



Aussie Mossie

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Islamic Review

Where Australian Muslims Connect with the World!

Islam beats Financial gloom

A **thriving** financial sector sounds like an oxymoron these days. Even Australia's banks - among the most profitable in the world - kept a fifth of last month's interest rate cut to cushion their margins. But there is one sector that has tongues wagging in the hubs of commerce: Islamic finance.

While the Western world's financial system

has been imploding, this small but rapidly growing share of world capital has weathered the storm.

Sharemarkets in London and New York are a third off their peaks. Dow Jones's Islamic financials index, in contrast, rose 4.75 per cent in the most recent September quarter and lost a modest 7 per cent in the previous year.

Not only has the industry been resilient; it's also on the cusp of serious expansion. It is growing faster than any other subset of world banking, at 15 to 20 per cent a year. The Economist estimates Islamic assets under management are worth \$US700 billion (\$1000 billion). This figure could hit \$US1 trillion - about the Australian sharemarket's

current value - by 2010.

What's more, all this growth has come from a model of lending that rejects interest payments and shuns speculation and heavy borrowing.

In short, Islamic finance bans some of the excess that has brought the West's financial

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Mufti calls for mixed mosque prayer sessions

AUSTRALIA'S most senior Muslim has said he will end segregation of men and women in mosques, in a bold response to Islamic women's anger at entrenched discrimination.

The Mufti of Australia, Sheikh Fehmi Naji el-Imam, said he would put his proposal to the next meeting of the Australian National

Imams' Council and consider how women could share the room with men during prayers.

Sheikh Fehmi said segregated



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40 years of Turkish Migration



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Editorial



Calls for Mixed Prayers by Mufti Absurd

The recent comments by Sheikh Fehmi Al Imam of Prestons Mosque in Melbourne has caused quite a stir. The Sheikh, who has been out of the limelight due to illness since being appointed by a National Council of Imams as the Mufti of Australia last year replaced the beleaguered Egyptian Sheikh Taj Al Din Al Hilali who went out in a torrent of controversy with his cat and meat comments. It is ironic that the two imams could not be any more different in their personas. Sheikh Fehmi being known for his quiet temperament and tolerance, softly spoken English, albeit with an accent and very

well regarded in various spheres. Sheikh Taj being known for his often fiery and often controversial and inevitably divisive comments about Jews, Australians and women. Sheikh Taj had held the top position for more than a decade after the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils appointed him in 1991. In contrast, Sheikh Fehmi was appointed by a newly formed coalition of 94 imams from around Australia. The Council's website says, "The ANIC is currently the sole national organisation of Imams and Islamic Scholars with broad community representation. This places the Council in a unique position of officially representing the wider interests of the Australian Muslim Community."

In a recent press release, the Council condemned the call for legalizing polygamy, by saying, "In our experience, relationships outside the "legally recognised marriages" among the Muslim community in Australia are neither a significant nor a widespread practice."

This was reassuring for many Muslims who felt that the unnecessary media coverage only worked towards humiliating the Muslim community based on a debate that did not really exist.

Likewise, the call by Sheikh Fehmi for mixed gender prayer sessions in our mosques has never been an issue. While historically, it is true that originally prayers took place in a mixed setting. That was in the early days of Islam. It was not until that women complained to the Prophet (sallallahu aleyhi wassallam) that they felt uncomfortable praying alongside other men. Under the guidance of the prophet (saw), women were designated to the back rows of the prayer sessions. This was only practical as it would have been inappropriate for women to be in the front rows due to the prostrations. Women preferred this solution.

There are no women calling for mixed prayers in Australia. There are no women complaining that they should be at the front of the rows. In fact, except for Fridays, the mosques are virtually empty and there is ample room to share and all are comfortable.

There is however, an issue of access, which has nothing to do with segregation.

Some mosques do not have adequate facilities for women, some mosques do not even have an allocated area and others are far too inadequate. The major mosques in Sydney for instance all have areas designated for women. There is another problem which has nothing to do with the system as such but the attitudes of the men that run certain mosques. This is usually misogynistic and patriarchal with primitive views about women, based on cultural and sometimes discriminatory attitudes. Women are not calling for the end of segregation. I have not heard any call from a single woman.

I have heard many complaints that women's areas are inadequate and that men try to dominate the women's area and even totally take over and push women out. There was the recent case at the GreenValley mosque where a dispute arose between the women and men over the use of the womens area which was larger and more modern than the men's area. Mt Druitt Mosque for instance in the past three years has renovated its mosque, enlarged the general area and upgraded and improved the women's section.

This is reasonable considering that it is not an obligation for women to attend Friday prayers and that women tend to attend the mosque on special nights or under organized events. Once again, this can be amicably arranged between the committee and the women just like any other group would need to do.

It begs the question as to just what Sheikh Fehmi is trying to do. He is too reasonable a chap to be scoring cheap publicity and there is little to gain by putting his colleagues off side. The issue is superfluous and really a red herring which overlooks the real issue of providing enough clean space for women and educating our (usually) elderly members of the dreaded mosque committees to see the light.

In profile:

Imam Mohamed Ashafa



The son of an Islamic scholar from a long line of Muslim clerics dating back 13 generations, Mohammed Ashafa grew up in a conservative family that espoused Islamic socio-cultural values and held deep suspicion for all things Western and Christian. As a young man and the eldest son, he followed the family vocation and became an Imam. To promote his family tradition of Islamic custodianship, Ashafa joined a fanatical Islamic group committed to completely Islamizing the North and chasing away all non-Muslims from the region. Ashafa became the leader of this militant group and also the Secretary General of the Muslim Youth Councils. The Muslim Youth Councils incited great violence in the North, which resulted in the Christians creating their own counter organization, the Youth Christian Association of Nigeria, led by Pastor Wuye.

Born in Kaduna State, Pastor Wuye, an Assemblies of God Pastor, was the son of a soldier who served in the Biafran War. From a young age, Wuye was fascinated by battle and war games. In the 1980s and 1990s he was involved in militant Christian activities and served as Secretary General of the Kaduna State chapter of the Youth Christian Association of Nigeria, an umbrella organization for all Christian groups in Nigeria for 8 years. He recounts that his "hatred for the Muslims had no limits". He hated seeing people being intimidated and abused, so when Muslims were blamed for inciting a violent conflict in Kaduna, he immediately volunteered to lead a reprisal attack. He lost his right arm during one of the battles against

Ashafa's militant group in Kaduna; increasing his vengeance and deep hatred for Muslims in general and Ashafa in particular.

Ashafa also experienced loss at the hands of Pastor Wuye. In one of the violent clashes between Muslim Youth Councils and Youth Christian Association of Nigeria, two cousins and Ashafa's spiritual mentor died while fighting Pastor Wuye's Christian group. For years, both Ashafa and Wuye vowed to avenge the deaths and injuries of their loved ones by killing each other. However, a chance meeting in 1995 brought the two clerics together and through intermediaries and months of soul searching, both leaders decided to lay down their arms and work together to end the destructive violence plaguing their country. This chance meeting and Imam's extension of the olive branch to Wuye led to the formation of the Interfaith Mediation Center of the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum.

Their collective work in peace building began in 1997, and they have since managed to spread their messages of conflict-resolution to all corners of the globe. Their work has earned them numerous accolades including the Peace Activist Award of the Tanenbaum Center of Interreligious Understanding; a joint Honorary Doctorate degree in Philosophy bestowed upon them in Kolkata, India; a Heroes of Peace Award from Burundi; Search for Common Ground on Interfaith Cooperation Award USA; and the Bremen Peace Award from the Threshold Foundation on interreligious reconciliation, among others.



CRIME STOPPERS
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In conversation with MCCA Managing Director Chaaban Omran

With all the dramas around the global financial crisis AUSSIE MOSSIE Kuranda Seyit caught up with MCCA's new Managing Director and chatted about the impact of the financial crisis on the average Aussie Mossie.



KS: The GFC has hit hard particularly in the US, although it seems that Australia has come out largely unscathed, is there a reason for this?

CO: The US's economy was really suffering well and truly prior to the sub-prime market collapse. Its involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan really put the American Economy under an enormous amount of pressure which low interest rates, plummeting house prices and significant rise in unemployment. Together with overvalued stock values, this is a classic recipe for a recession and unfortunately the world is linked to the US economy in some way due to financial exposure. Australia has a solid economy with sound fundamentals, however, as they say "when the US sneezes, the

rest of the world catches a cold." Australia will recover much faster than other affected countries.

KS: How will families be affected by the crisis, especially for new home buyers or people who have bought in the last year or so?

CO: Funds have dried up generally with investors pulling their money out of the market. Whatever money is available is being preserved and withheld by the banks. The Capital Markets dynamics have truly changed so much so that many experts are not sure how these issues will get resolved. Governments have pumped a lot of money into economies but it's not having the desired results. This new injected money is supposed to have the effect of better liquidity so that borrowers are still able to acquire properties but banks are being very particular that only those with sound financials will qualify for loans for a number of years to come. For families who have bought in the last year-ensure you make your repayments on time-this may mean sticking to a tight budget until the economy gets better. Spend only on needs not wants and if you have a credit card - manage this very carefully.

KS: Are there broader repercussions for the Muslim world? Will we see economic uncertainty in strong economic countries like Turkey, Emirates, Malaysia and S. Arabia?

CO: It is now well documented that the petro-dollar has not been hit by the GFC due to the unique structure of Islamic Finance and Banking. However, these countries will be very cautious about where they invest their money to minimize the risk of losses to their shareholders and investors.

KS: How are the Islamic institutions faring? Have Islamic sharia compliant institutes been affected by the GFC?

CO: Shariah Compliant institutions have made capitalists take note that there is indeed an alternative solution out there for the average home buyer. They have seen as with the example of Malaysia and the UK that anyone regardless of faith who has taken up the Shariah Compliant products has not had the same impact as those of conventional financing. This can only be good for Shariah Compliant Institutes. Australia must examine this methodology and work closely with MCCA to understand how we can best rollout these products to all Australians.

KS: What are the solutions for the future?

Australia must look at the Islamic Banking model. MCCA is uniquely placed to guide the regulators in this space as it can use the experience of the past 18 years of working with regulators and lawyers to achieve a favorable outcome.

KS: How long before the situation

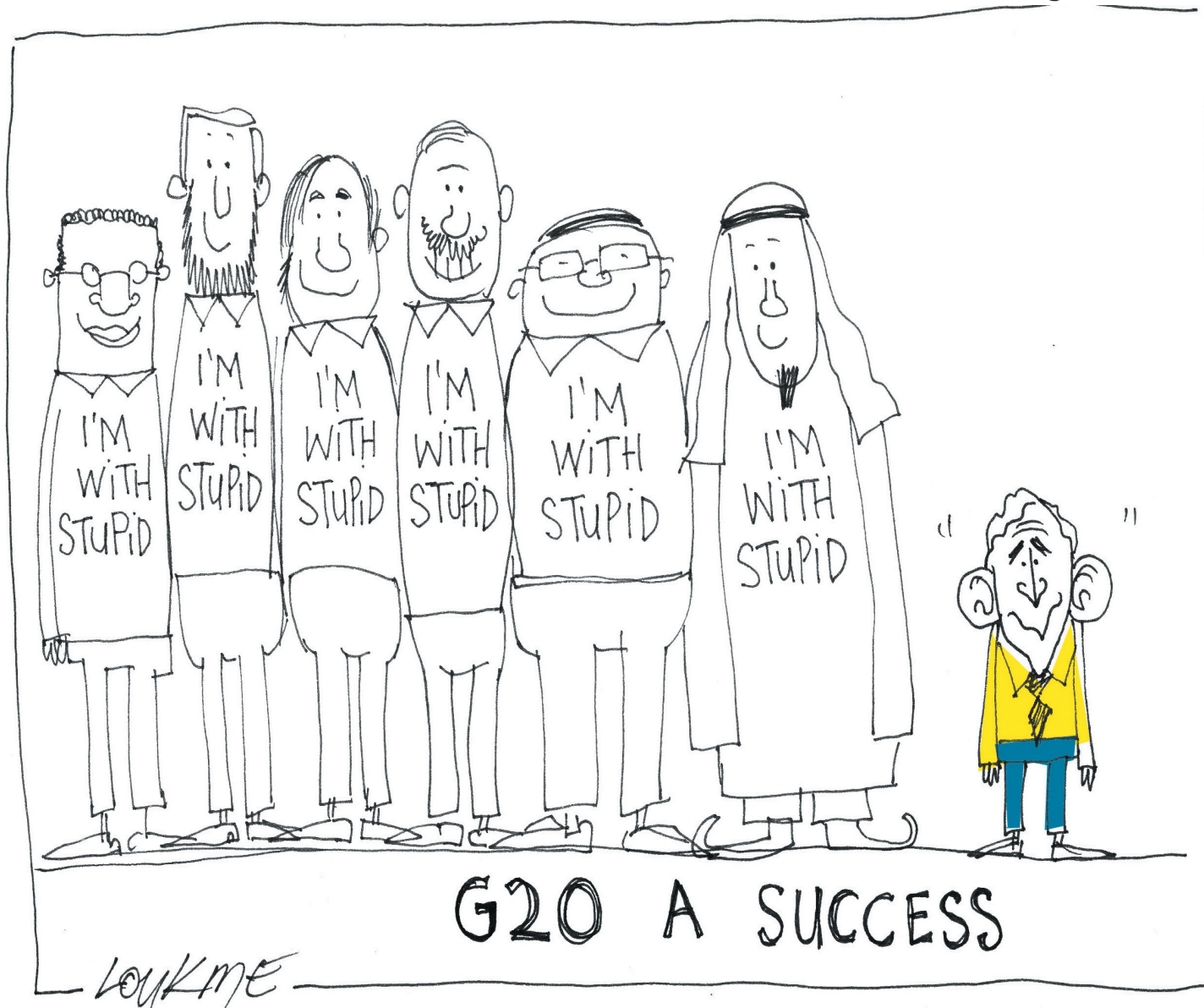
will return to stable for the international community? Or is this a sign of worsening situations?

CO: For countries like Australia where the fundamentals are sound, it should get better in about 3rd quarter of 2009 - in the meantime we should see unemployment rise. Now is the best time to be prudent with your spending as you need to make allowances for any unexpected events in your life.

KS: And on a general note of how does Sharia compliant borrowing work for example buying a house?

CO: The premise is to charge rent for the beneficial right to use that part of the property which has been financed by the funder. This method called Ijara Muntahabi tamleek means that you pay rent until you acquire the property outright. The Memorandum of Understanding which has been uniquely developed by MCCA using high profile lawyers in conjunction with regulators - establishes the spiritual position of the agreement based on Trade and it clarifies the terms used in the UCCC contract. Once our laws are modified we would not require to have two agreements inshallah. I am confident that if the community gets behind us then we will succeed in making the relevant legislative changes required to have only one agreement and products that anyone of any faith can consider.

