



PERSONS  
OF THE YEAR



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition  
The  
Muslim 500

THE WORLD'S 500 MOST  
INFLUENTIAL MUSLIMS

2019

WITH CUMULATIVE RANKINGS OVER TEN YEARS





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*

*The*  
***Muslim 500***

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*The 10th Anniversary Edition, The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims, 2019*

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# INTRO- DUCTION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ✽ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ✽  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ✽ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ✽  
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ✽ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ  
عَلَيْهِمْ ✽ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ✽  
صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God; Lord of all Worlds.

The Compassionate, the Merciful.

Master of the Day of Judgement.

You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help.

Guide us to the straight path:

the path of those whom You have favoured, not [the path] of those against  
whom there is wrath, nor of those who are astray.

*The Opening 1 : 1-7*

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

There are approximately 1.9 billion Muslims in the world today, making up 24.7% of the world's population, or just under one-quarter of mankind. As well as being citizens of their respective countries, they also have a sense of belonging to the 'ummah', the worldwide Muslim community.

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

This doesn't discount the significant amount of influence from other sectors of society. The publication selects Muslim individuals from a range of categories of influence, 13 in total:

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

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

How to measure this influence is of course the most challenging aspect of the publication, and the one where opinions diverge the most. Influence can sometimes be gauged on a quantitative basis, the number of followers, the number of books written, the amount of sales etc., but more often it is not something measurable in quantitative terms and is more related to the qualitative and lasting effect of that influence. A combination of social metrics, public opinion (we have a month-long open call for nominations every year, and all of the suggestions are considered) and expert opinion are the basis of this attempt to measure influence. The achievements of a lifetime are given more weight than achievements within the current year. People who are trailblazers, or the lone voice in a remote area are also taken into account as we give weight to people breaking barriers and to local influence as well as global influence. This means that our list of names will change gradually, rather than dramatically, year-on-year. This list acts as an opportunity to shed some light on the many challenges and pioneering triumphs that are present at the very crux of shaping the Muslim community.

#### WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE?

As well as the updated Top 50 and 450 lists, we have our regular 'House of Islam' essay which gives an overview of Islam and its branches.

We have our distinguished chief editor sharing his thoughts on the major events in the Muslim world over the past twelve months. These are complemented by further thoughts from our deputy-chief editor.

It being the 10th anniversary of *The Muslim 500*, we have decided to rank all the people mentioned over the 10 editions and have come up with a Top 100 list based on a points system of how many times they have appeared in the book and in which sections and ranks. This gives us a good indication of influence over the last decade.

Our 'Guest Contributions' section has exclusive articles covering a wide range of issues. These are sure to stimulate thought and discussion on current pressing issues. Also, our Book Reviews review some books that have been published recently.

The 'Major Events' section provides a timeline of the major events that have taken place over the past year.

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

To give a richer visual experience we have also included several calligraphy pieces throughout

the book, which we hope will serve as a beautiful reminder to pause and reflect as you go through the book. We have also added write-ups within the main body of the text about major initiatives (see A Common Word on page 155, the Marrakesh Declaration on page 161, Free Islamic Calligraphy on page 176, Altafsir.com on page 207).

Our website [[www.TheMuslim500.com](http://www.TheMuslim500.com)] is a popular destination. We welcome your feedback and will take nominations for the 2020 edition through it.



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Creator of the heavens and the earth

*The Cow 2 : 117*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

## Persons of the Year—2019

by Professor S Abdallah Schleifer

Twenty-five years after the signing and almost immediate betrayal of the Oslo Agreement, this is a time that is witness to the Trump-Netanyahu alliance kicking away the crutches of a defeated but still defiant Palestinian people; but now after decades of setbacks and defeats—there is a hero on the field. Ahed Tamimi, the Palestinian teenager who dared to kick and slap an Israeli soldier. She is *The Muslim 500* Woman of the Year.

Hours earlier an Israeli soldier had shot her stone-throwing cousin in the head with a so-called “rubber” bullet severely wounding him. Then an Israeli soldier came to her West Bank home in the village of Nabi Saleh, some 50 miles from Jerusalem. She slapped and kicked him, and the video made of that act of defiance went viral and raised the spirits of millions of Palestinians and the millions more across continents who grieve for Palestine.

Right after the slap that resounded around the world Knesset members and ministers called for action. Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman said “Whoever goes wild during the day, they will be arrested at night.” Israeli’s Education Minister

suggested she should spend her life in prison.

A few days later Ahed, aged 16, was arrested at her home at night. The army spokesman’s camera documented the handcuffed girl surrounded by masked combat soldiers and proudly promoted the video as if this was a picture of the Palestinian Governor of Jerusalem surrendering the Arab city to Moshe Dayan towards the end of the June 1967 Arab Israeli War.

The attempts to break Tamimi’s spirit continued after her arrest. Gaby Lasky, an Israeli human rights activist and an attorney, says she was privileged to have represented Tamimi in all her hearings in military court. Lasky described the interrogations that preceded the trial as “aggressive, questionably illegal with threats to imprison her relatives and harassment by one of the interrogators. In the face of these violent men, seeking to terrorize anyone who dares resist the occupation, this courageous girl stood up and did not give in for a minute.”

The Palestinian public was already aware of Tamimi’s patriotism well before she slapped the Israeli soldier. At the age of 11 a photograph was published of her raising her fist to an Israeli soldier.



Image © Jim Fitzpatrick



*Ahed Tamimi in Israeli custody*

The picture of her staring down the soldier made her instantly famous, as did another photo also taken at approximately the same time of her carrying the Palestinian flag which inspired the Irish artist Jim Fitzpatrick to produce a painting of that same scene. This is the same painter who had produced some years ago the historic Che Guevara poster which was also based upon a classic photograph.

The authorities in Israel could not ignore the fact that Tamimi was seen as an international heroine and received widespread support. As Lasky noted in an article she published in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz: “In the face of the posters published around the world and the flood of diplomats and reporters who came to support her or cover the hearings, someone remembered that shame, lost here years ago, still exists and the decision was made to hold the hearings behind closed doors... although Ahed, her family and the defense opposed a trial behind closed doors. The military court sentenced her to eight months imprisonment.”

In July 2018 Ahed Tamimi, who had gone into prison as a teenager, came out as an icon to Palestinians. Every hearing of her military trial received international attention and she was often seen smiling in court.

“Upon her release,” Lasky reported, “Tamimi was to visit the Bedouin village of Khan al Ahmar, which is to be demolished. The solidarity she will show with the inhabitants of the village will focus people’s attention on their cruel expulsion, an expulsion that constitutes another example of the Israel government’s attempt to block any possibility of Palestinian territorial contiguity in the West Bank, and thus bring us closer to institutionalized apartheid between the River Jordan and the sea.”

“It makes me happy and so proud” Tamimi has said, “that I succeeded to deliver the message of the prisoners, my homeland and nation. God willing, I will succeed to deliver the message that the Palestinians are suffering because of the occupation.”



The Muslim Man of the Year is Tun Dr. Mahathir Prime Minister of Malaysia—the second time he has served in this position—and at 93 years old Mahathir is now the world’s oldest sitting head of government. This quite extraordinary man has had a dynamic political career spanning 70 years and yet at the same time been the author of 17 published books. Aside from two memoirs, all of them are direct narratives responding to the immediate problems confronting Malaysian governance and economy, a concern often extended to Asia as a whole and the global economy and his plans for rectifying those problems.

Among rulers of those basically capitalist economies in the developing world, he was the first to stress the necessity of government regulation and correctly alluded to a reading of Adam Smith that recognizes Smith’s own recognition of a role for government in economic affairs to have been of far greater importance for Adam Smith than many advocates of total free market economies prefer to acknowledge.

Mahathir’s first tenure as Prime Minister lasted 22 years, the longest period for any Malaysian ruler, and in which he won five consecutive general elections. During this time, Malaysia experienced a period of rapid modernization and economic growth, and he initiated a series of bold and successful infrastructure projects. Malaysia was clearly a major participant in the East Asia boom that began with Japan’s spectacular post World War Two revival from ashes to the world’s second largest economy within 15 years. As for Mahathir, his years of leadership, first as deputy and then as prime minister, coincided with an era of spectacular economic and

social development in Malaysia, and with annual growth rates ranging from 7 percent to more than 9 percent during those years global journalists and economists recognized that Malaysia was the leading nation of East Asia's "Economic Tigers." What many did not recognize was that the strong base upon which Malaysian growth rested was secured by Mahathir's recognition in 1969 when race riots between indigenous Malays and Chinese occurred in the capital, Kuala Lumpur. The riots revealed the difficulty of running a multi-racial society and in Mahathir's own words laid bare the deep rifts that had emerged between the Chinese and other, poorer ethnic groups, in particular the Malays. In Malaysia, the Chinese made up about a third of the population, but in the 1960s they dominated most of the commercial sectors of the country. The Malays, comprising some 56 percent of the population, were mainly peasants and showed little interest in business and commerce. In the late 1960s only a few hundred small and medium sized businesses were run and owned by Malays. There were very few Malay university graduates and still fewer qualified professionals. Of the total registered professionals in 1970 only some 4.9 percent were Malays. First as deputy prime minister from 1976 to 1981 and then as prime minister, Mahathir played the key role in implementing the new Economic Policy (NEP), which was basically the concept of "positive discrimination" known in the US as "affirmative action" in both the economy and the educational systems. A very important aspect was to create more wealth, to expand the economy (in which foreign investment rather than foreign loans played a major role) and leveling up the Malays rather than leveling down the Chinese. Many secondary schools were built in the rural areas which were overwhelmingly Malay, scholarships were given to Malays to attend residential schools in urban areas, and quotas were set for admission to universities to ensure more Malays would be able to receive higher education. In business a larger number of government contracts and licenses were given to Malays in order to encourage them to move into fields dominated almost entirely by the Chinese. When the 20 year duration of the NEP ended in December 1990 the policy was a resounding success. The eradication of poverty, which had overwhelmingly plagued Malays, had largely been achieved. The Malays had become more urbanized, entered the mainstream economy, and gained access to a much larger share of the wealth of the country.



*HE Mahathir Mohamad*

But in the first week of July 1997 the Asian economic boom turned into the Asian economic bust as pressure from currency traders forced the Thai government to abandon the peg of the country's currency, the baht, to the US dollar, and immediately on July 2nd the baht collapsed. According to the contagion theory, what Mahathir has called the "theology of currency trading", if one economy is significantly weakened this will naturally spill over and damage the economies of neighboring countries. Global economists and currency traders insisted that the devalued Thai currency would make Thailand become more competitive than Malaysia and this would erode Malaysia's trade. It hadn't yet happened in July 1997 but the economists and traders said it was certain to occur. The same held true accordingly to Indonesia and the Philippines. In all three countries factories would close down because the Thai devaluation would render them uncompetitive. All the predictions were examples of self-fulfilling prophecies. Panicked by this hypothetical future, currency traders, acting like a herd, began to trade off their local currencies into exportable dollars; the foreign investors panicked and worried about the rapid deflation of their holding a local currency. Lacking

any regulations on the movement of investment dollar capital out of the concerned countries, foreign investors pulled out their money, and the Malaysian stock market lost 75 percent of its value. When the East Asian economies including Malaysia all tanked, every conceivable explanation was offered up by the global economists—corruption, crony capitalism, and overly rapid growth—but the fundamental and almost overnight cause: currency traders dumping currencies based on the contingent theory and the self-fulfilling prophecies among foreign investors “protecting” their investments by ending them.

The IMF urged austerity as the panacea for recovery. Mahathir eventually would refuse, and insist instead that global capitalism must be regulated. But in the troubled, depressed decade that had just begun, Malaysia initially implemented IMF’s call to cut government spending and raised interest rates, which only served to exacerbate the economic situation. So Mahathir reversed course and defied the IMF. As a result the Malaysian economy was the first East Asian economy to recover.

Much of the negative attitude towards Mahathir among the American political elite was connected with his restrictions on Malaysian democracy. In the course of a challenge to his leadership of the ruling UMNO, in which the opposition to Mahathir

had lost the vote for party president and vice president by a narrow margin, the opposition turned to the courts. The High Court ruled that UMNO was an illegal organization as some of its branches had not been lawfully registered. Both sides raced to register under the UMNO name. Mahathir’s side must have gotten to all the district registration branches first because he successfully registered UMNO Baru meaning the New UMNO, whereas the opposition bid to be recognized as UMNO Malaysia was turned down.

Concerned that the opposition would appeal to the High Court to dismiss the successful registration by Mahathir’s faction of the UMNO, he limited by constitutional amendment the ability of the High Courts to exercise judicial review. The High Courts could only exercise judicial review on any given issue when specific acts of parliament gave them the authority to do so.

The negative attitude towards Mahathir intensified as he criticized the US invasion and occupation of Iraq and the harm the US was doing to the civilian population of Afghanistan. But most shocking for the American political elite was a speech he gave at an ASEAN meeting in 1997 condemning the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—calling it an oppressive instrument to impose Western values on Asians. He added that Asians needed

*HE Mahathir Mohamad greets crowds after Friday Prayer*



stability and economic growth more than civil liberties. His real mistake was declaring his analysis in public for many developing countries, particularly in Asia and Africa; share that analysis but do not declare it publically as policy.

Indeed the most successful economy in all of Asia, and perhaps soon, in all of the world, is that of the People's Republic of China, which adheres as a relatively free-market economy governed by a Communist Party dictatorship far more authoritarian than Malaysia's slightly hedged democracy under Mahathir.

Mahathir has also been criticized for a few remarks that he has made which are considered as anti-Semitic. Now there are, in any measurable number, no Jews in Malaysia. The only Jews he knows of are the Israelis and the American Jews universally credited for America's invariable protection of Israel from the Security Council imposing sanctions for Israel's perpetual violation of relevant UN Resolutions. And he shares with most of the anti-colonial developing world a deep sympathy for the Palestinians. No doubt Mahathir has taken note that Netanyahu and other Israelis aligned with Netanyahu have declared that not only is Israel a Jewish state, based on the claim to a right of Jewish self determination, a state which has denied Palestinian refugees and their descendants the right of return to their homes in what became Israel, as the victor in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

In 2003 Mahathir retired, but by 2006 he was back in the political game, a strong critic of his hand-picked successor Abdallah Ahmad Badawi

for undermining aspects of his economic program for Malaysia. He would become a critic of another protégé who was next to assume the post of Prime Minister, Najib Razak. In 2015 Najib was implicated in the 1MDB Scandal. 1MDB is a government investment company—1Malaysia Development Bhd—that took shape under Najib who went on to lead its advisory board. The fund proved better at borrowing, accumulating \$12 billion in debt, than in luring in large scale investment. The US Justice Department says more than \$4.3 billion was embezzled. The Swiss say \$7 billion was stolen. Some of that money is alleged to have ended up with Najib and his family. That includes \$681 million that landed in Najib's personal bank account.

Starting in 2015 Mahathir repeatedly called on Najib to resign, which he refused to do. Instead Najib tightened his grip on power. By 2017 Mahathir had registered a new party and officially joined the opposition coalition Pakatan Harapan. On January 8, 2018 Pakatan Harapan announced that Mahathir was their candidate for Prime Minister in elections scheduled for May 9, 2018. Pakatan Harapan defeated Najib's Barison National Coalition, and Mahathir was sworn in as prime minister. Mahathir created a special task force to investigate the 1MDB scandal and prosecute suspected embezzlers. On July 3, 2018 Najib was arrested.

Not bad for a 93 year old politician with a history of two heart attacks and one bypass surgery.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا  
وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O you who believe, when you meet a host, then stand firm and remember God much, that you may succeed.

*Spoils of War 8 : 45*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

لَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى مOUNTAINٍ لَنَبْتَئْتَهُ بِالْإِسْطِيقَانِ الْعَالِيَيْنِ كَذِبًا

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقَيُّومُ لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ أَنتَ الْبَاقِي

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الَّذِي لَا يُغْنَى عَنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَكِيمُ

Had We sent down this Qurʾān upon a mountain, you would have surely seen it humbled, rent asunder by the fear of God. And such similitudes do We strike for mankind, that perhaps they may reflect.

He is God, than Whom there is no other god, Knower of the unseen and the visible. He is the Compassionate, the Merciful.

He is God, than Whom there is no other god, the King, the Holy, the Peace, the Securer, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Compeller, the Exalted. Glorified be God above what partners they ascribe!

He is God, the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

Exile 59 : 21-24

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

## A Regional Survey

by Professor S Abdallah Schleifer

US-Iran tensions have escalated over the past year and a half. They worsened in the spring and summer of 2018 and have continued to escalate as the crisis over the fate of Idlib in Syria deepened.

Idlib province remains the last Syrian province still—as I write in the first week of October 2018—under rebel control. It is estimated that by the summer of 2018 there were at least 80,000 rebel fighters (some of whom are foreign volunteers who infiltrated into Syria through Turkey, which has been a supporter of the armed rebellion to overthrow the government of Bashir al-Assad from the beginning.)

Most of the rebel groups in Idlib are Islamist; many of those can be described as Salafi-Jihadi or Takfiri-Jihadi. And after some infighting among the groups, 60 percent of the province came under the control of Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham (HTS), a very radical Islamist coalition which established a civil authority of sorts in their capital—Idlib City—and elsewhere in the province. There the HTS has reportedly imposed its perverted understanding of Islamic law to the great discomfort of the Sunni Muslim civilians living in Idlib..

HTS is dominated by the previously well-known rebel force Jabhat Al-Nusra, which dissolved its links with Al Qaeda for purely tactical reasons and with the approval of Al Qaeda's leadership, so that it would appear as a group within the spectrum of a national Syrian identity rather than a global identity as in the case of Al Qaeda, which had weakened the Jabhat's appeal to the rebel-minded sectors of the Syrian people.

Over the years, HTS (as it is now known) has demonstrated that its fighters are among the toughest of all Syrian rebel groups and capable of great brutality. It was one of two Islamist militias that took over the province when the Syrian Arab Army in the earliest years of the civil war abandoned much of the Sunni-dominated northern Syrian provinces to concentrate on a more defensible line running from Damascus to both southern Lebanon—the original heartland of Lebanon's Shi'a community and the birthplace of Hezbollah—and also a defensible line to Latakia—the Syrian Alawite heartland and birthplace of the late Syrian president Hafez al-Assad..

The two Islamist rebel groups, once settled

down in Idlib, predictably fought each other. HTS was the winner and thus from the beginning dominated what then was but a modest rebel presence in Idlib province. What is particularly fascinating—when considering how and why Idlib became the last rebel bastion in Syria—is that back in late December 2017 and early January 2018, the Syrian Arab Army—the name of the government's armed forces launched an offensive into the southernmost part of Idlib, this northern, predominantly Sunni Syrian province. That first offensive into Idlib by government forces was initially quite successful but was never pursued.

Meanwhile, in what appeared to be Syrian government policy, when rebel forces were defeated elsewhere, the local ceasefire agreements (often negotiated by members of a Russian Reconciliation Commission on behalf of the Syrian government and its armed forces) invariably specified that rebel fighters who refused to be reconciled, along with civilians who supported the rebels or were so suspected by the Syrian Arab Army, were invariably sent on to Idlib.

The population of Idlib has swollen, nearly doubling since the civil war began, by the many defeated but irreconcilable fighters and the more opposition-minded, if not necessarily pro-rebel, civilian refugees pouring in as well as civilian refugees from the earlier fierce fighting in Aleppo and the Aleppo countryside close to Idlib, where to this day rebel pockets exist.

Reconciliation also meant that all heavy and medium-sized weapons were turned over to the Syrian Arab Army and that government officials who had mainly fled the rebel takeovers in the first years of this seven-year-old rebellion would return to these reconciled former rebel cities, towns and villages and resume providing former rebel-controlled provinces with government services. As for the reconciled former rebel fighters, they would stay on to serve as a local, lightly armed security force under the guidance of Russian military police who have fanned out into now-reconciled territory.

The second largest rebel force in Idlib is an alliance of largely Turkish-supported, armed, trained and salaried Syrian rebels called the National Liberation Front (the NLF) put together in August 2018 to counter HTS. It includes, a bit



reluctantly, HTS's brief former ally at the time of the Islamist rebel takeover of Idlib. This radical Islamist force which eventually would turn, as a defeated rival, reluctantly like some of the other rebel groups now linked together in the Turkish-dominated NLF—groups which are not creatures of the Turkish Army, but could not withstand on its own any attack by the HTS.

The most recent truly significant event—the Sochi Ceasefire agreed upon by Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan meeting for four hours on September 17 at the Russian Black Sea resort city of Sochi concerning the fate of Idlib—has put a hold on what would have been a devastating fight to the finish between the rebels and the superior forces of the Syrian Arab Army (re-equipped with heavy artillery and new conscripts to make up for its losses of infantry be they dead or deserters), its Iranian and pro-Iranian allies on the ground, and the Russian Air Force, bombing and directing rocket fire from above. With increased levels of artillery fire as well as bombing runs directed at rebel forces in Idlib province in the beginning of September, it was assumed that a push into Idlib was imminent. For the civilians, that would have been a humanitarian disaster.

That is because for the three-million Syrians living in the province there is nowhere to go as refugees. The Turks, who are already hosting more than three million Syrian refugees, cannot consider taking in more Syrian refugees from Idlib, where several thousand Syrians had already fled and so Erdogan has been calling upon Russia and Iran to deter the Syrian government from moving ground forces into Idlib province.

At a joint press conference after their meeting, Putin and Erdogan announced they had agreed to create a demilitarized buffer zone in Syria's Idlib province to separate government and rebel forces. Putin said the buffer zone would be 15 to 25 kilometers wide and come into force by October 15th. This would entail a "withdrawal of all radical fighters from Idlib including the al-Qaeda-linked HTS."

The two leaders also agreed on the withdrawal of "heavy weaponry from this zone" in the detailed account provided online by the RFE/RL news group, including tanks, multiple-launch rocket sys-

*City buses used to evacuate civilians in Idlib province, Syria*

tems and rocket launchers belonging to all armed groups.

Erdogan said the two countries would carry out coordinated or joint military patrols on the borders of the buffer zone. “The Opposition will continue to remain in the area where they are. In return, we will ensure that the radical groups, which we will determine with Russia, will not operate in the area under discussion”. Neither Putin nor Erdogan explained how they planned to differentiate “radical” rebels from other anti-Assad groups. Earlier, Turkey’s *Hürriyet Daily* quoted Erdogan as saying Ankara’s calls for a ceasefire in Idlib were bearing fruit after days of relative calm. “It looks like we have obtained a result with the efforts which we made,” he told reporters on a flight back to Ankara, “But we are still not satisfied.”

The Sochi Ceasefire Agreement puts a halt to an imminent frontal assault scheduled at the end of September 2018 by the Russian-backed Syrian Arab Army and its pro-Iranian allies against the rebel forces holding Idlib (including at that time the Turkish-backed NLF and even possibly those Turkish Army units that have strengthened their forces in the 12 outposts on the Idlib-side of the province’s border).

The Turkish army was manning these outposts, originally created to prevent any violation of Idlib’s previous Russian-Turkish negotiations making Idlib a de-escalation zone, but it was periodically violated by the HTS slipping out of the province to raid Syrian Arab Army positions and using drones to harass a Russian air base in Syria.

But now the NFL and presumably the presence of Turkish troops at outposts on the borders of Idlib no longer are identifying themselves as supporters of the rebels as a whole (which included the HTS) since Turkey committed itself with Russia at Sochi to somehow force HTS fighters (referred to at Sochi as “radicals”) out of an Idlib, that remains (as of early October 2018) in the hands of rebels rendered relatively more moderate and without the heavy weapons required in any attempt to recover its previously held positions (most of Syria.)

There is also the possibility, however faint, that the rebel forces during the Sochi Ceasefire prevailing in and around Idlib in early October 2018, undergo a civil war within a civil war: non-Islamist groups and the numerous Turkish-armed Islamist groups in Idlib end up in a coalition fighting HTS, particularly if by mid-October 2018 the conditions of the Sochi Ceasefire—which differentiates

in the treatment of terrorist rebels (the HTS) and the other rebels, many under the banner of the Turkish-supported NLF—are implemented.

(For history buffs that is what happened ultimately within the ranks of Spanish Republican forces during the mid-1936-1939 Spanish Civil War when units of the Spanish Army led by General Francisco Franco attempted an unsuccessful coup against the Republic’s left-liberal Popular Front coalition government that included the Spanish Communist party along with the larger Socialist party and a group of liberal parties but was also supported by the then-powerful Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalist trade union movement and its peasant leagues in the poverty-stricken peasant villages of Spain’s lush southern agricultural provinces. The coup failed because the Spanish Republican Guard stayed loyal and the trade unions’ members—*anarcho-syndicalists* as well as socialists and communists—were armed by the Republic at the very last minute.

But despite the failure of Franco’s attempted coup, conservative Catholic forces, alarmed by the Republic’s ruling Popular Front coalition’s anti-clerical legislation: nationalizing Church properties and then requiring the Church to pay rent to the government for using the properties and prohibiting Catholic priests from leading street Processions on Holy Days, and the killing of priests, monks and nuns as a murderous reaction in working class neighborhoods to the attempted coup. As monarchists—some of whom were passionately Catholic, along with Spain’s basically secular Fascist party—the *Falange* rallied to Franco’s side along with most of the Spanish Army, and a civil war was on.

The war raged on with foreign intervention on both sides—bombers and fighter planes of Hitler’s *Luftwaffe* (air force) and Italian ground troops coming to the aid of the Nationalist forces (and providing prestige for the fascist *Falange* among Franco’s mass base of support).

*Falange* membership increased rapidly during the civil war. On the other side, the Spanish Communists, with its highly disciplined members of the party fighting on behalf of the Republic and also benefiting in terms of prestige from the presence of Soviet Russian warplanes on the side of the Republic, as well as the presence in Spain of some 20 thousand foreign volunteers—mostly Communists and Democratic Socialists largely recruited by communist parties in Europe, the

UK and the United States, which during the great global Depression that began with an American stock market crash in 1929 and continued through the 1930s—had considerable influence among intellectuals, artists as well as trade union leaders and leftist-inclined politicians.

As was the case with the foreign volunteers serving in the International Brigade in Spain, foreign volunteers not only from the Muslim world but also as Muslims from Europe, the UK, America, and the Chechen Republic (a part of the Russian Federation) took high casualties as assault forces for the Takfiri and Salafi jihadis among the rebel forces. Unlike the Spanish civil war, where recruitment of foreign volunteers was done by holding rallies and publishing articles in the relatively limited circulation of various leftist and liberal publications in the West that sympathized with the Loyalist cause, the most brutal of all the Takfiri or Salafi jihadi groups, DA'ISH recruited volunteers through its slick videos posted on the internet, and the videos promise engagement in justified and organized violence, weapons and uniform. They brought alienated and spiritually empty non-Muslims to convert, not initially to Islam, but to DA'ISH and only then to Islam as dues that one must pay to join any organization.

The various Spanish supporters of the Republic from communists, socialists, militantly secular liberals and even in a way the anarcho-syndicalists, were known as Loyalists, as in loyal to the Republic. In the first week of the civil war, more than half of Spain was held by Loyalist forces. But the better-organized Nationalist forces under Franco—the undisputed head of the unified Nationalist movement who had most of the Spanish Army fighting for him, as well as very effective Moroccan forces from then-Spanish-ruled northern Morocco—slowly but steadily captured or liberated (depending on one's perspective) most of Spain, just as the Syrian Arab Army has slowly but steadily recovered almost all of Syria, all but for Idlib and scattered Rebel pockets in the vast Aleppo countryside.

So too with Loyalist Madrid, besieged but still defending its lines to other parts of Spain still in Loyalist hands, much as the rebels who had taken Aleppo were in touch with rebel groups throughout Syria until besieged Aleppo was finally taken back by the Syrian Arab Army and its allies.

As for Spain, in the shrinking territory still Loyalist, the Spanish Communist Party (like the HTS in the shrinking Syrian territory still held

by rebels) overplayed its hand in asserting its leadership and increasing secret-police control of the Republic (read George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*) such that a Loyalist but anti-Communist general of the Loyalist army led his forces in an attack against the Spanish Communist party and its units within the Loyalist army just before Franco's forces overwhelmed what remained of the Republic.

As far as role-playing, but in no way in any ideological sense, the HTS is playing out its role among the rebel forces similar to that of the rising power of the Spanish Communists within the Loyalist Forces of the Republic more than 80 years ago. And in my hypothetical civil war, the Turkish-backed National Liberation Front (NLF), especially if their ranks are hardened by Turkish special forces, will take on the HTS. In my hypothetical civil war within a civil war it will be the NLF that will be playing the role of the anti-Communist forces within the Loyalist Army command that turned on the Spanish Communists in the last days of the Spanish Republic.

The moral of all of this is that Syria, however tragic, is not some unique experience—that civil wars often turn out to be intrinsically brutal, destructive of places as well as people, and ferociously bloody.

More Americans died in the 19th century Civil War between the northern and southern states than have died in all of the wars Americans have fought in, before and after the Civil War, where in border states brother often fought brother, as no doubt has happened in Syria.

It was in Spain that a city was first leveled by air force bombing—Hitler's *Luftwaffe*. That historic moment lives on in-a-manner-of-speaking as an abstract but pictorial sense of mayhem, chaos and agony in what is probably Picasso's most famous, and most popular painting: *Guernica*. At the time Picasso was a member of the Communist party, but his painting hangs in that vast gallery just off New York's elegant 5th Avenue—the ever-fashionable Museum of Modern Art.

And what were the losses in *Guernica* then or Aleppo now for that matter, compared to the leveling of Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War Two—a war that took at least 60 million lives which involved nearly the entire world on one side or the other: The Axis powers vs. the Allies. The World in a civil war between itself. But now, back to Idlib.)

By the summer of 2018 The Syrian Arab Army—with the significant help of the Iranian-supported Hezbollah, as well as pro-government Syrian Shi'a militias and contingents from large, neighboring Iraqi Shi'a militias—reportedly under the command of officers from Iran's Revolutionary Guard's Al-Quds unit, had recovered from the losses of men and territory in the first years of Syria's civil war.

What has developed in Idlib is the buildup of a variety of rebel forces, including some fighters from those presumably non-Islamist rebel forces trained and armed by America that had captured and then lost two provinces close to the Syria-Jordan border. But rather than submit to the re-establishment of Syrian government control (as many if not most of their comrades did), some chose to go to Idlib.

Most recently there are reports that DA'ISH fighters—from among the surprisingly large number of survivors from the so-called Islamic State capital in Syria, which fell in the fall of 2017 to a predominantly Syrian Kurdish force supported on the ground and in the air by American forces—have made their way from the Syrian south to join up with the rebels in Idlib.

Consider if the Sochi Ceasefire, which has held since the second week of September 2018, somehow fails, and the Syrian Arab Army and its allies do launch a devastating attack on Idlib despite Trump's warning, and much of the rest of the world's pleading that they do not do so, given the realistic dangers of a humanitarian disaster. Then there is the almost unimaginable possibility of American war planes which originally provided air cover for Syrian Kurdish forces effectively fighting DA'ISH to suddenly provide air cover for the Idlib rebels (now composed mainly of al-Qaeda's-former affiliate HTS, DA'ISH fighters and other extremist but not necessarily terrorist, Islamist groups). In Trump's warning and that of others connected or defending his administration, such a course of American action is hinted at.

And what if a chemical warfare attack is carried out either by the Syrian Arab Army which one might think would have no reason to use chemical warfare against the rebel forces in Idlib since it has done particularly well in retaking almost all the cities towns and villages once held by the rebels, or a false flag chemical warfare attack is secretly staged by some brutal and desperate Takfiri-Jihadi rebel factions in a bombing or shelling disguised as a government attack. The purpose of which would

be to prompt Trump to “retaliate” with- at the very least -American air power unleashed against Syrian government forces as he has already done in an immediate emotional response in two earlier chemical attacks.

Adding to the issue is the contradictory nature of U.S. policy. This is not exclusively a problem with U.S. policy toward Iran, nor exclusively a problem of State Department personnel differing, at the very least in tone, with the White House and with their relatively recently appointed head—the hawk Mike Pompeo. In other words, there are serious contradictions within the Trump administration itself.

That perhaps is a major explanation for contradictions within the very mode for expression—the almost daily tweets—by U.S. President Donald Trump announcing his attitudes and policies nestled between his other tweets ranting against the leader of any state or organization that has criticized him or, as in the case of the Palestinian Authority (PA), has also openly rejected his instructions. (More on this later.) These are easily available to any of that large population of the world that has access to the internet or follows the news carried in printed editions of the press. In the case that many of Trump's potential followers are nominally literate but effectively illiterate, they can follow him by listening to the radio or watching TV.

This is not to mention those allied or opposing individual heads of state who until recently would have been informed of an American President's policy positions on occasion by presidential phone calls or some sort of text delivered to someone specifically or to all at a time by diplomatic channels. There is a major, centuries-old reason for the existence of ambassadors or at least some form of diplomatic presence. This breach is an added cause for embitterment against Trump by many members of America's foreign service: the diplomats and other staff of the State Department.

And that is why when Trump addressed the UN General Assembly early in October 2018—an audience that included, as per UN tradition, many visiting heads of state or high-ranking representatives of heads of state—and began his speech by praising his administration's accomplishments as greater than any other American administration, his audience first chuckled and then laughed at him.

Consider Trump's statement to the press on July 30th 2018 that he was ready to meet with Iran's

President Hassan Rouhani, “anytime they want to meet” and with no pre-conditions. It seemed like a re-run of the Trump and the North Korean leader Kim’s war of words: Words from both leaders threatening nuclear war and then ending up like pals at their Summit in Singapore and then a “deal” which may go anywhere or nowhere.

Then, barely an hour or so after Trump’s sudden announcement that he was willing to meet with Rouhani, his hawkish Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tells an American TV network (which means the world) that he supports a Trump-Rouhani meeting. But before that happens, Pompeo goes on to say Iran must accept pre-conditions for a summit meeting which Trump had just said would have no pre-conditions.

So could this have been simply Trump’s art of the deal (the title of one of his best-selling ghost-written book) in which the President and his Secretary of State do everything to threaten and intimidate and then at the last minute there is a sunny summit?

Trump was so polite in Singapore that it bordered on a newly discovered friendship with Kim Jong-un during their meeting. But Trump’s words with Iran this time around and over a period of many months going back to his 2016 campaign for the presidency have been far more extreme than the Iranian President’s words. There is no comparison to U.S.-North Korean tensions with their pre-summit mutual threats—be they implicit or explicit—of nuclear war.

When running for President in 2016 Trump promised he would pull out of the 2015 Obama-negotiated nuclear deal with Iran and Trump kept that promise in May 2017. The other powers

(including Iran, until now) that signed on to the deal have vowed to stay on despite Trump’s declaration that the U.S. was restoring secondary sanctions against any nation or company trading in certain quite limited areas, most painfully in financial services, but by November 2018 to include the purchase of Iranian oil and gas, which is another and most serious matter. Iran in turn had committed to curtail uranium enrichment capacity that would prevent it from developing nuclear weapons and would submit to stringent verification processing in exchange for relief from painful and even potentially crippling U.S.-imposed trade and financial sanctions. And according to international inspectors, at least up until this moment, which is many months from the time Trump withdrew from the Agreement, Iran had kept its side of the deal.

Since then, perhaps as self-justification for keeping his campaign promise which meant going back on America’s word, Trump and his Secretary of State escalated the level of rhetorical threats. But even granting that possibility it is interesting in comparison that Pompeo did more than just badmouth the North Korean government—not a terribly difficult task—but once Trump and Kim were suddenly on the same page for a summit and Singapore selected as the site, Pompeo starting talking about a “Libyan model” for North Korea’s denuclearization.

So the Singapore summit, if we recall, was actually briefly cancelled. And we all should remember that happened because of what Pompeo was saying. Those remarks infuriated the North Koreans who did not remain silent about it. Again, as we all should remember, the ultimate outcome of Pompeo’s “model” was the overthrow of Libya’s

*Protests in the UN Security Council after US President Trump pulls out of the the Iran Nuclear Deal*



Gaddafi who might have wiped out the rebels very early on into the uprising if France hadn't intervened with air strikes on Gaddafi's army, then en route to Benghazi to smash the uprising.

This intervention was followed by the U.S. Air Force carrying out airstrikes nearly all the way to the fall of Tripoli and Gaddafi's subsequent capture and murder. Most likely if Gaddafi had actually succeeded in making a couple of nuclear bombs and had secured from North Korea a few long-range missiles capable of reaching America, neither France nor America ("leading from behind" was Obama's phrase) would have intervened on behalf of a rebellion in its earliest and probably defeated stage.

Disclosure: I was not so prescient on that one, and my rather sudden bad misreading of history led to an almost immediately embarrassing and regretful return to political activism: I was Adviser to the Cairo-based "Friends of Free Libya", initially formed with a prominent Libyan family in exile in Cairo who were my friends. My misplaced enthusiasm ended the moment the Libyan rebels captured Gaddafi. This was a moment partially recorded and quickly re-broadcast and posted online. It was not the typical revolutionary excess that ultimately can be passed over if the revolutionaries had simply put Gaddafi—the moment after his humiliating capture in some sort of huge empty drainage pipe—up against the wall to be shot dead by an on-the-spot assembly of a combined instantaneous judiciary also serving as a firing squad. For indeed, we have long forgotten or forgiven the cruel Russian Bolshevik murder of the last Tsar and nearly his entire immediate family, well after he had been overthrown by the significantly more moderate Menshevik wing of the Russian Social Democratic party (doomed to be overthrown along with their Social Revolutionary party allies) and put under house arrest in the Russian countryside.

Instead, Gaddafi was sodomized with a bayonet and then murdered, not executed. At that moment I remembered that no real revolution has ever been "good" except the American War of Independence, indulgently and more popularly known now as the American Revolution. That is because it really wasn't a revolution, like the French Jacobin, Russian Bolshevik and German National Socialist (Nazi) and—to a much lesser degree, the Iraqi and Syrian Baathist/Arab Nationalist and Egyptian Nasserist socialist revolutions were.

It was Englishmen struggling by and large

non-violently for their rights as Englishmen and so embittered by the British parliament and the British King's indifference to their rights that they opted to fight for independence. It was a successful revolt that established itself eventually as a state just as the Arab Revolt for independence from an Ottoman empire that had been taken over by the cadre of militantly secular Young Turk officers would lead to a Hashemite Kingdom in Jordan, which would endure quite successfully, and in Iraq, which tragically, did not.

But back to the difference between North Korea and Iran: The difference is so tremendous that it would make Trump overconfident. The only thing North Korea and Iran have in common is that both have suffered from Americans sanctions. But North Korea has nuclear bombs and transporting missiles that could reach America. Iran has neither.

So Trump could alternatively threaten Iran with either regime change or destruction "the likes of which few throughout history have ever suffered before" (i.e. nuclear warfare) in a tweet warning Rouhani "never ever to threaten the U.S. again." Trump was alluding to the Iranian President's own warning that a war with Iran would be "the mother of all wars." But Rouhani's threat was at least qualified by stating that peace with Iran "would be the mother of all peace."

In another barely mentioned aspect of this story, Rouhani was actually responding to that 12 item list put together by Pompeo of what Iran must do to lift the sanctions that were first lifted by Obama as part of the Iranian Nuclear Accord and then re-imposed by Trump when he withdrew the U.S. from that accord. Without Iranian compliance to Pompeo's list, secondary sanctions against any country purchasing Iranian oil or gas would go into effect in November of 2018.

It was inconceivable that the present Iranian government could accept any of the items on that list, which included Iran ending all support for Hezbollah, the Houthi rebels in Yemen, and Hamas in Gaza; to withdraw all forces under Iranian command in Syria; to disarm the large pro-Iranian Shi'a militia in Iraq and to apologize for all of its subversive behavior in the region.

So what it did signify, and Pompeo has more or less confirmed this, is that if conditions get even worse in Iran because of sanctions, Pompeo expects that Iranian public opinion would decisively turn against the regime, already under some pressure from recent demonstrations, leading to regime



*Two U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptors fly above Syria in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, 2 February 2018.  
© US Air National Guard, photo by Staff Sgt. Colton Elliott*

change. Although more recently Pompeo now denies that America is seeking just that.

But regime change seems far-fetched. Pompeo has argued that Rouhani is no different than the hardliners within the Iranian political establishment. Given the tight grip Iranian Security and the Revolutionary Guards have exercised against serious protest demonstrations in the past characterized by live gun fire and severe torture, it is hard to image regime change; except a partial and reverse regime change, where the hardliners and especially the Revolutionary Guard get Ayatollah Khamenei to depose Rouhani.

Indeed there are reports that the latest wave of Iranian youth demonstrating against Rouhani's government were initiated and led not by young liberals but by hardliner youth to undermine Rouhani. But in Pompeo's wording, whenever he referred to regime change, which obviously meant the Supreme Leader as well as the President.

What can Iran still do? Possibly do what Saddam Hussein threatened to do during the massive and long U.S. build up that led to the "Desert Storm" attack against the Iraqi Army then occupying Kuwait in 1991 as well as the destruction of much of the Iraqi infrastructure: to threaten to seriously attack Israel. I stress seriously for after Saddam threatened to attack Israel with missiles with chemical warheads if America attacked Iraq, Saddam was duly warned by America that Baghdad would be wiped off the map if he so dared. So

instead he fired off a few missiles armed with only conventional explosives that did minimal damage. His threat turned out to be a fiasco.

But at the time, well before a protracted "Desert Guard" (which sounded like some sort of Bedouin contraceptive) became "Desert Storm" and in one of my more prescient moments, I suggested in a talk at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in America that the only card Saddam had to play was to threaten to use his missiles armed with one or more of the varieties involved in chemical warfare, against Israel.

But Iran is the weapons supplier, trainer and presumably the main funder of Hezbollah, the well-armed and trained Lebanese Shi'a militia and political party. Iran can threaten both the U.S. and Israeli governments that Hezbollah will attack Israel if the U.S. attacks Iran. By now Hezbollah has an estimated 10,000 conventional high-explosive missiles in well-hardened launching sites that could overwhelm the Israeli counter-missile "Iron Dome" defense system, particularly if such an attack were initiated with, let us say, a few hundred missiles launched simultaneously and the internal "ready-alert" pulled off in the strictest secrecy, which Hezbollah (unlike once active Palestinian Fedayeen groups affiliated to a greater or lesser degree to the PLO) is capable of maintaining.

Israeli sources almost painfully indicate that the possibility of a massive Hezbollah missile first strike is actually far more troubling to the Israeli armed

forces (the IDF) than the Hezbollah units, pro-Iranian Iraqi militias and Iranian Revolutionary Guard forces in Syria along with missile sites which the Israeli Air Force had already, and usually discreetly, attacked on many occasions through 2016 and in the Spring and Summer of 2018. In August 2018 the Iranians had begun to install missile sites in Iraq, further way from Israel than those that were destroyed in Syria, yet still capable of hitting Israel. What Israel plans to do about that, or is already doing, but nobody's talking, is at this pre-publication moment, unknown.

Trump had also pledged during his 2016 presidential election campaign to try and improve relations with Russia which he certainly has done before, during and after the Summit in Helsinki in July 2018. Nothing of significance was said by either Putin or Trump about their one-on-one meeting prior to the press conference that ended the one day summit. But the following day the Russian Defense Ministry spokesman confirmed that an agreement had been reached to cooperate in Syria.

Even before the summit, conditions in Syria had increasingly pointed towards such an understanding. Prior to the siege of Idlib, Trump had already informed the largely American armed and trained rebel forces in the provinces of Daraa and presumably the neighboring province of Quneitra that America would neither intervene nor resupply them just before an imminent government offensive to retake those two provinces actually began and was quite rapidly successful. And Russia has since said it would work diplomatically to get Syria to take steps to "restore peace" along the Golan Heights border line.

That suggests dealing in some way with Pompeo's demand and Trump's apparent demand and their Helsinki Summit, that Putin pressure Syria to get Tehran to pull Iranian militias and Revolutionary Guards allied to the Syrian government completely out of Syria, which everyone assumed was a negotiating position which Putin has since said was impossible.

The most that Russia could probably secure would be for the Iranian and pro-Iranian foreign forces now in Syria to be kept back from the formerly rebel-controlled Syrian territory on the Golan Heights (adjacent to the Israeli-occupied portion of the Syrian Golan Heights) which is now back in the hands of the armed forces of Bashar Al-Assad's government: the Syrian Arab Army.

Sources suggested that in return for that, Trump would withdraw American troops that had been working with the Kurds against DA'ISH and recognize a major role for Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad in, at the very least, any transitional phase of a "political settlement, if not an even-more-enduring role as President given the military reality in Syria.

Before the Trump-Putin Summit, the Syrian Arab Army had already driven rebel forces out of the two remaining Damascus suburbs in rebel hands, followed up by an offensive before, during and after the Trump-Putin Summit that effectively secured the two sensitive provinces which shared a border with Israel and with the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

Only one province, Idlib, has remained in rebel hands in all of Syria. It was seized by a rebel coalition of Sunni Islamist militias in the spring of 2015. From that moment two pro-Assad Shi'a villages in Idlib came under a very tight rebel siege, just barely surviving in the way of food and ammunition periodically dropped by the Syrian Arab Army's air force. The two villages held out for a little more than three years. But in the summer of 2018 the villagers, including the pro-government fighters in the two villages, were able to completely evacuate and were transported in 120 crowded buses to Syrian-government-controlled territory. The buses were sent in by the Syrian government as part of a secret deal negotiated in Istanbul between representatives of the HTS and the Syrian government, well before this date but the deal had usually fallen apart whenever very small groups of villagers tried to evacuate and were hampered or attacked by the HTS rebel besiegers. Part of the deal was the release by the HTS of some 1,500 Syrian Arab Army prisoners it was holding.

At least one Beirut-based Western analyst, Sam Heller, who is a fellow at the Century Foundation think tank, has suggested to the Arab Gulf newspaper *The National* that the Syrian government decided to make Idlib its "dumping ground." That might explain why the seemingly easy and successful Syrian Arab Army penetration into the southernmost part of Idlib province which began back in late December 2017 was suspended early in 2018: according to Heller, it was because Idlib was "the least hospitable one possible—one run by predatory jihadist factions that would be culturally alien to people from, for example, the Damascus countryside," and invariably would end up fighting each

other. Heller's point was that this strategy "has also given the regime a useful bogeyman, allowing it to point to this low-functioning jihadist thing in Idlib as the real alternative to its own rule." And so it has come to appear.

Which is why it is difficult to understand Trump's sudden warning to Russia in Syria at the invitation of its disdained but internationally recognized Syrian government along with its allies not to storm into Idlib and set in motion a tremendous catastrophe for its civilian population. But to warn rather than appeal given that the slightly more than 2,000 American soldiers and warplanes are not there at the invitation of what can legitimately call itself the legitimate government (a body that has had a monopoly of power in a specific territory and approximately shares the cultural values of the people it rules over the government of Syria

Prior to the Putin-Erdogan Sochi Ceasefire, many other voices had taken up this position – not warning the Russians and the Syrian government as Trump has, but strongly appealing to them not to attack and create either a humanitarian disaster that had appeared to be a real danger given an imminent attack on Idlib where no doubt the predominantly Islamist remaining forces would have made their last stand.

Meanwhile what we are now missing on our TV screens are the Syrian "White Helmets". These rescue workers and their families fled Syria after government forces advanced into Deraa. Officially known as Syria Civil Defense, and wearing white helmets, they had been highly visible in TV footage of them in action saving possibly thousands of

Syrian lives in Rebel-held areas, digging the living out of the ruins of shelled or bombed-out buildings during several years of attacks by the Syrian Air Force and of late and perhaps more significantly, Russian warplanes.

Around 800 were expected but only 422 were able to make it past the Syrian Arab Army checkpoints and the revival and expansion of DA'ISH in that same area. Israeli soldiers and allegedly Western forces had helped the White Helmets and their families to cross over from Syria into the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and from there via Israel into Jordan. Israel helped in the evacuation at the request of President Trump and the leaders of other nations, according to the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The White Helmets and their families who made it out of Syria were received by the UNHCR in Jordan who were seeking asylum in Canada, Germany and the U.K. at the request of these countries. But that is no help for the tens of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons who no longer have the option of crossing over into Turkey and the refugee camps there or into Jordan and refugee camps there. Both Jordan and Turkey have closed their borders: both are already hosting more than one million Syrians, so in the name of the rarely credited predecessor to the Tahrir Uprising in 2011 Cairo—and I don't mean the Muslim Brotherhood. I mean Kafeya!!! My New-Yorker-born translation is Enough Already!!!

The Syrian Kurds are concentrated in a broken string of towns and villages along or close to Syria's border with Turkey and to a degree close to Syria's

*Syrian White Helmets*



border with Iraq. When Syrian government forces abandoned much of the north a year or two after the civil war began, the Kurdish fighting forces—the Peoples Protection Units (YPG) and the more recently organized Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—either simply took over uncontested villages, or moved more aggressively against DA'ISH which had taken over key towns close to the border with Turkey, which—when controlled by DA'ISH—had enabled thousands of radical Islamist volunteers from both Muslim majority countries and from Europe seeking to join DA'ISH to easily cross over from Turkey, and for wounded DA'ISH fighters to be easily taken across the border into Turkey for medical care.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) includes anti-DA'ISH Syrian Arab militias that are also pro-government and thus anti-rebel, but most fighters and the leaders are predominantly Kurdish, drawn from the YPG. And at least one time, in the first battle for Aleppo, the Kurds living in Aleppo also fought rebel forces. Both the SDF and the YPG have been supported by the U.S. with arms and air support, which was particularly important when the SDF/YPG succeeded in capturing Raqqa—DA'ISH' capital—in Syria in the fall of 2017.

The Turkish government which has been fighting a Turkish Kurd insurgency (the PKK) on and off for a couple decades insists that the Syrian Kurdish political party which established the Syrian Kurdish forces in the YPG and now also in the SDF is actually the Syrian branch of the PKK. The U.S. as well as Turkey have denounced the Turkish PKK as terrorists. The YPG/SDF forces deny there is any connection and the U.S. accepts that, which takes some straining to make that denial with any certainty and has led to growing tensions between U.S. and Turkey with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan publicly denouncing the U.S.

The U.S. says it has armed and supported the Kurdish forces because they have been the most effective armed force in Syria fighting DA'ISH. But that hasn't prevented Turkish armed forces—both air force and infantry along with the Turkish funded, trained and armed northern Syrian branch of the Rebel “Turkish” Free Syrian Army (the TFSA) from attacking, alongside Turkey's official armed forces, the Syrian Kurds. This has particularly been the case since January 2018 when the Turkish military launched Operation Olive

Branch in the SDF/YPG-controlled Afrin district. As it has done in the past, Turkey said it was also attacking DA'ISH but in Afrin there were no DA'ISH forces and elsewhere Turkish air force attacks against DA'ISH were slight compared to their bombardment of the Syrian Kurds at the very same time. By March 2018 Turkish forces and the TFSA had driven the Syrian Kurdish forces out of Afrin.

The U.S. position is not clear—the Pentagon has provided aid, arms and training for the Syrian Kurds and threatened Turkey if they attack American soldiers working with SDF/YPG forces. But Trump had declared he was ending all aid to the Kurds even before he had informed the largely American armed and trained rebel forces in the provinces of Daraa and presumably the neighboring province of Quneitra, that America would neither intervene nor resupply them just before an imminent government offensive to retake those two provinces actually began. And presumably Trump was expected in 2018 to pull out the estimated 2,000 American soldiers in Syria working with the Kurds.

But that all has changed now that it is clear that DA'ISH and its so-called Khalifa (Caliph) had survived the fall of Raqqa. And while figures vary dramatically according to the Pentagon or the UN, no one doubts that there are certainly several thousand DA'ISH fighters still operating in parts of Syria, as small units but all with communication links to the highest levels of leadership and several thousand still operating in Iraq, where they have been killing the mayors of Iraqi towns and the muktars (local leaders) of Iraqi villages, at the rate of at least one Iraqi government official a week.

When Erdogan launched his periodic interventions in Syria he also threatened a severe response to any Turks protesting against these interventions against Syrian Kurdish forces. Hundreds have been detained for participating protest demonstrations as have nearly 100 politicians and journalists and nearly 1,000 social media users, as well as high-ranking members of pro-Kurdish and left-wing political parties in Turkey. The crackdown is reminiscent of Erdogan's reaction at the time of an attempted coup in the summer of 2016 when he used that very inept attempt as an excuse to fire close to 200,000 public servants in government institutions as well as staff from private schools identified as sympathetic to his then-leading opposition: the Gulenist movement. That also included a very severe crack down on the press, forcing the



*Erdogan remains in northern Syria*

firing or resignation of journalists sympathetic to his former ally-turned-opponent Gulen.

When Erdogan first took power 16 years ago he eased pressure on Turkey's Kurds, but since 2015 scores of Turkish Kurd associations, media, schools, and cultural organizations were closed down in reaction to growing Kurdish power just across the border in northern Syria. On the Turkish side of that border there are large concentrations of Turkish Kurds that were no doubt sympathizing and possibly providing supplies to the Syrian Kurds fighting DA'ISH

It was DA'ISH' cross border attacks against Turkish Kurds that soured Turkey's initial tolerance and even some clandestine arms shipments for DA'ISH in Syria until 2015—only a few years ago. But whether serving as Turkey's President or Prime Minister, Erdogan has already been reliably quoted as saying he considers the Turkish Kurdish PKK as more of a threat to Turkey than DA'ISH, and the Syrian Kurds as an extension of the PKK—an extraordinary remark considering that whatever the PKK is—one could describe it as blending Turkish nationalism, Marxism and a cultish devotion to its founder, the now deceased Abdullah Ocalan, into an apparently coherent ideology for some or many of the Kurdish Turk minority communities. And judging from videos of a few members of the SDF/YPG fighting forces participating in rallies holding up large poster-mounted photographs of Ocalan, the PKK founder is also revered by some of the Syrian Kurds.

The SDF—with its predominantly Kurdish fighters and the entirely Kurdish YPG supported by American air power and artillery—defeated

DA'ISH in the Fall of 2017 in hard fighting to take Raqqa, then the capital of the so-called Caliphate. At the time an American spokesman declared that DA'ISH had been defeated. But by early 2018 it was becoming clear that DA'ISH was still operative. Thousands of DA'ISH fighters managed to escape the siege of Raqqa. How could have that have happened?

A very large number of DA'ISH fighters—estimated at 20,000—had been concentrated in Raqqa and the rural villages in the Raqqa district. The DA'ISH military and political leadership knew that ultimately they could not withstand the combination of intense American firepower and the battle-hardened fighters of the SDF/YPG. So it would be reasonable for many DA'ISH fighters and the highest rank of DA'ISH leadership to move out quietly at night from Raqqa itself in small squads under the command of a squad leader before the SDF and the Americans had seriously penetrated the district much less Raqqa itself.

Some of these DA'ISH fighters found refuge in Turkey, or if foreign fighters, moved on from Turkey to return to their homes in other parts of the Arab and Muslim world or to America, the U.K. and Europe. Some defected to a reviving Al-Qaeda in Syria. But most of the DA'ISH fighters were to be concentrated in the Yarmouk basin in Syria or operate in small guerrilla and terrorist style units. Over the last few months of 2018 they have staged suicide bombings in Syria and in Iraq. According to reports from Baghdad the Iraqis are building or preparing to build a wall on the border with Syria in the hope that it will halt or at least diminish infiltration of some of the DA'ISH

still present in Syria from crossing back into Iraq. DA'ISH has been attacking the Syrian Druze in Suweida province, kidnapping women and girls, and killing a few hundred Druze. For DA'ISH the Druze like the Shi'a are Muslim heretics deserving death, but these attacks may prove to be a great blunder by DA'ISH, since the Syrian Druze if mobilized, have a history as great fighters.

The drawn-out Syrian civil war has been a terrible burden to neighboring Jordan. More than an estimated 1,300,000 Syrian refugees fled to Jordan, which expects those refugees will soon return home now that it appears the rebel forces concentrated in Idlib are facing defeat and significant fighting in Syria will soon stop. Small groups of refugees have already been making their way home, particularly those from the nearest Syrian province of Daraa

Serious but mostly non-violent demonstrations took place in Amman and elsewhere in the Kingdom against austerity measures in effect imposed on Jordan by IMF conditions in the Spring of 2018. HM King Abdullah II responded with empathy: the new taxes, which were "the last straw" that had brought thousands of demonstrators into the streets were withdrawn and the despised Prime Minister replaced by a highly respected, popular member of the cabinet who pledged to ease the economic situation.

In June there were good tidings. Significant financial relief in two aid packages: a \$2.5 billion package jointly pledged by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait followed a few days later by \$500 million package from Qatar. Another boost in morale came in July: H.M. King Abdullah II was the recipient of the prestigious Templeton Award in recognition that he has done more to seek religious harmony within Islam and between Islam and other religions than any other living political leader and for the spiritual values he has encouraged in Jordan and elsewhere in the Arab world. (see pages 55, 155, and 186 for more information on three of these initiatives)

It seems helping Jordan is the only thing that Qatar could agree on with rivals Saudi Arabia and the UAE and their partners Bahrain and Egypt collectively referred to as The Quartet. The crisis began in 2017, reportedly triggered by a faked Qatar News Agency report attributed to the ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. The Quartet's demands were: Qatar must break its ties with Iran, which the Quartet accuses of waging subversion in the region; to stop aiding Muslim Brotherhood

and sheltering its leaders; and to close down Al Jazeera for its pro-MB perspective. Following an earlier threat by Saudi Arabia to build a trench along the borders with Qatar which would cut off all of Qatar's land access and a commercial as well as touristic boycott of Qatar, Saudi Arabia has threatened to invade Qatar if they proceeded to buy a Russian air defense system. Qatar recently announced its own boycott of Quartet products and declared it would not be party to any conflict with Iran. Aside from Trump's informal but quite-public reversing of support for Qatar the U.S. has maintained a neutral position, calling on both sides to find a diplomatic solution. The Al Udeid air force base is the largest American base in the region. So the big question in Washington D.C. is whether Qatar will try to stop the U.S. from using the base to attack Iran in the event of war.

It is hard to say when the war in Yemen began, because wars have been a dominant mode in Yemen for many decades. Yemen is both the poorest country in the Arab world and probably at this point in time, the most tribal, and there might be a relationship between all these aspects. Technically speaking the latest war began in 2015 when the Houthis—who are Zaidi Shi'a living in the northern highlands and believe they are not treated justly by the predominantly Sunni government—overran the capital Sana'a, but not before they had defeated a northern tribe with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafis.

Saudi Arabia quickly organized a coalition of nine Middle Eastern and African countries with support from the United States and began to bomb the Houthis. Until very recently the Houthis had little or no connection with the very much larger Shi'a sect known as the Twelvers, who make up most of the population of Iran and 60 percent of the population of Iraq. The Saudi warplanes frequently target large gatherings of Houthis. It is a rather tragic bit of irony the targets most often are funerals, and in Sana'a can often include as many or more Yemeni Sunnis as Zaidi Shi'a. At least 15,000 Yemeni civilians have been killed, perhaps even more because there are few human rights groups and medical aid teams operating in the countryside. The death toll is so high considering Yemen's small population.

In recent decades Yemen has imported almost all the food that the population consumes. In part that is because so much productive farmland has been switched over to the more profitable grow-

ing of khat – a mild narcotic consumed by almost the entire adult population of Yemen. In the face of Saudi Arabia's persistent accusation that the Houthis were allied with Iran, the son of the Houthi leader visited Qum, the religious center of Twelver Shi'a in Iran. He was so impressed by the leading religious personalities there that upon his return to Yemen he led the Houthi community to adopt Twelver religious liturgy as well as Iranian Islamist slogans, which is quite a betrayal of Zaidi tradition since the Zaidi Shi'a were probably closer to Sunni Islam than to Twelver Islam.

Most of the food in Yemen is imported and after nearly three years of Saudi and UAE blockades of most Yemeni ports. Famine as well as disease are beginning to take their toll. More than a million people have cholera and thousands have died from the disease. American Senators and Congressmen have begun to question American support for the Saudis in Yemen but Trump's Administration has refused to criticize the Saudis who made a big impression on Trump both with the lavish receptions in his honor in May 2018 when he visited the Kingdom, his first stop en route to his first global tour as President. His hosts, King Salman and his very active son, the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman have signed on to buy—over a period of ten years—350 billion dollars' worth of American products, primarily military, including tanks and aircraft. MBS, as the Crown Prince is referred to in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, serves as Minister

of Defense, along with other responsibilities, and is considered with his father's approval and even encouragement as an energetic reformer. Because of his reforms women now drive cars, movie theaters have been opened and concerts are open to the public. Western as well as Arab media are fascinated by MBS but of late there has been criticism because of the arrest of some Saudi women activists and most recently the disappearance of the well-known Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who has been a vocal critic of the Saudi regime, and in particular MBS..

As Minister of Defense, MBS was also responsible for the Saudi intervention in the Yemeni civil war. It was one of his first accomplishments which one senses that MBS now greatly regrets.

So far Saudi ground troops have not been committed to fight in Yemen, but UAE troops have most dramatically attempted to seize the Hodeidah port city, which is the Houthis' major port for bringing in food as well as other aid from a variety of humanitarian organizations concerned about the spread of famine and disease in Yemen. The assault upon Hodeidah was briefly suspended given the casualties caused by landmines and sniper fire and concerns about the civilians inside the besieged port as well as the inability of humanitarian organizations to ship in medical supplies, and perhaps basic food items.

March 30, 2018 marks the beginning of 'The Great March of Return, what was intended to be a non-violent series of protests launched in Gaza

*US Defense Secretary James Mattis meets with Saudi Arabia's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, at the Pentagon in Washington DC, 22 March 2018.*  
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close to the Gaza-Israel border. Also known as the Gaza Strip because of its dimensions, 41 kilometers long and from 6 to 12 kilometers wide, the Strip contains a population of nearly two million. Unlike the West Bank which is in no way as confined as Gaza, most of the inhabitants of Gaza are considered as refugees, in what is one of the most densely populated places in the world. It would take at least a few pages of type-set print to describe the variety of hardships imposed upon the people of Gaza. Here are just a few: 97% of Gaza's tap water is undrinkable due to high salinity and/or sewage pollution forcing Gazans, many if not most of whom are impoverished, to purchase water from local desalination facilities at excessive prices. Since Palestinians are unable to pay Israel for the electricity it provides, Gazans are receiving electricity for only four hours a day.

Originally organized by independent activists (meaning none were members of either Hamas or Fateh or presumably any of the smaller factions), the leadership and organization of the March demanded that the Palestinian refugees (which includes all the descendants of the original refugees who fled their homes 70 years ago) have a Right of Return, that the siege of Gaza be lifted, and that the decision to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem be revoked. On the first day some 35,000 Palestinians participated, and since then Friday demonstrations have averaged about 10,000, with much smaller numbers during the week. Palestinian casualties have been high: at least 140 were killed between March 30th and the 15th of May; between 13,000 to 14,000 were injured by live ammunition. On May 13, one day before Israeli and American high ranking officials and public figures such as President Trump's daughter and his son-in-law celebrated the opening of the American embassy in Jerusalem, the demonstrations peaked as 35,000 marched with thousands approaching the fence. One Israeli soldier was slightly wounded and 60 Palestinians were killed at twelve different clash points along the fence. Not what any soldier would consider acceptable odds. Was split screen simultaneous coverage of Ivanka enjoying the party at the embassy and Palestinians getting shot down approaching the border fence worth those odds.

If one million Palestinians in Gaza marched for Return, nothing much would happen except lots of Palestinians, perhaps thousands, getting shot down trying to crash through the flimsy gate, which is quite reasonably possible, and get past the IDF,

which is not. Even the Arab Peace Plan alluded, if I recall correctly, to a just settlement, but did not use the phrase the Right of Return: because anyone who is not blinded by either despair or hatred or a reasonable mixture of both, knows there will never be a Return as long as there is an Israeli Army, Navy and Air force—with an arsenal of nuclear bombs thrown in as well.

On the other hand there is "Trump's Deal of the Century – The Big Deal". This starts by refusing to provide the millions that the U.S. significantly funds UNRWA with. This severely cuts the medical and basic educational needs of millions of impoverished Palestinians just about wherever there are Palestinian refugee camps, especially in Gaza where those needs are the most apparent; even cutting off 12 million dollars for private charity financed hospitals providing medical care including operations otherwise not available for the impoverished Palestinians of occupied Arab Jerusalem. Hospitals which according to the Israeli government are operating inside Israel and certainly regularly inspected like any hospital operating in Israel.

Then there is closing down the Palestinian Authority's embassy in Washington D.C. which exists primarily to facilitate dialogue between the U.S. and the PA. Officially these measures are to force the PA back to the negotiating table with Israel under American auspices. But in fact what it appears to be are the preliminary steps in the Victory Concept that is held by many Israelis in circles close to Netanyahu—that peace with the Palestinians will come about not through compromise but for Israel and its greatest ally, the United States, to undertake all available harsh measures just short of war, to so damage the Palestinians that they must acknowledge to themselves that they have been defeated, and having admitted as such to the Israelis and the rest of the world, Israel would then issue the terms for effectively the Palestinian surrender described as a Peace Agreement.

Only Trump supporting the Victory Concept would explain why the three Americans chosen to represent the U.S. in working for an Israeli-Palestinian settlement are Modern Orthodox. While traditional Judaism or what is now called Ultra-Orthodox, is at best openly hostile to the very concept of Zionism, the Modern Orthodox are openly supportive of the state of Israel. All three—Trump's son-in-law as the President's special representative, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel



who prefers to refer to the West Bank and the Golan Heights as disputed territories rather than occupied territories – precisely the Israeli government’s unique terminology, and as U.S. Special Representative for International Negotiations, a former Vice President of the Trump Organization, all three have special interests and/or investments in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

There are good arguments for the PA to be at any peace table with representatives of the present Israeli government, even knowing the Israeli side is not at all serious about real peace, but nevertheless to sit there perhaps day-dreaming to pass the time of day but to be there so Israel cannot play the game it always does of “not having a partner with whom to make peace.” But to go to that table unaware of the Victory Concept being in play would be the worst reason to go there.

Trump’s first play in the Victory Concept was his announcement back in December 2017 that the US would be moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. That is where, on the Western side of the city, all the ministerial offices as well as the President’s office are located and where one does whatever business one does with Israel. All that Trump really did was to turn a de facto situation into a de jure capital. In itself nothing has changed, and there was even a sentence in Trump’s announcement for the Palestinians, that the boundaries of the Jerusalem he was now recognizing as Israel’s capital would be determined in negotiations between the concerned parties.

But U.S. formal recognition did what it was not intended to do—revive global pro-Palestinian sensitivities which were overshadowed or more accu-

rately dulled as it were over the past few years given the way military conflict be it in Syria, in Iraq (with a revived DA’ISH) in Yemen, and in a regional cold war between Iran and Saudi Arabia, with Qatar on Iran’s side and Abu Dhabi and in a most muted fashion, Egypt, with the Saudis.

An example of the Trump Effect was the decision of the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar University and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Mosque to declare 2018 as The Year of Jerusalem” devoting a major conference to Jerusalem. Until recently the Grand Sheikh has publicly opposed Muslims making religious pilgrimage to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem’s Haram al-Sharif. But PA President Abbas in a speech at the Azhar conference, joined his voice to that of the Mufti of Jerusalem, whose office is within the Haram al-Sharif. As one of the three most favoured pilgrimage cities in Islam, the Arab Jerusalem economy has always revolved around pilgrimage trade. Today a majority of Jerusalemites hold on, living below the poverty line and nothing would please the Israeli government more than if they all give up and abandon the Holy City. So it is critical that Muslim pilgrimage be restored. There was much discussion of this issue after Abbas spoke, most of it favoured restoring the pilgrimage. The Grand Sheikh has not expressed, as yet whether he has changed his position.

A key piece of the Victory Concept is the new Israeli Nationality Law approved by the Israeli Knesset in July 2018. This law declares quite boldly that only the Jewish people of Israel have the right of self-determination. Where is that right to be exercised an innocent to Middle East tensions might ask. Why nowhere else but in the unmen-

tioned word – Palestine. Article 4 of the Law says that Arabic will no longer share with Hebrew the status of an official language as it has since the earliest years of Israeli statehood. Israel's President Reuven Rivlin pleaded unsuccessfully with Prime Minister Netanyahu to remove a clause in the Law before it received final approval that would make it legal to deny Arabs the right to live in Jewish villages. I wonder how many very old American Jews living in New York will remember the great legal battle to outlaw “run with the land deeds” in which the buyer of property with such a deed would violate their contract of purchase if they in turn attempted to sell or rent their property to Jews and African-Americans. Such deeds were finally ruled unconstitutional by the New York State Supreme Court in the mid-1930s.

President Al-Sisi won a second term of office in the 2018 election. A bit of irony there when the President complained that no serious candidates ran against him in that election. His one opponent was a relatively obscure supporter of Al-Sisi who was more or less dragged into running against the former Field Marshal. But Al-Sisi also called upon the multitude of parties to merge into one major opposition party and one major party supporting the present government. Sisi does retain grudging popular support for the return of security: terrorist attacks have ended in what I always think of as “the mainland” and are now confined to a running battle with DA'ISH in the northern Sinai that, despite a lot of misguided reporting in American media, existed well before the Muslim Brotherhood took power via free but unfair elections for parliament as well as the presidency and then lost both after one year of rule, when the Egyptian Army intervened.. The worst atrocity in the history of DA'ISH terrorism in Egypt occurred in late November 2017 when DA'ISH killed 350 worshippers at Al Rawda Mosque in a small town in northern Sinai. The mosque was favored by Sufi tariqas in the district which is probably why it was singled out for attack. Meanwhile Harsh “reforms” insisted upon as conditions for a 12 billion dollar IMF loan, led to a 50 percent devaluation of the Egyptian Pound in late 2016 and an incredibly painful phasing out of government subsidies of gas, cost of electricity, water not just for poor Egyptians but even for the middle classes. Egyptians appreciate stability but you cannot put stability on the dinner table and eat it.

*The Deputy Chief Editor Farah El-Sharif, PhD candidate at Harvard University, has taken note of the need to expand the survey beyond the Middle East and she now adds these following thoughts:*

More Muslims live in India and Pakistan today than in the entire Middle East and North Africa,<sup>1</sup> and more than two-thirds of the world's entire Muslim populations inhabit the Asia-Pacific region. Despite this, there is a tendency to focus on the Arabic-speaking world as the key representative of Muslim affairs. However, judging by numbers alone, non-Arab Muslims far outweigh the number of Muslims of Arab descent. The disproportional attention is not only partial against the millions of Muslims outside the Arab world world who make up the world's majority, but tells an incomplete story about the state of Islam and Muslims in the 21st century.

At the same time, it is understandable that Arab world should take the biggest share of global news coverage, given that the highest concentration of Muslims live in the Arab world. Coupled with the fact that the Middle East usually takes the geo-strategic political cake, so to speak, and that Arabs make-up the majority of the world's estimated 68.5 million displaced persons in the largest refugee crisis since World War II. Arab or not, most of the world's refugees today are Muslim. Whether as displaced refugees in Myanmar or Afghanistan or as persecuted minorities in India or China, being Muslim today is unpopular at best, and dangerous at worst. While it is impossible to shed light on the status of non-Arab Muslims in a single essay—whose populations range from Albania to Chad and Bangladesh—we will attempt to shift our focus away from the Arab world, and highlight the main currents and conditions of the Muslim world at large.

Does a “Muslim world” exist, however? On a theoretical plain, recent scholarship has debated the efficacy of the very idea of a “Muslim world.” Elizabeth Shakman Hurd's “The Myth of the Muslim Country” and Cemil Aydin's *The Idea of the Muslim World*, for example, contest the idea of a civilizational monolith intrinsic to the Muslim world. In pre-modern times, Christendom and Islamdom existed in clearly delineated territorial and religious space. After global secularization, the “Muslim world” denotes an assumption of Muslim unity, which the above-mentioned authors argue is but a mere illusion. Some have responded to this

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<sup>1</sup> 344 million combined vs. 317 million.

scholarship by deeming it too historicizing, and for diluting the enduring agency of a collective, united ummah in the Muslim imaginaire. Tracking the discourse surrounding it is useful insofar as it traces the coercive power of secularization and exceptionalism when it comes to Islam and Muslims in the modern era. Whether an illusion or not, it cannot be denied that a common feeling that binds Muslims the world over exists, no matter their geographic location. For the greater part of the pre-modern period, that feeling endured due to the universal primary tenants of the faith and the centrality of the authority of the Prophet Muhammad. This, coupled with the unyielding absence of a centralized political governing body—there is no “Muslim Pope”, nor the Muslim equivalent for the State of Israel—proves that the idea of a “Muslim world” is more than just an Orientalist projection.

It is rather bittersweet that the 10th anniversary of *the Muslim 500* should come in confluence with a tempestuous time for Muslims globally. The unmistakable rise of persecution of Muslims in China, Myanmar, and Central Africa is shadowed by a world stage of strong-man politics and exclusionary rhetoric in much of the public discourse in the global north. Yet, it is also bittersweet that through these seemingly worst of times, a democratic resurgence in many parts of the Muslim world has proven that these are the best of times as well, at least in terms of political participation. In Pakistan, Malaysia and Turkey, key elections in 2018 have brought on a sense of renewal and hope for much of these countries. If the buds of hope witnessed in the Arab Spring were short-lived, perhaps the winds of change blew southeastward to the Asian Pacific.

For the first two decades of the 21st century, that common “feeling”, perhaps, is one of estrangement, one that is prophetically foreshadowed by the hadith of regarding the reception of Islam in later days: “Islam began as something strange and it will return strange as it began.” There are no more strangers today than the Uighur Muslims living in Kashgar, Xinjiang province. The region is vital as it is China’s biggest domestic producer of oil and gas and has become an important trade link for investment and trade, hence the crackdown on its Muslim inhabitants carries strategic political and economic motivations for the Chinese state. The Xinjiang Uighurs, a Turkic ethnic group of around 10 million Muslims, are the world’s most heavily surveilled community. Their persecution has worsened in recent months, with 500 police officers deployed to every 100,000 citizens, who routinely conduct what is known as fanghuiju; intrusive inspections to report on “extremist” behavior such as not drinking alcohol, fasting during Ramadan, sporting beards or possessing “undesirable” items, such as Qur’ans or prayer mats. Videos have surfaced of Urumqi police forcibly cutting shirts of Uighur women with scissors in the streets if they are deemed too long.

The most horrifying feature of the state’s persecution of Xinjiang province Muslims are the hundreds of “re-education camps” where some 1 million Uighurs are thought to have disappeared. The Chinese government denies the existence of such camps, but procurement for contractors to run the camps are on public record, in addition to numerous eye-witness reports by “cured” prison-

*Chinese government re-education camps for Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, China*



ers. Countless families have reported friends and family members missing. In re-education camps, prisoners are subject to torture, and the cruelest tactics to achieve “Islamic erasure”: in some camps, some are forcibly fed pork or are not permitted to eat until they denounce Islamic teachings or praise the Communist party. In January, Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hajim, a widely respected and renowned elderly Uighur alim, died in detention in Urumqi. It is estimated that a sixth to a third of young and middle-aged Uighur men are currently interned, or have been at some point in the past year. In stranger-than-fiction dystopian fashion, the state has also enforced the infamous Chinese “social credit system” on the Uighurs that rates the “trustworthiness” of each citizen by points. Going below a certain number of points can mean immediate detention.

It has become increasingly harder for foreign journalists to enter Xinjiang, and the Chinese government’s escalating repression on the Uighur community allegedly stems from fears of separatism. But by enforcing such extreme measures to persecute the Uighur minority and crackdown on their very existence, these policies only add fuel to the fire of marginalization. Being Muslim in China today is to live under extreme caution at all times, out of fear of torture, detention or even death.

### THE ROHINGYA

Unlike the Uighurs, the Rohingya’s persecution by the state has led to a mass exodus and large-scale refugee crisis. Their severe repression by the Rakhine Buddhist State security apparatus is comprised of the most severe forms of persecution by mass burnings, shootings and forcible displacement. Myanmar expert Professor Imtiaz Yusuf argues that the root of Rohingya persecution is not religious, but rather to do with racism and citizenship. It all began when the Burmese citizenship structure placed the Arkaan Muslims at a disadvantage since they took the area as their homeland in 1940; Myanmar has a three-tiered citizenship system made of “full,” “associate,” and “naturalized” citizenship. The Rohingya are denied all three types of citizenship, thereby deeming them perpetually “stateless.” The delegitimization of the Rohingya culminated in a law which prevented them from becoming Myanmar citizens, with more recent laws even requiring them to supply proof that their ancestors had settled in the country before the 19th

century.<sup>2</sup> As of 1994, the Burmese state ceased to issue Rohingya children with birth certificates. As a result of the fierce crackdown, 1.5 million Rohingya are today living in exile in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, India, Malaysia, Thailand, UK, USA, and Australia. Many lives have been lost, children dead or orphaned, men burned alive, and entire Rohingya villages razed to the ground. When all is done, the chastisement of Aung San Suu Kyi—Myanmar’s human rights icon—though justified, did not deem effective in bringing justice to the genocide and displacement of the Rohingyas. While she and others in the Myanmar military apparatus certainly should be held accountable for their silence and complicity, Suu Kyi’s fall from grace was low hanging fruit to assuage mass guilt on the part of the international community. A more serious recourse of accountability should have been taken to fully integrate the Rohingya as equal Myanmar citizens 80 years ago. The repercussions of decades of injustice have only worsened the present lives and the wretched future of the Rohingya people.

### INDIAN MUSLIMS AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

If it does not abate, the rise of India’s right-wing Hindu nationalist bend is doomed to repeat the same mistakes of the Burmese and Chinese states. The recent surge in mob lynching against Muslims and other minorities has reached alarming levels. In June of 2018 in Hapur, two Muslim men were attacked, kicked and dragged on the street while police stood by guarding the mob, leading to the death of one man. In another incident, an elderly Muslim man, was pulled by his beard and dragged through a field as he begged for mercy while amused onlookers took videos of the lynching and shared it across social media, which is becoming common practice with acts of mob violence in India. In the same month, a young man was killed in Alwar for allegedly being a “cow smuggler.”

A report by data-based news agency India Spend found that “Muslims were the target of 51% of violence centered on bovine issues over nearly eight years (2010 to 2017) – and they comprised 84% of 25 Indians killed in 60 incidents. As many as 97% of these attacks were reported after Narendra Modi’s government came to power in May 2014.” Modi was the head of the state of Gujarat when hundreds of Muslims were killed in the riots of 2002. Immediately after the attacks in Hapur,

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus.html>

Jayant Sinha, one of the most important ministers in Modi's cabinet, honored eight men accused of lynching and killing a Muslim man.

In Assam State, as many as 7 million Muslims have been deleted from its master list of "citizens" simply due to their "questionable" origins or unfit faith profession. The country's Supreme Court (SC), which is supervising the entire process, will intern those who don't make it to the master list of citizens, thereby breaking up families and spurring added suspicion towards Muslims all over India. Though there are more Muslims in India (172 million) than the entire population of Muslim-majority Saudi Arabia (32 million), but the dehumanization of Islam and Muslims by advocates of Hindutva—a far-right Hindu nationalist agenda championed even by parties and individuals that hold the highest offices in India—shows no signs of abating. The effects of this toxic rhetoric has rippled to neighboring countries, for it is not only in Denmark and France that Muslim women face persecution for their dress, but in Sri Lanka, where Hindu nationalists protested outside a private school against Muslim teachers wearing abayas as a slight against "Hindu culture" earlier this year. The alarming rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric in India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere proves that Islamophobia's geographic reach is not simply contained in the West as manifested by Trump's Muslim travel ban or Boris' burqa-ban, but is rather becoming a global phenomenon: even, or perhaps at a more alarming rate, in Muslim-majority societies. Strong-man politics and fascist ideologies are making a comeback the world over, or perhaps they were simply dormant and are merely reawakening. Are we really doomed to repeat the woeful persecutions of the 20th century? Are Muslims the final enemy standing?

There is a strange imbalance when experts and pundits discuss the so-called "War on Terror" and counter-extremism initiatives. The focus on Islam and Muslims as the sole object of deradicalization

efforts is a red herring. Despite being the global enemy du jour, in reality the majority of the world's Muslims make up some of the world's most vulnerable populations. There are those who live in dire conditions and in environmentally fragile areas that constantly get hit by deadly floods and typhoons, such as in Indonesia or Bangladesh. Others are undergoing the constant threat of displacement, persecution, or discrimination in their fragile homelands whether it is in Yemen, the Balkans, the Central African Republic or Myanmar. Far from being highly weaponized diabolical extremists, the fact is that millions of Muslims are simply struggling to survive or meet their daily needs and represent some of the most economically impoverished and downtrodden communities on earth today.

### NEW BEGINNINGS

Perhaps the most pleasant respite from this year's news roundup from Muslim-majority countries has been the remarkable resurrection of democracy in Malaysia and Pakistan, and to some extent in Turkey. Though each case is markedly different, one thing is true: the majority of Malaysian and Pakistani voters have called for real change in their respective countries, whether it was in the form of the unlikely alliance between political legends Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim, or the triumph of Imran Khan's vision for "Naya Pakistan." The return of Mahathir and Imran's victory, though not for the lack of challenges and detractors, have proven the obvious: when given the chance, Muslim-majority populations are capable of forging a sophisticated vision for their collective futures, one that emphasizes free and fair electoral systems and one that champions concrete steps towards reform and justice. It is our hope that prosperity may triumph over despair, justice over persecution and that above all; may humanity and compassion be that binding "feeling" that glues the global *ummah* together.



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❧ The ❧  
HOUSE  
OF ISLAM

# I. The House of Islam

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(with the exception of President Obama's speech)

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

The Holy Qur'an says:

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

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

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

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

## THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM

The essence and substance of Islam can be easily summed up by three major principles (which are also successive stages in the spiritual life): Islam (meaning 'submission to God's will'); Iman

(meaning 'faith in God'), and Ihsan (meaning 'virtue through constant regard to, and awareness of, God'). The second Caliph, the great 'Umar ibn al Khattab, related that:

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

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

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

(2) The five daily prayers (whose inward meaning is the attachment to God). (3) Giving alms or Zakat—one-fortieth of one’s income and savings annually to the poor and destitute (whose inward meaning is the detachment from the world). (4) Fasting the Holy month of Ramadan annually (whose inward meaning is detachment from the body and from the ego). (5) Making the Hajj (whose inner meaning is to return to one’s true inner heart, the mysterious square, black-shrouded Ka’ba in Makkah being the outward symbol of this heart). Thus also Iman as such consists of belief in all the essential doctrines of religion (and the inner meaning of this is that one should not go through the motions of religion and of the five pillars of Islam blindly or robotically, but rather have real faith and certainty in one’s heart). Thus, finally, *Ihsan* as such consists in believing that God always sees us, and therefore that one must be virtuous and sincere in all one’s actions. In this connection the Prophet said: ‘*By Him in whose Hand is my Life, none of you believes till he loves for his neighbour what he loves for himself*’.<sup>2</sup> In summary, we could say that the essence of Islam is exactly the Two Commandments upon which Jesus said hangs all the Law and the Prophets:

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

### THE CANON OF ISLAM

Islam does not, like Christianity, have a clergy. There is no temporal or even spiritual institute that holds it together or unifies it. So how has it held together—and indeed, flourished—for the last fourteen centuries approximately, when its scholars and

temporal policymakers keep changing and dying out over time? How has it remained so homogeneous that the Islam of 1900 CE was doctrinally exactly the same as the Islam of 700 CE? Where have its internal checks and balances come from?

