.9	2,670
French Polynesia	281,341	< 0.1	< 281
Gabon	2,240,097	1.4	31,361
Gambia	2,435,358	96	2,337,944
Georgia	3,987,148	10.5	418,651
Germany	83,855,110	5.7	4,779,741
Ghana	31,249,631	35.6	11,124,869
Gibraltar	33,688	4	1,348
Greece	10,409,682	1	104,097
Greenland	56,796	< 0.1	< 57

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Grenada	112,662	0.8	901
Guadeloupe	400,142	0.4	1,601
Guam	169,171	<0.1	< 169
Guatemala	18,005,551	<0.1	< 18006
Guinea	13,230,733	85	11,246,123
Guinea-Bissau	1,980,724	50	990,362
Guyana	787,563	6.8	53,554
Haiti	11,439,933	<0.1	< 11440
Honduras	9,947,222	0.1	9,947
Hong Kong	7,513,254	4.1	308,043
Hungary	9,653,886	< 0.1	< 9654
Iceland	341,834	0.4	1,367
India	1,380,004,385	14.2	195,960,623
Indonesia	274,300,161	87.2	239,189,740
Iran	84,282,503	99.4	83,776,808
Iraq	40,468,969	97	39,254,900
Ireland	4,952,607	1.3	64,384
Isle of Man	85,153	0.2	170
Israel	8,692,141	20.5	1,781,889
Italy	60,438,359	2.3	1,390,082
Jamaica	2,964,607	<0.1	< 2965
Japan	126,374,491	0.1	126,374
Jordan	10,230,306	95	9,718,791
Kazakhstan	18,837,130	70.2	13,223,665
Kenya	54,094,559	11	5,950,401
Kiribati	119,944	0.1	120
Kuwait	4,287,639	99	4,244,763
Kyrgyzstan	6,553,355	86	5,635,885
Laos	7,304,080	< 0.1	< 7304
Latvia	1,880,764	< 0.1	< 1881
Lebanon	6,817,407	54	3,681,400
Lesotho	2,146,794	0.1	2,147
Liberia	5,090,211	12.2	621,006

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Libya	6,896,501	96.6	6,662,020
Liechtenstein	38,157	4.8	1,832
Lithuania	2,712,431	0.1	2,712
Luxembourg	628,736	2.6	16,347
Macau	651,723	1.6	10,428
Macedonia	2,083,351	35	729,173
Madagascar	27,886,452	7	1,952,052
Malawi	19,265,687	12.8	2,466,008
Malaysia	32,477,756	61.3	19,908,864
Maldives	543,127	100	543,127
Mali	20,411,698	95	19,391,113
Malta	441,855	0.6	2,651
Marshall Islands	59,297	< 0.1	< 59
Martinique	375,188	0.2	750
Mauritania	4,683,240	100	4,683,240
Mauritius	1,272,328	17.3	220,113
Mayotte	274,618	97	266,379
Mexico	129,296,697	< 0.1	< 129,297
Micronesia	550,369	< 0.1	< 550
Moldova	4,031,489	< 0.1	< 4,031
Monaco	39,317	0.5	197
Mongolia	3,292,693	5	164,635
Montenegro	628,087	20	125,617
Montserrat	4,993	< 0.1	< 5
Morocco	37,029,204	99	36,658,912
Mozambique	31,498,505	35	11,024,477
Myanmar	54,507,998	1.4	763,112
Namibia	2,553,496	2	51,070
Nauru	10,842	0.1	11
Nepal	29,280,176	4.4	1,288,328
Netherlands	17,145,014	5	857,251
New Caledonia	286,240	2.6	7,442
New Zealand	4,832,799	1.3	62,826

