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Rocket Science

January 2015

Rabi al-Awwal / Rabi al-Thani 1436



In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

Our fourth birthday!

Al-hamdu lillah! *Rocket Science* started in a small way in January 2011, and we have managed to keep going every month since then. That's 48 issues! Mount Albert Islamic Trust would like to thank everyone who has written for *Rocket Science*, and everyone who has subscribed to it and read it. We hope you still find that there are interesting pieces on all aspects of Islam.

Feedback on how we are doing is always welcome
(mtalbertmasjid@gmail.com).



New year, new look

As it is a new (Gregorian) year, we thought we would take the opportunity to change the look of *Rocket Science*, which has been the same since we started four years ago. The previous template has lasted us well, but it was one where it was always difficult to manipulate text and graphics easily. You may have noticed that occasionally things didn't appear in quite the right place, etc.

In Islam, we are encouraged to take care of orphans and widows. In typography, "orphans" and "widows" relate to words and lines that are separated from the rest of their paragraphs by page breaks. Not a deadly sin, but nice to avoid.

Hopefully, this new template will allow us to look a bit more professional in this respect.

We have also taken the opportunity to incorporate an Islamic green theme to the template. Why green? Read the article on page 2.

We hope you like the new look *Rocket Science*.

Going green



Green is often associated with Islam. Why? There are various ideas about this.

- Green is mentioned in descriptions of Paradise, both of the gardens themselves, the garments of the inhabitants and other features, as in the following quotations.

And below them both [in excellence] are two [other] gardens ... Dark green [in colour]. ... In both of them are two springs, spouting. ... In both of them are fruit and palm trees and pomegranates. ... In them are good and beautiful women ... Fair ones reserved in pavilions ... Untouched before them by man or jinni ... Reclining on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets. (Quran 55:62-76, interspersed with repetitions of "So which of the favours of your Lord would you deny?")

Upon the inhabitants will be green garments of fine silk and brocade. (Quran 76:21)

- Al-Khidr (the green one) is a character who is mentioned several times in Surah al-Kahf (surah #18), and travelled with Moses (Musa, as).
- A hadith narrated by Aishah (ra) states, "When Allah's Apostle died, he was covered with a hibra burd (green square decorated garment)." Hibra is a kind of Yemenese cloth that was said to be the favourite garment of the Prophet (saw).

- The tomb of Prophet Muhammad (saw) in the oldest part of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, lies under a dome which was painted green on the order of sultan Abdul Hamid II (1842 – 1918).
- Green is a symbol of nature and life. The dry desert of Arabia would have made this a powerful symbol.
- It has been suggested that it is not coincidence that green is at the middle of the colour spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet), and that Islam is often described as a religion at the middle, avoiding extremes. Pickthall's translation of the Quran states, "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you" (Quran 2:143).
- The flags of many Muslim nations include green as their base colour (see below).

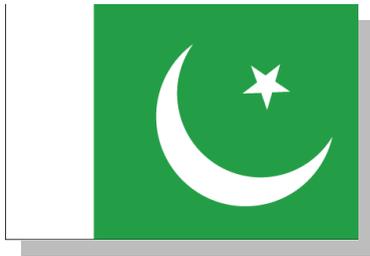
Islam regards itself as a pure monotheistic religion free from any cultural associations or symbolism. However, the use of particular colours, such as green, is not generally considered a symbol, because it does not lead people to commit shirk, that is, the association of anything or anyone as a partner to Allah (swt) or something to be worshipped.

Quiz

The flags below, with green as their base colour, belong to Muslim countries:

Algeria the Maldives Pakistan Turkmenistan
 Bangladesh Mauritania Saudi Arabia

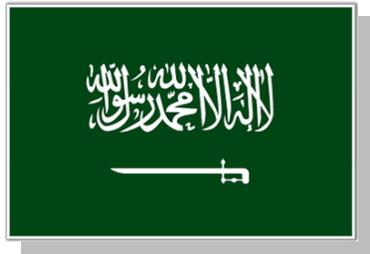
Which is which? (Answers on page 10)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

Muslim scientists

Insha Allah, this is the first of a number of articles about early Muslim scientists.

