Cameos of Islamic civilisation in Southern Africa

MAHMOOD SANGLAY

THE Third Congress on Islamic Civilisation was held in Cape Town, from September 16 to 18, at Islamia College. The event was jointly presented by the Research Centre For Islamic History, Art and Culture, Awqaf South Africa, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

The congress was dedicated to the memory of Shaikh Abu-Bakr Effendi and Imam Abdullah Haron. An attendance figure of 1,500 is estimated over the three days, which featured a range of local and international leaders, scholars and professionals.

The theme of Islamic Civilisation in Southern Africa resounded in twelve panel discussions on topics like identity, Arabic and SADC Muslim communities. Other panels were on women, youth and children, Muslim leadership, Muslim tertiary institutions, Muslim media, economic development and the environment.

In framing these themes, Awqaf CEO, Zeinoul Cajee, described Islamic beliefs, values and attitudes as the ‘software’ of Islamic civilisation, and the infrastructural aspects as its hardware.

Professor Aboubacar Abdullah Sengore, the deputy director general of IRCICA, said South Africa is taking the lead in providing the platform for the congress series.

Dr Lhoucine Rhazoui, the OIC’s director of cultural affairs, warned of the hegemonic influence of globalisation, hence the need for preserving and proliferating the rich heritage of Islamic civilisation. Former South African ambassador to the UNA, Elbrahim Rassool, urged the congress to ‘not ask the usual questions’.

These observations point to various critical approaches adopted by speakers on the panels. An example is the point made by Dr Shoaib Ahmad, of Madina Institute, who said that if after 360 hours of exposure to Arabic language teaching, the learner is unable to understand basic texts of the Quran, ‘then we have a problem’.

Shaikh Fakhruddin Owaisi’s presentation on the handwritten Qurans of the Cape offered a rich history in which spirituality often converged with activism under colonial rule.

However, the tradition of transcribing the Quran is also a current project in Cape Town. The Egyptian calligrapher, Abdelhamid Sallam, has completed three ajzaa under auspices of Jam ‘Eyyatul Qurra’.

Contrasting with this celebration of local Muslim culture, is the assertion of Dr Mogamat Faaiel Arnold that standard Afrikaans reflects a ‘Eurocentric dominance to protect the stolen property and innovations’ of Muslims, designed to caricature an oppressed people.

Shaikh Zaid Langa foregrounded township Islam in historical and institutionalised racism.

Thembisa Fakade characterised the essential paradox of black Muslim culture in South Africa as ‘majority within a minority’ forged by tensions due to marginalisation and discrimination.

Professor Amina Ngubane, describing herself as a ‘product of waqf’, sketched the role of African women’s contribution to education and development under very challenging conditions. Some interesting parallels emerged in Dr Egzi Gunér’s exploration of the meaning of decolonisation for the Iziko and the Cape Muslim Slave Heritage museums.

‘The blood of martyrs is not spilled in vain,’ said Fatemia Haron-Masoet, daughter of late Imam Abdullah Haron, in her deep personal and poignant letter to her father. This was on a special panel on Imam Haron.

Zenzile Khoisan, Jamia Galant, Khalid Shamis and Father Galant, Khalid Shamis and Father Weeder paid tribute to the Imam and sketched significant details of his legacy. Above all, they shared reflections on the post-apartheid frustrations to obtain justice for those murdered by the apartheid state.

‘This democracy was authored by a Faustian pact called Compromisso Historico,’ said Khoisan in his searing analysis of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s handling of Imam Haron’s death in detention.

Another special panel on Shaikh Abu-Bakr Effendi explored the often contested narratives on the shahid with a richly diverse and erudite panel, including decolonising project in presenting an alternative to orientalist and Eurocentric perspectives.

The congress included an Islamic art exhibition and the launch of the book The Crescent at the Cape: The True Story of Shaikh Abu-Bakr Effendi by journalist Shafiq Morton.

The academic director of the congress, Professor Muhammed Haron, said that an outcome of the congress is a publication containing the papers and proceedings of the event. In addition, summaries and versions of academic papers re-purposed for a broader audience will be published in future editions of Muslim Views.
More people around the world are sinking into poverty

THE goings-on in the United Kingdom over the past few weeks have embarrassed even the most uncritical supporters of the Conservatives in that part of the world. The disastrous move by the now-removed 38-day Chancellor of the Exchequer to effectively allow the super-wealthy to pay even less tax than before has resulted in even more turmoil in the wake of the Brexit nightmare that has seen the economy in the UK lurch from disaster to disaster.

With the ousting of former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the rise to the Tory leadership, and therefore the leadership of the United Kingdom, of Elizabeth Truss, has seen unprecedented turmoil in the lives of the majority of already struggling households. Increases in the prices of food, fuel, rents and transport have caused waves of anger and anguish across party-political lines amongst those most affected by these antics. Those most affected are the working poor. The working poor in the United Kingdom are those who are employed but who cannot meet their living expenses from day to day and month to month. The scandalous lowering of the tax rate in the United Kingdom may have saved a few meagly pounds per year for the poor but the tax breaks for the wealthy mean that they are allowed to score hundreds of thousands and even millions of pounds in tax not owed. This effectively provides even less money for the government to spend on providing the services that a state must provide to its citizens and those who work within its borders. In front of the world’s unbelieving eyes, the now ousted Chancellor of the Exchequer proclaimed that allowing the wealthy to keep more of their wealth for themselves would see these wealthy folks suddenly go on spending and investment sprees that would ultimately ‘trickle down’ to the masses of poor people.

This is a lie that is the basis of the current world order:

Those who own the wealth of the planet, though, do not admit to this lie. Instead, what has happened is a series of public statements that have caused more confusion rather than explaining the truth. The UK political scene is not unique to that part of the earth. All over the world, the same big lie is sold to the poor: that giving more money to the wealthy is good for the poor. Even the most ignorant person can see the idiocy of this lie. Yet, this is what is commonly sold to people without any shame on the part of the peddlers of these lies. Things are no different in South Africa.

The indignity of poverty is the lot of millions of South Africans, and of the hundreds of thousands of fellow Africans who come south in search of safety and a chance to find work to feed their families left behind. There is an urgent need for Muslims to ask a basic question: does Islam provide a set of economic principles that can be broadcast to the world as a genuine and workable alternative to the misery that is brought about by capitalism and its underlying principle: greed?

If Muslims have no such alternative, how can we be ‘the best of peoples evolved for the benefit of humankind’? We have the solution, but our greed makes us look the other way.

Our editorial comment represents the composite viewpoint of the Editorial Team of Muslim Views, and is the institutional voice of the newspaper.

