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We stand for:

- *Inter-faith and inter-civilisational dialogue*
- *Respect for the human race and rights*
- *Cooperation for the good of people*
- *Moderation*
- *Modernity*
- *High standards of spirituality*

In this issue

Local Events	2
Muslim Affairs	3
Evliya Çelebi, Turkish traveler	4
Malaysia targets RM50 billion halal exports	5
'Hijabi clout'; exploitation for campaigns	6
The Pious Man and the Shopkeeper	8

Abrar

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Jerusalem is capital of world's religions

For the past seven decades the case of Palestine has always been central to the Middle Eastern affairs. Since the UN resolution in 1947 that called for the partition of that land it has not ceased to attract the attention and concern of millions of people throughout this troubled planet. Not only has it been an issue for the Arabs or the Muslims but almost all progressive movements have embraced the case of Palestine. The Israeli occupation has never been recognised by the world especially the lands occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. The political interactions and engagements have led to a worldwide acceptance that the Palestinians ought to have their own state. Many Palestinians have rejected the Israeli occupation not only in 1967 but also in 1948. They still believe that Palestine is their country and that Palestinian Jews have as much right as any other Palestinian to reside on its soil. They reject the concept that Palestine is the land of any religious group; it belongs to all Palestinians across the religious divide.

The failure of the successive American administrations to adopt neutral position on the issue has contributed to making it one of most complex international disputes of modern times. The peace agreements signed over the past 40 years since the visit to Jerusalem in 1978 by the then Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, have not led to real peace. Wars have fought before and after the Camp David accords. They were devastating military conflicts that had contributed only to make the crisis more intractable. Simple or theoretical solutions cannot sort out complex issues and the use of military force to impose unfair solutions or deals are often doomed. Thus when the US president spoke of his "Deal of the Century" to end the conflict, no sensible person believed it would work. America may possess the largest military capabilities in the world but this power has not enabled it to impose its solutions on others. These policies may work in an apocalyptic scenario but not the real world. The Palestinian natives cannot be forced to accept the occupation of their

land. This is proven beyond any doubt by the seven decades of the uneven wars starting in 1948. Unless the US resorts to the use of its nuclear bombs to wipe up not only the Palestinians but also the Arabs, Muslims and the progressive forces in the world, the Palestinian problem will continue to haunt the occupiers and their backers.

So why should big problems like that of Palestine remain unsolved for such a long time? Isn't it the case that the world's community had learnt from the harsh lessons of World War 2? For half a century afterwards the international community sought to draw up extensive legislations to help prevent wars and provide collective leadership to challenge aggression and help the aggrieved. Since then many UN resolutions have been passed on the Palestinian issue including 242 and 338. The present American president has seriously undermined the UN role in world affairs and attempted to replace it with American hegemony. The world's religious leaders including the Vatican have repeatedly called for justice to the Palestinians. Their calls have not been heeded by Washington. Instead the White House imposed a new vision contained in Trump's Deal of the Century that seeks to end the Palestinian problem by giving unequivocal support to the Israeli policies of annexations including that of Jerusalem, the world's capital of religions.

To achieve a human environment with a degree of stability, cooperation, respect and mutual recognition of its components, religious leaders must speak out, promote the intrinsic values of the successive divine revelations, challenge injustices being committed at large scale against the poor, the weak and women and provide moral leadership in an immoral world. The Palestinians had a country but were illegally forced out of most of it. It is the duty of the world community to help them to return to their homeland, freed them of occupation and challenge the notion that military might is a source of legitimacy. Palestine belongs to their people, Jerusalem is the capital of world's religions, it must be embraced by all.



Religion and Revolution

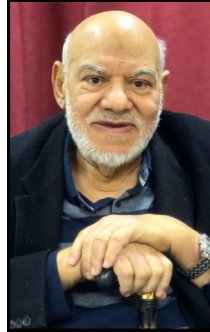
The role of religion in social change was debated at Abrar's weekly meeting on Thursday 6th February. The discussion was on the 41st anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution which was led by Imam Khomeini and led to the fall of the Shah's regime. Two people debated the issue; Dr Fouad Ibrahim, an academic from Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and Dr Kamal Helbawi, from Egypt.

Dr Fouad Ibrahim presented four reasons for the victory of that popular revolution: the participation of the people when millions took the street for a period of almost one year. 2- the leadership in the person of Imam Khomeini who had vision, strong and decisive. 3- the revolutionary ideology. Imam Khomeini managed to present new interpretations to the Shia texts, transforming it into revolutionary ideas for change rather than passive resistance. 4- The insistence on fundamental regime change rather than cosmetic one. Corruption had to be uprooted. He then presented four major challenges facing the Islamic Revolution: 1- The ability to maintain homogeneity involving the revolution and the state, any dual discourse is damaging to both. 2- the economic and scientific sanctions. 3- Combating the counter-revolution forces and preventing internal discord. Many outside players aspire to see the downfall of this unique ideological system. 4- Alternative political ideologies may present a challenge although the Islamic one is still superior in that society. The speaker then presented figures about the scientific and industrial developments in Iran over the past four decades.

Dr Kamal Helbawi said that there are events that cause the person to feel pathetic and others that enliven people. This is one of them, he said.