The answer is that Islam has a traditional canon:<sup>4</sup> a collection of sacred texts which everyone has agreed are authoritative and definitive, and which ‘fix’ the principles of belief, practice, law, theology and doctrine throughout the ages. All that Muslim scholars (called *ulema* and muftis or sheikhs and imams) have left to do is to interpret these texts and work out their practical applications and details (and the principles of interpretation and elaboration are themselves ‘fixed’ by these texts), so that in Islam a person is only considered learned to the extent that he can demonstrate his knowledge of these texts. This does not mean that Islam is a religion of limitations for these texts are a vast ocean and their principles can be inwardly worked out almost infinitely in practice. It does mean, however, that Islam is ‘fixed’ and has certain limits

<sup>4</sup> Even the English word ‘canon’ comes from the Arabic word *kanun* meaning ‘law’ or ‘principle’.



<sup>2</sup> Sahih Muslim, ‘Kitab al Iman’, 18, n. 72.

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

beyond which it will not go. This is an extremely important concept to understand, because misunderstanding it, and setting aside the traditional canon of Islam, leads to people killing and assassinating others in the name of religion. The traditional canon of Islam is what protects not just the religion of Islam itself, but the world (including Muslims themselves) from terrorism, murder and oppression in the name of Islam. The canon is Islam's internal check and balance system; it is what safeguards its moderation; it is 'self-censorship' and its ultimate safety feature.

To be more specific, the traditional Sunni Islamic Canon starts with the Qur'an itself; then the great traditional Commentaries upon it (e.g. Tabari; Razi; Zamakhshari/Baydawi; Qurtubi; Jalalayn; Ibn Kathir; Nasafi; and al Wahidi's *Asbab al Nuzul*); then the eight traditional collections of Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet, (e.g. Muslim; Bukhari; Tirmidhi; Ibn Hanbal, al Nasa'i; Al-Sijistani; Al-Darimi and Ibn Maja); the later Mu-haddithin, or Traditionists (e.g. Bayhaqi; Baghawi; Nawawi and 'Asqalani); then the traditional biographical and historical works of Sira (Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Sa'd, Waqidi; Azraqi; Tabari; and Suhayli); the *Risala* of Al-Shafi'i; the *Muwatta'* of Imam Malik; the *Ihya' 'Ulum al Din* of Ghazali; Ash'arite and



Maturidian theology; the (original) 'Aqida of Tahawi; Imam Jazuli's *Dala'il al-Khayrat*, and finally—albeit only extrinsically—Jahiliyya poetry (as a background reference for the semantic connotations of words in the Arabic language). We give a specific (but not exhaustive) list here in order to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding.

### ISLAM IN HISTORY

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

'The medieval Islamic world, from Central Asia to the shores of the Atlantic, was a world where scholars and men of learning flourished. But because we have tended to see Islam as the enemy, as an alien culture, society, and system of belief, we have tended to ignore or erase its great relevance to our own history. For example, we have underestimated the importance of eight hundred years of Islamic society and culture in Spain between the 8th and 15th centuries. The contribution of Muslim Spain to the preservation of classical learning during the Dark Ages, and to the first flowerings of the Renaissance, has long been recognised.



But Islamic Spain was much more than a mere larder where Hellenistic knowledge was kept for later consumption by the emerging modern Western world. Not only did Muslim Spain gather and preserve the intellectual content of ancient Greek and Roman civilisation, it also interpreted and expanded upon that civilisation, and made a vital contribution of its own in so many fields of human endeavour—in science, astronomy, mathematics, algebra (itself an Arabic word), law, history, medicine, pharmacology, optics, agriculture, architecture, theology, music. Averroes [Ibn Rushd] and Avenzoar [Ibn Zuhr], like their counterparts Avicenna [Ibn Sina] and Rhazes [Abu Bakr al Razi] in the East, contributed to the study and practice of medicine in ways from which Europe benefited for centuries afterwards.’<sup>5</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

TOP LEFT: A manuscript of Jazuli’s *Dalail Al-Khayrat*  
LEFT: Alhambra Palace in Spain  
RIGHT: Al-Azhar Mosque

# II. Major Doctrinal Divisions Within Islam

## Sunni Theology

### 1) Ash'ari and Maturidi Schools: Sunni Orthodoxy<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

### 2) Salafi School

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

### 3) Mu'tazili School

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

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

## Shi'a Theology

### 1) The Twelver School

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

### 2) Isma'ili School

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

### 3) Zaidi School

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

## Ibadi Theology

### Ibadi School

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

# III. Ideological Divisions

## Traditional Islam

(90% of the world's Muslims)

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

## Islamic Fundamentalism

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

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

## Islamic Modernism

(1% of the world's Muslims)

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

## IIIa. Traditional Islam

Sunni (90% of the world's traditional muslims)

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

### Schools of Sunni Islamic Law

#### Hanafi (45%)

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

#### Shafi'i (28%)

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

#### Maliki (15%)

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

#### Hanbali (2%)

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

## Shi'a (9.5% of the world's traditional Muslims)

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

### Branches

#### Zaidis (Fivers) (Less than 1%)

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

#### Twelvers (8%)

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

#### Isma'ilis (Sevens) (Less than 0.5%)

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

### Schools of Islamic Law for Twelver Shi'a

#### Usuli

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

#### Akhbari

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

## Ibadi (0.5% of the world's traditional Muslims)

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

# Mystic Brotherhoods

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

## Sunni Orders

### Naqshbandiyya

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

### Chishtiyya

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

### Qadiriyya

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

### Mawlawiyya

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

### Tijaniyya

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

### Rifa'iyya

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

### Shadhiliyyah

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

### Yashrutiyya

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

### Kubrawiyya

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

### Badawiyya

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

### Suhrawardiyya

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

### Khalwatiyya

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

## Shi'a Orders

### Irfan

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

## IIIb. Islamic Fundamentalism

### Sunni

#### Muslim Brotherhood

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

#### Wahhabism/Salafism

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

### Shi'a

#### Revolutionary Shi'ism

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

## IIIc. Islamic Modernism

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



God, there is no god, except Him, the Living, the Eternal Sustainer. Slumber does not seize Him, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth; who is there, that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them, and what is after them; and they encompass nothing of His knowledge, save such as He wills. His throne subsumes the heavens and the earth; the preserving of them wears Him not; He is the Sublime, the Tremendous.

*The Cow 2 : 255*

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ℳ The Top ℳ

50

# The Top 50

(Number in brackets indicates last year's position.)

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

24. Sheikh Habib 'Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri  
Director General of the Tabah Foundation  
(28)
25. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson  
Teacher and Co-Founder of Zaytuna College  
(27)
26. HE Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal  
Al-Sheikh  
Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
(17)
27. HE Sheikha Munira Qubeysi  
Leader of the Qubeysi (29)
28. HE Rached Ghannouchi  
Tunisian Politician (30)
29. HE Imran Khan  
Prime Minister of Pakistan (new)
30. Sheikh Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi  
Head of the International Union of Muslim  
Scholars (33)
31. Moez Masoud  
Preacher and Televangelist (32)
32. Maulana Mahmood Madani  
Leader and Executive Member of Jamiat Ule-  
ma-e-Hind, India (36)
33. Dr Amr Khaled  
Preacher and Social Activist (35)
34. Mustafa Hosny  
Preacher (37)
35. Sheikh Usama Al-Sayyid Al-Azhari  
Scholar (39)
36. HH Shah Karim Al-Hussayni, The Aga  
Khan IV  
The Aga Khan (40)
37. Habib Luthfi bin Yahya  
Preacher (41)
38. Sheikh Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi  
Leader of the Houthis (42)
39. Sheikh Mahmud Effendi  
Turkish Scholar and Preacher (43)
40. Maulana Tariq Jameel  
Pakistani Scholar and Preacher (44)
41. Halimah Yacob  
President of Singapore (45)
42. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi  
Scholar (47)
43. Professor Dr Seyyed Hossein Nasr  
Philosopher and University Professor (49)
44. HE Mahathir Mohamad  
Prime Minister of Malaysia (new)
45. HE Sheikh Uthman Taha  
Calligrapher (new)
46. Mohammed Salah  
Footballer (new)
47. HE Sheikh Muqtada Sadr  
Scholar and Politician (new)
48. HE Dr Aref Ali Nayed  
Scholar (50)
49. Ahed Tamimi  
Palestinian Activist (new)
50. Mohamed Bechari  
Political (new)

# LISTINGS OF TOP 50 AND THE 26 HONOURABLE MENTIONS BY CATEGORIES

Although the influence of the Top 50 straddles many categories and cannot be limited to just one or another category, it can be insightful to place them into more general categories. To the Top 50 we have added the 25 Honourable Mentions and have chosen three general categories into which to place them: 1. Rulers and Politicians, 2. Scholars and Preachers and 3. Social Issues, Media, Social Media, Arts, Culture and Sports.

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## *Rulers and Politicians*

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1. HE President Recep Tayyip Erdogan
2. HM King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud
3. HM King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein
4. HE Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei
5. HM King Mohammed VI
6. HM Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al-Sa'id
7. HRH Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud
8. HH General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan
9. HE President Joko Widodo
10. HE President Muhammadu Buhari
11. HH Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamid Al-Thani
12. Professor Dr KH Said Aqil Siradj
13. HRE Amirul Mu'minin Sheikh As-Sultan Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III
14. Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah
15. HE Imran Khan
16. HH Shah Karim Al-Hussayni
17. Sheikh Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi
18. Halimah Yacob
19. HE Mahathir Mohamad
20. HE Sheikh Muqtada Sadr
21. Mohamed Bechari
22. Ismail Haniyah
23. Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
24. Khaled Mashaal
25. HE Anwar Ibrahim
26. HE President Mahmoud Abbas
27. HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum
28. HE Sadiq Khan

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## *Scholars and Preachers*

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1. HE Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani
2. HH Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani
3. HE Professor Dr Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb
4. Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz
5. Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda
6. HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah
7. Hajji Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab
8. HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa
9. Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse
10. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson
11. Sheikh Habib 'Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri
12. HE Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal Al-Sheikh
13. HE Sheikh Munira Qubeysi
14. HE Rached Ghannouchi
15. Sheikh Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi
16. Sheikh Moez Masoud
17. Maulana Mahmood Madani
18. Dr Amr Khaled
19. Sheikh Mustafa Hosny
20. Sheikh Usama Al-Sayyid Al-Azhari
21. Habib Luthfi bin Yahya
22. Sheikh Mahmud Effendi
23. Maulana Tariq Jameel

24. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi
25. Professor Dr Seyyed Hossein Nasr
26. HE Dr Aref Ali Nayed
27. Prof Dr Akbar Ahmed
28. H.E. Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Jawadi Amoli
29. Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Sabouni
30. HE Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq Fayadh
31. HE Shaykh Ibrahim Salih
32. Prof Dr M Din Syamsuddin
33. Prof Timothy Winter (Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad)
34. Dr Ingrid Mattson
35. Mufti Abdul Qasim Nomani
36. Dr Muhammad Al-Arifi
37. Dr Zakir Abdul Karim Naik
38. Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri
39. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al Sudais

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## *Social Issues, Arts, Culture and Sports*

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1. HE Sheikh Uthman Taha
2. Mohammed Salah
3. Ahd Tamimi
4. Malala Yousafzai
5. Salman Khan
6. Sami Yusuf
7. Maher Zain
8. Khabib Nurmagomedov
9. Mohamed Farah



And do good that perhaps you may be prosperous.

*The Pilgrimage 22 : 77*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

**Country:** Turkey

**Born:** 26 Feb 1954 (age 64)

**Source of Influence:** Political

**Influence:** President of 75.7 million Turkish citizens

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni

2016 Rank: 8

2017 Rank: 8

2018 Rank: 5

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

2<sup>nd</sup>

largest standing military force in NATO

52.4%

of the national vote in Turkey's 2018 elections



ℳ I ℳ

*His Excellence*

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

# HE President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

## President of the Republic of Turkey

HE Recep Tayyip Erdogan was the Prime Minister of Turkey for 11 years, winning three consecutive elections with a majority (2002, 2007 and 2011), before becoming Turkey's first popularly-elected president in August 2014 and then securing a second-term in the 2018 election. During his terms, Turkey has seen unprecedented economic growth, constitutional reform, and a re-emergence as a major global power.

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

**Failed Coup Ramifications:** The failed coup of 15 July 2016, which led to about 200 deaths, has led to huge ramifications as Erdogan looks to root out all those involved. He has squarely laid the blame of orchestrating the coup on Fethullah Gulen, and has led an all-out attack on Gulen's organisations and supporters. There has been a major crackdown on many sectors with about 160,000 civil servants being dismissed in various state institutions, with over half from the education sector. Also, 50,000 people remain in detention with this number continually rising as authorities press ahead with regular raids.

**Global Relations:** Under Erdogan, Turkey has focused on building stronger relations with all of its seven land-contiguous neighbours (especially Greece) and also all of those countries bordering the Black Sea (an important trading hub and a geopolitically significant area). In Africa, it has opened up over twenty new embassies and consulates, and when Somalia suffered from a crippling famine and drought in 2011, Erdogan not only gave aid, but also became the first leader from outside Africa to visit Somalia in nearly two decades. While Turkey has about 45% of its foreign trade with European countries, it is developing strong trade relations with other regions and attracting investment from all over the world.

**Bait-and-Switch?** In July 2015 Turkey finally declared war on DA'ISH after an agreement with the US. It immediately proceeded to bomb sites in Iraq and Syria that it said were PKK sites. Turkey was consequently accused by the Kurds and by some US officials of a 'bait-and-switch' ploy, using DA'ISH as bait to fight its old nemesis, the Kurds.

**Challenges:** Erdogan has been forced to deal with a number of complex situations on both national and international issues; on Turkey's relationship with the USA, on its partnership with Russia, on how to deal with Syria, DA'ISH, and Kurdish fighters, on the continual crack down on the Gulen movement, on dissent within his own AKP movement and now on how to deal with an economic crisis which has seen the value of the Turkish Lira fall by 50%. His dealings with these issues as well as the security of Turkey in the face of terrorist attacks are the major challenges facing him now.

*Istanbul*



**Country:** Saudi Arabia

**Born:** 31 December 1935 (Age 82)

**Source of Influence:** Political

**Influence:** King with authority over 26 million residents of Saudi Arabia and approximately 14 million pilgrims annually.

**School of Thought:** Moderate Salafi

2016 Rank: 3

2017 Rank: 3

2018 Rank: 2

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

**\$15** million pledged for Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh.

**2.4** million pilgrims visited the kingdom in 2018.



۞ 2 ۞

*His Majesty*

**King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud**

# HM King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud

## King of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

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

**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques:** HM King Salman has significant influence in the global Muslim community through his custodianship of the two holy cities of Makkah and Madina. Makkah is the main pilgrimage site for 1.7 billion Muslims. Each year approximately 4 million pilgrims perform the Hajj. In addition to this, approximately 10 million pilgrims (including Saudi residents and GCC citizens) perform the umrah, 'the lesser Hajj', throughout the year. A multi-billion dollar expansion to the two mosques is well under way.

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

**Head of the World's Largest Da'wa Network:** King Salman is also head of the most extensive da'wa network of missionary Muslims in the world, promoting the Salafi brand of Islam. Salafism is historically rooted in Saudi Arabia, and owes its global spread to the financial backing of Saudi Arabia. Its violent offshoots have meant that Saudi Arabia itself is a target for them and in an effort to combat this extremist ideology, King Salman launched the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (GCCCEI) in an inauguration ceremony attended by

US President Donald Trump during his first trip to the Middle East.

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

**Military Action:** In March 2015, King Salman launched a nine-state coalition bombing campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen. The campaign is seen by many as curbing Iranian influence in the region. Saudi Arabia is also supporting many of the anti-Assad factions in Syria.

**Key Appointments:** King Salman has made important decisions regarding appointments in key positions. The most important of these was the appointment of HRH Prince Muhammad bin Naif as Crown Prince. This marked the first time that a grandson of King Abdul-Aziz, rather than a son, held the position. The transfer of power to the new generation, which some feared would be an issue that would split the country, was remarkably smooth. Since then, King Salman has promoted one of his sons, HRH Prince Muhammad bin Salman, to Crown Prince. Another key appointment was of Adel Al-Jubeir, someone who is not a member of the Saudi royal family, as Foreign Minister.

**Historical Decisions:** Since the appointment of his son as Crown Prince, several major historical decisions have been made including allowing women in Saudi Arabia to drive, opening cinemas and encouraging more foreign investment. The decision to float Saudi Aramco however, was one that King Salman did not approve of.

**Country:** Jordan

**Born:** 30 Jan 1962 (Age 56)

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

**Influence:** King with authority over 8 million Jordanians; outreach to Traditional Islam

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni

2016 Rank: 1

2017 Rank: 2

2018 Rank: 3

*“To me, this call to love is a call to concrete action. Our world needs to confront challenges to our shared humanity and values. They are the very ground of the coexistence and harmony our future depends on.”*

**41<sup>st</sup>** generation

direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad 🕌

**50** thousand

Jordanian troops working with the United Nations in peacekeeping missions across the world. Jordan ranks third internationally in participation in U.N. peacekeeping missions.



🕌 3 🕌

*His Majesty*

**King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein**

# HM King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein

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

King Abdullah tops The Muslim 500 “The Top 100 Cumulative Influence Over Ten Years” list (see page 115)

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

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

On the other side, on its borders with both Syria and Iraq, Jordan has been waging a quiet war against DA’ISH for the past four years, and acts as a buffer protecting both Saudi Arabia to its South and Egypt’s Sinai to its West. Finally, Jordan is actually the Middle of the Middle East. Being at the geographic crossroads of the three great continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, it straddles not only cultural and religious borders but also trade and shipping routes and international gas and electricity regional grids.

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

**Longevity:** Rightly or wrongly, monarchs rule longer than elected presidents, and after 20 years on the throne, and now being the second longest-serving Arab ruler (and still in his 50s), King Abdullah has had the opportunity to acquire a vast depth of experience, connections and influence. This, no doubt, is why he tops the ‘Top 100 Cumulative Influence Over Ten Years’ list (see p.115). His father King Hussein himself ruled for 47 years and was the longest-serving Arab leader when he died in 1999.

**Support for Jerusalem (Al-Quds):** HM King Abdullah II is the custodian of Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem, the sacred compound which contains Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. HM is also the custodian of Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. He has strongly supported the upkeep and renovation of these sites.

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

**Islamic Outreach:** In response to growing Islamophobia in the West in the wake of 9/11 and rising sectarian strife, King Abdullah II launched the Amman Message initiative (see page 55), which was unanimously adopted by the Islamic World’s political and temporal leaderships. King Abdullah II is

also credited with the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought's most authoritative website on the Holy Qur'an and Tafsir (see page 207). He also founded the World Islamic Sciences and Education University in Jordan ([www.wise.edu.jo](http://www.wise.edu.jo)) in 2008. In 2012, King Abdullah II set up integrated professorial chairs for the study of the work of Imam Ghazali at the Aqsa Mosque and Imam Razi at the King Hussein Mosque. And in 2014, he established a fellowship for the study of love in religion at Regent's Park College, Oxford University.

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

**Interfaith Outreach:** HM King Abdullah II is also lauded as an interfaith leader for his support of the 2007 A Common Word initiative (see page 155). He was also the initiator and driving force behind the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week Resolution in 2010 (see page 186). In 2014 HM King Abdullah hosted HH Pope Francis in

Jordan (having previously hosted both HH Pope Benedict XVI and HH Pope John Paul II). In 2015 the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ on Jordan's River Bank was unanimously voted a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Thus, at the same time that DA'ISH was destroying Syria and Iraq's historical and archaeological treasures, King Abdullah was preserving not just Muslim Holy Sites, but Christian Holy Sites and universal historical treasures as well.

**Safe Haven:** Jordan has around 2 million registered and unregistered refugees from Syria and Iraq and other regional conflicts (such as Libya and Yemen), in addition to around 2 million refugees from the Palestine conflict. Despite its paucity of resources, Jordan has welcomed and accommodated a staggering number of refugees and is seen by many as the most stable country in a turbulent region. It has the highest percentage of refugees of any country in the world.

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

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نُّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنَ أَمْرٍ بِصَدَقَةٍ  
 أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ  
 ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

There is no good in much of their secret conferences save (in) whosoever enjoineeth charity and fairness and peace-making among the people and whoso doeth that, seeking the good pleasure of God, We shall bestow on him a vast reward.

# THE AMMAN MESSAGE



[www.AmmanMessage.com](http://www.AmmanMessage.com)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Country:** Iran

**Born:** 17 July 1939 (Age 79)

**Source of Influence:** Political, Administrative

**Influence:** Supreme Leader of 77.7 million Iranians

**School of Thought:** Traditional Twelver Shi'a, Revolutionary Shi'ism

2016 Rank: 4

2017 Rank: 4

2018 Rank: 4

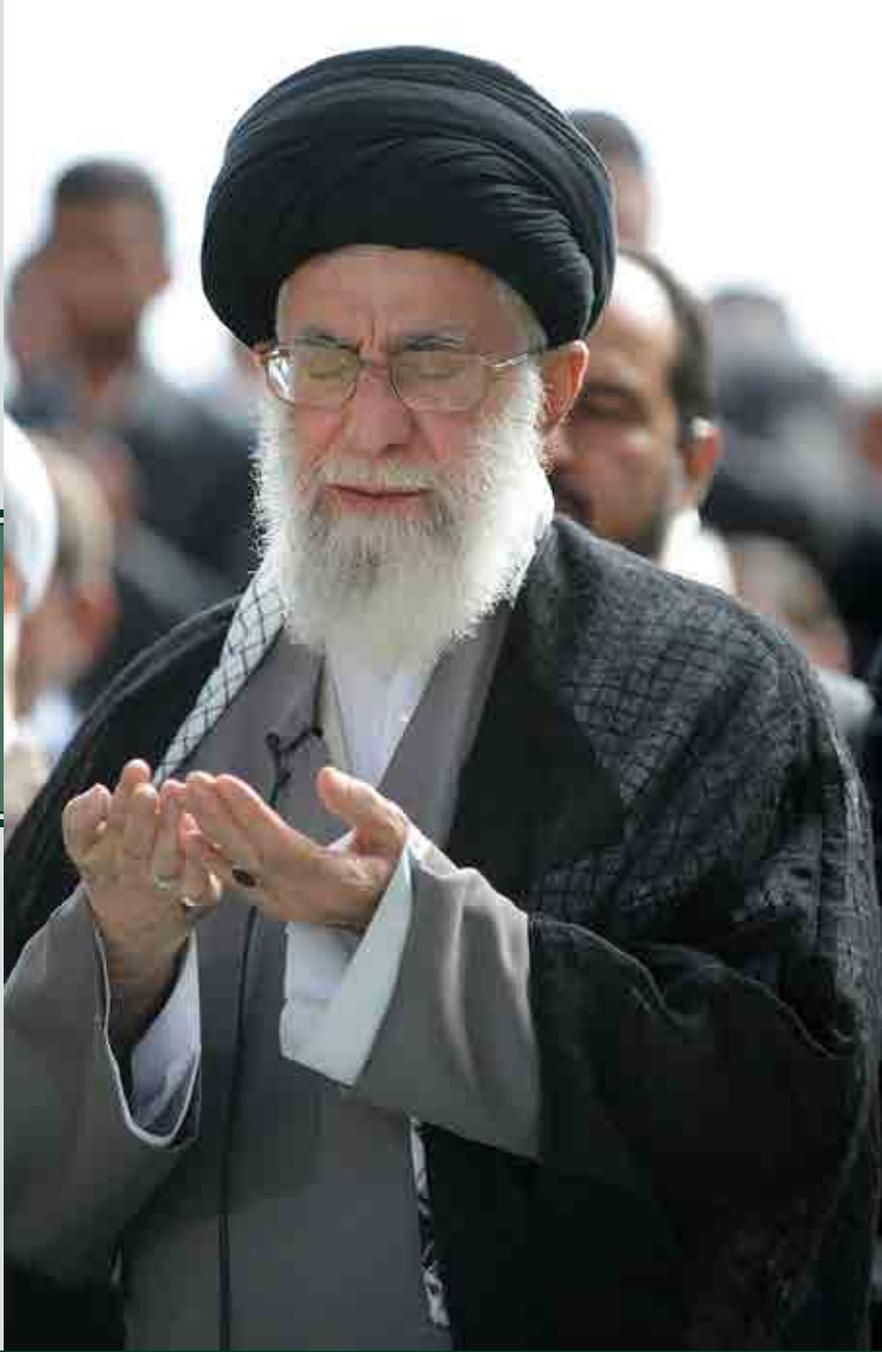
*"Today we see the signs of this thirst for the message of Islam, which is the message of monotheism, the message of spirituality, the message of justice, the message of human dignity."*

**17** thousand

housing units constructed and delivered to families in poor regions of Iran.

**\$431** billion

is Iran's GDP.



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*His Eminence*

**Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei**

# HE Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Grand Ayatollah Khamenei is the second Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He was born in Mashhad, and studied in the leading Iranian religious seminary in Qom, before becoming involved in the struggle with the Pahlavi Regime in the sixties and seventies. He was a key figure in the revolution in 1979 and served as President between 1981-1989 before succeeding Ayatollah Khomeini as Supreme Leader upon the latter's death. He has vocally supported most of the unrest in the Arab World, likening it to the Iranian Revolution. As a symbol for Iranian sovereignty, Khamenei lashed out against President Trump's "gangster" and "cowboy" rhetoric in his speech to the UN in September 2017, in which he threatened Iran and suggested that the US repeal the nuclear deal agreement signed under the Obama era.

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

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

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

**Current Issues:** The US's decision to pull out of the nuclear deal and re-impose sanctions will put further strain on the economy. Iran's role in the Syria and Yemen conflicts and how it maintains its relationships with the Arab world are further key issues that require Khamenei's lead.

*Amir Kabir Dam, Iran*



**Country:** Morocco

**Born:** 21 Aug 1963 (Age 55)

**Source of Influence:** Political, Administrative, Development

**Influence:** King with authority over 32 million Moroccans

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni, Maliki

2016 Rank: 5

2017 Rank: 5

2018 Rank: 6

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

**50%**

renewable energy capacity goal by 2030

**17%**

youth unemployment rate



ۛ 5 ۛ

*His Majesty*

**King Mohammed VI**

# HM King Mohammed VI

## King of Morocco

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

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

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

**Huge Influence over Muslims in Africa:** King Mohammed VI leads the largest African monarchy, with a population of 32 million. Besides political links, Morocco maintains strong spiritual ties with Muslims all over Africa. Morocco is the site of the tomb of a highly revered Sufi sheikh, Mawlana

Ahmed ibn Mohammed Tijani Al-Hassani-Maghribi (1735-1815 CE), the founder of the Tijaniyya Sufi order, whose shrine attracts millions from across the continent. Morocco is also recognized as a source for the spread of Islam through West Africa.

**The Marrakesh Declaration:** The King invited hundreds of the Islamic world's leading scholars to gather for a 3-day summit in Marrakesh in January 2016 to address the question of the treatment of religious minorities in Muslim-majority communities. Basing themselves on the Charter of Medina, also known as the Constitution of Medina, which was drawn up by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself, they issued calls for majority-Muslim communities to respect minorities' "freedom of movement, property ownership, mutual solidarity and defense". HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco delivered the inaugural address and pointed to the history of Islam's co-existence with other religions. This showed how Islam has enshrined the rights of religious minorities, and promoted religious tolerance and diversity. (see page 161)

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

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

*An oasis fortress*



**Country:** Pakistan

**Born:** 5 October 1943 (age 75)

**Source of Influence:** Scholarly, Lineage

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

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni (Hanafi, Deobandi)

2016 Rank: 22

2017 Rank: 6

2018 Rank: 7

*“Nothing destroys one’s respect in the hearts of others more than greed.”*

**143** publications

authored in Arabic, English, and Urdu.

**10** thousand

students at the Darul ‘Uloom Karachi



۞ 6 ۞

*His Honourable*

**Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani**

# HH Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani

## Deobandi Leader

Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani is a leading scholar of Islamic jurisprudence. He is considered to be the intellectual leader of the Deobandi movement. He served as Judge of the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan from 1982 to May 2002. He specialises in Islamic jurisprudence and financial matters.

**Deobandi Figurehead:** Usmani is very important as a figurehead in the Deobandi movement—one of the most successful of the Islamic revivalist initiatives of the past century. Usmani was born in Deoband, India, to Mufti Muhammad Shafi (the former Grand Mufti of Pakistan) who founded the Darul ‘Uloom, Karachi, a leading centre of Islamic education in Pakistan. He has authority to teach hadith from Sheikhul Hadith Moulana Zakariya Khandelawi amongst others, and he traversed the spiritual path of Tasawwuf under the guidance of Sheikh Dr. Abdul Hayy Arifi, a student of the founder of Deoband, Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. It is estimated that over 65% of all madrassas in Pakistan are Deobandi as well as 600 of the 2000 mosques in the UK. Deobandis consider themselves orthodox Hanafi Sunnis. They rely heavily on the writings of the 18th century scholar Shah Waliullah Dehlvi.

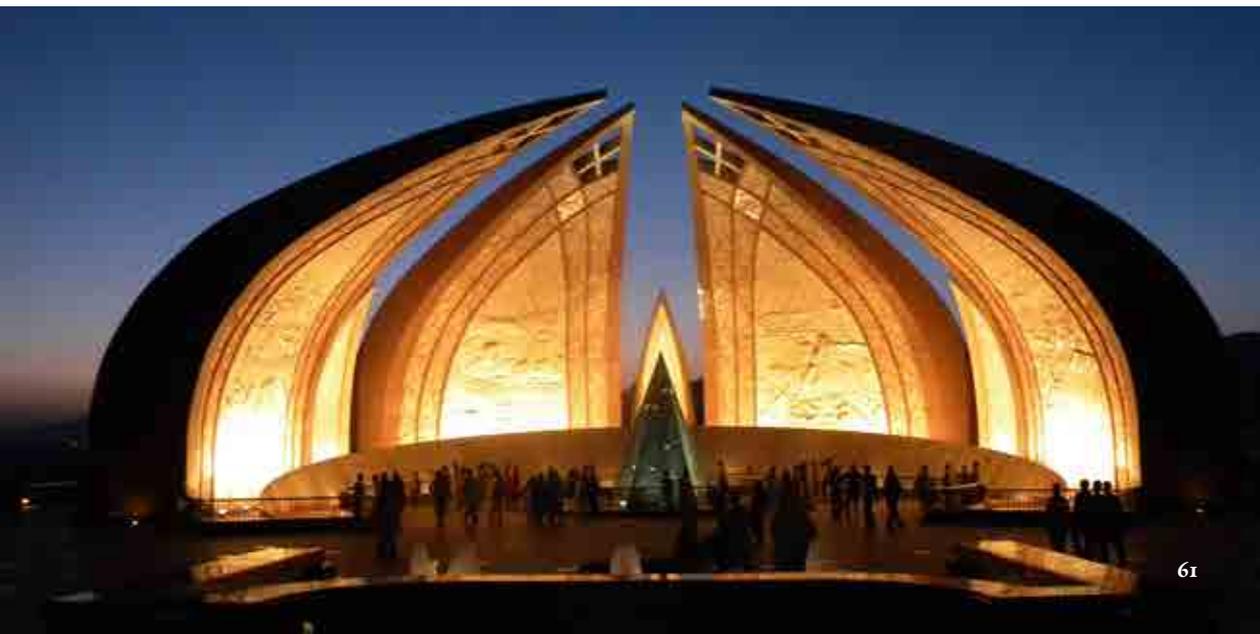
**Leading Islamic Finance Scholar:** Usmani’s other influence comes from his position as a global authority on the issue of Islamic finance. He has

served on the boards, and as chairman, of over a dozen Islamic banks and financial institutions, and currently leads the International Shariah Council for the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) in Bahrain. He is also a permanent member of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, one of the highest legal bodies in the Muslim world.

**Writer:** He is the Chief Editor of both the Urdu and English monthly magazine ‘Albalagh’, and regularly contributes articles to leading Pakistani newspapers on a range of issues. He has authored more than 60 books in Arabic, English, and Urdu.

**New Works:** He is directly supervising The Hadith Encyclopedia, a masterful, pioneering compilation which will provide a universal number to each Hadith in a manner that will make referencing any Hadith as easy as it is to refer to an Ayat of the Quran. The Encyclopedia will be over 300 volumes. A second major work being undertaken is entitled The Jurisprudence (Fiqh) of Trade. The Book concludes with a proposed Code of Islamic Law of Sale of Goods and Transfer of Property, which serves as a powerful “Call to Action” for regulators and standard-setting organizations alike.

*Pakistan Monument, Islamabad*



**Country:** Iraq

**Born:** 4 Aug 1930 (Age 88)

**Source of Influence:** Scholarly, Lineage

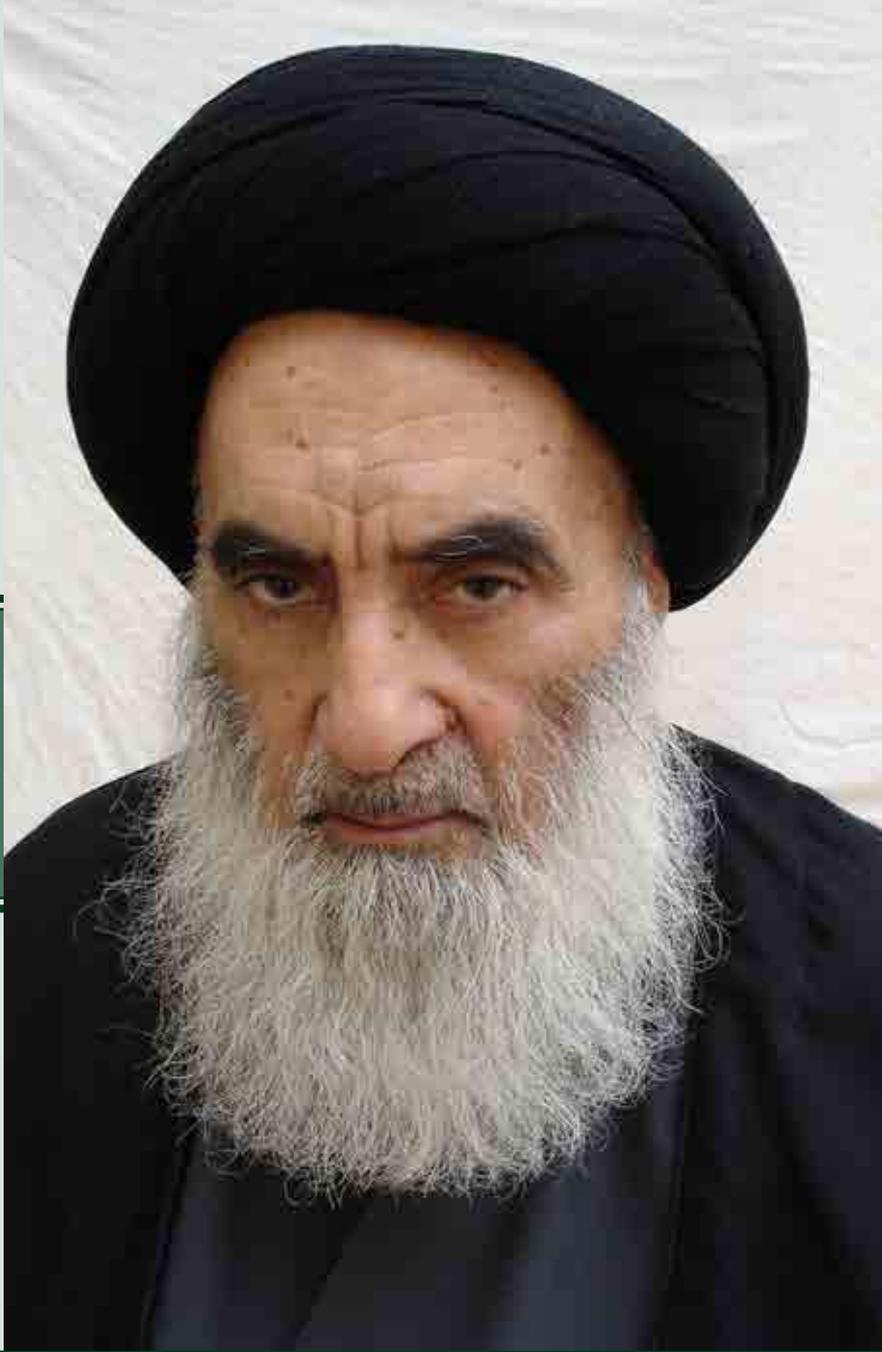
**Influence:** Highest authority for 21 million Iraqi Shi'a, and also internationally known as a religious authority to Usuli Twelver Shi'a.

**School of Thought:** Traditional Twelver Shi'a, Usuli

2016 Rank: 9

2017 Rank: 7

2018 Rank: 8



*"The sons of the Iraqi people demand a political system based on direct elections and a constitution that realizes justice and equality for everyone"*

**49** thousand  
students supported annually

**3** hundred  
theological centres funded annually



*His Eminence*

**Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani**

# HE Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani

## Marja of the Hawza

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

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

**Financial Influence:** Sistani also has very significant financial clout due to his position as *marja*. As a *marja* his followers give him a religious tax (*khums*, Arabic for one-fifth). The redistribution of this tax for the common good is one of the key

roles of a marja. Much of this remittance is redistributed through the Al-Khoei Foundation—the largest Twelver Shia development organization in the world that maintains a network of educational and humanitarian establishments for both Shia and non-Shia Muslims.

**Quietist Influence:** Significantly, Sistani is against the idea of *Velayat-e Faqih*, suggesting Shia clerics should not get involved in politics. Paradoxically this approach has afforded him very strong influence as a religious leader unsullied by politics. Ali Sistani has used his position of quietist authority to wield influence also as a peacemaker in turbulent, post-invasion Iraq. At a time when Sistani was losing support to Sheikh Muqtada Al-Sadr, he showed his sway by arranging a lasting deal between Sadr and US forces at the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf in 2005—a deal that secured the Shrine and pushed for an American retreat. Sistani was vocal about encouraging Iraqis to participate in the 2010 parliamentary elections. He strongly condemned the Baghdad church attack in October 2010 and also advised Iraqi security forces to take more responsibility for the protection of Iraqi citizens. He has strongly supported the prime minister of Iraq, Haydar Al-Abadi, asking him to form an inclusive, strong and efficient government. He has also issued strong statements against DA'ISH, calling on Iraqis to unite against the militants.

Karbala, Iraq



**Country:** Yemen

**Born:** 27 May 1963 (age 55)

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

**Influence:** millions of traditional Muslim followers globally

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

2016 Rank: 28

2017 Rank: 25

2018 Rank: 10

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

15

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

1993<sub>CE</sub>

is the year Dar Al-Mustafa was founded.



۞ 8 ۞

*His Eminence*

Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz

# Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz

## Director of Dar Al Mustafa

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

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

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

**Da'wa and Humanitarian Efforts:** Habib Umar is noted for his da'wah efforts, with significant visits to the USA and Europe. He has also partnered with Muslim Aid Australia as founder of Yemen-based NGO Al Rafah Charitable Society to address issues of poverty and hunger and lack of sufficient health care that affect areas of Tarim. His students, most notably Habib 'Ali Al-Jifri (see page 96) who established the Tabah Foundation and Habib Kadhim

Al-Saqqaf, are luminaries in their own right. He has a substantial following on social media, via Muwasala, an organisation founded by his students to "promote the scholarly teachings of the blessed tradition of Hadramawt."

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

Tarim Mosque



**Country:** Egypt

**Born:** 1946 (Age 72)

**Source of Influence:** Administrative

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

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni

2016 Rank: 2

2017 Rank: 1

2018 Rank: 1

*“The unity between the Muslims and Coptic Christians of Egypt is something of absolute importance.”*

**7**  
years

as the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar

**3**  
years

as Chairman of The Muslim Council of Elders (see page 165)



۞ 9 ۞

*His Eminence Professor*

**Dr Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb**

# HE Professor Dr Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar University, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Mosque

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

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

**Political Stance:** Over the past years of political uncertainty and unrest in Egypt and in particular during the months that led up to the Egyptian armed forces deposing Muhammad Morsi as President of Egypt, Tayyeb attempted to mediate between Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government on the one hand and opposition political forces on the other. It was the only time Morsi and the opposition sat together and given their mutual intransigence, Tayyeb's attempt at mediation did not succeed. While Tayyeb has been outspoken against the Muslim Brotherhood for their exploitation of Islam as a political ideology, Al-Azhar has experienced recent tensions with the establishment of President Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi. President Al-Sisi has increasingly called on a "religious revolution" and efforts to "renew Islamic discourse," which have been met by ambivalence by the Azharite establishment. Such efforts included the suggestion to revoke the verbal divorce law in Egypt. Al-Azhar wholly rejected the President's plan, calling the law an "undisputed practice since the days of the Prophet Muhammad." Tayyeb has been active in trying to diffuse the influence of DA'ISH, organizing many initiatives and conferences. He has also tried to improve foreign relations and met with many foreign religious leaders and heads of states (including the Pope and Queen Elizabeth).

**Advocate of Traditional Islam:** Sheikh Tayyeb has emphasized his mission to promote traditional Islam since becoming Grand Sheikh. He has stressed the importance of teaching students about Islamic heritage—considering Al-Azhar graduates as ambassadors of Islam to the world. In an age where the claimants to authoritative Islam seem to be on every corner Sheikh Tayyeb has both the institute and the personal skills to authentically claim to be a representative of traditional Islam, Islam as practiced by the majority of Muslims throughout the ages. On 29 August 2016 during the World Islamic Conference held in Grozny, Chechnya, Sheikh Tayyeb defined the Sunni community (Ahl Sunnah wa Jama'a) as those who follow Imam Abul-Hasan Al-Ash'ari and Imam Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi and the scholars of Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi'i jurisprudence, as well as the moderate scholars of Hanbali school. He also included the Sufis following in the way of Imam Al-Junayd.

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

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

**Country:** Saudi Arabia  
**Born:** May 1955 (Age 63)  
**Source of Influence:** Scholarly, Media  
**Influence:** 53 published books, supervises IslamToday.net, and reaches millions through TV  
**School of Thought:** Moderate Salafi  
2016 Rank: 17  
2017 Rank: 19  
2018 Rank: 11

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

**50** books published

**22** million followers on Twitter and Facebook



﴿ 10 ﴾

*His Eminence*

Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda

# Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda

## Saudi scholar and educator

A leading Saudi sheikh, Salman Al-Ouda is a former hard-line cleric turned advocate of peaceful coexistence. He is increasingly influential due to his innovative reach in the Muslim World propagated via IslamToday.net and his persistent efforts at ministering to the needs of the global Muslim community. In September 2017, Al-Ouda was arrested by Saudi authorities along with twenty other Saudi clerics for Tweets that were seen as offensive to the State (for refusing to criticise Qatar). He is still imprisoned (including 5 months of solitary confinement), and the public prosecutor is now demanding the death penalty.

**Key Scholar of Salafi Network:** Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda is a leading scholar of the Salafi movement. Although he is not noted for propagating innovative ideas within the network, he has notable influence in the movement due to his use of multiple modes of education (the Internet, audiovisual media, and print) to educate the large body of Salafi Muslims in the Islamic sciences. Sheikh Al-Ouda's website brings together a diverse range of Islamic scholars and educators to provide guidance in Islamic thought. Although he is by no means a figure of dissent and is loyal to the Saudi regime, Al-Ouda espouses reformist, pan-Islamic views and sentiments on his social media outlets. His far-spanning reach places him under added scrutiny by the political establishment.

**Influence Through Virtual Islamic Resources:** Sheikh Al-Ouda supervises all content published on IslamToday.net—a website that offers virtual resources for Islamic education in multiple languages. His work has far-reaching impact in an age when religion is spread through media and technology,

with IslamToday.net at the forefront of this trend. In response to a February 2010 ruling from the Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee condemning the use of Facebook, Sheikh Al-Ouda defended the social networking website, stating that he uses it to communicate with Muslims across the globe and to provide Islamic guidance online. Sheikh Al-Ouda has a following of over seven million fans on Facebook and nearly that many views of his official videos on YouTube. He also has over 14 million followers on Twitter.

**Innovative Educator:** Al-Ouda developed a following from weekly talks at his local mosque in Buraydah and has become an authority for Muslims and non-Muslims worldwide who access IslamToday.net—a Saudi-funded website dedicated to providing Islamic educational resources in English, Arabic, French and Chinese. He also addresses Islamic issues on the Saudi satellite channel MBC.

**Ambassador of Non-violence:** In an effort to distance himself from alleged connections to perpetrators of terrorism, Al-Ouda is outspoken about the importance of inculcating love and mercy as opposed to violence (except in valid cases of self-defense) in the daily lives of Muslims. As a prominent member of the International Union for Muslim Scholars, he led the delegation in talks with Arab heads of state regarding the need for them to unite in opposition to Israel's siege of Gaza in early 2009. He has strongly condemned DA'ISH. He also called for peace and unity between members of the GCC and Qatar, which, led to his arrest alongside other clerics in a series of clampdowns on the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia.

*Date palms in Buraidah, Saudi Arabia*



**Country:** Mauritania

**Born:** 1935 (age 83)

**Source of Influence:** Scholarly

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

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni (Maliki)

2016 Rank: 23

2017 Rank: 9

2018 Rank: 9

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

**90** thousand

Muslim scholars found in the International Union of Muslim Scholars.

**700**

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



﴿ 11 ﴾

*His Eminence*

Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah

# HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah

## President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies

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

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

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

**Author:** Having written numerous texts, Sheikh bin Bayyah's scholarly explorations have gone global through speaking engagements that draw crowds

of tens of thousands. He has spoken at length about the endurance of the Islamic legal tradition and also written extensively on rulings for Muslims living as minorities in foreign lands, or *fiqh al aqaliyaat*.

**Activist:** In June 2013, Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah visited the White House where he met with senior advisers and aides to President Obama. He called for the protection of the Syrian people and the Muslim minority in Myanmar. Also, he met with Bill Gates during the Global Vaccine Summit in Abu Dhabi in April 2013. He recently initiated the 'Muslim Council of Elders' which embraces leading scholars (including the Sheikh of Al-Azhar), and presided over a large gathering of religious scholars at a forum entitled 'Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies'.

**The Marrakesh Declaration:** Sheikh Abdallah bin Bayyah led around 250 Muslim religious leaders, in addition to approximately 50 non-Muslim religious leaders, in a three day summit in Marrakesh entitled: 'The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities: Legal Framework and a Call to Action.' The summit used the original Charter of Medina, drawn up by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself, as a basis for addressing the current crisis of religious minorities in parts of the Muslim world. With extremists committing violence in the name of Islam against other religions, as well as against most Muslims, it was necessary to voice the position of normative Islam vis-à-vis religious minorities through a gathering of its leading scholars. The summit concluded with the release of the 750 word Marrakesh Declaration (see page 161).

*Guel er Richât, Adrar Plateau, Mauritania—photo from the International Space Station*



**Country:** Oman

**Born:** 18 Nov 1940 (Age 78)

**Source of Influence:** Lineage, Political, Development

**Influence:** Leader of 4 million citizens and residents of Oman.

**School of Thought:** Traditional Ibadi

2016 Rank: 6

2017 Rank: 11

2018 Rank: 12

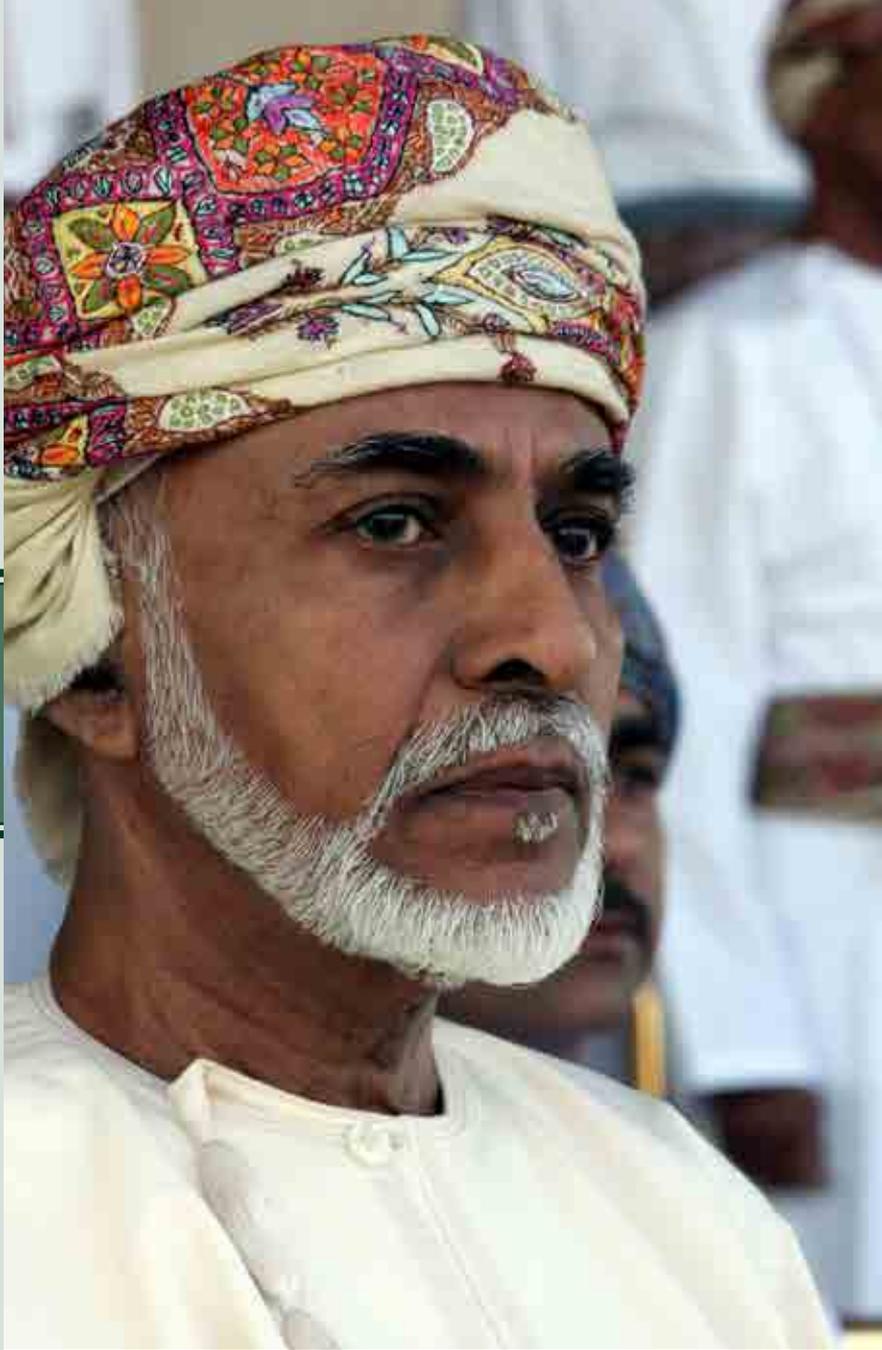
*"We continue to stand against injustice and darkness and remain on the side of justice, light and harmony."*

1.3%

inflation rate

967 thousand

barrels of crude oil produced daily



12

*His Majesty*

Sultan Qaboos bin Saïd Al-Saïd

# HM Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al-Sa'id

## Sultan of Oman

Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al-Sa'id, the 14th descendant of the Al-Bu Sa'idi dynasty, is a socially and politically active monarch, who has ruled for over 40 years as Sultan. Sultan Qaboos has revolutionized and modernized Oman, transforming it from a poor, isolationist nation into a land closely-linked with the African continent and devoted to economic development, regional stability, and religious tolerance.

**Leader of Omani Sultanate:** Sultan Qaboos Al-Sa'id reigns over a country strategically situated in the Gulf region. Oman has a stake in the crude oil market due to the Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Gulf of Oman to the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, producing over 950,000 barrels of crude oil per day according to Oman's Oil and Gas Ministry. Historically, Oman is significant as one of the only countries with a large population of Ibadi Muslims and as the most authoritative state in the Ibadi movement—one that is recognized as one of the oldest schools of Islamic thought.

**Beacon of Islam:** Sultan Qaboos has helped build or restore thousands of mosques at his personal expense, the grandest being the Sultan Qaboos Mosque, which can accommodate up to 20,000 worshippers. The Sultan is a discreet but strong supporter of moderate Islam and has created a unique Islamic culture in Oman that has carefully combined the best of traditional Islam with the benefits of the modern world. Sultan Qaboos has promoted culturally-specific Islamic dress, art, architecture and education, and is a keen advocate of environmentalism. Qaboos has also supported the non-Muslim population through the construction of Catholic and Protestant churches in the country as well as Hindu temples.

**Personal Leadership:** The Sultan has raised the Omani standard of living by building up Oman's school system, health care, infrastructure, and economy. He cites political participation as one of his major long-term goals. Within the last two decades, he has introduced political reforms; including a bicameral representative body, a basic law, universal suffrage, and a supreme court. Moreover, despite Oman's relative lack of oil and gas compared to other Gulf States, the Sultan has invested his country's

wealth so that all citizens are guaranteed free education up to the doctoral level (should they qualify); free healthcare, free land, soft loans for building homes, jobs and social security for the disabled, orphans and widows.

**International Leader:** Sultan Qaboos has been recognized by organizations such as the United Nations and the National Council of US-Arab Relations for his leadership in the Persian Gulf region. In 2008, he presided over the GCC Summit, where he was commended for his ongoing efforts toward political and economic cooperation amongst the GCC states. Sultan Qaboos has made an effort to strengthen ties between Oman and Iran, as well as the strategic partnership between Oman and India—showing the Sultan's foresight in carving foreign policy independent of that of his Arab neighbours.

*Wadi Shab, Oman*



**Country:** Saudi Arabia  
**Born:** 31 August 1985 (Age 33)  
**Source of Influence:** Political  
**School of Thought:** Moderate Salafi  
2017 Rank: 14  
2018 Rank: 13

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

**\$56** billion  
spent on defence in 2018.

**334**  
square kilometres is the size of the Kingdom’s largest cultural, sports and entertainment city in Al Qiddiya.



13

*His Royal Highness*

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

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

## Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia

HRH Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman Al-Saud is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Chief of the Royal Court, Minister of State, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, all at the tender age of 33, making him the youngest Minister of Defence in the world.

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

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

**Catalyst of Change:** The Crown Prince has been linked to major changes taking place in the Kingdom: allowing women drivers, allowing women to attend football matches and concerts, the (re-) opening of cinemas, a crackdown on corruption (including the arrest of princes and prominent businessmen), and the proposal to float part of Saudi Aramco to mention a few.

**Charity Work and Youth Development:** Before his recent promotions, Prince Muhammad bin Salman was known as the founder and chairman of the 'Misk Foundation', a charitable initiative seeking to bolster creativity, innovation and talent in Saudi youths in the fields of science, arts and technology. He also heads the King Salman Youth Centre. These experiences, and his own age, have made him popular amongst the youth (70% of the Saudi population is under 30).

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

*Edge of the World, Saudi Arabia*



**Country:** Pakistan  
**Born:** 1923 (Age 95)  
**Source of Influence:** Scholarly, Administrative  
**Influence:** Leader of an international organisation.  
**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni, Hanafi  
2016 Rank: 10  
2017 Rank: 10  
2018 Rank: 14

*“People out there are burning in the fire of ignorance and you are wasting your time here inquiring after my health!”*

**4**million

people gather from around the world to attend the ijtema in Aurangabad in India.

**169**countries

have chapters of the Tablighi Jamaat.



﴿ 14 ﴾

*Amir Hajji*

Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab

# Hajji Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab

## Amir of Tablighi Jamaat

Leader of the Pakistan chapter of the Tablighi Jamaat—a transnational Islamic organization dedicated to spreading the message of religious conservatism and renewed spirituality—Hajji Abdul-Wahhab is a prominent Pakistani scholar with a significant following in South Asia and the United Kingdom. Although the organization does not have a central authority, Abdul-Wahhab has been increasingly influential in his leadership of the throngs of Muslims that follow the international movement in Pakistan and abroad.

**Missionary:** As Amir, or leader of Pakistan's Tablighi Jamaat, Hajji Abdul-Wahhab's influence spans globally due to the organization's emphasis on missionary work. Considered a foremost da'ee, or inviter to the faith of Islam, Abdul-Wahhab has spoken about the need to return to the correct beliefs and practices of Islam in numerous countries and congregations.

**Champion of Conservatism:** Abdul-Wahhab urges Muslims to repent for their sins and to emulate the life of the Prophet Muhammad by adhering to the Sunnah—the Prophet's teachings and deeds. Among these is an exhortation to partake in the act of da'wa or spreading the message of the faith. The Tablighi Jamaat has gradually acquired a massive membership base owing to this core tenet. Abdul-Wahhab's work is derived from close ties to the founder of

the Tablighi Jamaat, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhelvi, and stems from the prominent Islamic institution Darul Uloom Deoband, in India, where the latter studied before establishing a following in Pakistan.

**Mass Appeal:** Among the throngs of Pakistanis, diaspora South Asians, and others who carry the flag of the Tablighi Jamaat are notable Muslim leaders. In Pakistan alone, Abdul-Wahhab's influence has won the allegiance of prominent politicians, actors, and athletes. Despite his influence over key Muslim leaders from various fields of social power, Abdul-Wahhab is consistent in his assertion that the organization is wholly apolitical—identifying the work of the Tablighi Jamaat as a spiritual revivalist movement. Annual gatherings in Raiwind, Pakistan draw close to 2 million people, and those in Biswa, Bangladesh attract over 3 million.

**Advocate of Non-violence:** In light of heightened incidences of violence by fringe Islamic militant groups, Abdul-Wahhab has publicly stated the importance of non-violence in bringing people closer to the faith of Islam. This comes after the tragic Mumbai attacks which investigations found were linked to the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba; a militant organization Abdul-Wahhab has made a point of distancing from the Tablighi Jamaat.

*Wazir Khan Mosque, Lahore, Pakistan*



**Country:** UAE

**Born:** 3 Oct 1961 (Age 57)

**Source of Influence:** Administrative, Development, Philanthropy

**Influence:** Military and political leadership.

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni

2016 Rank: 7

2017 Rank: 12

2018 Rank: 15

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

**2.12**million

call Abu Dhabi home.

**20%**

of Abu Dhabi's population is Emirati.



15

*His Highness*

General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed  
Al-Nahyan

# HH General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan is the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, as well as next in line to be President of the United Arab Emirates. The UAE is increasingly becoming an important centre for global weapons trading, with Abu Dhabi host to one of the world's largest defence expos.

**Political and Military Leadership:** Since becoming Crown Prince in 2004, Sheikh Mohammed has been recognized for his groundbreaking initiatives as an influential leader of Abu Dhabi. As Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohammed's directives were central to the Arab coalition military campaigns against Houthi strongholds in Yemen. He has played a key role in the Saudi, Egyptian, Bahraini, and Emirati blockade on Qatar. Involvement in other key issues shows that the UAE is punching above its weight international affairs.

**Economic Development:** With Abu Dhabi sitting on one of the world's top 10 proven oil reserves, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan maintains

immense political influence in the Muslim World as a leading member of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company—which directs development efforts for the UAE's role in the oil and gas industries. Sheikh Mohammed is chairman of the Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development (ADCED), which has been developing initiatives to boost entrepreneurship among youth in the UAE.

**Humanitarian:** Sheikh Mohammed is noted for his philanthropic and humanitarian efforts in charitable giving. He has donated billions of dollars to various causes, including DH55 million to the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, and purchasing vaccines in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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

*Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi*





# HE President Joko Widodo

## President of Indonesia

Joko Widodo, or Jokowi as he is popularly known, became the President of Indonesia by winning 55% of the vote in the presidential elections which took place in July 2014. He is seen very much as a populist leader, not enjoying the support of religious scholars, nor coming from a wealthy or military background.

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

**Successful and 'Clean' Politician:** Widodo was the mayor of Surakarta before becoming the governor of Jakarta in September 2012.

**Mayor of Surakarta:** He was a successful mayor who enjoyed a close relationship with his constituents. He focused on promoting the city as a centre of Javanese culture, but also developed the public transport system, healthcare and business relations with the community. He forged a reputation for being a 'clean' politician, avoiding the charges of corruption and nepotism which plague most politicians.

**Governor of Jakarta:** His political success continued with his election as governor of Jakarta. He was equally successful as governor making meaningful

reforms in education, public transportation, re-vamping street vendors and traditional markets, and implementing flood control.

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

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

**Future Prospects:** Although economic growth has not been as expected, strong investment in infrastructure and social services ensure that Widodo still enjoys strong support amongst the populace. He is also still seen as an honest leader and oversaw a successful 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. President Widodo has announced his candidacy for the coming April presidential election, selecting Ma'ruf Amin as his running mate. Ma'ruf Amin is leader of the Indonesian Ulema Council, the country's top Muslim clerical body.

*Raja Ampat Islands, Indonesia*



**Country:** Nigeria

**Born:** 17 December 1942 (age 76)

**Source of Influence:** Political

**Influence:** President of Nigeria

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni

2016 Rank: 20

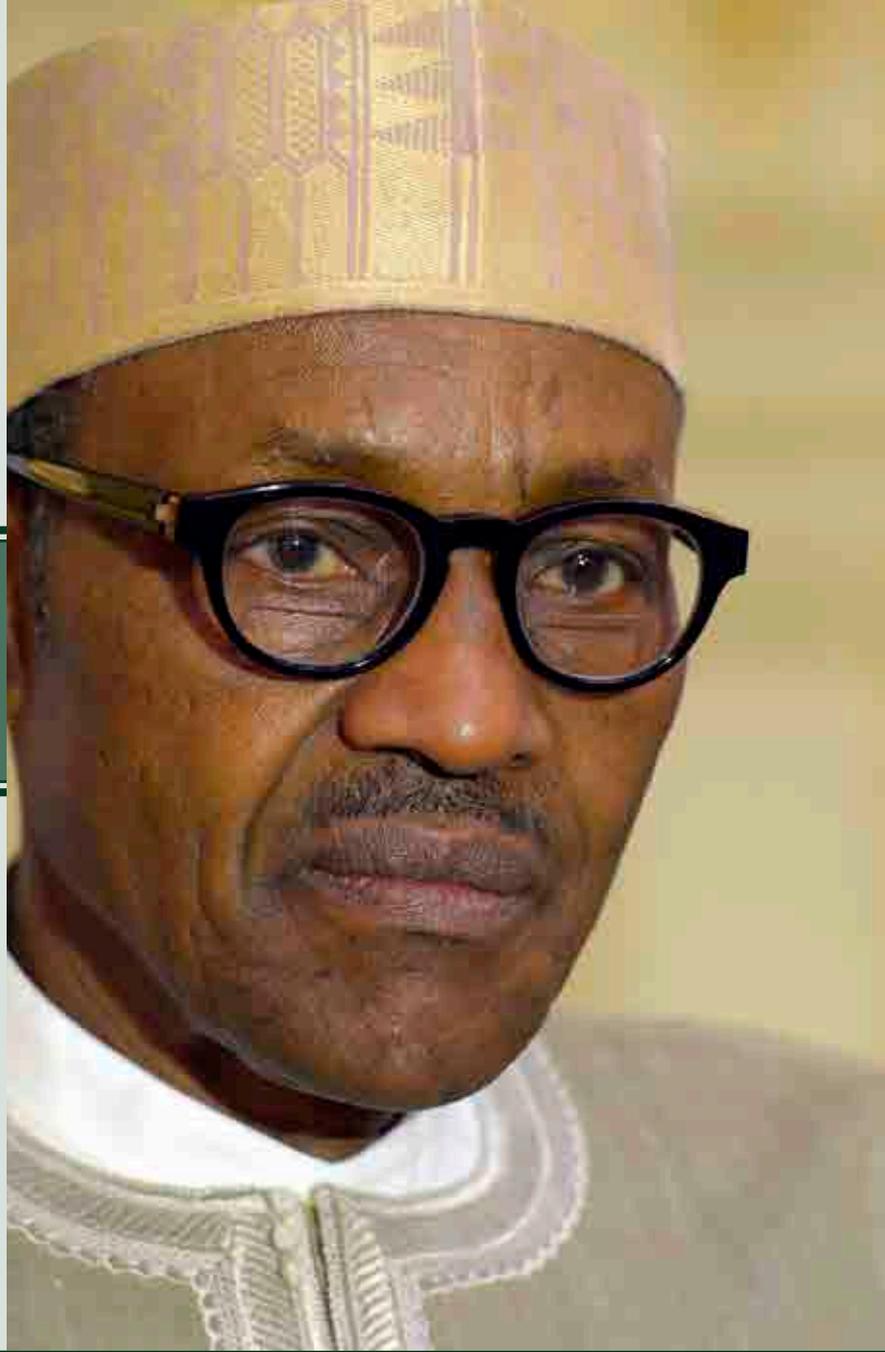
2017 Rank: 17

2018 Rank: 19

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

**\$6.5** billion  
is Nigeria’s trade surplus.

**2.9** billion  
barrels of oil extracted each day.



17

*His Excellence*

President Muhammadu Buhari

# HE President Muhammadu Buhari

## President of Nigeria

President Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as President of Nigeria in May 2015. He was the candidate for the All Progressives Congress and won the presidential election by almost 2.6 million votes. This was the first time in Nigeria's political history in which power transferred peacefully from one political party to another.

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

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

**Fighting Boko Haram:** The President has put defeating Boko Haram on top of his agenda. Boko Haram's actions have consistently caused international outrage, and the President has publicly committed to stop the terror attacks. In July 2014, he

escaped a suicide bombing attack that killed over 50 people. On 6 May 2017, Buhari's government secured a release of 82 out of 276 girls kidnapped in 2014, in exchange for five Boko Haram leaders. President Buhari met with the released Chibok girls, before departing to London, UK, for a follow-up treatment for an undisclosed illness.

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

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

**Elections:** Buhari has confirmed he will seek a second 4-year term in the presidential elections scheduled in February 2019. Buhari's ill health and an opposition coalition of more than thirty parties will be his main obstacles.

*Lagos, Nigeria*



**Country:** Egypt

**Born:** 3 Mar 1953 (Age 65)

**Source of Influence:** Scholarly,  
Political

**Influence:** Legal authority for  
87 million Egyptian Muslims

**School of Thought:** Traditional  
Sunni

2016 Rank: 16

2017 Rank: 18

2018 Rank: 20

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

**10** years

served as the Grand Mufti of  
Egypt.

**4** million

followers on social media



﴿ 18 ﴾

*His Eminence*

Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa

# HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa

## Former Grand Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt

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

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

### **Visit to the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque Controversy:**

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

day. The Grand Mufti also visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was much appreciated by the Christian community of Jerusalem.

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

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

*Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt*



**Country:** Qatar

**Born:** 3 June 1980 (age 38)

**Influence:** Political.

**School of Thought:** Sunni, Muslim Brotherhood

2016 Rank: 42

2017 Rank: 28

2018 Rank: 21

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

**\$5** billion  
in exports from Qatar

**\$44** billion  
is Qatar's GDP



﴿ 19 ﴾

*His Highness*

Emir Sheik Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani

# HH Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamid Al-Thani

## Emir of Qatar

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani became the Emir of Qatar at the age of 33 after his father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, abdicated in June 2013. Qatar is the richest country in the world with a GDP per capita of \$93,352. It is the top exporter of liquefied natural gas, and the site of the third largest natural gas reserves in the world.

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

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

**Expectations:** Qatar exploded onto the world scene under his father's reign, and expectations are that Sheikh Tamim will try to consolidate these achievements. Packing a punch far above its weight has led to neighbouring countries questioning the purpose of so many initiatives. He has had to repair relations with other Gulf countries over supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, and defend Qatar's world image over the treatment of labourers in Qatar.

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

*Doha*



**Country:** Indonesia

**Born:** 3 July 1953 (Age 65)

**Source of Influence:** Administrative, Political, Education

**Influence:** Leader of approximately 30 million members of the Nahdlatul Ulama

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni

2016 Rank: 18

2017 Rank: 20

2018 Rank: 22

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

Over

**40** million

members in Nahdlatul Ulama

**1926**<sup>CE</sup>

is the year Nahdlatul Ulama was founded.



﴿ 20 ﴾

*Professor*

**Dr KH Said Aqil Siradj**

# Professor Dr KH Said Aqil Siradj

## Chairman of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama

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

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

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

organization of traditional Islam—with an emphasis on education and political engagement based on Islamic principles.

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

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

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

*Jakarta, Indonesia*



**Country:** Nigeria

**Born:** 24 Aug 1956 (Age 62)

**Source of Influence:** Lineage, Development, Administrative

**Influence:** Central figure for 85.5 million Nigerian Muslims

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

2016 Rank: 24

2017 Rank: 22

2018 Rank: 23

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

**70** million

Muslims look to His Royal Eminence as their spiritual leader.

**1804**<sub>CE</sub>

is the year the Sokoto Caliphate was founded.



﴿ 21 ﴾

*His Royal Eminence*

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

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

## Sultan of Sokoto

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

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

**An Illustrious Family:** The position currently does carry with it some weight—though largely

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

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

**Boko Haram:** The Sultan has started many initiatives to counter and reduce the influence of Boko Haram, including inviting an international joint Muslim-Christian Delegation to visit Nigeria.

*His Royal Eminence at the National Interfaith Dialogue meeting, Abuja, Nigeria*



**Country:** Senegal  
**Born:** 1955 (Age 63)  
**Source of Influence:** Lineage, Scholarly  
**Influence:** Spiritual leader of around 100 million Tijani Muslims.  
**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni (Maliki, Tijani)  
2016 Rank: 13  
2017 Rank: 16  
2018 Rank: 18

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

Over  
**1** million  
Sufi adherents under his guidance.

**1781**<sub>CE</sub>  
is the year the Tijani Tariqa was founded.



۞ 22 ۞

*His Eminence*

Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse

# Sheikh Ahmad Tijani bin Ali Cisse

## Leader of the Tijaniyya Sufi Order

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

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

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

America attending numerous conferences and participating in religious debates. He also managed to edit and publish several important works, including Sheikh Ibrahim's *Kashif Al-Ilbas*.

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

**Descendent of The Tijaniyya Founder:** The Tijaniyya is a Sufi order founded by Ahmad al Tijani Hasani, an Algerian, in the late 18th century. As the spiritual leader of the Tijaniyya, Cisse is considered to be the bearer of a spiritual inspiration called the *Fayda Tijaniyya*, giving him authority to carry on the teachings of Ahmad al Tijani Hasani. Because of this position, some Tijani Muslims refer to Cisse as the reviver of the Sunnah.

*The Tijani Mosque in Medina Baay, Kaolack, Senegal*



**Country:** Lebanon

**Born:** 31 Aug 1960 (Age 58)

**Influence:** Political, Development. Political leader of 1–2 million Lebanese Shi'a and supporters of his resistance to Israel.

**School of Thought:** Revolutionary Shi'ism

2016 Rank: 35

2017 Rank: 35

2018 Rank: 25

*"Let the entire world hear me. Our hostility to the Great Satan is absolute."*

**7** thousand  
fighters deployed in Syria

Over  
**45** thousand  
active duty troops and reservists  
in Hezbollah



23

Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah

# Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah

## Secretary-General of Hezbollah

Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah is serving his sixth term as the current and third Secretary-General of Hezbollah (the Party of God). Hezbollah is a Twelver Shia Islamic political party, social and paramilitary organization based in Lebanon which seeks social justice through Islamic ideals. Nasrallah is viewed as the charismatic symbol for pro-Iranian and pro-Ba'ath party interests in the Middle East.

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

**Social Services:** Hezbollah has also won significant grassroots support by cultivating a social welfare system that provides schools, clinics and housing in the predominantly Shia parts of Lebanon. These welfare activities are run with efficiency and rival those carried out by the state, giving the organisation even broader appeal. It also runs Al Manar—an influential television station.

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

*The Beqaa Valley, Lebanon*



**Country:** UAE

**Born:** 16 April 1971 (age 47)

**Source of Influence:** Scholarly, Lineage, Philanthropy.

**Influence:** Preacher, Social Issues

**School of Thought:** Traditional Sunni

2016 Rank: 39

2017 Rank: 38

2018 Rank: 28

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

**6** million

followers on Facebook

**11** years

study under Habib Abdul-Qadir Bin Ahmad al-Saqqaf



﴿ 24 ﴾

*His Eminence*

Sheikh Habib 'Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri

# Sheikh Habib ‘Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri

## Director General of the Tabah Foundation, UAE

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

**Sufi Guide:** As a Ba Alawi Sufi, Al-Jifri is part of a tradition that has been based in Yemen for approximately 800 years. His numerous teachers include the scholar and spiritual master Habib Abdul-Qadir bin Ahmad Al-Saqqaf in Jeddah, and Habib Ahmad Mashhur bin Taha Al-Haddad. Habib Ali often teaches at Dar al Mustafa in Tarim, Yemen, and also travels all over the world meeting his students.

He has also made statements against popular revolutions during the Arab Spring for his belief that the preservation of peace and reducing bloodshed is paramount.

**Educator:** Al-Jifri founded the privately-funded philanthropic Tabah Foundation for Islamic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi, a young nonprofit institution that aspires to become a formidable source of reputable work in Islamic research and thought.

**World-Wide following:** Habib Ali’s popularity has grown enormously over the past few years with 6 million Facebook followers and 5 million on Twitter. His inspirational speeches often leave many in tears, and his smile and gentleness touch all who meet him. Despite not speaking English, he is in huge demand by English-speaking Muslims.

*Abu Dhabi*



**Country:** USA

**Born:** 1 January 1960 (age 58)

**Source of Influence:** Preacher,  
Social Issues

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

**School of Thought:** Traditional  
Sunni

2016 Rank: 36

2017 Rank: 35

2018 Rank: 27

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

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the age when he became Muslim

2008<sub>CE</sub>

is the year he co-founded Zay-  
tuna College



﴿ 25 ﴾

Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson

# Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson

## Teacher and Co-Founder of Zaytuna College

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

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

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

**Advisor:** He advises on Islamic Studies to several US universities, and is also on the board of advisors of George Russell's One Nation, a national philanthropic initiative that promotes pluralism and inclusion in America. He works closely with Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah and serves as vice-president for two organisations the Sheikh is president of: the Global Center for Guidance and Renewal, and the UAE-based Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies.

*Zaytuna College co-founders Imam Zaid Shakir (left) and Sheikh Hamzah Yusuf (right) on the campus grounds*





**HE Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal Al-Sheikh**  
 Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
 Country: Saudi Arabia  
 Born: 30 November 1943 (age 75)  
 Influence: Grand Mufti of Saudi and the global network of Salafis  
 School of Thought: Salafi



**HE Sheikha Munira Qubeysi**  
 Leader of the Qubeysi Movement  
 Country: Syria  
 Born: 1933 (age 85)  
 Influence: More than 75 thousand students in Damascus alone  
 School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

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Rank (2018): 17; Rank (2017): 15;  
 Rank (2016): 12

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

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

**Head of Sunni Jurisprudential Committees:** Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Aal Al-Sheikh is chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars, a scientific consultative commission composed of leading Sunni specialist scholars of Sharia (Islamic law). He is recognized for his influence in enforcing a distinct view of Islamic tradition. In 2008, he publicly criticized Muslim televangelists who encouraged Muslims to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. He has also been robust in his condemnation of Turkish soap operas sweeping the Arab World, calling them distracting practices. He is also ardently opposed to the practice of marrying off very young girls to older men, emphasizing its incongruence with human decency and Islamic tradition.

**Central Figure of Global Salafi Movement:** As Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al-Sheikh is the leading religious figure of the Saudi based network of Salafi Muslims. The rulings derived by Al-Sheikh are based heavily on a literal reading of the Qur’an and emphasize the need to strip away past interpretations that have become a part of Muslims’ lives. The movement he leads is characterized by an authoritative stance on Islamic religious practice. He has described DA’ISH as ‘evil’, and called them ‘the number one enemy of Islam.’

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Rank (2018): 29; Rank (2017): 18;  
 Rank (2016): 21

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

**Female Muslim Order:** At a time when clandestine meetings of Islamic organizations are proscribed in Syria, Sheikha Qubeysi’s network, the Qubeysiat, has legally been permitted to host classes and meetings in mosques since 2006—although they had been operating as a secret society for long before that time. Members of the Qubeysiat are provided a unique role within Arab society as scholars and teachers exclusively catering to the needs of Muslim women; they provide an open forum to address religious questions and discuss religious issues.

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

## HE Rached Ghannouchi

Tunisian Politician

Country: Tunisia

Born: 1941 (age 77)

Influence: Political, Scholarly

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2018): 30; Rank (2017): 27;  
Rank (2016): 30

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Ghannouchi is one of the world's leading Islamic thinkers and one of the most influential Tunisian politicians in the post-revolution transition period. With the fall of President Ben Ali, Ghannouchi returned to Tunisia in January 2011 after spending 20-years in exile. He led the Ennahda (Renaissance) Party to victory in the October 2011 National Constituent Assembly elections. He is currently assistant Secretary General of the International Union of Muslim Scholars.

**Politics:** Ghannouchi co-founded The Ennahda Movement in the 1970s and is its current President. He was imprisoned several times before being forced into exile. After successfully returning to Tunisia and winning power in 2011, Ghannouchi then, in 2014, quit government and handed power over to a technocratic government, and when elections were held later that year, Ennahda, without Ghannouchi leading them, came second to the Nidaa Tounes party. In 2012 he received the Chatham House Prize for "the successful compromises each achieved during Tunisia's democratic transition" and in 2016 he received the Jamnalal Bajaj Award for "promoting Gandhian values outside India".

**Countering terrorism:** Ghannouchi has stated that the widespread phenomenon of terrorism in the Arab region is due to corruption in the economic, social and political sectors. He also believes that whoever wants to fight extremism must do so in moderation by following the Tunisian model.

## HE Imran Khan

Prime Minister of Pakistan

Country: Pakistan

Born: 25 November 1952 (age 66)

Influence: Leader of 210 million

Muslims in Pakistan and major influence on the Pakistani diaspora

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni



Rank (2018): 450; Rank (2017): 450;  
Rank (2016): 450

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In August 2018 Imran Khan was sworn in as the 22nd Prime Minister of Pakistan. It had been a long journey.

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

**Challenges:** A crackdown on corruption and bringing accountability to the forefront are his major pledges. He has already implemented cut-backs in extravagant government expenditure and is using his personal credibility to fundraise for a dam.

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

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

**Personal Life:** His three marriages have all attracted considerable media attention. The first to Jemima Goldsmith, the second to Reham Khan, and the third to his current wife Bushra Maneka.



**Sheikh Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi**  
 Head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars  
 Country: Egypt  
 Born: 9 Sept 1926 (age 92)  
 Influence: Leading scholar  
 School of Thought: Sunni, Muslim Brotherhood/Salafi



**Moez Masoud**  
 Televangelist  
 Country: Egypt  
 Born: 4 July 1978 (age 40)  
 Influence: Preacher  
 School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

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Rank (2018): 33; Rank (2017): 31;  
 Rank (2016): 32

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Rank (2018): 32; Rank (2017): 34;  
 Rank (2016): 34

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi is a preeminent Egyptian scholar. Articulate and widely read, he is one of the most famous Islamic scholars of our time. Al-Qaradawi has been sentenced to death in absentia by an Egyptian court along with the ousted President Mohamed Morsi and over 100 other Egyptians affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Meanwhile, Interpol removed Al Qaradawi from its “Wanted” list in 2017.

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

**Leading Figure of the Muslim Brotherhood:** Qaradawi is the intellectual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. He has twice turned down offers to be their leader—in 1976 and 2004—preferring to be free of institutional restrictions. As early as 1997 he stated categorically that he was not a member of the Brotherhood. Earlier in his life Qaradawi was jailed three times for his relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood and subsequently stripped of his Egyptian citizenship in the 1970s—driving him to seek exile in Qatar.

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

Moez Masoud is an Egyptian preacher, television and radio presenter, and activist who focuses on the fields of contemporary spirituality, interfaith dialogue, and Islam in the modern world. His influence is derived from ongoing academic work as well as media.

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

**Media and Social Media:** His engagement in media has been significant since 2007 when his first Arabic TV show debuted, and by now his programs and appearances have acquired millions of viewers across the Arab world. His latest work, broadcast during Ramadan, “*Khutuwat Al-Shaytan*,” was widely viewed across the Arab world programs and was ranked 9th most viewed in the Gulf even when competing with conventional TV dramas. In 2017, Masoud produced the Egyptian film “Clash” which has been hailed as “one of the most telling depictions of modern Egypt yet filmed” and the film has been selected to represent Egypt in the Oscars’ 2017 Best Foreign Language Film race. Masoud is active in various social media sites, including Youtube videos (over 10 million views), Facebook (8 million likes) and Twitter (3 million followers). Masoud participated in the brief post Tahrir “Egyptian National Dialogue” and has continued that dialogue on socio-political issues in Egypt from within the perspective of traditional Islam.

## Maulana Mahmood Madani

Leader and Executive Member  
of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind  
Country: India  
Born: 3 March 1964 (age 54)  
Influence: Scholarly, Political,  
Administrative. 10 million members of  
Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind  
School of Thought: Traditional Sunni



Rank (2018): 36; Rank (2017): 39;  
Rank (2016): 43

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Maulana Mahmood Madani, a leading Islamic scholar and politician in India, has gained influence for his forthright condemnations of terrorism and unfaltering support of the Indian Muslim community.

**Religio-Political Heavyweight:** Madani has served as Secretary General of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, or Organization of Indian Scholars—one of the most prominent Islamic organizations in India. He has been outspoken in his opposition to the misuse of the term jihad as a tool of terrorism in India. Following fatal bomb blasts in 2008, he mobilised Darul Uloom Deoband institutions to host events condemning terrorism as inherently un-Islamic. This had a major impact in the community.

**Defender of the Faith:** As a respected political leader and Islamic scholar of India, Madani represented the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and the community of scholars from Deoband when he addressed the Pakistani government, and Pakistani High Commissioner Shahid Malik in particular, in an open letter regarding the commissioner's remarks at the UN Security Council about terrorism stemming from 'mullas in Deoband'. Maulana Madani is also a strong opponent of government interference in the madrasa system.