Correspondence can be sent to editor@muslimviews.co.za

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**World Food Day: root causes of hunger must be addressed**

SALEEMAH JAFFER

**EVERY year, on October 16, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) ‘celebrates’ World Food Day. The purpose of this is to create awareness around issues affecting global food and nutrition security in the hope of developing sustainable practices and innovative solutions to address hunger and poverty.**

According to the FAO, enough food is produced globally to feed everyone on the planet. The challenge we face is availability and accessibility to nutritious food on a regular basis to all individuals. Many factors impede achieving global food and nutrition security, including climate change, inequality, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, international tensions and rising food prices.

One could debate the reasons and causes for hunger and poverty, and who should be held responsible or accountable for the various factors that impact it. But, in the end, there are many children (and adults) in our communities going to bed on empty stomachs. Many factors impede achieving global food and nutrition security, and causes for hunger and poverty, not always sustainable.

As Muslims and as members of our community, we have a role to play. Below are just a few ideas on how we can contribute to addressing food security in our community:

**Food distribution**
When distributing food, consider the nutritional value of the food items as well as the acceptability or palatability of the food to those who will receive them. This is incredibly important as, often, we choose foods based on our personal preferences. In order to minimise waste, store food correctly, plan meals, upcycle leftovers and only purchase (or harvest) what is required.

**Economic empowerment**
If you are in a position to create work opportunities, fund start-ups, invest in entrepreneurship or train individuals in employable skills, you can change our behaviour.

**Food gardens**
Food gardens are a great way to create sustainable food sources. If there is insufficient space for a garden, one could use jars or old tyres to plant seeds or vegetable plugs. Food gardens not only provide food high in nutrients but are also an opportunity for individuals and families to grow food they enjoy themselves.

**Prevent food wastage**
A huge concern to global food security is food and water wastage. In our daily lives, we need to be aware of when we may be wasting food, and reflect on how we can change our behaviour.

**Food wastage**
When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.” (al-Bukhari and Muslim)

When we reflect on this hadith, we realise that if we want to fall into the category of ‘kind and compassionate believer’, we need to have empathy towards those who are suffering and going through difficulties.

The pain of hunger is not only easily treatable but preventable. Let us not hesitate to step up and assume our roles as positive contributors and change makers within our community.

**SALEEMAH JAFFER holds an Honours degree in Nutrition and Dietetics, and an MA in Peace and Conflict studies. She is an executive member of Planet Mercy South Africa and a student of the Islam Husayni Ninewa Zawiyah (Spiritual School).**
Here’s to the friends that become siblings, the aunties that become second moms, the corner shop uncle, the mechanic uncle, the friend of your toppie that is basically your uncle, and classmates whose children will call you aunty and uncle one day.

Whether it’s supper, Sunday braais or Eid lunch, here’s to always being surrounded by family. Because, we mos all family!
Teachers honoured for their service

‘HONOURING of our Teachers in their Lifetimes’ is an initiative by the Movement Against Illegitimate Leaders (Mail) that was first held on March 11, 2017, to recognise those who nurture the young through selfless service, commitment and dedication to their calling.

After the second event, on July 28, 2018, the COVID-19 pandemic intervened and there was a four-year hiatus.

This year, the much-awaited event was back, with 31 teachers being honoured on Saturday, October 15. Over 200 people attended as the teachers were acknowledged for their contributions to education in South Africa. Each teacher received a certificate and a medal from the organisers.

The prestigious Principled Principals’ Award went to Wesley Neumann, who was fired by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) from his post at Heathfield High School for taking a stand – in order to protect the learners in his care – against the unreasonable demand to re-open the school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A posthumous award was given to Omar Slamdien for his contribution in fighting for a just social order in South Africa. Rashieda Surve (left) hands over the award to Aziza Slamdien, the eldest daughter of Omar Slamdien. Photo ABDURAHMAN KHAN

Mariam Abrahams, widow of the late Yusuf Abrahams, hands over the Principled Principals’ Award to Wesley Neumann (right). Neumann also received three books and R8 000 cash with the award. Looking on is Brian Isaacs, who was the first recipient of this award. Yusuf Abrahams received the award in 2018. Photo ABDURAHMAN KHAN

Mohamed Sedick ‘Dicky’ Williams receives a medal and certificate from Aaliya Adams, for his contribution to education in South Africa. Photo ABDURAHMAN KHAN

A posthumous award was given to Omar Slamdien for his contribution in fighting for a just social order in South Africa. Rashieda Surve (left) hands over the award to Aziza Slamdien, the eldest daughter of Omar Slamdien. Photo ABDURAHMAN KHAN

The teachers who were acknowledged at the Honouring Our Teachers In Their Lifetime event, organised by Mail, held on Saturday, October 15. Extreme left: Fazilet Bell. Back row (from left): Roger Daniel McKay, Rasida Adams, Moegamat Kashief Abrahams, Mogammad Faheem Rhoda, Morgan Malandran Munien, Mark Daan Chetty, Wesley Neumann (Principled Principals’ Award), Isaac Arendse, Sheik Ebrahim Sheik Ismail, Mogamad Fuad Majiet (partly obscured), Redewaan Doolie, Russell Bell, Ebrahim Rhoda, Shafie Willenberg. Extreme right (standing): Deborah Marie McKay, Middle row (from left): Faldiea Chotia, Washiela Wouters, Jesmina Salie, Juaidia Rhoda, Sumaiya Gabier, Roslyn Downes. Front, from left: Sakina Desai, Regema Edross Hakimjee, Fatima Abrahams, Gertrude Pestor, Sumaya Abrahams, Rotraka Benjamin (secretary of the Special Action Committee (SAC) of Heathfield High School). Not in the photograph: Sharilla Najaar, Jerome Van Wyk, Mohamed Sedick Williams, Goolam Jaffer, Mogamat Ismail Abrahams. Photo ABDURAHMAN KHAN

Mariam Abrahams, widow of the late Yusuf Abrahams, hands over the Principled Principals’ Award to Wesley Neumann (right). Neumann also received three books and R8 000 cash with the award. Looking on is Brian Isaacs, who was the first recipient of this award. Yusuf Abrahams received the award in 2018. Photo ABDURAHMAN KHAN

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Millions are in need of aid in Pakistan, as devastating flash floods have engulfed the country, wreaking destruction and loss of life in their wake.

Death tolls from flooding across all 4 of Pakistan’s provinces have reached over 1000 people, with some estimates saying nearly 1 million homes are destroyed and 33 million people affected.
Muslim Views . October 2022

HUSSAIN CHOONARA

FLASH floods and landslides have led to massive destruction in Pakistan, in what is being called one of the worst climate change related disasters to date. Extreme heat earlier in the year led to the melting of ice caps and disastrous flooding when the monsoon season hit Pakistan, in July, this year.