11th February is an unforgettable day both in Iran and Egypt. It was a day of deceit in Egypt when Mubarak told the people he would appoint the military council. In Iran Imam Khomeini declared the final victory of the Revolution and the demise of the Pahlavi regime. Today I can see the influence of the Imam on his students and followers. They benefited from his spirit and thoughts. I was near to them before and after the Revolution. People like Ahmadi Nejad, Sheikh Tashiri and Khosrow-Shahi as well as some ambassadors are good examples of principled people. They walk high headed like Imam Khomeini. Sometimes we recite the holy verses and forget their real implications in life. "If you support God, He will support you and stabilise your feet". Imam Khomeini realised the true meaning of worship; to address God and believe He is the source of victory. The role of leadership is crucial; without a principled and original leadership victory cannot be achieved. I have three points: The first is that the Islamic Revolution came to save the Ummah, not only Iran. Thus the Ummah must feel indebted to that leader. After the demise of Imam Khomeini, Henry Kissinger said: Imam Khomeini has forced the West to face a real crisis in planning. His decisions was loud like thunder; they did not leave time for the politicians or planners to think. He was drawing his decisions from difference sources. He spoke of the Ummah, unity and love and utilising the thoughts and efforts of others to enlighten the masses. The Islamic jurisprudent moved from dealing with marginal issues to major and complicated cases of politics and government. No one at the time was able to tackle such issues. He said: Addressing anyone but Allah creates obstruction and obscure sight. This is true meaning of sincerity, not the language or tactics used by terrorists who severe heads and kill the innocent. He said: As long as our people aspire to God I am confident that no one can inflict defeat on them. He said: O'



Muslims and Oppressed people of the world who are subjugated by oppressors; rise and never care about the noise of the arrogant. In dealing with those arrogant powers; Muslims must: 1- not fear the colonial and hegemonic powers, 2- work to uproot colonialism and imperialism, 3- target the real enemies, 4- Challenge the values that contradict the natural instincts and 6- defend the holy places especially Palestine.

Rethinking Gulf security

On 4th February the Open Open Discussions in conjunction with the Gulf Cultural Club held a seminar titled: Rethinking Gulf security; Revising approaches to the Iran-US Crisis. Three speakers addressed the subject; Marigold Bentley from the Quakers dealt with the subject from a religious and peace perspective. Richard Reeve, from the Rethinking Security think tank and Roshan Mohammad Saleh, a freelance journalist who had covered Iran for many years. Marigold Bentley rejected war as a way to deal with Iran as has been repeatedly hinted by the White House. She said: Our religious understanding is that war is failure. Modern warfare is failure on a colossal scale. It is failure in the following ways: failure to love our neighbours as ourselves; failure to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us; failure to seek peace and pursue it; failure to leave no stone unturned in the search for a peaceful solution. Richard Reeves talked about how and why the UK and its military are exposed to involvements in conflict between the US and Iran. He also dealt with why the UK is so militarily intertwined in the Gulf region and what kind of fundamental assumptions underline that presence in the region. He also talked about how we could rethink the UK's security policy and the impact this could have on the region. Roshan Mohammad Saleh spoke about Iran with a degree of neutrality, touching upon the assassination of General Soleimani and the way the West has adopted double standards with regards to freedom of speech, citing the closing down of Press TV.



African leaders reject Trump's Mideast peace plan



African leaders on Sunday condemned US President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan as illegitimate, taking advantage of an African Union summit to voice solidarity with "the Palestinian cause".

AU Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat told assembled heads of state that the plan unveiled in late January represented the "umpteenth violation of multiple United Nations and African Union resolutions".

He said that it was prepared without international consultation and that it "trampled on the rights of the Palestinian people", a line that drew applause in the main hall at AU headquarters.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was represented at the summit by Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, who reiterated Palestinian position that the Trump plan "has no legitimacy whatsoever".

WHO: coronavirus spread may be 'tip of the iceberg'



Confirmed cases of coronavirus transmitted by people who have never traveled to China could be the "tip of the iceberg", Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has warned.

The WHO chief's remarks come as China attempted to return to some form of normalcy, with people returning to work on Monday as an extended Lunar New Year break ended.

"There've been some concerning instances of onward #2019nCoV spread from people with no travel history to [China]," Ghebreyesus tweeted, using the virus's provisional scientific name.

"The detection of a small number of cases may indicate more widespread transmission in other countries; in short, we may only be seeing the tip of the iceberg," he added. Members of a WHO

international expert mission flew Monday to China to help coordinate a response to the crisis, which has infected more than 40,000 people and killed at least 908.

Guterres: UN supports end of Israeli-Palestinian conflict on basis of international law

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is "key to sustainable peace in the Middle East", UN Secretary General António Guterres said on Tuesday, maintaining that the lack of any progress only "furthers radicalization across the region".

Guterres told the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, meeting in New York, that the UN supports an end to the decades-long conflict on the basis of numerous "resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements" that have been made, with "recognized borders on the basis of the pre-1967 lines". He cited the expansion and acceleration of illegal settlement activities in the occupied West Bank, ongoing demolitions, seizures of Palestinian-owned property and evictions, as continuing cause for concern.

Moreover, the UN has "repeatedly stated that Jerusalem remains a final status issue", he continued, "the city's future can only be resolved on the basis of international law and through negotiations between the parties".

