



SRI LANKAN MAJLIS - QATAR



Symposium

2010

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious and the most Merciful



SRI LANKAN MAJLIS - QATAR

Symposium 2010

24TH DECEMBER 2010

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MESSAGE

I wish to convey my greetings to the 9th annual symposium organized by the Sri Lankan Majlis in Qatar..

Sri Lankan Majlis is a vibrant association that extends generous support to the needy in various communities. I express my gratitude for their commitment to help the people in Pakistan who were affected by recent floods.

Sri Lanka Majlis also works in promoting cultural and educational activities among Sri Lankan community through various programmes which help to unearth the hidden talents and skills in various dimensions. The essay, drawing and speech competition organized annually by the Sri Lankan Majlis to mark the National Day have benefitted many children to improve their level of competence. The leadership that the members of the association take in arranging prayers during Eid festival is quite admirable.

The unity among the members is a unique feature that has made the association successful. I congratulate sincerely members of the association for the good work that they have been doing in the society and hope that they will continue to do so in future, with courage and dedication.

It has always been a pleasure to work with the members of the Association during my tenure of office and I wish them success in their future tasks.


V. Padukkage
Ambassador

9th December 2010



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President's Message

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise and thanks to Almighty Allah alone. Peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammed (SAW), the last of his Messengers and Prophets, his family, Companions and those who follow in his path till the end of time.



Assalamu Alaikum Warahmathullahi Wabarakathuhu. May the Peace, Blessings and Mercy of Almighty Allah be on all of you.

I have great pleasure and privilege to address and greet all of our special guests, dignitaries, members and well wishers on this great occasion of our 9th annual Symposium which is the most important event of the SLMQ calendar.

SLMQ, which started in December 2001 in a humble manner with a few like-minded gentlemen coming together and having a handful of families as members, stand today as a strong Sri Lankan Association in Qatar serving our Community in many ways. SLMQ has traveled this long journey of 9 years with many ups and down all along. However, much to the satisfaction of all, SLMQ was able to conduct various events regularly for the benefit of our member families and individuals living in Qatar. We have been continuing our activities supporting many worthy projects back home in Sri Lanka. We were also able to strengthen our relationship with other Associations in Qatar such as the Sri Lankan Coordination Committee, Sri Lanka Islamic Centre, Ministry of Interior, Qatar Guest Centre, Sheikh Thani Bin Abdulla Foundation for Humanitarian Services (RAF).

It is my duty to thank our Patron H.E Vijayasiri Padukkage, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the State of Qatar, who has been very supportive of all our events and activities and has always been encouraging which has helped us to succeed in our endeavors to a great extent. I also express my gratitude to the staff of Sri Lankan Embassy. I thank all our past Patrons, the previous Ambassadors who have always supported SLMQ throughout its journey.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our Guest Speaker Hon. Justice Ameer Ismail for accepting our invitation and joining us at this event. We are proud and privileged to have a person of his caliber. I also express my gratitude to our Sponsors for their continued support for this worthy cause, Symposium Steering Committee, SLMQ Advisory Committee, members and their families for their continued support and making this event a grand success. Finally, my heartiest gratitude goes to my colleagues in the Executive Committee for their tireless efforts and dedication throughout this year and making this event successful.

May Almighty Allah accept all our good deeds and reward the best of rewards and guide us in the right path.

Mohamed Hazim Hamza
President - SLMQ





QATAR
القطرية
AIRWAYS



In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise and thanks belong to Almighty Allah alone, the One all High, all Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad (SAL), the last messenger of Allah.



We started the year 2010 with a successful Islamic lecture in January at the Saudi Markaz. The speaker was Sheikh A.C. Agar Mohammed, Deputy Director, Jamiah Naleemia with a key note speech delivered by Dr. M.A.M. Shukri, Director, Jamiah Naleemia.

The annual event to mark the independence day of Sri Lanka, the "Independence Day Competitions 2010" was held on the 29th January 2010 at the Sri Lanka Embassy. The competitions covered events such as Drawing, Colouring, Prepared Speech and Essay Writing for Sub-Junior, Junior, Intermediary and Senior categories. The event was well attended by more than 100 contestants from various schools in Qatar and represented all Sri Lankan communities. Prizes were distributed to the winners by the Chief Guest, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka H.E Vijayasiri Padukkage.

Throughout the year we had several public bayan programmes which brought several prominent scholars including Dr. Zakir Naik, As-sheikh Imran Abu Musa, Sheikh Yousuf Mufti and Sheikh Rizvi Mufthi, which were widely attended.

The Quran Class Competition was held this year as well and was a grand success. Around 50 students participated and well attended by parents as well.

The SLMQ in coordination with a prominent Toast Master conducted a public speaking workshop for Stafford International School students. Furthermore, SLMQ sponsored an Islamic teacher for the school and contributed part of the teacher's salary for a period of one year.