In the modern world, Islam is seen from many angles, but rarely is it viewed as a source of inspiration and enlightenment. It is a force of enlightenment and many verses of the Quran testify to that fact. It is also inspiration, as shown by the great body of scholarship produced during the Middle Ages. While Europe was in the midst of darkness, it was the Muslims, spurred on by the light of their new deen, who picked up the torch of scholarship and science. Unlike Christianity, where deen (religion) and science are two separate elements, the study of science has always been compatible with Islam. It was the Muslims who preserved the knowledge of antiquity, elaborated upon it, and finally passed it on to Europe. For more than 1,000 years, the Islamic empire remained the most advanced and civilised nation in the world. This is because Islam stressed the importance and respect of learning, forbade destruction, and developed in Muslims the respect for authority and discipline, and tolerance for other religions.

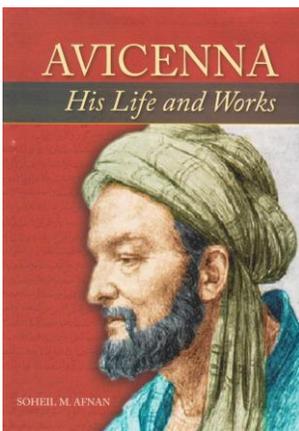
Although all people learn from what they do and pass on, it is important for us to learn about and appreciate the contributions of early Muslims to Islamic civilisation. Colonialism, the institution of the Western educational model, along with Eurocentrism, often portrays Islam as backwards, incompatible with science and technology, and anti-education. Muslim schoolchildren never learn of their glorious past and often the only thing passed on to them is the inferiority complex of the generation before them.

From the past, we can learn from our mistakes and use the analysis of those great examples before us as role models to enrich us in the future. So let us remember our great and glorious heritage by briefly surveying what Islam has already contributed to the world's development in different fields of science.

Medicine and life sciences

Abu Ali al-Hussain Ibn Abdallah Ibn Sina, universally known as Avicenna (980-1037), alone wrote 246 books, including *Kitab-al Shifa (The Book of Healing)*, consisting of 20 volumes, and *Al-Qanun fit Tibb (The Canons of Medicine)*. The Qanun was the chief guide for medical science in the West from the 12th to the 17th century. Dr William Osler, who wrote *The Evolution of Modern Science*, remarks, "The Qanun has remained a medical Bible for a longer period than any other work." Containing over a million words, it surveyed the entire medical knowledge available from ancient and Muslim sources, and included his own contributions.

Ibn Sina's original contributions included such advances such as recognition of the contagious nature of phthisis and tuberculosis; the distribution of diseases by water and soil; and the interaction between psychology and health. Also, the book described over 760 drugs and became the most authentic reference work of its era. Ibn Sina was also the first to describe meningitis and made rich contributions to anatomy, gynaecology and child health.



This interest in medicine went back to the time of the Prophet (saw), who once said that there existed a cure for every disease. With this spirit, there were hospitals and clinics built all over the Muslim world, the earliest built in 707 by Caliph Walid ibn Abd al-Malik in Damascus. Muslims made many advances such as the idea of circulation of blood, quarantine, and the foundation of the first apothecary shops and the earliest school of pharmacy.

Hunayn ibn Ishaq, a philosopher and physician, made advances in medicine, physics, mathematics, astronomy, veterinary science, and ophthalmology. He was the head of the famous school of translators founded by Caliph Mamun at Baghdad, and wrote the first systematic text book on ophthalmology.

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi (865-925), known as Rhazes, was one of the most prolific Muslim doctors and probably second only to Ibn Sina in his accomplishments. He was born at Ray, Iran and became a student of Hunayn ibn Ishaq and later a student of Ali ibn Rabban. He wrote over 200 books, including *Kitab al-Mansuri*, ten volumes on Greek medicine, and *Al-Hawi*, an encyclopedia of medicine in 20 volumes. In *Al-Hawi*, he included information on each medical subject available from Greek and Arab sources, and then added his own remarks based on his experience and views. He classified substances as vegetable, animal or mineral, while other alchemists divided them into "bodies", "souls" and "spirits".