Kartoon Kontroversy



Islam beats financial gloom

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system to its knees, and is looking wise indeed, or at least lucky.

Islamic finance takes its guidance from sharia.

The biggest markets are in the Middle East and Muslim countries, but global banks have opened sharia-compliant branches. Locally, the Muslim Community Co-operative of Australia is one of a few lenders offering the service.

Justice, partnership and opposition to excessive risk are the main principles guiding Islamic banks. Outright speculation and dealing with any party that has a balance sheet more than a third of which is debt are forbidden, as are investments deemed unethical by Islamic scholars, such as casinos.

But if these rules sound tough, the biggest difference is a ban on interest.

Charging interest is immoral because it does not take into account how changes in the value of the loan's security can affect the borrower, sharia says. Home owners who bought near the peak are now experiencing this harsh reality: interest gives banks a steady payment from the borrower, regardless of the property market's state.

However, profit is fine, and Islamic banks have devised ways to make money from lending. Instead of demanding interest, they buy the asset outright on behalf of the

education a moral responsibility



degeneration of Muslims throughout the world. To retrieve them from this degeneration, it's about time that the Muslim Ummah restructures its educational priorities along Islamic lines, fulfilling the existing needs as well. By virtue of such an educational program, the future generations will become the torch-bearers of Islamic values and play an effective role in the present world. The challenges of modern times call for rebuilding the structure of our educational program on such a

foundation as to fulfil our spiritual as well as temporary obligations. Today we need an education system which can produce, what the late Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi said, "Muslim philosopher, Muslim scientist, Muslim economist, Muslim jurist, Muslim statesman, in brief, Muslim experts in all fields of knowledge who would reconstruct the social order in accordance with the tenets of Islam."

The Muslims today are the most humiliated community in the world. And should they persist in following the same educational program as given by their colonial masters, they will not be able to recover themselves from moral and spiritual

decadence.

Ibn Mas'ud (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: The position of only two persons is enviable; the person whom Allah bestowed wealth empowering him to spend it in the way of righteousness, and the person whom Allah gave wisdom with which he adjudges and which he teaches to others.

According to Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: A single scholar of religion is more formidable against shaytaan than a thousand devout persons.

Islam is our greatest gift. We have to be thankful for this gift. We have to render to Allah His due. Allah has given us so much by making us a part of the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (S) so we must totally commit ourselves as followers of the Prophet (S). We must become true Muslims.

Now how can we become Muslims in the true sense of the word? First let's define what a Muslim is. A Muslim is not a Muslim simply because he's born one. A Muslim is a Muslim because he is a follower of Islam, a submitter to the Will of Allah. We're Muslim if we consciously

and deliberately accept what has been taught by the Prophet Muhammad (S) and act accordingly. Otherwise we're not true Muslims.

The first and most crucial obligation on us is to acquire knowledge and secondly to practice and preach this knowledge. No man becomes truly a Muslim without knowing the meaning of Islam, because he becomes a Muslim not through birth but through knowledge. Unless we come to know the basic and necessary teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (S) how can we believe in him, have faith in him, act according to what he taught? It is impossible for us to be a Muslim, and at the same time live in a state of ignorance.

It is essential to understand that the greatest gift of Allah – for which we are so over whelmed with gratitude – depends primarily on knowledge. Without knowledge one can't truly receive Allah's gift of Islam. If our knowledge is little, then we will constantly run the risk of losing that magnificent gift, which we have received unless we remain vigilant in our fight against ignorance.

A person without knowledge is like someone walking along a track in complete darkness.

Mosque of the Month Al-Khalil Mosque Adelaide



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worship had been introduced long ago, as a cultural change, not a religious one, and he would argue to end it.

"It is good to hear the complaints of the sisters, and to try to find some solution to their concerns," he told The Age in an exclusive interview.

"My duty is to propose, to discuss and try to convince. I can't guarantee the outcome."

Sheikh Fehmi said that in the time of the Prophet Mohammed 1400 years ago, women were not segregated.

His announcement is likely to attract international attention and may spark fierce debate among highly conservative mosque communities within Australia.

In some mosques overseas, there are no physical barriers between men's and women's areas but in Australia almost every mosque separates men's and women's sections.

Sydney lecturer Jamila Hussain this week told a conference at the National Centre for Excellence in Islamic Studies that women found facilities at some mosques "insulting" and that they were treated as second-class citizens.

Last night, Ms Hussain welcomed Sheikh Fehmi's promise to try to end segregation.

"It's an excellent start. But I'm a bit hesitant about when or whether it will happen — it will be a while."

She said many men would oppose such a move and, sadly, some women too. Imams didn't necessarily have much say.

Islamic Council of Victoria vice-president Sherene Hassan said it was a fine initiative, and it was good to see imams being proactive. She said it was in line with true Islamic teaching.

The Great Kebab Konspiracy

By Abu Numan

The great Kebab Konspiracy continues to bemuse and confuse many Muslims. As you know Muslims love a good conspiracy story. Of course, September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre probably tops the list. Many Muslims, probably, the majority, believe that it was a CIA plot pinned on Muslims. Then there is the one about the Holocaust suggesting that the number of Jews killed by Hitler was significantly lower in number than the projected six million. And there are other conspiracies about the downfall of the Ottoman empire, the deal between Zionists and the West to create Israel, the Jews behind all the financial crises in the world, the moon landing that never happened and the poisoning of Yasser Arafat, and not to mention the assassination of Princess Diana!

The great Kebab Konspiracy is just another one of those stories, however, unlike the ones listed above, this one is actually, purportedly or most likely if it can be proved or disproved to have happened in Australia if it happened at all.

The conspiracy starts in September just a few weeks before the 2008 NSW Local council elections in the heavily Muslim populated region of Western Sydney more commonly known as Auburn LGA (in the federal seat of Reid).

This was one of the most anticipated local government elections in recent times, coming off the back of the federal election which saw a landslide victory by Kevin Rudd and Labor. Politics was in the air and everyone was backing their man or woman. In the meantime, the State government was crumbling before the eyes of the electorates, first Scully and then Watkins and suddenly Iemma went, followed by Kosta. Heads were rolling in the Labor camp and Barry

O'Farrell could not believe his bejeevers, as his Christmas and Easter all came at once.

In the Auburn local Government Area, there were a host of candidates vying for the 10 positions available. This was reduced from twelve after Labor voted to reduce the numbers with the intention to give them more dominance in council (this badly backfired in Auburn as Labor lost one out of four council seats). But as it happened "Labor was on the nose", the State roads, hospitals and schools were in crisis and the state was in debt. This made it open

slather for the Liberal, Independents, Resident Action Group and Green candidates. It was anyone's guess. With labor doing so badly, many predicted new faces on the councils around the State. Locally the V8 Super car race and the Auburn Central fiasco pushed labor further behind. But at the end of the day it was tight race between Labor and the Greens for the fifth spot in ward two and RAGAA and the "Independent" Mosque candidate in ward one.

The presence of independents means Labor's vote is traditionally lower in council elections. What the results do not tell us is how the council independent vote will split between Labor and Liberal at the next state election. The swing from Labor to the Greens was 10 per cent in Leichhardt and Marrickville councils, the Greens easily outpolling Labor. Both councils lie within the state seats of senior NSW government ministers, namely Carmel Tebbutt, the Deputy Premier, and Verity Firth, the Education Minister.



In the meantime, a most unlikely marriage occurred between a Turkish Kebab Shop owner and the Mayor of Auburn and leader of the only Unity party in Australia, Le Lam. It is well known that Unity is what some call Chinese Liberals or Liberals in Chinese clothing. This partnership only had one possible outcome and that was to ensure the election of Le Lam back into Council. Le Lam has been in council since 1991. The Turkish kebab shop owner may have made a costly mistake. He drew a sizable vote, mostly Turks but this included

many of his loyal customers. This year there were 9 Turkish candidates and Auburn having a large Turkish population made this an important problem. The inevitable result was the vote was split and made it very hard for any of them to get over the line. In the end it was the Turkish candidate that won by 16 votes over the RAGAA

candidate. The Turkish Green's candidate found it very hard to compete with the Independent who was backed by Auburn Gallipoli mosque and was allowed to make an announcement, with his banners waving from the gates and his pull up banners on every side of the building. It was extremely disappointing to see the mosque being used in this way. The mosque is a community asset and owned by the Turkish community and the management's blatant abuse of power went unchecked. As it stands, it seems that the mosque committee is not accountable to anyone..

But back to the kebab conspiracy, actually it all started in 1998. During the federal election in the seat of Reid a Kebab Owner backed one of the candidates in the election.

Who claims that he was the "architect" behind the campaign. Suffice to say that Laurie Ferguson was returned without difficulty. Then in 2001, during the Federal Election, the same Kebab owner, bankrolled another Liberal candidate without success. The kebab owner was bragging about how he was behind all these political candidates who were also of Muslim backgrounds. And so the trend continued and this time in the local council election the same kebab owner professed to be the architect behind the five Turks running under the independent label. This time with success. Just. The question remains just what is their agenda and what qualifications do these people have? The irony is that the election resulted in the same faces being returned to the troubled Auburn Council. And with it a new mayor, Irene Simms. Now there's a conspiracy story there too, but I will have to tell that one another time.

So the great Kebab Konspiracy continues and more kebab shop owners are getting involved with politics. Who knows just what could happen in the years to come? More kebab laws being passed in parliament could see an increase in halal meat consumption and a boost to the halal industry, requiring more halal inspectors and an increase in Muslim migration to the country. This could then see a demand for Muslim schools and an expansion of the Muslim population in Anglo strongholds like Camden, Cronulla and Baulkham Hills and eventually Kebab shops could out-number churches and Thai restaurants.

This could all happen within the space of a few years and quite possibly Australia could turn into an Islamic state by 2020.

Watch this space!

History - Yunus Emre: Turkey's poet of sorrow



We know little about the life of Yunus Emre because the sources available to us are precious, scant and uncertain. Almost every significant thing about his life must be drawn

from his poems.

The empire of the great Seljuk Turks, established in Khorassan by the mid-eleventh century, had already expanded its borders to the lands of Anatolia. The Byzantine empire which ruled Anatolia launched the Crusades to preserve its borders against the threat of these Seljuk Turks. The armies of the Crusades were defeated in their battles against them, and the Seljuk Turks established precedence over the Byzantines by conquering Anatolia.

The people of Anatolia, already weakened and devastated by the Crusades from the west, now fell victim to the plundering attacks of the Mongols from the east. In 1231 when the Mongols marched into the city of Sivas in central Anatolia, they embarked on the mass slaughter of the civilian population there.

By the time the army of the Seljuk Turks arrived the Mongols had already withdrawn, disappearing into the rest of Anatolia.

This period of utmost unrest and turmoil shaped by all these difficulties which the people of Anatolia suffered, also shaped the remarkable character, the poetry and inner world of Yunus Emre. Through this terrible time, he spent his entire life trying to establish peace and unity in Anatolia, with both his ideas and his efforts. In pursuit of this, he traveled extensively among all the local rulers, explaining the significance of unity and peace to them: his great service was to give voice to and stimulate an awareness of these ideals in Anatolia.

There is consensus among historians and scholars that the Sakarya Valley is the place where Yunus Emre came into this world. Accordingly, Sariköy – now called the village of Yunus Emre in the town of Mihalliçcik, Eskisehir – has been acknowledged as the village where Yunus Emre was born.

During his youth when Yunus Emre lived with his mother in this village, he found himself in a kind of ghariblik, a strangeness, a sense of otherness which occasionally plunged him into loneliness. Most of the time, Yunus Emre wandered by himself through vineyards and orchards where he found himself in deep contemplation. One day as he was wandering

alone again, he encountered "the sorrowful waterwheel." While raising and lowering the waters of a stream to water vineyards and orchards, the waterwheel resonated as if it were weeping and moaning. He was overwhelmed by the effect of the waterwheel because its groaning actually voiced his own state of otherness, his solitude in this world.

*I am the sorrowing waterwheel,
My waters flow and flow,
This is what God has commanded, and
This is why I weep and moan.
I lift the waters up from deep below,
I spin around and push them up;
See the sorrows I have in the world, and
This is why I weep and moan.*

As we observed before, the local rulers and sultans of Anatolia were fighting each other, there were mass killings, the Mongols were invading. In an age when battles, killing and destruction were rampant in Anatolia, Yunus, the volunteer for peace, traveled among the local rulers sowing the seeds of love, compassion and unity. In the same way, may God permit us to follow the same principles that Yunus did, may we have the determination and the intention to serve all without discrimination in this world today where unpleasant things are also happening. Amin .

During his lifetime Yunus did not claim to

be a dervish nor did he describe himself as a sheikh or sultan. He was content with Haqq, the truth or reality which is God, losing any sense of self or varlik, individual existence, in the presence of Haqq. In this way he achieved the happiness of being yokluk, nothing, while at the same time becoming a source of hope for the gharibs, the hidden beings living in their otherness.

Yunus traveled to Syria and Azerbaijan as well as through Anatolia. Sariköy, the place of his birth, is also the place where he died. Though several towns in Anatolia claim to possess Yunus' mazar, his tomb, they are, in fact, his maqams, his spiritual stations in the world, places where he might have stopped to rest during his travels, where he might have visited people to discourse to them. The reverence for these places reveals how much the people of Anatolia valued Yunus, how they accepted and loved him. Furthermore, he was the only poet of his time who turned his face towards them, composing his poems in their spoken tongue. He implicitly explained the most complex, the most profound and perplexing truths to the people in their own language, making it easy for them to understand what he conveyed in his poems.