As part of SLMQ's community activities, SLMQ supported the SLCC in their Beach Cleaning Campaign on 12th March 2010 which was well attended.

As in the previous years, SLMQ organized several Ifthar Programmes during the month of Ramadan. SLMQ joined Qatar Guest Centre for the annual Ifthar function organized for the Sri Lankan community. The other significant function was the Ifthar organized by the Ministry of Interior in association with Sheikh Al-Thani bin Abdulla Foundation for Humanitarian Services (RAF). Sheikh A.C Agar Mohamed delivered a lecture on this occasion. The SLMQ family Ifthar function was held at the Al Arabi Sports Club and was well attended and benefitted by the families.

Cont...





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Eid Prayers were held for both Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha at the Sri Lanka embassy premises with a record number of attendees this year. Eid Fiesta 2010 was organized on 18th November at Al Hambal Grounds and was a grand success attended by a large number of families.

Apart from the activities in Qatar, SLMQ funded number of projects in Sri Lanka. The sewing machine project by the Young Women Muslim Association was a major project during 2010. A total of 18 machines were donated to the widows as part of this project. As part of its vision to support the educational upliftment of the Sri Lankan community, SLMQ supported several G.C.E Ordinary Level seminars and scholarships to higher education through the Al Huda Fund. Other projects included funding to a Mosque toilet building project in Sri Lanka.

We are indeed grateful to Almighty Allah for the success of these events and pray Almighty Allah grant the same success and more in the future.

We welcome all of you and value your esteemed presence for the 9th Annual Symposium of SLMQ.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to make SLMQ events during this year, eventful and successful.

Mohammed Lafir
General Secretary - SLMQ

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Introduction to SLMQ

MISSION

To bring all Sri Lankan Muslim families resident in Qatar under a single united group and conduct activities of educational, cultural, religious and charitable nature.

OBJECTIVES

To develop cordial ties among families, communities and other associations.

Educational and Religious Activities

- Skill development programs
- Seminars & Workshops
- Competitions for children and adults
- Quran & Islam Teachings
- Haj & Umrah pilgrimages

Charitable Activities

- Scholarships for needy students
- Janaza assistance
- Assistance to needy families
- Charity bazaars

Social and Welfare Activities

- Sports events
- Eid celebrations
- Family gatherings/picnics
- Job Bank

Membership

All Sri Lankan Muslim families resident in Qatar are eligible to apply for membership by filling an application form available with Executive Committee members. For further information, please contact
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2010



Sitting Left: Mohammed Lafir (General Secretary), Hazim Hamza (President), H.E. Vijayasiri Padukkage (Patron), Rizwan Yaseen (VP Public Relations), Mohammed Akram (Treasurer).

Standing Left: Dr. Fikreth Shuaib (Asst. Secretary), Imthiyas Samsudeen, Mohamed Rifkhan, Mohamed Rusaike, Rifaz Marikkar.

Not in Picture: Mumtaz Salim (VP Projects), Ahamed Hananudeen, Zahid Kuthubdeen



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Educational Support

Our educational support projects signify the commitment that the SLMQ has towards the educational development of the community.

A total of five students were supported for their higher education in various disciplines for a period of one year through the Al Hudha Fund Qatar.

There were several seminar series for G.C.E O/L and G.C.E A/L students, which were also supported by the SLMQ during 2010 in various parts of Sri Lanka.

Further, as part of our continued effort to serve the community in Qatar, SLMQ sponsored an Islamic and Arabic studies teacher for the Sri Lankan Community School (Stafford International School) by contributing part of the teacher's salary for one year. We also sponsored a leadership program for 25 students of the Sri Lankan School.

Community Support

In collaboration with Young Women Muslim Association, SLMQ is proud that we managed to donate 18 sewing machines to the needy widows in various parts of Sri Lanka. A part of the total funds was also contributed by SLMQ members.

SLMQ supported to build toilet facilities for a mosque in Attawarala – located in an isolated village in the Kurunegala district.

In response to a formal request made by HE Vijayasiri Padukkage – Sri Lankan Ambassador to the State of Qatar - SLMQ contributed towards installing a partition structure at the service counter in the Embassy Premises. The completed partition structure now holds the SLMQ name. This is helping to serve the thousands of people visiting the Embassy on a daily basis with ease.

We provided financial assistance to flood victims in Sri Lanka, which was channeled through a well established Organization. Recently we also provided financial assistance to flood victims in Pakistan in response to a massive human catastrophe. All these were done with the kind support of SLMQ members.



Provided financial assistance to flood victims in Pakistan



SLMQ sponsored an Islamic and Arabic studies teacher for the Sri Lankan Community School (Stafford International School) by contributing part of the teacher's salary





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SLMQ sponsored 18 sewing machines to needy windows in Sri Lanka. The presentation ceremony was held on 26th September 2010 at the YMMA premises, in the presence of SLMQ President & other key officials from YMMA.