## Dr Amr Khaled

Televangelist and Social Activist  
Country: Egypt  
Born: 5 Sept 1967 (age 51)  
Influence: Media, Youth. Popular  
preacher with massive social network  
following  
School of Thought: Traditional Sunni



Rank (2018): 35; Rank (2017): 29;  
Rank (2016): 31

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

**Popular Media Figure:** Part of Khaled's influence derives from the fact that he appeals to the common person. He holds a degree in accounting, and has no formal religious education; wears suits and ties, and has a clean-shaven face except for a trimmed moustache—everything you do not expect from a Muslim preacher. Khaled is credited with the launch of the first "Muslim reality TV show" *Mujaddidun* on Dubai Television. His website is translated from Arabic into nearly twenty languages and it rivals Oprah Winfrey's in terms of traffic. His videos have racked up over 90 million views on YouTube, and he boasts 28 million likes on Facebook. Amr Khaled came under fire after releasing a video in which he prayed for his social media followers during the Hajj pilgrimage. In response, he released a broadcast message explaining how the footage was severely misunderstood and his intentions misconstrued.

**Community Development:** Khaled's goal is to encourage community development in the Muslim world by its own people with religious faith as the guiding inspiration—something he believes should be linked to interfaith dialogue, tolerance and moderation. The break-up of communities is something Khaled sees as responsible for the malaise in the Muslim World, and something he believes puts the future of young people in jeopardy. One program he has launched to realize this objective of community development is Life Makers, which has a stated goal of producing a renaissance for the Arab and Muslim Worlds.



**Mustafa Hosny**  
 Televangelist  
 Country: Egypt  
 Born: 8 August 1978 (age 40)  
 Influence: Preacher  
 School of Thought: Traditional Sunni



**Sheikh Usama Al-Sayyid Al-Azhari**  
 Scholar  
 Country: Egypt  
 Born: 16 July 1976 (age 42)  
 Influence: Scholarly  
 School of Thought: Traditional Sunni

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Rank (2018): 37; Rank (2017): 47;  
 Rank (2016): HM

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

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

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

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

**Social Media:** He has nearly 32 million fans on Facebook in addition to over 5 million on Twitter. His daily advice and softly spoken words endear him to the public and account for his continued influence.

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Rank (2018): 39; Rank (2017): 43;  
 Rank (2016): 47

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

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

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

## HH Shah Karim

### Al-Hussayni

#### The Aga Khan IV

Country: France

Born: 13 Dec 1936 (age 82)

Influence: Leader of Nizari Ismailis

School of Thought: Modernist Shia, Ismaili, Nizari



Rank (2018): 40; Rank (2017): 37;

Rank (2016): 39

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Shah Karim Al-Hussayni, also known simply as the Aga Khan (Imamate: 1957-present), is the leader of the Shia sect of Muslims known as the Nizari Ismailis. For 5–15 million Nizari Ismaili Muslims the Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary Imam, with lineage descending back to Ali, the cousin of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He is only the fourth Aga Khan, a hereditary title bestowed upon the Imam by the Shah of Persia in the mid-nineteenth century. The period from July 2017 to 11 July 2018 was designated the Diamond Jubilee Year of the Aga Khan's 60th year of reign.

**Hereditary Leader of Ismailis:** The Aga Khan derives his position of authority from his lineage. At the age of 21 the Aga Khan bypassed his father and uncle to become the 49th Imam, a choice that his grandfather made because he felt the community needed a leader 'who has been brought up and developed during recent years and in the midst of the new age, and who brings a new outlook on life to his office.'

**Unparalleled Philanthropist:** The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a collection of development and humanitarian agencies working in areas of poverty. The network is widely known for its architectural and cultural work, including projects that revitalize historic cities. Some projects include the renovation of the Old City of Aleppo and the Al-Azhar Park in Cairo. The Aga Khan's foundation maintains a strong and enduring presence in developing countries—building health care capacity, promoting economic development in rural areas and helping improve educational opportunities. The AKDN is particularly influential in Central Asia, where it works in areas that are often neglected by other organizations.

## Habib Luthfi bin Yahya

### Preacher

Country: Indonesia

Born: 10 November 1947 (age 71)

Influence: Scholarly, Spiritual Guide

School of Thought: Traditional Sunni



Rank (2018): 41; Rank (2017): 45;

Rank (2016): 48

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Habib bin Luthfi is currently: Ra'is 'Amm of the Jam'iyah Ahli Thariqah Al-Mu'tabarah Al-Nahdliyah (the Association of Recognized Sufi Orders), Head of MUI Middle Java, and the spiritual leader of the Ba Alawi tariqah in Indonesia. The Ba Alawi are descendants of the Prophet (PBUH) who migrated to Hadramaut in Yemen early on in Islamic history. They played the major role in bringing Islam to the Far East, including Indonesia and Malaysia, and they hold high prominence to this day.

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

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



**Sheikh Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi**  
 Leader of the Houthi  
 Country: Yemen  
 Born: 22 May 1979 (age 39)  
 Influence: Political  
 School of Thought: Traditional Shia



**Sheikh Mahmud Effendi**  
 Turkish Scholar and Preacher  
 Country: Turkey  
 Born: 1929 (age 89)  
 Influence: Scholarly, Preacher  
 School of Thought: Sunni

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Rank (2018): 42; Rank (2017): 46;  
 Rank (2016): HM

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

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

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

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

**Humanitarian Toll:** Since 2015, they have been subject to aerial bombing by a Saudi led coalition. This bombing of one of the world's poorest countries has led to 10,000 civilian deaths and a humanitarian crisis which has left around 70 per cent of the population (27 million) reliant on humanitarian aid and over a million people infected by cholera.

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Rank (2018): 43; Rank (2017): 49;  
 Rank (2016): HM

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

**Life:** Sheikh Effendi became a Hafiz (one who has memorized the Qur'an) at the tender age of 6. He then started studying Arabic and Persian at first, and then went on to study the Islamic Sciences. Sheikh Effendi was appointed imam of the Ismail Agha mosque in Istanbul in 1954, where he remained until he retired in 1996. He devoted three weeks per-year to teach people across Turkey and made several missionary and educational tours in several countries, including Germany and the United States.

**Students:** He has millions of followers and has established various religious, social and charity organisations such as the Marifet Association, the Federation of Marifet Associations and Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaah Confederation. Although he himself has moved to the suburbs of Istanbul, his stronghold is still the Fateh area where his followers are easily recognised by their traditional dress. He emphasises service to humanity on the basis of sincerity.

## Maulana Tariq Jameel

Pakistani Scholar and Preacher

Country: Pakistan

Born: 1953 (age 65)

Influence: Scholarly, Preacher

School of Thought: Sunni, Tablighi  
Jamaat



Rank (2018): 44; Rank (2017): HM;  
Rank (2016): HM

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

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

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

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

## Halimah Jacob

President of Singapore

Country: Singapore

Born: 23 August 1954 (age 64)

Influence: Political

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2018): 45

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

**Election:** A former speaker of Parliament she gave up her parliamentary seat and position with the ruling People's Action Party to run for President. The government's criteria for the current President, including that the President must be an ethnic Malay, meant that Jacob was unopposed and became President unelected, a process which has drawn some criticism. She is the first ethnic Malay President for 47 years.

**Background:** Halimah Jacob came from humble beginnings, being raised by her Malay mother after her Indian father passed away when she 8 years old. She qualified as a lawyer before moving to work at the National Trades Union Congress, and then becoming Director of the Singapore Institute of Labour Studies She entered politics in 2001 and a decade later was appointed Minister of Community Development, Youth and Sports and later on Minister of Social and Family Development.



**Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi**  
Scholar  
Country: Syria  
Born: 7 May 1963 (age 55)  
Influence: Scholarly  
School of Thought: Sunni



**Professor Dr Seyyed Hossein Nasr**  
Philosopher and University Professor  
Country: United States of America  
Born: 7 April 1933 (age 85)  
Influence: Scholarly  
School of Thought: Traditional Shia

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Rank (2018): 47; Rank (2017): HM;  
Rank (2016): HM

Sheikh Al-Yaqoubi is a widely respected religious scholar who also has a significant spiritual following worldwide.

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

**Against Extremism:** He was one of the first scholars to speak against DA'ISH, denouncing its atrocities and showing that its actions are unIslamic. His book *Refuting ISIS* has become essential reading. His criticism of the Syrian government's response to protests made his stay in Syrian untenable, and so he had to flee the country.

**Educator:** As a teacher, he has trained several hundred Imams and teachers who work in the Arab World, the West, in the Far East and South Africa. As a spiritual guide he focuses on the spiritual well-being of Muslims and gives personal spiritual instruction to his disciples, of which he has a significant following in Europe and the USA. He is a charismatic public speaker in both Arabic and English and one of the most vocal moderate voices of Islam making a huge positive impact via his public talks, writings and numerous media appearances worldwide.

43

Rank (2018): 49; Rank (2017): 40;  
Rank (2016): 37

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

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

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

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

## HE Mahathir Mohamad

Prime Minister of Malaysia

Country: Malaysia

Born: 10 July 1925 (age 93)

Influence: Political

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2018): 450; Rank (2017): 450;  
Rank (2016): 450

44



Dr Mahathir Mohamad is the current Prime Minister of Malaysia, serving in this position for the second time. He first served as Prime Minister from 1981-2003. At 93 years old, he is the world's oldest sitting head of government.

**Prime Minister:** He was the key figure behind the transition of Malaysia's economy from being agriculturAl-based into a newly industrialized market economy. He is noted for his support for liberal Muslim values and has established Islamic institutions such as the International Islamic University of Malaysia.

**Determined winner:** Mahathir is a dominant political figure. In his first tenure as Prime Minister he won five consecutive general elections as well as seeing off party rivals to the leadership. Even when retired from politics he established the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission to focus on victims of abuse in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories. In May 2012, George W Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and their legal advisers were found guilty of war crimes.

**Criticisms:** Mahathir has been criticised for his record on civil liberties and for the trials and tribulations that his former Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, endured after being sacked by Mahathir in 1998.

**Miraculous Victory of 2018:** Mahathir registered a new political party in 2017 and had it join Pakatan Harapan (Pact of Hope), a political coalition. In January 2018, Mahathir was announced as the Pakatan Harapan coalition candidate for prime minister. This was part of an understanding that if successful, he would pardon Anwar Ibrahim and hand over the role to him. The Pakatan Harapan coalition won the 2018 elections decisively and Mahathir was sworn in as Prime Minister on 10 May 2018.

## HE Sheikh Uthman Taha

Calligrapher

Country: Syria

Born: 1934 (age 84)

Influence: Calligrapher

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2018): HM; Rank (2017):  
HM; Rank (2016): HM

45



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

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

**Copying the Quran:** The written copy of the Quran is known as a Mus-haf, and it took Taha approximately three years to copy one out. He wrote his first in 1970 and in total has copied out over 10 copies. The most significant one was the one assigned to him in 1988 by the King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an in Madinah. This copy is the one printed by the King Fahd Complex and distributed to millions of pilgrims every year. It is the most common copy of the Quran available worldwide. Taha has copied out 6 different textual variants including *Warsh* (used in Morocco and Algeria), *Hafs* (worldwide), *Duri* (Africa and Sudan), and *Qalun* (Libya)



**Mohammed Salah**  
 Footballer  
 Country: Egypt  
 Born: 15 June 1992 (age 26)  
 Influence: Celebrities and Sports  
 School of Thought: Sunni



**HE Sheikh Muqtada Al-Sadr**  
 Scholar and Politician  
 Country: Iraq  
 Born: 4 August 1974 (age 44)  
 Influence: Political, Social Issues  
 School of Thought: Shia

46

Rank (2018): N/A

Mohammed Salah is an Egyptian football player of global fame.

**International Player:** Salah started his career in the Egyptian Premier League in 2010 before moving on to join Basel, in Switzerland.

His stellar performances there attracted Chelsea FC and he moved to London in 2014. A disappointing season saw him move on to Italy, where he enjoyed a successful season with Roma in 2016/17. This success prompted another English team to sign him and Salah enjoyed the most successful season of his career with Liverpool FC in 2017/18. He broke many records and won many accolades. He also helped Egypt qualify for the World Cup.

**Popularity:** His affable nature and polite manners have won him many fans across the globe, and none more so than in his native country of Egypt where he has donated to various charitable causes. In the March Egyptian Presidential elections, over a million people struck out the two names vying for the presidency and inserted Mohamed Salah's name, making him an unofficial runner up in the election.

**Singing in the Terraces:** His footballing exploits during the 2017/18 season had the unprecedented effect of football fans singing positive songs about Muslims. "If he's good enough for you, he's good enough for me. If he scores another few, then I'll be Muslim too. Sitting in the mosque, that's where I wanna be! Mo Salah-la-la-la, la-la-la-la-la-la-la."

47

Rank (2018): 450; Rank (2017): 450;  
 Rank (2016): 450

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

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

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

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

## HE Dr Aref Ali Nayed

Scholar

Country: Libya

Born: 1962 (age 56)

Influence: Scholarly, Political.

Influential figure in Libyan government.

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2018): 50; Rank (2017): 50;

Rank (2016): 50

# 48



Nayed was the first post-Gaddafi Libyan Ambassador to the UAE for Libya's National Transitional Council. He led the Tripoli Stabilisation Team. Prior to the Libyan revolution he worked as an important scholar in the field of Muslim-Christian relations, and is the founder and director of Kalam Research & Media (KRM).

**Religious Scholar:** Nayed is a former professor at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (Rome), a former professor at the International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC, Malaysia) and a senior advisor to the Cambridge Interfaith Program and the Faculty of Divinity in Cambridge, UK. Prior to the Libyan revolution he lectured on Islamic Theology, Logic, and Spirituality at the restored Uthman Pasha Madrasa in Tripoli, Libya, and supervised Graduate Students at the Islamic Call College there. He is also a member of the Board of Advisors of the Templeton Foundation.

**Political Leader:** Nayed's other strengths have not gone unnoticed, and when he first submitted his resignation from the post of Ambassador to the UAE, it was rejected, and he was asked to take the position again. He is viewed in many circles as a man of integrity, wisdom and strength; virtues that are needed at the highest level to put Libya back on track. In 2017, Nayed launched a new movement for change in Libya dubbed *Ihya Libya* ("Reviving Libya") which aims to create a stable, prosperous and democratic country. He is the leading candidate in the upcoming presidential election due to be held in December 2018.

## Ahed Tamimi

Palestinian Activist

Country: Palestine

Born: 31 January 2001 (age 17)

Influence: Political, Social Issues

School of Thought: Sunni



Rank (2018): N/A

# 49



Ahed Tamimi is a 17 year old Palestinian who has become a globally recognised icon for resistance to the Israeli occupation of Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza).

**Previous Incidents:** A photo of an 11 year old Tamimi trying to punch an Israeli soldier and then a video of a 15 year old Tamimi biting a soldier who held her younger brother in a headlock were previous incidents showing what was common place when growing up under occupation.

**The Incident:** Tamimi had just learnt that her disabled 15 year old cousin had been shot in the head at close range when Israeli soldiers entered her yard in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh. She confronted them and then proceeded to slap and kick them. Her mother was recording the incident and later the video went viral.

**Arrest and Sentence:** A few days later, at night, the Israeli army's own camera documented the soldiers entering her house and handcuffing and arresting Tamimi. The 17 year old was then subject to interrogation, a fate common to most Palestinian youth living under occupation. She was detained for three months before being sentenced to eight months in jail. Her mother was also imprisoned but never charged.

**Release:** Ahed Tamimi was released after serving eight months as a political prisoner and came out as an icon of Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation. She received worldwide support and has highlighted the oppressive life faced by Palestinians.

**Future:** Whilst in prison, Tamimi continued her studies. She plans to study law at university and someday "... be a famous lawyer to defend my country." She also plans to travel abroad to garner support to highlight the plight of the Palestinians.

# THE TOP 50 INS & OUTS



Mohamed Bechari

Political

Country: France

Born: 16 April 1967

Influence: Political, Administration of Religious Affairs

School of Thought: Sunni

50

Rank (2018): HM; Rank (2017): HM;  
Rank (2016): HM

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

**Head of Organisations:** Dr Bechari heads or has headed dozens of organisations which play various roles for Islam in Europe. He has recently co-founded the The World Council of Muslim Minorities, which seeks to promote civil and political rights of Muslim minorities. He is the president of the French National Federation of Muslims, one of the leading entities organizing Islam in France. He is also the secretary general of the Islamic European Conference, a Europe-wide umbrella organisation that seeks to be a single organisation representing European Muslims at a European level.

**Scholar and Awards:** Bechari has written many books and taken up visiting professor posts at several international universities. He is the founder of the Avicenna Institute in Lille as well as being a member of the Islamic Fiqh Organisation (OCI), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He was awarded the King Abdullah II Award for Excellence of the First Class as well as The Medal of Sciences and Arts of the First Class from the Arab Republic of Egypt.

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

## THE INS

- HE Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan (from 450 to 29)  
page 101
- HE Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia (from 450 to 44)  
page 109
- HE Sheikh Uthman Taha, Calligrapher (from Honourable Mentions to 45)  
page 109
- Mohammed Salah, Footballer (New to 46)  
page 110
- HE Sheikh Muqtada Sadr, Scholar and Political (450 to 47)  
page 110
- Ahed Tamimi, Palestinian Activist (New to 49)  
page 111
- Mohamed Bechari, Political (from Honourable Mentions to 50)  
page 112

## THE OUTS

- HE Mufti Muhammad Akhtar Raza Khan Qadiri Al-Azhari (formerly 24), Barelwi Leader and Spiritual Guide (Passed Away)  
page 222
- HE President Mahmoud Abbas (formerly 26), President of the Palestinian National Authority (to Honourable Mentions)  
page 136
- HM Queen Rania Al-Abdullah (formerly 34), Queen of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (to the 450 Lists)  
page 180
- HH Amir Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (formerly 38), Prime Minister of UAE (to Honourable Mentions)  
page 136
- HE President Abdel Fattah Saeed Al-Sisi (formerly 31), President of the Arab Republic of Egypt (to 450 Lists)  
page 153
- HE Masoud Barzani (formerly 46), President of Iraqi Kurdistan (to the 450 Lists)  
page 154
- HE Sadiq Khan (formerly 48), Mayor of London (to Honourable Mentions)  
page 137

ℳ The Top ℳ

100

CUMULATIVE INFLUENCE  
OVER TEN YEARS

# The Top 100

## CUMULATIVE INFLUENCE OVER TEN YEARS

Since it first appeared 10 years ago, there is no denying that *The Muslim 500* has stirred both controversy and praise with its various lists and rankings over the years. In every issue, we remind our readers that the ranking system is based on the elusive factor of influence, not piety or popularity. If the 10 issues taken as a whole have proven one thing, it is that the influential Muslim can take many forms. Influence can be derived from a variety of sources: for example, the strong presence of Heads of State in the Top 50 category is arguably a natural placement for influential political leaders by virtue of their post or position. At the same time, even the influence of Heads of State waxes and wanes, ebbs and flows, according to a variety of political shifts and elements in any given year. Other individuals, such as artists, religious leaders, activists

	Total
<b>1. HM King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein</b> King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Custodian of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem Jordan	564
<b>2. HE Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei</b> Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Iran	562
<b>3. HM King Mohammed VI</b> King of Morocco Morocco	556
<b>4. HE Recep Tayyip Erdogan</b> President of the Republic of Turkey Turkey	554
<b>5. HE Prof Dr Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb</b> Grand Sheikh of the Al-Azhar University, Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar Mosque Egypt	528
<b>6. HE Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein Sistani</b> Marja of the Hawza, Najaf, Iraq Iraq	516
<b>7. HM Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al Sa'id</b> Sultan of Oman Oman	509
<b>8. Hajji Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab</b> Amir of Tablighi Jamaat, Pakistan Pakistan	465

or scholars display a wide array of influence either derived from their exceptionally bright minds, charisma, accomplishments or the reach among their followers. To celebrate the confluence of all these factors, we commemorate the 10th year anniversary of *The Muslim 500* by adding the Top 100 Muslims Ever list which is ranked according to the following system:

- Mentioned in book = 1 point
- Mentioned in HM = 5 points
- Rank 50 = 10 points
- Rank 49 = 11 points
- Rank 48 = 12 points, etc

Viewed as a whole, these rankings are meant to be seen as a reflection of the state of the Muslim world today. Rather than purely being system of hierarchy, these points are designed to convey the most influential players and forces that affect Muslim-majority societies for the greater part of the 21st century. From Salafis to Sufis, presidents to entrepreneurs, kings to activists, professors to pundits, the Top 100 list ultimately represents a rich tapestry comprised of *a decade of influence* in the Muslim world, with all the multitudes and complexity “influence” carries.

*The numbers denote ranking for that year followed by influence points given in brackets.*

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
3 (57)	3 (57)	2 (58)	1 (59)	4 (56)	4 (56)	7 (53)	4 (56)	4 (56)	4 (56)
4 (56)	4 (56)	4 (56)	4 (56)	3 (57)	3 (57)	6 (54)	5 (55)	3 (57)	2 (58)
5 (55)	6 (54)	5 (55)	5 (55)	5 (55)	5 (55)	3 (57)	2 (58)	5 (55)	3 (57)
1 (59)	5 (55)	8 (52)	8 (52)	6 (54)	6 (54)	2 (58)	3 (57)	2 (58)	5 (55)
9 (51)	1 (59)	1 (59)	2 (58)	2 (58)	1 (50)	8 (52)	7 (53)	7 (53)	25 (35)
7 (53)	8 (52)	7 (53)	9 (51)	7 (53)	8 (52)	13 (47)	10 (50)	8 (52)	7 (53)
12 (48)	12 (48)	11 (49)	6 (54)	8 (52)	9 (51)	12 (48)	9 (51)	6 (54)	6 (54)
14 (46)	14 (46)	10 (50)	10 (50)	10 (50)	13 (47)	17 (43)	16 (44)	16 (44)	15 (45)

	<b>Total</b>
<b>9. HH General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan</b> Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces United Arab Emirates	455
<b>10. HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa</b> Senior Religious Leader Egypt	455
<b>11. HE Sheikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Aal Al-Sheikh</b> Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Saudi Arabia	450
<b>12. HE Sheikh Salman Al-Ouda</b> Saudi Scholar and Educator Saudi Arabia	428
<b>13. HH Justice Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani</b> Deobandi Leader Pakistan	393
<b>14. HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah</b> President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies Mauritania	385
<b>15. HRE Amirul Mu'minin Sheikh As-Sultan Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III</b> Sultan of Sokoto Nigeria	385
<b>16. Sheikh Ahmad Tijani Ali Cisse</b> Leader of the Tijaniyya Sufi Order Senegal	382
<b>17. Prof Dr KH Said Aqil Siradj</b> Chairman of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia	373
<b>18. HE Sheikha Munira Qubeysi</b> Leader of the Qubeysi Movement Syria	362
<b>19. Sheikh Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi</b> Head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars Egypt	360
<b>20. His Majesty King Abdullah Bin 'Abd Al 'Aziz Al Saud</b> King of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Saudi Arabia PASSED AWAY 23 January 2015	353

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
15 (45)	15 (45)	12 (48)	16 (44)	9 (51)	10 (50)	15 (45)	18 (42)	22 (38)	22 (38)
18 (42)	20 (40)	18 (42)	7 (53)	15 (45)	12 (48)	14 (46)	12 (48)	10 (50)	10 (50)
26 (34)	17 (43)	15 (45)	12 (48)	12 (48)	14 (46)	18 (42)	14 (46)	11 (49)	11 (49)
10 (50)	11 (49)	19 (41)	17 (43)	16 (44)	16 (44)	20 (40)	19 (41)	25 (35)	19 (41)
6 (54)	7 (53)	6 (54)	22 (38)	19 (41)	25 (35)	32 (28)	32 (28)	31 (29)	27 (33)
11 (49)	9 (51)	9 (51)	23 (37)	20 (40)	23 (37)	29 (31)	31 (29)	30 (30)	30 (30)
21 (39)	23 (37)	22 (38)	24 (36)	21 (39)	18 (42)	22 (38)	25 (35)	23 (37)	16 (44)
22 (38)	18 (42)	16 (44)	13 (47)	13 (47)	19 (41)	23 (37)	26 (34)	36 (24)	32 (28)
20 (40)	22 (38)	20 (40)	18 (42)	17 (43)	15 (45)	19 (41)	17 (43)	19 (41)	—
27 (33)	29 (31)	26 (34)	21 (39)	18 (42)	17 (43)	21 (39)	24 (36)	24 (36)	31 (29)
30 (30)	33 (27)	31 (29)	32 (28)	31 (29)	31 (29)	16 (44)	13 (47)	14 (46)	9 (51)
—	—	—	—	1 (59)	2 (58)	1 (59)	1 (59)	1 (59)	1 (59)

	<b>Total</b>
<b>21. Hodjaefendi Fethullah Gülen</b> Scholar and leader of Gulen Movement Turkey	341
<b>22. Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah</b> Secretary General of Hezbollah Lebanon	335
<b>23. Sheikh Al-Habib Umar bin Hafiz</b> Director of Dar Al Mustafa, Tarim, Yemen Yemen	330
<b>24. Dr Amr Khaled</b> Preacher and Social Activist Egypt	320
<b>25. HE Mufti Muhammad Akhtar Raza Khan Qadiri Al-Azhari</b> Scholar and Preacher India PASSED AWAY 20 July 2018	284
<b>26. HH Shah Karim Al-Hussayni</b> The Aga Khan France	280
<b>27. HE Mohammad bin Mohammad Al-Mansour</b> Scholar and Leader of Zaidis Yemen PASSED AWAY 9 September 2016	266
<b>28. Sheikh Habib 'Ali Zain Al Abideen Al-Jifri</b> Director General of the Tabah Foundation, UAE Yemen	240
<b>29. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson</b> Founder of Zaytuna Institute, United States of America United States of America	238
<b>30. HE President Joko Widodo</b> President of Indonesia Indonesia	233
<b>31. HM King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud</b> King of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Saudi Arabia	230
<b>32. HM Queen Rania Al-Abdullah</b> Queen of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Jordan	215

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
450 (1)	450 (1)	48 (12)	15 (45)	14 (46)	11 (49)	10 (50)	15 (45)	13 (47)	13 (47)
23 (37)	25 (35)	35 (25)	35 (25)	34 (26)	27 (33)	28 (32)	23 (37)	18 (42)	17 (43)
8 (52)	10 (50)	25 (35)	28 (32)	28 (32)	28 (32)	36 (24)	37 (23)	37 (23)	33 (27)
33 (27)	35 (25)	29 (31)	31 (29)	30 (30)	38 (22)	34 (26)	21 (39)	15 (45)	14 (46)
—	24 (36)	23 (37)	25 (35)	22 (38)	22 (38)	26 (34)	28 (32)	26 (34)	—
36 (24)	40 (20)	37 (23)	40 (20)	39 (21)	35 (25)	31 (29)	22 (38)	20 (40)	20 (40)
—	—	24 (36)	26 (34)	25 (35)	24 (36)	30 (30)	30 (30)	29 (31)	26 (34)
24 (36)	28 (32)	36 (24)	39 (21)	38 (22)	34 (26)	41 (19)	42 (18)	41 (19)	37 (23)
25 (35)	27 (33)	33 (27)	36 (24)	35 (25)	41 (19)	42 (18)	43 (17)	42 (18)	38 (22)
16 (44)	16 (44)	13 (47)	11 (49)	11 (49)	—	—	—	—	—
2 (58)	2 (58)	3 (57)	3 (57)	—	—	—	—	—	—
450 (1)	34 (26)	32 (28)	33 (27)	32 (28)	32 (28)	37 (23)	34 (26)	32 (28)	—

	<b>Total</b>
<b>33. HM Sultan of Brunei Darussalam Hajj Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddahulah</b> Sultan of Brunei Brunei Darussalam	210
<b>34. HE President Mahmoud Abbas</b> President of Palestine Palestine	210
<b>35. Maulana Mahmood Madani</b> Leader and Executive Member of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, India India	206
<b>36. HE President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono</b> President of Indonesia Indonesia	204
<b>37. Prof Dr M Din Syamsuddin</b> Scholar and Leader of Muhammadiyah Indonesia	192
<b>38. HRH Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman Al-Saud</b> Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Saudi Arabia	186
<b>39. Dr Mohammed Badie</b> Guide of Muslim Brotherhood Egypt	180
<b>40. HE President Abdel Fattah Saeed Al-Sisi</b> President of the Arab Republic of Egypt Egypt	177
<b>41. Prof Dr Seyyed Hossein Nasr</b> Islamic Philosopher United States of America	170
<b>42. HE President Abdullah Gül</b> President of Turkey Turkey	168
<b>43. Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Sabouni</b> Scholar Syria	168
<b>44. HE President Muhammadu Buhari</b> President of Nigeria Nigeria	167

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	29 (31)	23 (37)	21 (39)	25 (35)	29 (31)	28 (32)	24 (36)
HM (5)	26 (34)	30 (30)	—	29 (31)	30 (30)	35 (25)	36 (24)	450 (1)	450 (1)
32 (28)	36 (24)	39 (21)	43 (17)	43 (17)	44 (16)	40 (20)	41 (19)	40 (20)	36 (24)
—	—	—	—	—	7 (53)	9 (51)	11 (49)	9 (51)	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	41 (19)	44 (16)	27 (33)	33 (27)	39 (21)	40 (20)	39 (21)	35 (25)
13 (47)	13 (47)	14 (46)	14 (46)	—	—	—	—	—	—
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—	450 (1)	36 (24)	4 (56)	8 (52)	12 (48)	—
450 (1)	31 (29)	21 (39)	19 (41)	24 (36)	29 (31)	—	—	—	—
43 (17)	49 (11)	40 (20)	37 (23)	36 (24)	39 (21)	44 (16)	47 (13)	48 (12)	47 (13)
—	—	—	—	—	20 (40)	24 (36)	27 (33)	33 (27)	28 (32)
HM (5)	26 (34)	33 (27)	35 (25)	34 (26)	29 (31)				
17 (43)	19 (41)	17 (43)	20 (40)	—	—	—	—	—	—

	<b>Total</b>
<b>45. HH Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamid Al-Thani</b> Emir of Qatar Qatar	165
<b>46. Sheikh Moez Masoud</b> Egyptian Preacher and Televangelist Egypt	164
<b>47. Khaled Mashaal</b> Leader of Hamas Palestine	156
<b>48. Sheikh Dr Muhammad Said Al-Bouti</b> Scholar Syria PASSED AWAY 21 March 2013	153
<b>49. HH Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani</b> Emir of Qatar Qatar	148
<b>50. HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum</b> Ruler of Dubai and the Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates United Arab Emirates	132
<b>51. HE Rached Ghannouchi</b> Tunisia Politician Tunisia	125
<b>52. HE Sheikh Prof Dr Mustafa Cerić</b> Chief Mufti of Bosnia Bosnia and Herzegovina	100
<b>53. Sheikh Usama Al-Sayyid Al-Azhari</b> Islamic Preacher, Egypt Egypt	94
<b>54. Dr Aref Ali Nayed</b> Scholar Libya	93
<b>55. Prince Muhammad bin Naif bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud</b> Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Saudi Arabia	92
<b>56. HE Dr Ahmet Davutoğlu</b> Prime Minister of Turkey Turkey	87

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
19 (41)	21 (39)	28 (32)	42 (18)	42 (18)	43 (17)	—	—	—	—
31 (29)	32 (28)	34 (26)	34 (26)	33 (27)	37 (23)	HM (5)	—	—	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	44 (16)	41 (19)	40 (20)	50 (10)	48 (12)	39 (21)	38 (22)	34 (26)
—	—	—	—	—	—	27 (33)	20 (40)	17 (43)	23 (37)
—	—	—	—	—	—	5 (55)	6 (54)	21 (39)	—
HM (5)	38 (22)	42 (18)	46 (14)	46 (14)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	21 (39)
28 (32)	30 (30)	27 (33)	30 (30)	—	—	—	—	—	—
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	44 (16)	49 (11)	46 (14)	44 (16)	43 (17)	39 (21)
35 (25)	39 (21)	43 (17)	47 (13)	47 (13)	HM (5)	—	—	—	—
48 (12)	50 (10)	50 (10)	50 (10)	50 (10)	40 (20)	49 (11)	50 (10)	—	—
—	—	14 (46)	14 (46)	—	—	—	—	—	—
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	27 (33)	26 (34)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)

	<b>Total</b>
<b>57. Habib Luthfi bin Yahya</b> Ra'is 'Amm of the Jam'iyyah Ahli Thariqah al-Mu'tabarah al-Nahdliyah, Indonesia Indonesia	86
<b>58. Sheikh Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi</b> Leader of the Houthi Movement Yemen	78
<b>59. HE Shaykh Ibrahim Salih</b> Mufti of Nigeria Nigeria	77
<b>60. Sheikh Mustafa Hosny</b> Egyptian Televangelist and Islamic preacher Egypt	69
<b>61. Sheikh Mahmud Effendi</b> Turkish Muslim Spiritual Leader Turkey	69
<b>62. Prof Dr Ekmelledin Ihsanoglu</b> Head of OIC Turkey	68
<b>63. Sheikh Mehmet Nazim Adil Al-Qubrusi Al-Haqqani</b> Spiritual Guide Cyprus PASSED AWAY 7 May 2014	67
<b>64. HH Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser Al-Missned</b> Philanthropist Qatar	65
<b>65. HE Dr Abd al Aziz bin 'Uthman Altwajjiri</b> Scholar Saudi Arabia	65
<b>66. Prof Timothy Winter (Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad)</b> Scholar United Kingdom	64
<b>67. Dr Aaidh Al Qarni</b> Scholar Saudi Arabia	61
<b>68. Uthman Taha</b> Calligrapher Syria	57

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
37 (23)	41 (19)	45 (15)	48 (12)	48 (12)	HM (5)	—	—	—	—
38 (22)	42 (18)	46 (14)	HM (5)	41 (19)	—	—	—	—	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	38 (22)	38 (22)	37 (23)	—	—	—	—	—
34 (26)	37 (23)	47 (13)	HM (5)	450 (1)	—	—	—	—	—
39 (21)	43 (17)	49 (11)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	450 (1)	43 (17)	45 (15)	44 (16)	40 (20)
—	—	—	—	—	42 (18)	45 (15)	48 (12)	49 (11)	49 (11)
HM (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	46 (14)	38 (22)	38 (22)	450 (1)	450 (1)
HM (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	450 (1)	45 (15)	47 (13)	49 (11)	50 (10)	50 (10)
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	HM (5)	47 (13)	50 (10)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)
HM (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	33 (27)	35 (25)	450 (1)
45 (15)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	—

	<b>Total</b>
<b>69. HE Muhammad Morsi Isa Al-Ayyat</b> President of Egypt Egypt	55
<b>70. HE Sheikh Al Azhar Dr Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi</b> Head of Al Azhar Egypt PASSED AWAY 10 March 2010	52
<b>71. HH Dr Syedna Mohammad Burhannuddin Saheb</b> Leader of Bohra Ismailis India PASSED AWAY 17 January 2014	52
<b>72. HE Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq Fayadh</b> Scholar Iraq	50
<b>73. Maulana Tariq Jameel</b> Pakistani Scholar and Preacher Pakistan	49
<b>74. Mohammad Mahdi Akef</b> Guide of Muslim Brotherhood Egypt PASSED AWAY 22 September 2017	48
<b>75. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi</b> Syrian Scholar Syria	46
<b>76. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al Sudais</b> Quran Recitor Saudi Arabia	46
<b>77. Dr Ingrid Mattson</b> Scholar Canada	43
<b>78. Dr KH Achmad Hasyim Muzadi</b> President of Singapore Indonesia PASSED AWAY 16 March 2017	43
<b>79. Dr Zakir Abdul Karim Naik</b> Scholar India	42

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	11 (49)	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8 (52)
—	—	—	—	—	HM (5)	HM (5)	46 (14)	47 (13)	45 (15)
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)				
40 (20)	44 (16)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12 (48)
42 (18)	47 (13)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)				
HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	HM (5)				
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	18 (42)
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)				

	<b>Total</b>
<b>80. HE Anwar Ibrahim</b> Politician Malaysia	42
<b>81. Dr Muhammad Tahir al Qadri</b> Scholar Pakistan	42
<b>82. HE Prime Minister Imran Khan</b> Prime Minister of Pakistan Pakistan	38
<b>83. HE Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Jawadi Amoli</b> Scholar Iran	38
<b>84. Mohamed Bechari</b> Politician France	35
<b>85. HE Excellency Colonel Muammar Gaddafi</b> Ruler of Libya Libyan Arab Jamahiriya PASSED AWAY 20 October 2011	34
<b>86. HE Halimah Yacob</b> President of Singapore Singapore	34
<b>87. Sami Yusuf</b> Nasheed Artist United Kingdom	34
<b>88. HE Prime Minister Atifete Jahjaga</b> Prime Minister of Kosovo Kosovo	33
<b>89. Dr Muhammad Al-Arifi</b> Preacher Saudi Arabia	32
<b>90. Dr Tariq Ramadan</b> Scholar Switzerland	30
<b>91. Ismail Haniyah</b> Prime Minister of Gaza Palestine	30

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	HM (5)	48 (12)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)
29 (31)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)
50 (10)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27 (33)	450 (1)
41 (19)	45 (15)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)				
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	45 (15)	45 (15)	—	—	—	—	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—	—				
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)
HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)				

	<b>Total</b>
<b>92. General Mohammad Ali Jafari</b> Military Commander Iran	28
<b>93. Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan</b> Scientist Pakistan	28
<b>94. HE Masoud Barzani</b> President of Iraqi Kurdistan Region Iraq	26
<b>95. Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah</b> Emir of Kuwait Kuwait	25
<b>96. HE Mahathir Mohamad</b> Prime Minister of Malaysia Malaysia	25
<b>97. Prof Ali Mohyi Al-Din Al-Qaradaghi</b> Scholar Iraq	24
<b>98. Maher Zain</b> Nasheed Artist Sweden	24
<b>99. Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat</b> Scholar and Politician Malaysia PASSED AWAY 12 February 2015	22
<b>100. Prof Dr Akbar Ahmed</b> Scholar Pakistan	21

2019	2018	2017	2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012	2011	2010	2009
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	41 (19)
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	46 (14)
450 (1)	46 (14)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	—	—	—	—	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	49 (11)	HM (5)	—	—	—	—	—
44 (16)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—	450 (1)
450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	49 (11)	—	—	—	—	—
HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—	—
—	—	—	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	42 (18)
HM (5)	HM (5)	HM (5)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	—



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

By Time!

Verily man is in [a state of] loss,  
except those who believe, and perform righteous deeds, and enjoin one another  
to [follow] the truth, and enjoin one another to patience.

*The Declining Day* 103 : 1-3

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ℳ Honourable ℹ  
MENTIONS

## HE Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Jawadi Amoli Scholarly

Country: Iran

Born: 1933 (age 85)



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

## His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq Fayadh Scholarly

Country: Iraq

Born: 1930 (age 88)



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

## Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Sabouni Scholarly

Country: Syria

Born: 1 January 1930 (age 88)



Al-Sabouni is influential because of his easy-to-read, simplified commentaries of the Holy Qur'an. They are now thought of as some of the most popular short commentaries in history after those of Jalalayn, Baydawi, Ibn Kathir and Ibn Juzayy. One of al-Sabouni's most influential commentaries is the Tafsir Ayat Al-Ahkam, an exploration of the Qur'anic verses that pertain to legal rulings. The Institute of Scientific Research and Revival of Islamic Heritage at the Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah, Saudi Arabia commissioned al-Sabouni to investigate the ancient tafsir manuscript of Abu

Jaafar al-Nahas (d. 949 CE/338AH). Al-Sabouni's landmark achievement of verifying the only surviving manuscript of the text has come to fruition as a six volume work published by the university.

## HE Sheikh Ibrahim Salih Scholarly

Country: Nigeria

Born: 1 January 1946 (age 72)



Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim Al-Husseini is currently the head of the Supreme Council for Fatwa and Islamic Affairs in Nigeria and recently became a member of the 'Muslim Council of Elders' which embraces prominent scholars. He completed his initial studies at the Supreme Islamic Institute in Nigeria and then studied at the hands of renowned scholars in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, India, Pakistan, Senegal, Niger and Sudan. Sheikh Ibrahim lectures in the fields of Tafsir Al Qur'an (exegesis) and the Hadith as well as Islamic Sciences, Jurisprudence and ethics. He has over 100 written works. He has held and still heads several significant positions, some of which are: Founder and mentor of the Islamic Renaissance Organization, Adviser to the Federal Government on its Islamic Affairs since 1992, Assistant Secretary General for African Affairs in the World Islamic People's Leadership 1989 and many more.

## Prof Dr M Din Syamsuddin Scholarly

Country: Indonesia

Born: 31 December 1958 (age 60)



Prof Din Syamsuddin served as chairman (2005-2015) of the largest modernist Islamic organisation in Indonesia, the Muhammadiyah. He also served as chairman of the Indonesian Council of Ulema and is currently acting as chairman of its Advisory Council. He is a member of Group of Strategic Vision Russia - Islamic World, Chairman of the World Peace Forum and President of the Inter Religious Council - Indonesia. He is also Prof of Islamic Political Thought at the National Islamic University in Jakarta and Chairman of Centre for Dialogue and Cooperation among

Civilizations. Syamsuddin is also very active in interfaith and intercultural dialogue. He was recently re-elected for another five-year term as President of the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP).

### Prof Dr Akbar Ahmed Scholarly

Country: Pakistan

Born: 15 January 1943 (age 75)



Prof Dr Akbar Ahmed is the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, DC and the former Pakistani High Commissioner to the UK and Ireland. He has also been named “the world’s leading authority on contemporary Islam” by the BBC. In addition to his academic and public sector careers, Ahmed has produced a number of noteworthy films and authored more than a dozen award-winning books. He produced the Jinnah Quartet and feature film, Jinnah (1998). In the aftermath of 9/11, Ahmed conceived a quartet of studies published by Brookings Press examining relations between the West and the World of Islam. He was awarded the 2017 Sir Syed Day Lifetime Achievement Award for excellence in Poetry, Literature, Arts and the Sciences and declared the 2017 Scholar/Teacher of the Year of the American University School of International Service.

### Prof Timothy Winter (Sheikh Abdal Hakim Murad) Scholarly

Country: United Kingdom

Born: 1960 (age 58)



Prof Timothy Winter, also known as Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad, is an academic who has been actively involved in a variety of Islamic initiatives over the years. He is currently the Aziz Foundation Prof of Islamic Studies for the Cambridge Muslim College and Ebrahim College, two leading seminaries training leaders and Imams for the British community. He is also Shaykh Zayed Lecturer of Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Divinity at Cambridge University and Director of Studies in Theology at Wolfson College. He has published and contributed to numerous academic works on Islam

and among his best known works are translations from Imam Ghazali’s Ihya and his own series of aphorisms (Commentary on the Eleventh Contentions). He is a much sought after speaker and contributes regularly to media (fluent in several languages). He is also overseeing the building of the new Cambridge eco-mosque.

### Dr Ingrid Mattson Scholarly

Country: Canada

Born: 24 August 1963 (age 55)



Dr. Ingrid Mattson is the London and Windsor Community Chair in Islamic Studies at Huron University College at Western University in Canada. Previously she had worked for 14 years as Prof at the Hartford Seminary in Hartford, and served as Director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. In 2001 she was elected Vice President of ISNA and in 2006 she was elected president, becoming the first woman and the first convert to hold such high positions within the organisation. She is the author of the highly acclaimed ‘The Story of the Qur’an.’ Dr. Mattson is frequently consulted by media, government and civic organisations and has served as an expert witness.

### HH Amir Sabah Al- Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Political

Country: Kuwait

Born: 16 June 1929 (age 89)



HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Sabah is the fifth Emir of Kuwait and the Commander of the Military of Kuwait. He had previously been Foreign Minister for 20 years, from 1963 to 2003, making him one of the longest-serving foreign ministers in the world. During his role as Foreign Minister, he restored Kuwaiti international relations after the Gulf War as well as restoring the country after the Iraqi invasion. During his reign as Emir of Kuwait, he instituted one of the strongest press freedom laws in the Arab world. He also sponsored the 27-article UN resolution 2178 that focuses on eliminating DA’ISH and related militants.

**HE President  
Mahmoud Abbas**  
Political

Country: Palestine  
Born: 15 November 1935 (age 83)



President Abbas is one of the few surviving founder members of Fatah – the main political grouping within the PLO. He has always been committed to pursuing an independent Palestinian state through negotiations and was one of the principal architects of the Oslo peace process. He accompanied Yassir Arafat to the White House to sign the Oslo Accords. The need to stop illegal Israeli settlements from ever-expanding and how to deal with the USA abandoning the Palestinians are the main issues of the day for Abbas.

**Ismail Haniyah**  
Political

Country: Palestine  
Born: 29 January 1962 (age 56)



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

**Khaled Mashal**  
Political

Country: Palestine  
Born: 28 May 1956 (age 62)



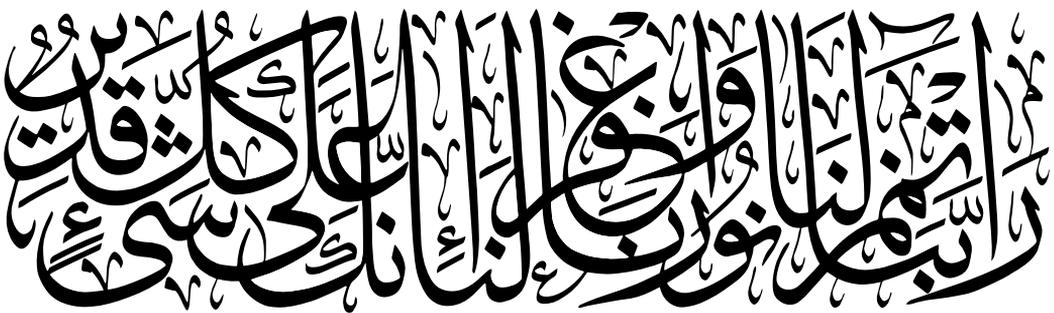
Khaled Mashal was Hamas' politburo chief from 2004-2017, when he stepped down after reaching the end of his term limit. His term began after the Israeli assassinations of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and Abdel Aziz Al-Rantisi in 2004 and ended in a peaceful transition to Ismail Haniyah. Mashal saw the organisation through multiple attempts at a roadmap to peace and a major Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip. Mashal has been recognized for his persistence with Hamas's effort. His determination is combined with a unique effort at diplomacy. Mashal has shown a willingness to negotiate with Israel to return to the 1967 borders and grant Palestinians a right of return, while importantly implying the necessary existence of the State of Israel, despite Hamas's historic denial of that possibility. Mashal has been one of the most direct, and candid leaders in dialogue and confrontation with Israel and this has garnered international recognition.

**HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid  
Al-Maktoum**  
Political

Country: United Arab Emirates  
Born: 15 July 1949 (age 69)



HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum is the constitutional monarch of Dubai, as well as the Prime Minister and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates. In 1995, as Crown Prince of Dubai, his chief objective was to



make Dubai a resort and business destination. To that end, he helped develop the Palm Islands, the Burj Al-Arab hotel, the Burj Khalifa skyscraper, the Dubai World Cup and the Godolphin Stables. He has also launched multiple charity initiatives from Dubai, such as 'Dubai Cares', which has reached over 18 million beneficiaries in 53 countries since its inception in 2007.

## HE Anwar Ibrahim Political

Country: Malaysia

Born: 10 August 1947 (age 71)



Ibrahim is a Malaysian politician of global stature. He was the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1993-98 and was then widely expected to succeed Mahathir Muhammad. A falling out between the two led to him being jailed on controversial charges. When the Supreme Court overturned his sodomy conviction in 2004, he was freed from jail and took up academic and other positions in the UK and USA. Once the term of his political ban had expired in 2008, he returned to Malaysia and was voted back into parliament. He was then charged with sodomy for a second time, but acquitted by the high court in 2012. In the 2013 elections, Anwar was re-elected to parliament and his coalition won 89 seats, losing to Najib Raza's BN party, which won 133 seats. In February 2014, his acquittal was overturned and he was back in prison. His imprisonment on sodomy charges has been condemned as unjust and a travesty by many international leaders and rights organisations. Although still in prison, in July 2017 he received the backing of Mahathir Mohamad and was named de facto leader of his country's opposition coalition - Pakatan Harapan.

## HE Sadiq Khan Political

Country: United Kingdom

Born: 8 October 1970 (age 48)



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

## Mufti Abul Qasim Nomani Administration of Religious Affairs

Country: India

Born: 14 Jan 1947 (age 71)



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

Our Lord! Perfect our light for us and forgive us. Assuredly You have power over all things!

*Banning* 66 : 8

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

## Dr Muhammad Al-Arifi Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 16 July 1970 (age 48)



Dr al-Arifi is a well-known scholar and lecturer from Saudi Arabia. He is a founding and honorary member of various Da'wa organisations, as well as being a member of their advisory committees. He is also a Prof in King Saud University of Riyadh. He takes a special interest in Hadith literature and has received licenses for the chains of transmission for various Hadith texts from a number of scholars. Has over 25 million followers on Facebook and almost 19 million on Twitter.

## Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Pakistan

Born: 12 July 1950 (age 68)



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

## Zakir Abdul Karim Naik Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: India

Born: 18 Oct. 1965 (age 53)



Zakir Abdul Karim Naik is a popular preacher and comparative religion specialist in the mould of the legendary Ahmed Deedat. He hosts huge public events where he speaks on all aspects of Islam and answers questions from the audience. Naik challenges leaders of other faiths to public debates that are broadcast around the world on Peace TV—a satellite channel that he helped to found. He is also the founder of the Islamic Research Foundation, which runs United Islamic Aid. In 2015, he was awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Services to Islam. He has recently been investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on incitement to terror and money laundering charges and has subsequently had his passport revoked. He has over 17 million FB followers.

## Malala Yousufzai Social Issues

Country: Pakistan

Born: 12 July 1997 (age 21)



Yousufzai's rise to prominence began tragically when the Taliban shot her in a school bus for encouraging girls to go to school in Swat. After the assassination attempt, Malala was flown to England, where she recovered and continued her schooling. She received high-profile support for her campaign to ensure that all children worldwide be schooled. In 2013, Yousufzai addressed the UN, received the prestigious Sakharov Prize, and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, which she co-received in 2014 at the age of 17, thereby becoming its youngest-ever recipient. Time Magazine listed her as one of The 25 Most Influential Teens of 2014, and she was awarded honorary Canadian citizenship in 2017. She has been granted audiences with royalty and world leaders, and this along with her high-profile international exposure has led some in her native Pakistan to question whether she has overreached. Having completed her secondary education in the UK, she is currently studying at Oxford University.

## Salman Khan

### Science & Technology

Country: United States of America

Born: 11 October 1976 (age 42)



Salman Khan is the founder of an online educational website that features more than 6,500 mini-lectures, free of charge, to anyone in the world. The videos are hosted on YouTube and teach a variety of subjects, such as: mathematics, history, healthcare, medicine, finance, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, economics, cosmology, organic chemistry, American civics, art history, macroeconomics, microeconomics, and computer science. The academy has delivered over 1 billion lessons in total. Khan published his international best seller, *The One World School House*, in October 2012. He appeared on the front cover of *Forbes*, where *The \$1 Trillion Opportunity* feature article described him as “The Most Influential Person In Education Technology”. He has 60 million followers on social media.

## Maher Zain

### Arts & Culture

Country: Sweden

Born: 16 July 1981 (age 37)



A Swedish R&B singer, songwriter, and music producer of Lebanese origin, Maher Zain sings mainly in English. He also occasionally sings in French, Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, and Malay. Maher’s debut album *Thank You Allah* reached the number one spot on Amazon’s Best World Music charts and ninth on the R&B charts. He has over 32 million fans on social media. In 2013, he took part in the *Colors of Peace* project, incorporating songs based on works by Fethullah Gülen. He has attended many rallies in support of refugees and the children of Gaza.

## Sami Yusuf

### Arts & Culture

Country: United Kingdom

Born: 19 July 1980 (age 38)



Sami Yusuf is an internationally renowned singer-songwriter and master musician. Although not the sole indicator of his achievements, his music has revolutionised the nasheed industry. Yusuf’s music is about the perennial truths that enlighten and strengthen the listener. He is also known for his extensive involvement in global charitable initiatives. His songs appeal all age groups, ethnicities and beliefs across the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America, thus rightfully earning him the title of ‘Islam’s Biggest Rockstar’. He has released eight studio albums to date, selling over 34 million copies and has about 8 million followers on Facebook.

## Sheikh AbdulRahman Al-Sudais

### Qur’an Reciters

Country: Saudi Arabia

Born: 10 February 1960 (age 58)



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

Our Lord is God

رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ

Khabib Nurmagomedov  
(new)

Celebrities & Sports

Country: Russia

Born: 20 September 1988 (age 30)



Khabib Nurmagomedov is a mixed martial artist. As well as being the youngest Russian wrestler in history to compete in the UFC he is also the first Russian and Muslim to win a UFC title. He is the current Lightweight UFC champion and holds the longest undefeated streak in MMA history with 27 wins and counting. He is ethnically from the Russian republic of Dagestan and has chosen the nickname 'the eagle' to pay homage to this region. This has won him great support amongst many Muslim youth not only in Dagestan but also in Chechnya and other ex-soviet Muslim majority countries. His appeal is not limited to these as he has managed to transcend ethnic complexities and become one of Russia's most popular sportsmen.

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

إِلَّا لِلَّهِ الْأَلِيبِ

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ

حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ

Mo Farah

Celebrities & Sports

Country: United Kingdom

Born: 23 March 1983 (age 35)



The most successful British athlete ever, Farah won the gold in the 5000m and 10,000m at the 2012 and 2016 Olympic games as well as 6 other global golds. Born in Somalia but raised in the UK from the age of 7, Farah has captured the hearts of the British public with his hard work, success, smile and warm personality. He is a popular role model to follow for people from all over the world, especially in the Muslim world. He was awarded a CBE in 2013 and knighted in 2017, the year he announced his retirement from track running. His winning celebration, the 'mobot' is mimicked internationally.

Glory be to God  
All praise is due to God  
There is no god but God  
God is the greatest  
I seek forgiveness from God  
God is sufficient

❧ The Final ❧

450

# 🌿 The Lists 🌿

## Scholarly

page 143

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

## Political

page 153

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

## Administration of Religious Affairs

page 164

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

## Preachers & Spiritual Guides

page 172

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

## Philanthropy, Charity & Development

page 180

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

## Social Issues

page 183

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

## Business

page 193

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

## Science & Technology

page 199

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

## Arts & Culture

page 203

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

## Qur'an Reciters

page 210

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

## Media

page 211

In an age of impulsive news and innovative media, these personalities have garnered influence from their activity in the media world.

## Celebrities & Sports Stars

page 215

These instantly recognisable figures have a huge public following due to their prominence in popular culture and sport.

## Top Extremists

page 218

These individuals are responsible for heinous acts and controversial statements that are rejected by Muslim orthodoxy, separating them clearly from others engaged in armed conflict.

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### ALGERIA

#### **Cherif, HE Ambassador Prof Dr Mustafa**

Prof Mustapha Cherif is a philosopher and researcher specializing in international relations and dialogue between cultures. Cherif has written numerous works on religion, civilization and dialogue between cultures. He has held many senior positions including minister of higher education and ambassador. He was awarded the UNESCO-Sharjah prize for Arab Culture and the Ducci Foundation peace prize in 2013. He is currently Director of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain.

### BAHRAIN

#### **Yaquby, Nizam**

Nizam Yaquby was trained in Islamic sciences in Bahrain and Makkah before going on to study at McGill University. He sits on a plethora of Sharia advisory boards including Morgan Stanley, Arab Banking Corporation, Citigroup Inc, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Barclays, BNP Paribas, Credit Agricole CIB, Dow Jones Islamic Index, Lloyds TSB, and HSBC Amanah. A highly sought-after expert with an immense breadth of experience with the Muslim community, Yaquby has received several awards, including the Euromoney Award for Outstanding Contribution to Islamic Finance and the Zaki Badawi Award for Excellence in Shariah Advisory in 2008.

### EGYPT

#### **Emara, Mohamed**

Dr Emara is an intellectual and scholar who has authored over 70 books. He is currently a member of the Al-Azhar Al-Sharif Islamic Research Academy, The International Institute for Islamic Thought, and The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. He was chosen to be part of the team re-writing the Egyptian constitution before the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood. Dr Emara is outspoken in his views

against Western intervention and influence over the Muslim world, calling upon all Muslims to unite and form an Islamic State under moderate Islamic rule. He resigned from his post as Chief Editor of Al-Azhar Magazine in 2015.

### IRAN

#### **Amoli, HE Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Jawadi**

Read bio on page 134 in Honourable Mentions

#### **Dabashi, Prof Hamid**

Hamid Dabashi is the Hagop Kevorkian Prof of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York. He has written extensively in major publications and peer reviewed journals on a variety of topics including religion, literature, cinema and philosophy. He founded Dreams of a Nation, a Palestinian Film Project, dedicated to preserving and safeguarding Palestinian Cinema. He is also a public speaker, a current affairs essayist (contributing opinion pieces regularly to the Al Jazeera website), and a staunch anti-war activist.

#### **Damad, HE Ayatollah Dr Seyyed**

#### **Mostafa Mohaghegh**

Damad is one of very few high-level clerics in Iran to have been educated in international law in the West. Damad is a forceful advocate for a more progressive interpretation of Sharia. He is a very well-respected scholar, Dean of the Department of Islamic Studies at The Academy of Sciences of Iran, and a Prof of Law and Islamic Philosophy at Tehran University. In October 2010, at the Pope's behest, he addressed the Synod in the Vatican, stressing the Muslim view towards Christians as one of friendship, trust, and mutual understanding. He was honoured as a prominent figure of humanities in Iran at the 8th Farabi International Award ceremony in 2017.

#### **Shirazi, HE Grand Ayatollah Nasir Makarim**

Grand Ayatollah Shirazi is a leading theologian teaching at the Qom Seminary, one of the two most important centres of learning for Twelver Shia. He is most influential for his Tafsir Al-Amthal, which is a very popular, simplified commentary of the Qur'an. He has also spearheaded the creation of schools and

magazines devoted to young people. He has been outspoken in his support for Palestinians. His official website ([www.makarem.ir](http://www.makarem.ir)) is in six languages, including English.

#### **Sobhani, HE Ayatollah Jafar**

Sobhani is a leading member of the Council of Mujtahids at the Qom Seminary, one of the two most important centres of learning in Twelver Shiism. He is the director of the Imam Sadiq Institute, Iran and was previously a member of the Society of Seminary Teachers at Qom. His work in all areas of the Islamic sciences is widely known and receives critical attention. Sobhani is a prolific writer, having published over 300 scholarly works.

### **IRAQ**

**Fayadh, HE Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq**  
Read bio on page 134 in Honourable Mentions

**Hakim, HE Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Said**  
Grand Ayatollah Hakim is one of the four maraji's of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq, and, accordingly, is one of Iraq's most important Shia clerics. His family is very prominent in Iraq, holding key positions in Shia social and religious organizations and also in government. Hakim leads around five percent of the Iraqi Shia population. His influence stems partly from his relationship to Grand Ayatollah Mohsen Al-Hakim, a former religious leader of the Twelver Shia in Iraq.

#### **Al-Najafi, HE Grand Ayatollah Bashir**

Grand Ayatollah Bashir Al-Najafi is one of the four maraji' of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq, and one of Iraq's most powerful Shia clerics. As a marja' of the Hawza in Najaf, Iraq's premier Shia institution, Najafi holds a position of immense authority. Najafi, originally from Pakistan, holds less sway amongst Iraq's population than the other maraji' but has significant clout in South Asia. His website ([www.alnajafy.com](http://www.alnajafy.com)) is available in five languages.

#### **Al-Qaradaghi, Prof Ali Mohyi Al-Din**

Prof Ali is the Vice-President of the European Council for Fatwa and Research and the Chairman of the Supreme Consultative Council for Bringing Islamic Madhahib Closer Together of ISESCO, in addition to many other professional positions. He has written more than 30 works.

#### **Al-Sadr, HE Ayatollah Al -Faqih Seyyed Hussein Ismail**

HE Ayatollah Al-Faqih Seyyed Hussein Ismail Al-Sadr is the most senior Shia cleric in Baghdad, Iraq. He heads the Ayatollah Seyyed Hussain Ismail Al-Sadr Foundation Trust, which runs humanitarian, development, and peace and reconciliation projects in Iraq. His role as a social leader and humanitarian has increased significantly during the recent hostilities in Iraq. The issue of reconciliation and dialogue between Iraq's different religious and ethnic communities has featured heavily in the Ayatollah's recent efforts.

### **JORDAN**

#### **Khasawneh, HE Sheikh Abdul Karim**

Sheikh Khasawneh has served Jordan in his capacity as a religious scholar and mufti in various roles. He is a former mufti of the Jordanian Armed Forces, served as the Grand Mufti of Jordan between 2010-2017, and is currently Jordan's Chief Islamic Justice.

### **LEBANON**

#### **Qabbani, HE Dr Mohammad Rashid**

Mohammad Rashid Qabbani is the former Grand Mufti of Lebanon and the country's leading Sunni scholar. Qabbani speaks out regularly against sectarianism and violence.

### **MOROCCO**

#### **Abdurrahman, Prof Dr Taha**

Taha Abdurrahman is a Moroccan philosopher famous for his work on the creation of an ethical humanistic modernism on the basis of the ethics and values of Islam. Abdurrahman has won the Moroccan Book Prize twice, and was awarded the ISESCO Prize for Islamic Philosophy in 2006. He is the president of the Wisdom Circle of Thinkers, Morocco, and a member of the International Union of Muslim Scholars.

### **OMAN**

#### **Al-Khalili, HE Sheikh Ahmad**

Sheikh Al-Khalili is the Grand Mufti of Oman. He is a strong advocate for religious tolerance and works hard to ensure harmony between the different religious schools of thought in Oman.

## PALESTINE

### Abu Sway, Prof Mustafa

Prof Abu Sway was appointed as the first holder of the Integral Chair for the Study of Imam Ghazali's Work at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa and at Al-Quds University in 2012. He has been Prof of Philosophy and Islamic Studies at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, Palestine, since 1996. He taught at the International Islamic University in Malaysia (1993-96) and was a visiting Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University, as well as a Visiting Prof of Islamic Studies at Bard College, NY.

### Nusseibeh, Prof Sari

Sari Nusseibeh, who comes from one of Jerusalem's oldest and most prominent families, is a Prof of philosophy and a leading intellectual. He served as president of the Al-Quds University in Jerusalem for more than twenty years. In 2008, Nusseibeh was voted the 24th in a list of Top 100 Public Intellectuals by Prospect Magazine (UK) and Foreign Policy (US).

**Al-Tamimi, HE Justice Sheikh Dr Tayseer Rajab**  
Al-Tamimi is a leading scholar and Chief Islamic Justice of Palestine. Popular as an outspoken thinker and leader on Palestinian-Israeli relations, Al-Tamimi is the head of the Palestinian Centre for Religion and Civilization Dialogue.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### Al-Fawzan, Sheikh Salih Bin Fawzan

Sheikh Al-Fawzan is considered to be the most senior scholar of the Salafi movement in Saudi Arabia. He is a member of the council of senior scholars and committee for fatwa and research. He has authored over 35 books and is one of the major Muftis on the program "Noor 'Ala Al Darb", one of the oldest and most famous programs broadcast on the Quran radio

channel, where a number of major scholars answer questions and give Fatwas.

**Al-Madkhali, Sheikh Rabee Ibn Haadi 'Umayr**  
Sheikh Rabee Ibn Haadi 'Umayr Al-Madkhali is one of the most radical thinkers in the Salafi movement. He is an influential writer and speaker whose influence has led to an independent faction within Salafism. Al-Madkhali's adherents are known as Madkhali Salafis and make up one of the most significant and influential branches inside the Salafi movement. A former head of the Sunnah Studies Department at the Islamic University of Madinah, Al-Madkhali is a scholar who has authored over 30 works in the fields of Hadith and Islamic disciplines.

### Al-Saffar, Hasan Musa

Hasan Musa Al-Saffar is a Saudi Shia reformist leader who has made significant progress in communicating with Salafi leaders and other senior officials in Saudi Arabia. This is important as sectarian tensions throughout the Muslim world have risen with increased Sunni-Shia hostilities in Iraq.

### Al-Shareef, Dr Hatim Al-Awni

Dr Al-Awni is the General Supervisor of International Committee for the Support of the Final Prophet (ICSFP). He has also served in a number of academic and political capacities, including the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia for two separate terms. While his academic research includes dozens of publications, perhaps his greatest contribution is the awakening of Salafi introspection in Saudi Arabia. His widely-read articles have pointed out clear connections between militant extremism and core Salafi texts. He also writes extensively on rapprochement between Islamic schools of thought, particularly between Salafi and Traditionalist (Ash'ari and Maturidi) approaches.

كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

This day your soul suffices as your own reckoner

*The Night Journey 17 : 14*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

## SYRIA

### **Al-Nabulsi, Dr Mohammed Ratib**

The son of a well-known Syrian religious scholar, Dr Al-Nabulsi has represented Syria all over the world in many Islamic conferences. Muslims know him through the lessons, orations, symposiums, and interviews broadcast on radio and television. He has written a number of Islamic books, many of which have been translated into English. In addition to studying in his native Syria, he has also studied in Ireland and France.

### **Al-Sabouni, Sheikh Mohammed Ali**

Read bio on page 134 in Honourable Mentions

## TUNISIA

### **Djait, Hisham**

Prof Hisham Djait is a well-known pan-Arab intellectual from Tunisia. A Prof of history at the University of Tunis, he has written important works such as *Al-Fitna* and *L'Europe et l'Islam*, and was chosen by the Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing in Beirut as the Cultural Personality of the Year for 2016.

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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## BURKINA FASO

### **Dokori, Dr Abu Bakr**

Abu Bakr Dokori is the President of the Islamic University of Ouagadougou. He is a major scholar and advisor to the president. Dokori is also Burkina Faso's representative to ISESCO. He is one of the leading Muslim scholars in a country with over 11 million Muslims.

## ERITREA

### **Said, Sheikh Faïd Mohammed**

Sheikh Said was raised in Eritrea, where he was educated by Sheikh Hamid (rehmatullah alaih), the Senior Judge of the Shari'ah Court in Asmara. While he remained in Eritrea, he studied under some of the greatest scholars in the country. He later moved to Madinah al Munawarah, where he continued his studies under Sheikh Atiyyah Mohammed Salim (rehmatullah alaih), the Resident Scholar of Masjid ul Nabawwi and Senior Judge of Madinah. Since

that time Sheikh Faïd has been invited to lecture all over the world, particularly in Canada, Germany, the Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UK. He has also headed Almadina College, a centre of learning in London.

## ETHIOPIA

### **Idris, HE Hajji Omar**

Omar Idris is a mufti and leader in Ethiopian Muslim politics. A proponent of Muslim unity, he is the current chair of the Addis Ababa Majlis and also the chair of the Addis Ababa Ulema Unity Forum.

## THE GAMBIA

### **Jah, HE Ambassador Prof Dr Omar**

Jah is an important figure in the Muslim community of Gambia and in Gambian scholarship on Islam. Jah was the former Gambian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Secretary of the Muslim Scholars Council of Gambia, and Acting Vice-Chancellor at the University of Gambia. After more than a decade at the University of Gambia, he is now the Pro-Vice Chancellor at the Islamic University of Technology (IUT) Dhaka, Bangladesh, where he was appointed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

## NIGERIA

### **Ahmed, Dr Ibrahim Datti**

Dr Ibrahim Datti Ahmed is the President-General of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN). The SCSN is the focal Islamic religious institution that deals with Sharia in Nigeria and is also a representative body of Nigeria's Muslim scholars. Recently, the SCSN has petitioned for fair treatment of Muslim military officers and has spoken out against prejudice and violence against Muslims. He has been touted as a mediator between Boko Haram and the government.

### **Salih, Sheikh Ibrahim**

Read bio on page 134 in Honourable Mentions

### **Zakzaky, Sheikh Ibraheem**

Sheikh Ibraheem is the leading force behind the most influential Shia movement in Nigeria and heads its Islamic Movement. The movement has witnessed rapid growth and is based on the model of Hezbollah, focusing on social services, education, charity, etc, but also including military training. In December 2015, the Nigerian Army raided his residence in Zaria,

massacred hundreds of his followers, killed three of his sons and held him under state detention before being released. He was arrested again earlier this year but the court hearing has been repeatedly delayed.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### **Desai, Mufti Ebrahim**

A prominent Deobandi sheikh, Mufti Desai runs askimam.org, issuing numerous fatwas online through the Camperdown-based Islamic institution Darul Iftaa, a department of Madrassah Inaamiyyah where he is the principal mufti and a senior lecturer.

### **Esack, Farid**

Farid Esack is a Muslim scholar who has authored many famous written works, a gender equality commissioner appointed by Nelson Mandela, a politician, a worker against apartheid, and an advocate of interreligious dialogue. Through the organization of Muslim Call, Esack calls out to hundreds of people and has created close ties with interfaith groups opposing apartheid. He is also active in helping Muslims infected with HIV in South Africa, and currently holds the position of Prof of Islamic Studies at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

### **Hendricks, Sheikh Seraj**

Hendricks is the Mufti of Cape Town, the Resident Sheikh at the Azzawia Institute, and Dean of the Student Body at the Madina Institute. He is a leading scholar on Sufism in South Africa and a patron of Dome Publications. Hendricks is seen as one of the highest authorities on Islamic scholarship for South Africa's large and affluent Muslim population.

### **Moosa, Ebrahim**

Ebrahim Moosa is the Prof of Islamic Studies in Krough School of Global Affairs, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, and in the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame. His interpretive and historical research on questions of tradition, ethics, and law includes two monographs as well as several edited and co-edited books. His prize-winning book *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination*, was awarded the Best First Book in the History of Religions by the American Academy of Religion. He is the author of *What is a Madrasah?* (2015). Moosa is also regarded as a prominent public intellectual. In 2007 he was invited to deliver the King Hasan Lecture (Darus Hasaniyyah) to HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco in Arabic.

## UGANDA

### **Mamdani, Mahmood**

Mamdani is the Herbert Lehman Prof of Government in the Departments of Anthropology and Political Science at Columbia University in the US, and Director of Makerere Institute of Social Research in Kampala, Uganda. In 2008, Mamdani was named one of the world's top 20 intellectuals by Foreign Policy (New York) and Prospect (London) magazines. He is the former president of the Council for Development of Social Research in Africa in Dakar, Senegal. Mamdani is well-known for his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War and The Roots of Terror*, which became significant in liberal policy circles in the US.

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## *Asia*

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## AZERBAIJAN

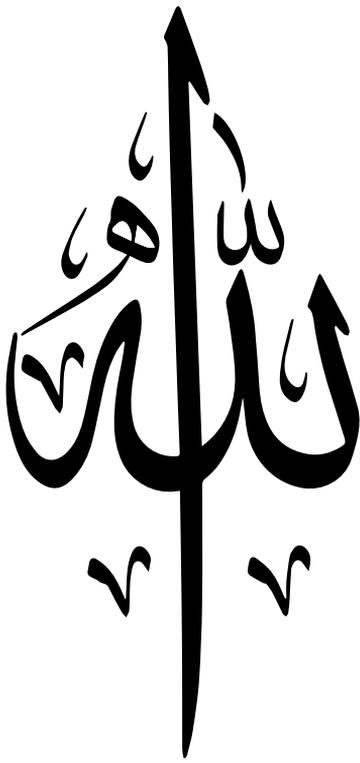
### **Pashazade, Sheikh ul-Islam Haji Allahshukur Hummat**

Pashazade is the Grand Mufti of Azerbaijan, the elected mufti of the Caucasus region, and the chairman of the Religious Council of the Caucus. Pashazade is also the world's only Sunni-Shia Grand Mufti, giving each group fatwas according to their relevant madhab, reflecting Azerbaijan's Sunni-Shia mix. He co-chaired the World Summit of Religious Leaders, held in Azerbaijan in April 2010.

## INDIA

### **Khan, Wahiduddin**

Wahiduddin Khan, founder of Centre for Peace and Spirituality, is an Islamic scholar who advocates peaceful coexistence, interfaith dialogue, and social harmony. He is the author of over 200 books, including a translation of the *Quran* into simple English. He is also the co-founder of Goodword, a popular publisher of children's books on Islam. Khan has received national and international awards. He was conferred a peace award by the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies in 2015 at Abu Dhabi. He has launched Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation and *Quran* Foundation to undertake educational courses on subjects related to Islam and peace.



#### **Nadvi, Rabey Hasani**

Nadvi is an Islamic scholar and a bilingual author of around 30 books in both Arabic and Urdu. His influence emanates from being the fourth president of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Rector of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, and a founding member of Rabita Aalam-e-Islami, Makkah Mukarramah. He is also the president of multiple Islamic centres and academies.

#### **Nadwi, Bahauddeen Muhammed Jamaluddeen**

Dr. Bahauddeen Muhammed Jamaluddeen Nadwi has published more than 100 works, including books, treatises, edited volumes, and translations in Arabic, English and Malayalam. His latest work, released in 2015, is the translation of Holy Quran into Malayalam. His works span Qur'anic sciences, Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, education, Sufism, Comparative Religions, Christianity, Arabic Language and Literature, and Islamic History. He is one of the six founding fathers of Darul Huda Islamic University, the Editor in Chief of an international Journal of Islamic studies, and a member of regional (Kerala), national, and international organizations. He has visited more 40 countries and delivered a number of religious, academic and cultural lectures.

## INDONESIA

#### **Bisri, Kyai Haji Achmad Mustofa**

Kyai Haji Achmad Mustofa Bisri is widely revered as a religious scholar, poet, novelist, painter, and Muslim intellectual. He has strongly influenced the NU's (Nahdlatul Ulama) social and political development over the past thirty years. He heads the prestigious Raudlatuth Tholibin Islamic Boarding School in Rembang, Central Java. Mustofa Bisri's role in combining spirituality with artistic expression is widely admired in Indonesia, where he is regarded as a cultural icon. Often called the 'President of Poets' he is celebrated for his courage in defending artistic and religious freedom in the face of radical onslaughts.

#### **Maarif, Syafii**

Maarif is one of Indonesia's most famous scholars whose political comments regularly attract significant attention. In 2008 he won the prestigious Magsaysay Award for guiding Muslims to embrace tolerance and pluralism. This former president of the influential Muhammadiyah organization is actively involved in interfaith and peace movements both domestically and internationally, largely through his Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity. He was recognized for his role in promoting interfaith dialogue and religious harmony at the Habibie Awards. Maarif is also a Prof of history at the National University of Yogyakarta and a productive author and columnist, currently writing two regular columns in 'Republika' newspaper and also in Gatra Magazine.

#### **Syamsuddin, Prof Dr M Din**

Read bio on page 134 in Honourable Mentions

## MALAYSIA

#### **Al-Akiti, Dato Dr Muhammad Afifi**

Al-Akiti is a scholar, trained theologian, and philologist. He is a lecturer of Islamic studies with the Faculty of Theology at Oxford University, a KFAS Fellow in Islamic Studies, and a fellow at Worcester College. He is internationally acclaimed for his 2005 fatwa "Defending the transgressed by censoring the reckless against the killing of civilians", written in response to the 7 July London bombings, which was praised by scholars of Islam and gained a massive readership on the Internet. Al-Akiti was appointed Privy Councillor to the State of Perak, Malaysia by the Crown Prince of Perak. In 2012, he was the sole recipient of the Darjah Dato's Paduka Cura Si-Manja

Kini (DPCM) which carries the Malaysian title of "Dato" in the Sultan of Perak Birthday Honours List.

#### **Al-Attas, Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib**

Dr Al-Attas is considered by many to be a giant of scholarship in the Muslim world. An influential philosopher and thinker, he has written on the traditional Islamic sciences as well as Sufism, metaphysics, and philosophy. He has served at various global academic institutions as an educator and lead administrator and is also a noted calligrapher.

#### **Bakar, Dr Osman**

Dr Osman Bakar is Distinguished Prof and Al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilizational Studies and Renewal at ISTAC, International Islamic University, Malaysia. He was formerly Director of the Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies (SOASCIS), Univeristi Brunei Darussalam. He is concurrently Emeritus Prof of Philosophy of Science, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. He has published 22 books and over 300 articles on Islamic thought and civilization, particularly on Islamic philosophy and science. He also writes on contemporary Islam and inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue. His writings have been translated into many languages. He has served as advisor and consultant to a variety of international academic and professional organizations and institutions, including UNESCO and The Qatar Foundation. He served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Malaya (1995-2000) and was awarded a Datukship by the Malaysian King in 2000.

#### **Kamali, Prof Mohammad Hashim**

Originally from Afghanistan, Kamali was dean and Prof at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and the International Islamic University in Malaysia. Kamali is currently Founding CEO of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies in Malaysia. He is the world's leading expert on comparative studies between Islamic and modern law, and one of the most prolific producers of quality scholarship on Islam in the world today. Kamali received the King Abdullah II bin Hussein International Award for the year 2010 in recognition of his intellectual and academic contributions towards serving Islam and Muslims. In February 2010, he worked on the new constitution of Somalia.

## PAKISTAN

#### **Ahmed, Prof Akbar**

Read bio on page 135 in Honourable Mentions

#### **Hashmi, Dr Farhat**

Dr Farhat Hashmi is an influential Islamic teacher, public speaker, and scholar. She is a prominent name in the burgeoning field of the role of women in Islam. In addition to the academic aspects of Islamic teachings, Hashmi also focuses on its relatable and practical aspects, thereby ensuring that her message resonates with a multitude of women across the globe. She holds a PhD in Hadith Sciences from the University of Glasgow, Scotland. She is the Founder of Al-Huda International, a non-profit institute founded in 1994. Al-Huda promotes Islamic learning and serves in the field of social welfare, and has branches across Pakistan as well as internationally.

#### **Najafi, HE Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Hussain**

Grand Ayatollah Hussain Najafi is the only marja' in South Asia. Based in the Sargodha district of the Punjab province in Pakistan, he was the first scholar from that country to be given the status of marji'yya and is one of only two ayatollahs from Pakistan.

#### **Al-Qadri, Sheikh Dr Tahir**

Shaykh Tahir al-Qadri is a Prof of law and the founder of Minhaj ul Qur'an International Worldwide and the Minhaj Welfare Foundation. Al-Qadri has authored some 450 published works and given more than 6,000 lectures on various subjects which are aired on international satellite channels. In March 2010, Qadri issued a 600-page fatwa declaring that terrorists and suicide bombers are unbelievers. He has continued to be outspoken against terrorists. His attempts to lead popular revolts against the Pakistani government has led to a fall in his standing. He is based in Canada.

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## *Europe*

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## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

#### **Ceric, Sheikh Dr Mustafa**

Mustafa Ceric served as the Grand Mufti of Bosnia from 1993 until 2012, when he retired. Ceric is outspoken on interfaith initiatives in the Muslim world. In 2006, Ceric issued the Declaration of European Muslims to the European Union stating that Euro-

pean Muslims are dedicated to the common values of law, tolerance, democracy and human rights, the value of life, faith freedom, property, and dignity. In 2008, Ceric led the Muslim delegation of the A Common Word initiative to the Vatican. In 2015 Ceric wrote A Friendly Letter to the European Bishops, declaring, "We accept you and ask that you accept us." He is President of the World Bosnian Congress.

#### **Karic, Dr Enes**

Dr Enes Karic is a Prof of Qur'anic studies and history of the interpretation of the Qur'an at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo. He previously served as the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1994-1996. Dr Karic has written extensively on the Qur'an and Islamic studies in English and Bosnian, and has delivered lectures worldwide. He recently completed his book Traditional Bosnia: Islamic Theological, Philosophical, and Logical Studies from the 15th Century Onward, which was commissioned by Kalam Research Media's analytic theology initiative.

#### **FRANCE**

##### **Bencheikh, Sheikh Sohaib**

Bencheikh is a theologian, a modernist former Grand Mufti of Marseilles, and one of the most influential social leaders and scholars of Islam in France. Bencheikh is also head of the Higher Institute for Islamic Studies. Marseilles is a cosmopolitan city with a huge population of Muslims of North African ancestry. Bencheikh is a passionate advocate for integration of the Muslim population, hijab rights, and women's involvement as imams in the Muslim community.

#### **GERMANY**

##### **Hoffman, HE Ambassador Dr Murad**

Hoffman is an author and Muslim intellectual, respected by both Muslims and non-Muslims. He is a prominent former German diplomat and author of several books on Islam, including Journey to Makkah and The Future of Islam in the West and the East, published in 2008. Many of his books and essays focus on Islam's place in the West and the US, specifically in light of the post-9/11 climate.

#### **RUSSIA**

##### **Gaynutdin, Mufti Sheikh Ravil**

Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin is a Moscow-based Muslim scholar. Among various academic roles, he is Grand Mufti of Russia and Chairman of the Union of Muftis of Russia. He is probably the single most important figure in the schema of Russian Islam. As a member of the Russian president's Council for Coordination with Religious Organizations, he is a key figure in relations between the Kremlin and Russia's Muslim population.

#### **SWITZERLAND**

##### **Ramadan, Dr Tariq**

Ramadan is a pre-eminent European Muslim intellectual and author about Islam in public life. He is a Prof of Contemporary Islamic Studies at Oxford University, as well as holding academic positions at other institutions worldwide. In February 2018, Ramadan was accused of raping two women (a third charge was dropped) and was arrested in that same month pending his trial. The French justice system has come under scrutiny for the way it has treated Ramadan since then, denying him bail and putting him in solitary confinement where his physical health has deteriorated (he suffers from multiple sclerosis). Prominent activists (e.g. Noam Chomsky) have signed petitions calling for Ramadan to be treated fairly.

#### **TURKEY**

##### **Kalin, Dr Ibrahim**

Ibrahim Kalin, PhD, is a senior advisor to the President and Presidential Spokesperson. Dr Kalin is the founding director of the SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research based in Ankara, Turkey and served as its director from 2005 to 2009. He is a fellow at the Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Dr Kalin has published widely on Islamic philosophy, relations between Islam and the West, and Turkish foreign policy.

##### **Karaman, Prof Dr Hayrettin**

Karaman is one of the most prominent scholars of Islam in Turkey, and the pre-eminent scholar of Islamic law (Sharia) there. He publishes popular academic texts extensively and writes a weekly column in the newspaper Yeni Safak (New Dawn). His long

career in academia has garnered him much respect. At the pinnacle of his career, Karaman was a dean at Turkey's premier university, Marmara University. He left this position at the height of the headscarf controversy in 2001.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### **Abdel Haleem, Prof Muhammad (new)**

Muhammad Abdel Haleem is a much loved Prof of Islamic Studies at SOAS and editor of the Journal of Qur'anic Studies. He was appointed an OBE in 2008 in recognition of his services to Arabic and inter-faith understanding. Born in Egypt, Abdel Haleem memorised the Qur'an (this was a prerequisite for entry to Al-Azhar university) before starting his further education. He has many publications including a widely acclaimed translation of the Qur'an.

### **Hellyer, Dr Hisham**

A noted scholar of politics & religion in the West and Muslim communities worldwide, Dr Hellyer's career has included affiliations with Brookings, Harvard, the Royal United Services Institute, the American University in Cairo, and the Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation (CASIS). As a non-partisan academic, he was appointed as Deputy Convenor in the UK Government's taskforce following the 2005 London bombings, and continues to be a prominent public intellectual. An English and Arab researcher of traditional Islamic thought, Dr Hellyer's books include "Muslims of Europe: the 'Other' Europeans", "A Revolution Undone: Egypt's Road Beyond Revolt", "A Sublime Path: the Sufi Way of the Makkan Sages" (co-author), and "The Islamic Tradition and the Human Rights Discourse" (editor).