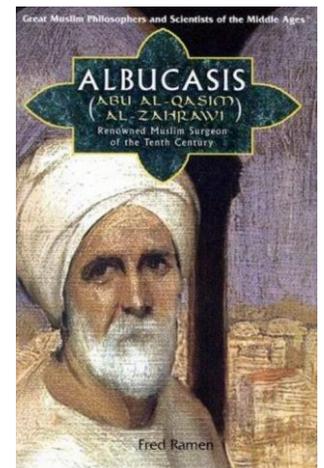
Al-Razi was placed in charge of the first Royal Hospital at Ray, from where he soon moved to a similar position in Baghdad, where he remained the head of its famous Muqtadari Hospital for a long time. He found a treatment for kidney and bladder stones, and explained the nature of various infectious diseases. He also conducted research on smallpox and measles, and was the first to introduce the use of alcohol for medical purposes. A unique feature of his medical system was that he greatly favoured cure through correct and regulated food intake. This was combined with his emphasis on the influence of psychological factors on health. He also tested proposed remedies first on animals in order to evaluate their effects and side-effects. He was also an expert surgeon and the first to use opium for anaesthesia.

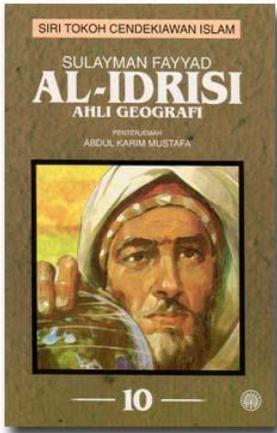
Another great physician who soon followed al-Razi was Abul Qasim al-Zahrawi (963-1013) who is known as Albucasis in the West. A famous surgeon in his time, at the court of Caliph al-Hakam II, students and patients flocked to him from the Muslim world and Europe. He wrote the medical encyclopaedia *Al-Tasrif Li Man Ajaz An-il-talif*, which contained 30 sections of surgical knowledge and illustrations of 200 surgical instruments, most of which he designed himself. The encyclopaedia was not only a standard for physicians, but even five centuries later it was still being used as the standard textbook on surgery in universities in Europe. He also performed many delicate operations such as caesareans, and was the first to use silk thread for stitching wounds.



A TREATISE ON THE
SMALL-POX AND MEASLES

RHAZES





Al-Idrisi was born in Cordova, Spain in 1099. His major contribution was in medicinal plants which he described in many books, such as *Kitab al-Jami-li-Sifat Ashtat al-Nabatat*. He collected plants and data not reported earlier and added this to the subject of botany. From him, a large number of new drugs from plants with their evaluations became available to medical practitioners. Al-Idrisi also made original contributions to

topography, as related to economics, physical factors and cultural aspects. He wrote geographical encyclopaedias, the largest called *Rawd-Unnas wa Nuzhalat Nafs (Pleasure of Men and Delight of Souls)*. He also wrote on the subjects of fauna, zoology and therapeutic aspects. His work was soon translated into Latin and his books on geography especially remained popular in the East and West for several centuries.

Islam and the environment

Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "Eat and drink from the provisions which We (Allah) have provided for you, and do not commit abuse on the earth, or spread corruption" (Quran 2:60).

Similarly, the messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Many people misappropriate (acquire wrongfully) Allah's property (meaning Muslims' property). These people will be cast in Hell on the Day of Resurrection" (reported by Al-Bukhari).

Today, we live in a world of consumerism. We consume the property of Allah like there is no tomorrow. We waste trees, water, land and other natural resources without concern for the pollution that it is causing around us or even considering the generations to come.

We must start now to think about the environment. How are we using the property of Allah? Are we being conservative or wasteful? How many times a day do we think of the property of Allah and how we can minimise waste? Also, start to think about our 'clean and green' image. Do we really uphold our values to support this? Now is the time when all of us need to start thinking about saving the environment.

Quran and hadith

So what do the Quran and sunnah say about the environment?