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Nicaragua	6,645,930	< 0.1	< 6646
Niger	24,452,880	98.3	24,037,181
Nigeria	207,551,162	51	105,851,093
Niue	1,629	< 0.1	< 2
North Korea	25,809,132	< 0.1	< 25809
Northern Mariana Islands	57,651	0.7	404
Norway	5,432,672	4	217,307
Oman	5,142,542	87.7	4,510,009
Pakistan	222,068,209	97	215,406,163
Palau	18,117	< 0.1	< 18
Panama	4,333,290	0.7	30,333
Papua New Guinea	8,993,457	< 0.1	< 8993
Paraguay	7,156,316	< 0.1	< 7156
Peru	33,096,798	< 0.1	< 33097
Philippines	109,977,484	11	12,097,523
Poland	37,835,572	0.1	37,836
Portugal	10,188,812	0.6	61,133
Puerto Rico	2,841,687	0.1	2,842
Qatar	2,894,344	67.7	1,959,471
Réunion	897,034	4.2	37,675
Romania	19,203,782	0.3	57,611
Russia	145,951,162	10	14,595,116
Rwanda	13,040,937	2	260,819
Saint Helena	6,082	< 0.1	< 6
Saint Kitts & Nevis	53,300	0.1	53
Saint Lucia	183,852	0.1	184
Saint Pierre & Miquelon	6,008	0.2	12
Samoa	198,769	< 0.1	< 199
San Marino	33,950	< 0.1	< 34
São Tomé and Príncipe	220,274	3	6,608
Saudi Arabia	34,961,722	93	32,514,401
Senegal	16,866,140	95	16,022,833
Serbia	8,728,036	3.1	270,569

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Seychelles	98,511	1.6	1,576
Sierra Leone	8,021,524	78	6,256,789
Singapore	5,862,753	15	879,413
Slovakia	5,460,348	0.2	10,921
Slovenia	2,079,014	2.4	49,896
Solomon Islands	691,537	< 0.1	< 692
Somalia	16,016,320	99.8	15,984,287
South Africa	59,511,758	1.5	892,676
South Korea	51,280,969	0.3	153,843
South Sudan	11,229,320	6.2	696,218
Spain	46,759,612	4.5	2,104,183
Sri Lanka	21,437,342	9.7	2,079,422
St. Vincent & Grenadines	111,034	1.5	1,666
State of Palestine	5,134,114	95	4,877,408
Sudan	44,131,612	97	42,807,664
Suriname	588,052	13.9	81,739
Swaziland	1,160,164	2	23,203
Sweden	10,116,213	8.1	819,413
Switzerland	8,671,682	5.2	450,927
Syria	17,618,068	85	14,975,358
Taiwan	23,828,304	0.3	71,485
Tajikistan	9,596,651	98	9,404,718
Tanzania	60,207,013	36	21,674,525
Thailand	69,846,870	4.9	3,422,497
Timor-Leste	1,325,328	0.2	2,651
Togo	8,332,246	20	1,666,449
Tokelau	1,362	< 0.1	< 1
Tonga	106,020	< 0.1	< 106
Trinidad and Tobago	1,400,703	5	70,035
Tunisia	11,852,105	99	11,733,584
Turkey	84,584,911	99.8	84,415,741
Turkmenistan	6,055,351	93	5,631,476
Turks & Caicos Islands	38,859	< 0.1	< 39

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Tuvalu	11,832	0.5	59
US Virgin Islands	104,384	0.4	418
Uganda	46,144,313	14	6,460,204
Ukraine	43,664,252	0.9	392,978
United Arab Emirates	9,922,835	76	7,541,355
United Kingdom	67,981,864	5	3,399,093
United States	331,524,830	1.1	3,646,773
Uruguay	3,476,958	< 0.1	< 3477
Uzbekistan	33,601,308	96.3	32,358,060
Vanuatu	309,125	0.1	309
Vatican City	825	0	0
Venezuela	28,414,529	0.3	85,244
Vietnam	97,566,509	0.1	97,567
Wallis & Futuna	11,188	< 0.1	< 11
Western Sahara	601,397	99.6	598,991
Yemen	30,006,819	99	29,706,751
Zambia	18,526,949	1	185,269
Zimbabwe	14,921,859	1	149,219
TOTAL		26	1,956,402,685

Muslim population statistics taken from Wikipedia.org. World populations taken from www.worldometers.info.