### **Motala, Hadhrat Sheikhul Hadith Maulana Yusuf**

Sheikh Motala is the founder of the Dar ul Ulum Al-Arabia Al-Ilamia in Holcombe, Bury, Lancashire. He is a scholar's scholar: many of the UK's young Deobandi scholars have studied under his patronage. Sheikh Motala founded an expansive network of students and educational institutions. He is also regarded as the spiritual khalifa of the famous scholar, Shaikh al-Hadith Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi, and consequently acts as a spiritual guide for thousands of people.

### **Nadwi, Sheikh Dr Mohammad Akram**

Sheikh Dr Mohammad Akram Nadwi is one of the most important Islamic scholars in the Western world today. He has a doctorate in Arabic Language and has authored and translated over 30 titles on Arabic, jurisprudence, Qur'an, and Hadith. He travels extensively, and his courses and lectures have a worldwide following. His biographical dictionary of women scholars in Islamic history (over 40 volumes) is now being published by al-Rabitah al-Muhammadiyah li al-ulama in Rabat. A revised edition of the English translation of the introductory volume al-Muhaddithat was published in 2013. He is the subject of the best selling book *If the Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Quran* (2015).

### **Pirzada, Shaykh Muhammad Imdad Hussain**

Shaykh Muhammad Imdad Hussain Pirzada is a scholar who has actively promoted education, community, and charity work in the UK and abroad. He has written dozens of books on educational, religious, and contemporary affairs in Arabic, Urdu, and English, including a five-volume Tafseer Imdad-ul-Karam, the first exegesis of the Qur'an to be written in the UK. Currently he is working on a 12-volume modern commentary to Sahih al-Bukhari. He is founder and principal of Jamia Al-Karam, an educational institution that has produced hundreds of young male and female British Muslim scholars, as well as imams and managers in mosques and educational centres. He is the founder and chairman of Muslim Charity -- Helping the Needy, an organization that operates in 17 countries while managing five hospitals in Pakistan. He is president of the World Association for Al-Azhar Graduates (UK) and also chairman of the British Muslim Forum.

### **Winter, Prof Timothy (Sheikh Abdal-Hakim Murad)**

Read bio on page 135 in Honourable Mentions.

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## *North America*

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## CANADA

### **Mattson, Dr Ingrid**

Read bio on page 135 in Honourable Mentions.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **Abdullah, Dr Umar Faruq**

Dr Umar is an American convert to Islam who founded and now directs the Nawawi Foundation, a Chicago-based non-profit organization that educates Muslims in the US about Islamic teachings, and conducts research on Islam in America. Abdullah has published *The Story of Alexander Russell Webb*, a biography of Muhammed Webb, one of the significant early American converts to Islam. He is currently engaged in independent research, writing, and teaching activities with institutions across the US, Europe, and Africa with a focus on Islamic theology.

### **El Fadl, Prof Khaled Abou**

Prof Khaled Abou El Fadl is an Islamic Scholar, lecturer and author whose writings focus on universal themes of humanity, morality, human rights, justice, and mercy. He was awarded the University of Oslo Human Rights Award, the Leo and Lisl Eitinger Prize in 2007, and named a Carnegie Scholar in Islamic Law in 2005. He was previously appointed by President George W Bush to serve on the US Commission for International Religious Freedom, and also served as a member of the Board of Directors of Human Rights Watch. His book, *The Great Theft*, was named one of the Top 100 Books of the year by Canada's *Globe and Mail* (Canada's leading national newspaper).

### **Huda, Qamar-ul**

Qamar-ul Huda is the Director of the Security and Violent Extremism program at the Center for Global Policy, a think-tank in Washington, DC. He served as a senior policy advisor to former US Secretary of State John Kerry's Office of Religion and Global Affairs. Dr Huda is the editor of *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam* and the author of *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis*. His studies and writings--which have been published in international journals and newspapers--are geared toward examining religious identities, comparative ethics, the language of violence, conflict resolution, and non-violence in Islam. He is adjunct associate Prof at Georgetown University and an expert for the UN Alliance for Civilizations.

### **Jackson, Sherman**

Jackson is the King Faisal Chair in Islamic Thought and Culture and Prof of Religion and American Studies and Ethnicity, and the Director of the Center for Islamic Thought, Culture and Practice (CITCAP) at the University of Southern California. He is a well-respected scholar and author of works dealing with Islam, Sharia, and the African-American Muslim community. Jackson is the co-founder of the American Learning Institute for Muslims (ALIM) and is featured on the Washington Post-Newsweek blog *On Faith* and the Huffington Post. He is a former member of the Fiqh Council of North America and a former Prof of Law, Near Eastern Studies, and Afro-American Studies at the University of Michigan.

### **Qadhi, Dr Yasir**

Yasir Qadhi is one of very few professors of Islamic studies who is also a classically trained scholar. He has established a reputation as a cleric who appreciates the cultural impact that Muslims have to face in the US. He is also renowned for reaching out to media outlets and mainstream Americans of different religions to promote a better understanding of Islam, and to challenge stereotypes about Muslims in the US. His condemnations of Da'ish and other extremists have led Da'ish to call for his assassination.

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## *South America*

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## ARGENTINA

### **Garcia, Prof Muhammad Isa**

Garcia was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He studied Arabic, Islamic studies, and theology at Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah. He is a specialist in the origins of Prophetic Tradition. Garcia has translated numerous books, with many only available to a Spanish-speaking readership in his translation. He is also the author of the series *Know Islam*.

He said, 'My Lord, expand my breast for me.  
And make easy for me my affair.  
And undo the knot upon my tongue,  
so that they may understand what I [shall] say'

*Tā Hā 20 : 25-28*

## *Middle East and North Africa*

### ALGERIA

#### **Bouteflika, HE President Abdelaziz**

Bouteflika is the longest-serving president of Algeria. During his years of presidency, Bouteflika has succeeded in ending a civil war that ran throughout the nineties and was one of the bloodiest civil unrests of the 20th century in the Muslim world. Peace was reached through a process of reconciliation and amnesty that was strongly supported by the Islamist and Nationalist belligerents. Following constitutional amendments, Bouteflika won his fourth term as president in April 2014 with 81% of the vote. Since suffering a stroke his physical health has deteriorated rapidly. In 2017, he ordered the government to reduce imports, curb spending and warned of the dangers of foreign debt. He made a call for reform in the banking sector as well as an increase in investment in renewable energy, specifically shale.

### EGYPT

#### **Al-Ayyat, HE Muhammad Morsi Isa**

HE Muhammad Morsi Isa al-Ayyat, a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood, became the first democratically elected president of Egypt in June 2012. A little more than a year later, following massive anti-Morsi demonstrations, he was deposed from office and detained by the Egyptian armed forces.

His critics accused him of trying to turn Egypt into an Islamist dictatorship while doing nothing to improve the dire state of Egypt's economy. The Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed and Morsi was sentenced to death, a case that was overturned by the Cassation Court in 2016. An independent panel made up of British Parliamentarians reported that Morsi is kept in torture like conditions and that inadequate medical care will likely "lead to premature death."

#### **Al-Sisi, HE President Abdel Fattah Saeed**

Former Field Marshal Abdel Fattah Saeed Al-Sisi was sworn into office as President of Egypt on 8 June 2014, having earlier that year resigned from his post as the Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces. Sisi first came to public attention when then President Muhammad Al-Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood promoted Sisi to Minister of Defence. On June 30 2013, millions of Egyptians again took to the streets in large numbers demanding that Morsi step down. The military apparatus led by Sisi removed Morsi from power and banned the Muslim Brotherhood. Outbreaks of violence ensued across Egypt that included the death of many hundreds of protesters at the hands of pro-military police at Raba'a Al-Adawiya Square in Cairo. Under Sisi, Egypt has enjoyed excellent relations with members of the Arab League and supported the blockade on Qatar as well as the GCC-led military intervention in Yemen. He has publically supported the Asad regime in Syria and has called on the Palestinian people to make peace with Israel promising the Israeli people "Egypt's unwavering support."

قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي \* وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي \*  
وَاجْلَعْ عَقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي \* يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي \*

## IRAN

### **Ebtekar, HE Dr Masoumeh**

Dr Ebtekar was the first female Vice President of Iran in 1997. A scientist, journalist, and politician, she frequently writes on environmental, political, social, and women's issues in Persian and English. She is one of the founding members of the reformist Islamic Iran Participation Front and served as Head of Environmental Protection Organization under Rouhani and Khatami. Her accolades include the Energy Globe Foundation Honorary Lifetime Achievement Award, being named one of the seven 2006 Champions of the Earth by the United Nations Environment Program, and one of 50 environmental leaders by The Guardian newspaper. In 2016 Dr Ebtekar was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Political Science by the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea. In August 2017, Ebtekar was appointed as Women Affairs' Vice President.

### **Jafari, Major General Mohammad Ali**

General Mohammad Ali Jafari is the Chief Commander of the Iranian Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution (also known as the Revolutionary Guard), a 300,000 strong elite faction of the Iranian armed force's separate from the armies that report directly to the Velayat-e Faqih. When his 10-year stint as commander of the elite military force was due to expire in three months, it was extended for three years. The Revolutionary Guard Corps occupies cabinet positions, parliament seats, and controls an extensive business empire, which it partially used to fund and direct Shia movements abroad such as Hezbollah and the Mahdi Army. Because of this, Jafari has a significant degree of influence in Iraq and Lebanon.

### **Khatami, HE Sayyid Mohammad**

Khatami is a reformist politician who served as president of Iran from 1997 to 2005. Although he was ineffective in bringing about many of the populist changes in his mandate, he remains a figurehead of the reformist movement. Khatami was elected to the first Majles al Shura and is known internationally for his proposal of the UN Dialogue Among Civilizations initiative, a movement he hopes will counter the prevailing sentiment that there was a "clash of civilizations". He continues his work in inter-civilizational dialogue and internal reform through two NGOs that he founded and heads. His movements are limited by security and the Iranian

media are currently banned from mentioning his name or publishing pictures of him.

### **Rouhani, HE President Hassan**

In Iran's 2017 presidential elections, Hassan Rouhani was re-elected with an increased electoral mandate, the third incumbent Iranian president to enjoy such a political accomplishment. He was pivotal in negotiating the 2015 Iran nuclear deal framework with the USA and other world powers. Rouhani has held many high-level positions such as the deputy speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis – Iranian Parliament), and the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council. Rouhani is also an accomplished scholar and has written 20 books in Persian, Arabic, and English.

### **Zarif, Mohammad Javad**

Mohammad Javad Zarif is the current Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. After studying diplomacy and law in the USA, he moved back to Iran in 1980, where he has held significant diplomatic and cabinet posts. As someone with intimate knowledge of the USA at the heart of the current Iranian government, he is key to building bridges. Zarif has recently accused the US of "creating domestic chaos" in Iran after Trump broke the US nuclear deal with Iran. He has recently met with Chinese diplomats to enhance trade deals with China.

## IRAQ

### **Barzani, HE Masoud**

Barzani entered the political arena at the young age of 16 under the wing of his late father the Kurdish nationalist leader Mustafa Barzani and became the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in 1979. He had a major role in shaping the new Iraq through his political position and by becoming a member of the Iraqi Governing Council in April 2004 after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. He has been the main force fighting DA'ISH and is adamant about establishing an independent Kurdish state. He was President of the Iraqi Kurdish Region from 2005-2017, but had to resign because of fierce regional opposition to the referendum he held in September 2017 for Kurdish independence (there was overwhelming support for an independent Kurdistan). There are approximately five million Kurds living within the Kurdish region in Iraq, 14.5 million in Turkey, 6 million in Iran, and less than 2 million in Syria.

# A Common Word

www.acommonword.com

The 'A Common Word Between Us and You' initiative (ACW) was launched on October 13th, 2007 initially as an Open Letter signed by 138 leading Muslim scholars and intellectuals (including such figures as the Grand Muftis of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Oman, Bosnia, Russia, and Istanbul) to the leaders of the Christian churches and denominations of the entire world, including His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. In essence it proposed, based on verses from the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible, that Islam and Christianity share, at their cores, the twin 'golden' commandments of the paramount importance of loving God and loving one's neighbour. Based on this joint common ground, it called for peace and harmony between Christians and Muslims worldwide, who together comprise over 55% of the world's population. ACW was and is an extended global handshake of interreligious goodwill, friendship and fellowship and consequently of world peace.

ACW is a document which uses religion as the solution to the problems of interreligious tensions. By basing itself on solid theological grounds in both religions—the twin Commandments to love God and love the neighbour—ACW has demonstrated to Christians and Muslims that they have a certain common ground (despite irreducible theological differences) and that both religions require them to have relations based on love not on hatred.

During the ten years since its launch ACW has become arguably the most influential interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians in history. It has provided a common ground on which thousands of Muslim and Christian religious leaders have been brought together through:

- Initiating a multitude of conferences, seminars, workshops, training programs, and university courses in Jordan, the Vatican, the USA (Yale University, Georgetown University and the College of William and Mary, Fuller Theological Seminary, ISNA, Oregon, Virginia, South Carolina, New Orleans), the UK (Cambridge University, Oxford University, Heythrop College and Lambeth Palace), Oman, Malaysia, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, the UAE, the Brookings Institute in Qatar, the Mediterranean Dialogue of Cultures, Germany (the Munich School of Philosophy), the World Council of Churches in Switzerland, the Philippines, and Australia.
- Being the subject of books, articles, PhDs and over 74 dissertations and reports.
- Founding the regular [every 3 years] Catholic-Muslim Forum, which was first held at the Vatican in 2008, at

the Baptism Site, Jordan, in 2011, and at the Vatican in November, 2014.

- Giving rise to a variety of other events, activities, initiatives and even legislative bills.

Thus HH Pope Benedict XVI, said of it (during the First Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum held at the Vatican, November 4–6, 2008):

“The Open Letter ‘A Common Word between Us and you’ has received numerous responses and has given rise to dialogue, specific initiatives and meetings, aimed at helping us to know one another more deeply and to grow in esteem for our shared values.”

Equally, HG Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said of it (in 2010):

“The appearance of the A Common Word [Open Letter] of 2007 was a landmark in Muslim-Christian relations and it has a unique role in stimulating a discussion at the deepest level across the world.”

Insofar as Muslim-Christian relations are concerned, Professor Miroslav Volf of Yale University said of it (in 2011):

“The A Common Word Initiative is the most significant initiative in Muslim-Christian relations since *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council.”

And in so far as Muslim initiatives towards Christians are concerned, Professor David F. Ford (Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge, U.K. and Director of the Cambridge Interfaith Program) said of it (in 2011):

“The Open Letter A Common Word Between Us and You (2007) was probably the single most important initiative ever taken by Muslim scholars and authorities towards Christians.”

The A Common Word initiative was awarded the UK's Association of Muslim Social Scientists Building Bridges Award of 2008; Prince Ghazi, Habib Ali Al-Jifri and Grand Mufti Mustafa Ceric were awarded Germany's Eugen Biser Award for it in 2008, and Prince Ghazi was awarded the St Augustine Award for Interreligious Dialogue in the Mediterranean (Milan, Italy, 2012) and the Interfaith Harmony and Tolerance Prize by the International Islamic University of Malaysia, *Jamia Ma'din* and the National Unity and Integration Department, Malaysia.

### **Al-Saadi, Sheikh Abdul Malik**

Sheikh Abdul Malik al-Saadi is a Sunni cleric who opposed Saddam Hussein and has recently reemerged as the leading Sunni voice in Iraq. His power base is in the province of Anbar. He was offered the post of Grand Mufti in 2007 but refused. He is known for his calm and moderate stance, and strives to keep a unified Iraq in the face of sectarian conflict.

### **ISRAEL**

#### **Salah, Sheikh Raed**

Raed Salah is the head of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel. He is widely respected in the Islamic world as a religious leader. From 1989 to 2001, Salah also served as the mayor of Umm Al-Fahm, an Israeli-Arab city. He has been arrested and imprisoned by the Israeli government on a number of occasions.

### **JORDAN**

#### **Al-Abdullah, HRH Crown Prince Hussein**

Named Crown Prince in 2009, HRH Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah is the eldest son of His Majesty King Abdullah II, making him heir to the throne. HRH holds the rank of First Lieutenant in the Jordanian Armed Forces, and has accompanied his father on several military and political occasions. His efforts to develop the Jordanian youth community started with the Haqeq (achieve) initiative, an activity targeting school-aged children. In 2015, Crown Prince Hussein became the youngest person to chair a UN Security Council meeting, during which he oversaw a debate on how to prevent youth from joining extremist groups. He graduated from Georgetown University in 2016. In 2017 he delivered Jordan's address at the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

#### **Abu Rashta, Ata**

Ata Abu Rashta is the global leader of the Islamic political party Hizb ut-Tahrir. Having worked closely with the organization's founder, Taqiuddin Al-Nabhani, Abu Rashta gained prominence in Jordan during the First Gulf War when he contested the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In 2003, he became the leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Hizb-ut Tahrir is popular in the Levant, the former Soviet Union, South and Southeast Asia, and Western Europe.

### **KUWAIT**

#### **Al-Sabah, HH Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber**

Read bio on page 135 in Honourable Mentions

### **LIBYA**

#### **Haftar, Khalifa**

Khalifa Haftar rose to prominence after the uprising against the late General Gaddafi, and was the person who announced that the Libyan government had been suspended. A leading figure in Libya's military establishment, Haftar became a major general in the Libyan Army since 2011, commander of the forces of the internationally recognized Tobruk government in 2015, and Libya's Army Chief in 2017. As of August 2016, Haftar had refused to support the new United Nations Security Council endorsed Government of National Accord, which led the US and allies to believe that he was jeopardizing the stability of Libya. The UAE, Egypt, and Russia continue to support Haftar. Haftar's Libyan Army seized control of Libyan oil ports in June of 2018. However, he later handed control of them back to port authorities after international pressure.

### **PALESTINE**

#### **Abbas, HE President Mahmoud**

Read bio on page 136 in Honourable Mentions.

#### **Haniyah, Ismail**

Read bio on page 136 in Honourable Mentions.

#### **Mashal, Khaled**

Read bio on page 136 in Honourable Mentions.

### **SUDAN**

#### **Al-Bashir, HE President Omar**

Al-Bashir is the current president of Sudan and head of the National Congress Party. He came to power in a coup in 1989 and has since instituted elements of Sharia law throughout the country, including Christian and animist areas. The International Criminal Court has accused him of crimes against humanity in Darfur. The 20-year-old civil war between the north and south of the country ended in 2005, and the creation of the new Republic of South Sudan was declared on 9 July 2011. He has been strengthening ties with Russia, Egypt and various African countries.

### **Al-Mahdi, HE Imam Sayyed Al Sadiq**

Al-Mahdi is the president of the moderate National Umma Party and the imam of the Al-Ansar Sufi order. He was Prime Minister of Sudan until the government was overthrown and he was forced into exile. Al-Mahdi returned to Sudan in January 2017 and is working to restore peace and democracy in Sudan. He derives a significant portion of his authority from the fact that he descends from Muhammad Ahmad, who claimed to be the Mahdi, a prophesied figure that many Muslims believe will return to revive the Islamic faith.

## **SYRIA**

### **Al-Assad, HE President Bashar**

Al-Assad is president of the Syrian Arab Republic. Because of its strategic position, Syria is regarded as a major player in any peace agreement in the Middle East. Since 2011, the civil war between the regime and an assortment of groups (mainly gathered under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army) has resulted in approximately 400,000 people being killed, six million displaced internally, and about five million having fled the country in a humanitarian crisis which is also having a destabilizing influence on neighbouring countries. The Khan Shaykhun chemical attacks of 2017--which the Syrian regimes denies carrying out--provoked airstrikes from the US military. In July 2017, the USA, Russia, and Jordan agreed to a ceasefire, with Russia giving assurances regarding Assad's compliance, and the US administration stopped equipping and training anti-government rebel groups.

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### **Al-Maktoum, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid**

Read bio on page 136 in Honourable Mentions.

### **Al-Nahyan, HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed**

Sheikh Khalifa Al-Nahyan is the president of one of the fastest-growing nations in the world. Under his leadership, the UAE has seen significant economic growth, and the renaming of the Burj Dubai to Burj Khalifa is considered a symbol of Al-Nahyan's financial power. He has made substantial donations to many health institutions around the world, and finances a major housing programme in the Gaza Strip. He has also inaugurated Warner Bros. Plaza at Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi, the first indoor

Warner Bros themed amusement park as part of his continued drive to make the UAE a prime tourist destination.

### **Al-Qassimi, Sheikha Lubna**

Sheikha Lubna bint Khalid bin Sultan al-Qassimi is the UAE's Minister of State for Tolerance. She was the first woman to hold a ministerial post in the UAE, where she served as the Minister of Economy and Planning from 2000-2004. In 2000, she founded Tejari, the Middle East's first business-to-business online marketplace which now has franchises in Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. In March 2014, she was appointed President of Zayed University. Forbes ranked her as 43rd in the World's Most Powerful Women in Politics in 2016, and the most powerful Arab women in government for 2017.

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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## **CHAD**

### **Deby Itno, HE President Idriss**

Deby is the President of Chad and heads the Patriotic Salvation Movement. He took power in 1990, leading a predominantly Muslim army. Muslims make up around 55.7 percent of Chad's 13.2 million people. Deby holds great domestic authority through his ability to consolidate power in Chad, a country that was previously affected by a high frequency of coups d'état. He participated in the negotiated peace agreement in February 2010 between the rebel groups of the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudanese government. There has been growing unrest over economic conditions, corruption and proposed constitutional changes that would allow Itno to stay in power until 2033. Chad was one of the countries to be placed on the US travel ban list.

## **SOMALIA**

### **Adan, Fowsiyo Yusuf Haji**

Fawsiyō's influence stems from the fact that she was the first woman to be named Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia. She had a significant role in revitalizing the Somali economy by recovering national assets that were frozen, as well as signing an agreement with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan for bilateral cooperation. A similar agreement was also signed with China.

Fowsiyo launched a TV channel named RAAD TV aimed at providing a better image of the unstable and war-torn Somalia.

### **Dayib, Faduma**

Dayib is a public health expert and social activist. In 2016, defying many death threats, she became the first woman to run for President of Somalia. Despite not making it to the second round, she has raised awareness of the roles Somalian women are now expecting to fill. Born in Kenya to illiterate Somali parents, she didn't learn to read and write until she was 14. At 18 she managed to get to Finland and completed two masters degrees before winning a fellowship to study at Harvard.

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## *Asia*

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### **AFGHANISTAN**

#### **Ahmadzai, HE Ashraf Ghani**

The former Finance Minister and Chancellor of Kabul University, Ashraf Ghani, assumed the office of President of Afghanistan on 29 September 2014 after months of uncertainty following recounts in the elections. Previously, he had worked at the World Bank from 1991 to 2001. After the September 11 attacks, he engaged intensively with the media, appearing regularly on NewsHour, BBC, CNN and US-based National Public Radio. In 2013, he ranked second in an online poll of the world's top 100 intellectuals conducted by Foreign Policy and Prospect magazines.

#### **Akhundzada, Mullah Haibatullah**

Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada was named as Taliban leader after a US drone strike killed the previous leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. Akhundzada is known primarily as a religious leader who ran religious schools from which many Taliban have graduated. He has recently spoken about the need for national reconciliation.

### **AZERBAIJAN**

#### **Aliyev, HE President Ilham**

Aliyev is the current president of Azerbaijan and Chairman of the New Azerbaijan Party. Not being outwardly religious, his advocacy of a moderate cultural Islam is representative of the demands of

the population of the country. Azerbaijan, with a population of 9.3 million Muslims is an active member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

### **BANGLADESH**

#### **Wazed, HE Sheikh Hasina**

Sheikh Hasina Wazed became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the third time after winning the 2014 parliamentary elections. Hasina ranked 36th in Forbes' list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women in 2016 and was featured in Richard O'Brien's book Women Presidents and Prime Ministers. Poverty alleviation has become a priority for one of the poorest but most populous Muslim countries. Wazed is the daughter of Mujibur Rahman, the first president of Bangladesh.

### **CHINA**

#### **Kadeer, Rebiya**

Kadeer is the de facto leader of the movement for social justice for the 15-million-strong Uyghur ethnic-population of China. She was formerly a successful businesswoman and philanthropist in China but was imprisoned in 1999 for leaking state secrets and now lives in exile in the US. Before her arrest, Kadeer was running the 1,000 Families Mother's Project which helped Uyghur women start businesses. She now presides over both the World Uyghur Congress and the Uyghur American Association. She is well-known for her work in Europe and North America publicizing the plight of the Uyghur ethnic group, and is partially responsible for raising the issue both in China and abroad. The Chinese government sees Kadeer as an agitator. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

### **INDIA**

#### **Farooq, Dr Mohammad Umar**

Dr Farooq inherited the 14th Mirwaiz (traditional preacher of Muslims in Kashmir) in 1990 at the age of 17 after the assassination of his father. At the young age of 20 he became Chairman and Founder of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, a grassroots coalition of pro-freedom parties in Jammu & Kashmir. He has raised the Kashmiri problem at the UN, the EU parliament, and the IOC, advocating dialogue with both India and Pakistan so that the aspirations of the Kashmiri people may be realized.

## INDONESIA

### **Matta, Anis**

Anis became the president of the Justice Party (PKS) in 2013 after having been the Secretary-General of PKS for four consecutive terms (1998-2013). He has spoken on the need for interfaith dialogue, and campaigns on the basis of conservative values. The PKS won 40 seats in the 2014 elections, a decrease of 17 seats from the 2009 elections.

### **Subianto, Lt Gen Prabowo**

Lt Gen Prabowo Subianto is a former Lieutenant General turned politician. He ran for the vice presidency in 2009, and for president in 2014, where he was narrowly defeated by Joko Widodo. As a 2014 presidential candidate, Prabowo's military past prompted mixed reactions from various organizations. He has announced his intention to run against Widodo again in the 2019 Presidential election.

### **Sukarnoputri, Megawati**

Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Indonesia's first President, became Indonesia's first female president (from 2001 to 2004) and the fourth woman to be the leader of a Muslim-majority nation. She is the current head of the opposition party despite losing three presidential elections (2004, 2009, 2014).

## MALAYSIA

### **Ibrahim, HE Dr Anwar**

Read bio on page 137 in Honourable Mentions

### **Wan Azizah, Datuk Seri Wan Ismail**

Datuk Seri Wan Azizah binti Wan Ismail is the current Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia (the first woman to serve in that position). Wan Azizah served as a government doctor for 14 years before deciding to support her husband, Anwar Ibrahim, when he was appointed the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1993. Since then, her political journey has been largely defined by his struggles. Following the dismissal and arrest of her husband in 1998, Wan Azizah moved full-time into politics, forming political parties, alliances and winning seats at general elections.

## PAKISTAN

### **Fazlur Rahman, Maulana**

Maulana Fazlur Rahman is the Secretary-General of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal coalition of religious parties in Pakistan's parliament. He is also the president of the Deobandi religio-political organization, Jamiat Ulema-Islam, or Assembly of Islamic Scholars. Fazlur Rahman leads one of two main branches of the expansive organization which is a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan. He is widely respected as a dedicated scholar of Islam and is a seasoned politician. In March 2018, he became head of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal and in August 2018 was nominated as a Presidential candidate.

### **Sharif, HE Nawaz**

Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif served as Prime Minister of Pakistan on three occasions: from 1990-1993, from 1997-1999 and from 2013-2017. On the last occasion he was forced to resign over corruption charges and in 2018 was convicted of corruption. He received a ten year sentence and spent two months in prison before the Pakistan High Court suspended the sentence. He is set to face further charges, but still enjoys support at home and abroad.

## PHILIPPINES

### **Misuari, Nur**

Nur Misuari is a revolutionary leader of the Bangsamoro. He began his campaign for better treatment of the people of Mindanao by the Manila government through the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) in the 1970s, which later became the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Under Misuari's leadership the MNLF challenged the government until the Tripoli Agreement was negotiated in 1976. He has been in self-imposed exile since 2013. The Philippine government has tried taking him into custody.

## SINGAPORE

### **Rasheed, HE Zainul Abidin**

Rasheed is Singapore's Ambassador to Kuwait and the Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Middle East. In 2017, he was appointed to the Board of Trustees at the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore. He previously served as Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for Singapore and mayor of the city-state's North Eastern district. Rasheed's activities focus on Singapore's

diplomatic relations with the Muslim world and sharing Singapore's expertise in inter-cultural and inter-religious relations with nations that have substantial Muslim populations. Rasheed is widely known domestically, having held numerous positions of leadership throughout his career in journalism, organized labour, and representation of Singapore's large Muslim community.

## TAJKIKISTAN

### **Rahmon, HE President Emomali**

HE President Emomali Rahmon has been President of Tajikistan since 1994. In 2013, he was elected to a fourth term in office. He has performed hajj and addressed OIC conferences. He has been a supporter of Tajiki cultural roots, changing his name in 2007 from Rahmonov to Rahmon following a decree that banned Slavic names endings and other Soviet-era practices.

## TURKMENISTAN

### **Berdimuhamedow, HE President**

#### **Gurbanguly Mälikgulyýewiç**

Berdimuhamedow has been the President of Turkmenistan since 2006. He is a moderate Muslim traditionalist who has sought to normalize life in Turkmenistan after the more unorthodox religious beliefs of his predecessor Niyazov. In the 2017 elections, he was re-elected with 97% of the vote.

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## *Europe*

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## KOSOVO

### **Jahjaga, Atifete**

Jahjaga was Kosovo's youngest and first woman president from 2011 until 2016. After earning a law degree from the University of Prishtina in 2000, she continued her studies in the UK and the USA. She then served in various governmental positions including the rank of Major General for the Kosovo Police.

## NETHERLANDS

### **Aboutaleb, Ahmed**

Ahmed Aboutaleb has served as Mayor of Rotterdam since 2009. Born in Morocco and arriving in the

Netherlands at the age of 15, Aboutaleb also served as State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment. He has balanced the racial and interfaith tensions that exist in Rotterdam, and is favoured to be appointed for a second term.

## RUSSIA

### **Kadyrov, HE President Ramzan**

Ramzan Kadyrov is the President of Chechnya and the son of the former president, rebel leader, and mufti, Akhmad Kadyrov. In 2016, Kadyrov was re-elected with nearly 98% of the vote. He has overseen a massive reconstruction of Chechnya, and has held several important international Islamic conferences in Chechnya, including one that attempted to define Sunni Islam in 2016.

## TURKEY

### **Davutoğlu, Ahmet**

Ahmet Davutoglu was Prime Minister of Turkey from 2014, before differences with President Erdogan saw him resign in 2016. He is a political scientist academic who was appointed ambassador, chief advisor to the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister in rapid succession. Davutoglu is considered to be the most important figure for redefining the new framework of Turkish foreign policy under the AKP's rule.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### **Javid, Sajid (new)**

The son of an immigrant bus driver Sajid Javid has come a long way on his journey to become the first non-white UK Home Secretary. A former banker at Deutsche Bank, he became MP in 2010 and since then has served in various Cabinet posts including Cultural Secretary, Business Secretary and Communities Secretary. Javid's ties to American neo-conservatives has not affected his strong support amongst Tory grassroots and the possibility that he may become leader of the party, and indeed the country.

### **Khan, Sadiq**

Read bio on page 137 in Honourable Mentions.

### **Warsi, Lady Sayeeda**

Baroness Warsi was Britain's first Muslim Cabinet Minister. From May 2010 to September 2012 she

# The Marrakesh Declaration

[www.marrakeshdeclaration.org](http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org)

## In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

Executive Summary of the Marrakesh Declaration  
on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly  
Muslim Majority Communities

25th-27th January 2016

WHEREAS, conditions in various parts of the Muslim World have deteriorated dangerously due to the use of violence and armed struggle as a tool for settling conflicts and imposing one's point of view;

WHEREAS, this situation has also weakened the authority of legitimate governments and enabled criminal groups to issue edicts attributed to Islam, but which, in fact, alarmingly distort its fundamental principles and goals in ways that have seriously harmed the population as a whole;

WHEREAS, this year marks the 1,400th anniversary of the Charter of Medina, a constitutional contract between the Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and blessings be upon him, and the people of Medina, which guaranteed the religious liberty of all, regardless of faith;

WHEREAS, hundreds of Muslim scholars and intellectuals from over 120 countries, along with representatives of Islamic and international organizations, as well as leaders from diverse religious groups and nationalities, gathered in Marrakesh on this date to reaffirm the principles of the Charter of Medina at a major conference;

WHEREAS, this conference was held under the auspices of His Majesty, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, and organized jointly by the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs in the Kingdom of Morocco and the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies based in the United Arab Emirates;

AND NOTING the gravity of this situation afflicting Muslims as well as peoples of other faiths throughout the world, and after thorough deliberation and discussion, the convened Muslim scholars and intellectuals:

DECLARE HEREBY our firm commitment to the principles articulated in the Charter of Medina, whose provisions contained a number of the principles of constitutional contractual citizenship, such as freedom of movement, property ownership, mutual solidarity and defense, as well as principles of justice and equality before the law; and that,

The objectives of the Charter of Medina provide a suitable framework for national constitutions in countries with Muslim majorities, and the United Nations Charter and related documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are in harmony with the Charter of Medina, including consideration for public order.

NOTING FURTHER that deep reflection upon the

various crises afflicting humanity underscores the inevitable and urgent need for cooperation among all religious groups, we

AFFIRM HEREBY that such cooperation must be based on a "Common Word," requiring that such cooperation must go beyond mutual tolerance and respect, to providing full protection for the rights and liberties to all religious groups in a civilized manner that eschews coercion, bias, and arrogance.

BASED ON ALL OF THE ABOVE, we hereby:

Call upon Muslim scholars and intellectuals around the world to develop a jurisprudence of the concept of "citizenship" which is inclusive of diverse groups. Such jurisprudence shall be rooted in Islamic tradition and principles and mindful of global changes.

Urge Muslim educational institutions and authorities to conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that addresses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism, leads to war and chaos, and results in the destruction of our shared societies;

Call upon politicians and decision makers to take the political and legal steps necessary to establish a constitutional contractual relationship among its citizens, and to support all formulations and initiatives that aim to fortify relations and understanding among the various religious groups in the Muslim World;

Call upon the educated, artistic, and creative members of our societies, as well as organizations of civil society, to establish a broad movement for the just treatment of religious minorities in Muslim countries and to raise awareness as to their rights, and to work together to ensure the success of these efforts.

Call upon the various religious groups bound by the same national fabric to address their mutual state of selective amnesia that blocks memories of centuries of joint and shared living on the same land; we call upon them to rebuild the past by reviving this tradition of conviviality, and restoring our shared trust that has been eroded by extremists using acts of terror and aggression;

Call upon representatives of the various religions, sects and denominations to confront all forms of religious bigotry, vilification, and denigration of what people hold sacred, as well as all speech that promote hatred and bigotry; AND FINALLY,

AFFIRM that it is unconscionable to employ religion for the purpose of aggressing upon the rights of religious minorities in Muslim countries.

Marrakesh

January 2016 ,27th

was the Co-Chairman of the Conservative Party, and a Minister without Portfolio in David Cameron's Cabinet. She was Minister of State for Faith and Communities and Senior Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Baroness Warsi chaired the Government's Task Force for Islamic Finance and was responsible for the issuance of Britain's first sukuk (Islamic bond). She resigned from her post in August 2014, citing her disagreement with HM Government's policy over the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict. Baroness Warsi is now involved in a number of charities and educational institutions, and remains a powerful voice on the issue of Islamophobia. In 2017, Baroness Warsi's published her first book, *The Enemy Within: A Tale of Muslim Britain*.

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## *Oceania*

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### AUSTRALIA

#### **Husic, Ed**

In 2010, Ed Husic became the first Muslim to be elected to the Australian Federal Parliament. When Kevin Rudd announced the Second Rudd Ministry in 2013, Husic was named as Parliament Secretary to the Prime Minister. Taking his oath on the Qur'an, Husic became the first Muslim sworn in to the Australian federal government frontbench. With his rise in political prominence came growing Islamophobic abuse directed toward him.

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## *North America*

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### CANADA

#### **Nenshi, Naheed**

Naheed Nenshi is the mayor of Calgary, the most popular politician in Canada (prior to the election of Justin Trudeau), and was elected World Mayor of the Year in 2014. He is the first visible-minority and Muslim mayor in Canada. He has publicly defended Muslims, including the right of an immigrant woman to wear niqab during her citizenship ceremony in 2015. He has been attacked by the political and religious right for being a Muslim and has been susceptible to the usual Islamophobic attacks. He has made a huge impact on creating a positive image for Muslims in Canada. In 2017, Nenshi was re-elected

as Mayor and was awarded the Honorary Peace Patron by the Mosaic Institute for his contributions to strengthening the fabric of Canada.

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### **Carson, Andre**

André Carson is one of only two Muslims--the other being Keith Ellison--serving in the US Congress. He was first elected to Congress in 2008, and is now serving his fifth two-year term. Congressman Carson is the Ranking Member on the Emerging Threats Subcommittee on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and plays a vital role in ensuring the US has the tools and resources needed to identify, track, and defeat dangerous threats. He is also a rising member of House leadership. During the current 115th Congress, Carson serves as Senior Whip for the House Democratic Caucus, sits on the powerful Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, and is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus' Executive Leadership Team.

#### **Ellison, Representative Keith**

Keith Ellison is the first Muslim to serve in the US Congress. He is the representative for the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota in the US House of Representatives. Ellison has been an outspoken advocate for American Muslims, and his trips to the Muslim world--such as his visit to Palestine in the aftermath of the Israeli attacks in 2009--have garnered international support for his outreach to the Muslim world. In 2017, he was elected as Deputy Chair of the Democratic National Committee by a unanimous vote of DNC members. Ellison recently announced that he would not seek reelection to a seventh term in Congress in 2018, but would instead run for Minnesota Attorney General.

#### **Khera, Farhana**

Farhana Khera is the President and Executive Director of Muslim Advocates, an independent, non-sectarian legal advocacy organization that has had a tremendous impact on the trajectory of civil rights for Muslims and others. Previous to this she was Counsel to the US Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Property Rights. She focused substantially on the Patriot Act, racial and religious profiling, and other civil liberties issues raised by the government's anti-terrorism policies after September 11, 2001.

### Omar, Ilhan

Born in Mogadishu, Somalia, to a Somali father and Yemeni mother, Omar came to the USA in 1995 at the age of 13. She excelled in studies and started work as a community nutrition educator whilst also working as a campaign manager. She is the Director of an association that advocates for women from East Africa to take on civic and political leadership roles. In 2016, she was elected a Democratic–Farmer–Labor Party member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, making her the first Somali American Muslim legislator to be elected to office in the US. In August 2018 she won the Democratic primary in Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District making her likely to be one of two Muslim women in Congress in January 2019.

### Tlaib, Rashida (new)

Rashida Tlaib won the Democratic nomination for the U.S. House of Representatives seat from Michigan's 13th congressional district and will be unopposed in the general election in November thus becoming the first Palestinian-American woman, and joint first Muslim woman, in Congress. She has previously served in the Michigan state house (2009 to 2014), and was the first Muslim woman ever elected to the state's legislature. She has been arrested on several occasions for her political stance; once was against Trump and one more recently at a pro-labor rally supporting union rights for fast food workers.



My Lord, make me enter with a veritable entrance.

*The Night Journey 17 : 80*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

# ADMINISTRATION OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### EGYPT

#### **Allam, Shawki Ibrahim Abdel-Karim**

Allam is the 19th Grand Mufti of Egypt (succeeding HE Sheikh Dr Ali Gomaa). In February 2013, he was elected by Al-Azhar's Council of Senior Scholars, headed by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayeb. His election by peers was unprecedented, as the Grand Mufti had previously been chosen by the President of Egypt. Allam is also a Prof of Islamic jurisprudence and law at the Al-Azhar University, and has written more than 25 works, many of which address issues pertaining to women.

#### **Badie, Dr Mohammed**

Dr Mohammed Badie succeeded Mohammad Mahdi Akef as the 8th Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood in January 2010. Following the military coup against Morsi's leadership, he was one of many Muslim Brotherhood leaders arrested. Badie--whose son was shot dead during one of the counter-protests against the coup--was sentenced to death in April 2015 along with 13 other senior Muslim Brotherhood members. In 2017, the Cassation Court accepted the appeal of Badie and 49 other defendants against their death sentences. He is currently serving multiple life sentences in prison.

### IRAN

#### **Rashad, Prof Ali Akbar**

Prof Ali Akbar Rashad founded the Islamic Research Institute for Culture and Thought, and has been its president since its establishment in 1994. Prof Rashad is a philosopher and a scholar in the field of Philosophy of Religion and Islamic studies. In addition to translations and ongoing research, he has written over 35 books and 69 articles. Prof Rashad is also active in international scholarly activities and conferences, particularly in the field of interfaith dialogues.

### MOROCCO

#### **Modghari, HE Dr Abd Al-Kabir**

Modghari is the director of the Casablanca-based Bayt Mal Al Qods Asharif Agency of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, an organization devoted to safeguarding the city of Jerusalem and its religious, architectural, and cultural heritage, as well as providing developmental assistance to the people and institutions of Palestine. Modghari previously represented the late King Hassan II as the long-term Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco.

#### **Al-Tawfiq, Ahmad**

Al-Tawfiq is the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in Morocco and a strong supporter of Sufi groups. He is a writer for the Association of Moroccan Authors for Publication, as well as the Vice President of the Moroccan Association for Historical Research. Al-Tawfiq is an advocate of interfaith dialogue, and is currently on the Board of World Religious Leaders for The Elijah Interfaith Institute.

### PALESTINE

#### **Hussein, HE Muhammad Ahmad**

Hussein was appointed the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 2006. Previously, he had been the manager and imam of the Blessed Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. He is an outspoken critic of Israeli occupation, and has personally defended the Al-Aqsa Mosque from settlers and the Israeli army. In July, 2018, Hussein issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims from selling or transferring any land in Palestine to Jews.

#### **Sabri, HE Sheikh Dr Ekrima Sa'id**

Sabri is the head of the Supreme Islamic Council and former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine. He remains an imam of the Blessed Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, where he preaches regularly. Sabri is well-respected in Palestine for his forthright views on Israel. In August, 2018, Sabri was awarded the International Islamic Human Rights Award in Iran.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### **Altwaijiri, HE Dr Abdulaziz Othman**

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijiri is the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), and the Secretary General of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW). Dr Altwaijiri is an accomplished academic, a senior lecturer, and an eminent writer and poet. Armed with a keenly holistic vision for human civilizational development, Dr Altwaijiri played a vital role in the development, supervision, and launch of 16 strategies approved by the Islamic Summit Conference. He also established the Supreme Council of Education, Science and Culture, an alliance designated for work outside of the Islamic world. Dr Altwaijiri is also a staunch advocate of cultural dialogue and the alliance of civilizations.

### **Al-Issa, Dr Mohammad ben Abdel Karim (new)**

Dr Al-Issa was appointed secretary-general of the Muslim World League in 2016. Prior to that he had served as Minister of Justice and Head of the Supreme Council for Justice. The Muslim World League is an NGO which was founded in 1962 and is based in Makkah. It propagates Saudi teachings worldwide as well as carrying out social work. Al-Issa regularly

attends conferences worldwide and visited the Vatican in 2017 where he met the Pope.

### **Al-Othaimen, Dr Yousef Ahmad**

Dr Yousef Ahmad Al-Othaimen was made the Secretary-General of the the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in November 2016. Al-Othaimen was the Minister of Social Affairs for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 2007 to 2015. He holds degrees from Ohio University (1982), and the American University in Washington DC (PhD in 1986). In March, 2018, Al-Othaimen met with the Pope to discuss the migration crisis and the plight of the Rohingya.

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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## KENYA

### **Khalifa, Sheikh Mohammed**

Khalifa is the organizing secretary of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya. He encouraged Kenyans to campaign peacefully in the 2017 general elections and to engage in politics on the basis of issues rather than along tribal affiliations.

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# The Muslim Council of Elders

[www.muslim-elders.com](http://www.muslim-elders.com)

The Muslim Council of Elders is an independent international body that was established on 21 Ramadan 1435 Hijri (18 July 2014) in order to promote peace in Muslim communities. The goal of the Muslim Council of Elders is to create secure societies that respect knowledge and scholars; to encourage dialogue, tolerance, respect for others, and peace; to restore the role of scholars by using their expertise to improve muslim societies; and to help eliminate causes of fragmentation and promote conciliation.

The council consists of Muslim scholars, experts and dignitaries known for their wisdom, sense of justice, independence and moderateness. They work together to promote peace, to discourage infighting, and to address the sources of conflict, divisiveness, and fragmentation in Muslim communities.

Based in the United Arab Emirates' capital, Abu Dhabi, the council is the first institutional body that aims to bring the Islamic nation together by extinguishing the fire that threatens Islam's humanitarian values and tolerant principles, and putting an end to the sectarianism and violence that have plagued the Muslim world for decades.

The Muslim Council of Elders was formed as a result of the recommendations of The Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, and it is a joint initiative by Grand Imam Sheikh Dr. Ahmad al-Tayyib, the Sheikh of al-Azhar, and the forum's chairman scholar Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah.

## MOZAMBIQUE

### **Cheba, Sheikh Muhamad Aboulai**

Cheba is the provincial director of 139 registered madrasas (Islamic schools), where pupils start learning about HIV/AIDS as early as six years of age. He raises awareness about the disease and sees mosques as the perfect place for the dissemination of such knowledge. HIV/AIDS affects roughly 15 percent of the adult population of Mozambique.

## NIGERIA

### **Ahmad, Abdrahman Olanrewaju**

Shaykh Abdrahman Olanrewaju Ahmad is the National Missioner of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, a 95-year-old Islamic organization established for the purpose of educational, moral, and social development for Muslims. The organization boasts millions of members, with its achievements spanning Nigeria's faiths and ethnicities.

### **Ajibola, HE Prince Bola**

HE Prince Bola Ajibola is the former head of the Nigerian High Commission in London and the president and founder of the Islamic Mission for Africa. He also served as a judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague between 1991 and 1994. In 1994, Prince Bola Ajibola was appointed a member to the Permanent Court of Arbitration with respect to the court's deliberations on the land dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon. He also served as the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of Nigeria, as well as being the former President of the Nigerian Bar Association. He is the founder, proprietor, and president of the Board of Trustee of Crescent University in Abeokuta. Currently he serves as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria (MUSWEN).

### **Oloyede, Prof Ishaq Olanrewaju**

Prof Ishaq Olanrewaju Oloyede is the Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council. He also serves as the President of the Association of African Universities (AAU), and is the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin.

### **Sanusi, Alhaji Dr Sanusi Lamido**

The 14th Fulani Emir of Kano, the second highest Muslim authority in the land (the Sultan of Sokoto

being the first), Sanusi succeeded his late uncle Dr Ado Bayero in 2014. He is the former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and a respected Islamic scholar who has won numerous awards. He has pointed out corruption in previous governments, pushed for an end to child marriage and been a target for Boko Haram.

## SENEGAL

### **Mbacke, Serigne Sidi Mountakha (new)**

Serigne Sidi Mountakha Mbacke was appointed leader of Senegal's Mourid Brotherhood in January 2018 after the death of his predecessor, Serigne Cheikh Sidi Mokhtar Mbacke, who died at the age of 94. He becomes the eighth caliph of the brotherhood which was established by the sufi Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba, who died in 1927 and is buried in Touba. It is estimated that over a sixth of all Senegalese are members of the tariqah, and it is particularly influential in the economic and political spheres. The Grand Magal of Touba is a pilgrimage of millions who converge on Touba to celebrate the life and teachings of Amadou Bamba.

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## *Asia*

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## BANGLADESH

### **Sayeedi, Delwar Hossain**

Sayeedi is an Islamic scholar, politician, lecturer, and Chief of the the Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest Islamist party in Bangladesh. From 1996 to 2008, he was a member of the National Assembly of Bangladesh; he also served as Member of Parliament in 1996 and 2001. In 2009, Sayeedi was put on trial for war crimes during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. He was handed a death sentence in 2013, a decision which led to violent protests. Many international observers doubted the impartiality of the trial, declaring it to be politically motivated.

## CAMBODIA

### **Adam, HE Zakaryya**

HE Zakaryya Adam is a member of the Parliament of Cambodia and serves as a member of the Commission on Education, Youth, Sport, Religious Affairs, Culture and Tourism. He previously held the position of Secretary of State in the Ministry of Cults and

Religions. In addition to his government service, he serves as Vice President of the Highest Council for Islamic Religious Affairs, Vice President of the Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation (CMDF), General Secretary for the Cambodian Islamic Centre (CIC), and as a director of Cambodian Islamic Voice Radio. Adam has translated the Qur'an and other Islamic books from Arabic into Khmer. He is also the author of a Melayu-Khmer dictionary.

## CHINA

### **Guangyuan, Imam Chen Chen**

Guangyuan is the Grand Imam of China, President of the Islamic Association of China, and President of the Chinese-Islamic Institute. With China's 24.6 million Muslims coming almost exclusively from minority groups, his role is pivotal. Guangyuan has also recently spoken out in opposition to violence against Uyghurs.

## INDIA

### **Ahmad, Sheikh Aboobackar**

Sheikh Aboobackar Ahmad is the General Secretary of the All India Muslim Scholars Association, founder and Vice Chancellor of Jamia Markus Ssaquafathi Ssunniyya (Sunni Cultural Centre) in Kerala, Chief Patron of the Sunni Youth Society, and General Secretary, Jamiat Ulema (Kerala). He was awarded the Shaik Muhiyudheen Abdul Khadar Jeelani Award in 2009. In India and the Arab world, Aboobackar is often referred to by his epithet Abul Aytam (Father of Orphans) for his service of orphans and the destitute.

### **Al-Bukhari, Sayyid Ibrahimul Khaleel**

Sayyid Ibraheemul Khaleel Al Bukhari founded and directed numerous educational and charity initiatives in India over the past 25 years. His Ma'din Islamic Academy has grown into a mass movement with 25 educational institutions, and has participated in international interfaith celebrations.

### **Nomani, Mufti Abul Qasim**

Read bio on page 137 in Honourable Mentions.

### **Noorie, Maulana Shakir Ali (new)**

Maulana Noorie is the President of Sunni Dawate Islami, a non-political religious organization in Mumbai, India. Under his leadership, through various religious events, including full-day congregations at state and national levels—the organization has suc-

ceeded in reviving Sunni Islam in India. In particular, the Annual Congregation is one of the largest Sunni Muslim assemblies held in India, attracting around 300,000 people into the heart of Mumbai, India's financial capital. The mission has been growing yearly with thousands of members and volunteers across states joining the organization. Noorie has established schools that provide both modern and religious education, thereby providing a platform for a new generation of Muslim leaders in India.

### **Owaisi, MP Janab Asaduddin**

Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi is an eminent Indian parliamentarian, and has served as President of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) since being elected in 2008. Under Owaisi's stewardship, the party won seven assembly seats in each of 2009 and 2014. In 2014, he was also elected to the 16th Lok Sabha (House of the People). An outspoken parliamentarian, Owaisi has been instrumental in persuading the Indian government to establish the Ministry of Minority Affairs to look after the welfare of religious minorities in India, including Muslims. The Dar-us-Salam Educational Trust (DET) is the branch of the AIMIM that oversees various social, educational, and welfare programs.

## INDONESIA

### **Nasir, Dr KH. Haedar**

Dr KH Haedar Nasir was elected as Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Movement in 2015. He previously served in a variety of other roles in the organization, which has approximately 30 million members. The Muhammadiyah Movement focuses on promoting moral and spiritual ideals through various social activities. It strongly opposes syncretism, but promotes interfaith relations.

### **Staquf, Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil (new)**

Yahya Cholil Staquf serves as General Secretary of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Supreme Council. As the world's largest Muslim organization—with over 50 million members and 14,000 madrasahs—the Nahdlatul Ulama adheres to the traditions of Sunni Islam, and teaches that the primary message of Islam is universal love and compassion. Sheikh Yahya also serves on HE President Joko Widodo's Presidential Advisory Council, where he advises the President on religious, domestic and international affairs. Sheikh Yahya co-founded the U.S.-based organization Bayt ar-Rahmah li ad-Da'wa al-Islamiyah Rahmatan li

The believers are indeed brothers. Therefore [always] make peace between your brethren, and fear God, so that perhaps you might receive mercy.

*The Private Apartments 49 : 10*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

al-'Alamin (The Home of Divine Grace for Revealing and Nurturing Islam as a Blessing for All Creation), to serve as a hub for the expansion of Nahdlatul Ulama operations in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

### MALAYSIA

#### **Amin, Maruf (new)**

Maruf Amin is an Indonesian Islamic scholar and politician. He is currently the chair of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia and general guide of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the world's largest Islamic organization. In August 2018, HE President Joko Widodo announced that Maruf would be his running mate in the 2019 Indonesian presidential election. Amin's early education was at a boarding school established by NU founder Hasyim Asyari, before receiving his bachelor's degree in Islamic philosophy. He then started his lifelong activities of working in dawah (religious propagation) and politics, finding success in both.

### MALDIVES

#### **Saeed, Mohamed Shaheem Ali**

Dr Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed is a hafiz of the Qur'an, a licensed lawyer, and the Chancellor of Islamic University of Maldives (IUM). He resigned from his post as the Minister of State for Islamic Affairs of the Republic of Maldives in 2015 and left politics altogether in 2017. Dr Saeed was central to the establishment of the Maldives Hajj Corporation, the Maldives Islamic Bank Pvt Ltd, and a waqf fund. He is a member of the Shariah Advisory Council of the Central Bank of the Maldives. Dr Saeed has authored many articles and books on religious issues and has spoken at forums in nine countries. In July, 2018, Saeed was announced as the running mate of President Abdulla Yameen.

### PAKISTAN

#### **Naqvi, Ayatollah Sayed Sajid Ali**

Ayatollah Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi leads the Shia Ulema Council (previously called Tehrik-e-Jafaria (TJP) of Pakistan). He was chosen by the Supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei, to lead Shia Muslims in Pakistan and is now his religious representative.

#### **Ul-Haq, Siraj**

From humble beginnings, Haq has worked his way up to senior leadership positions in both religious and political parties. He is a former finance minister of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in Pakistan, resigning in protest at US drone strikes. In 2014, Haq was elected Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islaami, one of the most influential Islamic movements in Pakistan. In 2015, he joined the Parliament of Pakistan as the Senator of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He became the Vice President of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal in March 2018.

### SRI LANKA

#### **Mufthi, MIM Rizvi**

Mufti MIM Rizwe is the President of the All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU), the supreme body of Islamic theologians in Sri Lanka. Inaugurated in 1924, ACJU boasts a 6,000-strong membership of scholars and an executive committee of 33 senior scholars who run the organization's 150 branches throughout the island's 24 districts. Rizwe is a specialist in the field of Islamic jurisprudence, and was instrumental in bringing Islamic insurance, interest-free banking, and halal certification to Sri Lanka. He has many contributions that have benefited the Sri Lankan community at large, including the Maktab Preliminary Islamic Education System, Careline Islamic Counseling, and Mahmood Institute for Skill Development of Ulama in Sri Lanka.



## TAJIKISTAN

### **Abdulkorizada, HE Saidmukarram**

Saidmukarram Abdulkodirzoda is the state-selected Grand Mufti and thus head of Tajikistan's Muslims, most of whom are Sunnis, and whose tradition includes following the Hanafi school in matters of jurisprudence and the Naqshbandi spiritual path. They belong to the Persian-speaking Tajik ethnic group who share a language, culture, and history with Afghanistan and Iran.

## UZBEKISTAN

### **Alemov, HE Usman**

Alemov has been the Grand Mufti of Uzbekistan since 2006. He is respected for his moderate stance and proven record in coping with extremists in the Samarkand region where he was formerly a mufti. Alemov was instrumental in making Tashkent the ISESCO Capital of Islamic Culture for 2007.

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## *Europe*

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## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

### **Kavazovic, Husein**

Husein Kavazovic has been the 14th Raisu-l-ulam (Grand Mufti of Bosnia) since 2012. Kavazovic had pushed for cooperation with other religious communities and a wider "incorporation of women into the work of the Islamic religious community". His sphere of influence is primarily with the community of 2.5 million Bosniak Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Bosniak diaspora, who number approximately 1.5 million. He speaks Bosnian, Arabic, and English.

## BULGARIA

### **Hadzhi, HE Mustafa Alish**

Hadji is Bulgaria's Chief Mufti. Bulgaria has recently been referred to as "Istanbulgaria" because of the importance of Turkish-Bulgarian relations. Hadji is the leader of the Muslim community in a predominantly Christian state with a large influx of Muslims. He defended his community from extreme nationalists who went so far as to attack mosques and worshippers.

## GERMANY

### **Köhler, Ayyub Axel**

Köhler is former chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany. Ayyub Axel Köhler has written numerous articles, primarily for Islamic magazines such as Al Islam of the Islamic Centre of Munich, and Al Fajr of the Islamic Centre of Hamburg. He also published newsletters for the Muslim League around the issue of the integration of Islamic ways of life into German society.

## ITALY

### **Pallavicini, Imam Yahya Sergio Yahe**

Pallavicini is an important figure in the religious life of Italian Muslims as well as in European relations with the Muslim world. He is Vice President of Comunit Religiosa Islamica (The Islamic Religious Community), Italy, the Chairman of the ISESCO Council for Education and Culture in the West, and an advisor for Islamic affairs to the Italian Minister of Interior. Pallavicini is also the imam of the Al-Wahid Mosque of Milan in Via Meda, where he organizes the training of imams in Italian. His father was the late Abd Al-Wahid Pallavicini, the noted preacher and head of the Ahamadiyyah Idrissiyyah Shadhiliyyah brotherhood in Italy.

## KOSOVO

### **Ternava, HE Sheikh Naim**

Naim Ternava is the Grand Mufti of Kosovo. He is the leading religious figure in Kosovo, which emerged after an ethno-religious war resulted in widespread loss of life and destruction. Ternava is a key figure in the attempts of the country's Muslim population to overcome the horrors of war. He was instrumental in the creation of the Inter-Religious Council Organization for Interfaith Relations.

## RUSSIA

### **Nasibullahoglu, Mufti Cafer**

Cafer Nasibullahoglu is the imam of the St Petersburg Mosque. He is also the Mufti of St Petersburg, home to close to one million Muslims. His diverse congregation consists of Muslims of Tatar, Kazakh, Uzbek, Tajik, and Arab origins, among others. The sermon at St Petersburg mosque is often conducted in Arabic, Tatar, and Russian.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### **Ahsan, Dr Muhammad Manazir**

Dr Muhammad Manazir Ahsan is the Chairman, Board of Trustees, The Islamic Foundation, and Rector, Markfield Institute of Higher Education, Leicester, UK. He has published and lectured extensively on Islam and Muslims in Britain. He is also the Editor of The Muslim World Book Review, a quarterly journal devoted to analyzing the latest publications on Islam and the Muslim World. He has chaired several major Muslim and interfaith organizations in the UK. He received an MBE in 2000 on the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his contribution to interfaith and community activities.

### **Shah Naqavi, Dr Sayyid Amjad H. (new)**

Dr Shah Naqavi is the founder and Dean of the Shī'ah Institute, located in Bloomsbury, London. He is an accomplished scholar and author who has overseen the development of the Shī'ah Institute into an internationally renowned academic institution, which has many high-end scholarly book series and numerous publications to its name, and a Fellowship of more than 70 scholars –from some of the most renowned universities around the world. Dr Shah Naqavi champions good relationships amongst Islamic schools of law and doctrine. He is currently engaged with numerous academic projects, including an English

literary translation and Arabic critical edition of the Nahj al-Balāghah. Dr Shah Naqavi is a Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Hertfordshire, U.K., a lifetime honour, which he has held since March 2016.

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## *Oceania*

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## NEW ZEALAND

### **Ghani, Dr Anwar**

Ghani is President of the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ). His work in leading FIANZ has been considerable, building bridges with the government, New Zealand's population as a whole, and leaders of other faiths.

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## *North America*

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## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **Crane, Dr Robert Dickson**

Dr Crane is the Chairman of the Holistic Education Center for Civilizational Renewal, based in Kerala, India, which publishes Armonia (armoniajournal.com) and uses his four-volume textbook, Islam and Muslims: Essence and Practice, together with his co-author, Prof Muhammad Ali Chaudry, in distance learning. He was formerly a Prof in the Qatar Foundation's Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies and Director of its Center for the Study of Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies, charged with studying the origins, state-of-play, and future prospects of the Arab Spring.

### **Ghazi, Drs Abidullah and Tasneema**

Dr Abidullah Ghazi--a prominent writer, speaker, and poet--is cofounder of the IQRA' International Educational Foundation, along with his wife Dr Tasneema Ghazi. IQRA' is a non-profit organization that creates Islamic studies textbooks and educational materials especially for children. The institution has produced a complete system of Islamic education for part-and full-time schools and a comprehensive madrasa-integrated program for the Singapore madrasa system. IQRA's programs and educational materials are used in the US and worldwide.

## Mohammed II, W. Deen

Warithudeen Mohammed II is the eldest son of Imam W Deen Mohammed. He is President of The Mosque Cares, a charitable organization established by Imam W Deen Mohammed. The organization sponsors classes in Qur'anic Arabic and financial literacy, as well as informational sessions in health and nutrition, and business and entrepreneurial initiatives.

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## Caribbean

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### JAMAICA

#### Muhammad, Mustafa

Muhammad is a spokesperson for the Muslim population of Jamaica and has been the President of the Islamic Council of Jamaica for the past 14 years. His work involves education and halal certification. He oversees the eleven mosques in Jamaica that are attended regularly by more than 2,000 Muslims.

### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

#### Ali, Imam Yacoob

Ali is the president of the largest and most influential Muslim organization in Trinidad and Tobago, the Anjuman Sunnat ul Jamaat Association (ASJA), founded in 1936. Ali's organization runs numerous schools and focuses on the importance of education for Muslim youth.

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## South America

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### ARGENTINA

#### Hallar, Muhammad Yusuf

Hallar is an active figure in Argentina, and is involved in community development for Muslims. He has conducted comprehensive research on Muslims in Latin America and holds a number of positions including Secretary-General of the Islamic Organization of Latin America and the Director of the Office of Islamic Culture. He is also a member of the Expert Committee on Minority Rights for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

### ECUADOR

#### Suquillo, Juan

Suquillo is an imam, director, and co-founder of the Islamic Centre of Ecuador. He has received awards in recognition of his services to the nation, and has translated many books into Spanish. After the 9/11 attacks, non-Muslims became interested in learning about Islam, and Suquillo's books have been bestsellers since. He is held in high regard by South American Muslim scholars.



He loves them and they love Him.

*The Table Spread 5 : 54*

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# PREACHERS & SPIRITUAL GUIDES

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### ALGERIA

#### **Belkaid, Sheikh Abdellatif**

Sheikh Abdellatif is well-known in Algeria, Egypt, and Europe as a spiritual teacher and leader of the Hibriyya tariqa. He inherited his father's spiritual gifts. The sheikh's students include many highly-placed officials in the Algerian government, as well as the famous Egyptian scholar, Sheikh Sha'rawi, before the latter's death.

#### **Al-Khairi, Sheikh Abdul-Nacer**

Sheikh Abdul-Nacer is a master of the Shadhili tariqa, and has a wide following in his native Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Malaysia, and various European countries, where his students come from all walks of life. He emphasizes the recitation of the Qur'an, as well as abundant salawaat (praying for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). He is a descendant of the famous Sufi of Prophetic lineage, Abdul Salam ibn Mashish of Morocco.

### EGYPT

#### **Abdelkafy, Sheikh Dr Omar**

Abdelkafy is an Egyptian preacher and da'wa practitioner. A well-respected hafiz of the Qur'an, he is also the director of the Qur'anic Studies Centre at the Dubai International Holy Qur'an Award. In addition to working in his native Egypt, he travels abroad to help Muslim communities, working specifically with the Muslim community in Canada.

### IRAQ

#### **Kubaisi, Sheikh Dr Ahmed**

Kubaisi is a very popular Sunni cleric and preacher in Iraq. He advocates the end of foreign occupation in Iraq and the institution of an Islamic state. To this end, he is a spokesperson of the Sunni Ulema Council, an important association of Sunni Muslim scholars in Iraq. Kubaisi leads prayers that are televised worldwide from the state mosque of Abu Dhabi.

### JORDAN

#### **Keller, Sheikh Nuh**

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

### SAUDI ARABIA

#### **Al-Arifi, Muhammad**

Read bio on page 138 in Honourable Mentions

#### **Al-Qarni, Dr Aaidh**

Dr Aaidh Al-Qarni is a prominent Saudi scholar, author, and activist preacher, best known for his popular self-help book *Don't Be Sad*. Dr Al-Qarni has garnered a substantial following through a preaching career which spans various modes of broadcast media, from audio lectures to a comprehensive website, [alislamnet.com](http://alislamnet.com). He lectures at mosques, colleges, and Islamic institutions, and hosts a popular weekly television show. He was found guilty of plagiarism

Know, then, that there is no god except God, and ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women. And God knows your going to and fro and your place of rest.

*Muhammad 47 : 19*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

in 2012 and has since lost some of his standing. He still has a powerful following, with over 800 lectures online and more than 35 million followers across social media.

### Al-Shugairi, Ahmad

Al-Shugairi is a televangelist with a huge following around the world. He is at the forefront of a religious revivalist movement that is affecting young people across the Middle East. While he is best known for his TV program *Khawatir* (2005-2015), Al-Shugairi is also the founder of the youth-centric coffee shop, *Andalus Cafe*. With no formal Islamic training and an MBA, his popularity comes from repackaging a balanced understanding of Islam for his throngs of fans of all ages. He has over 42 million fans across social media platforms and was listed among the world's 500 most influential Arabs by *Arabian Business* in 2012.

## YEMEN

### Al-Zindani, Sheikh Abd al -Majid

Al-Zindani is an active Yemeni politician and preacher. He is the founder of Iman University in Yemen, the founder of the Commission on Scientific Signs in the Qur'an and Sunnah in Makkah, the Chairman of the Shura Council of the Islah party (the Yemeni Congregation for Reform), and the head of the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen. He has been a vocal critic of terrorism and any killings of civilians. At the same time, he is an outspoken critic of US policies, declaring that jihad against any army that invades Yemen is self-defence and the right of its citizens. The US Treasury labelled him a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) for his indirect association with al-Qaeda. Despite that, he is a respected scholar and has a large number of followers. The *Wall Street Journal* referred to him as "a charismatic Yemeni academic and politician."

## GHANA

### Shaributu, Shehu Dr Nuhu Usamanu (new)

Sheikh Dr. Osman Nuhu Sharubutu is an Islamic scholar, National Chief Imam of Ghana, member of the National Peace Council and founder of The SONSET Fund and IPASEC. He has worked tirelessly on religious, social and educational issues, helping to promote disadvantaged and vulnerable communities in Ghana. This has enabled him to transcend religious boundaries and be respected by all sectors of the country.

## NIGERIA

### Bauchi, Sheikh Tahir Usman

Now in his mid-80s, Sheikh Tahir Usman Bauchi of the Tijaniyya Sufi order is celebrated for his Qur'anic schools which specialize in producing huffaz (memorizers) of the Qur'an. His public exegesis of the Qur'an, delivered in Hausa every year during the month of Ramadan, attracts thousands. Additionally, millions of West Africans listen to it on the radio or buy recordings. He has critically engaged with puritanical Islamic schools of thought since the early 1980s. In July 2014, he escaped a suicide bombing attack which killed 23 people.

### Katsina, Sheikh Yakubu Musa

Sheikh Yakubu Musa Katsina is a popular preacher in Nigeria. He is also the leader of the Izala revivalist sect in Katsina. The Izala, or Jama'at Izalatil Bidiawa Iqamatus Sunnah (Movement Against Negative Innovations and for Orthodoxy) is an activist Sufi brotherhood that calls for a return to the practices of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and a true practice of Islam. Hailing from Katsina, the predominantly Muslim city in northern Nigeria, Sheikh Katsina is outspoken against corruption in the country.



## ZIMBABWE

### **Menk, Mufti Ismail Musa**

Dr Ismail Menk is the Mufti of Zimbabwe under the Majlisul Ulama Zimbabwe, an Islamic educational and welfare organization that caters to the needs of the country's Muslims. Mufti Menk is known internationally for his motivational lectures and social media posts. He currently has a combined online following of more than 8 million.

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## *Asia*

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## INDIA

### **Azmi, H. Hazrat Allama**

#### **Maulana Qamaruzzaman**

Maulana Azmi is the Khalifa of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi's son. He is a prolific speaker and, according to the Times of India, has millions of followers worldwide. At the age of 18 he established Al-Jame-at ul-Islamia, which is now recognized as one of India's top Islamic universities. For over 50 years, he has been building organizations, institutions, mosques, colleges, and universities around the world.

### **Madani, Arsad**

Madani is the President of the 86-year-old Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, a group which strongly opposed the creation of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan. In 2006, Maulana Syed Arshad Madani succeeded his brother, Maulana Syed Asad Madani, but since 2008, the group has been split into two factions. Maulana Arshad is also a noted scholar, delivering a speech in Arabic in the presence of the late King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. He also does much social work and heads a number of Islamic seminaries and bodies and is an adviser to eight international Islamic schools.

### **Naik, Dr Zakir Abdul Karim**

Read bio on page 138 in Honourable Mentions'

### **Saifuddin, Syedna Mufaddal**

Mufaddal is the 53rd Dai Al-Mutlaq (Unrestricted Missionary) of the Dawoodi Bohras, a subgroup within the Mustaali, Ismaili Shia branch of Islam. He succeeded—but not without dispute—to the office after his father, Syed Mohammed Burhanuddin, passed away in 2014. In 2017, he inaugurated the 14-acre Nairobi campus of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, a

Dawoodi Bohra institute of higher learning. Kenyan President Kenyatta awarded him the Elder of the Order of the Golden Heart as a result. He also met Egyptian President El-Sisi in 2016 and donated 10 million EGP to the Long Live Egypt fund. He is the spiritual leader of 2-5 million people living in 100 countries.

### **Shuaib, Sheikh Dr Thaika**

Sheikh Dr Thaika Shuaib of Tamil Nadu is a polyglot Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and author. He is the head of the Arusiyya branch of the Qadiri Sufi order. His 880-page research work, Arabic, Arwi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu, sheds light on the cultural, political, social, spiritual, and educational activities and achievements of the Arwi Muslims of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu in their respective countries and abroad. In May 1994, he became the first Tamil Muslim to receive the National Award for Outstanding Arabic Scholar from the then-President of India, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma. In April 2016, the seventh President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, felicitated him for his services rendered to Islam and for his promotion of religious harmony.

## INDONESIA

### **Gymnastiar, Abdullah Aa Gym**

Abdullah Gymnastiar, more commonly known as Aa Gym (Elder Brother Gym), was for a long time Indonesia's most popular preacher. With his style of modern, youthful, enjoyable preaching, he built a substantial following and a large media empire. His regular audience boasted over 80 million Indonesians and had an approval rating that peaked at 91%, leading to Gymnastiar being courted by several political parties as a potential vice president nominee. In 2006 Gym announced a polygamous marriage and immediately saw a huge backlash from his mainly female audience: his ratings dropped and his commercial enterprises took a huge hit. Over the past several years, Gymnastiar has been slowly regaining his popularity using his unique preacher/performer style: he is an attractive, funny, and charismatic man who tells engaging stories and sings nasheeds (religious songs). He has over 12 million fans on social media.

### **Shihab, Quraish**

Quraish Shihab is an Indonesian expert on Qur'anic exegesis who regularly preaches on national television. He is noted as a progressive scholar who teaches

Qur'anic exegesis using context and simple language. He is an author of many Islamic books, including Tafsir Al-Misbah. He served as Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs in 1998 and also as Chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council since 1984. Shihab was also a director of State Islamic University, Syarif Hidayatullah, 1992-1998.

## MALAYSIA

### **Awang, Abdul Hadi**

Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi bin Awang is the current President of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party or PAS. He is also the Vice President of the International Union of Muslim Scholars. He was former Chief Minister of the state of Terengganu in Malaysia from 1999-2004, Member of Parliament for Marang Terengganu, and a state lawmaker for Rhu Rendang. He has written several books related to democracy and politics in Islam. Awang's Friday morning lectures at Rusila Mosque draw thousands of people.

### **Ibrahim, Dato Mashitah**

Ibrahim is a prominent motivational preacher in Malaysia, and a lecturer at University Islam Antarabangsa, Malaysia. Sultan Pahang awarded her with the honorary title "Dato" for her devotion to da'wa initiatives in 2000. Her views and opinions on contemporary Islamic issues receive wide attention. She also incited anti-Chinese vandalism and hatred by making a false allegation that Chinese individuals burnt a Qur'an.

### **MrGlani, Sheikh Dr Mahmoud**

Born in Medina to a family of prophetic lineage, Sheikh MrGlani himself belongs to the Shadhili Sufi tariqa but strongly emphasizes the need to recognize all authentic Islamic Sunni Sufi tariqas and sheikhs. His teachings emphasize the need to reestablish love for the Prophet ﷺ. To this end, he has founded a number of zawiyas around the world to establish the practice of regular and abundant dhikr and salawat. For the past several years he has been delivering a series of widely-attended public lectures titled "Divine 131 Gifts on the Path to Allah" in major Malaysian cities and universities. He encourages people around the world to rediscover and practice their core human values, to oppose colonial and oppressive thinking, and to espouse mutual respect and tolerance among followers of all the heavenly religions.

## PAKISTAN

### **Bukhari, Khanum Tayyaba**

Bukhari is one of very few female religious scholars in Pakistan that has significant influence. She is a sought-after speaker who excels in six languages: Urdu, Arabic, Persian, English, Punjabi, and Siraiki. Outside of Pakistan, she also has a large following in Europe, North America, and Australia. Ms Bukhari is the founder of Bukhari Relief Foundation, a well-known, non-governmental charitable organization that helps people all over Pakistan who have been displaced by major natural disasters.

### **Ghamdi, Javed (new)**

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi is a Pakistani public intellectual and Quran scholar. He is the founder of Al-Mawrid Institute of Islamic Sciences and its sister organisation Danish Sara. He was a member of the Council of Islamic Ideology and in 2009, Ghamidi was awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz, the third highest civilian honour of Pakistan. He appears regularly on TV shows and has a large middle-class professional following.

### **Qadiri, Sheikh Muhammad Ilyas Attar**

Read bio on page 138 in Honourable Mentions

## SINGAPORE

### **Alattas, Syed Hassan bin Muhammad bin Salim**

Syed Hassan, more affectionately known as Habib Hassan, has been a pillar of strength and unity in building religious harmony in Singapore and throughout Southeast Asia. He has condemned acts of terrorism and has been the force behind bringing Islam together with other religions in Singapore. In 2015, during Singapore's 50th National Day, he was conferred one of the highest awards by the Singapore Government in recognition of his outstanding work and contributions toward building a harmonious nation.

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## *Europe*

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## BELGIUM

### **van Ael, Sheikh Sulayman**

Sheikh Sulayman van Ael is the founder of The Ark Institute, an educational institution based in

London. After becoming Muslim at the age of 18, he travelled the world to seek knowledge and gained ijazah (teaching licenses) in various disciplines from scholars from Sudan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Jordan (where he received ijazah from the Grand Mufti of Amman to give religious verdicts). He graduated from Rotterdam University with a BA in Theology and MSc in Islamic Counselling. He lectures extensively and has appeared on CNN and Al Jazeera. His multi award-winning Belgian national television documentary, My Jihad, was translated into 12 languages. As a scholar who resonates with young and old alike, Sheikh Sulayman is a powerful, dynamic and credible voice for the emerging formation of a confident, faithful identity of Islam in Europe.

### Philips, Dr Abu Ameenah Bilal

A notable Jamaican-Canadian Muslim convert and Islamic scholar, Dr Bilal Philips is founder of the first accredited Islamic university in India in 2009: Preston International College, Chennai. However he is most notably the founder and chancellor of the Islamic Online University AKA International Open University, which currently has over 450,000 registered students studying accredited English-medium degree courses in Islamic Studies (Sharia), Education, Psychology, Banking & Finance, IT and Business Administration, and a BA in Arabic language & literature. The IOU has the distinction of having



Recite: In the Name of your Lord Who created

*The Clot 96 : 1*

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## Free Islamic Calligraphy

[www.FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com](http://www.FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com)

FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com is an established website that is doing much to make high quality Islamic calligraphy available more widely.

Having noticed that the Divine Names, key Qur'anic verses and sacred formulas were not available free online in the most perfect and beautiful styles of Arabic calligraphy, the Prince Ghazi Trust for Qur'anic Thought commissioned prize-winning calligrapher Mothana Al-Obaydi and other calligraphers to draw them and digitize them onto JPG, vector files and 'Word document' files so that they can be adapted, coloured and printed out by anyone according to their taste from the website. Thus, instead of paying for decorating their home with drawings or Western posters, or instead of paying for expensive name-brand calligraphy, any Muslim in the world can adapt the most beautiful pieces.

FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com is a non-profit website owned by the Prince Ghazi Trust for Qur'anic Thought, an Islamic charity (waqf) set up by HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal in 1433 AH / 2012 CE. of calligraphy and decorate his or her home with it for the price of a piece of a paper. This, God willing, will not only make people's homes more beautiful, but also their lives more beautiful as they see and remember God's Name more often.

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most diverse student body of any university in the world. Dr. Bilal also reaches mass Muslim audiences through his television appearances on global satellite channels like Peace TV, Huda TV, and Islam Channel as well as through his official Facebook page.

## TURKEY

### Gülen, Fethullah

Fethullah Gülen is a preacher, thinker and educator, who assumed the leadership of the Nurcu religious movement—started by Said Nursî (1878—1960 CE). He enjoyed huge support among all of Turkey's religious population until he was accused of orchestrating the attempted coup of 15 July 2016, and his organizations and supporters subsequently bore the brunt of Erdogan's crackdown. Many of his followers and supporters in state institutions such as the police, judiciary and education have been targeted and removed from their posts (most estimates give the number at around 100,000). Turkey has formally asked the US to extradite Gülen.

### Haqqani, Sheikh Mehmet Adil

Sheikh Mehmet Adil Haqqani is the Sheikh of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Order established by his father, the celebrated Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani. He is the eldest son of Sheikh Nazim, and was born and raised in Damascus, Syria, while his father was studying there under his own sheikh. With an uncanny resemblance to his father, and a soft, humble approach, Sheikh Mehmet has won over his father's thousands of students.

### Topbaş, Osman Nuri

Osman Nuri Topbaş is an author, philanthropist, and spiritual leader of a Naqshbandi Sufi order based in Istanbul. His group is known as Eronkoy (named after the town where he was born) and, like other Sufi groups in Turkey, focuses heavily on charitable work. He has written works in history, literature, religious sciences, and poetry. Translations of his works span 43 languages, including English.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Ali, Sheikh Hasan

Sheikh Hasan Ali is a popular preacher and reputable figure in London. In addition to volunteering his expertise at local mosques, community centres, and secondary schools, he contributes to local interfaith programs and various community events. He is

the founder of Safar Academy and holds a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology in addition to his Islamic training.

### As-Sufi, Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir

Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi, a Shaykh of the Darqawi-Shadhili-Qadiri Tariqa, entered Islam with the Imam of the Qarawiyin Mosque in Fez, Morocco in 1967. His spiritual inheritance comes from Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib of Meknes and Shaykh Muhammad al-Fayturi of Benghazi. Shaykh Abdalqadir has been responsible for the most far-reaching and successful Islamic Da'wa of the modern era, founding mosques in England, Spain and South Africa. As a result, communities of his students can be found across the world. His writing encompasses well over 20 books, as well as many essays and articles, covering various topics. Perhaps most notable has been his call for the proper implementation of zakat, a return to just forms of trade, the revival of Imam Malik's legal school and his emphasis on correct and coherent community and family dynamics. He has initiated the translation and publication of translations of the Qur'an into various languages, as well as numerous classical works of Islam, including the Muwatta of Imam Malik and Ash-Shifa of Qadi 'Iyad.

### Babikir, Sheikh Ahmed

With his gentle and warm disposition, Sheikh Babikir is a popular figure in the UK. He studied Islamic Sciences in Sudan and is fully authorized in a host of Islamic disciplines, including fiqh, hadith, creed, and Sufism. He holds an undergraduate degree in mathematics and a Masters in Management from the University of London. He has contributed widely to UK society through social, charitable, and educational initiatives. He was the headmaster of Islamic Primary School for many years, and is currently the Director and Founder of Rumi's Cave, a community hub in West London.

### Nakshawani, Ammar

Dr Sayed Ammar Nakshawani is an Islamic scholar who is a popular speaker. He studied Islamic Studies at Shahid Beheshti University in Iran and pursued further studies at the Islamic Seminary in Damascus, Syria. He was a visiting scholar at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge. In 2015, he moved to the USA, where he acted as Special Representative for the Universal Muslim Association of America, engaging in interfaith dialogue and advocating on behalf of Shia Islam. Currently, Dr.

Nakshawani is an Associate of the Iran Project at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

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## *North America*

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### CANADA

#### **Rabbani, Sh Faraz**

Sheikh Rabbani is the founder, education director, and an instructor at SeekersHub Global, an educational institute featuring a very popular Q&A service, online courses, and occasional retreats. In August 2011, he helped launch SeekersHub in Toronto with affiliated branches being developed in Australia and elsewhere. He was formerly a central figure with SunniPath, and has continuously been at the vanguard of effectively utilizing the latest web technologies and services to teach Islam in the West for over a decade. He serves as a partner and legal advisor with StraightWay Ethical Advisory.

#### **Slimi, Sheikh Hamid**

Dr Hamid Slimi has been serving as an educator, imam, chaplain, and consultant in Canada for 20 years in different religious and educational institutions. Due to his fluency in English, Arabic, and French, as well as his high level of expertise in various Islamic disciplines, he has a huge audience. He has been awarded for his work in spiritual leadership, youth engagement, community development, interfaith outreach, and bridge building. He is the Imam and founder of Sayeda Khadija Centre, and the Chairman of the Canadian Centre for Deen Studies.

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### **Kabbani, Sheikh Muhammad Hisham**

Sheikh Kabbani established the American branch of the Haqqani Educational Foundation, dedicated to the promotion of the fundamental Islamic teachings of tolerance, respect, and peace. Since Sheikh Muhammad Nizam Adil's death in 2014, Kabbani has become the leader of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi Order. In 1991, Kabbani moved to the US and has since founded 23 study and meeting centres in the US and Canada as well as an Islamic retreat centre in Michigan focusing on spreading Sufi teachings.