On January 28, US President Donald Trump proposed his 'Vision for Peace, Prosperity and a Brighter Future' that would legalize Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and also allow Israel to annex around 30 percent of the West Bank.

The Secretary General responded by recalling the UN's longstanding commitment to realize a two-state solution, with Israelis and Palestinians "living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines."

"The position of the UN on the two-state solution has been defined, throughout the years, by relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions by which the Secretariat is bound," the UN chief upheld.

Europe should ensure that Iran benefits of nuclear deal: Borrell

Borrell wrote on the Project Syndicate website, "Diplomacy cannot succeed unless it is backed by action. If we want the Iran nuclear deal to survive, we need to ensure that Iran benefits if it returns to full compliance."



Heading a delegation, EU's Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell traveled to Tehran last Monday to meet with Iranian officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif,

and Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani. During the meetings, Borrell underlined his determination to carry forward the EU's efforts to contribute to de-escalation and pursue stability in the wider region, and also the need for full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by all sides.

UK, US asked to investigate UAE 'war crimes' in Yemen

A British law firm filed requests on Tuesday with the authorities in Britain, the United States and Turkey to arrest senior officials from the United Arab Emirates on suspicion of carrying out war crimes and torture in Yemen.

The complaints were filed by law firm Stoke White under the 'universal jurisdiction' principle that countries are obliged to investigate breaches of the Geneva Convention for war crimes wherever they may have been carried out.

The firm filed the complaints to Britain's Metropolitan police and the U.S. and Turkish justice ministries on behalf of Abdullah Suliman Abdullah Daubalah, a journalist, and Salah Muslim Salem, whose brother was killed in Yemen.

Lawyers for the men said in the complaint that the UAE and its "mercenaries" were responsible for torture and war crimes against civilians in Yemen in 2015 and 2019. It named senior UAE political and military figures as suspects.

A spokeswoman for the UAE declined immediate comment, as did a spokesman for London's Metropolitan Police. There was no immediate reply to emails to the U.S. Justice Department and the Turkish embassy in London.

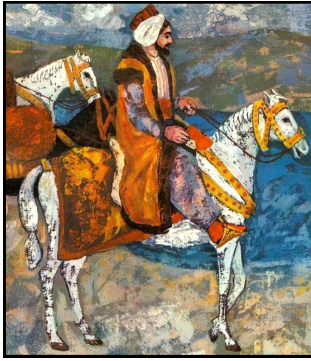


"The suspects reside in the UAE and the United States, and are not resident in the UK or Turkey," said Hakan Camuz, head of international law at Stoke White. "However, they travel to the UK regularly."

Evliya Çelebi: Traveler who documented Ottoman empire

By Lev Myshkin

Evliya Çelebi is known variously as a Turkish Pepys, a Muslim Montaigne and an Ottoman Herodotus, 17th century traveller, Evliya Çelebi, recounts his adventures in the 10-volume “Seyahatname” (Book of Travels). A new translation has revived interest in this remarkable man.



The Book of Travels by

Evliya Çelebi is not just a fascinating travel book, it is a key source for understanding the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century, despite the fact that the author had a reputation for occasionally confusing fact with fiction. Evliya Çelebi was considered something of a well-kept secret amongst historians until now, but with this new translation that may be set to change.

Evliya Çelebi (1611 – 1682) travelled extensively through the Ottoman Empire and neighbouring countries for 40 years. Along the way he wrote his travelogue, the Seyahatname, which eventually comprised ten books: 1. Istanbul and surrounding areas (1630); 2. Anatolia, the Caucasus, Crete and Azerbaijan (1640); 3 Syria, Palestine, Armenia and Rumelia (1648); 4. Eastern Anatolia, Iraq, and Iran (1655); 5. Russia and the Balkans (1656); 6. Military Campaigns in Hungary (1663/64); 7. Austria, the Crimea, and the Caucasus for the second time (1664); 8. Greece and then the Crimea and Rumelia for the second time (1667–1670); 9. the Hajj to Mecca (1671); 10 Egypt and the Sudan (1672).

The “Turkish Pepys” was born into a well-to-do family (his father was the imperial goldsmith) and it is thought that he received an excellent education. Evliya Çelebi himself tells us that he was taught to recite the Koran in its entirety (it took him 8 hours) by his tutor Evliya Mehmed Efendi and he continued the practice of reciting the Koran every Friday for his entire life. He would have been entitled to call himself “Efendi” due to his skill in Koran recitation but he opted for the title of Çelebi which roughly translated means “Gentleman”.

Evliya Çelebi could afford to travel constantly as he possessed inherited wealth and powerful family connections in Istanbul. Nevertheless he worked constantly during his travels, adapting to a variety of situations by making good use of his learning, witty repartee and fine singing voice. His occupations included working as an Imam, a muezzin, a courier, and a raconteur. Throughout the chronicle he describes himself variously as a bachelor (mücerred), mystical seeker (dervish), and a fakir.

A new translation, by Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim, of selections from Evliya Çelebi’s Book of Travels has just

been published by Eland Publishing, giving us a taste of each of the ten volumes. Robert Dankoff is Professor Emeritus of Turkish and Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago (and also the author of *An Ottoman Mentality: the World of Evliya Çelebi*) and Sooyong Kim is Visiting Assistant Professor at Bryn Mawr College. Their translation is accessible and eminently readable although

the authors do warn that many modern readers will find the endless references and allusions to Islamic and Persian lore somewhat tough going or just incomprehensible. The originally powerful associations conjured up by allusions to Sa’di’s *Rose Garden* (1258) and to the Koran and Hadith will be lost on most of us, but this does not detract from the historical importance or the pleasure of reading the chronicle.