SLMQ supported to build toilet facilities for a mosque in Attawarala – located in an isolated village in the Kurunegala district.





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SLMQ in collaboration with SLCC was involved in the annual beach cleaning project organized by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Urban Planning



A leadership program was organized by SLMQ for 25 student of Stafford International School. The program was lead by Toasmter Mohammed Al-Hayder.





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SLMQ Qurán Class: Activities

It should be noted with great pride that the first Project initiated for the Sri Lankan Muslim Children to learn Qurán and Islamic Studies was the SLMQ Qurán class, which was also one of the main reason for the formation of SLMQ.

Alhamdulillah, the SLMQ Qurán class has been continuing for the 9th consecutive year. Launched in April 2002 to impart Qurán and Islamic studies among the children of Sri Lankan families living in Qatar, the Qurán class has continued from strength to strength with the grace of Almighty Allah, the well wishers and members of SLMQ.

Only a nominal fee is charged from the students as class fees and transportation, whilst SLMQ bears a major portion of the cost for allowances of teachers and transportation through its own budget and well wishers. This is to ensure our children are benefited from this noble program without major financial burden.

To date, Qurán class are been conducted at the Shantinikethan Indian School premises with the wholehearted support and permission of the School Management and the Principal, who have made available to us this facility from the inception.

Class are conducted in the English language for age groups 4 to 14 years twice a week on Saturdays from 3.00pm to 6.00pm and on Mondays from 4.00pm to 6.00pm

The syllabus is designed in a way for students to learn the Qurán with the shortest time without compromising on thajweed rules. In addition to Qurán, Islamic studies are also conducted according to a structured syllabus. Periodic exams are conducted to assess the progress of the students. All the classes are taught by qualified teachers.

The Annual Qurán class competition was organized to encourage and motivate students which is a much awaited event by all students. This year too the competition was held in May at Doha Grand Hotel. The competition included Qurán recitation, Memorization, Quirath, Islamic Speeches, Islamic Quiz & Islamic Calligraphy as per individual age groups. Most of the events were held exclusively for Qurán class students while Islamic Speeches and Quirath contests were open to children of SLMQ members.

Due to the wider acceptability of the program and the standards maintained, families from other nationalities have also sent their children to SLMQ Qurán class. The teachers who provide their valuable time and efforts to these Qurán class are Moulavi Azwar (Madani), Moulavi Nasry (Naleemi), Mrs. Munzira Jiffry and Mrs. Foumiya Farzan.

For further information on Qurán class, please contact the head of SLMQ Qurán class Mrs. Munzira Jiffry on 66706867 /44429016





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SLMQ conducted the Annual Qurán class compition for the 6th consecutive year in May 2010 at the Doha Grand Hotel. Nearly 55 students participated in Quirath recitation, Qurán memorization, Islamic Speech, Islamic Quiz & Islamic Calligraphy contests. The occasion was graced by the presence of the Principal of the Sri Lankan School, Doha, who was the Chief Guest. The competition was an opportunity to show the hidden talents of the participants.





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During Ramadan 2010, SLMQ was involved in organizing four separate iftar functions: Qatar Guest Center; Ministry of Interior; SLMQ annual Family Iftar; and Sri Lankan Embassy.





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Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha prayers were held at the Sri Lankan Embassy premises, Eid sermons were conducted in Tamil.





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An Interview with the SLMQ Founder President – Mr Ikram Thowfeek

1) What were your intentions in establishing SLMQ in 2001?

The intention of setting up SLMQ was crystal clear, a decade ago, which was mainly to unite and bring together all the Sri Lankan Muslim families living in Qatar under a single social and community-centered platform, whilst maintaining Islamic values and principles. Alhamdulillah, the founding executive committee members was an excellent team, not only from an individual perspective but with great family spirit and bondage, which set a standard within to expand among the new members. We can still remember some of the early events and rejoice on the contributions made seeking reward only from Almighty Allah, by uniting and bringing together all Sri Lankan Muslim families in Qatar under the banner of SLMQ.

2) What were some of the hurdles faced in the early stages?

No institution or association is formed successfully, without hurdles or challenges, every institution will and have to face the difficulties of start-ups. I call it a roller-coaster ride, there are unexpected moves and challenges unprecedented – yet we have to face them if we are to be successful. Indeed, we faced many challenges, couldn't be specific or list them out, since we kept going with a strong and united team of executive committee members supporting the leadership at that time. We led, among all other long-standing associations representing other Sri Lankan communities, and set our benchmark very high deliberately so that we stand out in all our activities comparatively with that of other associations.

3) After almost a decade in existence, do you think SLMQ has achieved its objectives that were envisioned?