#### **Khan, Nouman Ali**

Nouman Ali Khan is the founder and CEO of Bayyinah and serves as a lead instructor for several programs including Dream, traveling seminars and Bayyinah TV. Nouman served as a Prof of Arabic at Nassau Community College until 2006 when he decided to take Bayyinah on as a full-time project. Since then he has taught more than 10,000 students through traveling seminars and programs. With millions of social media followers, Nouman is one of the most influential young western scholars. He has retained this influence despite being recently embroiled in controversy about aspects of his personal life.

#### **Al-Ninowy, Sheikh Dr Muhammad bin Yahya**

Sheikh Dr Muhammad al-Ninowy is a Syrian-American scholar and author based in Atlanta, Georgia, whose lineage is traced back to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Al-Ninowy is considered a muhadith. In addition to holding a PhD in hadith science, he also holds a bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of Illinois, and a Doctor of Medicine degree. He is the founding director of Madina Institute and Seminaries, the Center for Non-Violence and Peace Studies, and the charitable organization Planet Mercy, which have operational activities worldwide. Madina Institute and Seminary is a groundbreaking initiative offering traditional Islamic theological education in a modern setting, and is geared toward producing homegrown leaders, thinkers, and scholars. He has been the forerunner in promoting non-violence among all people and religions worldwide. Al-Ninowy is also the spiritual guide of the Alawi-Husayni-Ninowi Zawiyah; a Shadhili Rifa'i Sufi order.

#### **Shakir, Imam Zaid**

Zaid is a senior faculty member and co-founder of Zaytuna College, Berkeley, California, the first accredited Muslim undergraduate college in the USA. He converted to Islam in 1977 while serving in the US Air Force and obtained a BA summa cum laude in International Relations, MA in Political Science, and then pursued studies in Arabic, Islamic law, Qur'anic studies, and spirituality in the Muslim world. He is an influential Islamic scholar in the West and a voice of conscience for American Muslims and non-Muslims alike. He founded the New Brunswick Islamic Center (formerly Masjid al-Huda) in New Jersey, Masjid al-Islam in Connecticut, the Tri-State Muslim Education Initiative, the Connecticut Muslim

Coordinating Committee, the Lighthouse Mosque in Oakland, California, and United for Change.

### **Wahhaj, Siraj**

Siraj Wahhaj is Imam of the Al-Taqwa Mosque in Brooklyn, a prolific lecturer, community activist, the leader of the Muslim Alliance in North America, and former Vice President of ISNA. He first became famous for his successful efforts in fighting drugs and crime in his neighbourhood. In 1991, he became the first Muslim to recite the Opening Prayer of the Qur'an (Al-Fatiha) at the US House of Representatives. Brooklyn Borough President, Marty Markowitz, proclaimed August 15 Siraj Wahhaj Day in honour of his "lifetime of outstanding and meaningful achievement."

### **Webb, Imam Suhaib**

Suhaib Webb is a graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma with a background in Education from the College of Sharia, Al-Azhar University. Imam Suhaib has served various communities in North America and is currently the founder of SWISS. On December 1, 2011, Webb was inaugurated as the Imam of the Islamic Society of Boston's Cultural Center (ISBCC) the largest Islamic centre in New England. He helped raise \$20,000 for widows and children of firefighters killed in the 9/11 attacks. He

has spoken out against radical clerics that seek to prey on insecure youth and their American identities. He frequently shares advice, lessons and "SnapWas" on his SnapChat. He currently resides in New York serving as Scholar-in Residence at the Islamic Center at NYU.

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## *Caribbean*

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### **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

#### **Hosein, Sheikh Imran**

Sheikh Imran N Hosein is an Islamic scholar specializing in contemporary interpretations of Islamic eschatology. Having given up his career as a diplomat in 1985 to dedicate his life to the mission of Islam, Sheikh Imran is a tireless missionary who often travels for 2-3 years at a time in the cause of Islam and calls for Muslims to retreat to faith-based eco-villages until such time as Imam Mahdi appears. He is also a respected commentator on international monetary economics, and advocates the establishment of 134 free-markets and currency with intrinsic value as a means of savings and aversion of a pending collapse of the "world of paper money." He has very popular videos on YouTube with millions of views, especially on the end of time, politics, and the economy.



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

*The Enshrouded One 73 : 8*

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# PHILANTHROPY, CHARITY & DEVELOPMENT

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### IRAQ

#### **Al-Khoei, Sayyed Jawad**

Sayyed Al-Khoei is the Secretary General of the London-based Al-Khoei International Foundation, an international charity promoting the welfare of Shia communities throughout the world. He spends his time between the UK and his native Iraq. As a researcher in Islamic Affairs, Sayyed Jawad has authored various studies and articles on the religious minorities in Iraq and the need for interfaith dialogue.

### JORDAN

#### **HM Queen Rania Al-Abdullah**

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah is the wife of HM King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein, but is also in her own right an educational activist with global appeal. Through sheer hard work, she has developed the biggest virtual following of any Muslim in the world, and she defends and humanizes Islam and Arab causes in-and to-the West as effectively as any Muslim scholar in the world. She is the initiator and key leader behind the launch of several educational initiatives such as the Jordanian Madrasati, 'My School', a project for the development of Jordan's public school system. In 2017, Queen Rania received the Global Trailblazer Award and the Fellowship Award from "Fashion for Relief" in Recognition of her humanitarian efforts towards children caught in conflict.

### LEBANON

#### **Al-Sadr, Rabab**

Rabab Al-Sadr is a social and human rights activist, and a philanthropist. She is a dynamic thinker and is the President of the Imam Al-Sadr Foundation, one of the most successful humanitarian organizations working in Lebanon. The foundation's projects focus

on training, development, and poverty alleviation across Lebanon. She is the sister of Imam Musa Al-Sadr.

### QATAR

#### **Al-Missned, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser**

Her Highness Sheikha Mozah is the mother of the current Emir of Qatar, and Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. The Foundation has brought some of the leading US university programs to Qatar. It also promotes international research, and provides scholarships around the world. Sheikha Mozah also serves as the President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and is Vice Chairperson of both the Supreme Education Council and the Supreme Health Council. She plays a very active role in promoting a wide range of issues at home, in the Gulf region, and internationally.

### SAUDI ARABIA

#### **AbuSulayman, Muna**

Muna AbuSulayman was the first Saudi woman to become a regional TV personality. She is one of the founding co-hosts of the social issues show Kalam Nawaem, which was ranked number one across the Arab World for seven years in a row. She was also chosen as the first Saudi UN Goodwill Ambassador for the UNDP as well as a Young Global Leader at the World Economic Forum in the same year while managing one of the largest Muslim foundations. Recently AbuSulayman has successfully launched, managed, and scaled multiple businesses and is running a consultancy that focuses on finding "Big Ideas that Work" to solve problems in Education, Gender Issues, Media, and Entrepreneurship.

#### **Al-Madani, HE Dr Ahmad Mohamed Ali**

Al-Madani is the President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which aims to provide short and long-term solutions to poverty alleviation in the Muslim world. The IDB is the principal financ-

ing institution of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Al-Madani is keen on taking the IDB to the next level of excellence with Vision 1440H, a plan that aims at alleviating poverty, eradicating illiteracy, providing better health facilities to people, strengthening ties with the private sector and NGOs, and women's development. Previously, Al-Madani served as the Deputy Minister of Education in Saudi Arabia, and as Secretary General of the Muslim World League. He currently serves as a Member of the Board of Trustees of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology.

#### **Al-Rajhi, Sulaiman Abdul Aziz**

Al-Rajhi owns the world's largest organization for Islamic banking and finance, Al-Rajhi Bank. As Saudi Arabia's richest non-royals, members of the Al-Rajhi family are among the world's leading philanthropists. In 2012, Al-Rajhi received the King Faisal International Prize for dedicating half his fortune to charity. He also runs the SARR Foundation: a network of charities and research organizations. He has been listed as one of the "Richest Arabs 2010" by Arab Business and UAE Mega Projects.

### **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

#### **Al-Hussein, HRH Princess Haya**

HRH Princess Haya bint Al-Hussein of Jordan is married to HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and the ruler of Dubai. She chairs Dubai's International Humanitarian City which is now the world's largest operational centre for the delivery of aid in emergencies. She was an ambassador for the World Food Programme 2005-2007, and then appointed a UN Messenger of Peace in July 2007 by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. She writes editorials and articles on hunger, nutrition, and the UN Millennium Development Goals, and serves on the boards of many non-profit organizations. She founded Tikyet Um Ali—the first Arab NGO dedicated to overcoming local hunger—which aims at feeding 30,000 families. In 2016, she received the Award for Local Sports Personality from the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Creative Sports Award.

#### **Al-Qassimi, Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed**

Sheikh Sultan is the ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah. He had the educational vision to start University City which included the American University of Sharjah,

the University of Sharjah, and other colleges. Since then, his vision has inspired neighbouring emirates and countries to emulate his endeavour of bringing world-class university education to the region. He is known for his philanthropic activities and has endowed chairs for Arabic and Islamic studies in Western universities (e.g. Exeter University).

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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### **SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **Sooliman, Dr Imtiaz Ismail**

Sooliman is the founder of the Gift of the Givers Foundation. It is the largest disaster relief organization of African origin on the African continent. His organization has delivered over \$103 million in aid to 41 countries around the world. The organization has also designed and developed the world's first and largest containerized mobile hospital, which has been deployed in Bosnia. It also runs 24 development projects in South Africa and Malawi. He was awarded South Africa's Order of the Baobab for distinguished service in April 2010. In 2016, he received the Global Citizen Award from Henley & Partners in London.

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## *Asia*

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### **INDIA**

#### **Prenji, Azim**

Prenji is an Indian business tycoon and philanthropist who is the Chairman of Wipro Limited, a leader in the software industry. He is currently the second wealthiest Indian (worth US \$19 billion) as well as being the richest Indian Muslim. In April 2017, India Today ranked him ninth in India's 50 Most Powerful People. The Azim Prenji Foundation supports programs that reach more than 2.5 million children. His \$2 billion donation to his foundation was the largest charitable contribution in the history of modern India. He has now committed \$9 billion to the Foundation, 63% of his wealth. In 2011, he was awarded Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award by the Government of India.

### **Qasmi, Maulana Badruddin Ajmal**

Maulana Badruddin Ajmal is a prominent Indian businessman who runs the Ajmal Group of Companies, which sells attar perfume, oils, and textiles. He is a proponent and member of various social service organizations and is also a scholar of Islam, having studied at the Darul Uloom Deoband. Qasmi is also a politician who founded the Assam United Democratic Front political party. He is noted for his contributions to charitable hospitals, orphanages, and educational institutions, including a women's science college.

## **INDONESIA**

### **Bagir, Haidar**

Haidar Bagir is the founder and Director of Mizan—a large publishing company that significantly shapes the development of Islamic discourse in Indonesia—and co-founder and CEO of the Mizan Publishing Company. Bagir has founded and lectured in many educational institutions, and his philanthropic contributions include work on community development. He has written extensively on Sufism.

## **MALAYSIA**

### **Al-Bukhary, Syed Mokhtar**

According to Forbes, Syed Mokhtar al-Bukhary is the tenth richest Malaysian. He owns a variety of companies including the Malaysian Mining Corporation, a behemoth that has been awarded multiple, multi-billion dollar projects. He has established many humanitarian projects including rebuilding the lives of Afghan refugees, helping Pakistan's tsunami victims, and establishing an AIDS hospital in Uganda. He also supports many educational foundations.

## **PAKISTAN**

### **Edhi, Bilquis**

The wife of the late Abdul Sattar Edhi, Bilquis Edhi is a professional nurse and philanthropist in her own right. She runs several non-profit organizations for orphans, widows, and elderly people. Serving the nation for more than 50 years, she is known by the

honorific title “Mother of the Nation”. In 2015, she received the Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice.

### **Rizvi, Prof Dr Adib**

Dr Rizvi is one of Pakistan's leading humanitarians, having established the largest free health organization in Pakistan. He works as a doctor and an administrator at SIUT in Karachi, which was founded in 1971 as an eight-bed unit but is now the largest health organization in Pakistan. SIUT provides free and comprehensive services in urology, nephrology, transplantation, and liver-related diseases. He is the recipient of many awards for his life's work.

## **SINGAPORE**

### **Faizal, Mohamed**

Mr Mohamed Faizal is a passionate champion of educational initiatives who has conceived of scholarship programs specifically targeted at lower-income students. He has received the President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Award, being the second Muslim in its history to receive it. Many in Singapore's Muslim community consider him the foremost jurist on the MUIS Appeal Board, the city-state's highest body of Islamic law.

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## *Europe*

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## **UNITED KINGDOM**

### **Al-Banna, Dr Hany**

Al-Banna is the co-founder and President of Islamic Relief, the largest Western-based international Muslim relief and development NGO. Established in 1984, the organization provides assistance in over 30 countries worldwide. Queen Elizabeth honoured Al-Banna's work, giving him an OBE for his services to the community. In 2015, Islamic Relief signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union, formalizing a partnership to tackle poverty on the continent.

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### EGYPT

#### **Abul Magd, HE Prof Dr Kamal**

Abul Magd was the Vice President of the National Council for Human Rights in Egypt. He is an important intellectual in Egypt and the wider Arab World, and holds significant influence over media relations and public diplomacy in the Middle East. Shortly after September 11, 2001, Abul-Magd was appointed the Commissioner Responsible for Dialogue between Civilizations by the Arab League. He is noted as one of the most influential “new Islamist” thinkers.

### IRAN

#### **Ebadi, Shirin**

Shirin Ebadi is a lawyer who, in 2003, became the first Iranian to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She is the founder of Children’s Rights Support Association and has defended and supported the rights of children and women. Ebadi lectures about the human rights situation in Iran and espouses a liberal view of Islam appreciated by many Muslim feminists. Since the presidential elections of 2009, she has been forced to live in exile (in London) while her husband is barred from travelling out of Iran.

### MOROCCO

#### **Al-Soufi, Nawal**

Nawal al-Soufi won the recently established UAE ‘Arab Hope Maker’ prize and was rewarded with 1 million AED. She was rewarded for her passion and dedication to helping refugees. She arranged rescue missions for an estimated 200,000 Syrian refugees fleeing across the Mediterranean Sea.

### PALESTINE

#### **Abu Elaish, Dr Izzeldin**

Izzeldin Abu Elaish is a Palestinian physician and internationally recognized peace and human rights

activist devoted to advancing health and educational opportunities for women and girls in the Middle East. He is also known for using health as a vehicle for peace. Dr Abu Elaish’s book, *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor’s Journey*—the story of his loss of his three daughters Bessan, Mayar, and Aya and their cousin Noor to Israeli shelling in 2009 and his subsequent transformation—has achieved critical acclaim. Published in 2010 and translated into 17 languages, the book has become an international best seller. It is a testament to his commitment to forgiveness as the solution to conflict, and the catalyst towards peace. He has received a number of national and international awards for his work, including The Public Peace Prize in 2014.

#### **Abu Sarah, Aziz**

Aziz Abu Sarah is a Palestinian activist who is globally recognized for his work on peace and conflict resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He is currently the Executive Director of the Centre for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. He was named as National Geographic Explorer in 2011, being among only a handful of Arabs and Muslims to receive that distinction. He was the First Intercultural Innovation Award winner, an award issued in partnership by the UNAOC and BMW. Aziz is also a columnist for Alquds Newspaper and has published articles at the New York Times, Haaretz, Jerusalem Post, Alarabiya, Daily Star and Middle East online and others. He regularly provides analysis for television news programs

#### **Al-Faqih, Judge Kholoud**

Faqih made history when she became the first female sharia judge in the Middle East (in Ramallah, Palestine). She has travelled internationally to speak about her struggles in succeeding in a male-dominated field, and has become an inspiration to many women outside the Middle East as well. She ranked number 10 in the 100 Most Powerful Arab Women in 2012 by CEO Middle East and Arabian Business magazines. An award winning documentary, *The Judge*, was made about her life in 2018.

### **Al-Hroub, Hanan**

A school teacher from occupied Palestine who won The Global Teacher Prize in 2016, Hanan Al-Hroub started teaching traumatized children who had faced violence, or whose parents had been shot in front of them. Hanan Al-Hroub instilled confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to live a normal childhood. She published a book entitled *Play and Learn* that includes educational games that help children overcome the challenges they face.

## **QATAR**

### **Al-Thani, Dr Abdulla bin Ali**

Dr Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani is the President of the new Hamad Bin Khalifa University in the State of Qatar, and is Chairman of the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE). Dr Abdullah, a member of Qatar's ruling family and a former university professor, is the man at the centre of many of Qatar's educational initiatives, and is leading the way to transform Qatar's education system. Amid the 2017 row between Qatar and other Gulf states, he visited King Salman at his residence in Morocco

### **Al-Thani, HE Sheikha Aisha bint Faleh bin Nasser**

Sheikha Aisha al-Thani is the founder of the Doha Academy and board member of Reach Out to Asia, Qatar. She is also a member of the Qatar Supreme Education Council, the highest education authority in Qatar. She is a modernist development thinker who promotes a more pronounced and well-judged engagement with people of faith. Sheikha Aisha's perspective resonates with the more concerted efforts by humanitarian organizations to look at the networks of people of faith as a solution to practical development problems.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

### **Badawi, Samar (new)**

Samar Badawi is a Saudi Arabian human rights activist. She has been arrested several times, imprisoned and been subject to a travel ban. She has campaigned for women driving, women voting and other women and human rights issues. She has received international recognition for her activism. Her recent arrest in 2018, alongside fellow activist Nassima al-Sadah, prompted a defence from Canada and then a response from Saudi Arabia leading to a major diplomatic falling out between the two countries. Saudi Arabia

has expelled Canada's ambassador, and frozen trade with Canada.

### **Obaid, Thoraya Ahmed**

Thoraya Obaid is one of the few Saudi women on the Shura Council. She was formerly the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, the world's largest multilateral fund for population assistance. She was the first Saudi national to head a UN agency and was also Chair of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the principal inter-agency organization for coordinating management matters within the UN. She underlined religion and culture as important aspects for the agency's development work.

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### **Barakat, Maha**

Maha Barakat has been the Director General of the Health Authority Abu Dhabi since 2013. Previously she worked at the Imperial College London Diabetes Centre she founded in Abu Dhabi. She was awarded an OBE in 2010 and given the Imperial College Medal in 2013. An outstanding academic with a PhD from Cambridge University, she serves on various boards and committees related to research, quality and development issues in the medical field.

### **Mattar, Dr Maryam**

Dr Maryam Mattar is Director General of the Community Development Authority (CDA), a newly launched Dubai government authority that takes responsibility for setting up and developing frameworks for social development. She is also the founder and Executive Director of two non-profit civil associations: UAE Down's Syndrome Association and UAE Genetic Diseases Association. She has also initiated several national community outreach programs such as UAE Free of Thalassaemia and established a number of wellness centres. She was ranked the 83rd most powerful woman in the Arab world in 2012 by Arabian Business, and listed by Muslim Science as one of the top 20 Muslim female scientists.

## **YEMEN**

### **Karman, Tawakul**

Karman was one of three women jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. She is a Yemeni journalist and activist who has regularly led protests against the

government. Over the past six years, this 39-year-old mother-of-three has campaigned for the release of political prisoners and advocated freedom of expression and other human rights. These activities have caused her to be jailed several times. She has repeatedly called for an end to US drone strikes in Yemen and was ranked no. 2 in the 2013 list of the Most Powerful Arab Women by Arabian Business. In response to the January 2015 events of the 2014-15 Yemeni coup d'état, Karman spoke out against what she believes to be collaboration between late president Saleh and Houthis rebels to undo the 2011 revolution by ending the transition process.

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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### **BURKINA FASO**

#### **Aboubakary, Maiga**

Aboubakary is the Secretary General of the Burkina Faso Islamic Organization for Population and Development. His organization promotes family planning in mosques around the country. The tremendous growth rate in Burkina Faso has put great strain on the economy there and threatens to sharpen the already serious problem of poverty.

### **BURUNDI**

#### **Nkunduwiga, Haruna**

Nkunduwiga is the Secretary General of the Muslim Community of Burundi. He has been working recently to battle the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Burundi with other faith leaders by raising awareness and asking people to "stay clean". HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Burundi, affecting close to 20 percent of the urban population and nearly 10 percent of the rural population.

### **COTE D'IVOIRE**

#### **Abdoulaziz, Sheikh Sarba**

Abdoulaziz is the leader of the Association Soulatine pour les Actions de Bienfaisance. He works in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso on the development of the Muslim community and the fair treatment of Muslims. He has been active at major international conferences that deal with the problem of Islamophobia.

### **THE GAMBIA**

#### **Bensouda, Fatou**

Bensouda is Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, being the first African woman to hold such a position. She is the former Attorney General and Minister of Justice. In 2012 and 2017, Time Magazine listed her as one of The 100 Most Influential People in the World.

### **MALAWI**

#### **Chabulika, Sheikh Dinala**

Chabulika is the Islamic Information Bureau's national coordinator. He is known as an Islamic rights activist and has taken it upon himself to present the need to address social issues as religious duties. Chabulika works on health issues, exploitation, and has built bridges with non-Muslims in Malawi. He also fought against the forced teaching of religious texts to school children.

### **NIGER**

#### **Mindaoudou, HE Dodo Aichatou**

Ms Mindaoudou is a former Nigerien Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, and African Integrity. She has served the government since the mid-1990s and is also the former Secretary-General for the Network for Rural Law. Ms Mindaoudou has written extensively about economic development and women's issues. She is one of the most senior-level women politicians in West Africa having been the UN Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) from 2013-2017.

### **NIGERIA**

#### **Ashafa, Imam Muhammad**

Ashafa is the co-director of the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre in the city of Kaduna (Northern Nigeria), a leading task force that resolves conflicts across the country. He works with Christian Pastor James Wuye to promote peace between religions. Previously, both leaders encouraged hatred of others, but they changed their ways after being injured and affected by inter-religious violence. Pastor Wuye and Imam Ashafa have gained a worldwide audience and intense interest in their story by speaking about their successful work in resolving conflicts. In April 2013, they were awarded the first prize in the World

# UN World Interfaith Harmony Week

[www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com](http://www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com)

In September 2010, His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan proposed a World Interfaith Harmony Week at the Plenary session of the 65th United Nations General Assembly in New York. This was a call to establish a week every year where people of all faiths, and those of no faith, would promote the message of '*Love of God, and Love of the neighbour*', or '*Love of the Good, and Love of the Neighbour*'. The Draft Resolution for the World Interfaith Harmony Week was later written and presented by HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, Chief Advisor to King Abdullah II for Religious and Cultural Affairs and Personal Envoy of King Abdullah II, before the United Nations General Assembly where it was unanimously adopted on 20 October 2010.

UN Resolution A/65/PV.34; the World Interfaith Harmony Week, as it is called, recognises the first week of February of every year as a time when people of all faiths, and those of no faith, work together to promote and celebrate religious and cultural understanding and cooperation, to address each other in favourable terms drawn from their own traditions and to accept and respect 'the other' based on the foundations of '*Love of God, and Love of the Neighbour*', or '*Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour*'. Remarkably the World Interfaith Harmony Week excludes no one and includes and unites everyone.



## The HM King Abdullah II World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize

The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan established the World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize in 2013 to recognize the three best events or texts organized during the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week (first week of February) which best promote the goals of the World Interfaith Harmony Week. Prizes are awarded to each event or text that is judged to have been most successful in promoting interfaith harmony and impacting religious understanding. Since 2014, this prize has been known as the King Abdullah II World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize. The prizes are:

First	\$25,000 and a gold medal
Second	\$15,000 and a silver medal
Third	\$5,000 and a bronze medal

In 2017, over 1,000 events held in over 50 countries were registered on the site. They were arranged by groups as diverse as government agencies, social groups, schools, private individuals and of course the numerous interfaith organizations that exist worldwide.



Interfaith Harmony Week by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman, Jordan.

## SENEGAL

### Kane, Zeinaba

Zeinaba Kane is the President of Women of the Rassemblement Islamique du Sénégal (Alwahda), the largest Islamic organization in Senegal, having over forty Islamic associations operating within it. Kane works on the improvement of living conditions for rural women in Senegal. She has written many articles and is frequently interviewed by the media. From 2002-2008 she was the President of Women for the Association of Muslim Students in Senegal.

### Niasse, Shaykha Mariama

Sheikha Mariama Niasse is a revered scholar and leader who is known as the "Khadimatul Qur'an" (Servant of the Qur'an) for establishing one of the largest and most widely known Qur'an schools in West Africa. The "Dar Al-Quran Ecole Sheikha Mariama Niasse" in Dakar houses 1300 students from preschool to secondary years and instructs Arabic, French and Islamic studies alongside Quranic education. She is the daughter of one of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, one of the founders of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and one of the greatest icons of the Tijaniyya Sufi order in the 20th century. Sheikha Mariama carried her father's legacy of providing Islamic traditional knowledge and spiritual guidance to thousands of people in West Africa, especially women. She is also well-known for her influence over local and regional politics, and for negotiating conflicts between Senegal and Iran, as well as Senegal and Sudan.

## SOMALIA

### Abdi, Dr Hawa

For more than two decades, Dr Hawa Abdi has been providing humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable victims of the civil war in Somalia. She has saved tens of thousands of lives in her hospital while simultaneously providing an education to hundreds of displaced children at the Waqaf-Dhiblawe school. Dr Abdi runs her 400-bed hospital, with the help of her daughters Deqo and Amina, who are also doctors, on her own savings and donations. She also helps to provide food and clean water, runs a school and a women's education centre, and campaigns against female genital mutilation. In 2012, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her work

in serving displaced persons and the rural population, as well as providing equal access to healthcare, education, and food security for all. In 2014, Abdi received the Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award: Freedom from Want in Middelburg, the Netherlands.

### Elmi, Asha Haji

Asha Haji Elmi is a peace activist and a member of the Federal Parliament of Somalia. In 2008, she won the Right Livelihood Award (known as the alternative Nobel Prize). She is an activist for women's rights and formed the Six Clan 125 movement when women were excluded from the peace process in Somalia that involved the five traditional clans. Elmi is also the founder of Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC) and campaigns internationally against female genital mutilation in Somalia and in other areas of Africa.

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## Asia

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## AFGHANISTAN

### Joya, Malalai

Malalai is a well-known activist, writer, and a former politician from Afghanistan. She was a Parliamentarian in the National Assembly of Afghanistan, later to be dismissed for publicly condemning the Afghan Parliament. She was the first ever to speak against the democratically elected Karzai administration and its western supporters, specifically the US. Her actions have received international acclaim. She was listed in the 100 Most Influential People of 2010 as well as in the Guardian's top 100 women. She is renowned for her attempts to teach women and girls to read and write in the refugee camp where she resided during the Soviet-Afghan war, later to be smuggled back to Afghanistan at the age of 16 to set up a secret school for girls.

### Samar, Dr Sima (new)

Sima Samar is a medical doctor who lived as a refugee for over a decade. She established the Shuhada Clinic to provide health care for fellow Afghan women refugees in Pakistan. Upon her return to Afghanistan she served as Minister of Women's Affairs of Afghanistan (2001 to 2003). She has established an institute of higher education and carries on human rights works both nationally and internationally. She is currently the Chairperson of the Afghan In-

dependent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan. In 2011, she was part of the newly founded Truth and Justice party.

## BANGLADESH

### **Abed, Sir Fazle Hasan**

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed is founder and Chairman of one of the largest non-governmental organizations in the world, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). It was established over 40 years ago and now has more than 140 million students in nine countries at all levels and ages. He was awarded the WISE Prize (established by the Qatar Foundation) in 2011 in recognition of his life's work of bringing basic primary education to some of the world's poorest communities, from Afghanistan to South Sudan. He has won many awards including the prestigious 2018 LEGO Prize for his contribution towards improving children's lives and the Laudato Si' award for creating opportunities for millions of people living in poverty.

### **Hossain, Dr Hameeda**

Dr Hossain has published many books and articles relating to human rights and women's issues in Bangladesh and around the world. She is a founding member of Ain o Salish Kendra, a legal aid and human rights organization.

### **Yunus, Mohammad**

Mohammad Yunus is the founder of the Grameen Bank. He developed the concept of microcredit for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. His efforts focus on creating economic and social development, helping the impoverished escape poverty by providing loans on terms suitable to them, and teaching them sound financial principles. Yunus' work has been recognized by many international organizations, including the King Hussein Foundation, Jordan, and UNESCO. In 2012, he was named the Chancellor of Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland. In 2016, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appointed him to the High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, which was co-chaired by presidents François Hollande of France and Jacob Zuma of South Africa.

## CHINA

### **Tohti, Ilham**

Ilham Tohti is a university Prof who has supported the rights of ethnic Uyghurs. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of separatism. Much of the evidence against him included his teaching materials and interviews with foreign journalists. The sentencing was passed in the midst of a general Chinese crackdown on Muslim practice in the eastern region. There are estimated to be over 10 million Uyghurs living in the Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. His awards include the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders and the Weimar Human Rights Award.

## INDIA

### **Khan, Dr Saniyasnain (new)**

Dr. Saniyasnain has been a prolific writer of children's books. He established Goodword Books in 1999 and has published over 100 titles. His books focus on Islamic themes and have been translated into many languages. He is a regular contributor of articles in various newspapers and magazines as well as hosting a weekly TV show.

### **Ramzan, Dr Mubeena (new)**

Dr Mubeena Ramzan educates and empowers women in Kashmir. She runs the Jamia Islamia Mahdul Muslimat, based in Sopore and in Srinagar and also heads a socio-religious organization, Ansar un Nisa. The former institute graduates aalimahs (religious scholars) whilst the latter provides a helping hand to the needy, would-be brides, widows, orphans and also establishes vocational training centres.

## MALAYSIA

### **Anwar, Zainah**

Anwar is the co-founder and Director of Musawah: A Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family. Prior to this, she founded and was Executive Director of Sisters in Islam, an organization committed to gender issues and increasing respect for women. She is a journalist who has contributed to the New Straits Times and The Star—the country's two main newspapers—and has written a book about Islam in Malaysia. She addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos and delivered a keynote address titled Islam, Human Rights, and Activism at Harvard University. Newsweek and The Daily

Beast named Anwar one of the 150 women “Who Shake the World.”

## NEPAL

### **Siddiqui, Mohammadi**

Mohammadi Siddiqui is a pioneer female Muslim politician, social worker, and human rights activist. She established the Fatima Foundation in 2003 to ensure Muslim women’s rights on two related fronts: the personal daily struggle of women against discrimination, and the social and legal practices that influence women’s independence and access to basic rights. The foundation organizes Muslim women’s groups and works with religious scholars and women leaders to educate women and raise awareness of their rights in order to advocate for the practice of actual Islamic law and ensure social justice for women. The foundation also publishes books and translations of the Qur’an in the local language and provides services to the victims of domestic violence.

## PAKISTAN

### **Mazari, Muniba (new)**

Muniba derives her strength from the tragic car accident that took place when she was 21 which left her wheelchair bound. Since then, she’s been a pioneering voice heard in different countries around the world. Being a motivational speaker through TEDx, Entrepreneurs’ Organization (EO), Young presidents’ Organization (YPO), VCon Malaysia, Vcon Duba and several others. She was the first Pakistani woman to become a UN Good Will Ambassador and the first wheel-chair using model. In 2015, she was among BBCs 100 most inspirational women and was also featured in Forbes 30 under 30 in 2016. Muniba is also an artist and has created her brand by the name “Muniba’s Canvas” with the slogan “Let Your Walls Wear Colors”.

### **Yousufzai, Malala**

Read bio on page 138 in Honourable Mentions

## PHILIPPINES

### **Rasul, Santanina Tillah**

The first and only Muslim woman elected to the Senate of the Philippines, former Senator Santanina Tillah Rasul is also the last Muslim Senator of the Philippines. She is the founder and Chair of the Magbassa Kita (Let us Read) Foundation Inc,

which focuses on literacy and education. She is noted for her work on women’s empowerment, effective civil service, improved literacy for the Muslims of Mindanao, and equitable treatment of Muslims of the Philippines. She authored much landmark legislation, including the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act that empowered women. She also allocated development funds for women’s initiatives and opened the Philippine Military Academy to women. A peace champion, she was a member of the government panel during the peace talks with the Moro National Liberation Front that led to a peace agreement that was signed in 1996.

### **Rasul-Bernardo, Amina**

Amina Rasul-Bernardo, an advocate for peace and democracy, is President and co-founder of the Philippine Centre for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and a columnist with BusinessWorld. Appointed Director of the Mindanao Development Authority, she was a member of the cabinet of former President Fidel V Ramos, former Commissioner for Women, former Director of the Development Bank of the Philippines, and Director of the Philippine National Oil Corporation. She led the organization of the National Ulama Conference of the Philippines and the Noorus Salam (Light of Peace), a national network of ustadzas and Muslim women civil society leaders. She also led the development of an Islamic Model for Peace Education for Mindanao. The UN Act for Peace Programme named her the Mindanao Peace Champion in 2010. In 2013, she won second prize in the World Interfaith Harmony Week.

## SRI LANKA

### **Ismail, Jezima**

An educator for over three decades, Jezima Ismail is the Chairperson of People’s Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), President Emeritus and Founder of the Sri Lanka Muslim Women’s Conference (SLMWC), Founder and Chairperson of the Academy of Adult Education for Women (AAEW), Member of the Board of Management for the Center for Human Rights at the University of Colombo, Coordinator of the Muslim Women’s Research and Action Forum, Vice President of the Girl Guides Association, and a member of the Board of Directors of Helpage in Sri Lanka. In 1989, the Government of Sri Lanka conferred on her the title of Deshabandhu, the third highest national honour.

### **Marsoof, Justice Saleem**

Supreme Court Judge Saleem Marsoof was sworn in as the Acting Chief Justice before President Mahinda Rajapaksa in May 2013. Justice Marsoof is a former judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka and former President of the Court of Appeals. He is an award-winning lecturer on law and the development of legal studies, as well as a prolific author with a special interest in law reform in Sri Lanka.

## **THAILAND**

### **Sabur, M Abdus**

Sabur is the Secretary General and co-founder of the Asian Resource Foundation and the Asian Muslim Action Network. He is also Co-director of the School of Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation in Bangkok. In the 90s, Sabur served as coordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD). He has edited a number of publications on peace and dialogue in Southeast Asia, including: Understanding Human Rights: Perspectives from South Asia, Interfaith Conference on the Culture of Peace, Globalization and Asian Perspectives for an Alternative Development, and Towards Peace in Multi-Ethnic Asia.

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## *Europe*

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## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

### **Mahmutćehajić, HE Prof Dr Rusmir**

Rusmir Mahmutćehajić is a Bosnian academic, author, and former statesman. Considered one of Bosnia's leading intellectuals and public figures, he is the foremost advocate of the idea of a diverse Bosnia. A scholar of the Muslim intellectual tradition and a contributor to contemporary Muslim thought and the liberal interpretation of Islam, Prof Mahmutćehajić has served his country as Deputy Prime Minister and as Energy Minister through the process of independence and much of the war (1991- 95). For the past 15 years, he has been President of International Forum Bosnia, which is dedicated to the development of critical intelligence and a plural society in Bosnia. He is the author of more than 20 books in Bosnian, some 12 of which have been published in multiple languages, and author of several hundred academic articles and essays.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

### **Begg, Moazzam**

Moazzam Begg is a British Pakistani who was held without charge by the US for 3 years in the notorious Bagram and Guantanamo Bay detention centres. After much public outcry he was finally released in 2005, and in 2010, the British Government announced an out-of-court financial settlement for their complicity in the whole affair. He has written a book, 'Enemy Combatant,' which details the abuse carried out at the detention centres. He is currently a media commentator and speaks about international anti-terror measures and how they are eroding human rights.

### **Henzell-Thomas, Dr Jeremy**

Dr Henzell-Thomas has been a major force as a writer, editor, lecturer and advisor in the campaign to reform education in the Muslim world and the way Islam tends to be treated in Western educational circles. He founded the Book Foundation, served as first Chair of FAIR( UK Forum against Islamophobia and Racism) and now serves as Associate Editor of Critical Muslim. He was instrumental in advising Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal on funding the establishment of centres of Islamic Studies at two British universities and supported the newly established post of Readership in Islamic education at Warwick University. He remains a Research Associate at the Centre of Islamic Studies at Cambridge, serves as an Executive Committee member of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists UK and is a Fellow at the Royal Society of Arts. His most recent publication is Rethinking Reform in Higher Education: From Islamization to Integration (co-authored with Ziauddin Sardar.)

### **Mangera, Mufti Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf**

Mufti Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf Mangera has been studying traditional Islamic disciplines for most of his life. He memorized the Qur'an by the age of 15, and has studied with accomplished scholars in the UK, South Africa, India, and Syria. He holds an MA degree from the UK and has translated and written numerous works, many of which are published through White Thread Press ([www.whitethread-press.com](http://www.whitethread-press.com)).

### **Nahdi, Fuad**

Fuad Nahdi is a pioneering and award-winning journalist, campaigner, thinker, and interfaith activist whose contributions have spanned three decades. He

is currently Executive Director of the Radical Middle Way, an organization that has harnessed positive religious narratives to encourage civic engagement, promote positive social action, and empower relevant religious leadership to build resilience to violence and extremism. In 2014, Nahdi became the first Muslim to address the General Synod of The Church of England.

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## Oceania

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### AUSTRALIA

#### **Chowdhury, Sheikh Tawfique**

Chowdhury is the Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Mercy Mission, one of the world's fastest growing Muslim social enterprises. Its premier program is the AlKauthar Institute ([alkauthar.org](http://alkauthar.org)), which offers courses in Islamic disciplines to the general public through a medium that is accessible to working professionals. When AlKauthar initially launched in 2005, its offerings were limited to Australia. AlKauthar Institute has since spread its reach across the Western world, South Africa, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia. A medical doctor by profession, Tawfique studied Islamic theology in Medina, specializing in Islamic finance, personal law, and Islamic medical ethics. He also runs a successful multinational IT company, and is a corporate trainer and business coach to many successful people worldwide.

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## North America

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### CANADA

#### **Kutty, Faisal**

A leading North American Muslim lawyer, Faisal Kutty is outspoken on issues of human rights, Islamic thought and anti-terror legislation. He is a principal of Kutty & Associates, a respected Toronto law firm with an international client base. He co-founded the Canadian Muslim Civil Liberties Association and served as its first legal counsel and previously served as the vice chair and legal counsel to the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations (now renamed the National Council of Canadian Muslims). He is a widely invited public speaker and has written numerous op-eds, academic articles, papers, reviews and essays on topics ranging from national security to

religion and law. He is currently an associate Prof of law at Valparaiso University School of Law in Indiana and serves as an adjunct Prof of law at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto.

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### **Awad, Nihad**

Nihad Awad is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). CAIR is the most prominent Muslim lobby group in the US and is frequently sought out by the media and politicians for the Islamic perspective on events. Awad is one of the signatories of A Common Word Between Us and You and participates regularly in the US Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Awad coordinated the formal release of the Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi, signed by over 120 leading Muslim scholars and academics, which rejected the extremist teachings promoted by Da'ish.

#### **Beydoun, Khaled (new)**

Khaled Beydoun is a scholar on Islamophobia, national security and anti-terrorism law, and civil liberties. He lectures frequently and regularly writes for media outlets. His 2018 book, *American Islamophobia: The Roots and Rise of Fear*, has been published to wide-acclaim. He serves as an Associate Prof of Law at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, and currently serves on the U.S. Commission for Civil Rights.

#### **Khan, Salman**

Read bio on page 137 in Honourable Mentions.

#### **Majid, Imam Mohammed**

An outstanding figure in interfaith activities, Imam Magid is the Executive Director and Imam at the ADAMS Centre in Virginia, and former President of ISNA. He is an advocate for youth and women, and serves on the FBI's Muslim, Sikh, and Arab Advisory Committee. In recognition of his efforts toward interfaith bridge building, Imam Magid was among the ten Washingtonians of the Year in 2010 presented with Washingtonian Magazine's award for outstanding leadership. He has served as an advisor to many in Washington, including President Obama.

#### **Mogahed, Dalia**

Dalia Mogahed is the Director of Research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. She

was previously a senior analyst and Executive Director at the Gallup Centre for Muslim Studies, as well as the Director of the Muslim West Facts Project. President Obama appointed her to serve on the Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, making her the first hijab-wearing Muslim woman to hold a White House position. Mogahed has also held high positions in the US-Muslim Engagement Project and is co-author of the book *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*.

#### Mujahid, Abdul Malik

As President of the multimedia company Sound Vision, Abdul Malik Mujahid has created a critical educational resource for Muslims. His development of the Radio Islam nightly talk show in Chicago is not only a source of support for Muslims, but an important educational link to non-Muslims of Greater Chicago. During his tenure as Chair of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago and in his role as Chair of the Parliament of the World's Religions (2010-2015), Mujahid spoke with eloquence about the destructiveness of Islamophobia and the need for all people to come together in a spirit of justice and peace. He is the Chair of Burma Task

Force USA, National Coordinator of Bosnia Task Force USA, and collaborated with the National Organization of Women (NOW) to have rape declared a war crime. His reflections on current events can be found on his blog with HuffPost.

#### Sarsour, Linda

Linda Sarsour is an American-Palestinian, human rights and social justice activist, and a campaigner against increasing Islamophobia in the US. Linda is the Executive Director of the Arab American Association of New York and Senior Strategist for the Campaign to Take on Hate. She is also the co-founder of the Muslim Democratic Club of New York, the first of its kind in New York City. Her numerous distinctions include: the White House's Champion of Change, the New York City Council's Shirley Chisholm Women of Distinction Award, and CAIR's inaugural American Muslim of the Year. Linda has also written for—and been featured in—local, national, and international media on issues related to Arab-Muslim American communities, immigration, criminal justice issues, and Middle East affairs. She was one of the organizers of the 2017 Women's March which drew over 400,000 participants in the US alone.



And hold fast to God's bond, together, and do not scatter.

*The Family of 'Imrān 3 : 103*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### BAHRAIN

#### **Al-Zayani, Afnan**

Afnan al-Zayani is the CEO of Al-Zayani Commercial Services (AZCS), a multimillion dollar corporation. She appeared in Forbes' 200 Most Powerful Arab Women and Arabian Business' Power 100. She is responsible for the passing of personal status laws in Bahrain that ensure the protection of Muslim women's rights in divorce and custody proceedings, something she oversaw during her leadership of the Bahrain Businesswomen's Society (BBS). Subsequently, Al-Zayani led the Middle East and North Africa Businesswomen's Network. In 2010, she received the Leadership in Public Life Award from Vital Voices, a women's empowerment organization. In 2016, she was honoured by the IWEC Foundation at the annual conference in Belgium.

### EGYPT

#### **Helal, Lobna**

Lobna Helal was appointed by a Presidential decree as Deputy Governor of Egypt's Central Bank in 2016 after being the first woman to serve on its board, as Second Deputy Governor from 2011- 2013. Hilal also holds key positions such as the deputy chair of the Egyptian Banking Institute and recently joined Telecom Egypt's board.

### IRAN

#### **Ansari, Anousheh**

Anousheh Ansari is Chairman, CEO, and co-founder of Prodea Systems, a private US-based company offering technological solutions for businesses. In 2004, along with other members of the Ansari family, she co-sponsored the Ansari X Prize which awarded \$10 million to the first company that launched a reusable manned spacecraft. The catalyst of her influence was in 2006, when she became the first privately-funded woman, and first Iranian, to explore space. In 2015,

the National Space Society awarded Ansari the Space Pioneer Award for her service to the space community. She recently received an Honorary Doctorate of Science from Utah Valley University. In 2017, Ansari co-represented Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi at the 89th Academy Awards, accepting the Oscar on his behalf for his film *The Salesman*. Farhadi did not attend himself due to his opposition to President Trump's immigration ban.

### JORDAN

#### **Abu-Ghazaleh, Talal**

Abu-Ghazaleh is the Chairman and founder of the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization. He is credited with introducing the concept of intellectual property to the Arab World. Abu-Ghazaleh has been selected as Deputy Chairman of the UN Global Compact, as well as being appointed by the UN as Chair of UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development. He is the only person who is not from one of the G8 countries, to be listed in the IP Hall of Fame in Chicago, US.

### KUWAIT

#### **Al-Bahar, Sheikha**

Shaikha Al-Bahar is the Deputy CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait, valued at over \$79 billion in total assets. She is in charge of loans, investment banking, marketing, and treasury. Al-Bahar is also Chairperson of Al-Watany Bank of Egypt, Vice Chair at NBK Capital (a subsidiary of the National Bank of Kuwait), and sits on the board of the International Bank of Qatar. She studied at Harvard Business School, Stanford, Duke, and California University.

#### **Al-Ghunaim, Maha**

Al-Ghunaim is a pivotal figure in Arab and Kuwaiti banking and finance. In 1998, she founded Global Investment House, one of the most renowned companies in the Arab World. She is well-known for taking the company international and onto the London Stock Exchange in 2008, making it the first Kuwaiti company to be listed there. The firm is also listed on the Kuwait, Dubai, and Bahrain stock exchanges.

## LEBANON

### **Kassar, Adnan**

Kassar is a landmark Lebanese politician and businessman, and was President of the Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry for over 30 years. He was the driving force behind Lebanon remaining open for business during its long years of war and conflict. After acquiring Fransabank in 1980, Kassar transformed it into Lebanon's largest bank by branch network. His accolades include the National Order of Merit (France), Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary, Commander of the Order of Rio Branco (Brazil), the China Award, and the Order of Friendship (Russian Federation). Kassar received the Business for Peace Award in 2014, and was elected Honorary Chairman of the Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce (SRCIC) in 2016.

## MOROCCO

### **Bouhia, Hynd**

Hynd Bouhia is CEO of Global Nexus, a management investment fund focusing on clean energy and innovation. Prior to this she was the General Director of the Casablanca Stock Exchange. In 2004, the then Prime Minister of Morocco appointed her as his economic advisor. Bouhia was also a Special Assistant to the World Bank's Vice President for Middle East and North Africa, specifically in economic, technical, and diplomatic issues. Forbes mentioned her as one of The 100 Most Powerful Women while Arabian Business ranked her as one of the 100 Most Powerful Arab Women. She was inducted into John Hopkins Society of scholars in 2018.

## QATAR

### **Al-Ansari, Buthaina**

Buthaina al-Ansari is the Senior Director of Human Resources at Ooredoo (formerly Qtel) and Founder and Chairperson of Qatariat T&D Holding Company, which helps Qatari women develop business skills in order to advance in the workplace. She is a board member of the Qatar Business Women's Association and a member of the MENA Business Women's Network. In 2012, Arabian Business ranked her among the 100 Most Powerful Arab Women while L'Officiel Qatar awarded her the Most Inspirational Arab Woman of the Year Award.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### **Al-Amoudi, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Ali**

Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Ali al-Amoudi has a portfolio of businesses in oil, mining, agriculture, hotels, hospitals, finance, operations, and maintenance in various countries including Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia. His charitable and philanthropic works are substantial, especially in Ethiopia. In November 2017, al-Amoudi, alongside several Saudi princes and other billionaires, was detained in an anti-corruption crackdown. He was initially detained at the Ritz-Carlton hotel, but is now at an unknown location.

### **Bin Laden, Bakr**

Bakr bin Laden, half-brother of the deceased Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, is the Chairman of the Saudi Binladin Group. Revenue of his company is estimated at \$7.1 billion. His company is responsible for construction projects in the Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Mecca, such as the expansion and the jamarat projects. The group has been involved with several major projects in the country, including the King Abdullah Economic City, the King Abdul Aziz International Airport, and the King Saud University. In November 2017 he was detained, along with several Saudi princes and billionaires, on an anti-corruption drive. He spent three months at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh before being released in January 2018.

### **Olayan, Lubna**

Lubna Olayan is internationally recognized as Saudi Arabia's top businesswoman. As a leading investor in the Saudi economy, Chief Executive Officer of the Olayan Financing Company, and a board member for organizations such as Saudi Hollandi Bank, Rolls Royce, and Citigroup, among others, she is one of the most influential businesswomen in the world. She was listed as the 67th most powerful woman in the world by Forbes in 2015 and the number one most powerful Arab business woman in 2017.

### **Al-Saud, HRH Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal**

Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal is a member of the Saudi royal family who built his fortune through entrepreneurship and investment in real estate and the stock market. His philanthropic contributions are wide-ranging and include a contribution of \$20 million to found the Centre for Christian-Muslim Understanding at Georgetown University, which remains one of the key institutions globally working

on Christian-Muslim relations. In November 2017, he was one of several Saudi princes and billionaires detained on an anti-corruption drive. He spent three months at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh before being released in January 2018.

## SUDAN

### **Ibrahim, Dr Mohamed "Mo"**

Mohamed Ibrahim—more commonly known as Mo Ibrahim—is a Sudanese-born entrepreneur currently based in the UK. A successful telecommunications businessman, he founded one of Africa's largest cellular phone companies, Celtel. He came into prominence for establishing the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership in 2017, an award that provides the recipient a \$5 million initial payment, plus \$200,000 annually for life. The prize was conceived as a way to promote good governance and curb corruption by African leaders seeking financial security when they leave office. The prize is believed to be the world's largest, surpassing the \$1.3 million Nobel Peace Prize.

## SYRIA

### **Alchaar, Dr Mohammed Nedal**

Alchaar is the Secretary General of the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), an independent international non-profit organization. It is supported by its 200 members—mostly banks and financial institutions—from 45 countries around the globe. It is one of the key organizations creating standards for the Islamic banking industry.

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

### **Alabbar, Mohamed Ben Ali**

Mohamed Ben Ali Alabbar is a member of the Executive Board of the Government of Dubai and the Director of the Department of Economic Development. Under his leadership Dubai has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world. He has been successful in increasing the financial regulations requiring transparency, making Dubai a more attractive place to invest and do business in. He is one of the main assistants of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, and is the Chairman of Emaar, one of the world's largest real estate companies.

### **Al-Gurg, Raja**

Raja al-Gurg is Managing Director of the Easa Saleh Al-Gurg Group LLC (ESAG). Al-Gurg is the first Emirati woman on the board of HSBC Bank Middle East Limited and is also on the advisory board of Coutts Bank, the wealth management division of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group. She also plays an active role in several philanthropic, social, and women's societies, including serving as Deputy Chair of the Dubai Healthcare City Authority and President of the Dubai Business Women Council. Forbes listed her as the Most Powerful Arab Woman in 2015.

### **Al-Jaber, Fatima**

Al-Jaber is an Emirati businesswoman and Chief Operating Officer of the Al-Jaber Group. She supervises more than 50,000 employees and manages around \$4.9 billion in assets. She is also a regular speaker at economic conferences. Al-Jaber was the first ever Emirati woman to be elected to the Board of Directors at the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce in December 2009. She has received many awards and has been featured in Forbes and Arabian Business.

### **Lootah, Haj Saeed**

Haj Saeed Lootah is an accomplished entrepreneur, businessman, philanthropist, and visionary community leader. In 1975, Haj Saeed set up the first commercial Islamic bank in the world: Dubai Islamic Bank. He built his own construction company into a business empire that has holdings in almost all economic sectors. He maintains high ethical and Islamic standards throughout all his companies. He has been granted honorary degrees from universities in the USA and Russia. Haj Saeed was also presented with EFICA Lifetime Achievement Award for contribution to Islamic banking.

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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## KENYA

### **Merali, Naushad**

Merali is a business tycoon who has helped the commercial development in Kenya. He is best known for owning three of Kenya's major companies: Sasini Ltd, battery manufacturer Eveready East Africa, and Sameer Africa. He is also chairman of the mobile carrier Bharti Airtel's Kenya operations. Merali appeared in Africa's 50 Richest 2015 by Forbes.

# يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ذكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

O you who believe! Remember God with much remembrance.

*The Clans 33 : 41*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

## NIGERIA

### Dangote, Alhaji Aliko

Dangote is the Chairman and CEO of the Dangote Group, the largest industrial group in Nigeria. In January 2009, Dangote was honoured for being the leading provider of employment in the Nigerian construction industry. In 2011, Dangote was also awarded Nigeria's second highest honour, Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) by the President of Nigeria. As a philanthropist, he has donated to the National Mosque, the Presidential Library, and a host of charities. As of March 2018, he had an estimated net worth of US \$14.1 billion. He appeared in Forbes as no. 105 in The World's Billionaires 2017, no. 1 in The African Billionaires 2017, and no. 68 in The World's Most Powerful People 2016.

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## Asia

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## BRUNEI

### Waddahulah, HM Sultan Hajj Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Sultan of Brunai Darussalam

HM Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah has been the Sultan of Brunei since 1967. Following the death of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 2016, the Sultan is the wealthiest monarch in the world. His official residence has over 1,800 rooms and he maintains a car collection in the thousands. He owns many properties (via the Brunei Investment Authority) in the UK including the famous Dorchester Hotel. He is estimated to be worth \$20 billion.

## INDONESIA

### Indrawati, Sri Mulyani

Sri Mulyani Indrawati ranks among the most powerful women in the world. She is one of few Indonesian policymakers with an international profile. During her time as Finance Minister, Southeast Asia's largest economy became one of the 20 leading economies in the world and one of the fastest growing economies in the region, partly thanks to a combination of sound economic policies and a stable political environment. She was appointed Managing Director of the World Bank in 2010, where she served until 2016.

## MALAYSIA

### Bin Hashim, Tan Sri Muhammad Ali

In addition to being mayor of one of Malaysia's most successful industrial townships for a period of 26 years, Tan Sri Muhammad Ali Bin Hashim served as President and CEO of Johor Corporation for more than 28 years. He is currently the President of the Malaysian Islamic Chamber of Commerce (DPIM) and has been awarded Malaysia's Ma'al Hijrah Appreciation Award. His three books speak about how to realize the highest levels of social responsibility and environmental sustainability standards while integrating Islamic aspirations into business practice, thereby aligning them with the objectives of the Maqasid Al Shari'ah.

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## Europe

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### TURKEY

#### **Sabancı, Güler**

Sabancı is a renowned, award-winning Turkish businesswoman and the chairperson of the family-controlled Sabancı Holding, a \$25 billion industrial and financial corporation, the second largest in Turkey. Ban Ki-moon appointed Sabancı as a member of the Board of United Nations Global Compact, the UN's highest-level advisory body involving business, civil society, labour, and employers' organizations. She was recently honoured with the David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award for her philanthropic contributions.

#### **Ulukaya, Hamdi (new)**

Hamdi Ulukay is the founder and CEO of the multi-billion dollar yogurt business, Chobani. He immigrated to the USA in 1994, purchased a yoghurt factory in 2005 and developed his own recipe based on his Kurdish ancestry and the eastern Turkish farm he grew up in. He has developed a humane working culture for his 2,000+ employees, and focused on employing from the local community as well as refugees. He recently gave his employees a 10% stake in the company.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### **Aziz, Asif**

Asif Aziz is the founder and Chief Executive of Criterion Capital, which manages a £2 billion property portfolio across London and the South East of England. He has made significant charitable contributions across a range of sectors in the UK, and is currently consolidating them under the Aziz Foundation. The Foundation's work, particularly within the UK Muslim communities, has garnered attention. He is also a key donor to various projects in Malawi, his country of birth.

#### **Randeree, Shabir**

Randeree is a hugely successful entrepreneur and philanthropist and was recognized for his efforts with a CBE. He is the Chairman of DCD Group, Deputy Chairman of Al Baraka Bank South Africa and founder director at IBB Bank plc. He is the Chair of Mosaic (founded by HRH Prince of Wales) and involved in a number of other educational institutes.

He has served on Government Task Forces and in 2016 was inaugurated as the new chancellor of the University of East London.

#### **Shafik, Nemat**

An active economist who has held significant positions in international organizations, Shafik became Director of the London School of Economics in September 2017. She was the youngest ever Vice President of the World Bank, at the age of 36, served as the Bank of England's Deputy Governor of Markets and Banking, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and Permanent Secretary of the United Kingdom Department for International Development. She has written extensively on the fields of globalization, emerging markets and private investment, international development, the Middle East and Africa, and the environment. She was granted the title Dame Commander of the British Empire in the June 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours.

#### **Usmani, Tariq (new)**

Tariq Usmani is the co-founder and CEO of Henley Homes, a property development company in London. In addition, Tariq is the Chairperson of the West London Islamic Centre as well as founding member and Chairman of the Better Community Business Network. (BCBN). The BCBN is a charity consisting of business people and professionals that support local community projects. Usmani has also taken a particular interest in personally mentoring young offenders.

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## Oceania

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### AUSTRALIA

#### **Yassine, Talal**

Talal has spent 20 years in business, politics, and charity work. He is the Founder and Managing Director of Crescent Wealth, the world's first Sharia-compliant pension fund. Talal also serves as the Chairman of First Quay Capital and LandCorp Australia and serves on the Board of the Whitlam Institute Limited, a Prime Ministerial Board connected to the University of Western Sydney. He is a Director of Finocracy Ltd (USA) and the Responsible Finance Initiative (UK). His previous positions include a number of high-profile public-sector roles. Talal is a Professorial Fellow with the Crawford School at

the Australian National University and an adjunct Prof with the Business School at the University of Western Sydney.

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## North America

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### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### El-Erian, Mohamed

El-Erian's career started at the International Monetary Fund, where he worked for 15 years and served as Deputy Director. He also served as Managing Director at Citigroup in London and PIMCO, a global investment management firm and one of the world's largest bond investors, serving as CEO. He is currently Chief Economic Adviser at Allianz, the world's largest insurance company. In 2012, President Obama

appointed him Chair of the Global Development Council. El-Erian contributes to major economic publications such as Financial Times, Bloomberg View, Business Insider, CNN, and Foreign Policy. In April 2013, Foreign Policy named him one of the 500 most powerful people on the planet.

#### Khan, Shahid (new)

Khan moved to the USA in 1967, aged 16, graduated in Industrial Engineering and since then has gone on to become a billionaire businessman. His main company is Flex-N-Gate, which manufactures components for companies in the automobile industry. It currently has a revenue of over \$6 billion and a workforce of 13,000 employees. He is also the owner of the American national football league team, the Jacksonville Jaguars and the English football team, Fulham.



Yet God is best at guarding, and He is the Most Merciful of merciful ones.

Joseph 12 : 64

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### EGYPT

#### **El-Baz, Farouk**

Farouk El-Baz is a geologist who worked with NASA on the selection of landing sites on the moon and the training of Apollo astronauts in visual observations and photography. He is well-known for applying satellite images to groundwater exploration in arid lands. The Geological Society of America established two awards in his honour: the Farouk El-Baz Award for Desert Research (1999) and the Farouk El-Baz Student Research Award (2007). He has received numerous honours and awards, including Egypt's Order of Merit (First Class). El-Baz ranked no. 51 in the Power 100 of Arabian Business.

#### **El-Naggar, Zaghoul**

El-Naggar is an Egyptian geologist and scholar who writes and speaks on science and the Qur'an. He is a fellow of the Islamic Academy of Sciences, and is well-respected by the global scientific community for his work in geology. He has published close to 200 academic articles and scientific studies. He also works for the Arab Development Institute.

### IRAN

#### **Salehi, Dr Ali Akbar**

Dr Ali Akbar Salehi was appointed Head of the Atomic Energy Organization in Iran in July 2009 after the resignation of Gholam Reza Aghazadeh. Salehi is an academic and politician who has been involved in developing Iran's nuclear energy program since before the Islamic revolution in 1979. He transitioned to leading the Atomic Energy Organization after serving as a permanent representative of Iran with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Salehi was part of the 2015 Geneva Iran P5+1 nuclear talks to discuss technical aspects of Iran's nuclear program.

### JORDAN

#### **Dajani, Prof Rana**

Rana Dajani is a Prof of molecular biology and strong advocate for science education for women. She has also founded the initiative, "We Love Reading", which promotes literacy and trains women in the techniques of storytelling. This earned her the Synergos Arab World Social Innovator Award 2009. In 2017 she was selected by Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study as a fellow of the Radcliffe Institute Fellowship Programme at Harvard University.

### SAUDI ARABIA

#### **Al-Namankany, Abeer**

Dr Al-Namankany made history when she developed a new standard for measuring patient anxiety and treating it with drug-free psychotherapy, thereby protecting patients from the risks of general anesthesia and the side-effects of sedatives. She is the winner of six distinguished clinical and research awards from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry, the Emirates Medical Association, and others. In addition to her brilliant medical career, Dr Abeer is also a social activist and a defender of women's and children's rights.

#### **Sindi, Hayat**

Hayat Sindi is a pioneer in the field of medical science with significant groundbreaking scientific contributions. She was chosen among a delegation of 15 of the best scientists in the world to explore the trends and the future of science. She was the first female member of the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia, the first Saudi to complete her studies at Cambridge University in the field of biotechnology, and the first Arab to complete a doctoral degree in the field. Sindi has been appointed by UNESCO as a Goodwill Ambassador in recognition of her efforts in promoting science education in the Middle East. Her other distinctions include membership at the Clinton Global Initiative 2014 and receiving the Leadership in Civil Society prize.

## INDONESIA

### **Mumpuni, Tri**

Tri Mumpuni spent 14 years on improving rural communities in Indonesia through electrification initiatives based on developments with micro-hydroelectric power plants. Her influential work, which offers economic incentives for implementation of the micro-hydro system, has been applied in 65 villages across Indonesia and a village in the Philippines. She was presented with the Award for Community Power at the Ashden Awards in 2012. Mumpuni is the Executive Director of IBEKA, a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote community development via the provision of local energy, mainly hydroelectricity, and also clean water. She pioneered a community private partnership model to build small power plants, and is responsible for introducing an energy garden to remote villagers.

## MALAYSIA

### **Shukor, Dr Sheikh Muszaphar**

Dr Shukor, an orthopedic surgeon by profession, was the first Malaysian in space. He was selected as one of two astronauts to be trained at Star City in Russia and was subsequently selected to be the astronaut to further Malaysia's Angkasawan program, which sent him to the International Space Station in 2007. Images of him praying and celebrating Eid increased his popularity in the Muslim world. His launch also prompted the Malaysian National Fatwa Council to issue specific rulings regarding observance of religious obligations (praying and fasting) while in space. In 2010 Shukor was appointed as one of the ambassadors of Malaysia's nationwide reading campaign to encourage literacy among children.

## PAKISTAN

### **Atta-Ur Rahman, Prof**

Atta-Ur Rahman is the Coordinator-General of the OIC's COMSTECH, the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the promotion and cooperation of science and technology activities among the OIC member states. In 1999 he became the first Muslim scientist to win the UNESCO Science Prize. In 2013, in recognition of his work in the field of science, the largest Malaysian

university, Universiti Teknologi Mara, named its Research Institute of Natural Products after Prof Atta-ur-Rahman. He was given the International Cooperation Award, the highest award of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in 2014. In 2016, he was elected as Emeritus Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, thereby becoming the first scientist from the Islamic world to be bestowed this honour. The same year, Prof Rahman was appointed Co-Chairman of a United Nations Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation covering the member countries of UNESCAP.

### **Khan, Dr Abdul Qadeer**

Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan is the scientist who brought nuclear technology and nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan in the 1970s. Pakistan is the first and only Muslim-majority country to have nuclear weapons. This has made him a figure of great international interest. He has continued to use his financial success and stature to improve the quality of education in Pakistan through building educational institutions for metallurgical engineering.

### **Saif, Umar**

An award-winning scientist, entrepreneur, innovator, and a tech tycoon, Dr Saif studied at Cambridge and was a core member of the \$50 million Project Oxygen at MIT. He created the first startup incubators in Pakistan: the Saif Center of Innovation. He is also the founding Vice Chancellor of the Information Technology University in Punjab and is one of the main forces behind the IT ecosystem in Pakistan. The MIT Technology Review named Saif in its list of the "World's Top Young Innovators for the year 2011", and he was named "Young Global Leader" by the World Economic Forum in 2010. In recognition of his services to the country, in 2014 the Government of Pakistan conferred on him the Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Star of Excellence), one of the highest civilian awards in Pakistan. In 2017, he received the British Council Alumni Award for Professional Achievement.

### **Siddiqui, Irfan**

Irfan Siddiqui is an award-winning pioneering scientist who is best-known for the development of the Josephson bifurcation amplifier. He was born in Karachi and moved to the USA where he studied at Columbia, Harvard and Yale universities. He is currently Prof of Physics at the Quantum Nanoscience Laboratory (established by him) and the Department of Physics at the University of California, Berkeley.

## THAILAND

### **Dahlan, Prof Dr Winai**

Prof Dr Winai Dahlan is the Director of the Halal Science Centre (HASCI) in Thailand, named the Best Innovation in the Halal Industry by Malaysia's The Halal Journal. HASCI promotes halal manufacturing and service through exhibitions and regional cooperation with halal centres in Indonesia and Malaysia. Dr Winai Dahlan is involved in scientific training and has written more than 30 original research articles published internationally and locally. He has also produced more than 2000 articles on science and nutrition, writing weekly in three magazines since 1989.

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## *Europe*

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## FRANCE

### **Guiderdoni, Dr Bruno Abd al Haqq**

Dr Guiderdoni is an astrophysicist and French convert to Islam. A specialist in galaxy formation and evolution, he has published more than 140 papers and organized several conferences on these subjects. Guiderdoni serves as Director of the Observatory of Lyon. Besides his extensive writings on science, he has also published around 60 papers on Islamic theology and mysticism and is now Director of the Islamic Institute for Advanced Studies.

## TURKEY

### **Sancar, Aziz**

Sancar was co-awarded (along with Tomas Lindahl and Paul Modrich) the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2015 for his work on DNA repair. His contributions over the years have shed light on the processes of aging, causes of cancer and how cells work. Sancar studied at Istanbul University before moving to the USA where he is currently a Prof at the University of North Carolina. He is also a co-founder of a foundation which promotes Turkish culture and supports Turkish students in the USA (the Aziz & Gwen Sancar Foundation).

### **İmamoğlu, Ataç**

İmamoğlu is an award-winning physicist whose alma mater include the Middle East Technical University in Istanbul and Stanford. He was a Prof at the

University of California and then the University of Stuttgart before moving to this current position as head of the research group on Quantum Photonics, at ETHZ (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology), Switzerland. His academic interests are quantum optics, semiconductor physics, and nonlinear optics.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### **Al-Hassani, Dr Salim**

Dr Salim al-Hassani is a former Prof of mechanical engineering at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, and the celebrated author of 1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World, a best-selling account of scientific and technological developments in Islamic history. Dr Al-Hassani also serves as the Chairman and Founder of the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation. The Foundation partners with the Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation, a British charity which showcased the 1001 Inventions Global Touring Exhibition across the UK, US, and Turkey in 2010.

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## *North America*

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## CANADA

### **Ghilan, Mohamed**

Mohamed Ghilan is a Canadian Muslim who has managed to combine a high degree of learning of modern science and traditional Islam. Born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to parents from Sudanese and Yemeni backgrounds, he attended high school and university after immigrating to Canada. In 2007 Mohamed began his full time studies in the Islamic Tradition after having made connections with several Muslim scholars. In May 2015, Mohamed earned a PhD in neuroscience at the University of Victoria, where he studied synaptic plasticity in Huntington's disease, as well as the effects and molecular mechanisms of stress on the brain in Fragile X syndrome. He hopes his research can eventually be used to develop new therapies which can be used to assist individuals with movement disorders or intellectual disabilities. He is currently completing a medical degree at the University of Queensland.

**Elgamal, Taher**

Taher Elgamal, widely known as the “father of SSL (Secure Sockets Layer)”, is a world-renowned Egyptian-American cryptographer. In addition to being the driving force behind SSL, the technology used to secure web browsing online, his work is also used as the basis for Digital Signature Algorithm (DSA) adopted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology as the Digital Signature Standard (DSS). He is a recipient of the RSA Conference 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Khan, Mehmood**

Dr Mehmood Khan is Vice Chairman and Chief Scientific Officer of Global Research and Development for PepsiCo. He previously consulted for the Mayo Clinic on diabetes and other diseases and was President of Takeda Pharmaceuticals. He is one of the world’s leading thinkers in food, nutrition, and innovation. Dr Khan sits on numerous boards.

**Siddique, Prof Teepu**

Prof Siddique is a neurologist and scientist known for his groundbreaking discoveries concerning genetic and molecular abnormalities. He was head of the team that discovered the cause behind the mysterious and deadly disorder known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). He studied at Dow Medical College in Karachi, where he earned his medical degree in 1973 before moving to the USA. He was a Prof of neurology and cell and molecular biology at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine before becoming director of the university’s division of neuromuscular medicine.

**Ying, Jackie**

Jackie Y Ying received her PhD from Princeton University and was Prof of Chemical Engineering at MIT before becoming the Executive Director of the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN), Singapore. Her interdisciplinary research is focused on nanostructured materials and systems for catalytic and biomedical applications. She has authored over 310 articles and has over 120 patents issued or pending. In 2017, she was awarded the Abdeali Taybali Lifetime Achievement Award by Speaker of Parliament Halimah Jacob and also was named a Fellow of the United States National Academy of Inventors (NAI) (the first time a Singapore-based scientist has earned this accolade).



Verily there has come to you a messenger from among yourselves for whom it is grievous that you should suffer; who is full of concern for you, to the believers full of pity, merciful. So if they turn away, say: 'God suffices me. There is no god except Him. Upon Him I rely, and He is the Lord of the Tremendous Throne'.

*Repentance 9 : 128-129*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreIslamicCalligraphy.com

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### ALGERIA

#### **Mosteghanemi, Ahlam**

Ahlam Mosteghanemi is a best-selling author who has won numerous prizes, including the Naguib Mahfouz Prize for Memory in the Flesh, a novel about Algeria's struggle against foreign domination and the problems that plagued the emerging nation after its independence. Written in Arabic, the book has sold over a million copies. Although Algerian, she earned her PhD at Sorbonne in France and now lives in Beirut. She is the first contemporary Arab author to sell millions of copies of her work and dominate book charts for years in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, and the UAE. Arabian Business ranked her as 70th in the The World's Most Influential Arab Women. In 2014, she received the Best Arabic Writer award during the Beirut International Award Festival. In 2016, she was named UNESCO Artist for Peace.

### EGYPT

#### **Al-Aswany, Alaa**

Alaa Al Aswany is the recipient of many distinguished international literary honors and awards. His novels are acclaimed in the field of contemporary literature, selling millions of copies in three dozen languages and adapted into film and theater performances. Al Aswany reached international literary acclaim with his groundbreaking 2002 novel *The Yacoubian Building*. Through the prism of a fashionable downtown Cairo building, he exposes the corrupt dealmaking and exploitative relationships of power in Mubarak's Egypt. His latest novel *The Republic, As If*, published in 2018, is set during the events of Egypt's 2011 revolution. Al Aswany is the author of seventeen books—novels, short story collections, and compendiums of his articles. He has taught and lectured at universities and leading cultural institutions around the world. A leading democracy advocate, his op-eds have appeared in such influential publications as *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, the *Financial*

*Times*, and *The Guardian*. Al Aswany pens a weekly column for Deutsche Welle's Arabic news site and is fluent in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish

#### **Badreya, Sayed**

Badreya is an Egyptian-born actor who played significant roles in a number of Hollywood films such as *Iron Man* and *The Dictator*. His production company Zoom in Focus emerged with the purpose of showing the world the Arab-American story. Much of his efforts in this regard have been publicized in prominent news networks such as *The New York Times*, BBC, ABC, and Fox News.

#### **El-Wakil, Abdel**

Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil is an international architect and a contemporary icon of Islamic architecture. A student of the famous Hassan Fathy, El-Wakil has designed over 50 buildings around the world, including one for the Prince of Wales. He is the two-time recipient of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and received first prize for the design of contemporary mosque architecture in Riyadh.

### IRAN

#### **Farhadi, Asghar (new)**

Asghar Farhadi is an award-winning Iranian film director and screenwriter. He has won two Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film for his films *A Separation* (2012) (becoming the first Iranian to win an Oscar) and *The Salesman* (2016), as well as receiving a Golden Globe Award and numerous other awards. He famously did not attend the 2017 Academy Awards citing President Trump's travel ban as reason. He sent two famous Iranian Americans to receive the Oscar on his behalf. In his movies, Farhadi explores the depths and complications of everyday relationships and themes of jealousy and trust in an evocative way and often includes strong female leads.

#### **Majidi, Majid**

Majid Majidi is an Iranian film director whose films have won many international awards. His *Children of Heaven* was nominated for Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards. In August 2015, he released the first part of an intended trilogy on the life of

the Prophet ﷺ, with *Muhammad: The Messenger of God* being the most expensive film in Iranian movie history (\$40 million).

### **Nazeri, Shahram**

Shahram Nazeri is a world-famous icon of classical Persian, folkloric Kurdish, and Sufi music. Hailed as "Iran's Pavarotti" by the Christian Science Monitor, Nazeri has released over 40 recordings to date and performed in major venues worldwide. In 2014, Nazeri received France's National Order of Merit.

## **JORDAN**

### **Al-Baghdadi, Abbas Shakir Al**

Abbas Al-Baghdadi is one of the world's foremost experts in Islamic calligraphy. Born in 1951 in Baghdad, he has had a distinguished career as a calligrapher and teacher of calligraphy. He adheres strictly to the rules of classical calligraphy and is averse to modern calligraphy, especially when its practitioners do not master the art in its traditional form. He is well-known for the balance, clarity, and majesty of his works.

## **LEBANON**

### **Assaf, Roger**

Roger Assaf is a prominent Lebanese director, actor, and playwright. With his actress wife Hanane Hajj-Ali, he co-founded the Al-Hakawati Theatre Company and the Shams Cultural Cooperative for Youth in Theatre and Culture, an organization providing underprivileged individuals with a forum for self-expression through drama.

## **MOROCCO**

### **Lalami, Laila**

Laila Lalami is a Prof of creative writing at the University of California, a novelist, and essayist. Her novels have received international tribute and have been translated into ten languages. In 2015, her novel *The Moor's Account* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. Her political essays have been published in renowned media platforms. In 2009, she was selected by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader.

## **QATAR**

### **Al-Thani, HE Sheikha Al-Mayassa**

Sheikha al-Mayassa is the Chairperson of Reach Out To Asia, an NGO under the Qatar Foundation that contributes to the development of societies in Asia, including the Middle East. Its specific area of emphasis is improving the quality of both primary and secondary education in addition to achieving some of the goals of UNESCO's Education For All (EFA) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). She is the Chair of the Board of the Qatar Museums Authority and has spearheaded Qatar's recent massive investment in art. She was named as the most powerful person in the art world by *Art and Auction* magazine.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

### **Al-Esa, Majed**

Al-Esa has produced several music videos which have gone viral online. A recent release 'Hwages' highlights issues faced by women in Saudi Arabia and has already more than 15 million views on YouTube. His previous video was the dance hit 'Barbs', which has over 45 million views. Al-Esa is connecting to the younger generation of Saudis and his videos are causing concern in more conservative circles.

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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## **MALI**

### **Keita, Salif**

Known as the "golden voice of Africa", Salif Keita is an Afro-pop singer-songwriter from Mali. His West African music is combined with influences from Europe and the Americas. In 1977 Keita received a National Order Award from Guianese President Sekou Toure. His music is very popular in the Francophone world, and more broadly in Europe. Keita's latest album, *La Difference*, was awarded Best World Music 2010 by the *Victoires de la Musique*.

## **SENEGAL**

### **N'dour, Youssou**

Youssou N'Dour became Senegal's Minister of Tourism and Culture in April 2012. He is a world-famous composer, singer, percussionist, and UNICEF

Goodwill Ambassador. In 2005, N'Dour received a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Music Album for his album *Egypt*. In 2011, N'Dour was awarded an honorary doctoral degree in music from Yale University. In 2013, N'Dour won a share of Sweden's \$150,000 Polar Music Prize for promoting understanding between faiths as well as for his music.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### **Bhikha, Zain**

Zain Bhikha is a South African singer-songwriter and a pioneer performer of English nasheed songs. He is a much-loved household name amongst Muslims worldwide. He is also known for his collaborative efforts with other prominent Muslim entertainers, including Yusuf Islam and Dawud Wharney-Ali. Bhikha also writes and directs plays as well as holding creative expression workshops conducted specifically within schools. He has released over ten albums in his career spanning twenty-five years.

### **Latiff, Rashid**

Rashid Latiff was born in Nairobi, Kenya with the plains of wildlife his background. He was schooled in the UK and settled in South Africa with his established family run business. He is an international multi award-winning photographer with a keen interest in all types of art. He is active on the international photography exhibition circuit. Among his achievements are: PSA Gold Medal, Best of Show, at Golden West, USA PSA Gold Medal, Best Wildlife, at Saguro, Arizona, USA PSA Gold Medal, Best Wildlife, at Maitland, Australia.

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## *Asia*

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## AFGHANISTAN

### **Hosseini, Khaled**

Khaled Hosseini is a novelist and physician. He is best known for his three ground-breaking novels that have been published in over 70 countries and sold more than 40 million copies worldwide. *The Kite Runner* spent 101 weeks on the *The New York Times* Best Seller list, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) was a *Times* Best Seller for 103 weeks, and *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013) debuted near the top of the *Times*. Hosseini is currently a Goodwill Envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees (UNHCR). He established the Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a non-profit organization providing humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan. The Foundation works with the UNHCR to build shelters for refugee families. It also provides economic opportunities, education, and healthcare for women and children of Afghanistan.

## AZERBAIJAN

### **Qasimov, Alim**

Alim Qasimov is an Azerbaijani musician and one of the most recognized singers of Islamic folk music in the world. In 1999, he was awarded the prestigious International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize. Qasimov has recorded nine albums and performed in many concerts around the world. According to *The New York Times*, Alim Qasimov is simply one of the greatest singers alive. Back in 2010, Alim Qasimov was nominated for the US National Public Radio's "50 great voices" series.

## CHINA

### **Noor Deen, Haji (Mi Guang Jiang)**

Haji Noor Deen Mi Guang Jiang is a renowned master of Arabic calligraphy. He was born in Yucheng in the Shandong Province of China in 1963. In 1997, Haji Noor Deen was awarded the Certificate of Arabic Calligrapher in Egypt, the first Chinese person to be honoured with this prestigious award. His work has been displayed—often as the first Chinese-Arabic artist—in galleries and museums around the world, including the British Museum, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the National Museum of Scotland, and the Center for Government and International Studies (CGIS) at Harvard University. The focus of his work is in writing Arabic using a combination of traditional Chinese calligraphic brushes with quick organic strokes in order to uniquely fuse both the Chinese and Arabic arts. Also, he was awarded the Dubai Islamic Economy Development Centre 2016 Islamic Economy Award in the category of Islamic Arts in 2016.

## INDIA

### **Azmi, Shabana**

Azmi has been described as one of India's finest actresses of film, television, and theatre. She has been involved in over 120 movies, both in Hindi and foreign languages, many to international acclaim.

During her extraordinary career, Azmi won the National Film Award for Best Actress five times and garnered several international honours. She has also received four Filmfare Awards. In addition to her successful career, Azmi is a social activist and supports issues such as women's rights, child survival, and fighting AIDS and injustice in real life via the use of mainstream media. She was appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for India by the United Nations Population Fund in 1998. She is also a member of Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament. She was conferred with an honorary doctorate by TERI University in 2014.

#### **Khan, Aamir**

Aamir Khan is one of the leading stars of Bollywood. His phenomenal success has won him awards in India and acclaim abroad. His film *Lagaan* was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars while his venture *Dhoom 3* was the highest-grossing Bollywood film of all time. He is also a UNICEF brand ambassador, promoting child nutrition. He performed the Hajj in 2012.

#### **Rahman, Allah Rakha (AR)**

Rahman is a prolific composer, record producer, and musician for the Indian film industry. In 2011, *Time* described him as the world's most prominent and prolific film composer. He is the first Indian to receive a Golden Globe Award and two Academy Awards for the soundtrack of *Slumdog Millionaire*, a movie for which he also received two Grammy Awards. He was named CNN IBN Indian of the Year for 2009. In 2004, Rahman was appointed the Global Ambassador of the Stop TB Partnership, a World Health Organization project. A street was named in his honour in Markham, Ontario, Canada in November 2013. In 2014, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Berklee College of Music.

### **INDONESIA**

#### **Nadia, Asma**

Asma Nadia is a popular author who has written over 40 books, including short stories, novels, and non-fiction on topics such as self-improvement, instilling *sakinah* in the family, parenting, and motivational books. Two of her books have been made into movies. She has also established a publishing house, and a foundation to help young writers.

#### **Rosa, Helvy Tiana**

Helvy Tiana Rosa is a prominent Indonesian writer and lecturer in literature at the State University of Jakarta (UNJ). Rosa is a member of Majelis Sastra Asia Tenggara (the Southeast Asia Board of Literature) and often represents Indonesia in literary events, both at home and abroad. She also helped found the Pen Circle Forum (FLP) in 1997 with the goal of encouraging young writers.

### **MALAYSIA**

#### **Hamidun, Hafiz**

Hafiz is currently the most influential nasheed singer in the Far East. He is a multi-platinum award winner in the music industry with approximately 4 million followers on social media.

#### **Nurhaliza, Dato' Siti**

Dato Siti Nurhaliza binti Tarudin is a Malaysian singer who has won numerous musical awards. She has also been honoured for her contributions in charitable venues, and was one of the recipients of the Icon of Malaysia Award.

### **PAKISTAN**

#### **Ismail, Al-Hajj Siddiq**

Al-Hajj Siddiq Ismail is a world-renowned naat and hamd reciter, philanthropist, and spiritual leader. He has been reciting for the past 50 years in over 10 languages. Ismail has performed in the presence of presidents, prime ministers, governors, chief ministers, and foreign dignitaries. He was presented with Pakistan's national award, the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz*, and the prestigious *Pride of Performance Award*, which he donated to the victims of Swat and Malakand.

#### **Obaid-Chinoy, Sharmeen**

Obaid-Chinoy is an internationally acclaimed journalist, filmmaker and activist. Initially known for her film work highlighting women's rights, she has gone on to win two Oscars, six Emmy awards, the Livingstone Award for Young Journalists and become the first artist to co-chair the World Economic Forum. The Government of Pakistan has honoured her with the *Hilal-i-Imtiaz*, the second highest civilian honour of the country.

#### **Parveen, Abida**

Abida Parveen is an internationally acclaimed vocalist, often referred to as "the Queen of Sufi mystic

### NETHERLANDS

#### El Mouhandiz, Rajae

Rajae El Mouhandiz is a Dutch-Moroccan-Algerian poet, singer, composer, producer, performing artist and founder of the record label Truthseeker Records. After being the first Moroccan to study at a Dutch conservatory, El Mouhandiz left classical music to follow her own artistic path, seeking to incorporate her cultural roots. She is one of the 60 female curators of the international MUSLIMA exhibition. She has recently produced the theatre production Hijabi Monologues NL, and the music theatre production Home, Displaced. She continues to record, publish and perform her own music. She is also an Ariane de Rothschild fellow in Social Entrepreneurship and Cross-Cultural Dialogue.

singing". She is the only woman to reach this level of influence in devotional music. She specializes in traditional ghazals, and often performs before stadium-sized audiences across South Asia and globally. In 2017, she was designated a Peace Ambassador by SAARC.

#### Qadri, Muhammad Owais Raza

With millions of followers, Qadri is considered a legend in the field of naat recitation. He is known for his passionate performances as well as his beautiful voice. A devout Muslim, he is particularly vocal on the subject of his love for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He has over 3.5 million followers on social media.