While monsoon weather is expected in Pakistan, in 2022, the severely affected Sindh area received 784 per cent more rainfall than the August average. Rains usually end towards July or August but have continued well beyond that this year, wreaking havoc and creating a massive humanitarian disaster.

The Indus River has been turned into a 100 kilometre wide inland lake, and more than a third of the country is submerged and in desperate need of assistance. The death toll has reached over 1 400 people and over 33 million people have been affected by the floods.

Damage to infrastructure is debilitating – more than 1 460 health facilities in the country have been damaged, 22 000 schools shut and 3 000 kilometres of road destroyed. The human story behind the figures is heart breaking. AMA teams have been providing emergency assistance in Pakistan, and have met families who have suffered devastating loss. Amidst the rubble and wreckage left behind, the teams meet Amir Muhammad, an elderly gentleman in the area of Nowshera, Pakistan. It is difficult to describe the scene – household items, the pieces that once made up daily life for families, are now part of the debris. Kitchen utensils float past, tired attempts have been made to prop up mattresses and cupboards to dry. Clothing is strewn like unwanted rags on any surface available but the damp smell will not fade. Amir tells the team about his two sons – both are married and have children of their own. They lost their homes and all their belongings in the floods.

One son worked as a labourer in Punjab, surviving on basic daily wages. The other son is a street vendor who lost all his stock. These two men no longer know how they will earn a living and provide for their families. Amir’s concern is for his grandchildren. The agricultural sector has been heavily affected, with cotton, rice, sugar cane and vegetable crops destroyed. This bodes poorly for food security and employment in a country where 40 per cent of the labour force depend on the agricultural sector.

The effects of this flooding will not disappear quickly. Pakistan is bracing for a long road to recovery. AMA appeals for your support to begin this process by helping families to survive through providing basic emergency assistance. An emergency kits costs R8 500 and provides food, tents, hygiene kits, mosquito nets and emergency supplies to families in need.

Contact details: Hussain Choonara: +27 81 030 8241; www.africamuslimsagency.co.za Follow AMA on Instagram (@africamuslimsagency), Facebook (@AfricaMuslimsAgency), Twitter (@AMASDirectAid)
New exco elected as maankykers mark anniversary

The Crescent Observers Society of South Africa – popularly known as the maankykers – commemorated its 76th anniversary on Sunday, August 28, 2022, with a khatam ul Quran at Masjid Ghiedmatiel Islamia, in Taronga Road, Rondebosch.

The event commenced with a welcome by the deputy chairperson of the Crescent Observers Society, Moulana Mohamed Azeem Khatieb, and a duah by the president of the society, Imam Yusuf Pandy. In his welcoming address, Moulaana Khatieb invoked Allah SWT to bless the gathering and to accept the khatamul Quran and dhikr as a means of forgiveness, and to crown the work of the society with success.

The highlight of the morning was the khatamul Quran by the cream of the ahlul-Quraa of the Cape, reciting in melodious tones. The normal sighting age is 15 hours and above. The media has, over the years, highlighted some of the challenges faced by the society and the broader community. These include the hilal controversy, a united and unifying Eid and the confusion caused by conflicting reports over the sighting of the new moon.

Many groups and individuals were observing the sighting of the new moon in the earlier years but, sadly, no history was recorded for research. It is with great regret that we have not recorded the names of those devout men and women who observed the sightings over the years. From oral history we learn that the late Imam Tata Abdullah Salie, Moegamad Armien Pietersen and Moegamad Petersen, to name but a few, were the stalwarts in establishing the Crescent Observers Society.

Photographs from the archives indicate that this group of maankykers, as they are fondly known in the Cape, took pride in their duties, formed a loose alliance and executed their duties diligently.

The current members of the society would like to acknowledge the legacy these faithful pioneers left behind. This resulted in the formation of a formal body under the guidance of the MJC and various ulama.

The key purpose of the Crescent Observers Society of South Africa is to genuinely observe the sighting of the crescent (new moon) every month and to convey the news of the new crescent sighting, or no crescent sighting, to the community. While the record for the age of sighting of a new moon is currently recorded at 13 hours and 24 minutes, the sighting of the new moon has always had its fair measure of annual challenges.

The crucial factor is the sighting and not the mere birth of the moon. This point is enhanced by the Quranic verse, in which Allah SWT declares: ‘They ask thee concerning the new moon; say – they are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for pilgrimage.’

The three main categories are a high sighting, most probable sighting or poor sighting; that is when the moon is very low. These sightings are important as they determine, amongst other events, whether we fast for Ramadaan, celebrate the two Eids and the time for pilgrimage.

For example, the visibility, the transparency and the height above the horizon are some of the factors.

The current members of the Crescent Observers Society of South Africa also elected a new executive committee at its annual general meeting. The committee members are: Imam Yusuf Pandy, president; Shaikh Safwaan Sassman, chairperson; Moulaana Mohamed Azeem Khatieb, deputy chairperson; Abdullatief Salie, secretary; Rashaad Martin, assistant secretary; Shamiel Adams, treasurer; Salie David, trustee; Ighsaan Khan, trustee; Ismail McKenzie, trustee.

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The media has, over the years, highlighted some of the challenges faced by the society and the broader community. These include the hilal controversy, a united and unifying Eid and the confusion caused by conflicting reports over the sighting of the new moon.

What many people do not take into account when trying to understand the controversies, are the trying conditions under which the moon is often sighted. For example, the visibility, the transparency and the height above the horizon are some of the factors.

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Following the Sunnah and the authentic ahadeeth, Nabi Muhammad (SAW) explains: ‘Do not fast until you have seen it (the moon) and do not eat until you have seen it.’

This article is based on a report compiled by Moulanah Mohamed Azeem Khatieb, deputy chairperson of the Crescent Observers Society of South Africa.
THE path to educational success in post-apartheid South Africa is not easy. The South African National Zakah Fund (Sanzaf), in partnership with Muslim Views, provides the readers of Muslim Views the opportunity to share the educational journeys of three senior university students.

The three students, who introduce themselves on this page, have successfully completed their undergraduate studies at university, and are all busy with advanced postgraduate studies at various universities across South Africa.

Through the contributions of these postgraduate students to Muslim Views, every month, our readers will be able to share their educational journeys, read about the challenges they faced, learn about their fields of study and gain insight into how they each have successful students in spite of the challenges they have faced. They will share their thoughts on the various aspects of life as university students. Through their writing, it is hoped that the seed of educational ambition will be planted more strongly in the minds of students and families who may be inspired by their stories.