Reference: Yunus Emre: His Life and Selected Poems written and edited by Faruk Dilaver

A Town like Marree

By Abu Numan



About 750km north of Adelaide on the fringe of the great Australian outback, the soft red sands of Marree have many a yarn to tell. Over the past 170 years camels have tread on these sands carting heavy loads of supplies to outback dwellers and workers. In its hey day, Marree was a big commercial centre with a population of over a thousand and hundreds of camels. During the 1880's and up until the mid 1940's there were many 'Afghan' camel drivers who came to Australia on contract to work as hired labour to attend to the camels and drive them through the vast Australian interior covering territory from Port Augusta to Alice Springs, to broken Hill and Innamicka and along the Birdsville track to Cloncurry, and as far as Oodnadatta and into Coolgardie in West Australia. Today, the population varies between 50 and 60 depending on the time of year and

most of those are Indigenous. There are approximately a dozen descendants of the original Afghan camel drivers still living and working in Marree. Marree was given the nickname "little Asia" and contained the biggest population of Afghans in Australia. One of those who lived in Marree until his passing was the famous Bejah Dervish. Bejah was born in Baluchistan in 1862 and died in 1957 in Port Augusta, (S.A.), he served in the Indian army and came to Australia in 1891 and settled in Marree (formerly known as Herrgott Springs) where he bought land in 1901. He became famous for his role in the Calvert Expedition of 1896-97. He married a widow named Amelia Jane Shaw and had one son named Abdul Jabbar 'Jack' Bejah. Jack also accompanied the Madigan expedition into the Simpson desert in 1939. Jack's son, William 'Butch' Bejah (pictured) still lives and works in Port Augusta. Butch, remembers his grandfather as a very serious and quiet man, strict but gentle. "I remember once we had a chook which scratched my cousin's face and so grand dad told me to catch it so he could slaughter it halal. But I chased it and I killed it with a hatchet and then he was furious and through it down the toilet because we didn't do it right." Marree's oldest Afghan

descendant's are Max Dadleh and Irene Zada (pictured). They are happy in the quiet town. I caught up with Maxy and we spent the whole day together. I met him at the old Marree pub, outside the temperature was almost 40 degrees. Maxy, doesn't have that much recollection of the original Afghans but he remembers many of the elders who retired and eventually died in Marree. He remembers Said Goolamadeen who used to hawk fresh fruit bought from Port Augusta, apples, oranges and bananas were a treat back then. After a few cold ones Maxy and I drove down to the old Afghan cemetery and there we saw a small cluster of graves facing Mecca, mostly without any headstones, some with small epitaphs. Marree was also home to Mullah Assim Khan, who was the religious leader of the town and had a large family. His epitaph read, "Born 1870, Peshawar, Pakistan, Died 1944, Marree, Australia. Loving husband of Agnus, father of Sheran, Mormin, Emah, Tom, Ali, Zarret, Pat, Aleema, Gloria, Jack and Abdul. Forever rest in peace, this plaque was dedicated in 1999 by his great grandchildren."

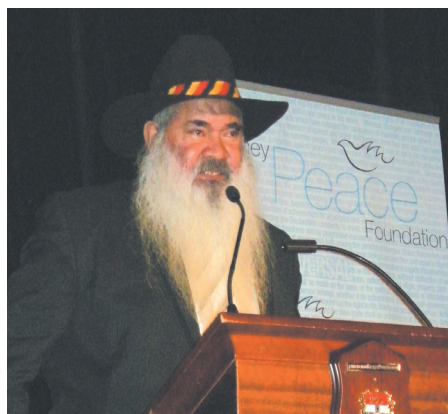
Marree is holds great historical significance for the Afghan Camel drivers and is now an open museum. In the town centre remains the old Ghan train, which was named after the Afghans and the town is littered with old date palms introduced by the Afghans. Also there is a replica of the first mosque in Australia which was built in 1890 (pictured) and

The old houses which the Afghans lived in still stand, Mullah Assim Khan's great grand daughter Karen still lives there. We also went over the Bejah's house which has been slightly renovated. Butch stays there when he comes up for the camel cup. Marree is now one of two towns (Alice Springs being the other) which holds their annual camel races, which is very popular amongst



the Afghan descendants who get together and swap old stories over a delicious curry and japaties. The old town is also divided with the railway line separating the Afghan side from the white side. It was referred to as the Gbantown as most places where Afghans worked had Gbantowns. Usually the Afghans lived away from the general population because they had to be close to their camels but also because there was still some discrimination between Afghans and the European settlers. The Aborigines also lived in the Gbantown. Sadly, very few Afghan descendants have retained much of their grand father's culture and traditions, which was inevitable as the Afghans died off and with them their traditions. Many of the older Afghan descendants still remember many of the traditions such as some prayers and verses from the Quran, they don't eat pork and understand the burial rites. The oldest remaining Afghan descendant in Australia is Aishy Zada who lives in Port Augusta, she is aged 98.

Father of Reconciliation accepts peace award



This year was a special year for Australia's first peoples. The newly elected PM apologized for the Stolen Generations and helped heal the wounds of 200 years of hurt and pain for Australia's indigenous people. To cap off a good year, 2008's Sydney Peace Prize recipient was the Father of Reconciliation Aboriginal activist, Patrick Dodson (pictured).

The SPF jury cited their reasons for his selection, *'For courageous advocacy of the human rights of Indigenous people, for distinguished leadership of the reconciliation movement and for a lifetime of commitment to peace with justice, through dialogue and many other expressions of non violence.'*

On November 5, the Prime Minister presented the award to Mr Dodson at the Peace Prize dinner.

Mr Dodson said on the night, " With the National Apology the nation has been given a wonderful opportunity to begin to make justice possible not only for the Aboriginal people but for all the people of this nation. Justice denied one group within the nation is a diminishment of us all and the nation will remain diminished until the wrong is righted. In the short term we can only expect anti social behaviour and predictable increases in the incarcerations of our youth. The simple act of Apology and its

acceptance by Indigenous Australia has gifted us an opportunity to begin a new Dialogue about the future relationship between the Indigenous peoples and the modern settler state."

"It will be a dialogue that will require us to challenge the tired old philosophical framework of assimilation and through a process of engagement and negotiation craft a new underpinning philosophical framework for the nation. Not only to rejuvenate the relationship between the Indigenous and the settler peoples, but to go beyond, to craft a nation at peace with itself and equipped to face the Global economic and ecological challenges with which we are being confronted."

He continued, "The President elect of the United States Barack Obama has recognised that his nations relationship with its First peoples has been found to be flawed in many respects and has committed his incoming Administration to properly address the failures of his nation to

address the issues of health, education, cultural preservation including making Native language preservation and education a priority."

"The opportunity to begin in a practical manner is presented to us with the Australian Governments proposed Closing the Gap Policy, which is about achieving parity between the Aboriginal and Settler peoples in such domains as education, health, employment and life expectancy."

"Resolving these issues at every level is absolutely essential if Aboriginal people are to play any relevant role in the future of this nation. And our commitment to meet the goals set out between short term ends and long term cultural sustainability in these policies is a matter of urgency. We need to achieve fundamental balances or no one should be in any doubt our Indigenous people are facing an apocalyptic disaster if both are not met." He said.

Internal conflicts could spread after Mumbai

By Sandy Gordon

THE US State Department has consistently listed India as the country with the second-highest number of terrorism casualties after Iraq. However Western media has given scant regard to the problem and this is sometimes resented in India.

All that is likely to change with the attacks in Mumbai. Mumbai has been at the epicentre of India's terrorist problem but there have been many attacks in other key cities.

Terrorism in India is perpetrated by a number of groups, including Maoists in eastern India and separatists in the north-east and Kashmir. But one of the most persistent and costly problems has been so-called "violent jihadi" terrorism in India's major commercial and administrative centres.

Indian authorities and commentators point to Pakistan, and especially the secretive Inter-Services Intelligence, as having a hand in the Indian attacks. After an attack on the parliament in December 2001, India mobilised against Pakistan and the two very nearly slipped into war - a frightening prospect for nuclear-armed powers.

It is clear that arms and training have been provided by Pakistani groups, such as Lashkar-e-Toiba; that the ISI has been heavily engaged in helping insurgents and terrorists in Indian Kashmir; and that Pakistan has refused to extradite accused terrorists to India.

But there is no "smoking gun" indicating direct involvement of Pakistani authorities in terrorist attacks outside Kashmir. On the contrary, most of those involved appear to be



"home-grown" terrorists intent on revenge against the activities of Hindu zealots, incensed by the poor socio-economic status of India's Muslims or inspired by the so-called "global jihad".

Frequently members of the banned Students' Islamic Movement of India, or SIMI, have been involved. Recently SIMI seems to have morphed into the Indian Mujahideen, or at least acted with its members. The group claiming responsibility for the recent attacks, Deccan Mujahideen, may be another example of such morphing.

The stakes in this "game" of terrorism in India are extremely high. Exponents of violent jihad and political Islam would like to see an end to the India-Pakistan rapprochement over Kashmir, which has resulted in a diminution of Pakistani support for the Kashmiri separatists.

If they could mount an attack of sufficient seriousness, the rapprochement could quickly unravel, especially in the highly charged climate of impending state and national

elections.

Moreover, increased India-Pakistan tension would be highly damaging to the broader "war on terrorism". It would draw Pakistan's security efforts away from the western frontier and give virtual free rein to the militants in the tribal belt to operate in Afghanistan.

The attacks also target commercial and IT hubs, such as Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad, apparently with the purpose of undermining India's economic renaissance. They also target communal hotbeds, such as Malegaon, and important religious centres, such as Varanasi. The apparent purpose is to fan communal unrest (Hindu-Muslim rioting) and thus drive Muslims to support militancy.

It is this strategic targeting, among other things, that has prompted accusations by Indian commentators of official Pakistani involvement. But, given that many of those terrorist leaders are well educated, especially in technology and science, it is possible that they, themselves, are capable of picking strategic targets.

Moreover, there is also an evident motive of revenge apparent in some of the targeting. Several attacks in Mumbai, including the rail bombings of 2006, have apparently targeted lines, business places and suburbs frequented by the Gujarati Hindu business community, evidently in revenge for the terrible rioting against Muslims that occurred in Gujarat in 2002. In those riots, the authorities - under a Hindu-leaning government - turned a blind eye to the horrors and failed subsequently to prosecute their alleged perpetrators.

A successful counter-terrorism campaign requires that two things be done well: investigation and intelligence to catch those involved and pre-empt attacks, and alleviation of the conditions that give rise to terrorism. India's record in the first of these has been patchy. Investigatory and forensic skills have not, on the whole, been well honed. Where the authorities have done very well is to keep the lid on the difficult communal situation after terrorist attacks. With the exception of Gujarat, there has not been widespread communal unrest after what are frightful terrorist attacks.

Long-term alleviation of the situation of Muslims is more problematic. Here the Congress-led coalition is caught between the rock of needing to act affirmatively to assist the community and the hard place of reaction to such action fanned up by the so-called "Hindu right", led by the Bharatiya Janata Party. Should a BJP-led coalition win next May's national election, the outlook for Muslim regeneration would probably be bleak. The BJP is making considerable political play of the Congress Government being "soft" on terrorism. Consequently the Government is contemplating toughening the counter-terrorism laws.

What India is experiencing is well short of the kind of violence and counter-violence in Lebanon and Iraq. Given that 140million of India's 1.1 billion are Muslim, that would be a development not to be contemplated. pick itself up and resume where things left off.

Sandy Gordon is the former head of the Australian Federal Police.

Austral(ians) resist bid for another Islamic school

BY Andrew West

IT HAS become almost a ritual in itself. A religious community proposes building a place of worship or learning, and encounters the wrath of thousands of residents. There are furious mass meetings, petitions, legal challenges and sometimes even violence. On the face of it, Sydney looks like a city riven by ethnic and cultural hostility.

Research by Gabrielle Gwyther, a western Sydney academic, to trace the movement of immigrant communities over generations, helps to explain many of the social tensions in Sydney in the past decade. Since 2001, there has been a rising consciousness - but not understanding - of Islam in Sydney.

Several attempts to establish Muslim institutions have provoked a backlash from residents. Dr Gwyther said: "It's often unclear whether people are talking about religion or terrorism when they raise objections."

The most recent outcry was when the residents of Austral campaigned to block a 600-place school for Muslim children. Other faiths have encountered similar resistance. Hindus faced opposition to their plan for a temple at Rouse Hill, while the Hillsong Assemblies of God Church has battled with Rosebery residents over a proposal to build

a 2700-seat auditorium. But mostly it is Muslims who have felt the brunt of



protest. The deputy chairman of the Islamic Council of NSW, Ali Roude, said: "This has historically been the trend and it appears that very little has changed over the past three to four decades. "Based on recent responses from local residents to the proposed Camden school and other development applications ... throughout south-west Sydney, it would appear the real concerns and opposition from locals have little to do with the merit of the project but more to do with general anti-Muslim sentiments."

Dr Gwyther, a researcher at the Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre

at the University of Western Sydney, refers to a "cultural protectionism" in south-western municipalities, which have tried to maintain their Anglo-Celtic character in the face of the movement of non-English-speakers from Sydney's inner and middle-ring suburbs. She tracked a generational shift from neighbourhoods such as Alexandria, Leichhardt, Marrickville, Newtown and Enmore - where Greeks, Italians, Maltese, Yugoslavs, Poles and Christian Lebanese settled after World War II - to suburbs such as Bankstown, Parramatta, Kingsgrove, Blacktown and Fairfield. In the 1970s migrants came from Vietnam and Cambodia to Fairfield, Cabramatta and Liverpool.

Despite 46 per cent of its population being born overseas, Dr Gwyther said Liverpool is "a very assimilationist" municipality. "It has not allowed the same sorts of developments that you find in neighbouring areas," she said. In Fairfield, for example, the NSW Heritage Office had registered five non-Anglo-Celtic constructions of local significance, including a Laotian temple, a Buddhist monastery, an Assyrian cathedral, a Turkish mosque, and a Buddhist temple. Second- and third-generation immigrants are joining the rush for bigger homes and more green space, pushing out the boundaries of the neighbourhoods in which they grew up. And when cultures rub up against one another, tensions are unleashed. Dr Gwyther said that in response to the multicultural

challenge, some Anglo-Celtic Australians have tried to recreate their own ethnic roots, especially in master-planned estates. With a park named Kensington Green streets lined with deciduous trees and even a cricket pitch, it is its own little England. She found 85 per cent of residents were Australian-born and the rest mostly British- or New Zealand-born. "There is a direct correlation between these planned communities and the so-called 'new towns' and garden suburbs created in England after World War II," she said. But she also found a conditional openness to other ethnicities. "You can be any colour or background so long as you are Anglophile in culture," she said. Elsewhere in southwestern Sydney, Dr Gwyther found people fleeing multiculturalism. "One couple, before they bought their house, 'sat in a coffee shop in Narellan for two hours counting the number of Muslims they saw.'"

But the passing years suggests hostilities can soften. Six years ago, in Annangrove in northwestern Sydney, a Muslim businessman, Abbas Aly, faced down almost 8000 residents opposing his plan to build an Islamic prayer hall. The council rejected his application but the Land and Environment Court overturned the decision. The furore was nasty. But now, some say, harmony prevails. "After about the first year, there was a real change in sentiment," said Rohan Baker, a cafe owner. "This is a pretty white Anglo community but now no-one really notices any difference."

New Premier hosts iftar



Premier Nathan Rees' speech at the 2008 Ramadan Interfaith Iftar, at Parliament House.

"It is an honour as Premier to join this distinguished company of religious leaders at this important time in the Muslim religious calendar.

We are here together from many backgrounds in support of our fellow Australians.

Tonight's gathering is indicative of the importance to NSW and to my Government of creating a harmonious community.

It's ironic that the religion most under scrutiny in our society and around the world is the one which has inspired this important gathering.

The great tradition in New South Wales of holding a government inter-faith Iftar dinner during Ramadan was initiated by Premier Bob Carr in 2004.

New South Wales was the first government in Australia to recognise the importance of Ramadan. We recognise the opportunity it represents to bring religious and community leaders together in respect for this holy and sacred period for Muslims.

Tonight's gathering has a double significance.