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﴿١﴾ About what are they questioning one another? ﴿٢﴾ About the awesome tidings, ﴿٣﴾ concerning which they are at variance. ﴿٤﴾ No indeed! they will come to know. ﴿٥﴾ Again, no indeed! They will come to know! ﴿٦﴾ Have We not made the earth a cradle, ﴿٧﴾ and the mountains pegs? ﴿٨﴾ And created you in pairs? ﴿٩﴾ and made your sleep for rest? ﴿١٠﴾ and made the night a cloak? ﴿١١﴾ and made the day for livelihood? ﴿١٢﴾ and built above you seven mighty ones? ﴿١٣﴾ and set a radiant lamp? ﴿١٤﴾ and sent down from the rain-clouds cascading water? ﴿١٥﴾ that with it We may bring forth grains and plants, ﴿١٦﴾ and gardens of intertwining foliage? ﴿١٧﴾ Verily the Day of Decision is the tryst, ﴿١٨﴾ the day the Trumpet is blown and you come in droves, ﴿١٩﴾ and the heaven is opened and becomes as gates, ﴿٢٠﴾ and the mountains are set in motion, and become as a mirage. ﴿٢١﴾ Verily Hell lurks in ambush ﴿٢٢﴾ for the rebellious [it is] a resort, ﴿٢٣﴾ to remain therein for ages, ﴿٢٤﴾ tasting in it neither coolness, nor drink, ﴿٢٥﴾ except boiling water and pus, ﴿٢٦﴾ as a fitting requital. ﴿٢٧﴾ Indeed they never feared any reckoning, ﴿٢٨﴾ and they denied Our signs mendaciously, ﴿٢٩﴾ and everything have We kept count of in a Book. ﴿٣٠﴾ 'So [now] taste! For We will increase you in nothing but chastisement'.

APPENDIX II
Social Media Statistics

Top Social Media Statistics of *The Muslim 500*

This is a list showing the most popular social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) run by Muslims.

(Rounded values in millions)

Rank	Name	Age	Country
1	Salman Khan	54	India
2	Shahrukh Khan	54	India
3	Mesut Özil	31	Germany
4	Paul Pogba	27	France
5	Mohamed Salah	28	Egypt
6	Mustafa Hosny	42	Egypt
7	A.R. Rahman	53	India
8	Ahmad Al Shugairi	47	Saudi Arabia
9	Aamir Khan	55	India
10	Amr Khaled	53	Egypt
11	DJ Khaled	44	USA
12	Muhammad Alarefe	50	Saudi Arabia
13	Amr Diab	58	Egypt
14	Shaquille O' Neal	48	USA
15	Sheikh Mishary bin Rashid Alafasy	44	Kuwait
16	Tamer Hosny	43	Egypt
17	Aidh Al-Qarni	61	Saudi Arabia
18	Ice Cube	51	USA
19	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	66	Turkey
20	Ahmed Helmy	50	Egypt
21	Maher Zain	39	Sweden
22	HM Queen Rania Al-Abdullah	50	Jordan
23	Ahlam Alshamsi	51	UAE
24	Zinedine Zidane	48	France
25	Imran Khan	68	Pakistan
26	Atif Aslam	37	Pakistan
27	Haifa Wehbe	48	Lebanon
28	Khabib Nurmagomedov	32	Russia
29	Kadim Al Sahir	63	Iraq
30	Salman Al Ouda	63	Saudi Arabia
31	Bassem Youssef	46	Egypt
32	Muhammad Assaf	31	Palestine
33	HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum	71	UAE
34	Lt Gen Prabowo Subianto	68	Indonesia
35	Tareq Al-Suwaidan	66	Kuwait
36	Abdullah Gymnastiar	58	Indonesia

Occupations	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Total
Actor	49m	42m	36m	127m
Actor	41m	41m	23m	105m
Footballer	35m	25m	22m	83m
Sports	18m	8m	42m	67m
Footballer	13m	13m	40m	66m
Preacher	34m	9m	14m	58m
Musician	24m	23m	5m	52m
Show Host	17m	18m	13m	48m
Actor	18m	26m	3m	48m
Preacher	31m	11m	4m	45m
Musician	16m	5m	22m	43m
Scholar	23m	20m	0m	43m
Musician	20m	11m	12m	43m
Sports	7m	15m	18m	40m
Qur'an Reciter	21m	15m	5m	40m
Musician	19m	3m	18m	40m
Scholar	16m	20m	4m	40m
Rapper		6m	19m	38m
Politician	10m	17m	9m	35m
Actor	14m	8m	14m	35m
Musician	27m	2m	5m	34m
Royalty	17m	10m	6m	33m
Musician	9m	9m	12m	31m
Sports	3m	0m	27m	30m
Politician	10m	13m	4m	27m
Musician	20m	1m	5m	28m
Musician	12m	7m	7m	26m
Sports	3m	1m	22m	26m
Musician	13m	7m	4m	25m
Scholar	7m	13m	2m	22m
Show Host	5m	11m	4m	20m
Musician	11m	3m	5m	20m
Royalty	4m	10m	5m	20m
Public Speaker	10m	5m	5m	19m
Show Host	9m	10m	0m	19m
Preacher	7m	3m	6m	17m