**NABEELA GAMIET**

I AM a scientific researcher and have been studying for most of my life. I am currently working part-time and am a full-time postgraduate student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

I was raised in a typical Muslim household, in Factreton, Cape Town. My siblings and I were quite comfortable within our home and very rarely went outside. I would often sit with my books as a way to pass time. I guess this is where my passion for learning arose.

I would write my notes in pencil in class, and then rewrite it in pen at home. This process, although time-consuming, has taught me diligence and consistency when learning, which is something that is highly recommended when pursuing science.

I’ve always been fascinated by science and biology but never really had the personality to become a doctor or any other medical professional for that matter. The everchanging nature of science as well as the idea of creating novel research captivated me.

It goes without saying that the attraction, chemical reactions and experiments greatly influenced my decision to pursue it as well.

I chose to complete my undergraduate and honours degrees in medical biosciences at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I majored in medical microbiology and found an interest in the various techniques that accompany it. It was during this time that I got married and subsequently became a parent, which made studying a little more challenging but not impossible.

Life is tough being a mother and a student but it allows me to practise patience and time management. These qualities have allowed me to join two wonderful organisations. I manage to tutor students in mathematics, physics and biology when I am available, through an NPO called TopTutors.

In addition, I have recently become a member of Gain Through Giving, which is another amazing NPO and empowerment initiative, and focuses on providing free, reusable sanitary wear to underprivileged women.

Currently, I am completing my final year MSc degree in biomedical sciences, which focuses on mycotoxins and gut health. It was found that mycotoxins commonly contaminate maize and maize-based products, which are staple foods within populations living in developing countries.

There has been an increase in childhood stunting in these areas over the years, which may be due to intestinal damage. My study focuses on a mycotoxin termed fumonisin and its interactions within intestinal epithelial cells, under the supervision of Dr Lily. Hopefully, after publications, my study will aid in understanding more about the effects of fumonisin on the gut.

In the near future, I hope to find a suitable job and complete my PhD before I turn 30. I would love to further my research within the mycotoxin field, and maybe even include cancer research. I also wish to teach students about science, biology and various post-matric opportunities as I see this as a gap in the curriculum.

**DUHA ZAKARIA**

I AM a Sudanese female, living in Khartoum, Sudan. I grew up in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, in a family of five siblings of which I am the youngest. I am an energetic, highly motivated and committed young professional. I appreciate honesty, collaboration and professionalism. I am eager to continue in a mission-based team where the priority is serving others and receiving a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment.

I enjoy working in diverse, multicultural environments and have an amicable personality.

I completed all my studies – school and undergraduate – in Khartoum. I have a Bachelor of Science honours in Information Technology from the University of Khartoum – School of Mathematical Science, and am currently enrolled in a master’s programme in Information Management, Faculty of Economic and Management Science, at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to be completed this year.

I was inspired to pursue my master’s studies in information management during my work as a system administrator, managing a patients database and implementing a health information system at a primary healthcare centre, in Khartoum. I realised that data are crucial to today’s healthcare professionals. As the demands in the healthcare field increase, so does the amount of patient information that organisations are responsible for securely storing and managing on a day-to-day basis.

As the number of professionals in healthcare increases, those leaders are needed to oversee them and to ensure health information management is at the forefront of strategic needs across an enterprise. Therefore, I was searching for a master’s programme that would offer me the opportunity to increase my knowledge to become an expert in this field. I found that the UWC master’s programme was perfect to meet my postgraduate objective as it is taught through collaboration between academics with world-class expertise in diverse aspects of health informatics that gave me an opportunity to learn about management and the analysis of the health data and their uses in medical research.

Furthermore, the programme provided broad specialisations, such as data analysis, implementation and administration and analysis of the information in health care systems.

I started my studies at the university and successfully completed modules and exams but had to return home for a family emergency, and was unable to return to South Africa. My supervisor then suggested that I finish my studies remotely.

At first, it was difficult working remotely due to inconsistent electricity supply in our area and sometimes weak internet connections. However, I managed by going to the library to work on my thesis and had regular online meetings with my supervisor. With his support, encouragement and guidance, I have progressed and will submit my thesis this November, Insha Allah.

Currently, I am working in the humanitarian sector as a monitoring and evaluation professional where I gained experience in data management, such as data analysis, monitoring and reporting, together with experience in emergency contexts, which carry excellent added value. I hope to continue my career in the humanitarian sector and become a data analysis specialist.

**FADWA MOHAMMED**

I AM blessed to be a 26-year-old wife and mother to a happy, healthy, two-year-old girl. Thus far, I have spent my entire life in the beautiful town of Paarl, where I matriculated from New Orleans Secondary School. Throughout high school, I enjoyed participating in sports, particularly hockey. I also took part in a few Math Olympiads.

I have always had an interest in the field of science as I am intrigued by natural processes and how things work. My favourite subjects in high school were geography and life science, which attracted me to pursuing a career in those fields. Narrowing down my list of options, I decided to pursue a degree in Environmental and Water Science at the University of the Western Cape and graduated with my first degree. By the grace and mercy of our Creator, I am currently employed and am able to study in the field within I am working.

I have also had the opportunity to obtain my Remote Pilot Licence, which allows me to fly over areas using a drone, and aids in executing tasks more effectively. My intention is to use this skill to optimise future research I may conduct.

I have learned that the scope within Environmental Management and Environmental Science is vast. That is why I am currently in the second year of pursuing my BSc Honours in Environmental Management at the University of South Africa (Unisa).

I have two more courses, one of which consists of seven modules, including a research module. I have chosen to conduct research on the recent locust outbreaks in the Central Karoo and exploring the impacts that came along with it.

To date, I have conducted interviews with farmers of the Central Karoo and gained a vast pool of knowledge regarding the farming operation in such an arid region.

While conducting my research, I quickly learned that by understanding the concerns, needs and limitations of the farmers, effective management of future outbreaks can be implemented.

My future interests are firstly, to complete my studies and gain the experience to become a specialist in my field of study.

Invasive alien vegetation is a risk to our water resources by consuming more water than indigenous vegetation would, thus placing pressure on the water available for various needs. For this reason, I am interested in working on invasive alien vegetation clearing projects as well.

The environmental field of work is as rewarding as the beautiful landscapes I encounter while conducting site visits. Therefore, my aspiration is to contribute to the sustainable use of the environment and the protection of its resources that have been gifted to us.

It is my duty to ensure that future generations also benefit from it. It brings fulfillment knowing that a career within the environmental science/ management field allows me to care for both the environment and the well-being of people.