Fortunately for us, it is not a matter of interpreting but rather a matter of applying the teachings from Allah (swt) and our beloved Prophet (saw). There are several words commonly used in today's language to report this very problem: "biodiversity", "global warming" and "sustainability".

With the rate of global expansion and population growth, it becomes essential that we consider our impact on the environment, particularly in the past few decades.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "And it is He (Allah) who made you vicegerents (khalaa'ifa: custodians, stewards, trustees) on the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees of awareness so that he may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is Swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful." (6:165).

So Allah (swt) has made us custodians of his property, the environment around us. We humans are the best of His creation but are also responsible for the worst kinds of damage done



A tui bird in a pohutukawa tree, both native to New Zealand

to our planet. We spend our time accumulating wealth to a point that we forgo our health. And then we use the money earned to make us healthy again. And we do the same to our environment.

We use the environment to the point of destruction by felling trees, producing harmful wastes, and wasting paper. Then we attempt to repair the destruction to this planet by using our profits from such activities. Allah (swt) has severely warned us against the destruction of the environment. He exhorts us in the Quran, "Eat and drink from the provisions which Allah has provided for you, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption" (2:60).

If we destroy a person's property, this is called vandalism. On the other hand, if we destroy Allah's property, we call it progress. Why these double standards? The impact we make on the environment affects our children, not our ancestors.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "It is Allah who spread out the earth and made therein firmly fixed mountains and rivers, and of fruits of every kind He has made pairs. He causes the night to cover the day. Verily in all this are proofs for people who can reflect" (13:4).

It is therefore our duty to take care of and protect our environment. Allah (swt) has trusted us with this important task. We must utilise the natural resources in a responsible and respectful manner, and give thanks to Allah (swt) for giving us such a wonderful place to live. Allah (swt) has said He has made everywhere on earth as a place of worship, both pure and clean.

We will be held accountable for many things on the Day of Judgement. We must therefore realise that we will be held

accountable for any cruelty that we do to nature and animals. The sharia has specific rules regarding this, and these range from land designation, and cruelty to animals, to how we use our water resources.

Cruelty to animals is completely forbidden. We see many stories in the Quran and hadiths where Allah (swt) talks about those who mistreated animals and what they will face as recompense for their actions. The Quran also talks about the virtues of those who went the extra mile and were kind to the animals.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "There is not an animal that lives on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but they form communities like you. Nothing have We omitted from the Book, and they all shall be gathered to their Lord in the end" (6:38).

It is related from Abu Umama (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Whoever is merciful even to a sparrow, Allah will be merciful to him on the Day of Judgement."

The shariah also prohibits the cutting down of trees without a just cause. Trees are protected by law and anyone who destroys without a just cause will be held accountable and tried in a court of law.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "Indeed, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant" (33:72).

Let us now make a vow to take care of the environment and be champions at planting, preserving, and protecting our environment as vicegerents of Allah so that generations to come will enjoy the environment as much as we have.



©Wrote Phawaraki



The truth about Jesus (Isa, as)?

Early in December, various newspapers reported a survey that was carried out outside Santa's grotto in Brent Cross Shopping Centre, in northwest London. It was aimed at investigating children's understanding of Christmas. As Katie Tucker, Marketing Manager at Brent Cross, explained, "With children looking forward to the festive season the whole year round, we wanted to ensure the true meaning of celebration was understood."

A total of 1,000 children, aged between five and 12 years of age, completed the survey.

One question asked: "Who is Jesus Christ?"

- a) A footballer for Chelsea
- b) Son of God
- c) TV presenter
- d) X Factor contestant
- e) An astronaut."

20% of the children gave (a) as the answer. Commentators have speculated on the reason for this. One newspaper¹ surmises, "It might be possible the children confused Jesus Christ with Jesus Navas, who plays for Manchester City." This confusion is possible, given that *Jesus* is unheard of as a first name in Britain and other English-speaking countries. It is, however, not uncommon in Spanish-speaking countries. The spelling is the same as in English, but it is pronounced the Spanish way "hay-zoos". There is even a website entitled "Famous people name *Jesus*"², all of them Hispanics.