Top Social Media Statistics of the General Public

This is a list showing the most popular social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram).
(Rounded values in millions)

Rank	Name	Age	Country
1	Cristiano Ronaldo	35	Portugal
2	Justin Bieber	26	Canada
3	Selena Gomez	28	USA
4	Taylor Swift	30	USA
5	Kim Kardashian	39	USA
6	Katy Perry	35	USA
7	Rihanna	32	Barbados
8	Dwayne Johnson (The Rock)	48	USA
9	Lionel Messi (Leo Messi)	33	Argentina
10	Neymar	28	Brazil
11	Beyonce	39	USA
12	Shakira	43	Colombia
13	Jennifer Lopez	51	USA
14	Barack Obama	59	USA
15	Miley Cyrus	27	USA
16	Nicki Minaj	37	USA
17	Demi Lovato	28	USA
18	Lady Gaga	34	USA
19	Kevin Hart	41	USA
20	Vin Diesel	53	USA
21	Justin Timberlake	39	USA
22	Drake	33	Canada
23	Will Smith	52	USA
24	Chris Brown	31	USA
25	LeBron James	35	USA
26	Eminem	47	USA
27	Adele	32	UK
28	Emma Watson	30	UK
29	Bruno Mars	34	USA
30	Britney Spears	38	USA
31	David Beckham	45	UK
32	Snoop Dogg	48	USA
33	Wiz Khalifa	33	USA
34	Ronaldinho Gaucho	40	Brazil
35	Amitabh Bachchan	77	India
36	Sachin Tendulkar	47	India

Occupations	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Total
Footballer	123m	88m	239m	450m
Musician	76m	113m	149m	337m
Musician	62m	63m	194m	318m
Musician	71m	87m	141m	299m
Reality Star	32m	67m	190m	288m
Musician	66m	109m	108m	282m
Musician	91m	99m	88m	277m
Wrestler	58m	15m	200m	273m
Footballer	101m	0m	167m	268m
Footballer	65m	50m	143m	257m
Musician	60m	16m	155m	231m
Musician	105m	52m	69m	225m
Musician	45m	45m	132m	222m
Politician	55m	123m	32m	210m
Musician	44m	45m	116m	204m
Musician	44m	21m	123m	188m
Actress - Musician	35m	56m	93m	183m
Musician	56m	82m	44m	182m
Comedian	31m	37m	99m	167m
Actor	100m	0m	66m	165m
Musician	41m	64m	59m	164m
Musician	46m	39m	72m	157m
Actor	101m	0m	50m	150m
Musician	44m	32m	72m	148m
Athlete - NBA	25m	48m	73m	145m
Musician	87m	23m	31m	141m
Musician	62m	27m	39m	128m
Actress	34m	29m	58m	121m
Musician	56m	43m	22m	121m
Musician	37m	56m	27m	118m
Footballer	53m	0m	65m	117m
Musician	42m	19m	53m	114m
Musician	43m	36m	31m	111m
Footballer	39m	20m	52m	111m
Actor	36m	44m	23m	103m
Cricket	34m	34m	27m	94m



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﴿﴾ By Time! ﴿﴾ Verily man is in [a state of] loss, ﴿﴾ except those who believe, and perform righteous deeds, and enjoin one another to [follow] the truth, and enjoin one another to patience.