It is my personal and career passion to help others in a way that will make a difference.
Ipsa’s excellence awards encourage students to emulate Prophetic conduct

NONTOBEKO AISHA
MKHWNANZI

BEING granted an award is exciting but being granted an award attached to a figure who is the best example of humankind is beyond what words can express.

This was the sentiment echoed by award recipients during the third Annual Prophet Muhammad Awards for Excellence ceremony, hosted by the International Peace College South Africa (Ipsa), on September 24, 2022, at Star College, Cape Town.

Established in 2005, as a result of a merger between Islamic College of Southern Africa (Icosa) and Darul Arqam Islamic Institute, Ipsa is an Islamic higher institution that aims to produce scholars, intellectuals and leaders who combine the qualities of faith, good character and knowledge in their learning, teaching and research by offering courses that are accredited by the Department of Education and Training, such as the Higher Certificate in Islamic Studies, Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies, Master’s and Ph.D. in Islamic Studies.

‘In developing the leadership of younger people, according to the Qur’an and Sunnah, we train the students to be inspired by Prophetic teachings. This can only be achieved through inspiring patience, courage, perseverance, prayer, tolerance and spirituality through recognising the youth that strive to live by these principles,’ says Akleker.

Ipsa Student Affairs officer, Shaikh Ighsaan Taliep, says that throughout the years, the awards have been given to students from Muslim schools but, this year, the awards extended to Muslim students who are not in Muslim schools.

‘This then becomes a form of dawah as it promotes exceptional behaviour as practised by our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW),’ says Shaikh Ighsaan.

Guest speaker, Shaikh Abdul Ghafoor Kamaldien, encouraged the students to continue loving Prophet Muhammad (SAW) more than they love themselves.

‘Loving Prophet Muhammad (SAW) means choosing his way of doing things in all your affairs, as this is not only a means of attaining reward in this world but in the hereafter. This love becomes a tool that strengthens belief in Allah, and is the source of strength through navigating through life,’ says Shaikh Kamaldien.

The awards were presented to both male and female students from various institutions across Cape Town.

Ipsa Student Affairs officer, Shaikh Fakhruddin Owaisi al-Madani, stated that the criteria for the award winners are based on academic excellence, exemplary and excellent character.

‘The award recipients on their achievements. Indeed, with such prodigious young minds which continue to spread the values of Islam, the future of South Africa is in great hands,’ noted Dr Terblanche.

Muslim Views . October 2022

Ipsa is the source of strength through having an Islamic higher institution that aims to produce scholars, intellectuals and leaders who combine the qualities of faith, good character and knowledge in their learning, teaching and research by offering courses that are accredited by the Department of Education and Training, such as the Higher Certificate in Islamic Studies, Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies, Master’s and Ph.D. in Islamic Studies.

Our mission is to encourage students to emulate Prophetic conduct amongst young people.

Vincent Terblanche, President of the Islamic Institute of Southern Africa (Icosa), which merged with Darul Arqam Institute to form Ipsa, said that the institution is to develop leadership within them that is inspired by Prophetic teachings.

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The differences between profit and interest

MUHAMMAD MOOLA

‘Profit and interest are one and the same, just worded differently.’ This is a statement by many who claim that a return received from deposits at an Islamic bank is actually interest but just worded differently. However, this is far from the truth as will be highlighted below.

Interestingly, the Arabic words for profit and interest are similar. Profit is ‘riba’ and interest is ‘riba’ in Arabic. Despite their similarity, there is a major difference between the two.

The Arabic root word for interest has common underpinning meanings of increase, growth, overpower and overshadow. These different words, when studied in the context of their use in the Quran, demonstrate the harms of interest.

For example, the verse, ‘Just because one group may be more strong, wealthier than the other’ (Quran 16:92). In this verse, the word ‘arba’, which is a derivative of ‘riba’ (interest), is used. This verse gives an impression of the nature of ‘riba’ (interest); that it gives artificial power to those involved in interest. It prevents people from undertaking real economic activities.

It is important to understand that money is not a commodity, from an Islamic perspective, but a medium of exchange. Therefore, it cannot be used as an object of trade itself, especially when it is exchanged for money of the same denomination, nor is it supposed to generate profit, unless exchanged for a commodity.

This is also a form of philosophical prohibition of interest because interest transactions are a form of trading in money with no commodity involved. This is in contrast to profit, which requires actual trading in a separate commodity to generate the profit. This distinction is also made in the Quran: ‘The Almighty has permitted trade and prohibited riba (interest)’ (Quran 2:275).

In understanding the difference between profit and interest from the above, it can be understood that profit involves trading and investment in the real economy. This, in turn, meets people’s needs and maintains a stable economy.

Interest, by contrast, does not give profit. They do not involve people’s needs and are not a positive to the economy. While profit has to be earned by active participation in economic activity, interest does not require participation of lenders and it is earned without taking any risk.

The prohibition of interest is so severe that the Almighty has announced war with those who are involved in interest (Quran 2:279).

Differences between profit and interest as far as banking is concerned: Relationship between the bank and customer

The relationship between the Islamic bank and customer can be that of investor and entrepreneur. This is in sharp contrast to the relationship in conventional banking, which is simply a lender and borrower relationship.

In a conventional account, the interest rate is fixed. The customer will receive a return regardless of whether or not the funds were used to generate the return.

In an Islamic account, the funds must be used in a shariah-compliant manner to generate profit. Only then will the customer receive a profit. Profits are shared on a profit-sharing ratio that is agreed upfront in the terms and conditions, e.g., 50 per cent to the bank and 50 per cent to the customer.

The profit rate (different from the profit-sharing ratio) quoted by an Islamic bank is always indicative and never guaranteed to avoid interest.

Investment policy

Conventional banks can invest funds in any manner, whether it is shariah-compliant or not. Islamic bank funds are ringfenced and may only be invested in shariah-compliant avenues as approved by the shariah board of the bank. This means that funds are not invested in a manner that is potentially harmful to mankind, such as the alcohol, tobacco and gambling industries, and interest-bearing activities, among others.

Islamic banks are also forbidden to invest in companies that have a high debt-to-equity ratio as part of the precautions offered to customers in their partnership with the bank.

Muhammad Moola is a shariah scholar and head of the Shariah Department at Absa. Muhammad has also advised and assisted with the development of Islamic banking in Tanzania and Kenya. His qualifications include an L.L.B., a six-year extensive course on Islamic studies (salim course) from Darul-uloom Zakariayya, South Africa; a diploma in Islamic Finance from CIMA, UK; and he is one of a few scholars in South Africa to be accredited as a certified shariah adviser and auditor by AAOIFI, in Bahrain.