I believe that the foundation in setting such high standards had helped to maintain to this day, the objective of the SLMQ, which is not to divide people, but to unite people by having close relationships among the members, with other associations (not only Sri Lankan associations but also other nationalities), the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Qatar and the Ambassador as the Patron of SLMQ. We had and have been working together on many occasions and given our utmost support whenever our Mother Lanka calls for any support under the aegis of the Embassy of Sri Lanka in the State of Qatar. This could only be possible, where our unity is maintained and strengthened. I believe that the objectives envisioned have been achieved to a reasonable extent, but we should not settle for it, and can do much more to put a smile on every Sri Lankan who lands in Qatar – whenever in need by giving an helping hand within the framework of SLMQ, which will definitely be to 'help as many people as it can'.

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The mandate of the Founder President was made easy to deliver and pass on to the next executive committee to take charge and move forward. I am indeed very much pleased and happy to see that with all the challenges in hand with the respective executive committees who took over year on year have made its mark to date, by flying the banner of SLMQ over the last 10 years. Keep going.

4) Moving forward, how would you see SLMQ's future?

Today, we are in a globalized world, where we all can get connected in a click of mouse with people locally, regionally and globally. We have to move beyond our initial mandate and comfort zones of sticking to a standard calendar of events year after year or sticking to the same network of people – we have to expand our horizons and there must be visible change in every activity SLMQ is involved in by making a difference in its contribution to the community at large.

Looking forward to the next decade, we must ensure that yet another set of benchmarks, setting very high standards, is in place today that could ensure that every activity that SLMQ undertakes will be and must be remarkable, for others to follow, whilst SLMQ leads.

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Sri Lankan Muslims Named amongst 500 World's Most Influential Muslims of 2010

The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre - an independent research entity affiliated with the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan – has published a report on the 500 world's most influential Muslims in 2010. The publication reports on the contributions of those influential Muslims as 'change-agents' and how they have shaped social development and global movements in the past few years.

Amongst this list of world leaders are three prominent Sri Lankan Muslims, viz. M.I.M Rizvi Mufthi; Deshabandu Jezima Ismail; and Justice Saleem Marsoof. A brief profile of these three Sri Lankan Muslims and their contributions in the respective fields is given below.

M.I.M. Rizvi Mufti

M.I.M. Rizvi Mufti is the head of All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU), an organization that plays an active role as the Islamic religious higher authority of Sri Lanka. Specialized in the field of Islamic banking and finance, Rizvi Mufti serves as a member of the shari'a advisory councils for a number of Islamic financial institutions in Sri Lanka

Deshabandu Jezima Ismail

Ms. Ismail has been actively involved in the field of education for over three decades, having served as the principal of Muslim Ladies College in Colombo. She is also the founder of the Muslim Women's Research and Action Forum (MWRAF). Ms Ismail serves on various international committees on women's rights and is the recipient of various awards. She is the Chairperson of Paffrel and a Member of the Committee for Reform of the Muslim Matrimonial Law. She is also President Emeritus and Founder, Sri Lanka Muslim Women's Conference (SLMWC).

Justice Saleem Marsoof

Justice Marsoof, PC is a Judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Previously, he has served as the President of the Court of Appeals and Additional Solicitor General in the Attorney General Department of Sri Lanka. He lectures in the field of law and legal studies at various institutes of higher education including: the Sri Lankan Law College; Open University; Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka; Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies; and an Honorary Fellowship at the Society of Advance Legal Studies, London.

(Source: The 500 Most Influential Muslims 2010 edited by Dr. Joseph Lombard and Dr Aref Ali Naye)



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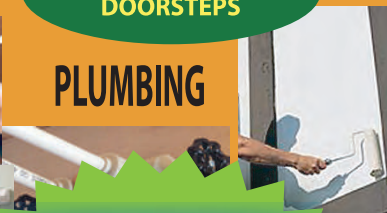


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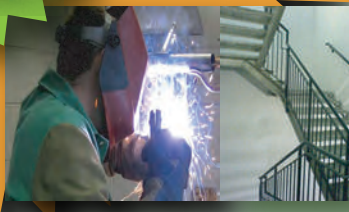
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Knowledge: An Islamic Perspective

In this increasingly modernized, high-tech contemporary era, knowledge has evolved into a complex phenomenon that is understood by a few, beyond the reach of many and is considered irrelevant to life beyond this world. But, is it really?

How does Islam view knowledge? What is the relevance of knowledge to this world and to the hereafter? What are the roles and responsibilities of Muslims in pursuing education? What should be our goals and objectives, and are there any limitations to seeking knowledge? This brief article attempts to direct our minds to these questions and help pave the way to pursuing an Islamic approach to knowledge.

What is Knowledge in Islam?

For analytical purposes, knowledge as a concept in Islam can be divided into two parts, ie. Quran and Hadeeths (revealed knowledge) and the acquired knowledge (natural sciences, arts and humanities).