The Declining Day, 1 - 3

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﴿﴾ Woe to every backbiter, [who is a] slanderer, ﴿﴾ who amasses wealth and counts it over. ﴿﴾ He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal. ﴿﴾ Nay! He will surely be flung into the Crusher. ﴿﴾ And what will show you what the Crusher is? ﴿﴾ [It is] the fire of God, kindled ﴿﴾ which peers over the hearts. ﴿﴾ Lo! it will be closed in on them ﴿﴾ in outstretched columns.

The Traducer, 1 - 9

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﴿﴾ Have you not considered the way in which your Lord dealt with the Men of the Elephant? ﴿﴾ Did He not make their stratagem go astray, ﴿﴾ and unleashed upon them swarms of birds, ﴿﴾ pelting them with stones of baked clay, ﴿﴾ thus making them like devoured blades?

The Elephant, 1 - 5

GLOSSARY OF ISLAMIC TERMS

Ahl al-Bayt (or Aal al-Bayt): Literally, “The People of the House”; refers to the family of the Prophet Muhammad.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah: Literally, “The People of the Prophetic Practice and Community”; refers to Sunni Muslims as a community.

Al-Fatiha: Literally, “The Opening” or “The Beginning”. This is the title for the first chapter of the Holy Qur’an that is recited as a fundamental part of Muslims’ daily prayers.

Aqida: Creed. This refers to theological and doctrinal beliefs of Muslims.

Ash’ari: Theological school of Sunni Orthodoxy named after the followers of the 9th century scholar Abu al Hasan Al-Ash’ari (874–936 CE).

Awqaf: Plural of waqf (see below).

Azaan/Adhan: The call to prayer.

Bid’a: Literally “innovation”; this refers to the act of creating superfluous, or non-prescribed traditions in the practice of Islam. It is used in common speech as a denunciation toward those not acting in accordance with the prescriptions of Islam.

Caliph: From Arabic khalifa (“successor”), the head of the entire community of Muslims, either current or in the past. Is also used by certain sects and Sufi tariqas to refer to their own leader his successor.

Chador: A loose cloth traditionally worn by Muslim women usually covering the body from head to foot.

Da’i/ Da’ee: Islamic missionary.

Da’wa: Islamic missionary work; literally ‘inviting’ to Islam or to acts of virtue.

Emir (or Amir): A title accorded to a leader, prince, or commander-in-chief.

Fatwa: A religious ruling issued by a mufti (a top legal scholar) regarding particulars of an issue in Islamic law based on circumstances surrounding the question, such as its time, place, people, and other details. Unlike the ruling of a judge (qadi), it is not normally binding.

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence. A branch of the Sharia that deals with rulings related to human actions, as opposed to faith or spirituality.

Fiqh al-Aqaliyyat: Islamic rulings for Muslims living as minorities in predominantly non-Muslim lands.

Ghazal: Love poetry used for describing the beauty of the loved one as well as the emotions the poet has towards the beloved.

Hadith: Literally “saying”. These are a collection of sayings—or direct observations—of the Prophet Muhammad. There are numerous ahadeeth (plural of “hadith”), and the practice of verifying them is an Islamic scholarly practice of its own that has been carried out since the life of the Prophet.

Hafiz (or Hafiza) al-Qur’an: A person who has committed the entire Qur’an to memory, and can recite the Qur’an at will. This is important in Islam because the Qur’an was originally revealed as an oral text, and until today, the authenticity of Qur’anic transmission is based primarily on oral, then written, transmission.

Hajj: The pilgrimage to Makkah, one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation upon every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it. The pilgrimage occurs from the 8th-12th days of Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar.

Halal: Permissible. A term referring to actions or objects that are permissible according to Islamic law. Commonly refers to food items that are permissible for Muslims to eat.

Haram: In the context of a sacred precinct, like Makkah, Medina, or al-Aqsa, this term means “invulnerable”. In most contexts, this term means “forbidden”, and relates to actions that are impermissible according to Islamic law.

Hijab: Normally refers to the headscarf worn by Muslim women but refers to both the head cover and attire worn by Muslim women to preserve their modesty. It obligatory by the consensus of all classical Islamic schools of thought. In some contexts, it can mean segregation, as in between genders.

Hijaz: The region along the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula that separates Najd in the east from Tihamah in the west.