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The past two months have been overwhelming for millions of people in Pakistan. The worst climate disaster in the history of Pakistan has impacted the lives of more than 33 million people across 116 districts. A third of the country is submerged under water, destroying vital infrastructure and communication across Pakistan.

Families have laid to rest their loved ones, with the floods taking the lives of more than 1,600 people, including 614 children, and injuring at least 12,000 people. More than 1.2 million homes have been damaged or destroyed, forcing at least two million people into displacement, living life with no shelter, safety and security. The situation in Pakistan is critical, with 6.4 million people in dire need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

The aftermath of the flash floods has exacerbated the country’s financial crisis, with millions of businesses and livelihoods devastated by the floods. More than 4.4 million acres of crops and orchards are currently under water, with at least 304,000 acres in Balochistan, 438,000 acres in Punjab and over three million acres in Sindh.

This devastation to the harvest season has caused a massive shortage of staple foods, such as rice, flour, vegetables and fruit in the markets. A spike in food prices has added a significant burden on families who are already struggling to survive this disaster.

Islamic Relief is responding to the needs of millions of people suffering from the worst climate disaster in the history of Pakistan. Our teams have distributed tents, food baskets, drinking water, tarpaulin sheets, hygiene kits, multipurpose cash grants and kitchen sets to around 329,034 people and families.

Your support enabled us to provide food packs, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and tents to 27,509 individuals in Noshki and Quetta, Balochistan. We have reached out to 107,445 individuals with food packs, household kits and tarpaulin sheets in Malir-Karachi, Thatta, Dadu and Mirpur Khas, Sindh.

Islamic Relief is making provision to increase our response in the coming days to reach over 500,000 affected people. We will continue to be in the service of those who have suffered from the floods.

We have distributed over 500,000 litres of clean drinking water to people in dire need and will distribute 40,000 litres of water daily in the flood-affected areas of KP and Sindh. Our teams are on the ground providing shelter to more than 4,000 homeless families who are spending their days and nights under the open sky. We are further assessing the situation in different areas so that we are all set to increase our response in the coming days to reach over 500,000 affected people.

Infrastructural damage makes it difficult for rescue teams and humanitarian organisations to reach the affected areas. More than 13,000 kilometres of roads are partially or completely damaged, and 410 bridges destroyed, limiting the aid delivery to those in need. The total loss in Pakistan is estimated to be over $20-billion (approximately R320-billion).

So far, we have received funding and commitments of approximately GBP 16.5-million (approx. R330-million) from partners and donors. We would like to thank our partners and donors for all the interest and funding commitments for Pakistan. We encourage you to continue providing support as we undertake a major scale-up of response activities in the future.

We ask Allah to facilitate ease and restore the dignity of the millions of people who have lost everything through the flooding. We ask Allah to grant us steadfastness to continue being in the service of those in need, ameen.

Your donations allow Islamic Relief to distribute aid to the millions in need in Pakistan.

Islamic Relief is on the ground daily, providing water in Pakistan.

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Islamic Relief is on the ground daily, providing water in Pakistan.
Renowned scholar and academic visits Al-Ikhlaas Academia Library

OMAR SULEMAN

THE Al-Ikhlaas Academia Library had the honour of welcoming Professor Dr Aboubacar Sanghore, deputy director general of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He was a keynote speaker at the third international congress on ‘Islamic Civilisation in Southern Africa’ that was jointly organised by IRCICA, Awqaf SA and the University of the Western Cape, and supported by the Academia Library, on September 22, 2022, at Islamia College, in Lansdowne.

A former foreign minister in the Gambian Government, Dr Aboubacar is also a scholar and an academic of note, who served as the dean in the Faculty of Law, at University of The Gambia, before his appointment to a ministerial position. Sanghore is a contributor to many academic journals. In his article featured in the African Human Rights Law Journal, he explores the relationship between democratic governance and the free and independent press in The Gambia since the inception of the Gambian First Republic in 1970. It supports the rights-based approach, which perceives the issues of democracy, good governance, and a free and independent press as related to the concept of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Put differently, a free and independent press is not only a mirror of good governance but also one of the essential elements of democratic governance. This article represents a modest contribution to the existing literature on the questions of governance, democracy, press freedom and human rights, with particular reference to The Gambia. (Source: African Human Rights Law Journal AHRLJ Volume 12 No 2 2012.)

During his tour to the Academia library, Awqaf CEO, Zeinoul Abedien Cajee, accompanied him and other guest attendees to the conference. The head of libraries, Omar Suleman, gave a brief explanation of what the library has to offer, including the hiring of the conference facility with its brand new multimedia studio.

Sanghore had some good advice to offer the Academia Library and praised the team for bringing to life such a fine establishment. Further discussions were around the digitisation process of the Academia Library and connecting the library with the rest of Africa.

Support the deaf awareness market day

AL-WAAGAH Institute for the Deaf is inviting the community to its Deaf Awareness Fundraising Market and Braai Day, on Sunday, October 30. The day-long event will be taking place at the Al-Waagah Centre, in 6 Petunia Road, Bridgetown. Meet and greet, and come enjoy the entertainment and festivities of the market day. Highlights include entertainment by The Young Brothers Nagtroep, fun for the young, with face painting, watergun games, a jumping castle, food stalls, a tea garden and shopping at a variety of vendor stalls.

For further details, and enquiries about vendor stalls still available, call 021 638 3368.
WE know that zakah is an obligation on all Muslims who have the minimum nisaab, and that the amount needs to be paid on an annual basis on certain forms of wealth that we possess, and at a certain rate which varies, depending on the type of wealth – from 2.5 per cent to 20 per cent.

Waqf, on the other hand, is completely voluntary and comes from one’s heart for the pleasure of Allah, seeking nearness to Allah and reaping the thawaab of Allah, seeking nearness to Allah and being paid on an annual basis on that the amount needs to be paid on an annual basis on that the amount needs to be.

The waqf has several benefits. You are contributing towards a major revival initiative by establishing a permanently income producing capital fund; establishing and supporting projects from awqaf revenues on a sustainable basis; promoting independence and self-reliance; raising the self-esteem of the ummah; making dawah more meaningful; contributing towards poverty alleviation; developing leadership through projects at grassroots level; empowering Muslim, poor and disadvantaged communities; contributing towards the growth and development of our country; leaving a legacy that future generations will be proud of; benefiting from the duahs of the poor and disadvantaged; making history – as part of a history-making initiative.