It is, of course, of paramount significance to all followers of the Muslim faith.

Ramadan is a purifying time. It is a time for Muslims to show greater sympathy for the needy and the poor. Fasting allows for greater concentration on the spiritual, generating empathy for the hungry and cleansing the body of overindulgence.

But it is no less significant that in marking this great occasion of Iftar, we are joined by spiritual leaders of other faiths represented in the broad Australian community.

While honouring Islam, we are acknowledging at the same time the diverse and pluralist tradition that allows all of us, of whatever faith, to meet together in harmony and goodwill.

That, truly, is the Australian way.

The restraint by Muslims during Ramadan makes them better citizens and we should support them during this time for self-purification.

It is important that we non-Muslims understand the regime of Ramadan.

It is the ideal opportunity for us to learn what we can from each other. And as fellow Australians, to reach a higher level of acceptance that we are all different and that we have some very different beliefs which will not change.

Those real differences need not and must not divide us. But through acceptance of that reality, we grow stronger in our sense of community.

When we do that, we become a stronger society and give a shining example to communities throughout the world.

I am very proud to be the Premier of the State where so many people from every part of the globe have been welcomed, where they have settled and

contributed in peace and harmony.

Those are not just fine sentiments. It is a reality.

This event is testimony to that reality. Here we are – representatives from across the religious and cultural spectrum of New South Wales – as one family, sharing with and supporting our Muslim brothers and sisters at a moment most solemn to them.

It places Ramadan on our community calendar and shows that Islam is a very normal part of our culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse society.

I want the whole community to see that this is happening and that my government values and supports the Muslims of this state. It is notable that we are gathered this evening in the home of the State's legislature. Not far from where we are seated is a poignant reminder of the strength of the Australian spirit – a spirit that combines respect for spirituality with respect for social diversity.

Ramadan is a time to give special consideration to the important role we play in our community, at a local level, and a member of the global community.

We should draw closer together, learn more about each other, and help promote a community built on solid ground of mutual respect and understanding

We know that the web of belief and identity is a powerful expression of what we are as individuals and as a people. And the way we negotiate our differences is a powerful test of our democracy, our defining national ethos.

We know that when local communities, on whatever justification, combine to exclude schools

or places of worship connected to a particular faith, we are departing from the true Australian way. We are demeaning and destroying something of the Australian spirit.

So by coming together this evening, as Muslims throughout the world observe the sacred rituals of Iftar, we are affirming that the Islamic and Australian traditions are close and at one with another.

The decision to make Australia a multi-faith and multi-ethnic society was taken long ago. Muslims – including Afghans, when they brought their camels and other possessions to Australia – were among the earliest immigrant settlers in outback Australia.

They were among the earliest participants in a multi-cultural, multi-faith experiment that endures to this day.

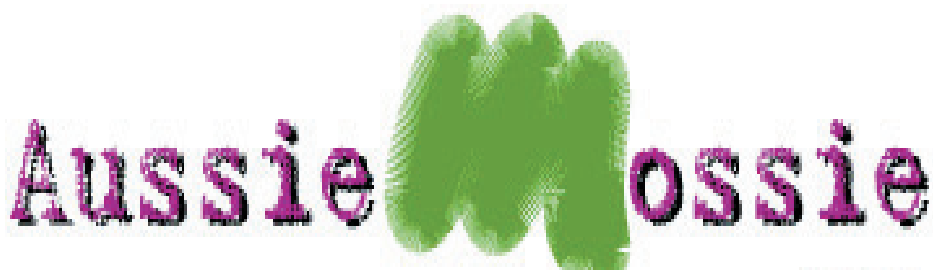
So it is right and proper that I give these assurances this evening: that my Government welcomes people of every faith and background to live peacefully in this nation

that we will not tolerate racism or discriminatory practices against any section of the community

that we respect the faiths and religious practices of all men and women who have been raised in Australia or have made this country their home

With these thoughts in mind, I want our Muslim friends amongst us tonight to understand the esteem in which your community is held in New South Wales.

I want this Iftar Dinner to signal that your traditions and culture are respected and that bigotry, fear and exclusion have no place in the tolerant, harmonious State which we are all privileged to call home. I wish you all Ramadan Karim.



Searching for Aussie Mossie of the year

Australian Muslims have worked hard over the last decade to keep a positive attitude and to ignore the many ups and downs that they have faced. Discrimination, stereotyping, the abuse and the glaring eyes. Of course the media has not helped.

Amongst it all there are many Aussie Mossies who are out there doing their best to help others to be better human beings, breaking down barriers and making a difference to society.

The search is on for the Aussie Mossie of the Year right across the nation. From Perth to Sydney and from Adelaide to Darwin. We would like to recognise their efforts with an award to show the ummah's appreciation. Sometimes we do a lot of work for sake of Allah swt and by and large it goes unnoticed by the community and sometimes its nice to be noticed. Just to say thankyou.

So please start nominating your Aussie Mossie now by sending us a short summary about the nominee. Their achievements, their community work and their contribution to society. There are seven categories:

1. Aussie Mossie of the Year (General)
2. Aussie Mossie (Youth under 25)
3. Aussie Mossie (Education)
4. Aussie Mossie (Group or organisation)
5. Aussie Mossie (Sport)
6. Aussie Mossie (Art)
7. Aussie Mossie (Welfare)

EMAIL YOUR NOMINATIONS TO

aussie.mossie@optusnet.com.au

May Allah reward your for your efforts

Are you a budding young film maker?



A new documentary film festival for youth will be held in 2009 exploring youth issues. The contestants will be challenged with making a 3 minute film about an issue that they believe is important in the area that they live. The successful participants will be given a video camera, sound equipment and editing suite and he or she will be mentored by an experienced film maker.

The project is called Aussie Mossie Video Challenge and sponsored by Auburn Council.

This is a unique opportunity for young people to follow their passion and create their own film about an important topic.

They will not only gain valuable skills in making a documentary but also learn to work in a team.

Applicants must demonstrate why they should

be chosen as a participant and outline in 100 words or less what their documentary idea is and how they plan to make it.

The six successful participants will have their documentaries screened at the Aussie Mossie Video Challenge at Auburn Town Hall in 2009. There are great prizes and the documentaries will be judged by film industry professionals and media personalities.

There will be plenty of entertainment and yummy food on offer.

Applications should be sent to PO Box 1013 Strawberry Hills 2012 NSW

or emailed to aussie.mossie@optusnet.com.au



Centre for Islamic understanding

By Kuranda Seyit



On 14th October 2008, the former Prime Minister of Australia Hon Bob Hawke launched the new International Centre for Muslim and Non-Muslim Understanding in South Australia and Dr Musimbi Kanyoro, former General Secretary of the World YWCA and Director of the Packard Foundation in USA, launched the UNESCO Chair in Transnational diasporas and reconciliation studies.

The centre will be a new phase in bringing a deeper and comprehensive understanding of Islam and Muslim communities around the world and in Australia. The Vice Chancellor of the University of South Australia Professor Peter Hoj welcomed an international line up of guests from the

U.K., Mauritania, India, and Australia. Director of the Centre, Elizabeth Ho said, "The Centre will do much needed research in Post-colonial studies, reconciliation, Security and cultural studies. As well as understanding the media's role in tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Centre will be an effective bridge-building institute. and help us understand Muslim relations in the domestic context."

Mr Hawke said, "Put yourself in the place of Muslim families who have been reduced to second class human beings, not something we can tolerate in this country. My father Clem Hawke used to say, if you believe in the fatherhood of God then you must believe in the brotherhood of man."

The federal government has pledged 7 million dollars towards the centre and State government has pledged 3 million dollars. It is fitting that this centre is situated in the city of Adelaide, where the roots of multiculturalism sprouted after Greek and Italian migrants approached Don Dunstan complaining about their treatment. Adelaide is also a perfect choice with its rich history of multiculturalism and the place of the original Muslim Afghan camel drivers who lived and worked the camels mainly in South Australia in the late 1800's and also where the country's oldest mosque stands (in Little Gilbert Lane) built in 1885..

Re-evaluating our concept of interfaith



Imam Ashafa, Kuranda Seyit, Pastor James and organiser: David Mills from Initiatives of Change

In the 1990s, Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa led opposing, armed militias, dedicated to defending their respective communities as violence broke out in Kaduna, northern Nigeria. In pitched battles, Pastor James lost his hand and Imam Ashafa's spiritual mentor and two close relatives were killed. Now the two men are co-directors of the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre in their city, leading task-forces to resolve conflicts across Nigeria.

Thousands have been inspired by these two men of faith, who are not only bringing peace to their country, but inspiring people around the globe with their story of courage. The type of courage that goes beyond running into the line of fire on a battle field. What they have done takes much more strength and humility than fighting with arms but fighting with their words to foster peace. To forgive your staunchest enemies in the tradition of their own role models; Jesus and Muhammad Aleyhisselam.

The Imam and the Pastor graced our shores last month, traveling to our capital cities and speaking to the masses. They also came to Sydney and spoke at two major events; one at NSW parliament House and another in Blacktown. The program was organised by Initiatives of Change. (www.au.iofc.org). They also made a special visit to Auburn, one of Australia's most multi-faith suburbs.

Imam Ashafa and Pastor James, both epitomize true and sincere interfaith dialogue. Their genuineness and clarity are refreshing and exciting. In a self-reflexive way it highlighted our deficiencies in this department of interfaith relations, while there are many initiatives in Australia designed to bring different faiths together, many lack the real,

open and transparent dialogue which breaks down suspicion and animosity, builds cohesion and involves real action and produces joint co-operation, working together and accepting each other's differences.

The problem that I have observed in the past six years or so of interfaith relations between Muslims and others is that the suspicion is still there after so many years of dialogue and interaction. While the same people lead the movement and many of them are doing a wonderful job, there seems to be a lack of progress without any substantial changes in attitude of the public although the participants have remained fairly consistent and neutral.

The type of interfaith dialogue we are used to in Australia is more about satisfying our self-interests and our localised groups, not extending beyond our constituencies. This is by no means an easy feat but it does take more effort, creativity and innovation.

For instance, in 2002 for the very first time in Australia, I as a Muslim, a Jew and a Christian embarked on a journey for peace between these three faiths. Through our common acceptance of one God we visited thousands of children and inspired them to pursue peace. The program called the *Goodness and Kindness Project* was a very loosely agreed upon charter to work together to reduce racism and bigotry against Muslims and Jews. To do this we started with school aged children and inspired them to do their best in accepting and respecting people of different faiths. Yet, the hypocrisy was obvious behind the scenes.

The three faiths did not see eye to eye on many issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and basically agreed to disagree. Yet, one side insisted that I did not use the term

Palestinian in any of my speeches, enforcing the assertion that Palestine did not exist. Other constraints of working together revolved around human rights abuses in Palestine carried out by the Jewish State and the acceptance of these abuses by the Jewish members of the team. Not being able to talk about these issues became a point of frustration and eventually the stumbling block to co-operative ventures. It was not only between Muslim and Jew but also Jew and Christian. In fact, the Jewish denial of Christ has always been a source of controversy and setting limits on what you can say about Christ in front of the audience was very difficult for the Christian presenters. For instance, one could not tell the story of the Good Samaritan as this offended the Jews. It was also at times difficult to do our job when the Jewish presenter could not enter a church which contained crucifixes or images of Christ. Of course these are the constraints of interfaith relations and should not be the source of conflict and by and large they were not, in fact the Goodness and Kindness project continued successfully for four years, visiting over 30000 children, featuring on television, radio and in newspapers. It won awards and national acclaim. However, it was when on side tried to dominate the program that things fell apart. It was one side that tried to claim ownership for the initiative, it lied about who started the program, it lied about the use of funds raised by donations and it even deceived the other members of the team when it received the National Marketing Award awarded by the Community Relations Commission. So it was very hard to remain loyal to the program when one side was continuously undermining the objective of equality and respect for one another.

It was the Christian presenters who first bailed out of the project after constant disagreement with the Jewish team, in the end it became a difference of vision. The Christian presenter did not accept payment for his time even though we had received a large amount of government funding. It was the Jewish presenter who wanted to corporatize the project and pay himself a corporate salary and enlarged the scope of the program, including teams in other states. Eventually, after so many problems the team broke down and only the Muslim and Jew remained. In an attempt to salvage the years of foundational work, we established a new board with a new name with the hope that there

would be more transparency and accountability and equality between the three faiths. The new name we chose was the *Together For Humanity Foundation* and became a Company Limited by Guarantee. We invited a new Jewish member to join the board and a new Christian member (both successful businessmen) and I became the Muslim board member. We employed the Jewish presenter as the "National Director". In the meantime, we had received \$180000 grant from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, largely due to my reputation with the department. I felt that we needed to be morally responsible about the Palestinian issue and at the time the bombing of Lebanon by Israel. I felt that we needed to express our own positions on the issue internally, however, this was neglected. I also felt that we needed to employ three project co-ordinators from each faith and distribute the funds equally to pay the co-ordinators. This was perceived as a direct threat to the Jewish director. In the end the two Jewish members and the Christian member joined forces to remove me from the board. They approached other prominent members of the Muslim community and recruited new Muslims on the project. Those new members joined the Foundation even though they were aware of all the problems and the ethical issues that existed between myself and the Jews. The program was dominated by the Jews and really the Muslim grievances about injustices to other Muslims in Palestine and Lebanon were not addressed. Ironically, those who joined the Foundation were either Lebanese themselves or Egyptian. I was personally disgusted by their lack of loyalty to our suffering brothers and sisters.

Interfaith dialogue must be strengthened by sincerity and openness. As in any relationship, issues left unaddressed will only simmer and fester and eventually get worse, like a sore which is untreated. True interfaith must be nurtured and respect for each others' perspectives must be acknowledged and universal issues of human rights cannot be compromised for the sake of unity. Unity must be pursued by the common acceptance of justice and rights of humanity. The irony is that to be together for Humanity can only work when there is true equality. Those who are a part of the program should ask who the board of directors are and just where the money that they receive is going.

The meaning of Qurban - getting closer to God

By Nuruddin Zangi

In the name of Allah, al-Rahman al-Raheem, and all praise is due to him for guiding us to the fastest way of drawing near to Him, that being al-Salaat, the Muslim prayer, whose name derives from the root word s-l-t, meaning: connection. And all praise is due to him for creating around His messenger great men who would preserve

Salaat is like when a man needs something from a leader (imam), and so offers him a gift. Thus we offer the Salaat to Allah (swt), as a gift, in order to be allowed to come nearer to Him, or to be given what we desire.

His Messenger's practices and teachings. And may He whelm His Messenger- who taught us this Salaat and told us to pray as he did- and whelm likewise his family and companions with peace, blessings, and ridwan.