Ibadi: The Ibadi school has origins in and is linked to the Kharijites, but the modern day community is distinct from the 7th century Islamic sect. It was founded after the death of the Prophet Muhammad and is currently practiced by a majority of Oman's Muslim population. It is also found across parts of Africa.

Ihsan: Virtue through constant regard to, and awareness of, God.

Ijaza: Certification given to a student for acquiring knowledge of a particular discipline under the authorization of a higher authority usually by face-to-face interactions, thereby enabling the student to transmit the knowledge the teacher has. This is performed under the supervision of a certified sheikh whose chain of narrations often leads to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ijtihad: Independent reasoning, or individual interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Imam: (1) In both Sunni and Shia Islam an imam is the leader of congregational prayers who may also deliver the sermon of the Friday (Jumu'ah) prayers; more generally, a person of authority within the community. (2) In Shia Islam this exclusively refers to a series of people, descended from the Prophet Muhammad, who by lineage are considered divinely guided spiritual leaders.

Imamate: The position or institution, in Shia Islam, that is comprised of a series of divinely guided imams.

Iman: Faith in God.

Islam: Submission to God's will.

Isnad: The chain of narrators of the Hadith; it is the list of authorities who have transmitted the sayings, actions or approbations of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) via one of his companions or a later authority (tabi'i). The reliability of the isnad is the main criteria in the validity of Hadith. Modern practices of scientific citation and historical method owe a great deal to the rigour of the isnad tradition of early Muslims.

Jihad: Literally, "struggle". An exertion of effort in any field, not just in war, in order to achieve good or prevent evil, done so for the sake of God's pleasure. The highest level of jihad is to overcome one's ego

and lower self. It is considered a religious duty upon every Muslim.

Kaaba: The large cubic structure in the Grand Mosque in Makkah, adorned in gold-embroidered black fabric, referred to by Muslims as the "House of God". This structure marks the direction in which Muslims pray and is central to the Hajj pilgrimage.

Khat: Script. Refers to Arabic calligraphy, which is the artistic practice of handwriting Arabic phrases, often in the form of verses of the Qur'an or Islamic prayers.

Khateeb: Refers to the person who delivers the Islamic sermon (khutbah) during certain occasions such as the Friday or Eid prayers. He is usually the imam or leader of the prayer.

Khalifa: See "caliph".

Khanqah: A building designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood, or tariqa, and is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. It is also synonymous with the regional terms ribat, tekke, and zawiya.

Khawarij: A group of Muslims in early Islamic history who went against the larger community and became outsiders. A term used to describe political deviants.

Khums: Literally, "one-fifth" in Arabic; a religious tax of one-fifth of one's income owed by followers of Usuli Twelver Shia to a very senior cleric and poor Muslims.

Madhab: A traditional school of Islamic legal methodology (e.g. Hanbali, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanafi, Ja'fari).

Madrassa: The Arabic word for "school". Can refer to a religious school.

Majlis al-Shura: Consultative religio-legislative body.

Marja'/Marja'iyya: The highest position of authority in the Usuli school of Twelver Shia fiqh whose authority lies after the Qur'an, prophets, and imams. Also referred to as marja' taqlid (literally "one who is worthy of being imitated"), they have the authority to make legal decisions within the confines of Islamic law for laymen and less-qualified clerics.

Masjid: Arabic for “mosque”.

Maturidi: Theological school of Sunni Orthodoxy named after the followers of the 9th century scholar Muhammad Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (853-944 CE).

Melayu Islam Beraja: The concept of Malay Islamic monarchy.

Morchidat: Literally, “(female) guides”. Refers to the Moroccan cadre of trained female preachers.

Mufti: A Muslim legal expert who is empowered to give rulings on religious matters.

Mujahid: Someone engaged in acts of jihad.

Muqri: Someone qualified to teach others proper recitation of the Qur’an.

Murid: Disciple of a Sufi guide or order.

Mursyidul Am: Malaysian term for religious guide.

Mushaf: A printing of the Qur’an, referring to the physical bound volume of the Holy Book.

Mutabarrik: Supporter or affiliate of a Sufi guide or order, someone less serious in treading the spiritual path than a murid.