It all started with a dream in which the Prophet Muhammad himself blessed Evliya Çelebi’s intention to travel the world. The chronicle begins close to home, with a depiction of his own city Istanbul with an incredibly detailed description of the Sultan Suleyman Mosque. A minute account is also given of the walled town of Galata with its famous fortress (its circuit is 10,060 paces) all greatly enlivened by a trenchant portrayal of the city’s international community and its habits. The inhabitants are mostly sailors, merchants, craftsmen and artisans like joiners and caulkers. With a touch of malice he says “The Greeks are tavern keepers. The Armenians are sellers of pressed mat (pastirma) and wealthy merchants. The Jews are intermediaries in the marketplace. The Jewish boys are male prostitutes – there is no more despised group of catamites than they.”

One of the more enlightening and amusing sections is Evliya Çelebi’s visit to Vienna and particularly to the Church of St Stephen. The architecture and decoration are examined with his customary scrupulousness and he gives an account of the castrati singers and the church’s organ; the latter he describes as having a “liver piercing sound, like the voice of the Antichrist, that makes a

man’s hair stand on end”. He was clearly impressed with the mechanics but passed the whole contraption off as mere “white magic”.

At times our credibility is strained somewhat by such tales as that of the virgin who gives birth to a baby elephant or the story of the Bulgarian witch who turns herself into a hen and her children into chickens. Some of these more fantastical episodes have given Evliya Çelebi the reputation of an entertainer rather than that of an eminent historian. Despite these occasional lapses into the imaginary, Evliya Çelebi is often portrayed as an enlightened precursor of modern thinkers, believing in equality, freedom of thought and intellectual debate but there is no question that he was a man of his time, albeit occasionally a slightly eccentric one.

He gives an extensive summary of the history of Jerusalem and the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Upon visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre he reminds us that “Even now 5,000 or 10,000 hell-doomed infidels gather here every year on their infamous festival of the Red Egg (Easter).”

The account of his years in Egypt are full of fascinating information, from snake-charmers and their trade, to crocodiles (even sex with them), prostitutes, pyramids, fellahin wedding ceremonies and female circumcision.

He was also a military man and something of a diplomat. He took part in the battle against the Mongols in Lebanon, and the Celali revolts in Anatolia, witnessed the siege of Zerinvar on the Croatian border and participated at the Battle of St. Gotthard, leaving an extremely detailed report. He was part of the embassy of Qara Mehmed Pasha to the court of Vienna in the capacity of muezzin and was sent twice to Tabriz to conduct negotiations with the Safavid governor.

When Evliya Çelebi takes a break from fighting the German infidels, he offers a delightful interlude describing the difference between the Austrians and the Hungarians. The Austrians are given short shrift for their lack of skill in shooting muskets and their insistence on washing

their faces in the morning with urine. The Hungarians are considered a touch more civilized as they wash their faces with water like any good Ottoman and they are clean and above all lay a generous table.

The Seyahatname is one of the few accounts of the 17th century Ottoman world from the perspective of a Muslim, which makes it a vital historical document. Evliya Çelebi has left us with an amusing, knowledgeable and wide-ranging travel book covering the politics, linguistics, music, science and the supernatural throughout the Ottoman Empire.



Malaysia targets RM50 billion halal exports by year-end

The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) aims to achieve its RM50 billion halal export target by year-end by enhancing its global marketing activities for local halal products. To realize this, the trade promotion agency will be leveraging the 17th Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS), to be held on 1-4 April this year.

Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Export Acceleration) Mohd Mustafa Abdul Aziz told Bernama that Malaysia has a lot of advantages in the halal industry, especially in terms of certification, but Malaysian industry players must not remain complacent. "Malaysia's success in the halal industry has motivated a lot of other countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim, to explore the prospects of halal for their economy. "We need to ramp up efforts to ensure the relevance of our local halal products globally, as there is still a major lack of understanding of what halal is all about among global buyers," he said.

Mustafa said MIHAS is a good platform to address this as it showcases the industry's value to global buyers. "Halal means the product is of superior quality and reliable - qualities that global buyers are looking for," he said.

He said the growing Muslim population worldwide and the rising demand by non-Muslims for halal products also facilitate the rapid progress of the industry. "Consumers are now actively seeking and familiarizing themselves with halal products and services, which include food and beverages, ingredients, healthcare products and services, personal care, tourism as well as financial services," he said. According to Dinar Standard's "State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2019/20", Muslims spent US\$2.2 trillion in 2018, a 5.2 percent growth year-on-year. The amount is expected to increase to US\$3.2 trillion by 2024 at a compound annual growth rate of 6.2 percent. Organized by MATRADE, MIHAS offers Malaysian exporters a platform to showcase their halal brands, and visitors will also be able to witness the conducive halal ecosystem that Malaysia has in place. "Malaysia is currently the only country in the world that boasts a comprehensive ecosystem for the halal industry development agenda.

"This includes halal certification systems, standards and regulations, infrastructures, incentives, human capital and Islamic banking, supported by effective frameworks from governmental institutions, all linked together to create a holistic halal ecosystem," Mustafa said.