Other children answered (d) and (e) to the question.

Answering that Jesus plays for Chelsea is also ironic, as (i) Chelsea's Portuguese manager, Jose Mourinho, is often referred to as "the special one", a reasonable translation for the Greek word *Christ*, and (ii) Chelsea's Russian owner is Roman Abramovich, it being the Romans who carried out the alleged crucifixion of Jesus according to Christian teachings.

Further findings of the survey were that:

- 52% of the children believe 25 December is Santa Claus's birthday
- 35% believe Jesus was born at the South Pole
- 27% believe Mary gave birth in a church
- 10% believe Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer was in the stable when Christ was born
- 25% believe the shepherds found Jesus using Google Maps
- 15% believe the three kings gave Jesus a wand, tiara and wings as gifts to celebrate his birth

Clearly, as another newspaper³ put it, "British children now struggle with the basics of the traditional Christmas story and instead believe the festive period is just about Santa and receiving gifts."

From the Islamic perspective, several points can be made.

The population of London

The nativity story of Christianity is portrayed as "the true meaning of Christmas". However, for many in London, it is not the true meaning. The population of London from the 2011 census⁴ is:



- Christianity 48.4%
- No religion 20.7%
- Muslim 12.4%
- Undeclared 8.6%
- Hindu 5%
- Jewish 1.8%
- Sikh 1.5%
- Buddhist 1%
- Other 0.6%

This means that one in eight of the population of London is Muslim, who have a very different interpretation of Jesus (Isa, as).

Son of God

The "correct" answer to the first question is given as (b) Jesus was the son of God. To the 12.4% of Londoners who are Muslim, there is no right answer alternative given. In the Quran, Allah (swt) says, "O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, 'Three'; desist – it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son" (4:171), and "They have certainly disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the third of three.' And there is no god except one God" (5:73).

The Bible contains references to other people as sons of God (Genesis 6:2).

25 December

The "correct" answer given for the significance of 25 December is that it is the birthday of Jesus. There is no authority for this date. Even Christian writers acknowledge this.

"A careful analysis of the Scripture [ie the Bible] ... clearly indicates that December 25 couldn't be the date of Christ's birth. Here are two primary reasons:

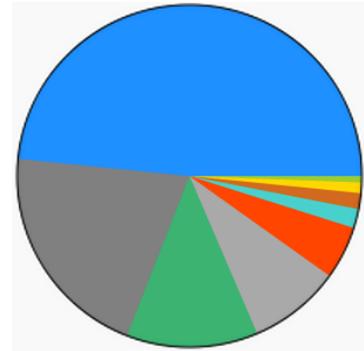
First, we know that shepherds were in the fields watching their flocks at the time of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:7-8). ... Shepherds were not in the fields during December. According to *Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays*⁵, Luke's account 'suggests that Jesus may have been born in summer or early fall. Since December is cold and rainy in Judea, it is likely the shepherds would have sought shelter for their flocks at night' (p.309)."⁶

Instead, shepherds would have kept their flocks in barns, making them unavailable for Mary to give birth in.

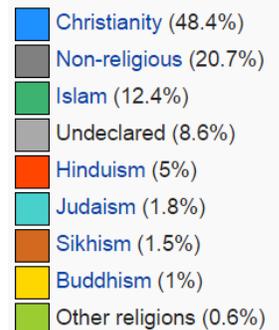
"Second, Jesus' parents came to Bethlehem to register in a Roman census (Luke 2:1-4). Such censuses were not taken in winter, when temperatures often dropped below freezing and roads were in poor condition. Taking a census under such conditions would have been self-defeating."⁶

So, why is Christmas celebrated on 25 December? The answer is that it has not always been celebrated on 25 December. Again, Christian writers acknowledge this.