The word qurban comes from the root word q-r-b, meaning proximity or nearness. The literal meaning of the word is "something with which you come closer to" (Allah Most High). But the word qurban actually refers to an offering to God, usually in the form of animal sacrifice. Now we know that the Qur'an criticized the pre-Islamic Arabs for thinking that their offerings at the Kaaba reaches God, saying that it is not the blood that reaches God but the act of sacrifice. Thus Islam accepted the practice of qurban and encouraged it, but made its purpose the feeding of the poor, and rewarded man's sacrifice of his animals, and thus of his property and wealth, for the sake of feeding the poor. This was the Islamic qurban, not the jahili qurban of leaving food for the Gods to eat, exalted is Allah above such a thought.

But how is our salaata qurban? There are many possible meanings of this. The first meaning is the one provided by Abu Hurayra himself in the same hadith, explaining that "Salaat is like when a man needs something from a leader (imam), and so offers him a gift." Thus we offer the Salaat to Allah (swt), as a gift, in order to be allowed to come nearer to Him, or to be given what we desire.

This "gift" can simply be seen as a qurban in the sense that it is something that you offer to Allah, to draw nearer to Him. However, I see in it the other meaning of qurban, the meaning of a sacrificial offering. This is because in order to do the Salaat you have to sacrifice your time in order to obey the command of Allah. You have to plan your day about the 5 salaata prayers, which become like the axis of your day. In this is a great sacrificial offering.

But I see another deeper level in which the Salaat is a sacrificial offering, the second

verse of surat al-Kawthar, the 108th, and shortest, sura of the Holy Qur'an:

"Wa Sallee li-Rabbika w'anhar" (108:2)

This verse says two things: The first part commands the Prophet, and also the believers, to do the Salaat prayer to our Lord. The second says "and inhar". The word inhar is the imperative form of the word nahr, so what does nahr mean? As a noun, nahr simply means "neck". However, nahr is also a verb, signifying the act of cutting an animal's neck.

So what then does this verse mean? According to Ibn Kathir, it means to do the Salaat prayer only to Allah, and then to sacrifice animals only to Allah, not to any other gods. However he and most other Quran commentators present all the different interpretations of the word inhar, many of whom see the act of nahr here not as a sacrifice of an animal, but as one of the movements of the Salaat. Thus, Ibn Kathir reports that Muhammad al-Baqir explained nahr as the act of raising one's hands at the beginning of the Salaat, because they come near the neck. Another interpretation, attributed to the Prophet's cousin Ibn Abbas (r.a.) and others, says that the nahr is the act of pointing one's neck toward the Qibla, as happens during the Rukoo'.

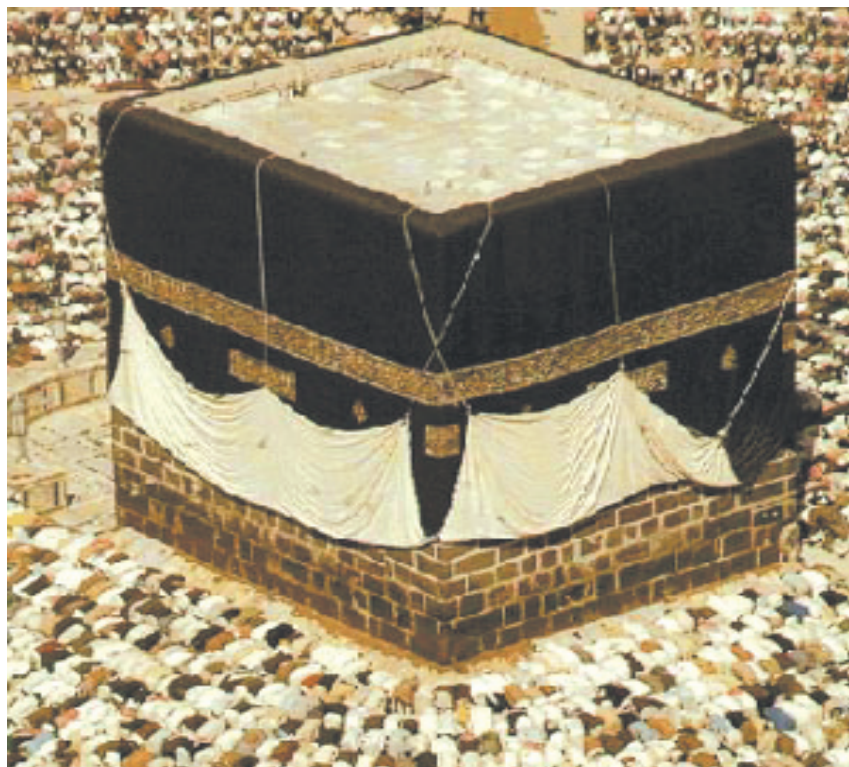
This brings me to what I think is one of the levels of meaning of this verse, and of the teaching of Abu Hurayra (r.a.).

Sometimes when I'm praying, I don't think of the Rukoo' movement as a bowing before Allah, as one bows before a King, for example, as I used to always do. While I do think of it this way a lot, I mostly see myself in the Rukoo' as doing something different, may Allah guide me to the correct path if I am wrong. But I see in the word nahr in that verse, beside its primary meaning of giving sacrificial offerings only to Allah, a command to sacrifice one's self to Allah. Thus in prayer, one is sacrificing not just his time but his own will and his own ego, for the sake of Allah. We are essentially submitting and saying, "I bow down before you, my Lord", despite the ego's pride which does not want to bow down before anyone, and does not want to sacrifice its time for the sake of prayer. I see an expression of this in the Rukoo' movement, in which we bow down until our back is so straight that you could put water on it and it does not spill, for that is how our Prophet (pbuh) did it. And this conjures up in my mind two images: First, I see the Prophet Isma'eel (Ishmael), who obeyed his father and stretched out his neck in order to be cut as per the dream. And second, the straight back of the sheep who are to be sacrificed as qurban. Thus whenever I bow down in Rukoo', I think of the verse 108:2, and of "assalatu qurban", and I stretch out my neck toward the Kaaba, as if to say, "Here is my neck, oh Allah, stretched out, as I sacrifice myself, my nafs, to You."

And it is this act of submission, of islam, which made me add the word Muslim in the title, making Salaat the Mu'min's Mi'raj and the Muslim's qurban. May Allah make this

submission and this sacrifice real, because I don't think that for me they go beyond the realm of imaginings and wishes.

May Allah accept from me my prayers, and may He guide us all to His proper worship, and correct our interpretations of His commands.



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Global Financial Crisis: how is it affecting Aussie Mossies?

By Nasya Bahfen

The future of Islamic banking and finance in Australia is uncertain, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. There are encouraging signs, such as the world's second largest Islamic finance institution Kuwait Finance House setting up shop in Melbourne. And an Islamic Banking Colloquium held in October 2008 by the University of Melbourne's Asialink Centre has heard Islamic banking may be introduced to Australia sooner rather than later. The finance industry in Australia is aware of both the growth of the sector (currently estimated to be worth 200 billion US dollars worldwide) and the fact that it's largely escaped the domino effect of the US financial crisis (because of a prohibition on interest, a preference for asset- rather than credit- based loans, and sharing profit/loss between banks and borrowers). Professor Michael Skully, chair of banking at Melbourne's Monash University, says financial circles are aware of the positives that come from Shariah-compliant banking. Speaking at the Asialink Colloquium, he believes Australia's small but growing Muslim population makes Islamic finance an area of potential. "I think - it's certainly a business proposition to consider for

Australian bank and foreign banks perhaps, wishing to establish here."

Australia's selling points include a stable political system, a mature banking and finance sector, and a wealth of "concrete" assets in the form of natural resources. Its nascent Islamic finance sector is exemplified by cooperatives such as the Muslim Community Cooperative (Australia) or MCCA. But several caveats stand in the way of the introduction of a complete Islamic banking sector in Australia. One of the most pressing is the absence of a regulatory framework for Shariah compliant finance to exist as part of Australia's financial sector, that covers issues such as licensing, consumer protection and the role of watchdogs such as the Australian Securities and Investment Commission. Once the framework is in place, more foreign Shariah-compliant banking providers may be moved to open branches in Australia, while the country's conventional banks will find it easier to set up Islamic banking units.

Post-financial crisis, the maturity of Australia's Islamic finance sector compared to conventional banking may also be a factor. An Islamic financial alternative is not yet "operational", according to Saudi

Arabian scholar Suleiman al-Audah, who recently told the AFP newsagency that while theoretically a Shariah compliant economic system is sound, "in practice, the Islamic banking experience is not yet mature, because it offers limited products like 'Murabaha'." Egyptian scholar Fahmi Howaidi says Islamic banking and finance can provide comprehensive solutions to some of the world's current economic woes, but warned it was not a "magic wand" that could stave off the global financial crisis.

Another factor that may delay the introduction of Islamic banking in Australia is the size of the Muslim community, which is small – although the sector has proven popular with non-Muslims in countries such as Malaysia and may be attractive to non-Muslims. The University of Melbourne's Professor Abdullah Saeed says, "It's not just for Muslims in Australia. A lot of conventional banks are interested in it, and a number of Islamic banks are actually moving into Australia so we're not just talking about a Muslim issue." The primary market for an Islamic banking sector – Australia's Muslim community – has also been affected by the financial crisis in the sense that like other Australians, they are tightening their wallets, delaying

non-essential consumption, and saving or investing less. Nail Aykan, marketing manager of the MCCA says in the short term, the global credit crisis will have a trickle-down effect. "Because banks are not lending to other banks, there's hesitation at the moment among the Middle Eastern and Asian Islamic finance providers to come to Australia," he says. "The Muslim community in Australia is also not immune to the vulnerability in the market and they're hesitant to make any kind of financial investment right now."

The financial crisis caused governments to change financial industry regulation, in an attempt to prevent the type of bloodshed seen on Wall Street. Monash University's Professor Michael Skully points to the move by the Labor government of Kevin Rudd to take over consumer credit legislation from Australia's state governments. Rudd was elected in November 2007 on a platform of supporting "working families", and Professor Skully says the changes in legislation are a chance to introduce Islamic banking to Australia. "This is a great opportunity for the Rudd Government to actually act and ensure that the financing is available for not just working families but also Muslim working families."

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Who ended the caliphate of Islam?



Ataturk – Father of the Turks

He was definitely father of modern Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was born in Salonica in 1890. One of Turkey's greatest modern military minds and the saviour of Gallipoli. After the end of the first world war like many of Turkey's generals he saw their country being carved up like a roast dinner. France got the leg, England the breast, Greece the ribs, The Russians were happy that Istanbul was an international city, the Armenians were praying for the scraps. And in 1919 at the Treaty of Sevres, Turkey was ultimately humiliated and all that remained was inner Anatolia. This was a bitter pill to swallow for 11 million proud Turks.

In the meantime elsewhere in the empire there were more deals being made. In Palestine there was an apparent agreement made between Lawrence of Arabia and the

Arabs that they would receive their own independent state if they assisted the British in fighting off the Turks. In Arabia an even sinister plot had hatched by the Saud clan.

There is a great misconception that Atatürk was the architect behind the abolition of the caliphate. After the war ended in 1918 the Arabs were rewarded for their treachery against the Turks (fellow Muslims) after siding with the British. They were promised Palestine and the Hejaz. Sherif Hussain was made the Emir of the Mecca and Medina. However, Hussain made a hasty error by declaring himself Caliph of the Muslim world. To the chagrin of the British.

Sayyid Hussein bin Ali, (1854-1931) was the ruler of the Hejaz and of Mecca from 1908 until 1917, when he proclaimed himself king of Hejaz, which received international recognition. In 1924, he further proclaimed himself Caliph of all Muslims. He ruled

Hejaz until 1924, when, defeated by the Abdul Aziz al Saud and he abdicated the kingdom and other secular titles to his eldest son Ali.

The British were not expecting Hussein to announce himself as Caliphate after all the plan had been from the start to destroy it forever. They had partially succeeded by partitioning the Ottoman empire and placing the Middle East under British and French control. When the Turks had finally announced that the Caliph in Turkey was no more (especially since they had lost almost all of their territory including Mecca and Medina) Hussein saw this as an opportunity to proclaim the title. He controlled both Mecca and Medina and in effect was the new caliph.

The problem with this is that the Caliph should be an elected position. Nonetheless, the British had no intention to tolerate such a brash move, especially after they had installed Hussein into power in the first place. They then pushed and supported Abdul Aziz Al-Saud to lead a campaign, reinforced with British weapons to oust Hussein and take control. The only condition was that Abdul-Aziz was not to proclaim himself Caliph nor were any of his descendants. To this day, we have never ever heard of a Saudi King declaring himself Caliph.

In the meantime, the Palestinians placed all the blame on Mustafa Kemal. They said that he hated the Arabs and he abolished the Arabic script, he secularised Turkey and abolished the caliphate.

What Atatürk did was remove the Caliph as an obstacle to his grab for power, having already lost the Hejaz which was a fundamental requirement for holding the title of Caliphate. Officially the Caliphate was declared over in Turkey as the last known Caliph was actually Sultan Mehmet

Vahdettin who abdicated in 1922 and was exiled to Malta. His successor Abdul Mecid II was briefly Caliph until 1924 when it was formerly abolished by parliament.

However, the real architects of the end of the caliphate were the Saudis. They had already made a deal with the British to fight the Turks in return for their military aid. The Saudis came near to extinction until they were saved by the British. In 1924 the Saudis made another deal to take over control of the Hejaz and depose of Sherif Hussein.

Bearing in mind all along the British were planning to create a new "Jewish Homeland" under the agreement of the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs were tricked into believing that they too would receive their own homeland which would include Jerusalem and most of the Westbank.

It was foolish to have trusted the British for in the end not only did Hussein lose all his power, the Arabs were placed under British and French mandates. They lived under colonial rule for almost half a century until one by one they gained independence but only to be ruled by puppet dictatorial regimes chosen by the British and French.

In the end it was the House of Saud that abolished the last Caliph of Islam. In return for taking power the British were promised that the Saudis would never claim the caliphate themselves. And to this day it is as so. The Muslims have no leader, and as long as Arabia is called Saudi Arabia we will never see another caliph lead the Muslims out of the depths of darkness.

In the end it was the House of Saud that abolished the last Caliph of Islam. In return for taking power the British were promised that the Saudis would never claim the caliphate themselves. And to this day it is as so.

Turkish national anthem a solemn religious doctrine

Fear not! For the crimson flag that proudly ripples in this glorious twilight, shall not fade, Before the last fiery hearth that is ablaze within my nation is extinguished.

For That is the star of my nation, and it will forever shine;



It is mine; and solely belongs to my valiant nation.

Frown not, I beseech you, oh thou coy crescent,

But smile upon my heroic race! Why the anger, why the rage? I

This blood of ours which we shed for you shall not be blessed otherwise;

For Freedom is the absolute right of my God-worshipping nation.

I have been free since the beginning and forever shall be so.

What madman shall put me in chains! I

defy the very idea!

I'm like the roaring flood; powerful and independent,

I'll tear apart mountains, exceed the heavens too and still gush out!