The revealed knowledge covers such fields as Uloomul Quran, Tafseer (Quran related knowledge), Uloomul Hadees, Shuroohul Hadees (Hadeeths related knowledge), fiqh (jurisprudence), aqeedah (doctrine), and suluuk (behavior). Acquired knowledge refers to knowledge of the various fields of natural sciences (eg. astronomy, oceanography, chemistry, geography, medicine), arts (eg. calligraphy, architecture) and humanities (eg. sociology, economics and history). Hence, in Islam the pursuit of knowledge is not only confined to the revealed knowledge but also extends to the so called acquired fields of knowledge. The pursuit of both parts of knowledge is vital for Muslims to have a successful journey in this world and to attain eternal bliss in the hereafter.

Why Pursue Knowledge?

The Glorious Quran is lettered with numerous verses that invite humanity to learn, to think, to understand, to ponder on various matters - in order to discover the purpose of life. In fact, the first few verses revealed to Prophet (pbh) was 'iqra' (to read), 'kalam' (pen) and 'ilm' (teach), though the Prophet (pbh) himself was completely un-lettered. In another verse (20:114), Allah (swt) states: **My Lord! Increase me in knowledge**

Similarly, the Hadeeths of the Prophet (pbh) calls on Muslims to actively seek knowledge. For instance, the Prophet (pbh) was reported to have said: **Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim** (Sunan Ibn Mâjah); and in another: **Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make a path to Paradise easy for him** (Sahih Muslim). Hence, these verses of the Quran and Hadeeths suggest that indeed the pursuit of knowledge is obligatory for every single Muslim – men and women, scholars and laymen.

Where to Apply Knowledge?

Once knowledge has been acquired, the application and utilization of this knowledge becomes equally important. Allah (swt) says in the Quran (61:2-3): **"O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do"**. In addition, the Prophet (pbh) states: **A servant of Allah will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his (time on earth) and how he used it; about his knowledge and how he utilized it; about his wealth and from where he acquired it and in what (activities) he spent it; and about his body and how he used it"** (Al-Tirmidhi). In a nutshell, the application of knowledge can be extended to the following four areas aimed at both the individual and society at large.

- **Spiritual Upliftment:** Spiritual upliftment can be achieved in two ways. Firstly, humanity in general is encouraged to reflect and ponder about Allah and His Creations as stated

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in the Quran. For instance, [3:190-191]: **Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day - there are indeed signs for men of understanding; Men who remember Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth (with the thought): "Our Lord! Not for nothing have You created (all) this. Glory to You! Give us salvation from the suffering of the Fire."**

Secondly, and in particular, Muslims need to acquire the revealed knowledge of the Quran and Hadeeths to correctly execute religious acts of worship such as salat, zakat and hajj. Therefore, reflecting, pondering and applying the knowledge of the Quran and Hadeeths helps us to attain spiritual satisfaction and fulfillment and bring us closer to Allah (swt). This will no doubt help Muslims to live successful life in this world and attain the hereafter.

- **Intellectual development:** The golden age of Islamic civilizations (Baghdad and Cordoba) and prominent Muslim scholars of yesteryears (Ibn Sinna, Al Razi and others) are a testimony to the contribution of knowledge to intellectual development in the Muslim world. By applying similar thoughts and practices during the Islamic golden age, we the present Muslim ummah need to emulate and replicate similar successes in the future, inshallah. Islam holds **men of knowledge** in high esteem so much so that the Prophet (pbh) was reported to have said: **Verily the men of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets** (Riyadh-us-Salaheen).
- **Physical well-being:** Knowledge of medicine and of nutrition is critical for us to lead healthy lifestyles. For instance, the science of nutrition informs the appropriate types of food and corresponding quantities to consume. The Prophet (pbh) stated: **Make use of the two remedies, honey and the Quran** (Sunan Ibn Majah). Furthermore, the Prophet (pbh) advised to teach the children swimming, archery and horse riding. The Prophet (pbh) himself used to walk at a fast pace and even race with his wife Aisha (Ahmad, Abu Dawud).
- **Societal Functioning:** For the effective functioning of Muslim societies, Islamic knowledge of commerce, trade and law is critical (eg. Islamic banking and finance, laws of inheritance and marriage and divorce). Knowledge on these topics helps us to interact with one another in a fair and just manner. If we don't have Muslims educated in these fields of knowledge, we risk relying on un-islamic laws to base our decisions, which often turn out to be against the commands of Allah (swt) and His Messenger (pbh).

Imparting of Knowledge

Islamic history teaches that Muslim educationalists taught and spread knowledge to all quarters. The spectacular revival of modern Europe owes much to the early Muslim interventions and establishments of centers of learning in Cordoba and other cities. The Prophet (pbh) says: **Acquire knowledge and impart it to others** (Tirmidhi).