MIHAS 2020 will also feature the International Sourcing Programme (INSP), a business-to-business matching event, to be held on March 31.

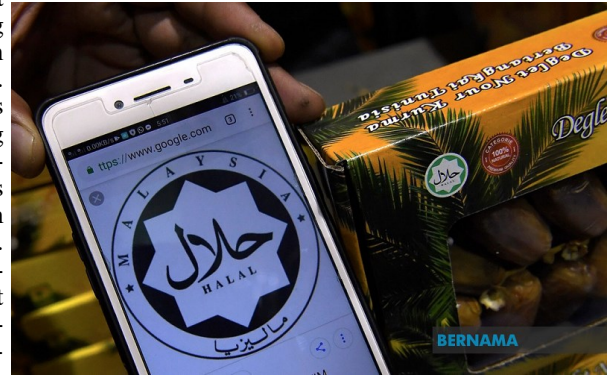
This year's INSP will involve 400 foreign buyers, to be matched with local small and medium enterprises.

Over the past 16 years, MIHAS' INSP attracted a total of 4,382 international buyers from more than 50 countries who were matched with 7,400 Malaysian companies.

More than 54,000 business meetings were arranged throughout the years, generating more than RM17.2 billion in export value. MIHAS 2020 also offers networking and learning opportunities, industry-renowned fora as well as talks by experts from various halal industries. Key sectors to be promoted at the halal trade event include food and beverages, food technology man-

ufacturing, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, logistics, tourism, Islamic Finance, digital and franchise.

The world-renowned event was awarded "The Best Malaysia Iconic Event" at the Malaysia Business Events Award in 2019 by the Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organizers and Suppliers.



Remnants of ISIS in limbo in Syria

In northeastern Syria, prisons and detention camps hold thousands of men, women and children whose lives are in limbo nearly a year after the final defeat of Islamic State to which they once belonged.

The area around Qamishli city is mainly controlled by Kurdish fighters who helped defeat the Islamist militant group. They have since been pushed into a small pocket of northeastern Syria by Turkish-led forces who consider them a security threat.

Kurdish forces bear the brunt of looking after those captured as Islamic State collapsed, including hundreds of foreigners who fought alongside local militants to create a self-declared caliphate in the Middle East.

What to do with the remnants of Islamic State, whose fighters tortured and executed thousands of people during its zenith from 2014, is a thorny issue for countries whose citizens went to fight with the group.

Many European countries, for example, have hesitated to repatriate nationals, fearing a public backlash if they do. Europeans comprise a fifth of the roughly 10,000 Islamic State fighters held captive in Syria by Kurdish militias.

Kurdish officials say they lack the resources to properly detain, investigate and prosecute the large number of prisoners as well as their families in camps. They have called repeatedly on foreign nations to take back their citizens.

"We want to know what our fate is," said Mahmoud Mohammad, an IS fighter from Syria held by Kurdish

forces in a prison near the town of Hasaka, south of Qamishli.

"We don't know anything about our families," he told Reuters in an interview arranged and supervised by Kurdish security forces during a sanctioned visit to the jail.

"We don't know if they're alive or dead, in Syria or outside. I want to know my sentence and my fate."

Mohammad, whose nom de guerre is Abu Hamza, was one of nine men interviewed by Reuters in two prisons - one located near Hasaka and the other the town's central jail.

Most were from Syria or Iraq, one was from the United States and another from Belgium.

Some were fighters, others said they were corralled into working for Islamic State as the movement won territory across Syria and Iraq. "I worked with (Islamic State) as a civilian," said Abdurrahman Mustafa al-Jomaa, a 32-year-old Syrian from Raqqa, who was being held at the central Hasaka jail.

"My sentence is 2 years. I'm married and have two children. My family is in Raqqa and they come and visit me."



'Hijabi clout': women of colour unknowingly used by 2020 campaigns

Nida Allam (in the photo), who worked on the Sanders campaign in 2016, was unknowingly pictured in a Hillary Clinton campaign tweet. Photograph: Twitter

With the 2020 election well under way in the US, political advertisements with messages of hope and inclusivity have been flooding social media feeds and inboxes all across the country.

Sabirah Mahmud, a high school student and the national logistics director for the US Youth Climate Strike was surprised on 2 February when she came across footage of herself in a video ad for Joe Biden's presidential campaign, after a friend texted her. But the main shock was that it happened despite the fact she is a vocal Bernie Sanders supporter.

"Initially I was surprised but now I feel very uncomfortable. Of all the [Democratic] candidates, [Biden] is the one I would be most alarmed about," Mahmud said. "This is a national campaign ad and my face is being put out to uplift his campaign. People will look at me and think 'Biden has young Muslim followers', but that's not true because I'm not one of them."

Mahmud tweeted a screenshot of herself from the ad, adding: "was just used as hijabi clout for the @JoeBiden campaign, too bad i'm #hotgirlsforbernie"

Mahmud attended campaign events for several of the 2020 presidential candidates including Biden's kickoff rally in Philadelphia back in May of 2019. Mahmud went in order to question him on his policy regarding the climate crisis, but she never expected to be a prop for diversity.

Mahmud said she recalled being very nervous talking to the former vice-president.