The lands of the West may be armored with walls of steel,

But I have borders guarded by the mighty chest of a believer.

Recognize your innate strength, my friend! And think: how can this fiery faith ever be killed,

By that battered, single-fanged monster you call "civilization"?

My friend! Leave not my homeland to the hands of villainous men!

Render your chest as armor and your body as trench! Stop this disgraceful rush!

For soon shall come the joyous days of divine promise...

Who knows? Perhaps tomorrow? Perhaps even sooner!

View not the soil you tread on as mere earth - recognize it!

And think about the shroudless thousands who lie so nobly beneath you.

You're the noble son of a martyr, take shame, hurt not your ancestor!

Unhand not, even when you're promised worlds, this paradise of a homeland.

What man would not die for this heavenly piece of land?

Martyrs would gush out should one simply squeeze the soil! Martyrs!

May God take all my loved ones and possessions from me if He will,

But may He not deprive me of my one true homeland for the world.

Oh glorious God, the sole wish of my pain-stricken heart is that,

No heathen's hand should ever touch the bosom of my sacred Temples.

These adhans, whose shahadahs are the foundations of my religion,

May their noble sound last loud and wide over my eternal homeland.

For only then, shall my fatigued tombstone, if there is one, prostrate a thousand times in ecstasy,

And tears of fiery blood shall flow out of my every wound,

And my lifeless body shall gush out from the earth like an eternal spirit,

Perhaps only then, shall I peacefully ascend and at long last reach the heavens.

So ripple and wave like the bright dawning sky, oh thou glorious crescent,

So that our every last drop of blood may finally be blessed and worthy!

Neither you nor my race shall ever be



extinguished!

The lands of the West may be armored with walls of steel,

But I have borders guarded by the mighty chest of a believer.

Recognize your innate strength, my friend! And think: how can this fiery faith ever be killed,

By that battered, single-fanged monster you call "civilization"? 3

For freedom is the absolute right of my ever-free flag;

For freedom is the absolute right of my God-worshipping nation!

Black & White House

By Zaid Jamil



Americans have elected a Black man with a funny name, ignoring his colour, creed, background. They believed in his promise of bringing about a change. The message and promise of change and the way it has been supported by masses in USA is a phenomenon which is nothing less than a revolution. It is a revolution for change against the fundamental policies followed by American regimes over the past many years which peaked during Bush's presidency over the past eight years. This revolution is demanding a change against blind imperialistic intents which led to the American invasion of many countries, illegal interference in others internal affairs and crushing of other ideologies. It is demanding a change against an extreme form of capitalism. The global economic movement which began in the early nineties brought great benefits to many parts of the world but soon became increasingly corrupt and power hungry. Major public sectors were privatized in most countries and there was increased pressure on CEOs to maximize return for their shareholders. Many CEO's became corrupt, took huge pay packages for themselves, cut staff levels to extreme limits, manipulated financial reports of their companies and indulged in unfair and corrupt practices. They took measures

which were devoid of economic sense and led the world into the worst financial crisis of past 100 years. This message of change from Obama is also a revolution against religious extremism of neo-cons who had taken the white house as hostage and were able to dictate terms in the US congress and military, forcing them to act against the spirit of human freedom and fundamental principals of American constitution.

While it remains to be seen how much of this change will eventually be brought about, the election of Barack Hussein Obama has other surprising features which I find extremely interesting. His election is described as a history making event which made true of Martin Luther King's dream. An African American is being elected by a huge margin as the president, the most powerful position in the world. If we look into it little more deeply, he is much more than an African American and thus this election is an astonishing event. An Average African American is one whose forefathers were brought to US more than 200 hundred years back as slaves for performing petty and demeaning jobs. Most of these black Americans are Christians and they have adopted American names. During 1960s, few blacks embraced Islam during a great Islamic movement led by Malcom X.

Obama's origin has little to do with a typical African American. Obama is the son of a Kenyan Muslim also named as Barack Hussein Obama, a typical African Muslim name. Obama Senior came to US for studies, met a white American Ann Dunham in university and married her who gave birth to Barack Obama. Ann, although never became a Muslim herself but she had such an influence that even after divorcing her first husband, she chose to marry another Muslim student from Indonesia who had also come to

US for higher studies. Lolo Soetoro is described by some as a practicing Muslim but not so by others. He brought his family to Indonesia where Barack Obama went through primary schooling. Ann also divorced her second husband and returned to US with Obama. Obama was then raised by her grand mother as a Christian and as he grew up he got involved in church based organisations. He has insisted throughout his election campaign that he was a true christian and he had never practiced Islam. However, it is interesting to note that Barack Obama opted to maintain his middle name "Hussein" throughout his life although this name has great significance to Islam and Muslims. Although he has increasingly tried to distance himself from Islam during his election campaign, his decision to maintain his middle name as Hussein may be seen by many otherwise. Thus a person with such a background is very different to an ordinary African American. His roots to a religion which is seen in US and west as an enemy makes his election really incredible. The American public needs to be applauded for raising themselves above color and creed and voting him to power in the most exciting election of many decades.

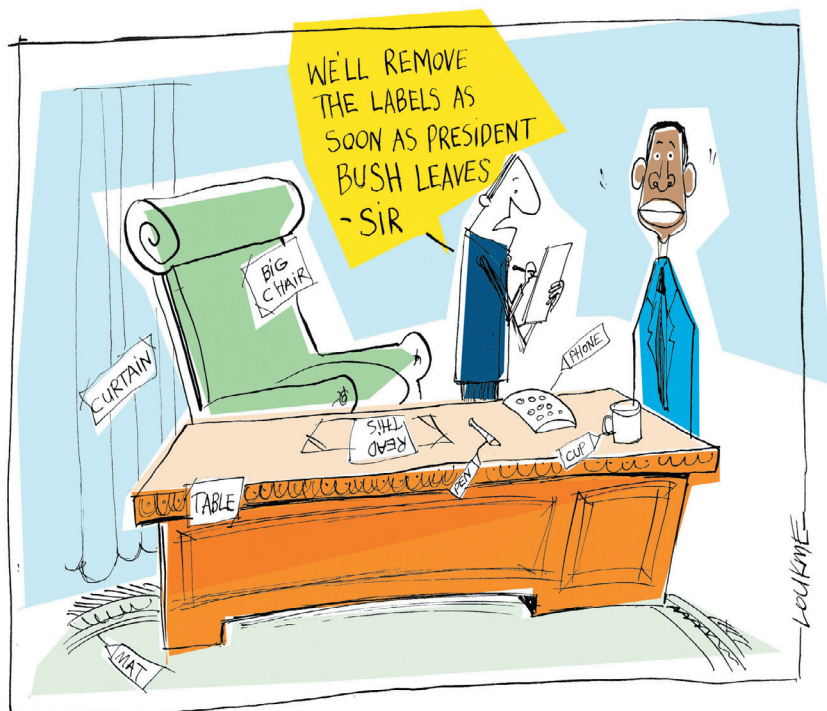
Barack Obama's rise to the most powerful office in the world puts him amongst the most miraculous personalities born on the earth. Not only in childhood, he confronted disturbances of broken marriages amongst his parents but he was also sandwiched between different religions, cultures and nationalities. As he grew up, he was raised by his grandmother, as his mother returned to Indonesia to work as an anthropologist. She only returned to US to die of ovarian cancer in 1995. Obama lived an ordinary life but excelled in studies. He undertook few university degrees eventually doing

a law degree from Harvard Law school. He entered politics in 1996 when he was elected to Illinois senate. In 2004 he was elected for US senate and within four years he successfully contested for the highest position in US and the world. This phenomenal rise in politics has no comparisons in the history, in particular given his very controversial background. In past all great kings belonged to great dynasties and in the recent past, only people from rich or well known families could secure top political positions at such a young age. Some may argue that it was more a vote against the failures of Bush administration rather than a win for democrats. However, within the democratic party, Obama had to first overcome the previous first lady and extraordinary powerful Hillary Clinton. Hillary did not only belong to extremely powerful and popular Clinton family but was also a white and a lady. Defeating her for the candidacy was in itself an unbelievable episode.

While I consider Obama's rise to the greatest office in the world as one of the most extraordinary events of history, I am not yet calling him great. His real test will now begin. An extraordinary orator, as he is, may not be as competent as he sounds. The president of America has not only internal but huge external challenges. Whether he will succeed at the home front as well as an international diplomat, remains to be seen. These are some of the most challenging times with looming financial crisis, US involvement in two wars and some very tense regions around the world.

I also have grave fears for his safety. His background is and will not be acceptable to the extreme right. If he displeases neo-cons, he may be eliminated before he may even begin to bring about the change, he promised.

Take a Loukme



Have you heard the story about the old Arab?

An old Arab lived close to New York City for more than 40 years. One day he decided that he would love to plant potatoes and herbs in his garden, but he knew he was alone and too old and weak. His son was in college in Paris, so the old man sent him an e-mail explaining the problem: 'Beloved son, I am very sad, because I can't plant potatoes in my garden. I am sure, if only you were here, that you would help me and dig up the garden for me. I love you, your father.'

The following day, the old man received a response e-mail from his son:

'Beloved father, please don't touch the garden. That is where I have hidden 'the THING.' I love you, too, Ahmed.' At 4pm the FBI and the Rangers visited the house of the old man and took the whole garden apart, searching every inch. But they couldn't find anything.

Disappointed, they left the house. The next day, the old man received another e-mail from his son: 'Beloved father, I hope the garden is dug up by now and you can plant your potatoes. That is all I could do for you from here. Your loving son, Ahmed'.



Heaven lies at the feet of your mothers



Among the many topics of interest to non-Muslims, the status of Muslim women and the theme of their rights -- or rather, the perceived lack of them -- seems to be foremost. The media's portrayal of Muslim women, usually outlining their "oppression and mystery" seems to contribute to this negative perception.

The main reason for this is that people often fail to distinguish between culture and religion -- two things that are completely different. In fact, Islam condemns oppression of any kind whether it is towards a woman or humankind in general.

The Quran is the sacred book by which Muslims live. This book was revealed 1400 years ago to a man named Muhammad, who would later become the Prophet. Fourteen centuries have passed and this book has not been changed since, not one letter has been altered.

In chapter 33, entitled Surah Al-Ahzaab (The Clans), verse 59 Allah The Exalted Almighty Says: "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the woman of the believers to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known (as free respectable women) and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." [Quran 33:59] This verse shows that

Islam makes wearing a Hijab necessary. Hijab is the word used for covering, not only the headscarves (as some people may think) but also wearing clothes that are not too tight.

Sometimes, people see covered Muslim women and they think of this as oppression. This is wrong. A Muslim woman is not oppressed, in fact, she is liberated. This is because she is no longer valued for something material, such as her good looks or the shape of her body. She compels others to judge her for her intelligence, kindness, honesty and personality. Therefore, people judge her for who she actually is.

When Muslim women cover their hair and wear loose clothes, they are obeying the orders of their Lord to be modest, not cultural or social mores. In fact, Christian nuns cover their hair out of modesty, yet no one considers them "oppressed". By following the command of Allaah, Muslim women are doing the exact same thing.

The lives of the people who responded to the Quran have changed drastically. It had a tremendous impact on so many people, especially women, since this was the first time that the souls of man and women were declared equal -- with the same obligations as well as the same rewards.

For the first time in history, women were granted economic independence in Islam. The money they bring in to marriage is theirs as well as the money they earn. In Islam, women are allowed to choose their own husbands and in extreme cases, ask for divorce. A woman has the right to be educated, contrary to what the contemporary world might think. The responsibility is that of the person who is raising her.

Islam is a religion that holds women in high regard. Long ago, when baby boys were born, they brought great joy to the family. The birth of a girl was greeted with considerably less joy and enthusiasm. Sometimes, girls were hated so much that they were buried alive. Islam has always been against this irrational discrimination against girls and female infanticide.

The Prophet Muhammad, sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam, said: "Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim (male and female)." Men and women both have the capacity for learning and understanding. Since it is also their obligation to promote good behavior and condemn bad behavior in all spheres of life, Muslim women must acquire the appropriate education to perform this duty in accordance with their own natural talents and interests.

While maintenance of their homes, providing support to the husband and bearing, raising and teaching children are among the first and very highly regarded roles for a woman, if she has the skills to work outside the home for the good of the community, she may do so. However, this is allowed only as long as her family obligations are met and as long as she complies with the Islamic code of dress and conduct, with no intermingling with men in the workplace.

Islam recognizes and fosters the natural differences between men and women despite their equality. Some types of work are more suitable for men and other types for women. This differentiation in no way diminishes the effort or benefit of one gender over the other. God will reward both genders equally for the value of their work, though it may not necessarily be within the same sphere of activity.

The two great roles a woman plays in life are that of a wife and a mother. The Prophet, once said to a group of Companions: "The best among you are those who are the best to their wives." This shows that Islam highly encourages treating the wives well. They should be shown love, respect and care. To foster the love and security that comes with marriage, Muslim wives have various rights. The first of the wife's rights is to receive dowry, a gift from the husband, which is part of the marriage contract and required for the legality of the marriage.

The second right of a wife is maintenance. Despite any wealth she may have, her husband is obligated to provide her with food, shelter



and clothing. He is not forced, however, to spend beyond his capability and his wife is not entitled to make unreasonable demands.

Concerning motherhood, the Prophet Muhammad, sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam, said: "Heaven lies under the feet of mothers." This implies that the success of a society can be traced to the mothers who raised it. The first and greatest influence on a person comes from the sense of security, affection and training received from the mother. Therefore, a woman having children must be educated and conscientious in order to be a skillful parent.

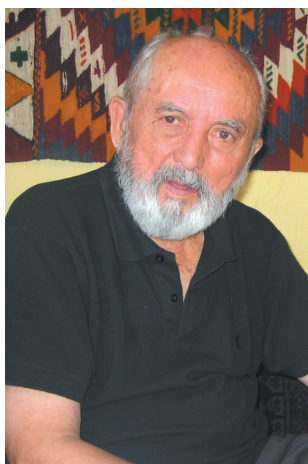
A man came to the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam, and asked: "Who among my kinfolk is worthy of my good companionship?" The Prophet, replied: "Your mother" three times before saying: "Your father." This indicates the impact that a mother has in a person's life. So women are highly honored in this great religion.

Islam is a religion that treats women fairly. The Muslim woman was given a role, duties and rights 1400 years ago that most women do not enjoy even today in the West. These rights are from God and are designed to maintain a balance in society; what may seem "unjust" or "missing" in one place is compensated for or explained in another place.

celebrating 40 years of Turkish migration

There were a small number of Turks living in Australia around the end of the 19th century, when Turks were regarded as "white" and came from the Ottoman State. However, it was not until 1967 that the first large migration of Turks started.