Support Awqaf SA. Make your waqf today. Small contributions or major gifts are all welcome. Make a waqf during your will. Visit www.awqafsa.org.za for further information or contact us at info@awqafsa.org.za or call us on 079 5071 196.

“Zeinoul Abedien Cajee [CA (SA)] MEd] is the founding CEO of Awqaf SA.
DEATH is certain but its consequences don’t just affect you. Many people have no will, assuming that their belongings will automatically be inherited by ‘obvious’, intended beneficiaries. But that is not always the case. The COVID-19 pandemic certainly prompted multitudes to consider their health and estate affairs. September 12 to 16 was the Law Society of South Africa’s National Wills Week. This article reiterates the significance of wills.

Deceased estates exist when people die leaving property and assets to be distributed amongst beneficiaries in terms of a will or intestate. Wills outline the deceased’s wishes. Executors administer deceased’s estates according to testament wishes, accounting for all assets at date of death and settling outstanding debts. Where no executor is nominated, the Master of the High court will appoint someone.

Executors should be knowledgeable, trustworthy and honest as this can be a significant administrative role in winding up the estate. A well-crafted will helps speed up the inevitably long delay in winding up your estate.

A will’s scheme with your other estate planning tools, such as antenuptial contracts, inter-vivos trusts, or benefits from retirement annuities, pension funds and life policies. This privilege is called ‘freedom of testation’, including nominating an executor.

A well-crafted will

TINASHE CHIPATISO, a tax and corporate consultant at Nexia SAB&T, emphasises the importance of having a will.

Have your will

Master of the High Court.

Dying without a will translates to your assets being distributed according to the Intestate Succession Act’s provisions, wherein the rules of devolution may not necessarily reflect your actual last wishes.

The estate will be divided amongst the surviving spouse(s), children, parents or siblings according to a set formula, and the surviving spouse inherits the greater of a child’s share or R250,000.

Without a will, unintended persons may benefit from your estate and family conflicts could arise because of no clear estate distribution instructions. Moreover, the process of appointing an executor may be time consuming, leading to significant administrative delays of your deceased estate or extra costs. Ultimately, beneficiaries are mostly affected, particularly if they are minors.

Through a will, you bequeath assets as you wish. You can even align your wishes and your otherwise carefully constructed financial and legal future because of the inevitably long delay in winding up your estate.

Without a will, the state will decide the children’s guardian and the selection choice may not have been your preferred choice.

Other advantages of awarding a surviving spouse certain assets include roll over relief available for Estate Duty and Capital Gains Tax. For instance, section 4A (Estate Duty Act) provides that the first R3.5-million of the first dying spouse’s estate is not subject to the payment of Estate Duty and section 4q asserts that any bequest’s value to a surviving spouse is also not subject to estate duty. This minimises the first dying spouse’s exposure to Estate Duty and CGT. Whatever is left in the hands of the surviving spouse is also not subject to CGT. Whatever is left in the hands of the surviving spouse is also not subject to CGT.

Remember, where there is a will, there is a way. Please note that the above is for information purposes only and does not constitute tax/financial advice. As everyone’s personal circumstances vary, we recommend you seek advice on the matter. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, Nexia SAB&T does not accept responsibility for any inaccuracies or errors contained herein.

For any queries or further information, please contact: Hassen Kajie (Entrepreneurial Business Services Director, Cape Town) Mobile: (+27) 82 333 3389; Email: hassen@nexia-sabt.co.za Yousuf Hassen (Entrepreneurial Business Services Director, Centurion) Mobile: (+27) 82 333 3376; Email: yhasilien@nexia-sabt.co.za
THE flash floods in Pakistan affected over 33 million people and destroyed the homes, belongings and livelihoods of millions. Many lost their loved ones, too, and thousands of acres of agricultural land were completely submerged by floodwaters, destroying crops and livelihoods. The government declared the situation a National State of Disaster.

The worst-hit areas were Sindh, South Punjab and Balochistan. In Badin district, located in Sindh, over 200 villages were under water, destroying homes and increasing the contraction of water-borne diseases.

Most of the people were displaced and required urgent assistance. Roads, bridges and thousands of acres of agricultural land were completely submerged in floodwaters, which caused heavy damage to infrastructure.

Alhamdulillah, thanks to the generosity of the donors, Muslim Hands was one of the first agencies to deliver aid to victims of the Pakistan floods. Below is a brief report on how our teams have been assisting families:

Provided urgent relief to families: our teams delivered drinking water, food, shelter and healthcare services to address the immediate needs of the victims and their families as millions of people were displaced and did not have the means to access basic needs.

Distributed 400 dry food parcels: the majority of families were in urgent need of food essentials as their homes and belongings were completely destroyed. Muslim Hands distributed 400 dry food parcels containing flour, rice, pulse, sugar and cooking oil to victims and their families. The distribution benefited 2 800 individuals in Badin district.

Established medical camps: our teams are currently setting up medical camps in Badin to assist families. The medical camps will provide free health check-ups by qualified doctors to families and also provide them with free medication. As many children have contracted water-borne illnesses as a result of the floods, the medical camps will help treat their condition and prevent it from worsening.

Distribution of mosquito nets: as a prevention initiative, over 400 mosquito nets will be distributed amongst families in Badin district to prevent the outbreak of Dengue fever and malaria in the community.

Alhamdulillah, thanks to your generous donations, 3 800 individuals have benefitted to date from our flood response. Our teams are continuing their efforts on the ground as the impact of the floods was devastating, and affected communities drastically.

The Prophet (SAW) said: ‘If anyone relieves a Muslim believer from one of the hardships of this worldly life, Allah will relieve him from one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection.’

Despite our efforts, there are still millions suffering from disease and hunger in the region. Please continue to donate and help families re-establish their lives. Visit muslimhands.org.za to donate today or call us on 0216336413 for more information.

Aisha Adam

**Muslim Hands delivers life-saving aid in Pakistan**

A Muslim Hands staff member attempts to cheer up a child whose family was affected by the flash floods in Pakistan.

Photo SUPPLIED

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Sanzaf bursary: power of the pen offers real hope

FEO realise that zakah, the ritual purification of surplus wealth, is better distributed with the underlying intention of sustainability. Charity, of course, is critical in relieving an immediate crisis – but to alleviate it, one has to have strategies in place to ensure that the experience is not repeated.

This is why providing hope is such an important element of zakah. Hope is a condition of the heart that actively wishes for something better but, to flourish, it has to be actively nurtured by something that offers a solution. It is the fishing rod of charity, as opposed to the fish.

One thing that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) realised after he migrated to the oasis city of Madinah, in the 7th century, was that poverty and ignorance could become a problem. This awareness was heightened by the fact that the emigrants from Makkah, who were literate (even if they were Jews) to educate the illiterate.