As we acquire even a drop of knowledge, an equal measure should also be given to imparting this acquired knowledge either through written or verbal means. We should learn the skills of imparting knowledge, not just through traditional methods, but embrace and leverage high-technology instruments at our disposal (social networks, blogs, and websites).

Finally, the Prophet (pbh) says, the knowledge imparted to others is a form of sadaqatul jariya - a continuous charity that will accrue to the person even after his death (Muslim).

Conclusion: The pursuit of knowledge should not be viewed as just another 'paper qualification' that will suffice to attain rank and repute in this world. Furthermore, knowledge in Islam is not confined to the revealed knowledge only. As Muslims, let us view knowledge through the lens of Islam, utilize its benefits and impart it to others in order to attain success both in this world and the hereafter.

(Source: This article was written by Dr. Fikreth Shuaib - SLMQ Exco Member)





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Muslim Spain's Contribution to Scientific Knowledge

Historians have discovered that there were two major periods of intense scholarly work in the Muslim world during the Medieval Age. The first period was in the 9th and 10th centuries in Baghdad and the second period was the 12th and 13th centuries in Europe (primarily Spain). In both of these periods, Muslim scholars first translated the scientific knowledge into Arabic and then into other languages. Of course, scientific knowledge was enhanced and expanded by Muslim scholars.

Scientific knowledge, architecture, mathematics, and philosophy flourished in Spain during the rule of Muslims. Much of this intellectual climate can be traced to the precepts of the Qurán. Throughout the Qurán, there is a strong emphasis on the value of knowledge. Because Muslims believe that Allah is all-knowing, they also believe that the human world's quest for knowledge leads to further knowing of Allah. Muslims must thus pursue knowledge not only of God's laws but also of the natural world as well, extending the frontiers of human knowledge. Unlike the revealed knowledge of the Qurán, Muslims believe that human knowledge is not perfect and requires constant exploration and advancement through research and experimentation. According to the Qurán, learning and gaining knowledge is the highest form of religious activity for Muslims, and the one which is most pleasing to God.

Abu Ali al-Husayn Ibn Abdullah Ibn Sina (sometimes known in the West as Avicenna) was born in Bukhara in 980. He is arguably the most famous and influential of all the Islamic philosopher-scientists. His famous book, *Al-Qaanun fi al-Tibb* ('The Laws of Medicine') was used in both Europe and the Islamic world from the 11th to the 17th centuries and was reprinted at least 35 times in Europe. In his writings, he spelled out the procedures for testing the effectiveness of a new drug. Beyond his work in medicine, he also made significant contributions in philosophy, mathematics, chemistry, and astronomy and was the author of over 200 books.

Among the other translations, a significant Arabic medical book that was translated into Latin, was the *Introduction to Medicine* written by Hunain ibn Ishaq, which remained a popular medical text in Europe for 600 years.

The Islamic love of knowledge can be seen in their cities. Every major Islamic city in medieval times had an extensive library; in Cordoba and Baghdad the libraries had over 400,000 books. We can compare this to the largest libraries in Western Europe that had only hundreds of books. Even into the 14th century, the library at the University of Paris only had about 2,000 books.

As with most other Muslim developments, the knowledge of Arabic numbers spread to Europe through Spain where it was evident that the Arabic number system was superior to the Roman number system, particular in commerce, arithmetic, and algebra. The *Codex Vigilanus*, written in Spain in 976, is the oldest European manuscript containing Arabic numbers. And, in the 14th century,

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Arabic numerals became widely used by merchants in Italy, and the spread to the rest of Europe.

However, the contributions of the Muslim world did not end with the Arabic number system. Because the Arabic number system, our decimal system, made mathematical calculations easier, it then became easier to use this number system to describe relationships. This process of using the decimal system to generalize arithmetical processes and relationships evolved into what we call algebra today. This type of mathematical reasoning was a departure from mathematical Greek thought (which is geometric). In mathematics, some of the Arabic terms are algorithm, algebra, and arithmetic.

Al-Khwarizmi is recognized as the founder of modern Algebra. The actual name of algebra comes from the title of his most famous book, *Kitab Al-Jabr wa al-Muqabilah* ("The Book of Integration and Equation"). This book on algebra, in its translated form, was the principal mathematics textbook in European universities.

In addition to their developments in the field of mathematics, the Muslim world made significant contributions to the field of astronomy. Part of the reason for the Muslim interest in astronomy is unique to the Islamic faith, and grew from the Muslim attempt to solve practical problems. The Muslim calendar is based upon a lunar system and the arrival of the new moon marked the beginning and end of each month. This was particularly important during the month of Ramadan, when fasting is required during the day. A second practical motivation for studying the stars was to determine the direction of Mecca from any location because Muslims are required to face Mecca when they pray.