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## Altafsir.com

[www.altafsir.com](http://www.altafsir.com)

Altafsir.com is a completely free, non-profit website providing access to the largest and greatest online collection of Qur'anic Commentary (tafsir or tafseer), translation, recitation and essential resources in the world.

It was begun in 2001 by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan, being the brainchild of HRH Prince Ghazi, the Chief Advisor for Religious and Cultural Affairs to H.M King Abdullah II. Today the website is fully operational in Arabic and English and provides the original Arabic texts of 150 or more books of Qur'anic Commentary, Interpretation and Explanation (tafsir or tafseer), recitation (tajwid) tutorials and Hadith collections, and other fields, pertaining to the study of Qur'anic exegesis. Translations of the meanings of the Qur'an are currently available in 24 different languages, and in several cases more than one translation is available. The site also includes audio Qur'an recitations; resources on Qur'an syntax; resources on the Contexts of Revelation (asbâb al-nuzûl); resources on the meanings of words found in the Qur'an, and other works on the Qur'anic sciences. It contains over a million pages of Qur'anic Commentary and translation. Some of the texts presented here exist only as manuscripts and have never previously been published in book form despite their historical importance and influence. Altafsir.com is thus a complete website for the study of the Qur'anic Sciences.

In addition to presenting the standard Classical and Modern Commentaries on the Holy Qur'an (tafsir or tafseer) texts of all eight schools of jurisprudence, the site also contains works of various mystical, philosophical, linguistic and theological currents. Moreover, the first time in one place, comparative studies between the Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, Ja'fari, Zaydi, Ibadi and Thahiri schools can be carried out complete with multi-screen displays and search programs.

In 2012 altafsir.com added the highly praised *Love in the Holy Qur'an* as a free downloadable pdf, and received 8 million visits bringing the total number of visits to over 27 million visitors.

In 2013, the Prince Ghazi Trust for Qur'anic Thought put up a sister website with a special emphasis for mobile devices. You can now read tafsir wherever you go by visiting [www.GreatTafsirs.com](http://www.GreatTafsirs.com) and downloading the app for Android or iOS.

Over  
**108** MILLION  
visitors to [altafsir.com](http://altafsir.com)

## SWEDEN

### Zain, Maher

Read bio on page 139 in Honourable Mentions.

## TURKEY

### Duzyatan, Engin Altan (new)

Engin Altan Duzyatan is a Turkish actor who plays the starring role in the hit Turkish drama: *Dirilis Ertugrul* ('Resurrection Ertugrul'), which is about the legendary father of Osman the First, the founder of the Ottoman Empire. The series centres around the migrations of the Kayi Tribe and their struggles against betrayal from within as well as battles against the Templars, the Mongols, Crusaders and the Byzantine Empire. It also gives a prominent role to the famous mystic Ibn al-Arabi. The series has captivated audiences not just in Turkey, but also huge numbers in the Middle East as well as Muslims in the West. Engin is also well-known for his charitable works in Africa where he has set up access to clean drinking water for over 100,000 people.

### Pamuk, Orhan

Pamuk is one of Turkey's most prominent writers and was the first ever Turkish Nobel laureate. His ten novels to date have been translated into over 60 languages and sold more than 13 million copies. His novels explore many aspects of Turkey's rich culture past and present as well as philosophical questions. As an academic and intellectual, his voice is important nationally and internationally and he has voiced opinions on Kurds, Armenia and the current presidency. He teaches at Columbia University, USA.

### Yalçin, Rabia

Rabia Yalçin is a Turkish fashion designer. Her creations represent a synthesis of local and international cultures and are inspired by the opulence of her homeland's Ottoman past. With her line Rabia Yalçin Haute Couture, Yalçin has a strong presence in the European fashion scene.

### Çelebi, Master Hasan

Master Hasan Çelebi is an eminent Turkish calligrapher who is hailed for his classical Ottoman calligraphy style. His exhibitions have been featured globally, and he is celebrated for his restoration of calligraphic panels in mosques around the world, from the Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi in Medina to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Ahmed, Riz

2017 was a breakout year for Riz Ahmed, who found himself in the lead role of the acclaimed HBO drama *The Night Of* as well as supporting roles in the latest Jason Bourne film and *Star Wars: Rogue One*. A British Pakistani, Riz graduated from Oxford before pursuing a career in the arts. He initially gained some recognition for his music with his satirical song *Post 9/11 Blues* before transitioning to acting. In his career, he has demonstrated great versatility with films ranging from the dark comedy *Four Lions* to the well-received thriller *Nightcrawler*. In 2017, he received two Emmy nominations for his performance in *The Night Of* and his guest spot in the final season of *Girls*.

### Islam, Yusuf

Formerly known as Cat Stevens, Yusuf Islam is a globally influential British musician and singer-songwriter. In 1977, he converted to Islam and left the music industry for educational and philanthropic causes. His international fame and high regard have probably made him the single most influential figure in the field of arts and culture in the Muslim world. He made a gradual return to music over the past five years with his latest albums *An Other Cup* and *Roadsinger*. Islam is a vocal opponent of terrorism and extremism, and in 2004 was recognized with the Man of Peace award by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Committee. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2014. Islam received three distinctions in 2015: the Global Islamic Economy Award, the Steiger Award, and BBC's Lifetime Achievement Award.

### Yusuf, Sami

Read bio on page 139 in Honourable Mentions

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## North America

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## CANADA

### Wharnsby, Dawud

A Canadian singer-songwriter, poet, performer, educator, and television personality, Dawud Wharnsby is best known for his pioneering efforts in the musical/poetic genre of English-language nasheed and spoken word.

# اسْتَغْفِرْ وَإِنَّكَ إِذْ تَبْتَغِي عَذَابَكَ

Ask your Lord for forgiveness. Assuredly He is ever Forgiving.

Noah 71 : 10

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### Aden, Halima

Halima Aden is a trailblazer in the world of fashion and beauty. She was the first ever contestant to wear a hijab and burkini in a USA pageant. She was the first hijab-wearing model to be signed by a major modelling agency and the first to appear on Allure and Vogue's covers. A far cry from her birth, 19 years ago, in a Kenyan refugee camp to Somali parents.

### Friedlander, Shems

Shems Friedlander—writer, artist, film maker, photographer and educator—has published his 10th book, Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi's Forgotten Message. The book contains interactive digital content via QR codes. Among his other books are Winter Harvest, Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes and When You Hear Hoofbeats Think of a Zebra. Friedlander has recently been appointed Emeritus Prof at the American University in Cairo where he taught graphic design and painting for 20 years. He has won over 30 awards for graphic design. Friedlander has also written two monodramas and his documentary films have been shown at film festivals in the US and abroad.

### Henry, Aisha Gray

Aisha Gray Henry is the Founder and Director of the charitable foundation and publishing company Fons Vitae, which is currently engaged in bringing out Ghazali's Ihya in English for parents and teachers as well as adapting it to accommodate children's workbooks, school curricula, and an instructional DVD. The Book of Knowledge and The Principles of the Creed educational sets are available and in use internationally with Purity and Prayer nearing completion. Included is a children's interactive website

www.GhazaliChildren.org, a pilot school project and prison program. Translations into Urdu, Arabic, and Malay are underway. The Fons Vitae Ghazali Project has been launched with great acclaim in Morocco, Canada, Indonesia, England, and the USA so far.

### Zakariya, Mohamed

A machinist by training, American-born Mohamed Zakariya is a classically educated Islamic calligrapher who earned diplomas in three calligraphic scripts from the Research Center for Islamic History, Art, and Culture in Istanbul. His work has been collected and displayed worldwide, including most recently at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar. Zakariya designed Eid holiday stamps for the US Postal Service in 2001 and 2011. He has been featured in several movies, including the 2002 PBS documentary Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet. Zakariya is represented by Linearis Art.

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## South America

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## GUYANA

### Shah, Ryhaan

Ryhaan Shah is considered to be among the best contemporary writers in Guyana and the Caribbean, best known for her 2005 novel A Silent Life. Shah is also an active public figure as the president of the Guyanese Indian Heritage Association. She came under criticism for race baiting in Guyana's 2015 election.

# QUR'AN RECITERS

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### EGYPT

#### **Tablawi, Sheikh Mohammad**

Tablawi is the Deputy of The Association of Qur'an Reciters and the main reciter of Al-Azhar University. He gained popularity in the Middle East after studying at Al-Azhar and reciting the Qur'an on Egyptian television in 1956. He is widely recognized as a leading reciter of the Qur'an.

### KUWAIT

#### **Al-Afasy, Sheikh Mishary bin Rashid**

Al-Afasy is an imam at Masjid Al-Kabir in Kuwait, and is also a singer of Arabic-language nasheed. He has gained international acclaim through his innovative use of technology to promote Islam through two satellite channels, a website ([www.alafasy.me](http://www.alafasy.me)), and videos on YouTube. He has more than 36 million fans on social media.

### SAUDI ARABIA

#### **Al-Ajmi, Sheikh Ahmad Ali**

Al-Ajmi is a Qur'an reciter from Khobar Province in Saudi Arabia. Prior to gaining prominence for his recitation style as an imam at mosques in Khobar and Jeddah, he studied Qur'anic interpretation in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

#### **Al-Ghamdi, Sheikh Saad ibn Said**

Al-Ghamdi has served as imam to Muslim communities across the globe, and is currently the imam of Kanoo Mosque in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. El Ghamdi studied usool al-deen (fundamentals of Islam) and isnad (hadith transmission), and is recognized as an influential Saudi theologian. In 2009, he was appointed by Royal Decree as a co-imam for the taraweeh prayers in the Al-Haram Al-Madani in Medina.

#### **Al-Mueaqly, Sheikh Maher bin Hamad**

Al-Mueaqly is an imam at the Grand Mosque in Mecca. He left his career as a mathematics teacher to become a scholar in Mecca and is now a popular preacher and teacher of Qur'anic studies.

#### **Al-Shatri, Sheikh Abu Bakr**

Al-Shatri is an imam in Jeddah, and a leading reciter of the Qur'an. Although he studied accounting, he has become increasingly influential for his recitation of the Qur'an at international Islamic events, particularly across the Middle East and in Saudi Arabia.

#### **Al-Shuraim, Sheikh Saud Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad**

Al-Shuraim is a leading reciter of the Qur'an known for his unique recitation style across the world. He formally studied usool al-deen (fundamentals of Islam) in Saudi Arabia before becoming a teacher, and subsequently became imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah. He recently created a Twitter account which had close to 3 million followers before it was deleted.

#### **Al-Sudais, Sheikh Abdul Rahman**

Read bio on page 139 in Honourable Mentions

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## *Asia*

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### INDONESIA

#### **Ulfah, Hajjah Maria**

Hajjah Maria Ulfah is an internationally acclaimed reciter of the Holy Qur'an, and is the first woman to win an international Qur'an recitation competition. She has popularized the Egyptian style of recitation, and currently serves as Director of the Women's Department at Institut Ilmu Al-Quran in Jakarta. She also lectures at the Islamic University of Indonesia.

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### EGYPT

#### **Howeidy, Dr Fahmy**

Howeidy is one of the leading columnists in the Arab World. He writes for the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram, where he is the Deputy Editor-in-Chief; his articles, however, are syndicated to seven other Arabic publications. Howeidy is influential both through his popularity and the fact that he has highlighted issues concerning Muslim communities outside the Arab World in groundbreaking work on Chinese, Bosnian, and Senegalese Muslims, among others. Muslims appreciate and respond well to Howeidy's use of Islam as a frame of reference in his articles.

#### **Mansour, Ahmed**

Ahmed Mansour is a journalist and TV presenter for Al Jazeera. He is best known for his coverage of wars, most prominently in Iraq and Afghanistan from where he published more than 1000 reports. He is also the presenter of a widely watched TV program *Bela Hodod (Without Borders)* and *Shahed Ala Al-Asr (A Witness to History)*. He was arrested in Berlin by German police at the request of the Egyptian government, but was later released. Mansour has published 25 books.

### JORDAN

#### **Al-Fares, Ola**

Al-Fares is a Jordanian lawyer, TV presenter and journalist currently working for the MBC channel. She has over 11 million followers on various social media outlets and has won several awards including: Young Arab Media Professionals Award (2009), Best Jordanian Media Award (2009), Creative Youth Shield (2010), Jordanian Model for Successful Youth (2011) and Arab Woman Of The Year (2015). She is considered to be one of the most influential media figures in the Arab world.

### KUWAIT

#### **Al-Mutawa, Dr Naif**

Dr Naif Al-Mutawa is founder and CEO of Teshkeel Media Group, and creator of the popular Islamic-themed comic series *The 99*. Forbes named *The 99* one of the top 20 trends sweeping the globe. He has been named as one of WEF's Young Global Leaders for 2011. In addition to having authored multiple children's books, Al-Mutawa holds a PhD in clinical psychology and has practiced in the field for many years.

#### **Al-Mutawa, Jassem**

Jassem Al-Mutawa is the president of Iqraa, an Islamic TV channel hosting programs that tackle everyday issues from a modern Islamic perspective, including spiritual, cultural, social, and economic matters.

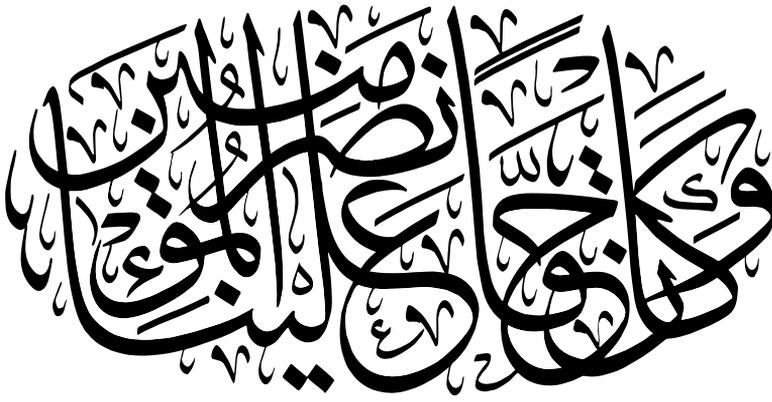
#### **Suwaidan, Sheikh Dr Tareq**

Tareq Suwaidan is the CEO and owner of Gulf Innovation Group in Kuwait, and was the General Manager of Al-Resalah Satellite TV. An entrepreneur and TV personality, his shows ranking among the highest in the Middle East, Suwaidan is also prominent as a motivational speaker and author of books on Islam.

### LEBANON

#### **Jaber, Dr Ali**

Dr Ali Jaber is a prominent figure in Lebanese and Arab media. Jaber has held several significant positions in the world of Arab media and participated in the launch of several important television channels. He is also Dean of the Mohammed bin Rashed School for Communication at the American University in Dubai. Currently, Jaber is one of three panel judges on *Arabs Got Talent*, a smash hit program showcasing talent from all over the Arab World. Sheikh Hamdan Mohammed Bin Rashed Al-Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, issued a decree on July 21, 2014 setting up The Dubai Council for Design and Fashion. The decree named Ali Jaber as Board Member along with other talented Arabs.



And it was ever incumbent upon Us to give victory to the believers.

*The Romans 30 : 47*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

## PALESTINE

### **Khanfar, Wadah**

In 2006, Khanfar became Al Jazeera's Director General. During his eight-year tenure at the helm, the network transformed from a single channel into a media network. During this period, the Arab world witnessed historic transformation, including the Arab Awakening. Khanfar, who resigned from the network in September 2011, has been named as one of Foreign Policy's Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2011 as well as one of Fast Company's Most Creative People in Business of the year. Khanfar has a diverse academic background with postgraduate studies in philosophy, African studies, and international politics. He is currently the President of Al Sharq Forum.

### **Omer, Mohammed**

An award-winning journalist, Mohammed Omer has been credited with reporting on the crisis in Gaza for major media outlets including the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Al Jazeera, the New Statesman, Pacifica Radio, Electronic Intifada, and The Nation. He was raised in the Rafah refugee camp and, despite calamities faced by his family—his father was imprisoned, his teenage brother was killed, and his mother was injured in a demolition—he dedicates himself to journalism and reporting on the crisis. He is the recipient of the 2008 Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism. He is the author of *Shell Shocked*:

On the Ground Under Israel's Gaza Assault, a book that received testimonials from a wide range of well known authors, including Noam Chomsky.

## QATAR

### **Al-Ruwaini, Nashwa**

Al-Ruwaini worked for Qatar TV and MBC before establishing her own production company, Pyramedia Ltd. Pyramedia is one of the largest and most successful production companies in the region, producing some of the highest rated TV shows, including the Million's Poet and Prince of Poets TV competitions on Abu Dhabi TV, as well as her self-titled Nashwa talk show on Dubai TV. Forbes listed her among The Top 100 Most Powerful Arab Businesswomen 2017 while the Hollywood Reporter selected her as one of the 25 Most Powerful Women in Global TV.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### **Al-Ibrahim, Waleed bin Ibrahim**

Waleed Al-Ibrahim is the chairman of Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC). He founded MBC in London in 1991 as the first independent Arabic satellite TV station. In 2003, he launched Al Arabiya, a 24-hour news channel. MBC now includes 11 channels catering to all viewers in Arabic, English, and Persian. In November 2017 he was detained,

along with several Saudi princes and billionaires, on an anti-corruption drive. He spent three months at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh before being released in January 2018. The government of Saudi Arabia arranged to acquire 60 per cent of MBC, leaving the remaining 40 per cent of the company in Al Ibrahim's hands.

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

### **Al-Awadhi, HE Najla**

HE Najla Al-Awadhi is a former Member of Parliament (the Federal National Council) of the United Arab Emirates and a distinguished media pioneer in the Middle East. She is one of the first women in the history of the UAE to become an MP, and also holds the distinction as the youngest parliamentarian in the UAE. During her four-year term in parliament, she served on the Education, Youth, Media and Culture Committee. Najla Al-Awadhi is also the first Arab woman to hold a chief executive post in a state-run media organization. With a particular focus on television, she served as the Chief Executive Officer of Television Channels at Dubai Media Incorporated.

### **Al-Kaabi, Noura**

Al-Kaabi has held many positions in business and public life. She was appointed as Minister for Culture and Knowledge Development in 2017. As of March 2018 she is a board member of the UAE National Media Council, Image Nation, the Abu Dhabi Sports Council and the United Arab Emirates University. Her previous posts include being the Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs and Chairwoman of the Media Zone Authority-Abu Dhabi and twofour54. She has won various awards and is included on many power lists including becoming the first Emirati to be ranked on Foreign Policy Magazine's Top 100 Global Thinkers List.

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## *Asia*

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## AFGHANISTAN

### **Mohseni, Saad**

Mohseni is a successful businessman, as well as the founder and head of the Moby Group, Afghanistan's largest media company. The Moby Group has interests in television, radio, print, production, online news services, directories, IT&T, and retail. In 2011,

Time Magazine named him one of the the world's most influential people.

## INDONESIA

### **Mohamad, Goenawan**

Goenawan Mohamad is a writer, editor, activist and award-winning journalist. He is the founder and editor of Tempo Magazine, Indonesia's most widely circulated weekly. He has 109 million followers on Twitter.

## PAKISTAN

### **Hamid, Zaid**

One of the most influential television & Social Media personalities in Pakistan, Zaid Hamid is a security consultant and strategic defense analyst by profession. He is also a popular political commentator, and is the founder of Brass Tacks, a Pakistani think tank on global politics. He hosts multiple, highly popular TV series on Geo-politics, Islamic philosophy, Muslim history, and Dr Iqbal's vision for Pakistan. He maintains a huge audience within Pakistani society, with millions of followers on social media, especially among the youth and Armed Forces. In 2015, he was arrested by Saudi authorities while on Umrah because of his opposition to the proposed Pakistani participation in the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen. He was released shortly afterwards after aggressive intervention by Pakistan's army.

### **Iqbal, Salman**

Mr Salman Iqbal owns ARY Digital Network, the largest media network in Pakistan. The network's reach covers Pakistan, the Middle East, Europe, North America, and many other regions of the world. He is recognized as an independent media voice in Pakistan and one of the most powerful and influential media personalities in the Muslim World.

### **Shakil-ur-Rahman, Mir**

Shakil-ur-Rahman is the owner of the Independent Media Corporation, Pakistan's largest media conglomerate. The Geo TV network and Jang Group are both under this umbrella organization. Shakil-ur-Rahman is also President of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society and the Chief Executive and Editor-in-Chief of the Jang Group, which publishes a number of newspapers and magazines in Urdu and English.

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## *Europe*

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### UNITED KINGDOM

#### **Hasan, Mehdi**

Mehdi Hasan is a leading Muslim political journalist whose analysis and comments on contemporary issues find resonance with many Muslims, especially the younger generation. In 2015, he moved to Washington DC to work full time for Al Jazeera English (AJE), where he hosts a weekly interview and discussion program. Prior to this, he was the host of AJE's Head to Head, as well as having worked for HuffPost UK, The Guardian, BBC, and Sky News.

#### **Omaar, Rageh**

Rageh Omaar is a television news presenter and writer who was stationed in Iraq and South Africa. He was the world affairs correspondent for the BBC from 1991-2006, when he moved to Al Jazeera English. At AJE, he presented the documentary series Witness and hosted his own show called The Rageh Omaar Report. In 2013, Omaar became a special correspondent and presenter for ITV News, reporting on a broad range of news stories and producing special, in-depth reports from around the UK and further afield.

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## *North America*

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### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### **Mohyeldin, Ayman**

Ayman Mohyeldin is an MSNBC anchor, analyst, and morning show host. He has interviewed world leaders, politicians, and diplomats, including President Erdogan after the failed coup attempt in Turkey. He reported on DA'ISH in Iraq, Syria, Europe, and Turkey. He participated in the network's coverage of the 2016 US Presidential Elections. Mohyeldin was previously an international correspondent. He covered the Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine, the revolutions of the Arab Spring, and the attacks on the US Consulate in Benghazi, where he was one of the first journalists to report the situation. His coverage of the 2014 Israeli War was widely cited and praised. Prior to joining NBC News, Ayman was correspondent for Al Jazeera English. From 2008-2010, he was the only foreign broadcast journalist based in the Gaza Strip, and during the 2008-2009

War on Gaza, he was the only American journalist reporting live from Gaza.

#### **Oz, Dr Mehmet (new)**

Dr Oz hosts a hugely popular television show which focuses primarily on medical issues and healthy living. He first came to prominence in 2004 with appearances as a health expert on The Oprah Winfrey Show. A cardiothoracic surgeon and a Columbia University professor, he is a proponent of alternative medicine and often draws upon his Turkish heritage when giving advice. He has co-authored, with Michael F. Roizen, six New York Times best sellers, and has a regular column in Esquire magazine amongst others

#### **Zakaria, Fareed**

Fareed Zakaria is one of the US' foremost public intellectuals. He hosts CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS and is a Washington Post columnist. Prior to this, he was Editor-at-Large for Time Magazine and Editor of Newsweek International and Foreign Affairs. His book, *The Post-American World: Release 2.0*, is an expanded version of his international bestseller. In 2013 he became one of the producers for the HBO series *Vice*, serving as a consultant.

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## *Middle East and North Africa*

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### PALESTINE

#### **Assaf, Mohammed**

Mohammed Assaf won first place in the popular TV program Arab Idol 2013 after his final performance of Ali al-Keffiyeh (Raise Your Keffiyeh), a nationalistic Palestinian song and de facto anthem which has now garnered over 20 million views. Raised in Khan Yunus refugee camp in the Gaza strip, he has become the face and voice of Palestinian youth and the epitome of its peoples suffering. Assaf became UNRWA's Goodwill Ambassador, was named Ambassador of Culture and Arts by the Palestinian National Authority, and was given a position with diplomatic standing by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. He has over 17 million fans on social media.

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## *Sub-Saharan Africa*

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### SOUTH AFRICA

#### **Amla, Hashim**

Amla is a South African cricketer. In 2004, he became the first player of Indian descent in the South African national cricket team. As a devout Muslim, he has actively campaigned to remove all alcohol-promoting logos from merchandise and playing gear. He was named one of the Wisden Cricketers of the Year in 2013. His bushy beard is instantly recognized the world over by cricket lovers.

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## *Europe*

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### FRANCE

#### **Pogba, Paul**

Pogba was the most expensive footballer in the world when he moved to Man Utd from Juventus

for £89 million in 2016. A talented midfielder, he was part of France's 2018 winning World cup side and scored in the final. Pogba was born to Guinean parents and is one of a growing number of European Muslim football players who rank among the best in the world. He has more than 41 million followers on social media. He has frequently documented his visits to Makkah on social media.

#### **Zidane, Zinedine**

Zinedine Zidane is a French footballing legend of Algerian descent. Born in a poor neighbourhood of Marseilles, he went on to become one of the greatest footballers ever, winning all major prizes at personal, club, and country level and winning player of the year three times. In 2018, Zidane, managing Real Madrid, became the first manager in the history of football to win three consecutive UEFA Champions League titles. A few days after the victory, he resigned as Real Madrid coach. His modest character has endeared him to the wider public. He has 24 million followers on social media.

### GERMANY

#### **Özil, Mesut**

A key member of Germany's World Cup 2014 winning team, this Arsenal playmaker of Turkish descent was awarded the Bambi award in 2010 for being a prime example of successful integration into German society. In 2018, after receiving criticism for posing with Turkey's President and Germany's poor World cup performances, Ozil announced his retirement from international football. He said "I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose,." He has a massive social media following—one of the highest in the world among sportspeople with a staggering 73 million online fans. He received plaudits for donating his 2014 World Cup winnings to children undergoing surgery in Brazil.

### RUSSIA

#### **Nurmagomedov, Khabib (new)**

Read bio on page 140 in Honourable Mentions.

**Farah, Mohamed**

Read bio on page 140 in Honourable Mentions.

**Hussain, Nadiya**

Since winning the BBC's *The Great British Bake Off* in 2015, Nadiya Hussain has gone from being the most famous British baker to being a columnist, author and television presenter. She has produced a popular documentary giving an insight into Bangladesh, her country of origin, as well as a TV cookery series. She has become a household name and instantly recognisable face in the UK, Bangladesh and for Muslims worldwide. She was bestowed the honour of being asked to produce a cake for the 90th birthday celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II.

## NEW ZEALAND

**Williams, Sonny**

Sonny Williams is an international rugby player and former heavyweight boxing champion of New Zealand. Williams converted to Islam in 2008, and is the first Muslim to play for the legendary All Blacks. In 2013, he was judged the World's Best Rugby League player at the annual RLIF Awards. He memorably gave away his World Cup winner's gold medal to a young supporter just after the 2015 final.

## Islamophobia in India

by Moustafa Elqabbany

In June 2018, the Thomas Reuters Foundation published a survey that named India the most dangerous country for women. The survey interviewed 548 experts and used six indexes, including sexual and non-sexual violence as well as human trafficking. In a country that is 80% Hindu, 12% Muslim, 2-3% Christian, and less than 2% Sikh, minorities are disproportionately the targets of sex and hate crimes, with Dalits (low-caste Hindus) taking the lead followed by Muslims.

This news is not altogether surprising: on January 17, the body of Asifa Bano, an 8-year-old Muslim nomadic girl was discovered. She had been given sedatives, kept captive in a Hindu temple, and, over the span of three days, raped repeatedly by multiple assailants. Rape, mob beatings, and vigilante cow violence are fueled by anger and offer the powerful a way to assert their power over the underprivileged. In 2017, IndiaSpend reported that 84% of the victims of vigilante cow violence were Muslims since 2010. Muslims account for

more than 97% of such incidents since May 2014, the same year that Narendra Modi, former Chief Minister of Gujarat during the infamous 2002 riots that left up to 2000 people dead—mostly Muslims—was elected as the Prime Minister of India. Modi is a member of the Hindu-nationalist BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). According to Ram Punjani, the BJP's success in Gujarat was due to the 2002 riots which flamed Muslim-Hindu tensions in the region.

Amnesty International India, which has maintained a database of hate crimes since 2015, says that there has been an “alarming increase” in the number of hate crimes against marginalized groups. Of the 100 hate crimes during the first six months of 2018, 22 were against Muslims, indicating that Muslims are targets of such crimes at nearly twice their representation in the country's population. Amnesty also indicates that hate crimes are worst in Uttar Pradesh, India's most Muslim-populous state, followed by Gujarat.

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

مَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ  
وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ  
وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ

وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ  
وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ  
وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ

وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ  
وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ  
وَمَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْغُلَامُ فَارْحَمْهُ

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt his neighbor, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his guest generously, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak what is good or keep silent.”

# TOP EXTREMISTS

## EGYPT



**Al-Zawahiri, Ayman**

US BOUNTY: \$25 MILLION

Ayman al-Zawahiri has been the leader of Al-Qaeda since the killing of Osama bin Laden. Born into a prosperous medical family in Egypt, he completed medical studies and set up a clinic. In the 80's he was already part of the Islamic Jihad group in Egypt and was arrested and tortured in prison. He went on to become the leader of Egypt's Islamic Jihad, which he merged into al-Qaeda in 1998. He emerged as bin Laden's personal advisor and physician. He is often credited with being the "real brains" of Al-Qaeda. Despite a huge US bounty on his head, he has managed to evade capture and with the demise of DA'ISH he may move to the fore again

## IRAQ



**Al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr**

US BOUNTY: \$25 MILLION

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is the leader of DA'ISH. DA'ISH has been responsible for numerous massacres and atrocities and while they have spared none who disagree with them, their attacks on religious minorities have received particular media attention. Their heyday seems to be over as they have lost all territory they held in Syria and Iraq. A 55 minute audio message in August 2018 was the first message from Baghdadi since the fall of Raqqa in 2017; the message acknowledged the losses of Da'ish but encouraged further acts of terrorism. There are no confirmed reports of Baghdadi's background, but some reports say that Al-Baghdadi was born near Samarra, Iraq, and holds a PhD in Islamic Studies from the University of Islamic Sciences in the Baghdad suburb of Adhamiya.

## JORDAN



**Al-Maqdisi, Abu Muhammad**

IN PRISON

Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi (born Isam Muhammad Tahir Al-Barqawi) is a Jordanian-Palestinian Salafi leader who became a mentor for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi-the founder of Al-Qaeda in Iraq- while they were in prison together. Al-Maqdisi's writings are still a source of inspiration for many Salafi-Jihadis despite his criticism of the extreme violence of al-Zarqawi and other jihadis. He is especially known for his book in which he declared takfir on the Saudi regime. Al-Maqdisi was recently found guilty on terrorism charges and sentenced to five years in prison by a Jordanian court.

## SYRIA



**Al-Julani, Abu Muhammad**

US BOUNTY: \$10 MILLION

Al-Julani is the current Emir and founder of the Syrian militant group now known as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). This group was formed in 2017 with the merging of several other militant groups. It is the main force fighting the Syrian regime and until recently was allied to al-Qaeda. It formally renounced links with al-Qaeda in July 2016 in an attempt to show that the group is focused on regime change in Syria alone, and does not have wider regional goals.

## NIGERIA

### Shekau, Abubakar

US BOUNTY: \$7 MILLION

Shekau is the head of Boko Haram, a terrorist group in Nigeria that has carried out a number of atrocities. He speaks Hausa, Arabic, and English, and claims to have undergone theological training. He has appeared in videos posted online, most notably after the kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls in April 2014. In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to DA'ISH and stepped up their terror attacks, including a massacre of over 150 Muslims praying in mosques during Ramadan. In August 2016, DA'ISH appointed Abu Musab Al-Barnawi as the group's new leader, but Shekau refused to recognize Barnawi's authority. However, in December 2016, the Nigerian State Security Service arrested Barnawi. Unconfirmed reports of Shekau's death are regularly disproved with his appearance a few months later.



## SOMALIA

### Umar, Ahmed

US BOUNTY: \$6 MILLION

Ahmad Umar, also known as Abu Ubaidah, has been the Emir of al-Shabaab since 2014, after US airstrikes killed the previous emir (Ahmed Abdi Godane). When Umar became advisor to Godane in 2013, he purged al-Shabaab of its foreign fighters, and oversaw all the domestic policies of the group. Umar adheres to takfiri ideology and strives to fulfill Godane's vision for al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab still carry out terrorist attacks in Mogadishu, Somalia, despite the presence of thousands of Somalia government as well as African Union troops. They have targeted hotels and resorts as well as Ugandan and Kenyan troops.



## INDONESIA

### Bashir, Abu Bakar

IN PRISON

Abu Bakar Bashir is an Indonesian Muslim cleric and leader of the Indonesian Mujahedeen Council (MMI). He was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment at his third trial in June 2011 on charges of planning and encouraging terrorist operations. In August 2014, he publicly pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, leader of DA'ISH, and his declaration of a caliphate.



يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا  
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ

God confirms those who believe by a firm saying in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; and God sends astray the evildoers; and God does what He will.

Abraham 14 : 27

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رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي الْمُلْكَ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مَا أَرِيدُ  
 فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنِّي مُخْلِطٌ بِكَ  
 الذُّلْمَ وَالزُّلْمَ وَالْآخِرَةُ لَآتِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ  
 وَالْحَقُّ يَا صَاحِبِ

My Lord, indeed You have given me of sovereignty and You have taught me the interpretation of events. Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in this world and the Hereafter. Take me to You in submission and join me to the righteous

Joseph 12 : 101

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreIslamicCalligraphy.com

**Mufti Muhammad Akhtar Raza Khan Qadiri Al-Azhari Scholarly**

Country: India  
 Born: 2 February 1941  
 Died: 20 July 2018



Mufti Muhammad Akhtar Raza Khan was the leader of the Indian Barelwis and considered by his followers as the Grand Mufti of India. He was the great-grandson and successor of one of the most influential sub-continental Islamic scholars in history: Ahmad Raza Khan (d.1921), who founded the Barelwi movement in South Asia. Mufti Akhtar Raza received his basic education at Darul Uloom Manzar-e-Islam in Bareilly, India. He then went to Al-Azhar University to study tafsir and hadith (1963-1966). Upon graduation, he was awarded the Jamia Azhar Award by Colonel Jamal Abdul Nasir. He then returned to India and wrote numerous books, educated hundreds of scholars, and oversaw the development of many educational institutes. He also served as a spiritual guide, having been given permission by his predecessor Mufti Mustafa Raza Khan to lead the Qaadriya, Barakaatiyah, and Nooriyah Sufi orders in India. He was also appointed to the position of Muslim Chief Justice of India in 2006. Mufti Akhtar Raza was also known for his extensive collection of English-language rulings, the Azharul Fatawa. He became involved in issuing Islamic rulings from the age of 17 and is noted for having issued over 5,000 rulings.

**Sheikh Murabit Al-Hajj Scholarly**

Country: Mauritania  
 Born: 1913  
 Died: 17 July 2018



Sheikh Murabit Al-Hajj was a Mauritanian ascetic and scholar who devoted his life to worship, learning, and teaching Islamic disciplines. Based in a remote village in Mauritania, he trained hundreds if not thousands of scholars, including Sheikh Hamza Yusuf. He continued his rigorous daily routine of praying and teaching until his dying day.

**Muhammad Mustafa Azami Scholarly**

Country: India  
 Born: 1932  
 Died: 20 December 2017



Muhammad Mustafa Al-Azami was a hadith scholar best known for pointing out the inadequacies of western scholarship's understanding of both the compilation of the Qur'an and hadith. He was especially critical of the theories of Ignac Goldziher, David Margoliouth, and Joseph Schacht. Al-Azami had a unique education, having studied at Deoband, Al-Azhar and Cambridge University. He had been visiting fellow and Prof at Oxford and Princeton universities respectively and was Prof Emeritus at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia when he passed away.

## Sheikh Hussain Hassan Abakar

### Administration of Religious Affairs

Country: Chad

Died: 18 January 2018



Sheikh Hussain Hassan Abakar was the Imam of the Muslims of Chad and the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Chad. He was also a founding member of the Muslim World League (MWL). Abakar oversaw the activities of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in implementing educational and cultural programs through Islamic schools, educational literature, and training courses for imams. He also carried out important fundraising work for the education of Muslims in Chad.

## Serigne Sidi Al Moukhtar Mbacke

### Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Senegal

Born: 11 July 1924

Died: 9 January 2018



Serigne Sidi Al Moukhtar Mbacke was appointed leader of the Muridiyyah Tariqa in July 2010. The tariqa was founded by the religious leader and mystic Amadou Bamba, who died in 1927 and was buried at the mosque in Touba, Senegal. Sidi Mbacke was the second grandson to inherit the leadership. It is estimated that over a sixth of all Senegalese are members of the tariqa.

## Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan

### Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Pakistan

Born: 31 December 1934

Died: 7 December 2017



He was a lecturer, a leader, a philosopher, and a reformist with followers worldwide. Sheikh Muhammad was the author of four commentaries on the Quran and the spiritual leader of the Naqshbandia Owaisiah Order, which has over a million murids. He was also the dean of Siqarah Education System which aims at making its students

practical and enlightened young Muslims. His patronage of institutions included: Al Falah Foundation and of Al Murshid Magazine; the former aimed at helping the poor especially in rural areas, and the latter aimed at providing guidance for the seekers of truth.

## Sheikh Abd al-Wahid Pallavicini

### Preachers & Spiritual Guides

Country: Italy

Born: 1926

Died: 12 November 2017



Sheikh Abd Al-Wahid Pallavicini was a noted preacher from Milan, Italy. After converting to Islam in 1951, he joined the Ahamadiyyah Idrissiyyah Shadhiliyyah Sufi Order and headed the brotherhood in Italy. His son is Imam Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini, the chairman of the ISESCO Council for Education and Culture in the West and imam of the Al-Wahid Mosque of Milan.

## Asma Jehangir

### Social Issues

Country: Pakistan

Born: 27 January 1952

Died: 11 February 2018



Asma Jehangir—former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan—was a landmark jurist who fought many high-profile social justice cases. She co-founded and chaired the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). Emphasizing that democracy should continue to flourish in Pakistan, she refused an offer to become the Caretaker Prime Minister and advised retired judges to do the same. In 2014, Jehangir was awarded the Stefanus Prize, a human rights prize celebrating freedom of religion or belief. In 2017, she became the first Pakistani to deliver the Amartya Sen Lecture at the London School of Economics, where she called for a counter-narrative of liberal politics to challenge religious intolerance.



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Truly those who believe and perform righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them through their faith. Rivers will flow beneath them in the Gardens of Bliss, their prayer therein: 'Glory be to You, O God!', and their greeting therein will be: 'Peace'. And their final prayer will be: 'Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds'.

*Jonah* 10 : 9-10

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Guest

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# Malaysia in 2018: Resurrecting Islamic Democracy

by Nurul Izzah Anwar

## MALAYSIA IS AT THE CROSSROADS

As the last quarter of 2018 dawns, Malaysia has hard work and hard choices ahead. Our country has always had great potential. Indeed, it is often seen as a model for developing countries in general and Muslim-majority nation-states in particular. We have been blessed with a talented multicultural society, abundant natural resources and a strategic location in the Indo-Pacific. Despite this, we have wasted decades due to undemocratic politics, single-party rule and soft authoritarianism. It seemed as if corruption was the norm, with certain leaders invoking race and religion to justify their abuses, maladministration and outright theft of the country's wealth.

### THE "MIRACLE" OF 9 MAY

As such, the political transition which took place after Malaysia's 14th General Elections on 9 May 2018 was nothing short of miraculous. Malaysian voters—both Muslim and non-Muslim—chose to throw out a corrupt ruling coalition that had enjoyed nearly six decades of uninterrupted power. I am one of the Members of Parliament (MP) of the-then opposition Pact of Hope (or PH) that was voted into power that day. Still, the events of 9th May was more than just about the fact that Malaysia had witnessed its first change of government in its history. What was more moving—and more meaningful—was that Malaysians of all walks of life finally realized that they had the power to choose their own destiny, that no leader is entitled to power.

### MANY CHALLENGES AHEAD

However, there are many challenges ahead for this "New Malaysia" that people speak of. The bugbears of the past still remain: beneath the shiny skyscrapers, is a country that is becoming increasingly divided, indeed, in some cases behaving in ways contrary to the principles of Islamic moderation it claims to uphold. Muslim and non-Muslim Malaysians are routinely pitted against each other and between themselves over wedge issues like faith, ethnicity, mother tongues, gender and state-federal tussle over what is deemed acceptable Islamic legislation. Legacy problems such as wealth inequality and the stagnation of our education sys-

tem have been distorted as communal, rather than policy issues, to be viewed as zero-sum games between the different groups.

Muslim Malaysians, ironically, are often their own worst enemies: constantly recriminating each other rather than respecting differences of opinion on questions of religion and morality. The supremacy of our Constitution, as well as the principles of the rule of law and of equality before the law are often cast aside when it is convenient for the powerful and wealthy. This is above and beyond our need to provide genuine social mobility, security and opportunities for all Malaysians in a rapidly-globalizing world now grappling with the 4th Industrial Revolution. Moreover, Malaysia still needs to move beyond authoritarian modes of governance, of the top-down and "leaders know best" approach. So while the remarkable political events in Malaysia should be celebrated, no one should believe that our journey is complete.

### REFORM MUST CONTINUE

Nevertheless, I still believe that Malaysia can still be a country of the future. We can yet be a democratic Muslim nation of the 21st Century, a beacon for other predominantly-Muslim, multicultural states seeking to make their own democratic change. What is important is that the process of reform—whether economic, political or social—should be tackled boldly and unrelentingly. While there will be many challenges ahead, Malaysia must steadfastly uphold the principles of justice, fairness, and compassion. There can be no compromise on the rule of law, beneath which all are equal. The independence of our judiciary, civil service, media and civil society must be restored and respected by all.

### ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE SEPARATED

There is no contradiction with this and our status as a Muslim-majority, multicultural nation. I would argue, in fact, that the two cannot be separated. To be Islamic is to be democratic. The coalition that now governs Malaysia, as was the previous government, features Muslim and non-Muslim parties alike, sharing a common goal to serve the people. Islam and Muslims must be

able to coexist with our fellow citizens. This can only be achieved through equal representation in political office, of believing that all Malaysians have equal rights, responsibilities and worth, whatever their background. It is true that some reforms must be gradual or sequenced. But this must not be an excuse for inertia, of indefinite postponements in all but name, especially when it comes to correcting or preventing injustices or reducing exclusion. The people must certainly be won over to the cause of change. But this is no excuse for leaders to drag their feet or pander to the basest instincts of the mob. Doing this, time and time again is not prudence: its cowardice.

### MALAYSIA MUST EMPOWER ITS WOMEN

One thing that Malaysia—like all nations, Muslim or not—must work extra hard on is to empower women at all levels in society. With a female Deputy Prime Minister in Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Malaysia hopes to make a case for the greater participation of women, not only in the corridors of power, but also the boardrooms, workplaces, lecture halls, data centres and laboratories of the world. A nation cannot hope to progress if its women are not emancipated and allowed to take their rightful place in society. There's also no use in the latter if women are constantly hobbled by archaic cultural beliefs and norms, or treated like passive objects rather than human beings by the mass media and popular culture. Women must be seen and they must be heard. Girls and young women should be in schools, colleges, universities and internships, not brides.

### DEBATE MUST CONTINUE

Debate and discussion over the role of religion in our society must continue. Again, no one should not be silenced on this matter simply because of who they are. It may perhaps take time before we can move away from harsh punishments done in the name of Islam towards a more equitable and understanding society. But we must make a start and we must not back down from exposing as well as confronting those who would manipulate these questions for partisan political gain. Compassion in Islam is and should always be a cornerstone of our policies, acting as a foundation to build consensus and influence partners in society. Freedom of speech and thought must be respected—and so should the need for civility. This applies to be-

tween Muslims and non-Muslims, but also within those groups.

### AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL

The events of the past decade have also shown that unbridled capitalism not only fails to serve the greater good, but often engenders authoritarian, narrow-minded and xenophobic populism. Neither command economics or free-for-all market forces can—by themselves—truly, in the long-run, better the lives of people nor give them dignity and a sense of belonging. I believe that the principles of Islam, with its focus on ethics, equity and social cohesion, offers Malaysia and the wider world a middle-path between these extremes. Economic development should never become synonymous with, or conditional upon, human degradation. The turmoil we see in the developed world today is arguably a direct result of their leaders' failure and unwillingness to decouple the two. Although every country is different, the focus of the great and the good should always be on lifting everyone up, rather than enriching the few. On our part, Malaysia must move beyond its "addiction" to extractive resources and foreign labour.

Our economy must meet 21st Century realities and be responsive to the massive technological changes that seem to occur on a daily basis. Our government should support innovation as well as ensure that the law is upheld and the environment protected, rather than become everyone's boss. There is also a great need for us to improve our Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) system, to produce workers who can compete in the evolving global economy. TVET should never be seen as the second-best choice, but a respected life path through which men and women can better themselves, their families and societies. Artisans and craftsmen in Muslim civilizations once commanded the admiration of the world with their work—Malaysia hopes to be at the forefront of reviving this noble tradition. We must give young Malaysians opportunities to choose diverse careers and interests. Work-life balance is paramount: men and women have a right to have both. The elderly, differently-abled and vulnerable need social security and safety nets while still contributing in their own ways. Our diaspora—you will find determined, talented, and hardworking Malaysians all over the globe—should also be made to feel welcome and able contribute to the exciting changes back home.

## THE PURSUIT OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD

Further afield, Malaysia must continue to stand up for peace and justice everywhere. We must continue to speak out for the oppressed, including the Palestinians and closer to home, the Rohingya and Uighur peoples, as well as long suffering Syrians and in defence of innocent Yemeni civilians. Equitable and peaceful solutions to issues like the South China Sea dispute must be pursued. Malaysia, I am sure, will continue to actively contribute to these and other processes, through multilateral bodies like the UN, ASEAN, the OIC and NAM as well as on a bilateral basis.

### THE ROAD AHEAD

I believe that this is the best way forward for Malaysia: to adopt wise policies that increase our liberties and at the same time pursue a fairer,

more equitable socio-economic system. Of course, the way ahead will not be easy and success will not be immediate. There will be setbacks. There will be times when Malaysians will ask whether this change has truly meant anything, whether it is old politics masquerading as something new. There will be times when expectations are not met, when it feels like we're only going backwards. It is our responsibility now to ensure that the great enthusiasm that came after the last elections does not give way to apathy, that expectations are both managed and met. It is fundamentally a question of political will: what kind of future do we want for our country? For the global ummah? And are we willing to work together to achieve it? The road ahead is long, but if we remain resolute in our vision for the country, there's no reason why we cannot realise a truly progressive, Islamic democracy in Malaysia.

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*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*



# Manufacturing Imposture

## The View on the Theory of Evolution through the Prism of Islam and Science

by Abdelhaq M Hamza

Today's world cannot be conceived without the World Wide Web, the world of the Millennials: an ocean of information where one can easily drown while seeking knowledge, an impossible quest if one is not equipped with traditional tools and values that allow the identification of the invariants. But then again, in an era dominated by the internet and the indexing of scholarship, one is led to believe that "knowledge is what is left when the internet is down," and one is not sure as to how much is really left, especially when 'apprentice sorcerers' have taken control of the keyboard, the mouse and the touchscreen.

The object of the present paper is to discuss some of the literature available on the net that is directly relevant to the field of Islam and Science. More specifically, we will focus on the misinterpretation of traditional texts by a new wave of Muslim writers, who have sought to discredit the conventional wisdom by suggesting that science alone, modern science, should dictate the new order. Most, if not the majority should we say, of these Muslim writers have very little background in the hard sciences, and those who do have some have ceased to conduct research and have become armchair scientists claiming absolute expertise in science, philosophy and theology, erudite in the science of imposture. The road to scholarship is a thorny road; it takes a lot of efforts, constant vigilance, and all the patience one has to stay on this road: "Knowledge will not give you part of it, until you give it all of you"<sup>1</sup>. The quantification of scholarship has been conducted through indexing, and like any other quantification system indexing has some serious loopholes that have yet to be plugged.

In an essay entitled "How to become a celebrity scientific expert,"<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Bishop, a professor of developmental neuropsychology at Oxford university, captures a rampant phenomenon in academia, and suggests a list of six golden rules, if followed, can secure fame and celebrity, highly sought commodities by certain species of academicians and journalists. The rules are simple and clear:

1. Establish your credentials;
2. Find a controversial topic;
3. Specify a causal chain;
4. Avoid rigorous peer review;
5. Assemble supportive evidence;
6. Anticipate criticism but don't let it worry you.

Gisèle Sapiro, on the French side, writes in the French newspaper *Le Monde*<sup>3</sup>:

*"... Or, ce qui caractérise les intellectuels médiatiques, c'est précisément qu'ils sont capables de parler de tout sans être spécialistes de rien. Pénétrés de leur importance, ils donnent leur avis sur tous les sujets, par conviction sans doute, mais aussi et surtout pour conserver leur visibilité. Car la visibilité médiatique n'est pas donnée, elle se construit, elle s'entretient. Aussi sont-ils prompts à s'attaquer les uns les autres pour tenir en haleine les médias et le public, même si force est de constater qu'on est loin du panache d'un duel entre Mauriac et Camus. ..."*

which can be translated as:

"... What characterizes media intellectuals is precisely that they are able to talk about everything without being specialists in anything. Imbued by their importance, they give their opinion on all the subjects, by conviction without doubt, but also and especially to maintain their visibility. Because media visibility is not given, it is built, it is maintained. So, they are quick to attack each other to hold the media and the public in suspense, even if it is clear that we are far from the excitement of a duel between Mauriac and Camus ..."

We will argue and demonstrate in what follows that the field of Islam and Science has been monopolized by a group of Muslims who are not necessarily the most qualified people to address the complex issues raised in the domains of Science, Philosophy and Theology, yet they have become the most visible in the virtual space by adopting the Bishop rules cited above. Often, one can easily identify all the symptoms of the Dorothy Bishop syndrome; indeed, most of the literature available on Islam and Science, in general, is not peer reviewed and often finds a quick way to readers

<sup>1</sup> "الْعِلْمُ شَيْءٌ لَا يُعْطِيكَ بَعْضُهُ حَتَّى تُعْطِيَهُ كُلُّكَ ، وَأَنْتَ إِذَا أُعْطِيْتَهُ كُلُّكَ مِنْ إِعْطَايِهِ الْبَعْضَ عَلَّ عَرَّ"

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Bishop, 2011, <http://deevybee.blogspot.ca/2011/09/how-to-become-celebrity-scientific.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, *Le Monde*, 16 Janvier, 2016.

[http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/01/16/la-revolte-des-clercs-contre-les-demunis\\_4848388\\_3232.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/01/16/la-revolte-des-clercs-contre-les-demunis_4848388_3232.html).

through multimedia. Moreover, a great deal of activity in the cyberworld is financed by specific foundations, which are not necessarily interested in exposing various scholarly positions on the subject of Islam and Science; This constitutes a major problem for as far as scholarship is concerned. In particular, we will focus on what we believe has been a systematic case of apophenia: A case driven by a group of Muslim modernists writing about science subjects and suggesting that traditional manuscripts contain the seeds for modern theories, and in particular the theory of evolution; manuscripts from the ninth century onwards are cited to support ideas or should I say memes and/or agendas. These same modernists have expressed themselves very loudly against any type of ‘concordism’ (I’jaz el-’lmi) in Islam. We should clarify, before going any further in our analysis, that we have adopted Malek Bennabi’s position on the ‘Modernist Movement’<sup>4</sup>. We should also point out that Seyyed Hossein Nasr has a position similar to Malek Bennabi’s on the ‘Modernist Movement’, see for example ‘The Library of Living Philosophers’<sup>5</sup>

Let us take a step back and analyze what is available on the net on the subject of Islam and Science and try to identify the drivers and the deliverables. In what follows, we will try and deconstruct the arguments put forth by the Muslim modernists, who claim that early Muslim manuscripts going as far back as the ninth century contain ideas that are coherent with the theory of biological evolution as we understand it in this early part of the twenty first century. The following references can be consulted for accuracy for as far as the use of traditional texts written by Muslims to justify the presence of biological evolutionary ideas, in the modern sense.

Nidhal Guessoum in an interview with Rachael Kohn<sup>6</sup> states:

“A number of thinkers and scientists of the golden age of Islam were specialists of zoology, of plants, of humans, of history, of sociology, etc. ... and observed and noted that there are signs of evolution, that there are signs of adaptability, that there are signs of similarities between apes and humans for example, or between certain species of animal...



Al Jahiz [776-869], a very well-known thinker and writer has this huge book called *The Book of Animals*, which seemed to express what I call proto Lamarckian views that the environment seems to push a species to adapt by changing some of its features and transforming some of its organs and thereby evolving”.

Kohn goes on to write:

“The professor, who spoke on ‘Creationism in the Muslim World’, is keenly aware that the scientific aspirations of Al-Jahiz and other Muslim thinkers, including the 13<sup>th</sup> century poet Jalal Adin Rumi, who wrote a poem about the evolution of humans from inanimate matter through to plants and animals, not only collapsed in subsequent centuries, but by the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were actively replaced by fundamentalists thinkers”.

More recently, Nidhal Guessoum in an article on the Moon as a physical object and reference to various physical phenomena, published in Arab

4 Malek Bennabi, *Vocation de l’Islam*, collections “*Esprit Frontière Ouvertes*”, Edition du Seuil, 1954. *Le Mouvement Réformateur*, pp. 57-66.

5 Seyyed Hussein Nasr, *The Library of Living Philosophers*, Vol. XXVIII, *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, Edited By Lewis Edwin Hahn, Randa E. Auxier and Lucian W. Stone, JR., 2001, pp. 799-809.

6 Rachael Kohn, in *Science, Creationism and the existence of God*, 17 October, 2014. <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings/science-creationism-and-the-existence-of-god/5822276>.

News<sup>7</sup>, cites Rumi completely out of context:

“Luna has also been a favorite motif of poets. For example, the great Sufi master and poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi said: “Who could be so lucky? Who comes to a lake for water and sees the reflection of the Moon?” And: “At night, I open the window and ask the Moon to come and press its face against mine. Breathe into me. Close the language-door and open the love-window. The Moon won’t use the door, only the window.””

Guessoum exposes his lack of sensitivity for the esoteric literature. The Moon of Rumi has nothing to do with the Moon of the empiricist that Guessoum is.

In a recent lecture at the ‘*Institut du Monde Arabe*’ entitled “*Dialogue entre Islam et Science*,” Ines Safi<sup>8</sup> suggests that Ibn Khaldun tells us in his ‘*Muqadimah*’ about common ancestry with monkeys as a matter of fact.

The internet is littered with statements like Ines Safi’s and Guessoum’s suggesting that the theory of evolution has seeds in the traditional Islamic texts.

Salman Hameed<sup>9</sup>, who has made the theory of evolution a stock in trade, writes:

“There are many others, however, who accept various interpretations of evolution. Often, this acceptance is justified in the context of the Koran or by crediting the theory of medieval philosophers. For example, the South Asian philosopher and poet, Mohammed Iqbal, while accepting evolution reluctantly, credited 9<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, Al Jahiz for the idea of evolution and Ibn-Maskawaih, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, as the “first Muslim thinker to give a clear and in many respects a thoroughly modern theory of the origin of man” (5). Indeed, a few medieval Muslim philosophers elaborated on the theories of common descent known at the time, but none postulated any process similar to natural selection”.

Rana Dajani<sup>10</sup>, the biologist in house, writes in various news items:

“Before Darwin, al-Jahiz and others proposed rudimentary evolutionary theories in the ninth century”.

In an essay, written as a contribution to a Task Force study sponsored by the Templeton Foundation, Rana Dajani<sup>11</sup> writes:

“Scientists during the Islamic civilization have been doing just that producing a civilization where scientific discoveries flourished. Amongst the scholars and scientists Ikhwan Al-Safa, Al Jahez and Ibn Khaldoun produced theories similar although rudimentary to the theory of evolution as we know it today (1).

Al Rumi very nicely described his theory of evolution in his poem ...”

Usama Hassan<sup>12</sup>, The Quilliam foundation representative, and according to whom Evolution is a “Muslim Theory,” writes on various slides of a presentation on the subject of Islam and the theory of evolution:

- Al-Jahiz (9th century, 776-869) & the “Struggle for Existence”
  - ▶ Influence of environment on animal survival in his magnum opus, *Kitab al-Hayawan (Book of Animals)*
  - ▶ Came up with a crude Lamarckism, that was later replaced by Darwinian evolution
  - ▶ “dogs, foxes & wolves must have descended from a common ancestor” (4:23, cf. Jim al-Khalili, Pathfinders, p. 76)
  - ▶ Understood eco-systems, Understood natural selection
  - ▶ Understood adaptation (Rebecca Stott, Darwin’s Ghosts, Chapter 3)
- Ibn Miskawayh & the Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwan al-Safa*) (Persia, 10th century)
  - ▶ Worlds:
  - ▶ Mineral → Plant → Animal → (Monkey) → Human
  - ▶ Source: Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, famous 20<sup>th</sup> century Hadith scholar
- Ibn Khaldun (14Th Century, d. 1408)

“One should then look at the world of creation. It started out from the minerals and progressed, in an ingenious, gradual manner, to plants and animals. The last stage of minerals is connected with the first stage of plants, such as herbs and seedless

7 <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1320206>

8 Ines Safi, Dialogue entre Islam et Science, Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA), Paris, France, Pensée, science et religion dans le monde arabe: Questions et problématique », le 30 mai 2018. (1 hour 19 minutes and 55 seconds into the lecture <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6W0gU9Ter8>).

9 Salman Hameed, in *Bracing for Islamic Creationism*, SCIENCE magazine, Vol 322, 12 December 2008.

10 Rana Dajani, in *Why I Teach Evolution to Muslim Students*, <https://www.nature.com/news/why-i-teach-evolution-to-muslim-students-1.17364>.

11 Rana Dajani, Task Force Essay: Evolution and Islam—Is there a contradiction? August 9, 2015. <http://muslim-science.com/task-force-essay-evolution-and-islam-is-there-a-contradiction>.

12 Usama Hassan, *Islam & The Theory/Fact of Evolution*, 2015, <https://unity1.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/8-islam-and-the-theory-fact-of-evolution-usama-hasan.pdf>.

plants. The last stage of plants, such as palms and vines, is connected with the first stage of animals, such as snails and shellfish which have only the power of touch. The word ‘connection’ with regard to these created things means that the last stage of each group is fully prepared to become the first stage of the next group ... The animal world then widens, its species become numerous, and, in a gradual process of creation, it finally leads to man, who is able to think and to reflect. The higher stage of man is reached from the world of the monkeys, in which both sagacity and perception are found, but which has not reached the stage of actual reflection and thinking. At this point we come to the first stage of man. This is as far as our (physical) observation extends.<sup>13</sup>

- Rumi (poem from Masnavi)
  - ▶ ‘Allamah Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.”

From these few references, we notice the common references to Al-Jahiz, Ikhwan el-Safa, Ibn-Maskawaih, Rumi and Ibn-Khaldun; though none of these references point to the actual sources and none are cited within their actual and proper contexts. We shall address each of these references by going back to the actual sources and by deconstructing the arguments of the Muslim modernists.

We will dedicate a section to ‘*Kitab al-Hayawan*’ by al-Jahiz<sup>14</sup>, since he is cited by all those who claim that his ‘*Kitab al-Hayawan*’ describes clearly that which parallels the modern theory of evolution. We will also dedicate a section to ‘Ikhwan el-Safa’<sup>15</sup>, ‘The Brethren of Purity’, who wrote fifty-one or fifty-two Epistles some of which on religious and conventional sciences. A thorough discussion of a passage in Rumi’s Mathnawi<sup>16</sup> is necessary, for some claim it is clear evidence for an argument for biological evolution. A close look at the work of Ibn Miskawaih<sup>17</sup> ‘Al-Fawz al-Asghar’ reveals yet another misreading of the traditional manuscripts. In the end we wrap up this document with a discussion on scholarship in a field plagued with mediocre contributions. We will conclude after a thorough analysis of the texts cited that

the Muslim modernists have been manufacturing mediocrity and imposture for they either take deliberately the texts out of their respective contexts or they have not read the sources and fail the very scholarship they pretend to hold.

## THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION AND ITS MUSLIM APPRENTICES

Reading the literature published over the past two decades on Islam and Science, one is led to conclude that apophenia has not spared some Muslim writers, who seem to perceive connections and meaning in various classical texts on various science subjects, and especially evolutionary biology while at the same time condemning any type of concordism ‘*Tjaz I’lmi*’.

In the next few subsections, we will attempt to deconstruct some of the common arguments brought forth by various Muslim writers who suggest that some classical texts contain genuine thought on very modern science subjects. We shall focus primarily on the abuse of classical texts that are described as Islamic sources supporting modern theories.

### READING EVOLUTION IN RUMI’S POEM

The poetry of Djaleddine Rumi<sup>18</sup>, especially his ‘Mathnawi’, has been read for many centuries, and continues to attract flocks of people from various backgrounds and ideologies. But one should remind readers that Rumi was a Muslim who expressed his belief through mystic poetry that is anchored in the creed (*A’qida*) of Islam. To read in Rumi’s text that which goes against the very Islamic A’qida is to have misread Rumi, who subscribed to the ‘Hanafi’ school of jurisprudence. In an article that appeared in the New Yorker on January 5, 2017, Rozina Ali<sup>19</sup> writes:

“Rumi himself described the “Masnavi” as “the roots of the roots of religion”—meaning Islam—“and the explainer of Koran.” And yet little trace of the religion exists in the translations that sell so well in the United States. “The Rumi that people love is very beautiful in English, and the

13 *The Muqaddimah—An Introduction to History* by Ibn Khaldun, trans. Franz Rosenthal, Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 75.

14 Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-Hayawan*, ed. Muhammad al-Sasi (Cairo: Matba’ al-Sa’ada, 1906-7.

15 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brethren\\_of\\_Purity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brethren_of_Purity)

16 R. A. Nicholson, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.151299>.

17 Ibn-Miskawaih, *Al-Fawz Al-Asghar*.

18 Djaleddine Rumi, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumi>.

19 Rozina Ali, in *The Erasure of Islam from the Poetry of Rumi*, The New Yorker, January 5, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-erasure-of-islam-from-the-poetry-of-rumi>.

price you pay is to cut the culture and religion,” Jawid Mojaddedi, a scholar of early Sufism at Rutgers, told me recently.”

Rozina Ali continues and writes in her New Yorker’s article on Rumi:

“In the twentieth century, a succession of prominent translators—among them R. A. Nicholson, A. J. Arberry, and Annemarie Schimmel—strengthened Rumi’s presence in the English-language canon. But it’s Barks (Coleman Barks) who vastly expanded Rumi’s readership. He is not a translator so much as an interpreter: he does not read or write Persian. Instead, he transforms nineteenth-century translations into American verse...

In our conversation, Barks described Rumi’s poetry as “the mystery of opening the heart,” a thing that, he told me, “you can’t say in language.” In order to get at that inexpressible thing, he has taken some liberties with Rumi’s work. For one thing, he has minimized references to Islam. Consider the famous poem “Like This.” Arberry translates one of its lines, rather faithfully, as “Whoever asks you about the Houris, show (your) face (and say) ‘Like this.’” Houris are virgins promised in Paradise in Islam. Barks avoids even the literal translation of that word; in his version, the line becomes, “If anyone asks you how the perfect satisfaction of all our sexual wanting will look, lift your face and say, Like this.” The religious context is gone. And yet, elsewhere in the same poem, Barks keeps references to Jesus and Joseph. When I asked him about this, he told me that he couldn’t recall if he had made a deliberate choice to remove Islamic references. “I was brought up Presbyterian,” he said. “I used to memorize Bible verses, and I know the New Testament more than I know the Koran.” He added, “The Koran is hard to read ...

Rumi used the Koran, Hadiths, and religion in an explorative way, often challenging conventional readings. One of Barks’s popular renditions goes like this: “Out beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing, there is a field. / I will meet you there.” The original version makes no mention of “rightdoing” or “wrongdoing.” The words Rumi wrote were iman (“religion”) and kufr (“infidelity”).”

20 Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 1930.

21 See Iqbal, page 72

22 See George Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, I, 1957, where it is said that the ‘*Kitab al-Hayawan*’ of al-Jahiz, contains the germs of many later theories: evolution adaptation, animal psychology. Cf. also M. Plessner, ‘Al-Jahiz’ in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, VII, 63-65.

23 For a statement of the views of the ‘Brethren of Purity’ with regard to the hypothesis of evolution, cf. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, pp.72-74.

24 See Lecture V, p. 107, for Ibn Maskawaih’s very clear conception of biological evolution, which later found expression in the ‘inimitable lines’ of the ‘excellent Rumi’ quoted in the next passage as well as in Lecture VII, pp. 147-148.

It is clear from these passages that Coleman Barks has not done justice to Rumi’s poetry, which is anchored in the Islamic tradition. Cherry-picking seems to be the ‘modus operandi’.

There is absolutely no need at this point to get into further details for as far as translations of Rumi’s poetry is concerned. We will address one passage in “Masnavi” that is of interest for some Muslim modernists have suggested that latent in Rumi’s poem are the seeds of a biological theory of evolution or more specifically human evolution.

It is in “*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*,” that Mohammad Iqbal<sup>20</sup> first introduced some sources, which he thought explicitly describe the ‘mechanism’ of biological evolution in Muslim thought. He writes<sup>21</sup>:

“How did man first emerge? This suggestive argument embodied in the last verses of the two passages quoted above did in fact open a new vista to Muslim philosophers. It was ‘Jahiz’ (d. 225 A.H.) who first hinted at the changes in animal life caused by migrations and environment generally.<sup>22</sup> The association known as the ‘Brethren of Purity’ further amplified the views of ‘Jahiz.’<sup>23</sup> Ibn Maskawaih (d. 421 A.H.), however, was the first Muslim to give a clear and in many respects thoroughly modern theory of the origin of man.<sup>24</sup> It was only natural and perfectly consistent with the spirit of the Qur’an, that Rumi regarded the question of immortality as one of biological evolution, and not a problem to be decided by arguments of purely metaphysical nature, as some philosophers of Islam had thought. The theory of evolution, however, has brought despair and anxiety, instead of hope and enthusiasm for life, to the modern world. The reason is to be found in the unwarranted modern assumption that man’s present structure, mental as well as physiological, is the last word in biological evolution, and that death, regarded as a biological event, has no constructive meaning. The world of today needs a Rumi to create an attitude of hope. And to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life. His inimitable lines may be quoted here:

First man appeared in the class of inorganic things,  
 Next he passed therefrom into that of plants,  
 For years he lived as one of the plants,  
 Remembering naught of his inorganic state so different;  
 And when he passed from the vegetative to the animal state,  
 He had no remembrance of his state as a plant,  
 Except the inclination he felt to the world of plants,  
 Especially at the time of spring and sweet flowers,  
 Like the inclination of infants towards their mothers,  
 Which know not the cause of their inclination for the breast.  
 Again the great Creator, ass you know,  
 Drew man out of the animal into the human state,  
 Till he became wise and knowing and strong as he is now.  
 Of his first souls he has now no remembrance.  
 And he will be again changed; from his present soul.<sup>25</sup>

Let us contrast Iqbal's rendering of Rumi's poem to that of Nicholson's<sup>26</sup> before commenting. We should remind the reader that Reynold Alleyne Nicholson was an English orientalist who became a scholar in Islamic literature and Islamic mysticism, and is believed to be one of the greatest Rumi scholars and translators of 'The Masnavi' to the English language. What follows is Nicholson's translation of the same passage cited above by Iqbal:

"3900. O my noble (friends), slaughter this cow (the fleshly soul), if ye desire to raise to life the spirits (possessed) of insight. I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal. I died from animality and became Adam (man): why, then, should I fear? When have I become less by dying? At the next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels; And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel: everything is perishing except His face."

These two translations of Rumi's verses from the Mathnawi are worlds apart; Iqbal's version confines the verses in the horizontal plan of the body and seeks clearly a connection with evolutionary biolo-



gy while Nicholson's catches the rise of the soul in the vertical direction and sees no connection with the material world in his attempt to bring Rumi to the English reader.

I would also like to expose the translation to French of the same verses by Eva de Vitray Meyerovitch<sup>27</sup>, because she too seems to be closer to Nicholson than Iqbal. Eva de Vitray Meyerovitch was a doctor of Islamology (Islamic Studies), and was the first one to translate the "Masnavi" to the French language. What follows is her attempt to translate Rumi's passage to French:

«L'ascension sur l'échelle de l'être, mue par l'Amour divin<sup>28</sup> qui tend à faire réintégrer dans l'Unité les parties du tout disperses dans la multiplicité<sup>29</sup>, a donc pour raison et pour but l'apparition de l'Homme parfait: "Il n'y a pas d'autre cause finale que l'homme," dit Shabestari; "les deux mondes étaient le moyen de sa production"<sup>30</sup>. Rumi décrit ainsi cette évolution:

25 Cf. E. H. Whinfield (tr), *Masnavi*, pp. 216-217; this translation of verses 3637-3641 and 3646-3648 of Book iv of Rumi's *Mathnawi*—cf. Allama Iqbal's observation on these verses in his *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 91.

26 Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*, Volume III & VI, Cambridge, UK, 1925-1940, verses 3890, 3895, 3900, 3905, 3910, 3915.

27 Eva de Vitray Meyerovitch, *Mystique et Poésie en Islam, Djhalal-ud-Din Rumi et l'Ordre des Derviches tourneurs*, Desclée De Brouwer (DDB), 2eme edition, 1972, p. 273.

28 *Mathnawi*, I, 25 sq. Cf. supra, p. 184 sq.

29 Cf. *Mathnawi*, I, 2801-2804, 2904-2906, II, 2575-2582, etc.

30 Golshan-e-Raz, v. 262-63.

*Du moment où tu vins dans le monde de l'existence,  
Une échelle a été place devant toi pour te permettre de t'évader;  
D'abord, tu fus minéral, puis tu devins plante;  
Ensuite, tu es devenu animal: comment l'ignoris-tu ?  
Puis, tu fus fait homme, doué de connaissance, de raison, de foi;  
Considère ce corps, tire de la poussière: quelle perfection il a acquise !  
Quand tu auras transcendé la condition de l'homme, tu deviendras, sans nul doute, un ange;  
Alors tu en auras fini avec la terre: ta demeure sera le ciel.  
Depasse même la condition Angélique: pénètre dans cet océan,  
Afin que ta goutte d'eau puisse devenir une mer<sup>31</sup> ...*

*De même, dans le Mathnawi, sont décrites les différentes étapes par lesquelles l'âme doit passer avant de retourner à Dieu, et l'état d'inconscience qui accompagnent ces changements:*

*L'homme vint tout d'abord dans le règne des choses inorganiques, puis de là il passa dans le règne végétal, ne se souvenant pas de sa condition précédente. Et lorsqu'il passa dans l'état animal, il ne se rappela plus son état en tant que plante: il ne lui en reste que l'inclination qu'il éprouve pour cet état, notamment à l'époque du printemps et des fleurs, telle l'inclination des petits enfants à l'égard de leurs mères: ils ignorent la raison qui les attire vers le sein maternel: ou comme l'inclination du disciple pour le maître spirituel: l'intelligence partielle du disciple dérive de l'intelligence universelle<sup>32</sup> ... Puis l'homme est entré dans l'état humain; de ses premières âmes il n'a point de souvenance, et il sera de nouveau changé à partir*

*de son âme actuelle<sup>33</sup>.*

*Il peut donc s'écrier:*

*Je suis mort à l'animalité et devenu Adam: que Craindrais-je ? Quand ai-je-été diminué par la mort ?—Puis je mourrai à l'état d'homme afin de pouvoir prendre mon essor parmi les anges;—Et je dois échapper même à cet état angélique: Toute chose est périssable sauf Sa Face<sup>34</sup>; A nouveau je serais sacrifié et je deviendrai ce que l'imagination ne peut concevoir<sup>35</sup>. »*

Eva de Vitray Meyerovitch makes it clear that Rumi's poem is all about the ascension of the soul, and nothing to do with that which Newtonian gravity will hold down.

To complete this survey on the translation of Rumi's verses, one would have to add the Arabic version of the verses found in the Mathnawi<sup>36</sup>.

٣٩٠٠ كانت بقرة موسى أضحية لكن أقل جزء منها صار حياة لقتيل .  
لقد قفز ذلك القليل واقعاً ناجياً من الأذى، عندما خوطب ب "اضربوه ببعضها".  
يا كرامي اذبحوا هذا البقر إن اردت حشر أرواح النظر .  
لقد مت من الجمادية وصرت ناميا، ومت من النماء وانقلبت حيوانا .  
ومت من الحيوانية وصرت إنساناً، إذن فمن أي شيء أخاف؟ ومتى تقصت من الموت؟

٣٩٠٥ وأموت مرة أخرى من البشرية، حتى أخذ من الملائكة أجنحتها وقوادمها .  
ومن الملائكية ينبغي أن أقلع عن الطلب، ذلك أن كل شيء هالك إلا وجهه .  
ثم أصير بعدها فداء من الملائكية، وأصير إلى ما لا يحده وهم .  
إذ أصير عدماً والعدم كالأرغنون، يتغنى قائلاً "إنا إليه راجعون".  
فاعلم أن الموت هو ما اتفقت عليه الامة، من أن ماء الحيوان مخبوء في الظلمة .

31 Diwan (SP), XII.

32 C'est-a-dire le Logos auquel s'identifie l'Homme Parfait (note Nicholson ad loc.).

33 Mathnawi, IV, 3637 sq.

34 Qur'an, XXVIII, 88.

35 Mathnawi, III, 3901 sq.

36 Mathnawi, translation and commentary, Dr Ibrahim el-Dousouqi Chata, Cairo, 1996, Vol III, p. 335-336.

It should be very clear by now that the translations by Nicholson, Eva de Vitray Meyerovitch and the Arabic version of el-Doussouqi have absolutely nothing to do with the theory of evolution in the modern or Darwinian sense.

This leads us to conclude that those, who suggest that in Rumi's poem one can find the seed for the biological evolution meme, have been citing Mohammad Iqbal blindly or have failed to read the texts in their proper contexts. Rumi is describing the ascendance of the soul to the state of 'Ihsan' best described by the prophetic tradition of 'Hadith Jibril'<sup>37</sup> in which we have a mathematical like definition of what *Islam*, *Iman* and *Ihsan* are. Rumi, like most Sufis take for granted the first two states of Islam and Iman without which one cannot ascend to the third through a path of purification of the soul, a path described in most if not all of his poems, the path leading to the Perfect Man.

#### READING EVOLUTION IN IKHWAN EL-SAFA'S (THE BRETHERN OF PURITY) RASA'IL (EPISTLES)

For a thorough study of the epistles by The Brethren of Purity one is directed to the work of Seyyed Hossein Nasr<sup>38</sup>, and in particular to chapters I and II of his book entitled "*Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*". The Rasa'il according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr are organized in three categories<sup>39</sup>: the primary [propaedeutic] sciences (*riyadiyah*), the religious sciences (*al-shari'at al-wad'iyyah*), and the philosophical sciences (*al-falsafiyat al-haquiyyah*). In this section, we will primarily focus on what Ikhwan al-Safa describe as 'The Hierarchy of Being' or the 'Great Chain of Being' as presented by Nasr<sup>40</sup> when he writes:

"The creation of the world by God, or the manifestation of existence by Being, is compared by the Ikhwan to the generation of numbers from One. ... The creation of the Universe, beginning with the Creator, descending through the multiple states of Being, and ending with the terrestrial creatures whose final link is man, is outlined in the following manner:

1. Creator—whose is one, simple, eternal, permanent.

2. Intellect (*'aql*)—which is of two kinds: innate and acquired.
3. Soul (*nafs*)—which has three species: vegetative, animal, and rational.
4. Matter (*hayula'*)—which is of four kinds: matter of artefacts, physical matter, universal matter, and original matter.
5. Nature (*tabi'ah*)—which is of five kinds: celestial nature and the four elemental natures.
6. Body (*jism*)—which has six directions: above, below, front, back, left and right.
7. The sphere—which has its seven planets.
8. The elements—which has eight qualities, these being in reality the four qualities combined two by two:
  - ▶ Earth—cold and dry
  - ▶ Wat—cold and wet
  - ▶ Air—warm and wet
  - ▶ Fire -warm and dry
9. Beings of this world—which are the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, each having three parts."

Note item 3 on the soul, which according to Ikhwan el-Safa possesses three species. Seyyed Hossein Nasr<sup>41</sup> elaborates on the 'Great Chain of Being' and explains the position of Ikhwan el-Safa as follows:

"According to the Ikhwan, the qualities and perfections belonging to the various levels of the hierarchy of being are not in any way "subjective" or "anthropomorphic," but, being a part of their ontological status, are completely independent of the whims and fancies of the "thoughts" of men... Inasmuch as this hierarchy is based on the degree of intelligence and the development of interior faculties rather than on external similarities, we find that the Ikhwan name the elephant rather than the monkey as the animal closest to man. This is a good example of the difference between the traditional idea of gradation which is based on interior qualities and ontological status and the modern theories of evolution which are based on the physical behavior and the external similarities of creatures... From what we have discussed thus far, however, the divergence of the Ikhwan from modern theories of evolution should be clear. First of all, according to

37 [https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB\\_%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%84](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB_%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%84)

38 Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, chapter 1, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, Thames and Hudson Ltd., Revised edition published in Great Britain, 1978.

39 Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, p.40, 1978.

40 Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, p.51, 1978

41 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 1970, *The Cosmos and the Hierarchy of the Universe*, pp. 69-74.

the *Rasaa'il* all changes on earth occur as acts of the Universal Soul and not by an independent agent acting within bodies here on earth. Secondly, according to the Ikhwan this world is a shadow of another world more real than it, and the "idea" of everything of this world actually exists in the other, so that there is no question of a species changing into another, because the "idea" of each species is a form which is beyond change and decay. In the words of the Ikhwan:

"The species and genus are definite and preserved. Their forms are in matter. But the individuals are in perpetual flow: they are neither definite nor preserved. The reason for the conservation of forms, genus and species, in matter is the fixity of their celestial cause because their efficient cause is the Universal Soul of the spheres instead of the change and continuous flux of individuals which is due to the variability of their cause".

Seyyed Hossein Nasr goes on to explain some similarities:

"There do exist, however, certain similarities between the views of the Ikhwan and modern theories in that both believe that the date of the beginning of the terrestrial existence of plants precedes that of animals, just as minerals precede the plants. Also, the Ikhwan believe in the adaptation of organisms to their environment, much in the manner of the authors of the nineteenth century, but the authors of the *Rasaa'il* consider it from a different perspective. Their whole conception of Nature is, of course, teleological. Everything exists for a purpose, the final purpose of the cosmos being the return of multiplicity to Unity within the heart of the saints...The Ikhwan imply in their writings, without always stating it clearly, that the coming into being of the sublunary region after the heavens, the mineral after the elements, the plants after the minerals, the animals after the plants, and finally, man after the animals, is temporal as well as in principio...In the section of the *Rasaa'il* called "Dispute between Man and the Animals" at the end of the treatise on zoology, the members of the animal kingdom complain to the king of the jinn for man's cruelty against them...At the end, the only point which justifies the domination of man over the animal kingdom is that among men there

are few who become angels on earth, that "among men there are few saints and sages who have the natures of cherubim..."Adaptation to the environment" is not a result of struggles for life or "survival of the fittest," but comes from the wisdom of the Creator, Who has given to each creature what corresponds to its need."

There is absolutely no doubt that Ikhwan el-Safa were describing an evolution that allowed man to access the angelic state, and this alone refutes any attempt to cite them to justify an evolutionary agenda in the Darwinian sense.

#### READING BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION IN KITAB AL-HAYAWAN BY AL-JAHIZ

We mentioned earlier that it is very likely that Mohammad Iqbal may have been the first one to bring forth the idea that evolutionary Biology was buried deep in '*Kitab al-Hayawan*' of al-Jahiz (160-256 A.H./776-869 A.D.)<sup>42</sup>, a Mu'tazilite, believed to be a member of "The Brethren of Purity" (Ikhwan el-Safa), and disciple of Seyar al-Nazzam<sup>43</sup>. Mohammad Iqbal suggests in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* that the seed of evolutionary Biology is deeply rooted in the Mu'tazilite thought of al-Jahiz. This is not surprising given the fact that Iqbal was a modernist by ideology. However, we believe that the seed was planted by George Sarton<sup>44</sup> in his "Introduction to the History of Science," where he cites al-Jahiz three times in the first volume, where he deems absurd to call him a chemist<sup>45</sup>, and writes the following entry, an entry that has been used, especially page 597, by all those who have sought to find a seed for the theory of evolution in the traditional Islamic texts, the entry reads:

"Abu 'Uthman 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz, i.e., the goggle-eyed. Flourished in Basra and died there in 868-69, being more than ninety Muslim years old. One of the Mu'tazilite leaders in Basra, the founder of a sect named after him (al-Jahiziya). Man of letters, with a genuine interest in the natural and anthropological sciences. His most important work is the Book of Animals (*Kitab al-Hayawan*), a very discursive compilation, the purpose of which is theological and folkloric rather than scientific, but which is nevertheless of great interest to the stu-

42 Al-Jahidh, *Kitab al-Hayawan*.

43 Abu Ishāq Ibrahim Ibn Sayyār Ibn Hānī' an-Nazzām, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibrahim\\_an-Nazzam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibrahim_an-Nazzam)

44 George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Volume I, from Homer to Omar Khayyam, Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, Huntington, New York, 1975, p. 597.

45 Ibid. p. 586.

dent of Arabic science and culture. Though partly based on Greek knowledge (chiefly Aristotle), it is intensely Arabic, which explains its great influence upon Arabic literature. Al-Jahiz knew how to obtain ammonia (and salmiac) from animal offals by dry distillation. His work contains the germs of many later theories (evolution, adaptation, animal psychology)”.

First, we believe that Sarton’s qualification of Al-Jahiz as ‘One of the Mu’tazilite leaders in Basra’ is not adequate. Al-Jahiz is believed to have been a disciple of Seyar al-Nazzam, who is considered to have been one of the towering figures of ‘I’tizal/Mu’tazilism’ like Abu-al-Huthail or al-Qadhi Abduldjabbar. The recorded history of the Mu’tazila does not consider Al-Jahiz to have been a leader of the Mu’tazila but rather a student under the supervision of his Kalam Master Seyar al-Nazzam.



For many Muslim modernists the last sentence in the short paragraph above by Sarton on al-Jahiz seems to be justifying a modern Darwinian reading of “Kitab al-Hayawan”. Mehmet Bayrakdar<sup>46</sup> cites two of the three entries on al-Jahiz by Sarton on the History of Science, and writes:

“Although al-Nazzam made the first steps in the field of biological evolutionary thought, in the history of science, the theory of biological evolution was presented for the first time in its complete form by a great early zoologist, al-Jahiz, in the ninth century; with him the theory as such was originated. ...”

There is absolutely no evidence given by George Sarton or for that matter by Bayrakdar to justify a theory of evolution in the Darwinian sense in the works of al-Jahiz as we will show explicitly in what follows.