"Before I could even ask him the question, he interrupted me mid sentence, mansplaining the entire climate crisis," Mahmud said. "He went on to the next people to take pictures and shake hands." The Biden campaign did not return a request for comment.

Ayanna Lee, another Sanders supporter, protested with friends at an Elizabeth Warren rally in Milwaukee. She later discovered her photo was featured in an ad for Warren 2020. "My friend sent a screenshot in the group chat," Lee said. "I clicked on it and was like 'No way.'"

"Not even 10 minutes into us walking in the door, her team was asking us what we were doing and trying to bargain with us to not make a statement," Lee said. "We talked to her. Each of us took 10-20 seconds to give a statement about what we cared about like agriculture, indigenous rights or water."



Lee said the Warren campaign was aware she was not at the rally in support of Warren. The Warren campaign also did not return a request for comment.

"I honestly didn't know what to do. I felt weird because I knew I took myself to that rally but they took advantage of who I am," Lee said. "It made me upset that I was being used for a campaign that didn't support what I support."

Nida Allam found herself in a similar situation in 2016. The Hillary for America twitter account, @HFA, supporting Clinton's election campaign, tweeted:

Peterborough Muslim women's cycling group 'great for socialising'

A group of Muslim women who set up their own cycling group are on a mission to get more females from minority backgrounds on their bikes.

The women, from Peterborough, say it can be difficult finding female-friendly groups to join and there are stigmas to exercising in public.

Research by Sport England shows only about 10% of female cyclists are from ethnic backgrounds.

"I think more women from minority backgrounds should take up cycling," said 39-year-old Naheed Kausar. "It's a great way to socialise with other ladies and it's also a great way of improving your health and fitness."

New cyclist Soraya Royker, 43, added: "If other ladies were to see me on my bike with my hijab and see that I'm wearing normal clothes... [it will] hopefully inspire other women to join our group."



"We made history." It featured a picture of Allam, who wears the hijab, crying. Like Mahmud and Lee, Allam was also supporting another candidate.

"I was at the DNC convention on the delegate floor and it was the moment Senator Sanders had conceded. I was crying because I was working on the Sanders campaign," Allam said. "It was obviously really raw, hearing the stories of marginalized voices across the country

who found hope in the message of the [Sanders] campaign.

Allam discovered the tweet from the Hillary for America twitter account after friends texted the link to her.

"As a visibly Muslim American woman, it felt like my hijab was being used in a manner that I didn't approve of," Allam said.

The loss of a loved one influenced Allam's decision to pursue working on Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign.

"I had gotten involved in the campaign after losing my best friend."

The best friend was Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, one of the three victims of the 2015 Chapel Hill shooting at the University of North Carolina.

"Our community was hit with such a huge tragedy," Allam said. "That's what really motivated me to become politically active, to uplift marginalized voices." Allam pointed out the Clinton campaign's error at the time by replying to the original tweet with "Guess you didn't get the memo...#StillSanders".

"@HFA responded eventually and said 'Sorry for the mix up. Thanks for everything you do'," Allam said. "But they never took it down."

This election cycle, Allam urges candidates to listen closely to different communities about what they want from their elected officials.

"Speak to the moms, the kids, the Imams. You can't just use our image to garner support," Allam said. "You have to speak to the issues that affect us on a day to day basis. We have to have equitable access to education and other resources through policy."

Allam is now vice-chair of North Carolina's Democratic party, the first Muslim woman to hold this position. She's also running for county commissioner in her local election in Durham. If Allam wins, she will be the first Muslim woman ever elected in the state of North Carolina.

"My entire campaign is about continuing to uplift marginalized voices and engage people who haven't been involved in the electoral process," Allam said. "If there is representation across every level of government, you're less likely to fall into these tokenisms of people."

Shi'i Islam and Sufism

By Denis Hermann, Mathieu Terrier

Offering new perspectives on the relationship between Shi'is and Sufis in modern and pre-modern times, this book challenges the supposed opposition between these two esoteric traditions in Islam by exploring what could be called "Shi'i Sufism" and "Sufi-oriented Shi'ism" at various points in history. The chapters are based on new research in textual studies as well as fieldwork from a broad geographical area including the Indian subcontinent, Anatolia and Iran. Covering a long period stretching from the early post-Mongol centuries, throughout the entire Safawid era (906–1134/1501–1722) and beyond, it is concerned not only with the sphere of the religious scholars but also with different strata of society. The first part of the volume looks at the diversity of the discourse on Sufism among the Shi'i "ulama" in the run up to and during the Safawid period. The second part focuses on the social and intellectual history of the most popular Shi'i Sufi order in Iran, the Ni'mat Alahiyya. The third part examines the relationship between Shi'ism and Sufism in the little-explored literary traditions of the Alevi-Bektashi and the Khaksariyya Sufi order. With contributions from leading scholars in Shi'ism and Sufism Studies, the book is the first to reveal the mutual influences and connections between Shi'ism and Sufism, which have been little explored.

Reviews

"The edited volume, *Shi'i Islam and Sufism: Classical Views and Modern Perspectives* offers new, powerful insights into the long-debated issue regarding the intellectual interactions and mutual influences occurring between Shi'i Islam and Sufi doctrines and practices.