It would be simplistic to look upon the Muslim world merely as the conduit for scientific knowledge transferred from the Greek era to Europe. Yes, the classical works of Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Galen were eventually transferred to Europe through Islamic Spain. However, Muslim contributions to sciences are more significant than these transfers, particularly in the areas of chemistry and medicine. The medical knowledge available in the Muslim world was far advanced as compared to the Medieval West. Muslim innovation and work in chemistry and medicine flourished from about 900 - 1200 AD. Books from Arab sources became standard medical texts in Europe.

In summary, Muslim Spain had conceived its scientific knowledge through the translations of the Greek text into Arabic and further enhanced it by developing major scientific concepts and theories especially in medicine, philosophy and mathematics. These valuable inventions were later translated back into Latin to be used as text books in major universities in Europe. Therefore, Islamic scholarship had not only preserved the works of Greek scientists and philosophers but also contributed greatly towards the development of scientific knowledge in Latin Europe.

(This article was compiled based on the information provided by Dr. Patricia Backer, the chair of the Department of Aviation and Technology at San Jose State University in San Jose, CA. She can be reached at pabacker@email.sjsu.edu or by phone at (408) 924-3190.)





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The Influence Of Islamic Concepts On European Philosophers Of Liberty

Any study of Western international law proceeds on the tacit assumption that it was the West which triggered off the development of international law and that international law, as we know it, was a Western creation. It is submitted that such a conclusion is untenable for the following reasons:

Firstly, the prior existence of a mature body of international law worked out by accomplished Islamic jurists in textbooks on the subject is an unquestionable fact.

Secondly, the flow of knowledge in all departments of science and philosophy from the Islamic to the Western world, commencing from the eleventh century, is likewise an indisputable fact.

Thirdly, the fundamental rule of Western international law - *pacta sunt servanda* - worked out by Hugo Grotius in the 17th century, where it is based upon Quranic injunctions and the Sunna of the Prophet.

There is inconclusive, yet significant evidence that renowned Western philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and their theories of sovereignty could have been influenced by Islamic thinking on the relationship between subjects and the State. Locke while at Oxford showed a keen interest in the lectures of Edward Pococke where he was exposed to the theories of government current in the Arab world.

As with Locke, Rousseau came under strong Islamic influences, especially in the later phases of his life. Rousseau wrote of the Prophet in his *Social Contract*: "Mahomet had very sound opinions, taking care to give unity to his political system, and for as long as the form of his government endured under the caliphs who succeeded him, the government was undivided and, to that extent, good."

Another philosopher who, no doubt, felt the impact of Islamic concepts was Montesquieu. There are many specific references to the Quran and to the Islamic law in the writings of Montesquieu. Some of these references are pertinent to international law and are indeed recognized. For example is his reference in book XXIV section 16 to the cessation, every year, of all hostilities between the Arabian tribes for a period of four months, during which any hostility would be looked upon as an impiety. His authority for this is "Prideaux's Life of Mahomet". He goes on in the next section to refer to a Quranic law (Quranic Book 1, Chapter of the Cow) to the effect that: "He who shall injure a wrongdoer after having received satisfaction shall in the day of judgement receive the most grievous torments". He gives this information under the notion that religion ought to produce many ways of reconciliation for the hatreds that occur in a state.

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What is important to note here is that Montesquieu had access to and indeed quoted not only from the Quran itself but also from biographies of the Prophet. The Spirit of Laws which went into 22 Editions in two years is one of the most original and influential works in the history of jurisprudence. It was clearly not written in isolation from the Islamic texts or Islamic experience.

The claim to originality made by English lawyers regarding the Trust Concept is described as a remarkable and unique achievement of English jurisprudence. Professor Frederic Maitland, one of the best formulators of this claim, goes further and takes the trust concept into the realm of government through the notion of trusteeship of political power. The idea of trusteeship, however, has been the basic idea of Islamic law for centuries in relation to the duties of rulers.

The Islamic idea of consensus is parallel to Rousseau's notion of each individual being subject to all and receiving back his civil liberties from the community. The Islamic idea that the community, through the means of consensus, determines the law in cases of doubt is parallel to Rousseau's idea of the general will determining what is just and unjust. As with Islam, Rousseau was against the separation of the moral code of a nation from its political institutions – one of his grievances against the political structures of Christian Europe. Hence the community formed the body politic and the body politic is a moral being possessed of a will. Rousseau gave eloquent testimony to his regard for Islam and its founder when he wrote:

It should be noted that knowledge of Arabic was part of the literary equipment of the accomplished fifteenth and sixteenth century scholars, particularly in Spain and Italy. Arabic literature was hence not a great unknown in the days when the first seeds were being sown of what was to become Western international law.