The then Holt Labor government signed a treaty with the Turkish Republic, allowing unskilled migrants in a bid to bolster the population and the workforce. In late 1968 the first plane arrived in Sydney and then shortly after planes arrived in Melbourne. One of the first arrivals in Sydney was Rasim Ektash, from the town of Konya. These people, still relatively young and energetic came with the view that they would return after a few years. There were no long term plans. The first groups were settled in Villawood Migrant Hostel and then later resettled in the inner-city. A small community evolved around the Ford Plant near Auburn and others around the Arnott's biscuit factory in Homebush. Most lived



in Redfern and Surry Hills and the first Turkish mosque was opened in 1975 (an old church in John St Erskineville). There were very few Turks in Sydney and Melbourne and most could not speak any English at all. Life was difficult and it became a situation where new arrivals lived close to the older arrivals and soon a community sprung up. Another early arrival was Mehmet Musa Mehcur (pictured), who arrived with his wife and three children. Musa says, "I came to Australia because

we had a friend who was already here and he told us that it was a nice place. That was back in 1969 and I thought that we would go back after we worked a little, but our income was just enough to get by and we never really made enough. So we ended up getting a mortgage and buying a house in Emu Plains and our family grew to eleven. Most of them are married now and I have 13 grandchildren."

Musa was quite religious and in 1970 when the first Eid prayer was to be prayed he led the prayers as there was nobody who was trained as an imam. Soon after he was affectionately known as Musa Hodja. In the late 1970's the small but growing community in Auburn decided to purchase some land and build a large mosque (now known as the Auburn-Gallipoli mosque) and Musa hodja went overseas to raise much needed funds, the mosque ended costing over five million dollars and has become an icon of western Sydney and a

tourist attraction.

For all of those Turks who were planning to return, it has been 40 years and there are now second and even third generations, calling themselves Aussies. The Turks have done well to integrate into Australian society. Although in the early 70's there were some teething problems with discrimination and crime, by and large there has been little issues facing the Turks. One of the most successful was Mustafa Ilhan (from Melbourne), who created a mobile phone empire (Crazy Johns) and became one of the richest men in Australia, sadly he died last year at the age of 42. Turks have celebrated the 40 years in Melbourne and Sydney with festivals and other events. A documentary is planned as well. The Turks have done well as one of Australia's first Muslim communities and are seen as big brother to many of the new emerging communities. Let's hope that we can have an even bigger party for our 50th anniversary in 2018.

Uygur Turks protest on China's National Day



Talgat Abbas chants at the protest rally outside the Chinese Consulate in Sydney and Chairman of the Uyghur Association of America Alim Seytoff speaks about the atrocities being carried out by Chinese authorities

China: Human Rights abuses Roundtable on Tibet



most recently in the cities of Kucha and Kashgar, as well as an increase in the number of executions, especially in 2008.

Emerging evidence has undermined the basis for the Chinese government's repression in East Turkestan. During the Olympic Games period East Turkestan witnessed three attacks, two in the Kashgar area and one in Kucha. Chinese government officials accused a number of Uyghurs with conducting the attacks, adding that the suspects had received substantial assistance from international terror groups. No evidence has ever been produced to support these allegations.

A September 29 New York Times article cast doubt on Chinese government claims about the deadliest of the attacks, in which 16 people reportedly died in Kashgar. Photographs suggest that events did not occur as the Chinese government claim. The photographs show men in police uniforms carrying out the attack against other policemen, contradicting Chinese government claims that a vegetable seller and a taxi driver were responsible.

Uyghur democracy leader Rebiya Kadeer (Pictured above) said "the Chinese government is using the allegations against the eight men as an instrument to further demonize Uyghurs in the eyes of the international community. The move is designed to justify China's crackdown on Uyghurs in the face of mounting evidence that disprove claims of widespread Uyghur involvement in global terror."

The October 21 announcement from Beijing also signals an added measure in following through on its August 2008 threat of a "life or death struggle" in East Turkestan, as well as a hardening of policies designed to manage Uyghur issues.

One of these measures, according to the Hong Kong based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, is the deployment of around 200,000 public security officers and armed police to East Turkestan to "prevent terrorist attacks" in the post-Olympic period.

Another measure is the unprecedented level of restriction on religious activity. Students and government employees were not permitted to fast during Ramadan this year or attend mosques in general. Restaurants were also forced to open during fasting hours.

Uyghurs are not permitted to undertake Hajj, unless it is with an expensive official tour, in which applicants are carefully vetted for their "obedience to the law". Confiscations of passports, to the point where very few Uyghurs have passports, ensures adherence to the 'official tours only' policy, and also restricts other types of international trips.



Mrs Kesang Takla, the Minister for Information and International Relations in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, visiting from Dharamsala, India. Visiting Sydney at a round table discussion and update on the human rights situation in Tibet.

Even as the eyes of the world were on China this Olympic year, the Chinese government repeatedly demonstrated a lack of commitment to respecting and expanding this right. If hosting Olympics was to have encouraged human rights improvements in China, the early returns are certainly discouraging.

During the crackdown on protests in Tibetan areas that began in March, the government cut off or interrupted telephone and Internet service in Lhasa and other Tibetan areas, significantly hindering the flow of eyewitness reports and other information as violence spread and the number of deaths rose. Three months later, Human Rights Watch confirmed that authorities continued to confiscate mobile phones, cameras, fax machines and computers, monitor calls, censor and block emails and Internet content, and harass Tibetans to prevent them from communicating with journalists and relaying information inside and outside of Tibet

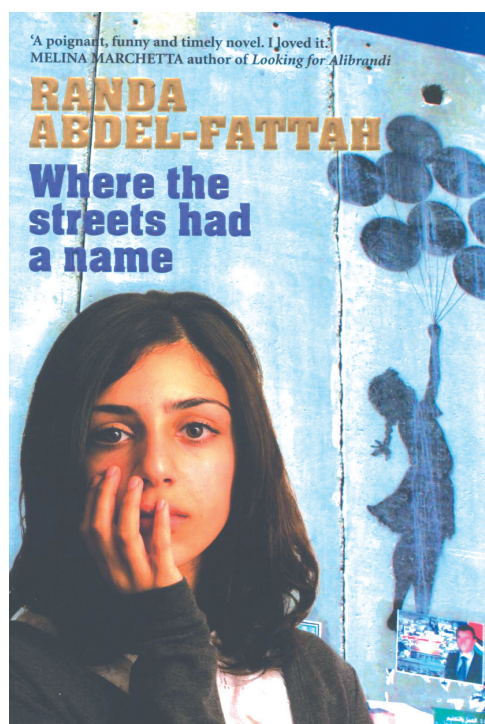
The Uyghur American Association (UAA) is extremely concerned about terror allegations made against eight Uyghur men at an October 21 briefing by Ministry of Public Security spokesman, Wu Heping. UAA was heretofore unaware of these men or of their alleged activities. UAA also believes that the timing and purpose of the announcement is motivated by recent credible challenges to the Chinese government's claim that Uyghurs are connected to global terror networks.

The eight men have been accused of "plotting, organizing and executing various terrorist activities targeting the Beijing Olympic Games". The eight men, according to Mr. Wu, are all members of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

The Chinese government has used the "war on terror" to justify fierce crackdowns in East Turkestan. These crackdowns have included the mass detention of Uyghurs,

Review: *Where the streets had a name*

by Randa Abdel-Fattah



By Zuleyha Seyit

Randa Abdel-Fattah's new novel *Where the Streets Had a Name* has proven that the young writer has matured with time and developed a keener sense of the moving portrayals of human frailty and emotion. Although, the book is targeted at younger audiences there are subtle and deeper nuances at play that anyone can relate to in this story about courageous determination and man's injustice to his fellow man.

This story is set in Bethlehem in 2004 and told through the eyes of a Palestinian girl Hayaat. Her family were forced out of their home and they are now living in a tiny apartment. She shares a room with her older sister, younger brother and Sitti Zeynab, her maternal grandmother. Throughout the book Hayaat mentions the

scars on her face but it is not until the final chapters she reveals she was shot by an Israeli soldier.

Hayaat –is full of life- she risks her life and her Christian neighbour Samy's life to keep a promise she made to Sitti Zeynab who was also forced out of her homeland, a village in Jerusalem.

Hayaat and Samy meet David and Molly an Israeli- American couple who help them through checkpoints and climb the Wall. They ignore David and Molly's warnings and runaway from them to continue their dangerous and illegal journey on their own.

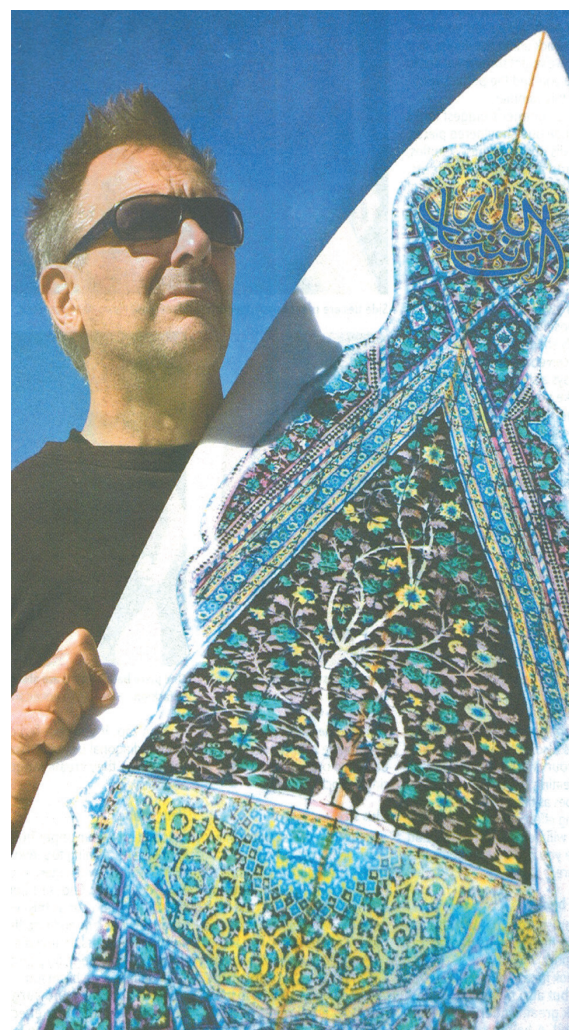
After a long and exhausting day finally they complete their mission with the help of Yossi who smuggles people into West Jerusalem.

Hayaat returns home with a jar full of Jerusalem soil for her grandmother who really appreciates the sacrifice her granddaughter has made for her.

Abdel-Fattah has given the characters authenticity and realism, their names and the odd Arabic add to the humour and intrigue, for many young Australian school students this novel should open the eyes of the average person who reads and sees the Israeli-Palestinian conflict every day, not really knowing the full extent of the struggles and anguish that people caught up in the conflict have to live with constantly. Abdel-Fattah, uses the characters delicately and ensures that we see both sides of the tragedy humanizing both Israeli Jews and Christian and Muslim Arabs as well. This will be an entertaining and educational read and great for the plane trip next time you are off for holidays to Palestine.

Published by Pan Macmillan Australia, Sydney 2008. RRP \$19.99

Borderlands exhibition at Powerhouse: combines Islamic art with surfboards



Phillip George is a surfer. He surfs at Maroubra beach and knows Sydney's southern beaches intimately. Like all good surfers he studies the turbulent movements of the swell as it collides with the weathered Australian coastline. Phillip is the creator of *Borderlands* art exhibition and has masterfully intertwined Islamic art and surfing, you could say as both as sacred religious traditions. Phillip George is well aware of the effects of the Cronulla riots where youth refused

attacked and chased out anyone of middle eastern appearance. For George the coast is where entry and departure is under constant surveillance functioning as a means of exclusion and national identity.

Casula Powerhouse's artistic director Nicholas Tsoutas says, "By remapping the surfboards George invests surfing and surfing culture with different meanings and different histories from Islam and the Arabs. He collapses as what some see as polar opposites into a space of dialogue and exchange. George's *Boderlands* project imagines the shared space of dialogue resisting the violence of confrontation."

There are 30 surfboards currently on show at the Casula Powerhouse museum. The surfboards have been reinscribed with iconography from the historic mosques that George visited in Syria, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq. The images are the internal spaces of mosques, exquisite in their design, colour and patina of age and historical and spiritual significance. They reflect repeating motifs of the tree

of life and the garden of Eden, in their many manifestations from Egypt to Persia. Mr Tsoutas says, "Peter George utilizes surfing culture, spiritualism and beauty as political agency appealing for dialogue and change towards a different future."

Boderland – 4 October 2008 – 18 January 2009 at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre for more information go to www.casulapowerhouse.com

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media mirror - reporting Islam

By Julie Shingleton

"Muslims are like the fat kid in school or the kid with glasses ... easy targets," said Kuranda Seyit, FAIR Executive Director, speaking on the portrayal of Muslims in Sydney media.

"They look different, are concentrated in suburban enclaves in south western Sydney and are very devout in their practice," he said. FAIR is a public relations group aimed at promoting a positive and harmonious relationship between Muslims and the wider community.

The panel, chaired by Jake Lynch, a former presenter for BBC World News, and now director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPACS) also included Peter Manning, former executive producer of the ABC current affairs program 'Four Corners' and Jamila Hussain, lecturer in Islamic law and Asian Law and Culture.

According to CPACS's latest research, which monitored Sydney media coverage on Muslims and Islam from August 3 to 12, 2007, 73 percent of articles in The Daily Telegraph and its weekend edition, The Sunday Telegraph about Muslims and Islam identified Muslims as 'the problem.'

This was compared with 62.5 percent for The Australian, 51.6 percent for The Australian Financial Review and 47.2 percent for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Sun Herald.

One example was an article in The Weekend Australian on August 11-12, entitled "Howard warns Iraq: move now or we pull troops out," which the panel saw as blaming the crisis situation in Iraq on bad government management by Iraqi Muslims, rather than the invasion by non-regional powers.

The trend towards demonising Islam and Muslims in the Sydney media is not new and was noticeable as early as 1991 in the media coverage of the first Gulf War. But that trend has increased exponentially since September 11, 2001 and the declaration of the 'War on Terror.'

In his book 'Dog Whistle politics and journalism' published in 2004, Peter Manning conducted statistical and literary analysis of more than 12,000 articles published in the one-year period before and after September 11, 2001 attacks. He found that 89 percent of articles that appeared in Sydney's two major papers associated the words 'Arab' or 'Muslim' with terrorism.

"The media is wrestling with how to report without demonising the Muslim population and is aware that some of its reporting has had a contributing effect to the denormalisation of Muslims and Islam," he said.

However, despite numerous studies, such as Manning's, that denounce the negative portrayal of Muslims in the Australian media, as well as several comprehensive media guides made available to journalists to prevent unbalanced reporting, media coverage of Muslims and Islam remains negative in the highest circulation papers.

Jamila Hussain, Australian born, of Anglo-Irish descent and a convert to Islam, said, "Muslim women are often negatively stereotyped in Australia, portrayed by some elements of the press as victims, oppressed women, as if all Muslim women dressed in black, wore hijabs and remained uneducated."