Let us start with a quote from “*Kitab al-Hayawan*”, often translated as “*The Book of Animals*,” but we believe a better translation ought to be “*The book of Living*” as James E. Montgomery<sup>47</sup> points out and suggests that al-Jahiz<sup>48</sup> alluded to this meaning; the text is clearly written by an author who believes in miracles as the short excerpt from the first volume of *The Book of Living* indicates:

فأما عوامُ الأممِ فضلاً عن خواصهم فهم يعلمون من ذلك مثل ما نعلم وإنما يتفاضل بالبيان والحفظ وينسق المحفوظ فأما المعرفة فتحن فيها سواء وليرعرف العقل وعدمه ونقصانه وإفادته وأقدار معارف الحيوان إلا بما يظهر منها وتلك الأدلة عرفنا فرق ما بين الحي والميت وبين الجماد والحيوان فإن قال الخصم: ما نعرف كلام الذئب ولا معرفة الغراب ولا علم الهدهد قلنا: نحن ناسٌ نؤمن بأن عيسى عليه السلام خلق من غير ذكر وإنما خلق من أنثى وأن آدمَ وحواءَ خلقا من غير ذكر وأنثى وأن عيسى تكلم في المهد وأن يحيى بن زكريا نطق بالحكمة في الصبا وأن عقيماً الفتح وأن عاقراً ولدت وبأشياء كثيرة خرجت خارجة من نَسق العادة فالتسبب الذي به عرفنا أنه قد كان لذلك الهدهد مقدراً من المعرفة دون ما توهمتم وفوق ما مع الهدهد ومتى سأئتمونا عن الحجة فالتسبب واحدة ونحن نقر بأن من دخل الجنة من المجانين والأطفال يدخلون عقلاء كاملين من غير تجاربٍ وتعميرٍ وترتيب فسألتكم عما ألهم الهدهد هي المسألة عما ألهم الطفل في الجنة

This part of this paragraph can be translated as follows:

“We say: we are people who believe that Issa (Jesus) peace be upon him was created without a male; he was created from a single female, and that Adam and Hawa’ (Eve) were created without male

46 Mehmet Bayrakdar, “Al-Jahiz and the Rise of Biological Evolution”, *The Islamic Quarterly* 27:3, 1983, pp. 307-315.

47 Montgomery, James E., *Al-Jahiz: In Praise of the Books*, *Edinburgh Studies in Classical Arabic Literature*, Edinburgh University Press, 2013, pp. 9-10.

48 *Kitab al-Hayawan* 5.286.4-7: If someone says, ‘So and so produced a book on the classes of living things (Hayawan) but does not include the angels and the jinn, yet that is how people use language’—there is another occurrence (mawdi’) of the word ‘living’ (Hayawan)—the words of God (Great and Glorious!) in His Book: ‘The next dwelling—it is living’. The word ‘hayawan’ occurs in the Chapter 29 of the Quran al-ankaboot, verse 64.

and female, and that Issa (Jesus) spoke in his cradle, and that Yahiya (John the Baptist) son of Zakariya spoke with wisdom as a child, and that a sterile man planted a seed and that a sterile woman gave birth, and we believe in many other things that do not fit the cycles of habit ...”

If what is claimed by the majority of modernists is true, namely that one can read evolutionary Biology in the work of al-Jahiz, then they should be able to reconcile the belief of al-Jahiz in the miracles of Issa (Jesus), Adam and Eve, Yahiya (John the Baptist) and Ibrahim and Sarrah as well as the miracle births of both Ismail and Isaac. This belief in the miracle births is inconsistent with any suggestion that al-Jahiz wrote his book “*Kitab al-Hayawan*” with the intention to spread a Darwinian evolution-like meme. James E. Montgomery<sup>49</sup> captures the essence of Al-Jahiz magnum opus when he writes:

“Part 6: Appreciating Design. This part reverts to a consideration of al-Jahiz’s dispute with the Addressee. It presents a translation of the debate that rounds of the ‘Introduction.’ It unearths one of the fundamental features of disagreement—the tendency of some Kalam Masters to debate the principle topics of theology by means of subjects which seem to have nothing to do with these topics. It transpires that the maligned Debate of the Dog and the Cock that so upset the Addressee was really a debate about human responsibility and capacity for action”.

We should also mention Epistle 22 of *Ikhwan el-Safa*<sup>50</sup>, which describes the court case brought by the animals before the king of the Jinn, and in which the conclusion that there are among men saints who can be just and can lead. Like in ‘*Kitab al-Hayawan*’, these debates between animals are used to bring forth human attributes and their divine source.

Montgomery<sup>33</sup> goes on and writes:

“*The Book of Living* and many of al-Jahiz’s other works are informed by, and provide ample insight into, these and other topics. They have frequently been (very clumsily in my view) mined for the sorts of information they might contain on such subjects. It is my contention, however, that we must first pay attention to and understand how and



why al-Jahiz says what he does, before we can cherry-pick his writings. To be in a position to do that we must first enter into his world of ideas.”

We believe that the Muslim modernists who have found the theory of evolution in al-Jahiz’s works have indeed cherry-picked his writings, and have either not read al-Jahiz, a difficult task since mastering Arabic is a necessity, or failed to grasp the essence of his work.

In a book review of Montgomery’s “*Al-Jahiz: In Praise of Books*,” Lara Harb<sup>51</sup> writes:

“Written in an “apocalyptic” age (towards the mid third/ninth century), of which even al-Jahiz’s ugliness seems to have been a sign (!) (p.29), Montgomery argues that there was a particular sense of urgency to save the morally corrupt and riven ‘Abbasid society before the coming of the end of time (ch 1.1). The logic, as Montgomery delineates in Parts 4 and 5, is as follows: in order to bring back cohesion to the fragmented society, al-Jahiz needed to find a common principle on which all would agree. This basic principle is that “life as a product

49 Montgomery, James E., *Al-Jahiz: In Praise of Books*, pp. 7-14, 2013.

50 *Ikhwan el-Safa*, Epistle 22, *The case of the Animals versus Man Before the King of the Jinn*, Translated by Lenn Goodman and Richard MacGregor, 2010.

51 Review of James E. Montgomery, *Al-Jahiz: In Praise of Books* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 78/2 (June 2015).



of creation necessitates a Creator Whom we should celebrate out of gratitude for the blessings He has showered upon us” (p. 265). This obligatory celebration and appreciation of God (agreed upon by all except the Eternalists, the Dahriya, the century’s “atheists”, p. 277) takes place in two forms: by writing an account of God’s creations (5.3) and doing so through the proper use of Arabic language (5.2).

God’s creations, from the despicable creatures to the most admired, are all signs of His majesty. The world is thus a “semiotic system” to be read and interpreted, and humans (who are themselves signs) have the unique intellectual capacity to do so (pp. 270-1).”

We will now address some of the most referenced passages in “*The Book of Living*,” and show that apophenia seems to be the underlying diagnostic.

In his article “*Al-Jahiz and the Rise of Biological Evolution*,” Mehmet Bayrakdar<sup>30</sup> cites ‘*Kitab al-Hayawan*’ ten times. I will go through the direct passages he quotes from ‘*Kitab al-Hayawan*’. Bayrakdar suggests that al-Jahiz described three mechanisms that are evolution mechanisms and goes on

to cite al-Jahiz to justify 1) the Struggle for Existence, 2) Transformation of species and 3) Environmental factors. Frank N. Egerton<sup>52</sup> in his ‘*Roots of Ecology*’ writes:

“Mehmet Bayrakdar claims al-Jahiz was an evolutionist because he “recognized the effect of environmental factors on animal life,” described a struggle for existence, and reported that some people said that dogs, wolves, and foxes came from an original form of quadrupeds. However, these thoughts were not synthesized into a theory.”

Egerton<sup>53</sup> writes elsewhere:

“Bayrakdar’s case for al-Jahiz being an evolutionist is unconvincing, but his narrower claim that he “recognized the effect of environmental factors on animal life” (1983:151) seems valid. Apparently, al-Jahiz was the first to discuss food chains, although his details are not always accurate.”

Rebecca Scott<sup>54</sup> in “*Darwin’s Ghosts*” writes:

“If certain historians have claimed that Jahiz wrote about evolution a thousand years before Darwin and that he discovered natural selection, they have misunderstood. Jahiz was not trying to work out how the world began or how species had come to be. He believed that God had done the making and that he had done it brilliantly. He took divine creation and intelligent design for granted. So did all the people he talked to about animals—the Bedouins and the hunters and the animal trainers in the zoological gardens in Baghdad. There was, for him, no other possible explanation.

What is striking, however, about Jahiz’s portrait of nature in *Living Beings* is his vision of interconnectedness, his repeated images of nets and webs. He certainly saw ecosystems, as we would call them now, in the natural world. He also understood what we might call the survival of the fittest. He saw adaptation. Like Aristotle, he believed in spontaneous generation—he had seen flies emerge from the flesh of dead animals. None of those things was remarkable or controversial in his time. His aim in writing *Living Beings*, he told his readers, was to prove to them that the world of animals around them was interconnected, mutually dependent, that everything had its place in the great web and that it was possible to account even for the presence of harm and danger in the world as a sign of God’s generosity and blessing...

52 Frank N. Egerton, *Roots of Ecology: Antiquity to Haeckel*, University of California Press, 2012, pp. 45-47.

53 Frank N. Egerton, *A history of Ecological Sciences, Part 6: Arabic Language Science—Origins and Zoological Writings*, Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America, April 2002, p. 143.

54 Rebecca Scott, *Darwin’s Ghosts: The Secret History of Evolution*, Spiegel & Grau, New York, 2012, p. 51.

Had he pursued his investigation of anomalies like Darwin did later with his barnacles, for instance, he might have reached different conclusions about how species had come to be, explanations that might have centered on the idea of descent with modification. Instead, Jahiz used the collapse of taxonomies to question categories of high and low in creation, to show, again, how the All-Powerful Creator had fashioned a world of endless complexity and sophistication in which every organism had its place and depended on everything else.”

**READING BIOLOGICAL  
EVOLUTION IN IBN-MISKAWAYH'S  
AL-FAWZ AL-ASGHAR**

The best introduction to Abu 'Ali Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Miskawayh (421 H) and his work, especially on wisdom and ethics, can be found in “*An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*” edited by S. H. Nasr & M. Aminrazavi<sup>55</sup>. The work of Mohammed Arkoun<sup>56-57</sup> on Miskawaih is also recommended. The work that tends to be cited in relation to the theory of evolution, in particular, is “*Al-Fawz Al-Asghar*”<sup>58</sup> which has not been translated and is only accessible in Arabic to our knowledge. The book in question is a book of ‘*Aqida*’ (creed) and philosophy not a book on evolutionary biology as some modernists have suggested. Miskawayh’s *Al-Fawz Al-Asghar* consists of three main parts. In the first part, Miskawayh deals with the proofs of the existence of God, then he moves to the soul and its modes in the second part and wraps up the book with the subject of prophethood in the third and final part.

It becomes very hard for those who have read Miskawayh’s *Al-Fawz Al-Asghar* to identify anything Darwinian that can be connected with a theory of physical evolution.

Yasien Mohamed<sup>59</sup> writes about the Cosmology of Miskawayh:

“Miskawayh’s concept of the universe is set

forth in his *al-Fawz al-Asghar*. According to Badawi<sup>60</sup>, it is similar to al-Farabi’s *Ara’ ahl al-madinah al-Fadhila* (opinions of the People of the Virtuous City) in its attempt to reconcile Aristotelian and Neoplatonic elements. Miskawayh’s work deals with three main themes: the existence of God, the soul and prophecy. Neoplatonism is clearly evident in his conception of the cosmos, and in chapter 5 he explicitly acknowledges his indebtedness to Porphyry. In chapter 9 he reveals Neoplatonic tendencies in his opinion that the first existent to emanate from God is the intellect. Miskawayh adopted Neoplatonic ideas from the Ikhwan, particularly with respect to the evolution of being from mineral through vegetal and animal to human, and finally to prophets, who are the highest level of being and who complete the cycle of evolution...

Clearly, then, Miskawayh adopted the Neoplatonic view of creation. Creation emanates from God through a series of intermediaries starting from the First Intellect and ending with man, the highest in the chain of being. It is man’s challenge to transcend his corporeality and become godlike in order to return to the source of his being, God. This is man’s process of becoming.”

Ibrahim Abu Bakar<sup>61</sup> in a paper on Ibn Miskawayh’s thought writes:

“Hawi (Sami S. Hawi) finds in the “*Tahdhib*” different thing. He finds in the book the idea of human evolution of Darwin and Huxley. He says that Ibn Miskawayh (A.D. 936-1030) wrote about evolution of man in the “*Tabdhib*” and the “*Fawz al-Asghar*”. In this connection, Hawi says, “This philosopher [Ibn Miskawayh] possessed a profound awareness of the evolution of life that stands on a par with the views of Darwin, Huxley and others.”

The statement by Sami S. Hawi<sup>62</sup> with his own translation of the Arabic text follows:

“Perhaps a fuller and more daring expression about the evolution of man and his ascent from

55 *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, Vol 1: From Zoroaster to Umar Khayyam, Edited by S. H. Nasr & M. Aminrazavi, I. B. Tauris Publishers, London. New York, in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 2008.

56 Mohammed Arkoun, in “Deux Épitres de Miskawayh,” *Miskawaih’s al-Ladhdhat wa al-Alam*, édition avec introduction et notes, “Bulletin d’études orientales, 17 (1961-1962) 7-74, esp. 11-9 for the Arabic edition.

57 Mohammed Arkoun, in “Deux Épitres de Miskawayh,” *Miskawaih’s Risalat al-Nafs wa al-Aql*,” “Bulletin d’études orientales, 17 (1961-1962) 7-74, esp. 10-55 for the Arabic edition.

58 Ibn Miskawayh, *Al Fawz Al Asghar*, ‘*Manchurat Dar Kitabat elhayat*’, Beyrouth, Lebanon.

59 Yasien Mohamed, *The Cosmology of Ikhwan al-Safa, Miskawayh and al-Isfahani*, *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4, Special Issue: Islam and Science (Winter 2000), pp. 657-679.

60 Abd al-Rahman Badawi, “Miskawayh,” in M.M. Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 469-479.

61 Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Some Aspects of Ibn Miskawayh’s Thought*, *ISLAMIYYAT* 10 (1989) 115-123.

62 Sami S. Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism: A Philosophic Study of Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974) p. 123.

lower forms of life by Muslim philosophers is to be found in Ibn Miskawaih, A.D. 936-1030. This philosopher possessed a profound awareness of the evolution of life that stands on a par with the views of Darwin, Huxley and others. Part of his statement on evolution will show that certain Islamic philosophers were awake to the facts of evolution in a strict and direct manner, and that such facts were present in the corpus of Islamic thought just before Ibn Tufayl by less than a century:

The first step in the ascension of plants, of a higher order, is to free themselves from the ground and from their need to consolidate their veins in it. This is rendered possible by their newly developed power of free motion. This first animal stage is weak because of the weakness of sensitivity in it. This sensitivity develops to one general sense, that of touch, such as in sea shells and snails ... Animals in this stage remain weak in locomotion even though they freed themselves from the ground and evolved to a new life. This so because they are still very near to the immediate realm of plant life and still remain some rudiments of it. Then they evolve from this to another stage: here their capacities of movement and sense become stronger; such is the case of worms, many kinds of butterflies and crawling beings. This stage is also surpassed to another. Sensitivity in these new animals becomes stronger and from them emerge animals having four senses such as the mole and the like. From here they [animals] progressively evolve to higher stage in which sight is generated; this is the case with ants and bees ... then they approach the last stage of the animal kingdom. Although this rank is superior, nevertheless it remains base and inferior, far from the level of monkeys and the like. These become near to man in structure and human appearance. There is no difference between these types and man except a little, which if surpassed they become humans.<sup>63</sup>

One cannot miss the tone of Hawi's translation of Ibn Miskawaih passage from '*al-Fawz al-asghar*'; indeed, Sami Hawi's tone is that of a converted evolutionary Darwinian. Like Iqbal's reading of Rumi's poem, Hawi's reading of Ibn Miskawaih's *Al-Fawz Al-Asghar* has to be deconstructed by showing that Hawi constructs, through a translation of an infinitesimal part of Miskawaih's work,

the illusion that imbedded in the traditional text are the seeds of an evolutionary Darwinian theory. The same construct is claimed by those who see in a small paragraph of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqadima*<sup>11</sup> above the seeds of a Darwinian theory of evolution as will be shown below. The texts by Ibn Miskawaih and Ibn Khaldun are completely taken out of context, respectively.

Let us first address the reference to Ibn Miskawaih. The critical part of the text translated by Sami Hawi can be found in the chapter entitled '*The Third Case: Concerning Prophecies*' of Ibn Miskawaih's *al-Fawz al-Asghar*<sup>64</sup>. In this chapter Ibn Miskawaih describes the 'Great Chain of Being', a chain very similar to that described by the Brethren of Purity, Ikhwan el-Safa, in the fiftieth Epistle, in the process of purification of the soul leading to the state of prophethood. Miskawaih takes this process of evolution towards the status of prophethood, adopts it and uses it as a basis for his moral theory. Like for the Brethren of Purity, the process is separated by Miskawaih into four stages: the mineral, the vegetative, the animal and the human. The state of prophethood, the viceregency state is reached by imbibing the celestial soul.

The arguments put forth to explain what the Great Chain of Being meant for The Brethren of Purity remain valid for the case of Ibn Miskawaih. This is very well illustrated by Seyyed Hussein Nasr<sup>65</sup>, who in '*The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*', writes:

"Basing himself on Aristotle's *De Anima* and Alexandrian commentators, but also adding elements not to be found in those sources explicitly, Ibn Sina developed a faculty psychology bases on the relation between the five external and five internal senses. He also classified souls (*nafs*) into the vegetative, animal, and human or rational, each soul possessing certain faculties that are in fact developed fully only in certain species of a particular kingdom. Only in man are all the faculties belonging to all the three souls, which he possesses within himself, fully developed. Ibn Sina relates the gradual development of each faculty to the great chain of being, which is based on the fundamental notion of hierarchy and an ever-greater degree of perfection as the chain is ascended."

63 Translation by Hawi of Ibn Miskawaih, *Al-Fawz al-asghar*, Beirut, 1940, pp. 78-83. See also by the same author *Tabdhib al-Akhlāq*, Cairo, 1950, pp. 55, 58.

64 Ibn Miskawaih, *Al-Fawz al-Asghar*, Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2010 with funding from University of Toronto, <http://www.archive.org/details/kitbalfawzalagh00ibnm>, p. 85.

65 Seyyed Hussein Nasr, in '*The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*', Curzon Press, Edited by Mehdi Amin Razavi, 1996, pp. 71-72.



READING BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION IN IBN-KHALDUN'S MUQADDIMAH

The passage from the Muqaddimah that has been used to justify biological evolution in the Darwinian sense has already been cited above when relating a presentation given by Usama Hassan of the Quilliam foundation<sup>10</sup>. We now elaborate on the fact that the passage of the Muqaddimah referred to by most if not all the Muslim modernist is completely taken out of context and suggests a lack of rigor to be polite and a total absence of scholarship on the citing party.

I will start by using the same reference used by Usama Hassan, namely Franz Rosenthal's translation of Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddima<sup>11</sup>. The passage cited by Usama Hassan and others is part of the 'Sixth Prefatory Discussion: The various types of human beings who have supernatural perception either through natural disposition or through exercise, preceded by a discussion of inspiration and dream visions'<sup>66</sup>. What Usama Hassan fails to cite is the text preceding and following the passage he cites. So I will take the liberty to cite the text to show that the passage in question is taken completely out of context. On 'The real meaning of

prophecy' Rosenthal translates the text preceding Ibn Khaldun's passage of interest as follows:

"It should be known that we—May God guide you and us—notice that this world with all the created things in it has a certain order and solid construction. It shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some parts of creation with others, and transformations of some existent things into others, in a pattern that is both remarkable and endless. Beginning with the world of the body and sensual perception, and therein first with the world of visible elements, (one notices) how these elements are arranged gradually and continually in an ascending order, from earth to water, (from water) to air, and (from air) to fire. Each one of the elements is prepared to be transformed into the next higher or lower one, and sometimes is transformed. The higher one is always finer than the one preceding it. Eventually, the world of the spheres is reached. They are finer than anything else. They are in layers which interconnected, in a shape which the senses are able to perceive only through the existence of motions. These motions provide some people with knowledge of the measurements and positions of the spheres, and also with knowledge of the existence of the essences beyond, the influence of which is noticeable in the spheres through the fact (that they have motion)."

The text following Ibn Khaldun's passage of interest is translated by Rosenthal as:

"Now, in the various worlds we find manifold influences. In the world of sensual perception there are certain influences of the motions of the spheres and the elements. In the world of creation there are certain influences of the motions of growth and perception. All this is evidence of the fact that there is something that exercises an influence and is different from the bodily substances). This is something spiritual. It is connected with the created things, because the various worlds must be connected in their existence. This spiritual thing is the soul, which has perception and causes motion. Above the soul there must exist something else that gives the soul the power of perception and motion, and that is also connected with it. Its essence should be pure perception and absolute intellection. This is the world of the angels. The soul, consequently, must be prepared to exchange humanity for angelicity, in order actually to become part of the angelic species at certain times in the flash of a

66 Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, <http://www.saaid.net/book/open.php?cat=7&book=2085>, pp. 90-94

moment. This happens after the spiritual essence of the soul has become perfect in actuality, as we shall mention later on.

(The soul) is connected with the stage next to it, as are all the orders of the existents, as we have mentioned before. It is connected both upward and downward. Downward, it is connected with the body. Through (the body, the soul) acquires the sense perceptions by which it is prepared for actual intellection.

Upward, it is connected with the stage of the angels. There, it acquires scientific and supernatural perceptions, for knowledge of the things that come into being exists timelessly in the intellections of (the angels). This is in consequence of the well-constructed order of existence mentioned above, which requires that the essences and powers of (the world of existence) be connected with one another.

The human soul cannot be seen, but its influence is evident in the body. It is as if all (the body's) parts, in combination or separately, were organs of the soul and its powers. The powers of action are touching with the hand, walking with the foot, speaking with the tongue, and the total combined motion with the body."

There remains no doubt that those, like Usama Hassan, who cite the passage from *al-Muqaddimah* to suggest that Ibn Khaldun was writing about some type of biological evolution, have absolutely taken the passage in question out of context as is clearly evident in the text cited above.

There are yet other passages in the *Muqaddimah* that are omitted by most of those who read biological evolution in Ibn Khaldun's writings. In the sections entitled "The sciences (knowledge) of human beings and the sciences (knowledge) of angels," and "The sciences (knowledge) of the prophets," respectively, the passages are translated by Rosenthal<sup>67</sup> (The original Arabic references<sup>68</sup>) as:

"Of the (three) worlds, the one we can perceive best is the world of human beings, since it is existential and attested by our corporeal and spiritual perceptions. The world of the senses is shared by us with the animals, but the world of the intellect and the spirits is shared by us with the angels, whose essences are of the same kind as the essences of that world. They are essences free from corporeality and matter, and they are pure intellect in which intellect, thinker, and the object of thinking are one. It

is, in a way, an essence the reality of which is perception and intellect.

The sciences (knowledge) of the (angels), thus, always agree by nature with the things to be known. They can never have any defect. The knowledge of human beings, on the other hand, is the attainment of the form of the thing to be known in their essences, after it had not been there. It is all acquired. The essence in which the forms of the things to be known are obtained, namely, the soul, is a material substance that gradually takes over the forms of existence with the help of the forms of the things to be known that it obtains. Eventually, it reaches perfection, and, through death, its existence fulfills itself as regards both its matter and its form.

The objects in the soul are subject to constant vacillation between negation and assertion. One of the two is sought by means of some middle (term) to connect the two extremes. When that is achieved and the object has become known, it must be explained that there exists agreement (between knowledge and the thing known). Such agreement may often be clarified by technical logical argumentation, but that is from "behind the veil," and it is not like the direct vision that is found in connection with the sciences (knowledge) of the angels.

The "veil" may be removed, and the agreement may, thus, be effected through direct perceptive vision. It has been explained that human beings are ignorant by nature, because vacillation affects their knowledge. They learn through acquisition (of knowledge) and technique, because they obtain the objects they seek by applying their ability to think according to technical rules. The removal of the veil to which we have referred is achieved only through training in dhikr exercises of which the best is prayer, which forbids sinful and evil actions—through abstinence from all distracting food of consumption—of which the most important part is fasting—and through devoting oneself to God with all one's powers.

"God taught man what he did not know."

This passage is followed by another focusing on the sciences (knowledge) of prophets and is translated by Rosenthal as:

"We find that this kind of human being is in a divine condition that is different from (ordinary) human ambitions and conditions. In prophets, the trend toward the divine is more powerful than

67 The *Muqaddimah*—An Introduction to History by Ibn Khaldun, trans. Franz Rosenthal, Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 551-553.

68 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, <http://www.saaed.net/book/open.php?cat=7&book=2085>, pp. 460-465.



their humanity, as far as the powers of perception, the powers of desire—that is, concupiscence and wrath—and the other conditions of the body are concerned. (Prophets) keep away from things human, except in as much as they are necessary for life. They turn toward divine matters, such as worship and the remembrance (dhikr) of God, as their knowledge of Him requires. They give information about Him and (transmit) the revelation for the guidance of the nation (of believers) which they received in (their divine) condition. They do that according to one particular method and in a manner known to be peculiar to them. It undergoes no change in them and is like a natural disposition which God has given them.

Revelation has already been discussed by us at the beginning of the book, in the chapter dealing with people who possess supernatural perception. We explained there that the whole of existence in (all) its simple and composite worlds is arranged in a natural order of ascent and descent, so that everything constitutes an uninterrupted continuum. The essences at the end of each particular stage of the worlds are by nature prepared to be transformed into the essence adjacent to them, either above or below them. This is the case with the simple material elements; it is the case with palms and

vines, (which constitute) the last stage of plants, in their relation to snails and shellfish, (which constitute) the (lowest) stage of animals. It is also the case with monkeys, creatures combining in themselves cleverness and perception, in their relation to man, the being who has the ability to think and to reflect. The preparedness (for transformation) that exists on either side, at each stage of the worlds, is meant when (we speak about) their connection.

Above the human world, there is a spiritual world. It is known to us by its influence upon us, in that it gives us the powers of perception and volition. The essences of that spiritual world are pure perception and absolute intellection. It is the world of the angels.

It follows from all this that the human soul must be prepared to exchange humanity for angelicity, in order actually to become part of the angelic species at any time, in a single instant. It will afterwards resume its humanity. But in the world of angelicity, it has meanwhile accepted (ideas) that it is charged to transmit to its fellow human beings. That is the meaning of revelation and being addressed by the angels.

All prophets possess this predisposition. It is like a natural disposition for them. In exchanging (their humanity for angelicity), they experience strain and sensations of choking, as is known in this connection.

Their (supernatural) knowledge is one of direct observation and vision. No mistake or slip attaches itself to it, and it is not affected by errors or unfounded assumptions. The agreement in it is an essential one, because the veil of the supernatural is gone, and clear and direct observation has been attained. When (the prophets) quit that state and reassume their humanity, this clarity does not quit the knowledge they have, for it has become attached to it in the former condition.

And because they possess the virtue that brings them to that condition, their (experience) constantly repeats itself, until their guidance of the nation (of believers), which was the purpose for which they were sent, is accomplished. Thus, it is said in the Qur'an: "I am merely a human being like you, to whom it has been revealed that your God is one God. Thus, be straightforward with Him and ask Him for forgiveness."

This should be understood. One should compare what we said earlier at the beginning of the book, about the different kinds of people possessing supernatural perception. It will constitute

clear comment and explanation. There, we have explained the matter at sufficient length.

“God gives success.”

There is no shadow of a doubt that Ibn Khaldun like many Muslim scholars before him was writing about the same ‘Great Chain of Being’, which gives human beings access to the angelical state. It is clear that Ibn Khaldun focuses on the essences and identifies the movement of ascension with the soul not with the body. The rest of the text is self-explicative.

### CONCLUSION

In this paper we have primarily focussed on shedding some light on the abuse that some Muslim writers have inflicted on Rumi’s poetry, Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah*, Miskawayh’s *Al-Fawz Al-Asghar*, some of Ikhwan al-Safa’s Epistles and

Al-Jahiz’s *Kitab Al-Hayawan*. We hope to have accomplished the task of convincing the reader that those who claim to read a biological theory of evolution in the traditional texts cited in this paper have either cherry-picked by taking passages out of their contexts or have clearly not read the texts. We will leave it up to the reader to decide.

We should also point out the fact that the Muslim modernists who have suggested a reading of biological evolution in the traditional texts have been condemning the “I’jaz al-‘Ilmi” movement (concordism) vitriolically. It is only fair to remind them that through their seeking a Darwinian seed in the traditional texts they commit the very sin they have accused those who seek to find modern science in the sacred scriptures.

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## Will Americans Stand up Against Trump’s Muslim Ban?

by Faisal Kutty

This past July, as they have done for the past 232 years, Americans celebrated the fourth of July, marking the country’s independence. It celebrates the Declaration of Independence, adopted on 4 July 1776, when the 13 US colonies declared themselves independent from the British Empire.

In the minds of many, it is about freedom and equality—but defining what these concepts mean invites social division.

The oft-cited words of the Declaration’s preamble are definitely stirring: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Despite the foregoing and the “Give me your tired, your poor” invitation of Lady Liberty, Americans have long been fractured over who and what a patriot is or should be.

This tension is all the more evident now as we see images of immigrant families being torn apart, African-Americans marginalised, and bigoted pronouncements about Muslims from “the land of the free and home of the brave”.

Yes, Americans have come a long way from the

unforgivable treatment of the First Nations people and slaves, but times have changed again under the Trump administration.

We have recently been witnessing the inhumane effects of the zero tolerance immigration policy. The sight of children being torn from parents and jailed in cages is clearly not the US most of us thought we would live to see.

Many of us also watched in disbelief as the US Supreme Court upheld the Trump administration’s “travel ban” in *Trump v Hawaii*. The direction that the country appears to be headed is even more troubling for me now, as the father of two American Muslim children.

The highest court’s decision to uphold what is commonly known as the “Muslim travel ban” was nothing short of religious prejudice cloaked in the garb of national security.

Yes, claims of national security and racial/religious discrimination are often intertwined. The US is not alone in this, but the US is different and must be held to a higher standard, because it was ostensibly established as a home for those fleeing discrimination based on religious and other differences.



As Americans reflect during this critical time, it is incumbent that they take a step back and reassess where their great country is headed.

The majority and minority opinions from the Supreme Court in the “travel ban” case can help in this process. The similarities between the shameful Korematsu case, when Japanese Americans were rounded up and detained in internment camps, and the Muslim “travel ban” decision provide much food for thought.

The majority opinion in Hawaii noted that the Korematsu decision, in which the Supreme Court majority sided with the government, was gravely wrong and “has no place in law under the Constitution”. Brave words indeed from Chief Justice John Roberts.

But as others have noted, it is not courage to speak out against past injustices while upholding or facilitating similar conduct today. The majority, led by Roberts, shamefully and hypocritically did not muster the same outrage against the fear and xenophobia used today to push through this “travel ban”.

As Justice Sonia Sotomayor pointed out for a minority of the bench, there are numerous parallels between the Japanese internment case and the “travel ban” case: “As here, the government invoked an ill-defined national security threat to justify an exclusionary policy of sweeping proportion ... As here, the government was unwilling to reveal its own intelligence agencies’ views of the alleged security concerns to the very citizens it purported to

protect.

“And as here, there was strong evidence that impermissible hostility and animus motivated the government’s policy.”

In both the Japanese internment case and the “travel ban” case, the Supreme Court uncritically accepted the government claim that the conduct was “facially neutral”. Thankfully, in both cases, the efforts to mask racism or religious bigotry did not go unopposed.

As Sotomayor and other minority justices did in the “travel ban” case, Justice Frank Murphy in the Korematsu case called out the Japanese internment as being based on what he called an “erroneous assumption of racial guilt” rather than “bona fide military necessity”. Murphy bluntly and bravely labelled the government conduct as the “legalisation of racism”.

History only benefits us if we learn from it. Sadly, it appears that Americans are ignoring the lessons.

In what seems prophetic now, Murphy also warned in his Korematsu dissent that if the Supreme Court sanctioned such suspicion and hatred, it would “encourage and open the door to discriminatory actions against other minority groups in the passions of tomorrow”.

To my American friends, students, neighbours and colleagues, I ask: will you learn from history and take steps to avert shameful deviations from your founding principles?

Will you stand up for the ideals and values that

actually made this country great? Will you guarantee that my American children will have the same rights and freedoms as the rest of you?

I know the answers I expect from those of you I have encountered over the last nine years as I commuted between Canada and the US. Indeed, the US I know was evident as hundreds of thousands of Americans across the country marched to protest the heartless immigration policy and the thousands of lawyers who lined up to assist those caught up in immigration limbo.

The Americans I have come across are some of the kindest, most principled and fair-minded people I have ever had the good fortune of meeting. I call on these Americans to encourage their fellow citizens to consider these questions through the lens of both the letter and spirit of the Declaration and the Constitution.

It is now more important than ever to take a few moments to reflect on what should really make the US unique in the eyes of many: freedom, liberty and equality for all.

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## Muslims and the Environmental Crisis

by Fazlun Khalid

There are a very few spaces left today that can be described as 'Islamic' in the sense that a truly holistic appreciation of it exists that takes into account and integrated perspective that includes a deep affinity with the natural world.

It has often been observed that Islam cannot ordinarily be described as a religion and that it prescribes a way of life that goes beyond the performance of rituals ... It provides a holistic approach to existence, it does not differentiate between the sacred and the secular and neither does it place a distinction between the world of humankind and the world of nature ... *'The creation of the heavens and the earth is far greater than the creation of humankind. But most of humankind do not know it'* (Qur'an 40: 57).<sup>1</sup>

So, how is it that given this perspective that Muslim nation states and their populace inhabitants have been left behind when it comes to manifesting concerns about the environmental debacle the human race has collectively created for itself? A short answer to this is that in common with the other traditions Muslims have succumbed to western hegemony based on the secular ethic driven by capitalism that has reduced allegiance to the divine and the sacred to a private pursuit. A near

total disconnection from the natural world is now evidenced by a rampant consumer ethic at the individual level and the penchant for grandiose projects at the level of the nation state which manifests itself in the competition to construct tall buildings.

'Between 1900 and 2000, the increase in world population was three times greater than during the entire previous history of humanity—an increase from 1.5 to 6.1 billion in just 100 years.'<sup>2</sup> We are now rapidly approaching the 8 billion mark and this points to a stark economic reality. As human numbers grow and the economic cake shrinks the rich and the powerful grab the icing and the poor and the weak are left with the crumbs. And the end result of blasting and bruising Planet Earth to enrich ourselves has caused nature to change course. We, the human race, have become a force of nature and scientists have seen fit to call this time the Anthropocene—the human epoch.

More than 1,700 independent scientists, 'including the majority of living Nobel laureates in the sciences' issued a warning in 1992 that cautioned humankind that, 'a great change in our stewardship of the Earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided' and showed in their manifesto 'that humans were on a collision course with the natural world'. This warn-

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1 Fazlun M Khalid, 'Islam and the Environment', in Peter Timmerman and Ted Munn (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Global Environmental Change*, volume 5: Social and economic dimensions of global environmental change (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), pp. 332–339.

2 World Population Growth by Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina. Our World in Data, First published in 2013; updated April, 2017. Available at <https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-growth> (accessed September 2018).



ing was reiterated by more than 15,000 scientists 25 years later in December 2017: ‘World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice.’<sup>3</sup> They expressed concern about current, impending, or potential damage on planet Earth involving ozone depletion, freshwater availability, marine life depletion, ocean dead zones, forest loss, biodiversity destruction, climate change, and continued human population growth. They proclaimed that fundamental changes were urgently needed to avoid the consequences our present course would bring. They ‘... pleaded that we stabilize the human population ... (and) implored that we cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and phase out fossil fuels, reduce deforestation, and reverse the trend of collapsing biodiversity.’<sup>4</sup>

humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in generally solving these foreseen environmental challenges, and alarmingly, most of them are getting far worse ... Especially troubling is the current trajectory of potentially catastrophic climate change due to rising GHGs from burning fossil fuels, ... deforestation, ... and agricultural production—particularly from farming ruminants for meat consumption ... Moreover, we have unleashed a mass extinction event, the sixth in roughly 540 million years, wherein many current life forms could be annihilated or at least committed to extinction by the end of this century.<sup>5</sup>

The scientists further itemize their concerns as follows:

- intense but geographically and demographically uneven material consumption;
- continued rapid population growth as a primary driver behind many ecological and even societal threats;
- reassess the role of an economy rooted in growth;
- reduce greenhouse gases;
- incentivize renewable energy;
- protect habitats;
- restore ecosystems;
- curb pollution;
- halt defaunation;
- constrain invasive alien species.

Scientists are less prone to using emotive language than most of us but when they say: ‘humanity is not taking the urgent steps needed to safeguard our imperilled biosphere’ we need to sit up and take notice. They urge us to put pressure on our politicians and ‘insist that their governments take immediate action as a moral imperative to current and future generations of human and other life’ and compel political leaders to do the right thing. They also remind us that: ‘It is also time to re-examine and change our individual behaviours, including limiting our own reproduction (ideally to replacement level at most) and drastically diminishing our per capita consumption of fossil fuels, meat, and other resources.’<sup>6</sup>

So where does all this leave the Islamic world—the Muslims? My engagement in this work for the past 40 years has convinced me that there is much we can contribute to turn things around for the

3 William J Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Thomas M Newsome, et al., ‘World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice’ *BioScience*, 67/12 (1 December 2017), pp. 1026–1028. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/67/12/1026/4605229> (accessed on September 2018).

4 Op cit.

5 Op cit.

6 Op cit.

better. We comprise 20% of the world's population and a corresponding mitigation of the problems we have collectively caused can be beneficial for all of us. I have attempted to show in my book<sup>7</sup> that what we have come to describe today as environmentalism is deeply embedded in the matrix of Islam. It is at its simplest level about good manners. It is about personal behaviour and how it manifests itself in our relationships with others. It is about being well behaved in our relationship with the natural world and other sentient beings. The exemplar is Prophet Muhammad, and it grew from the foundations he established into a range of rules and institutions that manifested an expression of life in a way that is truly holistic. As the prophetic model is based on the Qur'an it could be distilled into three categories, bearing in mind that public good must be the ultimate objective. They are to do what is right, forbid what is wrong and act with moderation at all times: Let there be a community among you that calls for what is good, urges what is right and forbids what is wrong; those are the ones who have success (Qur'an 3: 104).

The body of the Shariah allows us to deduce three general principles as it pertains to the natural world:

- The elements that compose the natural world are common property, bearing in mind that the ultimate owner of the Earth is the Creator.
- The right to benefit from natural resources is a right held in common.
- There shall be no damage or infliction of damage to it bearing in mind future users.

What is now emerging as 'Islamic environmentalism' (a tautology) originated from this foundational code and Muslim legalists have over the centuries worked out both principles and structures to give this expression. They concern individual rights, obligations and responsibilities individuals owe to the community, accountability, benefits accruing to users from renewable and non-renewable resources held in common, and penalties for improper use of natural resources. I have given concrete examples of how this could work in the book, although I see it only as a beginning. My intentions have been to start a process of dialogue and to invite scholars with greater understanding

of the Qur'an and the traditions to participate in extending and improving this knowledge base, as there is much to be drawn from the sources.

But I cannot repeat often enough that there is an inherent urgency in what we face given the predictions by scientists of global systems collapse and the looming climate crisis. What Muslims, who form over one-fifth of the world's population, can offer the rest to mitigate the collapse and how soon we do it will have a bearing on how the human race will survive in a changed world. Equally, how the rest relate to planet Earth will have a bearing on Muslims, and the times call for a sensitivity to these common challenges in a shared space. The Islamic template provides us with a model whereby we could lead reasonably satisfactory lifestyles that meet our needs based on the prophetic tradition, where caring and sharing takes precedence over selfishness, personal aggrandizement and greed. I summarize them below:

- Live moderate simple lives.
- Do not hoard wealth for its own sake.
- Share your wealth. Pay the compulsory zakat—2½ per cent of your savings—as charity. Give your surplus wealth to the needy and good causes.
- Caring for the environment is a sacred undertaking.
- Broadly-speaking, money is any non-perishable commodity that can be used as a medium of exchange. Usury/interest and fake money is forbidden.
- Markets must be free and open.
- Fair trade is encouraged and is built into contractual obligations.
- Wages must be paid immediately when they are due.
- Conduct affairs by mutual consultation.
- Give precedence to the rule of law.

The first community of Prophet Muhammad in Madinah was a social patterning Muslims can emulate, working in harmony with the heartbeat of the natural world. It can be applied at the level of the nation state and also in small communities wherever Muslims live. There are good examples to be set from which no doubt our children will benefit.

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7 Falun M Khalid, *Signs on the Earth—Islam, Modernity and the Climate Crisis*. Kube, Leicester UK, Winter 2018/19.

# An Islamic Framework for the Natural Law of a Just Third Way

by Dr. Robert D. Crane

In the prologue to his *Summa Theologica* the Christian “Father of the Church”, Saint Thomas Aquinas, called Ibn Sina (Avicenna) “my mentor”. Together they envisaged the discipline of transcendent jurisprudence as a rational key to all thought and action. Islamic scholars at the time used the term *maqasid al shari’ah* as a paradigm of thought designed to seek ultimate truth from three sources, namely, divine revelation (*haqq al yaqin*), scientific observation of the laws of nature (*‘ain al yaqin*), and rational articulation of what is common to both (*‘ilm al yaqin*).

This concept of integral jurisprudence flourished in Europe as a primordial form of “natural law”. Unfortunately, however, as a result of the militant secularism that reigned during the 19th century in Europe and even in America, the transcendent nature of natural law was popularly reversed in order to exclude reliance on anything that could not be physically observed and measured. The designation “natural law” therefore is not accepted in all the world religions, except in Roman Catholicism, where the traditionally transcendent ontology of natural law is still a matter of faith.

The best effort to substantiate Islamic jurisprudence as natural law may be found in the book, *Natural Law: A Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Trialogue*, by Anver M. Emon, with Matthew Levering and David Novak, Oxford, 2014, 231 pages. Even Professor Emon, however, in more recent publications seems to indicate that the concept of natural law may be too controversial in Western thought to serve as a definition for other civilizations.

In Islamic jurisprudence the specific rules for application, namely, the axiology or *fiqh*, should be derived both from the rationally derived purposes and from the specific rules evident in divine revelation and prophetic practice.

The purposes, i.e., *maqasid* (also known as the universals or *kulliyat* and the essentials or *dururiyat*), can be divided into two categories, each divided into four specific goals or *hajjiyat*.

Each of these can be divided into still more specific tertiary objectives or *tahsinniyat*, and then into courses of action (*‘amal*), as suggested in my books, *Planning the Future of Saudi Arabia: A Model for Achieving National Priorities*, Praeger, 1978, 241 pages (which was funded by the U.S. Department

of the Treasury in 1976 for the new U.S. Saudi Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation); *Shaping the Future: Challenge and Response*, Tapstry Press, 1997, 159 pages, including the appendix, “Moral Law for Cyber-Civilization: A Tawhid Cybernetic Framework for Applying Islamic Thought”; and *The Natural Law of Compassionate Justice: an Islamic Perspective*, Read 1 Communications, 2010, 224 pages; as well as the four-volume mega-textbook with extensive charts, *Islam and Muslims: Essence and Practice*, which is available in a single cut-down volume, entitled *Islam and Muslims: Special Edition*, from my co-author, Professor Muhammad Ali Chaudry, founder of the new Islamic Center of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, who has used the shortened version during the past ten years in holistic distance education from Rutgers University.

The first category of the *maqasid* provides ontological guidance, consisting of respect for religious freedom (*haqq al din*); for the sacredness of the individual person (*haqq al nafs*), including right to life; for the sacred nature of the derivative communities from family to nation to humankind and beyond (*haqq al nasl*), including communitarian pluralism; and for our physical environment (*haqq al mahid*, from *wahda* or oneness).

The second category is epistemological and is designed for axiological application in ever greater specifics. These are economic justice (*haqq al mal*), including reduction of the wealth gap by reform of money, credit, and banking in order to universalize individual capital ownership ([www.uniteamerica-party.org](http://www.uniteamerica-party.org)); political justice (*haqq al hurriyah*), specifically through *khilafa*, *shurah*, and *ijma*; gender equity as part of human honor (*haqq al karama*); and freedom of thought, publication, and assembly, known as *haqq al ‘ilm* and more specifically as *haqq al ‘aql*.

Fortunately, there now seems to be a worldwide revival of enlightened religion in reaction to the European imposition of secular states at the expense of organic nations, especially in Southwest and Central Asia, which has led to chaos and terrorism.

This enlightenment is reflected strikingly in the on-going renaissance in the Catholic Church and its relations with other world religions. The first

institutional revolutionary was the “traditionalist” Pope Benedict XVI, who spent his formative years in Communist Poland. His contribution to the universal jurisprudence known in Islam as the *maqasid al shari’ah* was to call this paradigmatic framework “personalism”.

The next most influential revolutionary source was his “progressivist” successor, Pope Francis, who spent his early years as a priest in the “Third World national liberation movement”. He might regard the movement popularized in the Islamic *maqasid al shari’ah* as a form of “socialism”.

Together these two popes, the one “retired” and the other still very active in this first such ar-

rangement in the 2,000-year history of the Roman Catholic Church, might regard the *maqasid* as a key to the holistic harmony inherent in a new jurisprudential model of integral education. They might call it simply a “Just Third Way” beyond socialism and capitalism, as developed during the past half century at [www.cesj.org](http://www.cesj.org) and more recently at [www.uniteamericaparty.org](http://www.uniteamericaparty.org).

This, in turn, could give rise to a new system of “metalaw” for all sentient beings, based on the first sentence of the Qur’an, *rabbi al’alamin*, and on the foundational metalegal principle, “Do unto others what they would have done unto themselves”.

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## Tolerance and Cooperation in the Prophetic Paradigm

by Sheikh Faid Mohammed Said

**I**n Makkah the Prophet Muhammad had to contend with those who not only rejected his perspective, but also subjected him and his companions to severe hostility and persecution. Before the mass migration to Madinah, the Muslim community in Makkah suffered physical and verbal abuse, social and economic exclusion and forced displacement. Enjoying overwhelming might and power, the Makkans boasted of their flagrant aggression. However, in Madinah the Muslims faced different kinds of opposition in an environment where they enjoyed some semblance of security.

In and around Madinah, the interests of three groups—the native Arabs who claimed allegiance to Islam, the native Jews and the still-pagan Arabs—converged, so that the Muslims had to contend with foes pretending friendship. Resenting the loss of their former influence, some native Arabs outwardly professed Islam, but frequently undermined the Prophet on various levels. One might have expected to see condemnation of this two-faced group in the Qur’an as a justification for punitive measures against them. However, the response of the Prophet was to patiently invite them into Islam. Instead of adopting a too-easy interpretation of divine censure to punish them,

he was extraordinarily lenient with the subversive elements in his society. Limiting himself to general warnings about hypocrisy, he never exposed their identity, out of concern that his own loyal companions might exact retribution. Only Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, his secretary, was privy to his dismay.

The Prophet’s attitude is striking, a sizeable element of the community was brazenly conniving with enemies, and yet he consciously chose not to expose them. We may be tempted to think it a dangerous policy, this clement treatment of the subversive group led by one Abdullah Ibn Ubay. To put this into context, the Muslim community faced considerable danger and Ibn Ubay’s treachery included battlefield desertion and unabashed collusion with the Prophet’s enemies. However, the striking feature of such clemency was that Ibn Ubay’s party, the much-maligned hypocrites, were eventually won over, as the son of Ibn Ubay remained a staunch Muslim all along.

When informed on his arrival in Madinah that the native Jews annually fasted on the tenth day of the month of Muharram in thanksgiving for Moses’ victory over Pharaoh, the Holy Prophet exhorted the Muslims to also observe a fast on that day, declaring, “I am closer to Moses than they.”<sup>1</sup> He

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<sup>1</sup> Bukhari, *Sahih*: 2004

taught the Muslims that Moses' victory was their victory, because all prophets strive for the same goal, while demonstrating to the Jewish constituency that he shared their values and found their custom appealing. As far as the Prophet was concerned, the personal always was the political. One of his wives, the Lady Safia bint Huyay, famously traced her descent from the line of Aaron and of Moses. Although she had happily embraced Islam, the Lady Safia was derided by her fellow wives for her Jewishness until the Prophet taught her the unanswerable challenge, "My father was a prophet, my uncle was a prophet and I am the wife of a prophet."<sup>2</sup> Disavowing discrimination in any form, this sketch of life within the Prophetic household simultaneously shows how the Prophet was always readily able to transcend barriers of race and religion, even as he encouraged his wife to be proud of her own ethnic identity.

The exaggerated difference between Jew and Muslim in our time would have appalled both the early Muslims and the Jewish communities, with whom they lived closely. Standing up from a reclining position to mark respect for a Jewish funeral procession, the Prophet was questioned about this and simply replied, "Is it not a human soul?"<sup>3</sup> Troubled by the absence of a Jewish boy in his service, the Prophet was informed that the youth was fatally sick and went to visit him. Invited to recognise him as God's Messenger, the dying youth looked to his father. The latter, resolute in his faith, nonetheless recognised the Prophet's benevolent concern and urged his son to, "follow Abul-Qasim."<sup>4</sup> There was no obvious gain in the material world for either party from the conversion of one about to expire, so the only motivation was the sincere concern of the one and the willing acceptance by the other. It was common humanity that had induced the Prophet's visit. Jews and pre-Islamic Arabs in Madinah had in any case enjoyed cross-cultural interaction, including inter-marriage. After the Prophet's arrival in Madinah, these traditions were enhanced and he set the pattern for community contact and mutual exchange in civil society to the very end of his life. On his death, the Prophet's companions discovered that his shield was mortgaged with a Jew.<sup>5</sup>

The Prophet's clemency and forbearance, given expression in his embrace of plurality and diversity, represents the authentic culture of Islam. So it is that in the life of the Prophet Muhammad we find a timeless model for all humanity. "Indeed in God's Messenger you have the outstanding example."<sup>6</sup>

The rigid social system in Makkah was seriously undermined in the early years of Islam, which facilitated movement across social barriers, emancipating and empowering disadvantaged groups. However, it was the Muslim experience in Madinah that witnessed the growth of a truly pluralistic society. The famous Madinah Declaration would forever be associated with the Prophet's city, because of the social charter ratified there, which conferred individual liberties and civic responsibilities upon the disparate communities who signed up to the document. Intimately linked to this charter of rights and enshrined freedoms in the emergent state of Madinah was the personal history of its originator, the Prophet Muhammad.

Built on a network of tribal alliances, the delicate balance of power in Madinah had shifted decisively with the arrival of the Muslim émigrés from Makkah. The internecine war between the Aws and the Khazraj, the two Arab tribes in Madinah, had come to an end following their embrace of Islam, although not all indigenous Arabs of Madinah had entered the fold. Joined by the Makkans, the Muslims now became the majority community in Madinah, unified through faith.

The Aws and the Khazraj had formerly built alliances with the three dominant Jewish tribes in Madinah, but these had become obsolete overnight. The Aws and Khazraj had also enjoyed complex affiliations with outlying desert tribes, so that, all in all, power relations were completely transformed and the Prophet found himself leader of this newly-dominant constituency. Far from issuing orders to the minority communities, he embarked on an integration programme that extended well beyond mere pacification. Through the instrument of the Madinah Declaration, he conferred equal rights on the various participants in the now-unified state, in the process granting its signatories the distinction of becoming the

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2 Tirmidhi, Sahih: 3984

3 Bukhari: 1312

4 Bukhari: 1356

5 Bukhari: 2916

6 Qur'an, Al Ahzab, 33:21

first-ever human community to enjoy a charter of rights.<sup>7</sup> The status of the immigrants, namely the Makkan refugees, also changed dramatically. Any anxieties about their deracination or reduction to second-class citizens in the new environment were soon dispelled. Article Four of the Declaration ensured that all Madinans had the same right of redress under law. In the first instance, it enshrined equality in law so that a native of Madinah had no greater right than an immigrant or naturalized citizen. Second, that law was self-referentially Madinan, meaning that the Makkans wholly embraced the laws of the host province.

The Declaration made the equality conferred upon all parties explicit. Various articles of the instrument proclaim the, “indiscriminate rule of law and justice for all communities,” and the, “prohibition of unjust favouritism”, that, “non-Muslim minorities possess the same right to life protection” and the, “guarantee of freedom of faith for both Muslims and non-Muslims”. The Declaration also recognised differences among its signatories, as evidenced by Article 40, which granted, “equality of rights for all branches of the Jews”. In this regard, the various subdivisions that exist within Islam would do well to rethink their relations. Differences might not be so irreconcilable; certainly there is nothing to prevent harmonious co-existence.

While the Madinah Declaration was very much a product of its historic context, the tenets enshrined—freedom of belief, equality in law and recognition, and consequent protection of differences—are fundamental principles of Islam and its culture. Freedom of belief is explicit in the Qur’an, which over and over confirms this principle. It is of paramount importance if peaceful coexistence is to achieve real meaning.

Compulsion in belief is explicitly forbidden: “There is no compulsion in belief, for truth stands out clear from error.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, in the Islamic perspective, God has granted His Creation freedom of choice: “Whosoever wishes, let him believe

and whosoever will, let him disbelieve.”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, God confirms that one of the requirements of His cosmic order is diversity: “Had God willed, He would have made you one community.”<sup>10</sup> Recognition of the other is an equally important logical extension of freedom of belief and here “belief” means, not simply religious alignment, but something approaching ‘way of life’ or ‘culture’. Hence in the Qur’an: “Unto you, your belief and unto me, my belief.”<sup>11</sup> The chapter containing this verse is revealingly entitled, “The Unbelievers”. The verse begins the chapter thus: “Say, O Unbelievers!”<sup>12</sup> The Qur’an thereby gave Islam’s culture its particular hue, by establishing not only freedom of choice, but also recognition of another’s belief, ideology and inclination.

When seen in its natural way, the generosity and open-handedness of the real culture of Islam confounds even its staunchest critic. Now customary arguments against organised religion include fear of total enslavement, and yet closer inspection reveals that the God of Islam offers complete freedom of choice. By no means is this a rarefied position. It was in this manner that the Prophet and his followers received, understood and sustained the Qur’an. When Islam is viewed this way, it appears surprising modern and far from the common conception that it is stuck in the Middle Ages. This again confounds totalitarian conceptions about Islam. At the very least, such an understanding of Islam leads to the opening up of more positive dialogue with it. The scholarly community of Islam frequently says, “The key to the Qur’an is the Qur’an.” Or we might say that the puzzle contains its own solution. On the other hand, the proclamations of a host of noisy Muslims do not make Islam very appealing, much less comprehensible. The Qur’an states: “Do you enjoin right conduct upon mankind while you neglect (its practice) yourselves? And you read the Scripture!”<sup>13</sup>

Unsurprisingly, even the most enlightened efforts at coexistence will degenerate if the approach

7 Sometimes referred to as the “Constitution of Madinah”. The present author, however, cannot agree with the designation “constitution”, which has technical associations appropriate to the framework of a state, and has preferred the term “charter”, which defines rights and liberties, to describe the instrument of the Madinah Declaration. Early Muslim sources that refer to the Declaration include the historian Muhammad Ibn Ishaq in his *Sirat*. Scholars subsequently have attempted to define it as a “constitution” or “treaty”. The Declaration perhaps accords to the idea of a social contract or charter.

8 Q, Al Baqarah, 2:256

9 Q, Al Kahf, 18:29

10 Q, Al Maeda, 5:48

11 Q, Al Kaafiroon, 109:6

12 Al Kaafiroon, 109:1

13 Al Baqarah, 2:44

and application are faulty. Efforts at interpersonal and social relations are contingent upon communication at its finest and according to all that is best in manners, without loquacity or intimidation. The Qur'an exhorts benevolence in dialogue, even in the face of received offence: "And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless in a way that is better."<sup>14</sup> The stress on gentle persuasion in this Qur'anic verse is more than a call for objective reasoning. Generosity means sincere goodwill, and not merely grudging acceptance. The Qur'an's exhortation to adopt only the best speech is especially instructive, because mankind is greatly esteemed by God: "Indeed, We have honoured the children

of Adam."<sup>15</sup> The point is not whether one is a theist, polytheist or an atheist but that the human being occupies a lofty position, reflected in the mode and manner in which we respond to differences of opinion and belief.

The Madinah Declaration was unique to its historic context, but freedom of belief, equality in law and recognition of difference are universal principles in Islam. If commitment to rights and liberties is the goal of modern humans, then these were set in stone by the last of the prophets, but first among modernists, namely Muhammad. Seventh-century forms are long out of fashion, but these principles are timeless and this spirit is enlivening in every age.

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Educated by some of the most prominent scholars of our times in his native Eritrea and in the illuminated city of Madinah, Shaykh Faid is a qualified Maliki jurist and commentator of the Holy Qur'an with specialism in the Arabic language

14 Q, Ankabut, 29:46

15 Q, Al Israa, 17:70

## Prophetic Leadership

### 11 Qualities that Changed the World

by Nabeel Al-Azami

**W**hat kind of leadership do we want to see in the world today? And why are so many leaders falling short of our expectations?

As we suffer the consequences of poor leadership worldwide, questions are increasingly being asked about those in power. Abraham Lincoln famously said: 'Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.'

There is something about power that affects the human condition unlike anything else. It has an uncanny ability to change people, their behaviour and their actions, which in turn says something about their character. Power placed upon a weak character corrupts absolutely. And there seems to be no shortage of weak characters seeking and acquiring leadership and power.

Power can take many forms and can come about through many means. Power is not just political or organisational, but can also be economic/financial, social and even religious. Each can test our character (if you think religious power doesn't test one's character you are mistaken!)

A person once described a leader as an honest man, only for his friend to ask, 'honest up to how much?' One is hence left to wonder whether every-

one's character has a price tag.

We clearly live in a time when the world is demanding better leadership, whether one looks in the 'East' or the 'West'. Widespread dissatisfaction with corrupt and unjust leadership and the breakdown of trust in many leaders and institutions is clearly visible through the media, and in society generally.

One of the world's most widely referenced measures in this regard is the German based Transparency International, and their 'Corruption Perception Index' (CPI). At the end of each year, some 180 nations are ranked in order of how low and high their corruption levels are. This matters, not only because of extensive Islamic exhortations about general and financial honesty, honouring contracts and so on. Indeed the longest verse in the Qur'an (see Baqarah 2:282) is concerned with this subject.

It matters because, corruption is linked to injustice, oppression, poor wealth distribution, loss of life among other tragedies. Indeed all of the essentials of the '*Maqasid ash-sharia*' (higher objectives of Islamic law) which must be preserved (from preservation of life and intellect, to the preservation of freedom, dignity and justice) are compromised in a corrupt environment.

A look at the results in the Muslim world, show some nations making progress but the over-arching picture is incredibly worrying and depressing. How can this be changed? The answer is good leadership.

The need for good leadership is not unique to Muslims but is a global problem. The words of Martin Luther King Jr ring true, when he famously lamented at how our scientific (and technological) advancements have outstripped our human and spiritual advancement, hence 'we have guided missiles and misguided men.'

However this anathema faced by people the world over, is not due to the non-existence of knowledge about what makes a good leader. When the world's first leadership professor—John Adair asked former British Prime Minister Jim Callaghan if he had studied leadership, the response was 'I haven't, and perhaps if I had, I might have been a better leader'.

There is hence an urgent need for education, cultivation and coaching of current and emerging leaders at all levels, from socio-political to organisational leaders, on how to be a good leader, if we are to build better organisations, societies and a better world. And of the many leadership qualities one might be educated on, of foremost importance is integrity, which involves the imbedding of ethics into one's character.

Our opening quote revealed how notable leaders like Lincoln understood the importance of character and integrity when one steps into the arena of leadership. There are too few leaders today who have managed to embody this. But among those who were marked by greatness due to their integrity in recent history include the likes of Mandela, Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Luther King Jr and Malcolm X.

But when considering the greatest leader of all times, the name of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ must come to the fore, not just in the eyes of Muslims worldwide, but even to noted non-Muslims researchers and historians such as Michael Hart, who named Prophet Muhammed ﷺ as number one in his compilation of the hundred greatest leaders in history.

We know that the idea of leadership was important to the Prophet (ﷺ) He (ﷺ) famously said: 'Each of you is a shepherd, and each responsible for his flock'—Bukhari and Muslim

The great Prophets were known to have been shepherds at some stage in their lives. A simile is drawn from this fact, where the shepherding was a

training process to enable the prophets to lead people. This hadith teaches us that beyond the great Prophets, we are all shepherds, one way or the other. In another well known hadith narration concerning leadership, the Prophet ﷺ said: 'When three are on a journey, they should appoint one as a leader'—Abu Dawud

This is fascinating as it shows that even in a small group, where one may otherwise have thought that leadership is not required, the Prophetic and hence Islamic exhortation is to still appoint a lead person.

However, what kind of leader should one seek to be? What are the qualities of leadership that was exemplified by the Prophet ﷺ?

## THE 11 PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Drawing on our analysis of the Sirah, and integrating the work of multiple researchers worldwide, most notably that of John Adair—the world's first professor of leadership, who wrote on the Leadership of Muhammad in 2011, we identified a comprehensive list of over 50 prophetic leadership qualities.

We then critically reviewed these to seek the top 10. After extensive filtering, merging and examining the list against Sirah based evidence, we arrived at 11 qualities, and concluded each of these 11 were vital, and hence would form our definitive list.

That list is as follows:

- Integrity & Trust—built a reputation for honesty and truthfulness; role modelled
- Vision—a strategic mind offering vision and direction through inspiration
- Courage—showed incredible bravery and confidence in the face of adversity
- Competence—was effective, reliable and made an impact
- Fairness—was just and meritocratic in dealings including with non-Muslims
- Decisiveness—would not sit on the fence, but consider options then make a clear decision
- Servant-leadership—led by example; faced hardship with the people; action not just words
- Wisdom—able to make considered judgement drawing on knowledge and long-term view
- Patience—showed deep resilience, forgiveness and ability to go all the way
- Compassion and Warmth—radiated heart, affection, appreciation and gentleness
- Emotional and Spiritual intelligence—able to inspire hope; give people purpose and meaning

It is not difficult to find an abundance of examples of the above qualities in the life of the Prophet ﷺ.

His integrity was established from a young age given his consistent display of honesty and truthfulness in his dealings with everyone. During the dispute of the blackstone, when the young Muhammad ﷺ walked in, the Makkkan leaders declared 'Al-Amin has arrived' and accepted him as their solution provider.

His strategic vision was apparent during the treaty of Hudaibiyah when he framed an agreement with the Makkans which his followers felt disappointed with in the short term, but which saw Makkah conquered in the long term.

His courage was apparent during every battle and every challenging period faced by his people. Once at night during the Madinan period, the companions were awoken by a frightening loud noise. As they cautiously stepped out of their homes to see what was going on, they saw it was an out of control horse, but luckily someone brave had swiftly come out and brought the horse under control. It was none other than the courageous Prophet ﷺ.

He embodied the Quranic framework of *Al-Qawi Wal Amin*. Hence strong, competent and able, while being trustworthy. Today we find that sometimes good people aren't the most competent, while the most competent aren't always being good. The Prophet ﷺ role modelled the need to be both. He was known to be an able communicator who had the gift of '*jawam'ul kalim*'—a poetic way with words enabling him to say much with only a few words. He was an expert swordsman, with excellent equestrian skills but also had day to day practical skills from construction to sewing.

He was scrupulously fair, and just, such that during a dispute between a believer and a Jewish person who had been framed, he gave a verdict in favour of the Jewish person in light of the evidence. He similarly declined to given leadership roles to companions whom he felt would not be sufficient-ly just in their leadership.

He was a focussed decision maker who moved to action soon after his mind was made. He was an advocate of consulting (*shura*) and drew on the expertise of those around him. Then he would decide and act. Once as he was making defence preparations and putting on his armour for a military expedition, a companion came to question the plans in relation to the military move. The Prophet ﷺ

knew when the time for discussion and when the time for action was. He said to the companion, when a Prophet puts his chainmail on there is no turning back.

The Prophet ﷺ once said 'the leader of a people is their servant'. He demonstrated this throughout his life from personally building his mosque to partaking in digging during the battle of the Trench. He was not a self serving leader but in service of a higher cause. This was accompanied by humility and living a simple life. He didn't have a thrown and sat among his people as one of them, such that when foreign visitors came, they could not immediately tell from a gathering who the Prophet ﷺ was.

He was wise but practical at the same time. Once a Bedouin came to the mosque of the Prophet ﷺ and when the call of nature came he began urinating within the mosque and prayer area. Naturally this infuriated the other worshippers and companions of the Prophet ﷺ who started marching towards him in anger. The Prophet ﷺ intervened, not only by stopping the possibility of the Bedouin getting beaten up, but actually told the worshippers to let the Bedouin finish urinating!

This was not only very considerate of him but most wise. He ﷺ recognised that this was not an act of aggression but rather the simple Bedouin did not know about the etiquettes of the mosque and needed to be taught. This was the wisdom of the great teacher—the Prophet ﷺ, who proceeded to counsel the foolhardy Bedouin.

One of the most apparent qualities of the Prophet was his incredible patience. For 13 years he endured abuse and persecution at the hands of his fellow Makkans, including times when his companions were beaten, tortured and in some cases killed. Even the Prophet ﷺ wasn't spared having animal entrails thrown at him as he prayed. One of his most perilous moments was in Ta'if when the people and their children stoned the beloved Prophet ﷺ until he was bleeding extensively.

Yet he had to remain patient and resilient through the suffering while painfully seeing his beloved followers grossly mistreated. His internal strength and patience, gave his followers strength and patience until God gave them some ease.

Compassion and love was in abundance in the Prophet ﷺ who sought to reflect the compassion of the divine. Once, an elderly neighbour who would regularly throw rubbish in the pathway of the Prophet ﷺ fell ill. In seeing this, the Prophet ﷺ did not celebrate this situation rather

showed care and compassion by going to visit the old woman, and preparing food for her.

Emotional intelligence is about regulation of one's emotions and that of others, to harness good relationships. The Prophet ﷺ taught that even 'smiling was charity'. Hence he taught to project positive emotions hence keeping oneself happy and making others happy as well. Spiritual intelligence is the next level from the emotional realm. It is about directing oneself and inspiring others towards a purposeful end. It's about leveraging the power of values to create meaningfulness and seeking to make a difference.

The Prophet ﷺ always warned against living life in a meaningless fashion and called for follower to be great people. Once when an Arab chief called Thumama Ibn Uthal was captured and set for execution on account of his murder of countless Muslims, the Prophet ﷺ surprised him with hospitality and leniency instead. In the process he ﷺ repeatedly enquired into Thumama's heart, asking him to open up and say something. Thumama felt the power of the Prophet's ﷺ presence and heart. He could sense the presence of the great man ﷺ and his heart. The Prophet ﷺ then released Thumama unconditionally, but Thumama found himself warming to the divine purpose and immediately made his declaration of faith without much being said between them. The prophet (pbuh) was less concerned with winning arguments and more concerned with winning hearts. This is what Spiritual intelligence is about.

The 11 Prophetic leadership qualities are authentic, timeless and universal. They mattered in the past, are needed today and will continue to matter in the future. The below illustrates the qualities for reference:

These qualities relate to the wider Islamic notion of character development and spiritual development, something of critical importance for leaders and the key to mitigate against corruption and other pitfalls of power. It is no wonder, the Prophet ﷺ said: 'the best of you are those best in character'.

Al Ghazali—a master of character development, who deeply understood Prophetic leadership, recognised the need to set an example as a

leader. He said in his famous advice to rulers: "If a king is upright... his officials will be upright, but if he is dishonest, negligent, and comfort-seeking... officers implementing his policies will soon become slothful and corrupt."<sup>1</sup>

### BATTLE OF HUNAYN: AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

One of the most remarkable events in the Sirah is found in the famous battle of Hunayn. It is an event that Adair<sup>2</sup> notes as being an impressive example of managing multiple stakeholder demands with integrity. Hunayn was a difficult and challenging occasion in which the Prophet ﷺ showed great judgement, astute leadership and arguably all of the 11 leadership qualities in one event. As the saying goes<sup>3</sup>, 'leadership is like a tea bag, you don't know how good it is until it's in hot water'. And in the hot water of Hunayn, the Prophet ﷺ demonstrated why he was the greatest of leaders.

After the peaceful liberation of Makkah, some neighbouring tribes became enraged at the growth and success of the emergent Muslim community. The Bani Hawazin in particular set out on the war path in an attempt to destroy the Muslims. The battleground was the valley of Hunayn, near Ta'if where some 12,000 Muslims would meet some 4,000 enemies<sup>4</sup>. In outnumbering the enemy for once (in contrast to Badr where Muslims were outnumbered yet won) many among the ranks felt over confident, complacent and thinking it would be an easy battle.

However, as the Muslims set up camp, they faced a surprise ambush, as the enemy charged forth earlier than expected, leading many of the Muslim soldiers to flee, leaving the courageous Prophet ﷺ in danger as he ﷺ continued to stand his ground before the oncoming attack.

As the Prophet ﷺ and his steadfast companions called the fleeing Muslims to return and stand with the Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims eventually regained control and overcame the Bani Hawazin. The lesson to be learnt for those who fled was revealed in Surah Tawbah<sup>5</sup> reminding us of the need to both take preparation and rely on God; and not to assume victory solely based on *dunya-wi* (physical worldly) and numeric considerations,

1 From Al-Ghazali's work titled "at-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nashih al-Muluk" or *Ingots of Gold for the Advice of Kings*.

2 Based on Adair, John (2010) p.73-75

3 This quote exists in variant forms and has been quoted by multiple figures over the past hundred years, with no definitive author.

4 Based on numerous books of Sirah including Sharif M.H.A., *Sirah of the Final Prophet* (2002) p.159.

5 See Qur'an: Surah At-Tawbah 9:25-27

but to invoke the metaphysical world and seek the help of God as only He can grant success. It is also the case that one can only be deserving of God's help and blessing if one is of good character and is *al-amin*.

The great leadership of the Prophet ﷺ becomes even more apparent when observing the way he managed different stakeholders and emotions in spite of being in the difficult environment of the battlefield. For example, it emerged that one of the captives was Shayma bint Halima—the long lost foster sister of the Prophet ﷺ who happened to get caught up in the battle. Her claim of relation was not initially believed but she asked to see the Prophet ﷺ and he ﷺ agreed, but when she came forth he ﷺ did not recognise her until she showed him a bite mark he ﷺ left on her arm when he was a child. The Prophet ﷺ then welcomed her warmly and laid down his cloak so they could both sit and catch up—a wonderful example of warmth, patience and emotional intelligence in the midst of the harshness of war.

Another defining moment was when the defeated and captured Bani Hawazins pleaded for mercy from the Prophet ﷺ. This was difficult for the Prophet ﷺ to grant as his soldiers had an established right to the spoils of war which included booty and captives. However as Adair notes, he creatively found a win-win approach (Covey concept<sup>6</sup>) by calling upon his men and asking for volunteers to come forward in public and forgo their right (Ihsan concept<sup>7</sup>). The opportunity to exchange booty for honour by being recognised by the Prophet ﷺ before their peers was too good an offer to resist for many, hence allowing the Prophet ﷺ to grant clemency to those who pleaded. To others he ﷺ offered camels and goats in exchange for captives, leaving stakeholders satisfied—a great example of wisdom, integrity and fairness.

However there remained one group—some of his closest companions from amongst the Ansar who felt they had missed out completely—gaining little by way of honour or booty. This slight discontentment reached the Prophet ﷺ, and rather than ignoring the feelings of his people, as some leaders do, he went to find them and ask them about how they felt and why. The hesitant companions eventually expressed how they felt they had missed out while others gained much, even though they had sacrificed the most. This is where the spiritual

intelligence and vision of the Prophet ﷺ really showed, as he ﷺ reminded them that while others went home with goats and camels, they the Ansar are the favoured ones who get to take Allah and His Messenger home! The companions wept at this great realisation and felt embarrassed at their earlier feeling of discontentment.

The Prophet ﷺ thus applied almost all the 11 qualities in this one event, and solved immense challenges with incredible integrity.

### GOOD LEADERSHIP & RESPECTFUL PLURALISM IN TODAY'S WORLD

The 11 prophetic leadership qualities listed above make for an incredibly good and worthy leader no doubt. Indeed embodying even half of them would make one stand out in today's leadership vacuum. But cultivating these qualities is not easy, which is why true leadership is ultimately hard won.

Hence we return to the issue of character as outlined in our Lincoln quote at the beginning, and note that this is man's greatest frontier. Man's greatness or grotesqueness depends acutely on their character and qualities.

While the aforementioned leadership qualities have strong references in Islamic tradition they are also universal in nature, hence making it globally applicable and useful to any leader Muslim or Non-Muslim.

In today's plural, multicultural and multi-faith environment, universality is gold dust. And there is a desperate need for people to be able to offer leadership across beliefs and boundaries. Muslims need to be able to act as ethical beacons in society, living up to the prophetic (and universal) values. They need to be inclusive and able to serve causes that benefit wider society not just Muslims.

It has often been asked 'where is the Muslim Mandela?' It is indeed a pertinent question. In Mandela we see one who embodied many of the prophetic leadership qualities, yet we struggle to find Muslim leaders today who have even some of these qualities. This is of course not just a Muslim problem as the world in general has not replaced Mandela with an equal.

Muslims believe that there will never again be a leader like the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, but there is nothing to say there cannot be another great leader like Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman or Ali. There is

6 See—Covey, S. (1999)

7 This is one of the many meanings of Ihsan. Other meanings include excellence, doing good, best practice and forgiveness.

hence certainly no reason why there cannot be another Mandela, if we find it in ourselves to be great people. Let us embody the leadership example of

the Prophet ﷺ, and let the 11 qualities unlock your talent. The world is waiting for you.

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## In the Age of Trump, Muslims Must Learn How to Communicate Again

by Muddassar Ahmed

President Donald J Trump has not only changed politics, he has changed how the world—particularly the Muslim world—views America. But the most significant change is something more subtle, yet potentially much more transformational for all 1.9 billion of us. Trump has changed how we see ourselves. As well as challenging America—and by implication the West's—assumptions about itself and what it stands for, he has acted as a mirror for all our issues, faults and hopes.

Much is said by those appropriately qualified (and sometimes the less qualified) about how Islamic systems of Theology, Jurisprudence and Law cannot be allowed to stagnate in a 21st century, world. This is true: not only do we confront

different challenges than the Companions, we also face different issues to Ottoman Caliphs. As the Prophet Muhammed said: "Surely, Allah will send for this Ummah at the beginning of every century a person (or persons) who will renew (mujaddid) its religion for it."

But it is not only our religious tradition that must be infused with the spirit of *Ijtihad* and *Tajdid* (independent reasoning and renewal); it is our ability to communicate, with the wider world, with each other, and even within our own selves. I'm not just talking about Public Relations (my chosen profession) although this is the most obvious manifestation of the ability to communicate at the macrocosm. The "communication revolution"



must begin at the microcosm, with how each one of us relates to our religious inheritance.

After all, the Qur'an (49:13) tells us: "O humankind! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another."

How then do we go about this core Islamic principle of 'knowing one another'?

The primary struggle for any Muslim is to understand, at the personal level, what being a Muslim means. What are the spiritual, moral and intellectual tools our ancestors in faith developed? Who are their present-day guardians? And how can we learn them and apply them today?

It is these tools—the teaching of not necessarily *what* to think, but of *how to think*—that many of us are in need of. And our educational institutions, whether they be religious or secular in declared purpose, must protect these tools, rather than merely transmitting an ossified tradition by rote learning or blind following, a habit repeatedly condemned by the Qur'an. But the individual level is just the beginning of the "Muslim Comms Revolution". One of the most damaging faultlines in many Muslim societies is the generational divide. The Muslim world is the envy of more atomised, individualistic societies for its extended familial and communal relationships that transcend age. It is common in Cairo or Karachi to see three generations of a family sat together in a cafe; less common in London or Los Angeles.

But new media has started to change this. Across many Muslim-majority nations, a generation has emerged immersed in a parallel online culture that is completely alien to their parents. At worst, some of them are at risk of being radicalised online. This has led to the idea the Muslim world's "youth bulge"—a somewhat negative term for what should be the source of optimism and hope in societies with young, ambitious populations. And that source of optimism can be preserved if within families, efforts are made to bridge the intergenerational divide. And once families can communicate within themselves, they need to communicate with each other—including across sectarian boundaries. One of the tragedies of the last 15 years is that sectarianism has become an article of faith for too many Muslims, particularly in the Middle East. Following a particular school of thought or spiritual tradition has been weaponised as part of cynical geopolitical strategies. Within the new generation, there are some who know nothing

other than virulent hatred of fellow Muslims who come from a slightly different background.

This is even true in countries like Iraq and Lebanon where intermarriage between Sunni and Shia Muslims has long been a norm. It is only through an awareness of the nuances of each school of thought, and an ability to communicate them beyond the shallow tribalism of identity politics, that Muslim societies can rebuild.

While it might seem attractive to hope that the Muslim Comms revolution is just about Muslims talking to each other—it is about much more that: it is about us communicating effectively to those of other faiths. This need is most pronounced in countries where Muslims are a minority, like those in Europe and North America, whilst not forgetting the less media savvy Muslim minorities in Russia, India and China. Although the experiences of Muslims in Detroit are in some ways very different to those in Delhi, there are some important shared needs between all Muslim minorities, and indeed all minorities.

That is why we need more forums (such as the OIC) for those different communities to meet with each other, and to meet with host majority communities. Although it is important for Muslims, wherever they are located, to be allowed to simply get on with their lives, there is an important "comms role", especially for minorities, which cannot be ignored.

The reality is that every Muslim living in a minority community has an ambassadorial role. Indeed, globally speaking, all Muslims are in a minority community of 1.9 billion, in a world of 7.6 billion. So we are all in a civilisational discourse, and it is within this grand context that the Muslim Comms Revolution is urgently required. Although the hypothesis of the "Clash of Civilisations" has been disproved (as the largest conflicts in the world are, once again, wars between nations with fundamentally similar ideologies and even comparable cultures) there are still basic psychosocial needs of identity, competition and territory. These needs are being skilfully exploited by populists of different stripes, including the self-declared Islamic ones.

This is one of the things holding back Muslim world communications. As individuals, we can only communicate effectively with friends, family and co-workers once we know ourselves. Likewise, the global Muslim community can only tell our story to the world once we know our own strengths and weakness, opportunities and limitations. Too

much time is spent in the Muslim world either fantasising about a utopian future or idealising an imagined past. The Muslim fetish for historical dramas and populist eschatology—with or without scriptural basis—are both manifestations of our denial of reality. This comes at a cost. When Muslims—either individually, or at the governmental, or even intergovernmental level—communicate, we never do it as effectively as we could. Various

Muslim governments have spent millions setting up news organisations with little credibility, or paying for broadcast advertising campaigns that are so one-sided that they violate broadcasting regulations in the countries they target.

We cannot respond to President Trump if we are guilty of the very excesses and distortions of which his detractors accuse him.

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## The Two Most Important Institutions for British Muslims

by Faem Raza

If there is one thing about Muslims in Britain that seems to escape the popular debates about Islam, it is their generosity.

Despite it being well researched and often reported that Muslims are the most generous of all faith groups in the UK, and have rallied to the assistance of hundreds of millions of people in desperate need throughout the world, it is generally an unrecognised fact that this culture of giving to the needy is intrinsically woven into the spiritual DNA and identity of every adherent of Islam.

In 2013 The Times wrote: "Muslims are among Britain's most generous givers, topping a poll of religious groups that donate to charity, according to new research. Muslims who donated to charity last year gave an average of almost £371 each, with Jewish givers averaging just over £270 per person. Atheists, by contrast, donated an average of £116 when they gave to charity, with Roman Catholics giving slightly more than £178, other Christians

slightly less than £178 and Protestants £202. According to the ICM poll of 4,000 people, nearly four in ten atheists and Hindus did not donate at all. This compared with more than three in ten Muslims".

The Independent in 2016 wrote: "British Muslims have been praised by the Charity Commission for donating vast amounts of money to good causes. During the holy month of Ramadan, British Muslims as a whole have donated money at a rate of £38 per second during Ramadan, or £371 per individual over the year" And in 2017, The Guardian wrote: "Zakat requires Muslims to donate 2.5% of their wealth: could this end poverty?"

As much as these statistics are a source of pride, they do give rise to a couple of very important questions. Firstly, why is it that these facts are not celebrated and admired when it comes to a discussion on Islam? Is it because of institutionalised islamophobia and media trialing, collective punishment





following foreign-policy-blowback or are we still suffering the white man's burden? Secondly, is all this good will and charity being sensibly spent, on people who deserve it, or are there intermediaries profiteering from this immense generosity and good will?

Islamophobia under its various guises, is a factual reality, and perhaps this is one reason why this inconvenient truth of generosity is hidden from plain sight. However, there are other realities that must be taken into account for any defense to hold sway and credibility. According to a report by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) on the 2011 census, Muslims have the highest rate of unemployment, the poorest health, the fewest educational qualifications and the youngest age profile of all faith groups in the UK. Half of British Muslims live in the lowest 10% of local authority districts for deprivation. 13% of the prison population is Muslim, and 28% of Muslims are in social housing. In addition, "The report claims this high unemployment is partly because: 'Muslims face a double penalty—racial and cultural discrimination—in entering the labour market, as is confirmed by numerous studies.'"

Although this report highlights the results of widespread social disadvantages and biases, the shocking reality of over-representation in the prison system also shows that the British Muslim

community is desperately struggling to cope. It certainly makes it more difficult to complain about islamophobia when half of the prisoners in a high security prison are Muslim and have been found genuinely guilty of some terrible crimes.

Apart from criminality and social deprivation, there are reports too that many Muslims are leaving the faith in alarming numbers, the youth in particular, besieged by Islamophobic culture and denied the corresponding support they need.

This is a stark and shocking indictment of the failure of Islamic principles to disseminate from the pulpit to the wider congregation. Mosque leaders are failing to help stem criminality, much of the community is stuck in the quagmire of social immobility, poverty and destitution; the youth, the elderly, sisters and brothers are often left desperate for support; and the community is constantly under attack for it. In short, the Muslim community in Britain is in danger of severe erosion.

In order to answer the first question: 'Why is it that these facts are not celebrated and admired when it comes to a discussion on Islam?' It seems that although there is undoubtedly a demonstrable institutionalised culture of bias against Muslims in Britain, the community is also desperately in need of immediate, structural support.

An explanation for the irony that on the one hand Muslims are generous charity givers, and on the other hand are simultaneously in need of help is the amount of their charity that is spent in the UK. According to the chief executive of the National Zakat Foundation interviewed in *The Times* earlier this year, 98% of British Muslim charity goes to campaigns abroad. A reallocation of as little as 3% of that funding would be enough to pay for current UK Muslim community projects, several times over.