Today, over 1 000 years later, this simple – but effective – model still applies. The most impactful way of transforming a society, of eradicating poverty and reducing unemployment, is via education. Nelson Mandela knew what he was saying after his release from Robben Island when he said that we had to focus on ‘education, education and education’.

As the beloved Prophet said to Sayyida Aishah in a similar vein, ‘Allah neither sent me as a person who causes difficulty to others, nor did He send me as one who desires hardship and difficulty. Rather, He sent me as a teacher and the one who causes ease to people…’

This, of course, embodies the very first Quranic revelation of ‘Iqraa’, a word which carries a far deeper import than just reading and reciting. In fact, the scholars tell us that implicit in this command is a directive for us to understand things so that we can become conscious beings, cognisant of the Mercy of Allah, and everything of His around us.

Today, this ethos is firmly rooted in Sanzaf. Experts tell us that poverty can only be eradicated by an ‘ecological’ approach. This is achieved via a focus on knowledge and skills training after a person’s primary needs such as hunger, shelter and security have been met.

That the institution of zakah meets the above criteria like a glove is a no-brainer. The greater picture of zakah, enjoined by every single prophet is that it roots for the underdog, calls for dignity and compassion in execution and extols the virtues of elevating the human spirit.

The Sanzaf bursary programme is one such vehicle, with thousands of students having benefitted from it already. The significance of this particular project is stressed by the fact that young people who would otherwise fall through the cracks of the system, are allowed to enjoy a bright future.

In the South African context, the social impact is massive. Just one student graduating and finding a job, or starting a business, will not only be able to fill the national skills vacuum but will also have the power to lift an entire family out of poverty. This in turn regenerates the economy. And, as the application process for the Sanzaf bursary programme opens, we need to bear this in mind, for it is a project well worth our support – moral or otherwise.
Pictured, from left, are Ipsa CEO, Dr Dawood Terblanche, Ipsa senior administrator, Aisha Adjiet, Sajidah Samodien, student awardee, Athlone High School principal, Vincent Hendricks, and Ipsa founding member, Shaikh Ighsaan Taliep, during the 3rd Annual Prophet Muhammad Awards for Excellence ceremony at Star College, Cape Town. Photo IPSA
Imam Haron’s legacy kept alive through generations

While Ash-Shaheed Imam Abdullah Haron had a direct impact on his students and congregants, it is a measure of the Imam’s conduct of teaching and activism that the lessons learnt from this dynamic personality continue to impact on generations that follow. NONTOBEKO AISHA MKHWANAZI spoke to the daughter of one of Imam’s students.

THE killing of community leader, teacher and activist, Imam Abdullah Haron, on September 27, 1969, by the apartheid government, left thousands of people across the globe in a state of shock and grief.

Among those who were devastated upon hearing the sad news was the late Abduraghmaan Galant, fondly known as Pinkie, who was Imam Haron’s student at Al Jaamia Masjid, in Stegmann Road, Claremont.

‘My father [Abduraghmaan], who was 13 years old at the time, was grief-stricken as the Imam was not only his teacher but his pillar of strength, and this could be heard from his voice as he made adhaan [the call to prayer] at the balcony of the home of Imam Haron on the day of the Imam’s janaazah [burial],’ says Abduraghmaan’s daughter, author of Imam Haron’s Bilal and founder of Sky Limit ProMan, Haja Fatima Galant Abrahams.

Through the book, which tells the story of Abduraghmaan, particularly his rich memories during his madrasah days at Al Jaamia Masjid in the 1960s, Fatima expresses the importance of preserving history in order to inspire change.

Fatima says that her late father cherished the values and principles taught by the Imam, and he instilled these principles in his children and encouraged them to teach their children, and the community at large.

‘My father would tell us countless stories where the Imam encouraged the learning of deen and the spread of the message of Islam. I deem this as a crucial aspect in dawah because spreading a message without sufficient knowledge is misleading people.

‘Hence, to promote learning and spreading of Islam, led by my sister, Muallima Aiesha Galant Fortune, under Sky Limit ProMan, my family and I run Madrassa Sobieren, in Hanover Park, which has over 100 students.

‘These students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and with the area being flooded by drug abuse and gangsterism, it is important for us to teach them Islam so they can be exemplary in their communities,’ says Fatima.

She says that Imam taught the youth with passion, love and kindness.

‘My father would also narrate to us that there was never a dull moment with the Imam. If you were sad, upon meeting the Imam, your face would be lit with a smile. My father would also tell stories of how fun it was to play with the Imam but there was always a lesson to be learnt. That is how easy and loveable he made Islam to be for the youth,’ says Fatima.

She expressed that her father emphasised the importance of encouraging the youth to use their talents to worship Allah.

‘My father’s love for the Mawlid [commemoration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)] was inspired by Imam. Despite, this sacred month also being a reminder of the morning on 29 May, 1969, when the Security Branch took the Imam away from his family and held him incommunicado for over four months [123 days].

‘My father was excited on this day as he was going to use his voice to worship Allah through dhikr but the news of the Imam’s arrest broke his heart. But he did not allow that to hinder his passion which was inspired by the Imam, using his voice to worship Allah. And this he continued throughout his life by also participating in nasheed competitions,’ says Fatima.

In addition, she says that her father had taught her the importance of feeding the poor, as he had observed from the Imam.

‘From a young age, my father, his siblings and other boys from Claremont would go to townships to spread deen, inspire hope and feed the poor. So, growing up, this too became part of our culture.

‘In order to continue this legacy, among the projects my mother and I run is a feeding scheme named after my father – The Pinkie Chow – which feeds thousands of people in various areas,’ says Fatima.

She also highlights that in continuing the legacy of Imam, one does not need to do extravagant things but each one can start small in their communities. At the end of the day, it’s about inspiring change for a better future, even if it’s just feeding or teaching Islam to one person and sharing that principle with the next generation.

In light of the recent announcement by the Imam Haron Foundation of the reopening of the inquest into the Imam’s death, which will be taking place in an open court at the Western Cape High Court from November 7 to 18, 2022, Fatima says it is time for justice to be served.

‘Imam died while fighting against injustice and it can’t be true that, 53 years later, there is still no justice in South Africa. This needs to change in order to instil justice in our society,’ says Fatima.

To purchase a copy of Imam Haron’s Bilal, contact Fatima Galant Abrahams on +27 73793994 or +27 718875497 or email skylimitproman@gmail.com

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**Author of Imam Haron’s Bilal and founder of Sky Limit ProMan, Haja Fatima Galant Abrahams**

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