"Lacking any scriptural pointers to Jesus's birthday, early Christian teachers suggested dates all over the calendar. Clement ... picked November 18. Hippolytus ... figured Christ must have been born on a Wednesday. ... An anonymous document, believed to have been written in North Africa around A. D. 243, placed Jesus's birth on March 28' (Joseph L. Sheler, *U.S. News & World Report*, "In Search of Christmas," Dec. 23, 1996, p. 58)."⁶



Religion in London (2011)^[1]



Armenian Christian girls



Similarly, not all Christians celebrate Christmas on 25 December nowadays. It is also celebrated on:

- 7 January (25 December in the Julian calendar) by some Eastern churches
- 6 January by most of Armenian Christianity
- 16 January (6 January in the Julian calendar) by some Armenian Christians⁷

So, why is Christmas celebrated on 25 December? Again, Christian writers acknowledge, with reluctance, that it may have pagan origins.

“The most loudly touted theory about the origins of the Christmas date(s) is that it was borrowed from pagan celebrations. The Romans had their mid-winter Saturnalia festival in late December; barbarian peoples of northern and western Europe kept holidays at similar times. To top it off, in 274 C.E., the Roman emperor Aurelian established a feast of the birth of Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun), on December 25. Christmas, the argument goes, is really a spin-off from these pagan solar festivals. According to this theory, early Christians deliberately chose these dates to encourage the spread of Christmas and Christianity throughout the Roman world: If Christmas looked like a pagan holiday, more pagans would be open to both the holiday and the God whose birth it celebrated.”⁸

Likewise, do we know that Jesus was born in the first year of the calendar, ie 1 AD? The simple answer is no. “The birth year of Jesus is estimated among modern historians to have been between 7 and 2 BC [“before Christ”]”⁷ So, the current year, strictly speaking, is not 2015.

Nabi Isa (as)

There are clearly problems with Brent Cross Shopping Centre presenting the Christian story of Christmas as if it were universally accepted fact, the “right” answer.

To conclude, we need to spell out the Islamic view of Jesus (Isa, as). He is not the son of God in any literal sense. Instead, he was one of the great prophets of God (may Allah swt pour his blessings on all of them), the second-to-last, the final one being Muhammad (saw). Like all prophets, he was 100% human. He is mentioned by name 25 times in the Quran – more often indeed than Muhammad is. Clearly, he must have born somewhere and at some time, but these are trivial details; what is important is the message he brought, which Muslims believe to be the same as that of the other prophets, namely the oneness of God (tawhid).

His mother, Mary (Mariam, ra), is also revered as a great and pious woman. A whole chapter of the Quran (surah Mariam, #19) is named after her, and contains her story.

It is incumbent upon us to teach the true nature of Jesus and Mary to our children, so that they could answer any quiz correctly.

Answers to the quiz on page 3

- 1 Pakistan
- 2 Bangladesh
- 3 Saudi Arabia
- 4 Algeria
- 5 The Maldives
- 6 Mauritania
- 7 Turkmenistan

- 1 *The Independent*, 11 December. www.independent.co.uk
- 2 www.famousbirthdays.com/names/jesus.html
- 3 *The Daily Mail*, 11 December. www.dailymail.co.uk
- 4 Wikipedia *Religion in London*. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_London
- 5 Myers, R. J. (1972). *The Complete Book of American Holidays*. Doubleday & Company.
- 6 United Church of God. www.ucg.org/bible-faq/when-was-jesus-christ-born-was-jesus-born-december-25-christmas-day
- 7 Wikipedia *Christmas*. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas
- 8 Bible History Daily. www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/new-testament/how-december-25-became-christmas

Book review: *Islam Between East and West* by Alija Ali Izetbegovic

Possibly the most neglected book on Islam for modern Muslim bibliophiles is the 1984 *Islam Between East and West* by the late Marhum Hajji Alija Ali Izetbegovic (1925 – 2003). Izetbegovic was a malcontent Bosnian lawyer jailed twice by the Communists for his outspoken criticisms of Socialism. He wrote many books, but this one presented a fairly deep critique of humanity and placed Islam squarely as the only possible solution. In the early 1990s, he was the first democratically elected president of the republic of Bosnia.