In the context of horrific tragedies abroad in Syria, Palestine and Myanmar, concerns at home are very understandably overshadowed. However, that shadow does not obviate the serious growing crisis in the British Muslim community. A compelling case for charity to begin at home can be made without even referencing the widely accepted jurisprudential view that when zakat is sent away, local eligible recipients of zakat can demand justification for why their rights have been denied to them.

From *Fiqh Al Zakat*, "Abu 'Ubaid says, "Scholars all agree that [...] people of every region have priority on their zakah, as long as they still have anyone in need, or until all the zakah is distribut-

ed." He goes on, "If the officer transports collected zakah while there still is need in the region from which it was collected, the government must return it to its region, as did 'Umar bin 'Abd al 'Aziz, and as stated by Sa'id bin Jubair."

This appears to be the general principle of Zakat distribution, with exceptions permitted in unusual circumstances.

So how is this critical need to preserve the British Muslim community addressed?

Take the example of a young man, trained at various seminaries and employed as an imam in a provincial city in the UK for a few years. He finds the opportunity at a British institution to learn new skills and contextualise his knowledge. He finds employment at another mosque as imam, and immediately sets about putting into practice what he has now learned. He has a new found confidence to reach out to local institutions: the police, the local judiciary, the local paper, local healthcare providers and local government. He changes the mosque services to make them more appealing to the British Muslim public, projecting a powerpoint presentation of his weekly sermon on a screen for latecomers to be able to pick up the key messages of spiritual inspiration in his sermons which he delivers in English so that the majority of his congregation can understand it.

As a result, his congregation doubles in size, with many of the new attendees being the young. The madrasa now has a long waiting list. 1,200 local school children have visited and many have written letters of thanks for their introduction to what a mosque looks like, and for answers to their questions. Solid relationships are forged with his local institutions. And there is hard evidence of his successful efforts in genuinely helping his community by way of a measurable doubling of weekly donations at the collection box.

This represents a proof of concept: a huge win for British Islam, for the desperate support that British Muslims need, and for breaking down politicised barriers of hate built on misery and mistrust between communities, which tabloids and politicians utilise to further their businesses and careers. And it is entirely funded and strategised by the Muslim community.

Take another example of a young girl, clad in a headscarf and educated in an isolated and ignored seminary in the north of England, considered to be a backward, invisible and irrelevant environment. She is selected by the same British institution, and

is educated and up-skilled. At the age of 17 without A-levels, she has performed so outstandingly well that she is offered a place at Cambridge University, and chooses instead to study at SOAS before pursuing her Phd abroad.

A hundred other students from this same British institution have their own stories to add to this list. This institution is equipping, training and supporting the next generation of Muslim leaders, so that they can go on to help their communities directly. Not by way of anonymous, national campaigns from large, opaque charities free of accountability, but by equipping young, bright, exceptional, young people to come directly into their communities to help their children, wives, husbands, parents, and neighbours both Muslim and non-Muslim in whichever way is most needed for their locality. This might take the form of educational classes in languages that modern British Muslims understand, outreach to surrounding communities and institutions, organising services for the elderly, or counselling, supporting and rehabilitating the local youth beset by modern problems of identity, crime and drugs.

The organisation in this example is The Cambridge Muslim College (CMC), which has been in existence for ten years and sets itself the very highest standards. It trains the next generation of Muslim leaders by taking seminary students well versed in basic skills of Quran, Fiqh and Hadith, and then in an environment of professional academic excellence, it teaches them doctrine, heritage, architecture, comparative religion, counselling, dealing with the press, professional skills and even takes them to the Vatican to meet the Pope: all strictly within a context of uncompromising Islamic orthodoxy.

From amongst ignored communities, economically deprived areas, Dar-ul-looms and seminaries discarded as irrelevant and anachronistic, institutions like the CMC are taking jewels, and are genuinely making them shine.

In addition to this, they arrange lectures and retreats for the public to learn from their scholars, have arranged Islamic study trips abroad to unanimous acclaim, and have even attracted the world's leading academics to their Science & Religion Conferences on "What is Consciousness and Why Observers Matter in Quantum Theory?," and "Artificial Intelligence and Consciousness," arranged by dedicated academic CMC scholars who are experts in these fields.

The College has recently received appraisals of their BA programme from external examiners at the Open University and Oxford University who were effusive in their praise, with comments that the programme stands on par with those at Oxbridge, and that the students might even be producing work of a higher quality.

The two examples above are real life examples of alumni of the CMC, and proof that the potential of younger generations cannot be underestimated. These will be the generations of Muslims that will speak for their community, and will protect them, to ensure that they remain one of the most significant communities in one of the most important countries in the democratic world.

This type of work serves to strengthen Muslim communities from within. But combined with this is a necessity to protect the community from without. The British Muslim community justifiably feels under siege, bombarded with incessant, exaggerated, negative stereotypes every day. There have been several institutions which have done excellent work directly to combat this problem, but the one that deserves particular praise is another of the most important institutions for British Muslims.

This is the MCB. A largely volunteer led endeavour, run by a youthful, professional group of Muslims who have been working tirelessly to address the issues discussed above, and in particular those mentioned in the MCB report.

The MCB has emerged as a unique organisation directly addressing the two most important life lines of the British Muslim community. One is an endeavour to improve local institutions and mosques, with training, guidance and best-in-class toolkits for addressing any number of community difficulties. The other is a superbly successful advocacy group.

It is an astonishing accomplishment that an organisation this small has had such far reaching success in fighting the onslaught of islamophobia both in the British press and at the government level. They have single handedly forced apologies, corrections and the rescinding of 50 stories in the mainstream press and media over the past three years, and have single handedly brought to light cases of institutionalised islamophobia at the highest levels.

This work is critical to breaking the rampant culture of hate in Britain built upon a widespread, deliberate misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims.

These institutions are examples of those directly

tackling our most critical needs as a community, and do so with a best in class standard of excellence. There can be little doubt that they are amongst the two most important institutions for British Muslims.

The answer to the first question at the start of this article suggests that a critical rethinking of Muslim charitable habits is long overdue, and a greater responsibility for exactly where charity goes is essential for the community to survive. Given the evidence available, it is important to seriously consider whether some of that charity ought to be redirected homeward.

The answer to the second question is to examine the mechanisms available to accomplish this. There are two obvious consequences to the outstanding generosity of Muslims: an immense amount of potential resource to help those in need; and an immense amount of potential resource to embezzle.

Embezzle is probably too strong a word to use here, but the intended inference is that donating to a charity ought to be a well researched decision and may not be as straightforward as one might imagine. Muslim charity is an extraordinarily lucrative industry, unique in that immense amounts of wealth attract negligible calls for accountability and transparency from its donors. This then, unfortunately, also attracts poor practice, and so in an internet-information age that facilitates accountability and transparency, it is a mandatory, extra responsibility on the donor to demand it.

To illustrate just how attractive an industry this is, according to Charity Choice, a self appointed charity directory, it is estimated that there are 1,369 "Islam Charities" in the UK.

Each one of these charities no doubt has a compelling story to tell for the good it is trying to achieve. But each one also has its costs: staffing costs, support costs, governance costs, accounting costs and in general most significantly, its fund raising costs.

The more these charities overlap, the more there is a duplication of these costs and the less there is available to return to the ultimate, deserving target for that donation.

A discussion of how to go about choosing a charity to support, a "Guide to Giving" so to speak, is a larger subject worth exploring elsewhere, but it might be worth making a few a few simple observations here.

If one were to choose between several charities which pretty much do the same thing, internation-



*Muslims in Preston, UK donate to the local hospital*

al relief for instance, it is worth comparing their cost structures, and favouring the most efficient. They vary immensely.

It stands to reason that it is much easier to validate the work of charities working in the UK than it is to validate the work of charities working abroad. Talking to anyone working within the charity space might help in understanding examples of good versus poor practice.

Although campaigns for the terrible plight of people suffering abroad are compelling, the sad reality is that rumours of malpractice do surface. These can take the shape of ‘money dumping’ which is when a campaign attracts more money than a project budget, in which case the money is dumped on any associated project irrespective of control or cost; or water wells drilled in faraway countries where a photo is taken of the well and sponsor’s plaque, before the sponsor’s plaque is replaced with another for the next photo; or earthquake shelters built as promised until a photo is taken for proof after which it is immediately dismantled by locals to sell on. Rumours are just that, and should never be depended upon for a decision, but it is important to have some understanding of

the parameters within which to assess a charity, given the immense spiritual responsibility that goes along with giving.

To answer the second question directly, not all charities are problematic, of course. Some international charities such as the largest muslim charity in the UK, Islamic Relief, have been awarded rare industry accolades for their exceptional transparency, and are reputed highly enough to be a part of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). There are relatively few UK-only oriented charities, but the National Zakat Foundation is by far and away the largest of the mainstream institutions with excellent transparency and leadership.

To conclude, the British Muslim community should be proud that despite being from amongst the most impoverished communities in the UK, they are by far and away the most generous when it comes to charity. It is a critical responsibility for every charity giver to be acutely aware of the needs around them, and to ensure that their charitable obligations are met on the one hand, and that on the other, they hand over their donations to institutions which will honour that responsibility and treat it with the respect it deserves.

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Facem Raza is an independent scholar with a research interest in the charity sector. He has thirty five years of experience as a Strategy Consultant.

# Brief Remarks on Islam, History, Philosophy, and European Triumphalism

by Ahab Bdaiwi

Medieval studies is undergoing something of a resurgence. Philosophy in particular—traditionally understood as the pursuit of wisdom and highbrow reflections on the cosmos and human nature—is grabbing the headlines. Placing philosophy on the pedestal of human achievement—past and present—is natural. Since time immemorial great empires and civilisations of bygone centuries took to philosophy to project power, exhibit prestige, and showcase their commitment to elevated intellectual life and wisdom. The alliance between philosophy and empire was not merely a meeting of utility and opportunity but formed the bedrock of identity construction and historical memory in Europe and elsewhere. The idea that sapient societies who fostered philosophical learning were racially superior to uncouth savages beguiled by irrational mysticism and occult practices is standard leitmotif in the medieval historical writings of authors later to be identified as European. Such contemptuous imaginations of the other on the part of “western” writers continued unabated well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In the nineteenth century, when Europe was gripped by powerful tides of nationalism, and well into the early decades of the twentieth, the study of the medieval period was invoked to imagine what Europe was really about, and who Europeans were. In other words, the study of the medieval period, or the Middle Ages, was unavoidably bound with sentiments motivated chiefly by nationalism. Historians of philosophy such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Heinrich Ritter, Albert Stöckl, Maurice de Wulf, Bernhard Geyer, Etienne Gilson, Norman Kretzman, and John Marenbon, imagined Europe as the bastion of Enlightenment rationality, the primary mode of highbrow knowledge production, and the natural, fertile ground of philosophical thinking.

Almost without fail, the standard textbooks on the medieval European thought—an all-encompassing term in general parlance but describes philosophical and intellectual traditions and discourses in academic nomenclature—will start with such towering thinkers as the deeply reflective Saint Augustine (died in 430 AD) followed by the Roman Senator (among his role being *magister officiorum*) and perfectly lucid Boethius (died in 526 AD).

What follows next is typical—even until the present. The next philosopher in line after Boethius is almost always Thomas Aquinas, the immensely influential catholic theologian and philosopher who died approximately 800 years later (in 1274 AD). But how do the historical sources and avid champions of European intellectualism explain away the interregnum that saw eight centuries of philosophical inactivity? A proviso is in order before we consider the typical rejoinders. The intended takeaway point is not to lend credence to the inactivity thesis (which is not without criticism) but to operate, hypothetically and momentarily, through the optics of European self-imaginings.

Speaking in 1883 at the Sorbonne, Ernest Renan, the versatile French thinker and influential voice in nineteenth century debates on nationalism and identity, delivered a scathing lecture that was suffused with brittle triumphalism and lapses of racist diction that surpasses the right-wing tropes of today. Renan subjects his audience to endless harangues about the chasm between Islam and rational discourse and the inability of Islam to offer something worthwhile in the philosophical conversations of the medieval past and yesteryear. Islam, we are told, is *à mille lieues de tout ce qui peut s'appeler rationalisme ou science*. And while Muslim societies took stock of science and philosophy for a few centuries during the period when dogmatism felled Europe, the truth of the matter is, according to Renan, Greek philosophy and science in the hands of Muslims is an historical accident that has more to do with European failure to preserve and guard its own Hellenistic heritage than Muslim motivations to pursue knowledge beyond the confines of scriptural epistemology:

*Ah ! si les Byzantins avaient voulu être gardiens moins jaloux des trésors qu'à ce moment ils ne lisaient guère ; si, dès le huitième ou le neuvième siècle, il y avait eu des Bessarion et des Lascaris ! On n'aurait pas eu besoin de ce détour étrange qui fit que la science grecque nous arriva au douzième siècle, en passant par la Syrie, par Bagdad, par Cordoue, par Tolède. Mais cette espèce de providence secrète qui fait que, quand le flambeau de l'esprit humain va s'éteindre entre les mains d'un peuple, un autre se trouve là pour le relever et le rallumer,*

*donna une valeur de premier ordre à l'œuvre, sans cela obscure, de ces pauvres Syriens, de ces filsouf persécutés, de ces Harraniens que leur incrédule mettait au ban de l'humanité d'alors. Ce fut par ces traductions arabes des ouvrages de science et de philosophie grecque que l'Europe reçut le ferment de tradition antique nécessaire à l'éclosion de son génie.*

More recently in the later decades of the twentieth century, suppositions that Islam is essentially an unphilosophical tradition defined primarily by its recalcitrant attitude towards the embrace of rationality found expression in the works of such academics as Professor Sir Hamilton Rosskeen Gibb (d. 1971), former Laudian Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford. Gibb's writings on Islam echo the unmistakable imprint of European triumphalists who cast aspersions on Muslim intellectualism wherever it is found. Describing the views of his teacher, Gibb, Professor Muhsin Mahdi, the late Iraqi historian and philosopher wrote:

There was also a more general problem that had to be faced: whether the study of Islamic philosophy or of the philosophic sciences that flourished in Islamic civilization is a legitimate subject for Islamic studies at all. Gibb did not believe it was, not out of ignorance but out of firm conviction. That is, to be a Muslim meant for him not to be philosophic or rational in this sense, and to be philosophic or rational in this sense meant for him not to be a Muslim, but something else, perhaps a misguided Muslim or even an 'infidel'.

How does history judge the claim that Islam far removed from philosophy and philosophical thinking? In his letter response to Renan, the renowned Muslim theologian and philosopher Jamal al-Din al-Afghani notes that when Muslims inherited the Greek philosophical and scientific corpora they transformed and acclimated it

through re-conceptualisations, re-imaginings, re-evaluations, re-formulations, and re-considerations grounded in their attachment to the Muslim views of the cosmos and religious scriptures. In other words, over the centuries, from Avicenna (d. 1037) to Mulla Sadra (1635) and Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (d. 1981) Muslim philosophers took to Greek philosophy as the basis for the creation of a new philosophical tradition conceived in Arabic, situated within the Islamic ethos, inspired by Greek and Persian thinking, and respondent to Muslim scriptural invitations to become reflective believers.

The Muslim philosophical tradition received by Europe in the twelfth century carried much more than Arabic renderings of the likes of Aristotle and his famous expositor Alexander of Aphrodisias. The introduction of Arabic philosophy into Latin Europe led to the transformation of almost all philosophical disciplines. The influence is particularly dominant in metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics, psychology, and philosophy of language. To recall one of many examples, in 1255, when the statutes of the University of Paris arts faculty declared all known works of Aristotle mandatory reading for students—they presented the Arabic Aristotle along with accompanying Arabic commentaries of Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Rushd, or Averroes in Latin.

Among right-wing groups especially the alt-right there is a renewed appreciation for the symbolic importance of medieval studies and triumphant epochal moments in history that matter greatly to proponents of white supremacy. Europe, we are to believe, was built on the efforts and intellectual ingenuity of white men. History, however, tells a different story. In the medieval past when Europe was discovering and learning anew the wisdom and learning of late antiquity it did so through the filter of Islam and Arabic thought—an irksome factoid many nowadays try to gloss over.

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Ahab Bdaoui is an intellectual historian and assistant professor at Leiden University. His research interests include medieval and modern Islamic history, religion and philosophy in late antiquity, Arabic and Persian manuscript studies, and theology.



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Did We not expand your breast for you,  
and relieve you of your burden,  
that which weighed down your back?  
Did We not exalt your mention?  
For truly with hardship comes ease.  
Truly with hardship comes ease.  
So when you are finished, toil  
and seek your Lord.

*Solace 94 : 1-8*

Book

# REVIEWS



**Mufti Taqi Usmani**

***Easy Good Deeds***

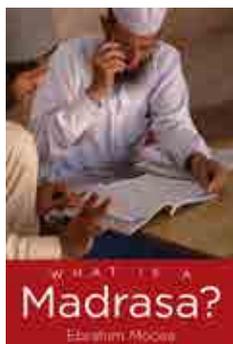
**Turath Publishing**

Book Review by Yahya Batha

A common misunderstanding which deters people from practising Islam is the idea that Islamic teachings are quite difficult to practise. Alongside this, there are many opportunities a person comes across on a daily basis to amass reward for the Hereafter, but which one misses due to lack of knowledge. *Easy Good Deeds* is a valuable book which details many good deeds that every person can easily practise without any major effort. The author has highlighted actions over a wide spectrum of areas, ranging from worship to social conduct, all of which entail minimal effort but reap abundant reward nonetheless. This concise work will help readers appreciate the importance of many righteous actions, realise how easy it is to perform them, and

ultimately imbue them with the spirit to practise Islam in its entirety.

“Allāmah Taqi Usmani in his person and writings evinces a discernment few human beings have been blessed with. *Easy Good Deeds* navigates through the vast ocean of the Prophetic Sunnah and distils it into a simple, attractive and operable program for inculcating virtue into the souls of busy people in our modern age... a kind of easy do-it-yourself *Ihya’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn* for the twenty-first century. I love this little book and most humbly recommend it to all Muslims, especially young people, to read, keep and re-read every year, in-shā’ Allāh.” (Prince Ghazi ibn Muhammad)



**Ebrahim Moosa**

***What is a Madrasa?***

**University of North Carolina Press**

Book Review by Mahan Mirza

*What is a Madrasa?* blends ethnography, history, advocacy, and autobiography. It takes the reader inside institutions of traditional learning in India and Pakistan, shares the rhythm of everyday life, moves back and forth through time and texts, recounts glimpses of the author’s personal experiences, and advocates for changes in attitude and policy both from the wardens of the madrasas and from external agents engaging them on the national and international stage. One of the most engaging aspects of *What is a Madrasa?* is the anecdotes. From the beginning that recounts a somewhat gruff encounter with a religious skeptic to the end where the author visits competing madrasa franchises, illustrating how the same texts can

be used to emphasize different teachings, the book stitches together a detached academic approach with an engaged and constructive one.

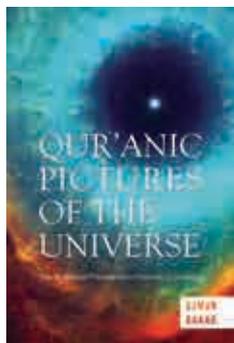
The articulation of a shift in madrasa culture from a “republic of letters to a republic of piety” is a particularly helpful conceptual contribution. There are two hallmarks of traditional madrasa education that Moosa highlights: 1) the virtual transnational community of scholars that it engenders, and 2) an emphasis on a rational core in the curriculum consisting of texts in logic and philosophy. But, argues Moosa, what was at one time the great strength of the curriculum also ended up being its downfall: its protagonists came to “believe the canon of texts is infused with an aura of sanctity.” (133) Unable to accommodate change, the “madrasa now plays a new role: it promotes piety, a lowest common denominator.” (140)

A smattering of names, institutions, texts, dates, and historical phases mesmerizes the narrative. Just leafing through two random pages, for example, gives us references to M. Qasim Naautvi (cofounder of the Deoband school), the Nizami curriculum (the madrasa curriculum named after its original compiler, Mulla Nizamuddin), Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Aligarh Muslim University, Nadwatul ‘Ulama, Mawlana M. Mongheri, the North Indian city of Kanpur, and Lucknow, an important center of learning and capital of the state of Uttar Pradesh. The references are numerous and at times repetitious, reentering the author’s narrative as and when relevant to the issue at hand. At times, important figures are introduced appropriately for a reader who is unfamiliar with the terrain. At other times, because the book is arranged thematically, not chronologically, it is difficult to keep track of casual references to important names, places, or texts that might have been introduced earlier or appear later in more detail.

*What is a Madrasa* is heavily critical of media narratives about the madrasa, policies of entities like the US government to the madrasas, the decline in intellectual sophistication of madrasa culture, and the administrators within madrasas who are either unwilling or incapable of leading re-

form efforts. Moosa’s equal opportunity criticism provides a sense of balance, and it is accompanied with hope: he believes that there are tremendous resources within madrasas that can be harnessed for change, and he believes that Western policy can be enlightened to positively engage madrasas. In a move that seems unorthodox for academic writing—donning the hat of peacemaker—the author concludes his book with open letters to a madrasa leader and to the president of the United States, pleading for sanity.

Ebrahim Moosa is able to accomplish all that he does in this book because of the many scholarly perspectives he brings to it, accumulated through a lifetime of study and activism. He comes to the madrasas as a “friendly critic.” His criticism can only be received as emanating out of deep reverence and even love for the institution. Anyone who doubts this should pause on this biographical disclosure: “Spending six years inside India’s madrasas had left deep imprints that over time have become more significant. If I had to do it all again and choose between a madrasa education and a university, I suspect I would opt for a madrasa.” (29) Although this book is titled *What is a Madrasa?*, one may look back at it one day as *Who is Moosa?*



**Osman Bakar**

### *Qur'anic Pictures of the Universe*

UBD Press and Islamic Book Trust

Review by Maryam Latifah Osman

**T**his book, a recent work by Osman Bakar, presents a new study of one of the major themes of the Qur’an.

The theme of *Qur’anic Pictures of the Universe* treated here pertains to as yet a little explored facet of Islamic cosmology. Through this particular thematic study of the Qur’an the author has made a significant contribution to the contemporary understanding of the scriptural foundation of Islamic cosmology and the present discourse on epistemology of scientific exegesis (*tafsir ‘ilmiy*) of the Qur’an. The book offers many new insights that will prove particularly helpful to those interested

in deepening their understanding of Qur’anic perspectives on cosmology, the natural sciences, and relationship between religion and science.

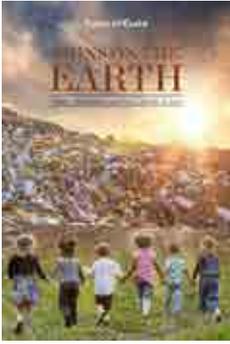
This book explores the multiple visions of the Universe as perceived through the lens of the Qur’an. Although the Qur’an’s visions of the Universe are many and varied, this book only discusses five of them, which its author maintains are not only the most visible but also among the easiest to understand. Each vision of the Universe produces what the author refers to as its corresponding picture. Each picture takes a distinctive shape that may be visualized in the mind through the interpretation of a set of related verses of the Qur’an that appear as displaying conceptual coherence and

thematic unity not only among themselves but also with other pictures of the Universe.

The first picture presented to readers is what is referred to by the author as the “the astronomical picture.” This picture depicts the Universe as “a vast celestial space-time complex that is constituted of such cosmic entities as planetary and stellar systems, galaxies and constellations governed by laws.” The second picture is described as “the architectural picture.” It depicts the Universe as a divine work or “edifice with a solid construction, a perfect architectural design, and a beautiful ornamentation.” The third picture is presented by the author as the picture of “the divine kingdom” in which there is perfect governance, law and order. The kingdom

“extends from the Divine Throne (al-‘arsh) to the furthest region of the material world where the planet Earth, the home of God’s vicegerents, namely the human species, is situated.” The fourth picture depicts the Universe as a hierarchy of light and darkness. The fifth picture is described as “the microcosmic” picture, which depicts human being as “a perfect replica of the whole Universe.”

The author argues that this study of the Qur’anic pictures of the Universe may justifiably be viewed as a work on scientific exegesis (*tafsir ‘ilmi*) of the Qur’an. A sequel to this volume is under preparation, which contains other Qur’anic pictures of the Universe to marvel at.



**Fazlun M Khalid**

*Signs on the Earth - Islam, Modernity and the Natural World*

**Kube Publishing Ltd**

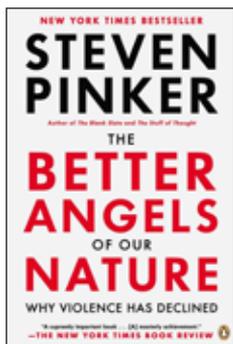
Review by Kube Publishing editorial staff

This book by one of the world’s leading Muslim environmentalists examines the relationship between modernity and Islam in the context of the environmental concerns which now engage our attention. It looks at how modernity has imposed its stamp not only on the Islamic world but also how it has thrown into disarray the progression of other societies and traditions and ways of life. It enquires into how this disruption is unfolding and at the same time has succeeded in corrupting natural systems that support life, while holding out a promise of progress towards a better future. It argues that industrialisation, a rush for economic growth and an addiction to consumerism need to be rethought, alongside an appeal to reconnect the human race with what is sacred. This book has the potential to transform the attitudes of future generations into one that is more caring of the natural world.

The book devotes a whole chapter to environmentalism and Islam in practice and theory and

explores how Islamic practice can contribute to the task of restoring the natural world to a state of equilibrium. It includes a restatement of the legal tradition in Islam that deals with the environment and incorporates this into a historical overview of the causes that have led to the current concerns over climate change and related environmental issues. It appeals to Muslims to take a serious approach to these challenges and demonstrate the dynamism it is capable of in addressing the perils faced by the planet.

Fazlun Khalid not only draws his inspiration from the Islamic faith but he also challenges the current mindset in a manner that confirms mainstream analysis. In recognising that environmental concerns are a collective responsibility this book calls on people of religious faith and no faith to work together on these issues in a concerted effort to leave an Earth where future generations will not only survive but also thrive.



Steven Pinker

*The Better Angels of Our Nature*

Viking Press, 2011

Book Review by Dr Qamar-ul Huda

Despite the headlines of civil war, conflict, terrorism and civilian casualties from government genocide, Harvard psychology professor Steven Pinker claims that the world has historically become more tolerant and peaceful.

The New York Times best-seller, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, Pinker asserts that the 21st century began with horrendous acts of violence – the Dafur genocide, 9/11 attacks, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan - however, comparing to the previous centuries, there is a global agreement that the use of war is unacceptable form of resolving conflict and disputes.

Pinker starts with a particular pressing question: “How are we to make sense of modernity—the erosion of family, tribe, tradition, and religion by the forces of individualism, cosmopolitanism, reason, and science?” His response is that modernity produced a less violent world. With an immense amount of data and examples of torture, sadism, genocide, punishment for civilians, Pinker takes the reader with details of past atrocities as a normal form of existence. But this normative use of violence was purposely controlled by the rule of law and democratic principles of governance.

Pinker believes that the pace of “moral progress” on civil rights, human rights, equal treatment of women, the dismantling of caste systems, supporting children to thrive with education, and even the positive attitudes toward animal protection. Human chauvinism that promoted violence as a means to an end is no longer a prevalent moral

assumption.

“Violence has declined over long stretches of time,” Pinker asserts at the outset of his 800-page compendium of murder and mayhem. “Today we may be living in the most peaceable era in our species’ existence.”

There is a global consensus that mass killings of civilians is an outrage. Governments will attempt to conceal their atrocities, but global institutions like the United Nations and International Criminal Court, Human Rights Watch exist to prosecute against government abuses.

Pinker identifies education as the single important factor to the changing views of violence. It is not only the fact that nation-states emphasize education for the success of their citizens, rather it is the public affirmation of compassion, empathy and learning to feel the pain of others.

He is staunch advocate of humanism. He attributes the declining violence and cruelty with the achievements of Enlightenment humanism. For him, humanism concerns itself with “the flourishing of humans, the only value that cannot be denied.” According to Pinker “human flourishing must be defined by the maximizing of pleasure and minimizing of pain.”

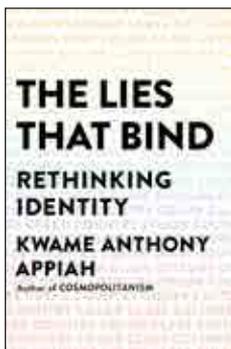
This book thoroughly demonstrates historical violence as a truism for societies to prosper has dramatically changed in the modern world. Pinker believes one of the pearls of modernity is its victory of human values that preserves life instead of destroying it. With a rich use of resources, and an interdisciplinary study of violence, this is an immense contribution to the field.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Surely we belong to God, and to Him we will return.

*The Cow 2 : 156*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com



## Kwame Anthony Appiah

### *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity: Creed, Country, Color, Class, and Culture*

Liveright Publishing

Book Review by Dr Qamar-ul Huda

There is a resurgence of seeking meaning of identity. Amid globalization, mass migration, the emergence of new superpowers, the financial crisis of 2008, both right-wing movements in Europe and America, anti-immigration politics, religious-based violent extremism, technology disruption and the integration of artificial intelligence in daily life, scholars are questioning how identity is being defined and reimagined in a context of change.

New York University scholar of philosophy and law, Kwame Anthony Appiah tackles the evolving notions of identity in *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* in a fresh innovative manner. Known for his best-selling books, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* and *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, Appiah has been widely praised for an astute ability to make philosophy accessible to the layperson.

Taking a broader philosophical, linguistic, cultural and historical view of identity, Appiah points out the ways in which individual and collective identities evolved in midst of global changes. How we understand identity, according to Appiah, is based on five types of identity markers: creed, country, color, class and culture.

He argues to be fixed on a nationalist pro-country identity is to ignore other remaining factors

such as creed, color or culture factors comprising identity. Appiah wants readers to question how their identity was shaped, what circumstances formed it, which frameworks of thought were used to design the identity and acknowledge the fluidity of identity-making is a common experience.

For example, Appiah asserts war or conflict is an important factor in shaping identity. The war experience is incredibly traumatic that it shapes and redefines the individual's identity. Even the interpretation of religion, or lack thereof, forces one to reconceptualize the idea of community and its importance to identity.

Appiah is writing in a world of fellow ethicists, philosophers, political philosophers, and linguists fundamentally attached to a post-modern notion of identity, where multiple identities is the standard notion of 'identity' or specific traits are innate to particular groups. For example, in the pre-modern world feudal aristocrats believed they were superior to everyone else by virtue of their blood lineage, has this been replaced by privileged meritocrats who gained wealth in large part the result of privileged access to education and social networks.

Appiah's *The Lies that Bind* is a timely thought-provoking exercise on reflection in midst of massive changes in the world. Readers will appreciate Appiah's meticulous approach in rethinking the role of individual in a broader context.



He said, 'Certainly not! indeed I have my Lord with me. He will guide me'.

*The Poets 26 : 62*

Calligraphy by Hasan Kan'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

Major

# EVENTS

# Major Events

Date	Event
24 October 2017	Quebec's Bill 62: Niqab-wearing Muslim fears the impact of face-covering ban.
25 October 2017	Crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, says Saudis want return to moderate Islam.
30 October 2017	Muslim feminist activist, Henda Ayari, in France details rape claims against Oxford professor, Tariq Ramadan.
1 November 2017	Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Russian President Vladimir Putin that Tehran and Moscow must step up cooperation to isolate the United States and help stabilize the Middle East.
2 November 2017	Uber and Lyft ban far-right activist Laura Loomer after anti-Muslim tweets.
2 November 2017	British police issued an arrest warrant for the brother of a suicide bomber who killed 22 people in an attack on a pop concert in Manchester in May, asks Libya to extradite him.
3 November 2017	Syrian Civil War: both Deir ez-Zor in Syria and Al-Qa'im in Iraq are declared liberated from ISIL on the same day.
3 November 2017	ISIL loses al-Qaim in Iraq and Deir Az Zor in Syria.
4 November 2017	Lebanese Prime Minister, Saad Hariri, resigns citing Iranian meddling.
4 November 2017	Saudi Arabia Arrests 11 Princes, including Billionaire Alwaleed bin Talal, at The Ritz Carlton hotel in Riyadh, in anti-corruption crackdown.
5 November 2017	Former prime minister, Gordon Brown, says Pentagon misled UK over case for Iraq invasion.
6 November 2017	Malaysia to roll out more than \$1B worth of flood mitigation projects, after floods leave 7 dead in Penang.
9 November 2017	ISIS chased out of last stronghold in Syria, a strategic town near the border with Iraq.
10 November 2017	Marine drill instructor, Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Felix at Camp Lejeune, N.C., sentenced to 10 years in prison for targeting Muslim recruits.
10 November 2017	Tensions as Paris suburb tries to stop Muslim street prayers.
11 November 2017	Iraq: Mass graves discovered near Hawija.
13 November 2017	A new FBI report says hate crimes — especially against Muslims — went up in 2016.
13 November 2017	Threats to boycott Tesco after Muslim family features in Christmas ad.
14 November 2017	Barbie reveals first hijab-wearing doll inspired by trailblazing US fencer.
14 November 2017	Britain First Leaders, A Controversial Right-Wing Group, Arrested in Belfast For Making 'Anti-Islam' Speeches.
14 November 2017	Members of a far-right, anti-Islam group attempt to prevent the construction of a mosque in the Netherlands by dumping pig's blood on the site.
14 November 2017	Over 530 people killed as 7.3 magnitude quake hits Iraq-Iran borders.
15 November 2017	Assaults against Muslims in U.S. surpass 2001 level.
17 November 2017	Northeastern Middle School in Bristol, Connecticut, cancels Muslim speaker after teacher organising presentation receives threats.
17 November 2017	Nearly Half of Canadians Have Negative Feelings Towards Islam: Poll.
17 November 2017	Israeli military chief, Gen Gadi Eisenkot, wants closer Saudi ties as Iran tensions rise.

Date	Event
18 November 2017	Saudi Arabia 'swaps assets for freedom' after arrests of Saudi princes in anti-corruption crackdown.
19 November 2017	Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, to run for Libya president in 2018.
20 November 2017	Morocco: 15 people crushed to death in food aid stampede in drought-stricken village, Sidi Boulaalam.
21 November 2017	Iran President Rouhani declares end of Islamic State.
21 November 2017	Suicide car bombing at fruit and vegetable market in the centre, Tuz Khurmatu, kills 23 and wounds 60.
22 November 2017	Groups of Sunni Muslim extremists gathered in a Holiday Inn in northern Virginia over the weekend and called for followers to wage jihad against infidels.
24 November 2017	A mosque attack in Sinai, Egypt kills 305 worshippers and leaves hundreds more wounded.
26 November 2017	Indonesia Aims To Attract More Muslim Visitors In 'Halal' Tourism Push.
26 November 2017	Migrants for sale: Slave trade in Libya
28 November 2017	Local mosque gives University of Cincinnati \$1M to teach more about Islam, amid concerns of Islamophobia.
29 November 2017	Muslim population of the UK could triple to 13m following 'record' influx.
30 November 2017	Saudi Arabia Drives OPEC to Extend Oil Production Cuts To Bolster Prices.
3 December 2017	CIA Director, Mike Pompeo, warns Iran against anti-US action in Iraq.
3 December 2017	Former Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik, deported by the UAE, plans to challenge current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.
4 December 2017	Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh killed. Iran-backed Houthis claim responsibility.
5 December 2017	Saudi Arabia and UAE launch new economic and military alliance, further isolating Qatar.
6 December 2017	The United States officially recognises Jerusalem as Israel's capital.
7 December 2017	Hate crime in India: Muslim man hacked, burned to death in western state of Rajasthan.
9 December 2017	The Iraqi military announces that it has "fully liberated" all of Iraq's territory from "ISIS terrorist gangs" and retaken full control of the Iraqi-Syrian border.
14 December 2017	6,700 Rohingya Muslims killed in one month in Myanmar, MSF says.
17 December 2017	Miss Iraq's family forced to flee country after beauty queen's selfie with Miss Israel.
17 December 2017	Burma: 40 Rohingya Villages Burned Since October.
18 December 2017	Far-rights EU politicians band together against Islam, encourage Trump style travel ban.
19 December 2017	Saudi-Iran standoff: Missile fired at Riyadh palace highlights tensions.
19 December 2017	Saudi Arabia unveils record \$261bn budget to drag kingdom out of recession.
20 December 2017	Between 9,000 and 11,000 people were killed in the nine-month battle to recapture the Iraqi city of Mosul from ISIL, an Associated Press investigation has found.
21 December 2017	Australia to end airstrikes in Iraq and Syria following victory over Isis.
24 December 2017	Tunisia bans UAE Emirates airline from landing in Tunis, amid widespread anger after a number of Tunisian women were prevented from boarding its flights.
24 December 2017	Guatemala follows in the footsteps of the United States by announcing that they will also move their Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, followed by Honduras and Panama two days later.

Date	Event
27 December 2017	A social media activist in Bangladesh could go to jail for 14 years for defaming Islam and the Prophet Muhammad.
27 December 2017	Saudi Arabia and UAE prepare to introduce taxes to boost revenues after oil price collapse.
31 December 2017	After days of anti-government rallies, social media apps Telegram and Instagram temporarily blocked as 'safety measure'.
1 January 2018	UAE And Saudi Arabia End Tax-Free Living, Roll Out 5% VAT As Oil Revenue Slump.
7 January 2018	Saudi Arabia arrests 11 princes protesting over utility bills.
17 January 2018	Saudi Arabia pumps \$2 billion into Yemen's central bank.
20 January 2018	Turkey, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, announces the beginning of a military offensive to capture a portion of northern Syria from Kurdish forces, amidst the ongoing Kurdish-Turkish conflict.
23 January 2018	Egypt arrests presidential candidate, Lieutenant General Sami Anan, removing the most likely opponent to current President Abdul-Fattah Sisi's re-election bid.
24 January 2018	Far-right German politician, Arthur Wagner, quits anti-Islam group, Alternative für Deutschland, and converts to Islam.
28 January 2018	UAE-backed separatists launch 'coup' in southern Yemen.
29 January 2018	Deadly attack in Afghanistan, using an ambulance filled with explosives, kills 103 people and wounds 235.
9 February 2018	French Muslim singer, Mennel Ibtissem, quits TV show amid row over online posts.
12 February 2018	Philippine government orders total ban on workers' deployment to Kuwait after the deaths of 7 migrant workers.
18 February 2018	Iran Aseman Airlines Flight 3704 crashes in the Zagros Mountains, en route from Tehran to Yasuj. All 65 passengers and crew members perish.
25 February 2018	Kurdish Syrian ex-leader Salih Muslim arrested in Prague.
26 February 2018	Saudi Arabia allows women to join the military.
2 March 2018	British man, Paul Moore, convicted after running over Muslim woman in Leicester.
5 March 2018	Saudi Arabia and Egypt agree to a \$10 billion deal to build a new mega-city in Egypt's southern Sinai Peninsula.
8 March 2018	Anti-Muslim riots in Sri Lanka signal a new social fissure.
14 March 2018	Facebook Permanently Bans British Political Group, Britain First, for Anti-Muslim Hate Speech.
21 March 2018	Ahed Tamimi: Palestinian teenager who slapped Israeli soldiers sentenced to eight months in prison.
23 March 2018	An Islamic terrorist attack in Carcassonne and Trèbes, France, kills five people, including the perpetrator.
24 March 2018	Egypt's food crisis soars as government cuts subsidies.
1 April 2018	Bahrain strikes its biggest oil field, dwarfing current reserves.
3 April 2018	Erdogan, Putin mark start of work on Turkey's first nuclear power plant.
14 April 2018	The United States, the United Kingdom and France order the bombing of Syrian military bases, in response to the sarin attack allegedly by the Bashar al-Assad regime on civilians in Ghouta.
18 April 2018	Saudi Arabia to open first public cinema in 35 years.
22 April 2018	Mohamed Salah: Liverpool forward voted PFA Player of the Year 2017-18

Date	Event
23 April 2018	Hate crimes against US Muslims rose 15 percent last year, according to a study released on Monday by advocacy group the Council on American-Islamic Relations.
26 April 2018	Philippines expresses 'great displeasure' as abuse row with Kuwait deepens, after Kuwait expels its ambassador.
30 April 2018	Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accuses Iran of not holding up its end of the Iran nuclear deal after presenting a cache of over 100,000 documents detailing the extent of Iran's nuclear program. Iran denounces Netanyahu's presentation as "propaganda".
6 May 2018	UAE offers \$200 million in aid to Pakistan.
8 May 2018	U.S. President Donald Trump announces his intention to withdraw the United States from the Iranian nuclear agreement. In a statement, former U.S. President Barack Obama calls the move "a serious mistake".
9 May 2018	The opposition-led Pakatan Harapan coalition, led by former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, secures a parliamentary majority in the Malaysian Parliament, ending the 61-year rule of the Barisan Nasional coalition since independence in 1957.
10 May 2018	Cardiff University receives £850k gift by philanthropist to help promote the study of Islam.
12 May 2018	Iraqi election results in shock victory for Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr.
14 May 2018	The US Embassy in Jerusalem opens, resulting in protests in Gaza. 61 Palestinians killed and over 1200 wounded by Israeli forces over the course of a week.
16 May 2018	The Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Muhammad V, pardons Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and is immediately released.
18 May 2018	Muslims forced to drink alcohol and eat pork in China's 're-education' camps, former inmate claims.
21 May 2018	Bernard Lewis, Influential Scholar of Islam, Is Dead at 101.
26 May 2018	Qatar Bans Saudi, U.A.E. Goods Just Days Before Embargo Anniversary.
27 May 2018	Two men stabbed to death on Oregon train trying to stop anti-Muslim rant.
1 June 2018	Israeli army kills Palestinian nurse, Razan Al-Najar, who was tending the wounded, in Gaza border protest.
3 June 2018	Jordan: thousands protest against IMF-backed austerity measures. King Abdullah II asks Prime Minister Hani al-Mulki to resign and appoints Omar al-Razzaz, a former World Bank economist. Omar al-Razzaz immediately withdraws the controversial income tax law.
5 June 2018	Prominent Islamic activist, Tariq Ramadan, testifies over rape accusations.
6 June 2018	Iraq orders recount of all 11 million votes from May 12 election.
8 June 2018	Austrian authorities to shut down seven mosques and several organizations as part of a crackdown on "political Islam".
10 June 2018	Gulf states pledge \$2.5b to support Jordan.
11 June 2018	Qatar takes UAE to UN International Court of Justice over blockade, citing human rights violations.
12 June 2018	Egyptian electricity prices to rise as subsidies slashed once more.
13 June 2018	Dutch anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders to hold Prophet Muhammad cartoon competition at his party's parliamentary offices.
13 June 2018	Saudi-backed forces begin assault on Hudaydah port in Yemen.
14 June 2018	Bay Area Muslim Leader, Zahra Billoo, Has Her Award Rescinded by Interfaith Group After Pro-Israel Activists Objected, Due to Her Criticisms of the Israeli Government and Various pro-Israel Groups.

Date	Event
14 June 2018	U.S. turns down UAE request for aid in offensive against rebel-held Yemeni port, Hodeidah.
15 June 2018	A record-breaking 140,000 Muslims gathered in Europe's largest such celebration to mark Eid - in a park in Small Heath, Birmingham.
15 June 2018	US drone strike kills Pakistan Taliban leader, Mullah Fazlullah.
16 June 2018	British Muslims raise over £100m for charity in the month of Ramadan alone.
18 June 2018	Israeli PM Netanyahu meets Jordan King Abdullah II in Amman to discuss regional developments, the two-state solution and bilateral relations.
24 June 2018	Saudi Arabia allows women to drive.
24 June 2018	President Erdogan wins the Turkish Presidential election with 53% of the vote in a record 88% turnout.
25 June 2018	The US Supreme Court upholds President Donald Trump's revised travel ban. The presidential proclamation bans nationals of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen from entering the US. It also covers travellers from North Korea and certain government officials from Venezuela.
25 June 2018	French far-right group arrested over alleged plot to attack Muslims.
27 June 2018	Violent clashes between Muslim cattle herders and Christian farmers in Nigeria leave 86 killed.
27 June 2018	Interfaith group PACT reinstates award to Muslim leader Zahra Billoo after community outrage.
28 June 2018	Muslim civil rights groups and advocates rally against Trump's travel ban in downtown Orlando.
28 June 2018	Shadowy Cell in France, Operational Forces Action, Charged With Plot to Kill Muslim Civilians.
28 June 2018	50,000 Syrians Flee Assad Bombs to Jordan Border.
28 June 2018	Saudi women's rights activist arrested as long-time driving ban lifted.
29 June 2018	Man Stabbed 16 Times for Adopting Muslim Girl in Hyderabad.
29 June 2018	Hundreds of Syrian refugees return home from Lebanon.
30 June 2018	Saudi Arabia, Oman sites added to UNESCO World Heritage List.
1 July 2018	Female, Muslim and a boxer: Bianca Elmir comes out swinging in doco.
1 July 2018	Trump blasts OPEC, warns European companies against business with Iran.
1 July 2018	Gay rights groups march in Istanbul Pride parade in spite of ban.
1 July 2018	Suicide bomber targets Iraq ballot site after recount announced.
1 July 2018	Iraq begins building fence on Syria border to keep out Islamic State fighters.
25 July 2018	Somalia's attorney general announces country's first prosecution of female genital mutilation after death of a 10-year-old girl
25 July 2018	Pakistan general election: former cricketer Imran Khan wins most votes but not majority after vote marred by violence and bomb that kills 31 people
29 July 2018	6.4 magnitude earthquake strikes island of Lombok, Indonesia, killing at least 14
29 July 2018	Palestinian teenage activist Ahed Tamimi released from prison after eight months
29 July 2018	Demonstrations calling for safer road by students begin in Dhaka, Bangladesh
30-31 July 2018	Sochi Summit in which the leaders of Russian, Turkey, and Iran discuss a ceasefire in Syria that leads to a lack of bloodshed in Idlib later on.
6 August 2018	Saudi Arabia's state airline suspends direct flights to Toronto and expels ambassador after Canada calls for release of detained activists for civil and women's rights

Date	Event
7 August 2018	The United States reimposes sanctions on Iran
8 August 2018	Malaysia charges former prime minister Najib Razak with three counts of money laundering
9 August 2018	Saudi-led air coalition strikes a school bus in Sada Province, Yemen, killing 43, many of them children
10 August 2018	Turkish lira falls dramatically after US President Trump announces tariff increases on Turkish steel and aluminum
12 August 2018	More than 200 Afghan soldiers reported killed after 3 days of attacks by taliban insurgents over multiple fronts including Ghazni city
12 August 2018	Mali's Presidential run-off election held, eventually won by current President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (not in <i>The Muslim 500</i> ) with opposition disputing outcome
15 August 2018	Boat overturns in floods near the Nile in Northern Sudan, leaving 25 dead, most of them school children
15 August 2018	Suicide bomber attacks tuition centre in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing 48 and injuring 67
18 August 2018	Archaeologists confirm first-ever cheese found from Ancient Egypt 3,200 years old in tomb of Ptahmes, mayor of Memphis
19 August 2018	Two more earthquakes hit Lombok in Indonesia killing 14 two weeks after previous earthquakes
25 August 2018	Afghan Islamic State leader Abu Saad Erhabi and 10 others killed in an air strike in province of Nangarhar, Afghanistan
26 August 2018	Moroccan pop singer Saad Lamjarred (not in <i>The Muslim 500</i> ) arrested in Saint-Tropez, France on a rape allegation
2 September 2018	About 400 prisoners escape a jail near Tripoli in Libya during militia fighting
3 September 2018	First public caning and conviction of lesbian couple, attempted to have sex, by Sharia High Court in Terengganu state, Malaysia
3 September 2018	Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed al-Maktoum named the UAE's first two astronauts: as Hazza al-Mansouri, 34, and 37-year-old Sultan al-Neyadi.
8 September 2018	Egypt sentences over 700 people, including 75 death sentences for 2013 pro-Muslim Brotherhood sit-in at Rabaa al-Adawiya square
18 September 2018	Imran Khan pledges to grant Pakistani citizenship to all Afghan and Bangladeshi refugees who were born on Pakistani soil
19 September 2018	Two people have been seriously hurt after a car mowed down worshippers outside a London mosque in the early hours of the morning
24 September 2018	Amnesty International says that China must end systematic oppression against Muslims in Xinjiang



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Say: 'He is God, One.  
God, the Self-Sufficient, Besought of all.  
He neither begot, nor was begotten.  
Nor is there anyone equal to Him.'

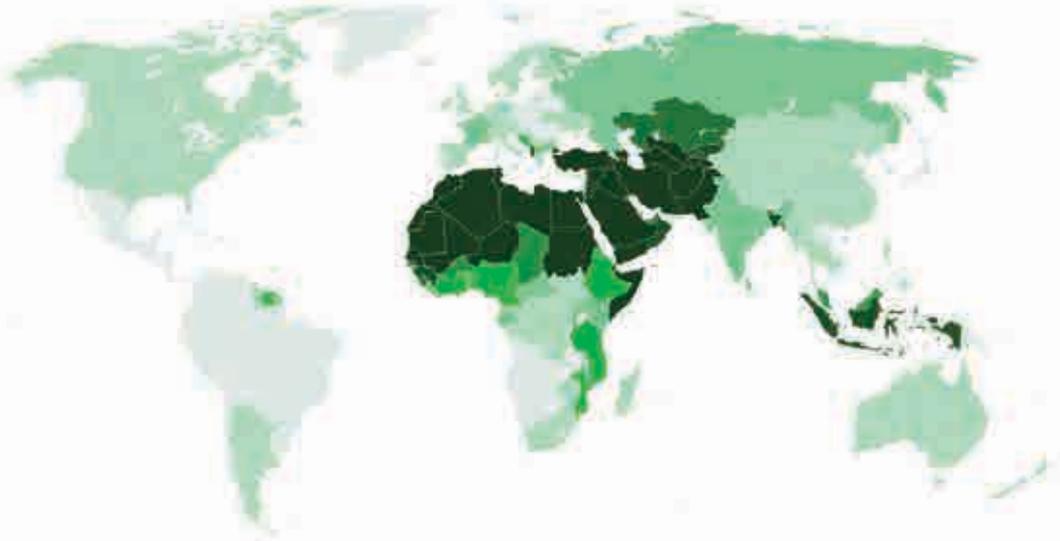
*The Unity* 112 : 1-4

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ℳ Appendix I ℟

# POPULATION STATISTICS

# World Muslim Population



Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Afghanistan	36,373,176	99.7	36,264,056
Albania	2,934,363	58.8	1,725,405
Algeria	42,008,054	99	41,587,973
American Samoa	55,679	< 0.1	< 56
Andorra	76,953	2.6	2,001
Angola	30,774,205	1	307,742
Anguilla	15,045	0.6	90
Antigua and Barbuda	103,050	0.6	618
Argentina	44,688,864	2.5	1,117,222
Armenia	2,934,152	< 0.1	< 2934
Aruba	105,670	0.4	423
Australia	24,772,247	2.6	644,078
Austria	8,751,820	8	700,146
Azerbaijan	9,923,914	96.9	9,616,273
Bahamas	399,285	0.1	399
Bahrain	1,566,993	70.2	1,100,029
Bangladesh	166,368,149	90.4	150,396,807
Barbados	286,388	0.9	2,577

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Belarus	9,452,113	0.2	18,904
Belgium	11,498,519	7.6	873,887
Belize	382,444	0.1	382
Benin	11,485,674	27.7	3,181,532
Bermuda	61,070	0.8	489
Bhutan	817,054	0.2	1,634
Bolivia	11,215,674	< 0.1	< 11216
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3,503,554	50.7	1,776,302
Botswana	2,333,201	0.4	9,333
Brazil	210,867,954	0.2	421,736
British Virgin Islands	31,719	1.2	381
Brunei	434,076	78.8	342,052
Bulgaria	7,036,848	11.1	781,090
Burkina Faso	19,751,651	61.5	12,147,265
Burundi	11,216,450	2.5	280,411
Cambodia	16,245,729	1.9	308,669
Cameroon	24,678,234	21	5,182,429
Canada	36,953,765	3.2	1,182,520
Cape Verde	553,335	2	11,067
Caribbean Netherlands	25,702	0.2	51
Cayman Islands	62,348	0.2	125
Central African Republic	4,737,423	15	710,613
Chad	15,353,184	58	8,904,847
Chile	18,197,209	< 0.1	< 18197
China	1,415,045,928	1.8	25,470,827
Colombia	49,464,683	0.2	98,929
Comoros	832,347	98.3	818,197
Congo	5,399,895	1.6	86,398
Cook Islands	17,411	< 0.1	< 17
Costa Rica	4,953,199	< 0.1	< 4953
Côte d'Ivoire	24,905,843	42.9	10,684,607
Croatia	4,164,783	1.4	58,307
Cuba	11,489,082	0.1	11,489
Cyprus	1,189,085	25.4	302,028
Czech Republic	10,625,250	0.1	10,625
Denmark	5,754,356	5.4	310,735
Djibouti	971,408	97	942,266
Dominica	74,308	0.2	149
Dominican Republic	10,882,996	< 0.1	< 10883
DR Congo	84,004,989	5	4,200,249
Ecuador	16,863,425	< 0.1	< 16863

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Egypt	99,375,741	90	89,438,167
El Salvador	6,411,558	<0.1	< 6412
Equatorial Guinea	1,313,894	4.1	53,870
Eritrea	5,187,948	48	2,490,215
Estonia	1,306,788	<0.1	< 1307
Ethiopia	107,534,882	33.9	36,454,325
Falkland Islands	2,922	< 0.1	< 3
Faroe Islands	49,489	< 0.1	< 49
Fiji	912,241	6.3	57,471
Finland	5,542,517	2.7	149,648
France	65,233,271	8.8	5,740,528
French Guiana	289,763	0.9	2,608
French Polynesia	285,859	< 0.1	< 286
Gabon	2,067,561	9.7	200,553
Gambia	2,163,765	95.3	2,062,068
Georgia	3,907,131	10.5	410,249
Germany	82,293,457	6.1	5,019,901
Ghana	29,463,643	18	5,303,456
Gibraltar	34,733	4	1,389
Greece	11,142,161	5.7	635,103
Greenland	56,565	<0.1	< 57
Grenada	108,339	0.3	325
Guadeloupe	449,173	0.4	1,797
Guam	165,718	<0.1	< 166
Guatemala	17,245,346	<0.1	< 17245
Guinea	13,052,608	84.2	10,990,296
Guinea-Bissau	1,907,268	45	858,271
Guyana	782,225	7.2	56,320
Haiti	11,112,945	<0.1	< 11113
Honduras	9,417,167	0.1	9,417
Hong Kong	7,428,887	3.1	230,295
Hungary	9,688,847	0.3	29,067
Iceland	337,780	0.2	676
India	1,354,051,854	14.2	192,275,363
Indonesia	266,794,980	87.2	232,645,223
Iran	82,011,735	99.4	81,519,665
Iraq	39,339,753	99	38,946,355
Ireland	4,803,748	1.4	67,252
Isle of Man	84,831	0.2	170
Israel	8,452,841	17.7	1,496,153
Italy	59,290,969	4.8	2,845,967

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Jamaica	2,898,677	<0.1	< 2899
Japan	127,185,332	0.1	127,185
Jordan	9,903,802	93.8	9,289,766
Kazakhstan	18,403,860	70.2	12,919,510
Kenya	50,950,879	10	5,095,088
Kiribati	118,414	<0.1	< 118
Kuwait	4,197,128	74.1	3,110,072
Kyrgyzstan	6,132,932	88.8	5,446,044
Laos	6,961,210	<0.1	< 6961
Latvia	1,929,938	0.1	1,930
Lebanon	6,093,509	54	3,290,495
Lesotho	2,263,010	<0.1	< 2263
Liberia	4,853,516	12.8	621,250
Libya	6,470,956	96.6	6,250,943
Liechtenstein	38,155	4.8	1,831
Lithuania	2,876,475	0.1	2,876
Luxembourg	590,321	3.2	18,890
Macau	632,418	<0.1	< 632
Macedonia	2,085,051	33.3	694,322
Madagascar	26,262,810	7	1,838,397
Malawi	19,164,728	12.8	2,453,085
Malaysia	32,042,458	61.4	19,674,069
Maldives	444,259	100	444,259
Mali	19,107,706	95	18,152,321
Malta	432,089	0.2	864
Marshall Islands	53,167	< 0.1	< 53
Martinique	385,065	0.2	770
Mauritania	4,540,068	100	4,540,068
Mauritius	1,268,315	17.3	219,418
Mayotte	259,682	98.8	256,566
Mexico	130,759,074	0.1	130,759
Micronesia	106,227	< 0.1	< 106
Moldova	4,041,065	0.4	16,164
Monaco	38,897	0.5	194
Mongolia	3,121,772	6	187,306
Montenegro	629,219	19.11	120,244
Montserrat	5,203	0.1	5
Morocco	36,191,805	99	35,829,887
Mozambique	30,528,673	22.8	6,960,537
Myanmar	53,855,735	2.3	1,238,682
Namibia	2,587,801	0.4	10,351

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Nauru	11,312	< 0.1	< 11
Nepal	29,624,035	4.2	1,244,209
Netherlands	17,084,459	7.1	1,212,997
New Caledonia	279,821	2.8	7,835
New Zealand	4,749,598	0.9	42,746
Nicaragua	6,284,757	<0.1	< 6285
Niger	22,311,375	98.3	21,932,082
Nigeria	195,875,237	50	97,937,619
Niue	1,624	< 0.1	< 2
North Korea	25,610,672	0.1	25,611
Northern Mariana Islands	55,194	0.7	386
Norway	5,353,363	5.7	305,142
Oman	4,829,946	85.9	4,148,924
Pakistan	200,813,818	96.4	193,584,521
Palau	21,964	< 0.1	< 22
Panama	4,162,618	0.7	29,138
Papua New Guinea	8,418,346	< 0.1	< 8418
Paraguay	6,896,908	< 0.1	< 6897
Peru	32,551,815	< 0.1	< 32552
Philippines	106,512,074	11	11,716,328
Poland	38,104,832	0.1	38,105
Portugal	10,291,196	0.4	41,165
Puerto Rico	3,659,007	< 0.1	< 3659
Qatar	2,694,849	77.5	2,088,508
Réunion	883,247	4.2	37,096
Romania	19,580,634	0.3	58,742
Russia	143,964,709	15	21,594,706
Rwanda	12,501,156	4.8	600,055
Saint Helena	4,074	< 0.1	< 4
Saint Kitts & Nevis	55,850	0.3	168
Saint Lucia	179,667	0.1	180
Saint Pierre & Miquelon	6,342	0.2	13
Samoa	197,695	< 0.1	< 198
San Marino	33,557	< 0.1	< 34
São Tomé and Príncipe	208,818	< 0.1	< 209
Saudi Arabia	33,554,343	97.1	32,581,267
Senegal	16,294,270	95.9	15,626,205
Serbia	8,762,027	3.1	271,623
Seychelles	95,235	1.1	1,048
Sierra Leone	7,719,729	71.5	5,519,606
Singapore	5,791,901	14.7	851,409

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Slovakia	5,449,816	0.2	10,900
Slovenia	2,081,260	3.6	74,925
Solomon Islands	623,281	< 0.1	< 623
Somalia	15,181,925	98.9	15,014,924
South Africa	57,398,421	1.9	1,090,570
South Korea	51,164,435	0.1	51,164
South Sudan	12,919,053	6.2	800,981
Spain	46,397,452	2.6	1,206,334
Sri Lanka	20,950,041	9.71	2,034,249
St. Vincent & Grenadines	110,200	1.7	1,873
State of Palestine	5,052,776	97.5	4,926,457
Sudan	41,511,526	97	40,266,180
Suriname	568,301	19.6	111,387
Swaziland	1,391,385	10	139,139
Sweden	9,982,709	8.1	808,599
Switzerland	8,544,034	5.2	444,290
Syria	18,284,407	82.9	15,157,773
Taiwan	23,694,089	0.3	71,082
Tajikistan	9,107,211	96.7	8,806,673
Tanzania	59,091,392	35.2	20,800,170
Thailand	69,183,173	5.8	4,012,624
Timor-Leste	1,324,094	0.1	1,324
Togo	7,990,926	20	1,598,185
Tokelau	1,319	< 0.1	< 1
Tonga	109,008	< 0.1	< 109
Trinidad and Tobago	1,372,598	5.8	79,611
Tunisia	11,659,174	99.8	11,635,856
Turkey	81,916,871	99.8	81,753,037
Turkmenistan	5,851,466	93.3	5,459,418
Turks & Caicos Islands	35,963	< 0.1	< 36
Tuvalu	11,287	0.1	11
U.S. Virgin Islands	104,914	0.1	105
Uganda	44,270,563	12	5,312,468
Ukraine	44,009,214	0.9	396,083
United Arab Emirates	9,541,615	76	7,251,627
United Kingdom	66,573,504	6.3	4,194,131
United States	326,766,748	1.1	3,594,434
Uruguay	3,469,551	< 0.1	< 3470
Uzbekistan	32,364,996	96.5	31,232,221
Vanuatu	282,117	< 0.1	< 282
Vatican City	801	0	0

Country	Population	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population
Venezuela	32,381,221	0.4	129,525
Vietnam	96,491,146	0.1	96,491
Wallis & Futuna	11,683	< 0.1	< 12
Western Sahara	567,421	100	567,421
Yemen	28,915,284	100	28,915,284
Zambia	17,609,178	1	176,092
Zimbabwe	16,913,261	8.69	1,469,762
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,632,451,113</b>		<b>1,882,723,489</b>

Muslim population statistics taken from Wikipedia.org. World populations taken from www.worldometers.info.



Everything will perish except His Countenance.

*The Story* 28 : 88

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Appendix II  
SOCIAL  
MEDIA  
STATISTICS

## Top Social Media Statistics of *The Muslim 500*

This is a list showing the most popular social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) run by Muslims.  
(Rounded values in millions.)

Rank	Name	Age	Country
1	Salman Khan	53	India
2	Shahrukh Khan	52	India
3	Zayn Malik	25	UK
4	Mesut Özil	29	Germany
5	Mustafa Hosny	40	Egypt
6	Muhammad Alarefe	47	Saudi Arabia
7	A.R. Rahman	51	India
8	Amr Khaled	51	Egypt
9	Ahmad Al Shugairi	45	Saudi Arabia
10	Paul Pogba	25	France
11	Aamir Khan	53	India
12	Aidh Al-Qarni	58	Saudi Arabia
13	Sheikh Mishary bin Rashid Alafasy	42	Kuwait
14	Amr Diab	56	Egypt
15	Tamer Hosny	42	Egypt
16	Maher Zain	37	Sweden
17	HM Queen Rania Al-Abdullah	48	Jordan
18	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	63	Turkey
19	Atif Aslam	35	Pakistan
20	Ahlam Alshamsi	49	UAE
21	Ahmed Helmy	48	Egypt
22	Salman Al Ouda	61	Saudi Arabia
23	Zinedine Zidane	46	France
24	Haifa Wehbe	42	Lebanon
25	Kadim Al Sahir	61	Iraq
26	DJ Khaled	42	USA
27	Tareq Al-Suwaidan	64	Kuwait
28	Imran Khan	65	Pakistan
29	Muhammad Assaf	28	Palestine
30	HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum	69	UAE
31	Bassem Youssef	44	Egypt
32	Lt Gen Prabowo Subianto	66	Indonesia
33	Ahlam Mustaghanami	65	Algeria
34	Ragheb Alama	56	Lebanon
35	Nabil Al Awadhy	47	Kuwait

Occupation	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Total
Actor	36m	35m	19m	89m
Actor	30m	36m	14m	80m
Musician	20m	28m	30m	77m
Footballer	31m	23m	18m	73m
Preacher	33m	7m	8m	48m
Scholar	24m	21m	—	47m
Musician	23m	20m	2m	45m
Preacher	30m	11m	3m	43m
Show Host	14m	18m	10m	42m
Sports	7m	6m	29m	42m
Actor	16m	24m	1m	41m
Scholar	16m	19m	3m	38m
Qur'an Reciter	19m	14m	3m	36m
Musician	17m	9m	7m	33m
Musician	19m	3m	10m	32m
Musician	26m	2m	4m	32m
Royalty	17m	10m	5m	32m
Politician	9m	13m	4m	27m
Musician	20m	1m	4m	25m
Musician	7m	9m	9m	25m
Actor	12m	5m	7m	24m
Scholar	7m	14m	2m	23m
Sports	3m	0m	21m	23m
Musician	11m	7m	5m	23m
Musician	13m	7m	3m	22m
Musician	3m	4m	12m	20m
Show Host	8m	10m	—	18m
Politician	9m	9m	1m	18m
Musician	10m	3m	4m	17m
Royalty	4m	9m	3m	17m
Show Host	3m	10m	3m	16m
Public Speaker	10m	3m	2m	14m
Novelist	12m	1m	0m	14m
Musician	5m	6m	3m	13m
Preacher	1m	11m	0m	12m

# Top Social Media Statistics of the General Public

This is a list showing the most popular social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) run by Muslims.  
(Rounded values in millions.)

Rank	Name	Age	Country
1	Cristiano Ronaldo	33	Portugal
2	Justin Bieber	24	Canada
3	Taylor Swift	28	USA
4	Selena Gomez	26	USA
5	Katy Perry	33	USA
6	Rihanna	30	Barbados
7	Shakira	41	Colombia
8	Kim Kardashian	37	USA
9	Neymar	26	Brazil
10	Beyonce	37	USA
11	Lionel Messi (Leo Messi)	31	Argentina
12	Dwayne Johnson (The Rock)	46	USA
13	Barack Obama	57	USA
14	Jennifer Lopez	49	USA
15	Lady Gaga	32	USA
16	Demi Lovato	26	USA
17	Miley Cyrus	25	USA
18	Nicki Minaj	34	USA
19	Justin Timberlake	37	USA
20	Vin Diesel	51	USA
21	Eminem	45	USA
22	Adele	30	UK
23	Kevin Hart	39	USA
24	Drake	31	Canada
25	Britney Spears	37	USA
26	Bruno Mars	32	USA
27	Emma Watson	28	UK
28	LeBron James	33	USA
29	Chris Brown	28	USA
30	David Beckham	42	UK
31	Will Smith	49	USA
32	Wiz Khalifa	31	USA
33	Lil Wayne	35	USA
34	Pitbull	37	USA
35	Ronaldinho Gaucho	38	Brazil

Occupations	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Total
Footballer	123m	75m	141m	338m
Musician	78m	104m	102m	284m
Musician	73m	83m	111m	267m
Musician	61m	57m	143m	261m
Musician	68m	107m	72m	247m
Musician	80m	79m	65m	223m
Musician	102m	51m	53m	206m
Reality Star	30m	59m	117m	206m
Footballer	61m	41m	102m	204m
Musician	63m	15m	117m	195m
Footballer	90m	0m	98m	188m
Wrestler	58m	13m	115m	186m
Politician	55m	102m	18m	176m
Musician	44m	44m	79m	167m
Musician	60m	77m	30m	166m
Actress - Musician	37m	57m	71m	165m
Musician	45m	41m	76m	161m
Musician	42m	20m	92m	154m
Musician	38m	64m	52m	154m
Actor	99m	0m	51m	150m
Musician	88m	22m	23m	134m
Musician	64m	28m	33m	124m
Comedian	24m	35m	63m	121m
Musician	35m	37m	47m	120m
Musician	38m	56m	21m	116m
Musician	57m	32m	23m	112m
Actress	34m	29m	48m	111m
Athlete - NBA	23m	42m	41m	106m
Musician	41m	23m	40m	104m
Footballer	53m	0m	51m	104m
Actor	77m	0m	22m	99m
Musician	41m	33m	23m	97m
Musician	50m	34m	9m	92m
Musician	56m	26m	7m	89m
Footballer	35m	18m	37m	89m



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Say: 'O disbelievers!  
I do not worship what you worship,  
and you do not worship what I worship,  
nor will I worship what you have worshipped,  
nor will you worship what I worship.  
You have your religion and I have my religion.

*The Disbelievers* 109 : 1-6

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❧ The ❧  
GLOSSARY

**Ahl al-Bayt (or Aal al-Bayt):** Literally, “The People of the House”; refers to the family of the Prophet Muhammad.

**Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah:** Literally, “The People of the Prophetic Practice and Community”; refers to Sunni Muslims as a community.

**Al-Fatiha:** Literally, “The Opening” or “The Beginning”. This is the title for the first chapter of the Holy Qur’an that is recited as a fundamental part of Muslims’ daily prayers.

**Aqida:** Creed. This refers to theological and doctrinal beliefs of Muslims.

**Ash’ari:** Theological school of Sunni Orthodoxy named after the followers of the 9th century scholar Abu al Hasan Al-Ash’ari (874–936 CE).

**Awqaf:** Plural of waqf (see below).

**Azaan/Adhan:** The call to prayer.

**Bid’a:** Literally “innovation”; this refers to the act of creating superfluous, or non-prescribed traditions in the practice of Islam. It is used in common speech as a denunciation toward those not acting in accordance with the prescriptions of Islam.

**Caliph:** From Arabic khalifa (“successor”), the head of the entire community of Muslims, either current or in the past. Is also used by certain sects and Sufi tariqas to refer to their own leader his successor.

**Chador:** A loose cloth traditionally worn by Muslim women which usually covers the body from head to foot.

**Da’i/ Da’ee:** Islamic missionary.

**Da’wa:** Islamic missionary work; literally ‘inviting’ to Islam or to acts of virtue.

**Emir (or Amir):** A title accorded to a leader, prince, or commander-in-chief.

**Fatwa:** A religious ruling issued by a mufti (a top legal scholar) regarding particulars of an issue in Islamic law based on circumstances surrounding the question, such as its time, place, people, and

other details. Unlike the ruling of a judge (qadi), it is not normally binding.

**Fiqh:** Islamic jurisprudence. A branch of the Sharia that deals with rulings related to human actions, as opposed to faith or spirituality.

**Fiqh al-Aqaliyyat:** Islamic rulings for Muslims living as minorities in predominantly non-Muslim lands.

**Ghazal:** Love poetry used for describing the beauty of the loved one as well as the emotions the poet has towards the beloved.

**Hadith:** Literally “saying”. These are a collection of sayings—or direct observations—of the Prophet Muhammad. There are numerous ahadeeth (plural of “hadith”), and the practice of verifying them is an Islamic scholarly practice of its own that has been carried out since the life of the Prophet.

**Hafiz (or Hafiza) al-Qur’an:** A person who has committed the entire Qur’an to memory, and can recite the Qur’an at will. This is important in Islam because the Qur’an was originally revealed as an oral text, and until today, the authenticity of Qur’anic transmission is based primarily on oral, then written, transmission.

**Hajj:** The pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation upon every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it. The pilgrimage occurs from the 8th–12th days of Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar.

**Halal:** Permissible. A term referring to actions or objects that are permissible according to Islamic law. Commonly refers to food items that are permissible for Muslims to eat.

**Haram:** In the context of a sacred precinct, like Mecca, Medina, or al-Aqsa, this term means “inviolable”. In most contexts, this term means “forbidden”, and relates to actions that are impermissible according to Islamic law.

**Hijab:** Normally refers to the headscarf worn by Muslim women but refers to both the head cover and attire worn by Muslim women to preserve their modesty. It obligatory by the consensus of

all classical Islamic schools of thought. In some contexts, it can mean segregation, as in between genders.

**Hijaz:** The region along the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula that separates Najd in the east from Tihamah in the west.

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

**Ihsan:** Virtue through constant regard to, and awareness of, God.

**Ijaza:** Certification given to a student for acquiring knowledge of a particular discipline under the authorization of a higher authority usually by face-to-face interactions, thereby enabling the student to transmit the knowledge the teacher has. This is performed under the supervision of a certified sheikh whose chain of narrations often leads to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

**Ijtihad:** Independent reasoning, or individual interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

**Imam:** (1) In both Sunni and Shia Islam an imam is the leader of congregational prayers who may also deliver the sermon of the Friday (Jumu'ah) prayers; more generally, a person of authority within the community. (2) In Shia Islam this exclusively refers to a series of people, descended from the Prophet Muhammad, who by lineage are considered divinely guided spiritual leaders.

**Imamate:** The position or institution, in Shia Islam, that is comprised of a series of divinely guided imams.

**Iman:** Faith in God.

**Islam:** Submission to God's will.

**Isnad:** The chain of narrators of the Hadith; it is the list of authorities who have transmitted the sayings, actions or approbations of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) via one of

his companions or a later authority (tabi'i). The reliability of the isnad is the main criteria in the validity of Hadith. Modern practices of scientific citation and historical method owe a great deal to the rigour of the isnad tradition of early Muslims.

**Jihad:** Literally, "struggle". An exertion of effort in any field, not just in war, in order to achieve good or prevent evil, done so for the sake of God's pleasure. The highest level of jihad is to overcome one's ego and lower self. It is considered a religious duty upon every Muslim.

**Kaaba:** The large cubic structure in the Grand Mosque in Mecca, adorned in gold-embroidered black fabric, referred to by Muslims as the "House of God". This structure marks the direction in which Muslims pray and is central to the Hajj pilgrimage.

**Khat:** Script. Refers to Arabic calligraphy, which is the artistic practice of handwriting Arabic phrases, often in the form of verses of the Qur'an or Islamic prayers.

**Khateeb:** Refers to the person who delivers the Islamic sermon (khutbah) during certain occasions such as the Friday or Eid prayers. He is usually the imam or leader of the prayer.

**Khalifa:** See "caliph".

**Khanqah:** A building designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood, or tariqa, and is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. It is also synonymous with the regional terms ribat, tekke, and zawiya.

**Khawarij:** A group of Muslims in early Islamic history who went against the larger community and became outsiders. A term used to describe political deviants.

**Khums:** Literally, "one-fifth" in Arabic; a religious tax of one-fifth of one's income owed by followers of Usuli Twelver Shia to a very senior cleric and poor Muslims.

**Madhab:** A traditional school of Islamic legal methodology (e.g. Hanbali, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanafi, Ja'fari).

**Madrasa:** The Arabic word for “school”. Can refer to a religious school.

**Majlis al-Shura:** Consultative religio-legislative body.

**Marja’/Marja’iyya:** The highest position of authority in the Usuli school of Twelver Shia fiqh whose authority lies after the Qur’an, prophets, and imams. Also referred to as marja’ taqlid (literally “one who is worthy of being imitated”), they have the authority to make legal decisions within the confines of Islamic law for laymen and less-qualified clerics.

**Masjid:** Arabic for “mosque”.

**Maturidi:** Theological school of Sunni Orthodoxy named after the followers of the 9th century scholar Muhammad Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (853-944 CE).

**Melayu Islam Beraja:** The concept of Malay Islamic monarchy.

**Morchidat:** Literally, “(female) guides”. Refers to the Moroccan cadre of trained female preachers.

**Mufti:** A Muslim legal expert who is empowered to give rulings on religious matters.

**Mujahid:** Someone engaged in acts of jihad.

**Muqri:** Someone qualified to teach others proper recitation of the Qur’an.

**Murid:** Disciple of a Sufi guide or order.

**Mursyidul Am:** Malaysian term for religious guide.

**Mushaf:** A printing of the Qur’an, referring to the physical bound volume of the Holy Book.

**Mutabarrik:** Supporter or affiliate of a Sufi guide or order, someone less serious in treading the spiritual path than a murid.

**Mu’tazili:** An almost obsolete school of Sunni Islam, popular in the 8th century, that advocates the belief that the Qur’an is created—as opposed

to the Orthodox Sunni view that it is eternal and uncreated.

**Nasheed:** Islamic song. Islamic vocal music, sung individually or by a group and sometimes accompanied by the daf, a shallow drum similar to the tambourine. The words sung may refer to religion, history, current issues, or anything related to Islam.

**Pancasila:** Indonesian concept of five basic, national principles: belief in the Oneness of God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy, and social justice.

**PBUH:** An acronym for “Peace be upon him”.

**Pesantren:** The term for Islamic schools in Indonesia.

**Qibla:** The direction in which Muslims offer their five daily prayers; the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca.

**Ramadan:** Holy month of fasting, ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

**Salafi:** A movement of Sunni Muslims that places great emphasis on literal interpretation of the Qur’an and Hadith, with skepticism towards the role of human intellect.

**Salawat:** Prayers of peace upon the Prophet which have many distinct formulas, often consisting of the basic Allahumma salli ala sayyidina Muhammad wa ala ahlihi wa sallim (O God send your prayers and blessings upon Muhammad and his family).

**Shahadatayn:** The two testimonies of faith: “There is no deity but God. Muhammad is the Messenger of God.” Stating these two sentences is sufficient to become a Muslim.

**Sharia:** Literally, “the way to the source”, this refers to Islamic law. Islamic law is not, as is widely perceived, a standard set of written rules, but is rather an unwritten text that is interpreted by legal scholars in specific instances, drawing on the Qur’an and other reliable religious sources relevant to the tradition followed.

**Sheikh:** (1) A position of authority granted to people who are respected in society. (2) A religious or tribal official.

**Shia:** The second largest denomination of Muslims referred to as Shi'atu 'Ali or "party of Ali", the fourth caliph of Islam and first imam in Shia Islam.

**Sunnah:** Literally "the trodden path", this refers to the ways and practices of the Prophet Muhammad. Reference to these practices can be found in the Qur'an and in the Hadith.

**Sunni:** The largest denomination of Muslims referred to as Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah or "The People of the Prophetic Tradition and Community"—with emphasis on emulating the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

**Tafsir:** Interpretation of the Qur'an, either by commentary or exegesis.

**Taqlid:** The practice of following rulings without questioning the religious authority. This is a core tenet of the Shia Usuli school of Islamic law.

**Tariqa:** any particular brotherhood of Sufism (spiritual travel) that leads to a path to the Divine. It consists of a group of seekers following their guide (spiritual leader), and through spiritual deeds and guidance one reaches the ultimate truth of knowing God.

**Ummah:** The collective Muslim community.

**Umrah:** The "lesser pilgrimage" to Mecca. It can be performed any time of the year and has fewer rites than the hajj.

**Usul ad Din:** The basic foundations of the Islamic religion, represent creed, behaviour, and intellectual conduct and all are based on the rudiments of the Islamic faith.

**Velayat-e-Faqih:** A position of both spiritual and temporal powers in the Republic of Iran. Literally, "Guardianship of the Jurist", referring to the fact that while the Mahdi (awaited one) is in occultation, the jurists should have guardianship over the earth.

**Waqf:** A religious endowment or charitable trust.

**Zakat:** Mandatory distribution of excess wealth to the poor, and one of the five pillars of Islam. It typically consists of distributing 2.5% (one fortieth) of one's excess wealth every year, as well as mandatory charity during Eid al-Fitr, following Ramadan.

**Zawiya:** See khanqah, above.



Is the reward of goodness anything but goodness?  
So which of your Lord's favours will you deny?

*The Beneficent* 55 : 60-61

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❧ The ❧

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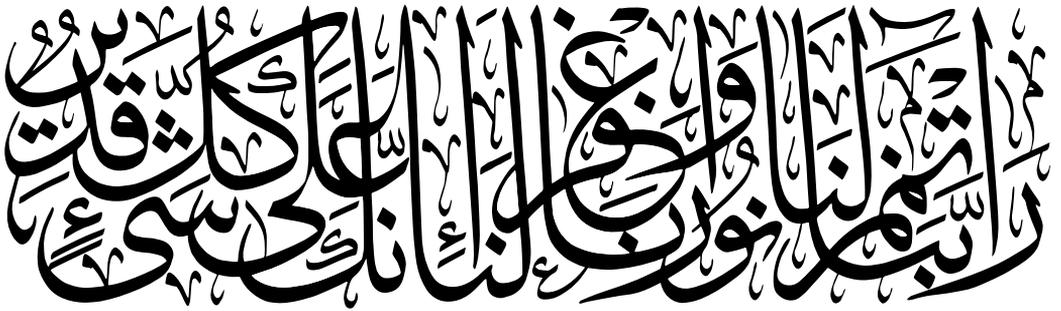
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Our Lord! Perfect our light for us and forgive us. Assuredly You have power over all things.

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## NOTE ON FORMAT

- All dates are of the Common Era (CE) unless otherwise stated. The abbreviations CE (Common Era) and AH (Anno Hegirae: years after Hijra) are used for clarity with very old dates.
- Names are presented as individuals refer to themselves, or as they are most frequently used; therefore some professors and doctors do not have the honorifics Prof. and Dr in their title. This is except in the Top 50 where titles are included. Royalty and nobility are accorded their traditionally used honorifics.
- The honorific His Eminence (H.E.) is given to figures of religious importance, such as state-level Muftis or Muftis of high stature, and also to Ayatollahs. His Royal Eminence is used for the Sultan of Sokoto, who has a combination of spiritual and regal honours.
- Other honorifics are presented where they apply, such as Ambassador, Representative, and Lady, among others.
- The title His/Her Excellency (H.E.) is accorded to heads of state, heads of government, and senior diplomats only—as per established usage of these terms. Rarely, individuals wish to avoid such titles, in such cases, we have adhered to the individuals' preference.
- Names are presented surname-first for ease of navigating and indexing, except in cases where first names are more relevant—such as for some royalty.
- Spelling of names is, where possible, as the individuals spell their own name. In other cases we have adhered to the most common usage.
- Specific terms in languages other than English have been italicized, and described.
- Further explanations for terms are presented in a glossary at the rear of this publication.
- For ease of reading we have adhered to the more widespread and straightforward transliterations of Arabic words into English, such as: Sheikh, Hadith, and Ayatollah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 إِذْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كَانُوا  
 إِهْبَاتًا لِلَّهِ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تُكْفَرُونَ سَلِمُوا لَنَا  
 مِنْ سُلَيْمٍ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ  
 الْمَصِيرُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا أَلَمْ تَسْأَلْ  
 وَعَلَيْهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تَأْتِيكُمُ الْغُرُوبُ  
 رَبَّنَا وَلَا جَمْعًا عَلَيْنَا إضْرًا كَمَا جَعَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ  
 مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا أُولَئِكَ الْبُرْءَانَ  
 رَبَّنَا وَإِنَّا فَانِقُونَ رَبَّنَا فَاصْفُرْنَا  
 وَعَلَيْهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تَأْتِيكُمُ الْغُرُوبُ  
 رَبَّنَا وَلَا جَمْعًا عَلَيْنَا إضْرًا كَمَا جَعَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ  
 مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا أُولَئِكَ الْبُرْءَانَ  
 رَبَّنَا وَإِنَّا فَانِقُونَ رَبَّنَا فَاصْفُرْنَا

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The Messenger believes in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and the believers; each one believes in God and His angels, and in His Books, and His messengers, 'we make no distinction between any of His messengers'. And they say, 'We hear and obey; Your forgiveness, our Lord; to You is the homecoming'. God charges no soul save to its capacity; for it is what it is has merited, and against it is what it has earned. Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget, or err; our Lord, burden us not with a load, such as You did lay upon those before us. Our Lord, do not burden us beyond what we have the power to bear; and pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us; You are our Patron; so grant us assistance against the disbelieving folk.

The Cow 2 : 285-286

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