Despite the long-standing and extensive body of studies on Sufism and the considerable progresses made over the past few decades in the field of Shi'i Studies, the mutual relationship between Imami Shi'ism and Sufism has been little explored. The present work, thanks to the contributions of some amongst the most renowned scholars in the field of both Sufism and Shi'ism, effectively contributes to build a comprehensive historical picture of these two major currents within Islam, both from a textual and doctrinal point of view. Moreover, by probing political, historical, doctrinal and sociological developments, this volume offers a systematic exploration of the Shi'i-Sufi relationship. This is attained by looking, inter alia, at the social history of Shi'i-Sufi brotherhoods such as the Ni'matullahiyya, and by analyzing the way the relations between Shi'ism and Sufism have been depicted and perceived in other literary Sufi traditions. Particularly significant is that the present volume also seeks to examine the nature and advance of alternative literature to anti-Sufi discourses in Shi'i

pre-modern and modern works." — Dr Maria De Cillis, Senior Research Scholar at the Institute of Ismaili Studies and Managing Editor of the Shi'i Heritage Series, UK

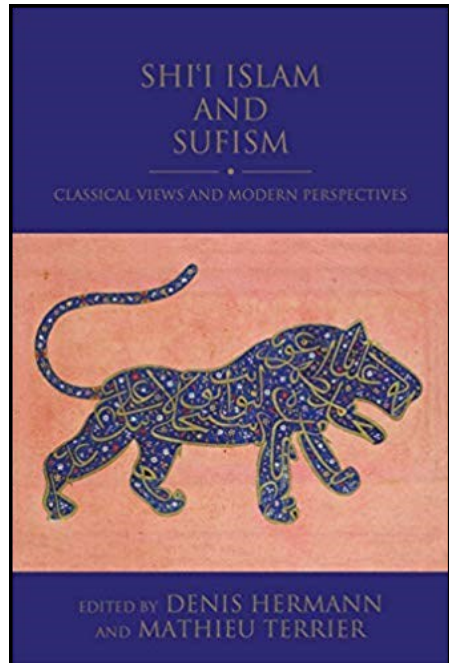
Denis Hermann is Director of the Institut Francais de Recherche en Iran (IFRI) in Tehran and Associate Member of the Centre for Iranian Studies at The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

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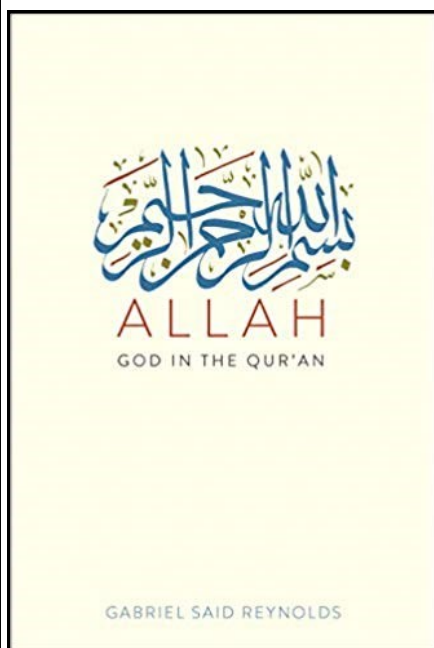
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Allah: God in the Quran

A concise and illuminating portrait of Allah from one of the world's leading Qur'anic scholars.



The central figure of the Qur'an is not Muhammad but Allah. The Qur'an, Islam's sacred scripture, is marked above all by its call to worship Allah, and Allah alone. Yet who is the God of the Qur'an? What distinguishes the Qur'anic presentation of God from that of the Bible?

In this illuminating study, Gabriel Said Reynolds depicts a god of both mercy and vengeance, one who transcends simple classification. He is personal and mysterious; no limits can be placed on his mercy. Remarkably, the Qur'an is open to God's salvation of both sinners and unbelievers. At the same time, Allah can lead humans astray, so all are called to a disposition of piety and fear. Allah, in other words, is a dynamic and personal God. This eye-opening book provides a unique portrait of the God of the Qur'an.

Gabriel Said Reynolds is professor of Islamic studies and theology at Notre Dame and the author of *The Qur'an and the Bible*. He lives in Granger, IN.

"An objective and nuanced portrayal of Allah. Understanding His seemingly paradoxical attributes is crucial to mapping out the powerful religious energy Islam has introduced into human history."—Mustafa Akyol, author of *The Islamic Jesus*

"A masterful examination of the Qur'anic conception of God—Allah—with illuminating comparisons to the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels, and rich insights into many aspects of the Islamic tradition as it deals with the Qur'an."—Fred M. Donner, author of *Muhammad and the Believers* "Skillfully unraveling the literary and theological threads that bind the Qur'an to the Bible, Gabriel Reynolds has produced a well-written, insightful, and accessible introduction to major themes of Islamic religious thought. He shows how the Qur'anic God is not a different God but one who is differently depicted and understood."—Jane McAuliffe, founding editor of the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*

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The Pious Man and the Shopkeeper

20. AND THE APOSTLES WHOM WE SENT BEFORE THERE WERE ALL (MEN) WHO ATE FOOD AND WALKED THROUGH THE STREETS: WE HAVE MADE SOME OF YOU AS A TRIAL FOR OTHERS: WILL YE HAVE PATIENCE? FOR ALLAH IS ONE WHO SEES (ALL THINGS).