"Nowadays, a young Muslim woman is equally likely to be found in an engineering classroom of one of Australia's universities ...the vast majority are completing school, university and higher degrees."

Hussain recounted an anecdote about a glossy magazine who recently published a feature about Muslim women, insisting the article had to include a picture of a Muslim woman wearing a hijab even if it meant "dressing up one of their staff with a veil and a black dress."

However, both Peter Manning and Kuranda Seyit agree that there has been a turning point in the coverage of Muslims in the Australian

media and that the peak of anti-Muslim press was reached two years ago.

Kuranda Seyit singled out The Sydney Morning Herald's week-long series of articles 'Faces of Islam,' as an example of the change in the media. He said it was "an attempt to portray Muslims fairly and positively."

Seyit says that during the Haneef case the turning point became evident. "Journalists were sick of the bad Muslim tag and were willing to give Haneef a chance."

Seyit says that Muslims Australians are taking measures to change the status quo and believes that Muslims will "become more confident in working with the media, as they mature as a community slowly, we will begin to reduce our presence in the media and attempt to normalise Islam."



Funding Opportunity

The Community Policing Partnership Program (CPPP) is a partnership program between police services, the community, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF). The CPPP is one of several programs that the Australian Human Rights Commission is running over three years, with special funding from the Commonwealth government, to promote social cohesion and counteract discriminatory views and intolerance towards Muslim Australians. While these projects have a "whole-of-community" approach, the program will focus on ensuring Australian Muslim communities are an essential partner in and beneficiary of these projects.

The CPPP will consider grants of up to \$10,000. Applications may be downloaded from the internet. The Community Policing Partnership Program applications must address the selection criteria.

Applications must be received by the AMF by February 16, 2009

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Here's to your health, the halal way

By Nuruddin Zangi

"Everything good that happens to you (O Man) is from God, everything bad that happens to you is from your own actions". (Quran 4:79).

Therefore, pathology (disease) is defined by the famous pathologist William Boyd as physiology (natural state) gone wrong. It is our tampering with the natural process that leads to unnatural outcomes.

The spiritual care involves the acts of worship. The problem is that Iman (faith) cannot be translated into belief, nor Salaat into prayer, Nor Wudu into washing hands, face and feet nor; Sawm into fasting nor Zakat into charity nor Hajj into pilgrimage to Mecca. They are entitlements in themselves.

A. Iman:

The belief in God is the first and foremost important need for spiritual stability.

Belief in God includes belief in His attributes, His angels, His books, the Day of Judgment, the Heaven and Hell and belief that - all good and bad is within His reach.

Imam Rumi has called faith being superior to prayers. In illness, according to Imam Ghazali, the awareness of God increases and man becomes closer to God by realizing his own weakness. Without true belief, neither our prayer, nor charity, nor fasting nor pilgrimage will be accepted. The essence of belief is to rid ourselves of all false gods around us, or within us, and to worship no one except God alone.

There are three health aspects of Salat:

I. Wudu: Washing all the exposed areas of the body, hand, feet, face, mouth, nostrils etc. 5 times a day is a healthy preventive procedure.

Handwashing is being emphasized more and more in hospitals now in order to prevent the spread of germs. However, non-Muslims did not know that handwashing is so important - it has been ordered in Quran (5:7) 1400 years ago. And for complete cleanliness bathing is advised (4:43).

2. Recitation of Quran:

This has a healing effect on the body, mind and heart. These healing effects are due to the effect of sound (echo) and the meaning. The letter Alif resounds unto the echoes to heart and the letter YA resounds unto echoes to the pineal gland in the brain.

"O Mankind: There has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (disease) in your hearts

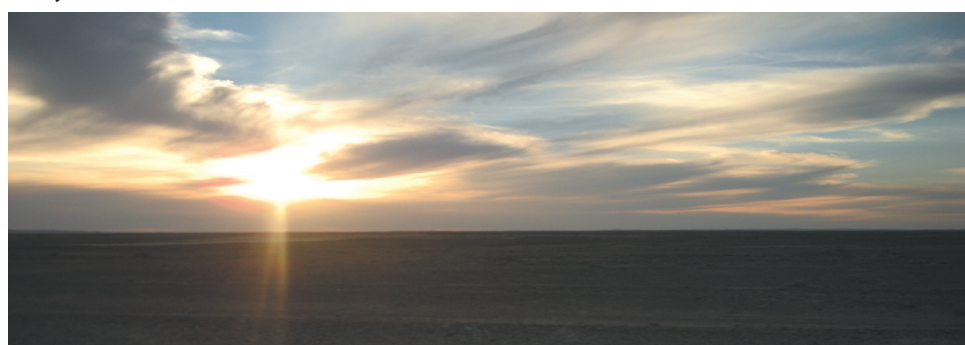
- and for those who believe a guidance and mercy!" (Quran 10:57)

"And We sent down in the Quran that which is healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss". (Quran 17:82).

The movements in Salat are mild, uniform, and involve all muscles and joints. The caloric output is desired to keep the energy balance.

C. Zakat (Charity):

The word itself means purification and growth. Here it is meant to imply the purification of legitimately earned wealth. Many of our crimes are committed with money or for the love of money, and in the love of money one becomes violent in behavior.



"And he is violent in his love of wealth" (Quran 100:8).

In Islam the ownership of wealth belongs to God. We are the disposers of that trust. Therefore, this concept establishes peace at heart and our behavior in the loss of money or unusual gain. In either way, we thank God.

D. Sawm:

The Islamic fasting: Islamic fasting is prescribed as way training of our mind, and body in self-restraints.

"O you who believe fasting is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you can learn self-restraint." (Quran 2:183).

Therefore, during the period of fast one may not only get rid of nibbling food, coffee, smoking but also of anger and excessive sexual passion.

In fact, the fast not only gives rest to the stomach but also stabilizes the secretion of hormones which control our behavior.

E. Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah):

The moral is Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him)'s submission and absolute surrender to God's will, the opportunity for repentance, and the social and political gathering of the Ummah depicting brotherhood and

equality.

However, this can be used for programming and testing us for physical endurance, a requirement for all able men and women. The long walks, the heat, the sun, the thirst, the physical exercise, etc. is to remind us of the Day of Judgment.

We should perform Hajj when we are young and physically well rather than wait for old age. We should keep ourselves in good shape before and after the Hajj.

After describing the pillars of faith as a basis for the spiritual health, let us talk about the maintenance of the physical structure in which the spirit resides.

(A) Nutrition:

Allah loves His creations so much that He is

concerned even with what we eat and put in our body.

Our muscles, bones, lungs, liver, brain and secretions are made from the raw product we feed it. If we provide the factory with junk raw products, the factory will not produce tough bones, strong muscles, good pump (heart) and clean pipes (vessels).

"O mankind: Eat of what is lawful and good on earth" (Quran 2: 168).

Forbidden to us are dead meat, blood and flesh of swine (see Quran 5:3) and intoxicants (Quran 5:91, 92, and 2:219).

Science so far has not confirmed any beneficial effects to the prohibitions.

The blood and meat of the dead could be full of germs and other harmful elements like antibodies. Pork meat is high in cholesterol, salt and may have worms.

Obesity is a major Australian tragedy, a form of malnutrition, affecting millions of people, of all age. Ninety-nine percent of obesity is due to overeating. Allah advises as to be moderate in quantity.

"But waste not by excess for God loves not the wasters" (Quran 7:31).

"Eat of the good things we have provided for your

sustenance, but commit no excess therein, lest my wrath should justly descend on you, and those on whom descends my wrath do perish indeed" (Quran 20:81).

According to one Hadith of Prophet Mohammed we are advised to leave one third of our stomach empty after finishing the meal. I understood this Hadith only when I broke my blender/mixer in the kitchen after stuffing it to the top and then turning the machine on. After all, what is a stomach, if not a blender, grinder, mixer and food processor, all in one!

Certain types of food i.e. fruits are especially emphasized in Quran (36:57, 43:73, 16:67)

"And from the fruits of date palm and grapes you get wholesome drink and nutrition: Behold in this is a sign for those who are wise" (Quran 16:67).

Fruits are low in calories, high in vitamins and minerals, and fiber and sugar is fructose and not sucrose. In a recent study by Dr. Anderson fructose has been shown to cause no rise in blood sugar and even lowers the high blood sugar of diabetics. Honey is fructose.

(B) Cleanliness:

Allah is pure and likes purity. He is clean and likes cleanliness.

Therefore, cleanliness of body and mind is stressed in Quran (4:43). Miswak (brushing teeth) is not a new invention of last 200 years. This was stressed as part of our daily routine by Prophet Mohammed.

He also advised us on flossing (Khilal) as is now being advised by all the dentist. In fact, he is known to have said that if it was not a hardship for Muslims, he would have advised using Miswak before each prayer i.e. five times a day.

Cleanliness of our mind is prerequisite for total cleanliness (body and mind).

(C) The Value of exercise in maintaining health

Though we do not find much in Quran about specific exercise, recommendation, the Prophet's Fife was full of recommendations.

He advised all Muslims to teach their children swimming, archery and horse riding. It is a pity that Muslim men and women have become sedentary and, because of the excessive consumption of starches, obesity has crept into them. We should keep ourselves fit to go for Jihad and feel healthy in peacetime.

If we give up excessive salt, sugar and cholesterol from our diet, and do not drink and smoke, and stay active, it is possible that the pump (the heart) won't be rusted from inside.

The Iqraa Quiz on Islam - win prizes!

Quiz of FIRSTS

(ages 9-12)

1. Who was the first prophet in Islam?
2. Who was the first muezzin?
3. What was the first sin on Earth in Islam?
4. Who was the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)?
5. Who was the first caliph?
6. What is the first surah in the Qu'ran?
7. What is the first month in the Islamic calendar?
8. The first emigration of the Muslims in Mecca was to where?
9. What was the first major battle in Islam in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)?
10. What is the name of the first prayer in Islam?

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The first fully correct entry received will win a the latest Brothahood CD.

Misconceptions and Myths Quiz

(ages 15 and above)

1. It is often overlooked that Muslims consider the stories of the Bible to be part of Revelation as well, and are familiar with many Biblical characters. Which of these four is a "character" in Arabic tradition but NOT in the Christian or Jewish Bible?
 - a. Zuhara
 - b. Yusuf
 - c. Musa
 - d. Suleyman
2. Under which of these names is Jesus known to the Muslims?
 - a. Yunus
 - b. Nuh
 - c. Isa
 - d. Azrael
3. Which of these is, in the view of Muslims, NOT one of the "signs" of the Approach of the Day of Judgment?
 - a. The Conversion of the Jews to Islam
 - b. Air-pollution.
 - c. The Return of Jesus

- d. Sunrise in the West.
4. What was the name of the one who disobeyed Allah's order that all angels and jinns should bow down to newly-created Adam, and was therefore banished from Allah's Grace, and became a Tempter of Men?
 - a. Ibn El Narr
 - b. Iblees
 - c. El Zeit
 - d. El Djinn
5. Al Fattah is one of the 99 "most beautiful names of Allah". What does it mean?
 - a. The Peaceful
 - b. The Protector
 - c. The Opener
 - d. The Holy
6. Which of these specializes in "law" rather than in theology?
 - a. the Imam
 - b. the Mufti
 - c. the Sheikh
 - d. the Muezzin

7. The Ka'ba already existed before the Revelation of the Qu'ran to the Prophet.
 - a. True
 - b. False
8. Muslims don't like to be called Muhammedans.
 - a. True
 - b. False



What the Halal! Are you eating genetically engineered foods?

“O ye who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and render thanks to Allah if it is (indeed) He whom ye worship” (2:172).

The Greenpeace True Food Guide was launched recently in Sydney.

Leading supermarket brands Coles, Aldi and IGA Metcash (4), top users of canola oil Goodman Fielder, Unilever and Peerless foods (5), and some of the biggest consumer food brands including Kellogs, Heinz, Arnott's, Carman's Fine Foods, King Island Dairy and Lilydale, are now listed as “green” in the True Food Guide and will “actively avoid ingredients from GE crops”. This major industry rejection comes at a time when Australia's first genetically engineered canola is being harvested in New South Wales and Victoria. Launching the True Food Guide – Canola Edition, Margaret Fulton said, “This is the first time so many food brands have pledged their commitment to use only natural non-GE produce; it is so reassuring to see how far

we have come from the launch of the first True Food Guide in 2002. It is fantastic that GE-free shopping can now be easy and affordable.”

The wallet-sized GE-free shopping guide also provides information about food products which “may allow GE ingredients” to help consumers make an informed choice. Shoppers will be able to avoid buying products and brands in the “red” which include Nestle, Cadbury, Kraft, Mars, Leggo's, Uncle Toby's, Weight Watchers and Woolworths own brands. Chefs, mothers, scientists nutritionists and leading groups, including the Public Health Association of Australia, have joined Greenpeace in asking for labelling of all GE food - including oils and products from animals (milk eggs, meat, honey) fed on GE feed. They are also calling for independent safety assessment of GE food crops. Concerned Australians can voice their concern by signing the petition to the Health Minister, Nicola Roxon at: <http://www.truefood.org.au/OurRightToKnow/>



Canola

In 2008, GE food crops were introduced in Australia; GE canola is now grown in NSW and Victoria.

Canola is found in a range of foods from margarine and vegetable oil to ice cream, bread and sauces. Under current laws these do not have to be labelled.

Soy, corn, cotton and canola are the only major GE crops available worldwide, with canola the only GE food crop grown in Australia. All other grains and their oils are GE free.

All certified organic products are GE free.

No GE fruits or vegetables are available for sale in Australia.

Visit www.truefood.org.au for more info on our ratings policy.

You may have seen the term genetically modified (GM/GMO). This has the same meaning as genetically engineered (GE).

Keep GE food off your plate. When customers speak companies listen

- Join the True Food Network it's free
- Keep the True Food Guide in your purse or wallet and use it while you shop
- Ask the red list food brands to be GE free

Visit www.truefood.org.au for a full list of GE free brands - and sign up for regular email updates.

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Keeping genetically engineered crops out of Australian soil and our food.



True food guide

The majority of Australians do not want to eat genetically engineered (GE) food.

Increasingly Australian food companies are responding by removing GE ingredients from their products.

Australia's top canola oil users including Goodman Fielder (Meadow Lea), Peerless oils (Tablelands margarine), Coles Housebrand products and Unilever (Flora) have made a strong commitment not to use GE canola or other GE derived ingredients in their products.

Australia's leading chefs are opposed to GE foods. Margaret Fulton, Neil Perry, Kylie Kwong, Bill Granger, Tobie Puttock, Duré Dara and nutritionist Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM all endorse the GM Free Chefs Charter.

Green List

Brands that actively avoid ingredients from GE crops.

Red List

Brands that may allow GE ingredients to contaminate their supply.

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- Nestlé 1800 025 361

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