Mu’tazili: An almost obsolete school of Sunni Islam, popular in the 8th century, that advocates the belief that the Qur’an is created—as opposed to the Orthodox Sunni view that it is eternal and uncreated.

Nasheed: Islamic song. Islamic vocal music, sung individually or by a group and sometimes accompanied by the daf, a shallow drum similar to the tambourine. The words sung may refer to religion, history, current issues, or anything related to Islam.

Pancasila: Indonesian concept of five basic, national principles: belief in the Oneness of God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy, and social justice.

PBUH: An acronym for “Peace be upon him”.

Pesantren: The term for Islamic schools in Indonesia.

Qibla: The direction in which Muslims offer their five

daily prayers; the direction of the Kaaba in Makkah.

Ramadan: Holy month of fasting, ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

Salafi: A movement of Sunni Muslims that places great emphasis on literal interpretation of the Qur’an and Hadith, with skepticism towards the role of human intellect.

Salawat: Prayers of peace upon the Prophet which have many distinct formulas, often consisting of the basic *Allahumma salli ala sayyidina Muhammad wa ala ahlihi wa sallim* (O God send your prayers and blessings upon Muhammad and his family).

Shahadatayn: The two testimonies of faith: “There is no deity but God. Muhammad is the Messenger of God.” Stating these two sentences is sufficient to become a Muslim.

Sharia: Literally, “the way to the source”, this refers to Islamic law. Islamic law is not, as is widely perceived, a standard set of written rules, but is rather an unwritten text that is interpreted by legal scholars in specific instances, drawing on the Qur’an and other reliable religious sources relevant to the tradition followed.

Sheikh: (1) A position of authority granted to people who are respected in society. (2) A religious or tribal official.

Shia: The second largest denomination of Muslims referred to as *Shi’atu ‘Ali* or “party of Ali”, the fourth caliph of Islam and first imam in Shia Islam.

Sunnah: Literally “the trodden path”, this refers to the ways and practices of the Prophet Muhammad. Reference to these practices can be found in the Qur’an and in the Hadith.

Sunni: The largest denomination of Muslims referred to as *Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama’ah* or “The People of the Prophetic Tradition and Community”—with emphasis on emulating the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

Tafsir: Interpretation of the Qur’an, either by commentary or exegesis.

Taqlid: The practice of following rulings without

questioning the religious authority. This is a core tenet of the Shia Usuli school of Islamic law.

Tariqa: any particular brotherhood of Sufism (spiritual travel) that leads to a path to the Divine. It consists of a group of seekers following their guide (spiritual leader), and through spiritual deeds and guidance one reaches the ultimate truth of knowing God.

Ummah: The collective Muslim community.

Umrah: The “lesser pilgrimage” to Makkah. It can be performed any time of the year and has fewer rites than the hajj.

Usul ad Din: The basic foundations of the Islamic religion, represent creed, behaviour, and intellectual conduct and all are based on the rudiments of the Islamic faith.

Velayat-e-Faqih: A position of both spiritual and temporal powers in the Republic of Iran. Literally, “Guardianship of the Jurist”, referring to the fact that while the Mahdi (awaited one) is in occultation, the

jurists should have guardianship over the earth.

Waqf: A religious endowment or charitable trust.

Zakat: Mandatory distribution of excess wealth to the poor, and one of the five pillars of Islam. It typically consists of distributing 2.5% (one fortieth) of one’s excess wealth every year, as well as mandatory charity during Eid al-Fitr, following Ramadan.

Zawiya: See khanqah, above.



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ [In gratitude] for the security of Quraysh, ﷻ their security for the journey of winter and of summer, ﷻ let them worship the Lord of this House, ﷻ Who has fed them against hunger and made them secure from fear.

Quresh, 1 - 4

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ Have you seen him who denies the Judgement? ﷻ That is he who repels the orphan ﷻ and does not urge the feeding of the needy. ﷻ So woe to them who pray, ﷻ those who are heedless of their prayers, ﷻ those who make a pretence, ﷻ and deny aid.

Small Kindnesses, 1 - 7

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ﷻ We have assuredly given you Abundance. ﷻ So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. ﷻ Indeed it is your antagonist who is the severed one.

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A scene from *The Conference of the Birds* by Farid ud-Din Attar



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