21. SUCH AS FEAR NOT THE MEETING WITH US (FOR JUDGMENT) SAY: "WHY ARE NOT THE ANGELS SENT DOWN TO US, OR (WHY) DO WE NOT SEE OUR LORD?" INDEED THEY HAVE AN ARROGANT CONCEIT OF THEMSELVES, AND MIGHTY IS THE INSOLENCE OF THEIR IMPIETY!

22. THE DAY THEY SEE THE ANGELS, - NO JOY WILL THERE BE TO THE SINNERS THAT DAY: THE (ANGELS) WILL SAY: "THERE IS A BARRIER FORBIDDEN (TO YOU) ALTOGETHER!"

23. AND WE SHALL TURN TO WHATEVER DEEDS THEY DID (IN THIS LIFE), AND WE SHALL MAKE SUCH DEEDS AS FLOATING DUST SCATTERED ABOUT.

(THE CRITERIA, THE FORQAN)

www.abraronline.net

This is our website. Have visited it: It will put you face-to-face with an alternative world, full of spirituality, morality coupled with modern outlooks and perspectives. We want to hear your views on its contents, layout and general quality.

Join us in our Noon and Afternoon prayers
Everyday
at 12.00

There lived a pious man all by himself, who spent most of his time in praying, fasting and praising Allah. Almost all his waking hours were utilised in meditation and devotions. He was very happy with his spiritual progress. No wicked thoughts came to his mind and no evil temptations entered his heart.

One night, he dreamt a rather disturbing dream. He saw that a shopkeeper in the town was far superior to him in spirituality and that he must go to him to learn the basics of true spiritual life.

In the morning, the pious man went in search of the shopkeeper. He found him busy with his customers, selling goods and collecting money with a cheerful face. He sat there in a corner of the shop and watched the shopkeeper carefully. No signs of any spiritual life at all, he said to himself. His dream could not be true. But then he saw the shopkeeper disappear to pray. When he returned, he was busy dealing with money matters again.

The shopkeeper noticed the pious man sitting in the corner and asked: "As Salamu Alaikum, would you like something, brother?"

"Wa Alaikum As Salam. Oh! No! No!" said the pious man. "I don't want to buy anything, but I want to ask you a question." He then related his dream. "Well, that is very simple to explain," said the shopkeeper, "but you will have

to do something for me before I answer your question."

"I will do anything for you," replied the pious man.

"All right! Take this saucer; there is some mercury in it. Go to the other end of the street and come back fast within half an hour. If the mercury falls out of the saucer, you will hear nothing from me. There you go now."

The pious man took the saucer and started running. The mercury nearly wobbled out of the saucer. He saved it just in time, and slowed down. Then he remembered he had to return within half an hour, so he started walking at a fast pace. At long last he returned puffing and panting. "Here is your mercury, safe and sound," he told the shopkeeper. "Now tell me the true interpretation of my dream."

The shopkeeper looked at the pious man's weary condition and asked him:

"Well, friend, how many times did you remember Allah while you were going from this end of the street to the other?"

"Remember Allah!" exclaimed the pious man. "I did not remember Him at all. I was so worried about the mercury in the saucer."

"But I do remember Him all the time," said the shopkeeper. "When I am doing my business, I am also carrying mercury in a saucer. I am fair, honest and kind to my customers. I never forget Allah in my dealings with other men."



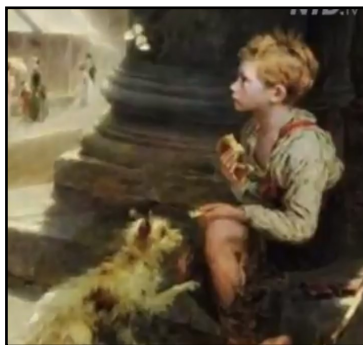
The story of Howard Kelly

One day, a poor boy who was selling goods from door to door to pay his way through school, found he had only one thin dime left, and he was hungry. He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. However, he lost his nerve when a lovely young woman opened the door.

Instead of a meal, he asked for a drink of water. She thought he looked hungry and so she brought him a large glass of milk. He drank it slowly, and then asked, "How much do I owe you?" "You don't owe me anything," she replied. "Mother has taught us never to accept pay for a kindness." He said, "Then I thank you from my heart."

As Howard Kelly left that house, he not only felt stronger physically, but his faith in God and man was strengthened also. He had been ready to give up and quit.

Years later, that young woman became critically ill. The local doctors were baffled. They finally sent her to the big city, where they called in specialists to study her rare disease.



Dr. Howard Kelly was called in for the consultation. When he heard the name of the town she came from, he went down the hall of the hospital to her room. Dressed in his doctor's gown, he went in to see her. He recognized her at once. He went back to the consultation room determined to do his best to save her life. From that day, he gave special attention to the case.

After a long struggle, the battle was won. Dr. Kelly requested from the business office to pass the final billing to him for approval. He looked at it, then wrote something on the edge, and the bill was sent to her room. She feared to open it, for she was sure it would take the rest of her life to pay for it all. Finally she looked, and something caught her attention on the side of the bill. She read these words:

"PAID IN FULL WITH ONE GLASS OF MILK.... (Signed) Dr. Howard Kelly."

Tears of joy flooded her eyes as her happy heart prayed: "Thank You, God, that Your love is shed abroad through human hearts and hands."