In conclusion, it may be said that the above mentioned brief survey of the influence of Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy should be seen in a practical context when we observe that Article 38 (1) (b) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, requires the International Court of Justice to apply 'the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations'. Having regard to the large number of Islamic nations now members of the United Nations, the international law of Islam is a body of knowledge which the world court cannot afford to ignore. Indeed, it must necessarily make an impact upon the content of contemporary international law.

(This article was compiled from the book 'Islamic Influences on International Philosophy and Law' by former Justice of Supreme Court of Sri Lanka C.G.Weeramantry, Doctor of Laws of the University of London and Former Judge and Vice President of International Court of Justice at The Hague.)



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Genesis and Growth

The establishment of Jamiah Naleemiah in the year 1973 was a milestone in the history of Muslim education in Sri Lanka. The idea of founding an institution for the purpose of producing scholars who are not only learned in Islamic studies but also sufficiently knowledgeable in modern disciplines was conceived by Late Al-Haj M.I.M. Naleem, and this idea was given a form and content by a group of eminent Ulama and scholars.



Jamiah Naleemiah was founded to fulfill this important need for an integrated system of Islamic education, which accommodates the modern within the framework of traditional system of education.

The educational objectives, the curriculum and the academic programme of the Jamiah Naleemiah has been planned with the objective to produce a generation of Islamic scholars who have the academic background, intellectual vision, wider outlook, moral training and spiritual strength to provide a dynamic Islamic leadership to the Muslim community, having a broader outlook to appreciate the cultural values of the different communities of the multi-ethnic society of Sri Lanka.



Over the years Jamiah's educational philosophy and experiment proved to be successful and -Al Hamdu Lillah - it forged ahead against all hurdles and obstacles by the mercy and blessings of Allah and witnessed a remarkable progress and success during a very short period. At the time of its inception when Jamiah Naleemiah ventured on this new educational experiment with meagre resources none could have imagined and foreseen that this institution which had a humble beginning would develop into a full-fledged academic institution in its present form.

During this period Jamiah Naleemiah had attained considerable progress and had made substantial contribution to the development of Arabic and Islamic studies and the cause of Islamic Dawah. It was also able to establish contacts with international Islamic institutions and organizations and also had the privilege of being visited by eminent Islamic scholars like Moulana Abul Hasan Ali An Nadwi, As-Sheikh Mohammad Al Ghazzali, Dr. Yusuf Al-Qardawi, Dr Maneh Al Johani and Professor Khurshid Ahamad.

One of the important developments in the history of Jamiah was the agreement for co-operation signed between Jamiah Naleemiah and the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan in 1995 and on the basis of this agreement the International Islamic University accorded recognition to Jamiah Naleemiah degree. With the assistance of International Islamic University, Islamabad and Iqraa Charitable Society, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the Department of Usul-ud-Deen has been established and it is being planned to open the Sharia and other Departments.

In 1996 it was accorded a membership in the Federation of the Universities in the Islamic World (FUIW) functioning under the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) at Rabat, Morocco. Graduates of Jamiah were awarded scholarships by International Islamic University, Islamabad to pursue their postgraduate studies and the Federation of the Universities in the Islamic World has donated valuable books to the Library.

Cont....



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Education System

Education curriculum of Jamiah consists of a period of seven years divided into two major stages on the following basis:

1. Preparatory Stage (Al-Marahala At Tamheediyya)

This stage consists of three years and during this period the main emphasis is on proficiency in Arabic and English with the background knowledge of basic Islamic studies. While following this course of studies, students are also prepared for the G.C.E. (Advance Level) Examination.

2. University Stage (Al Marhala Al Jamieyya)

This stage consists of a period of four years. The students commence the Jamiah course proper at this level. The course covers Arabic language and literature, Aqeeda, Tafseer and Quranic studies, Hadees and Science of Hadees, Islamic law and Jurisprudence, Islamic Culture and Civilization, Philosophy and Psychology, Comparative religion, Contemporary ideologies and Principles of Islamic Dawah.

While following this course of studies students appear for the External Degree of the University of Sri Lanka.

This enables the students to obtain two degrees:

- 1- "Licentiate" Certificate in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Jamiah Naleemiah.
- 2- Degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sri Lanka.

The educational philosophy of Jamiah aims at not only providing knowledge, but also aims at the total development of personality. All efforts are taken to inculcate Islamic values, develop the students' Islamic personality, and broaden their outlook. Students are encouraged to make use of the Library. The Students Forum provide them an opportunity to develop their speaking ability and the Students Organ – Ar Rabita Al Qalamiyya provides them the opportunity to gain skill in writing ability. Periodically student camps are held in which lectures are delivered on various themes and on current issues and students are encouraged to debate and exchange views. In brief, the academic course and extra curricular activities are formulated in such a manner as to draw out the ingrained talents of the students and develop their inner potentialities. In short, it is a total education imparted within an Islamic framework.

(Source: This article was compiled based on Jamiah Naleemiah's official English profile booklet)



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