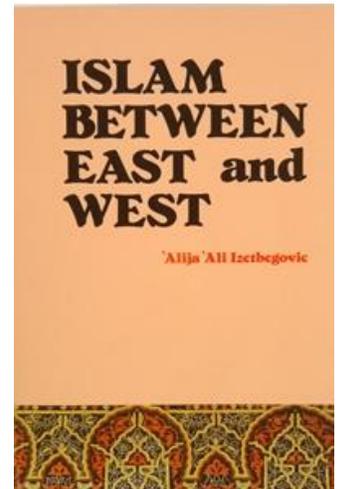
Overall *Islam Between East and West* is an extraordinary piece of studied multidisciplinary erudition. The principle objective of this tome is to scrutinise the roots of the cultural omnishambles, the moral crisis and political anarchy of the modern West and to demonstrate how these are related to the unhealthy stimulus of half-truths and the triumph of reductionist philosophies.

The central thrust of his thesis is that there are three distinctive worldviews that mirror three differing elemental possibilities: the religious, the materialistic, and the Islamic. Izetbegovic asserts the Islamic view of the world (life, history and so forth) is integral in as much as it pools both pure religiosity and pure materialism. Whilst pure religion alone stresses the conscience of the individual, and pure materialism emphasises the innate power of nature, Izetbegovic claims that the focus of Islam is on the needs and aspirations of humanity who live in a real physical world and one of spiritual needs.

Izetbegovic goes on to argue that both "pure religion" (Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism) and materialistic philosophies

(Socialism and Capitalism) have only provided partial answers to the integral anxieties of "ideals" and "interests" in life. He suggests they have tried to compensate for their primal shortcomings and partial truths by an ongoing process of theological and theoretical compromises. On the basis of much historical evidence, the author suggests that the tangible realisation of these two disparate outlooks on the world have been substantially different from what they initially aimed to undertake. He concludes that in our post-Renaissance world it is increasingly difficult to be either an unfailing Christian or an unfailing materialist. This elucidation in turn leads Izetbegovic to construct a thesis presenting Islam as a "Third Way", an alternative worldview that accommodates both the spiritual and material needs and wants of mankind. However, this has led, historically, to assaults from the two polar opposites: from those who consider Islam as "too natural, actual, and tuned to the world" and from sceptics who perceive far too much religion, faith and mysticism (and not enough empirical science!). He also discusses how Islam performed an axiomatic role as a cultural intermediary and historic bridge between the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt, and the modern West. He argues that the Islamic faith and the faithful should once again strive to resume this role as a cultural bridge between the various peoples and ideas in a deeply divided and war-torn world.

The concluding chapter of his *magnus opus* develops a rather interesting and undoubtedly provocative hypothesis: Anglo-Saxon societies, politics, arts, literature, and philosophical trends





Alija Ali (1984).
Izetbegovic *Islam
Between East and
West* (3rd edition
1993, American Trust
Publications)

are the nearest approximation of the bipolarity of the Islamic model he has been advocating. The historic orientation of the English moral philosophy (as it seemed to the author in the 1980s), with the emphasis on egalitarianism, social harmony and a drive for an ethical polity, reveals a distinct resemblance to the traditional historic theological, moral and intellectual objectives of the first century of Islam. Izetbegovic explores the parallels between historical Islamic trains of thought and those of the English. Whilst discussing the significance of Spengler's contrast between the Prophet Mohammed (saw) and the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, Izetbegovic observes that there are striking parallels between the initial rise of early Islam and the emergence of England as a global power. In short he is suggesting broadly that England and Anglo-Saxon culture in general have uncovered the middle road between religion and materialism, and so bear an uncanny similarity to the "Third Way" of Islam as interpreted and proposed by Izetbegovic.

One may not agree entirely with Izetbegovic. He certainly tends to gloss over or overlook fundamental cultural affinities between the English and their European cousins, affinities that are clearly rooted from a shared religious tradition of Western Christianity. Furthermore, like many contemporary Muslims, he commits the obvious intellectual mistake of comparing "our best" with "their worst". Rather than comparing ideals with the ideals of "the Other" or the practices of one with the other, this polemical approach contrasts all Islamic aims and principles with the worst of Western conduct.

Izetbegovic's critique of evolutionism and the materialistic

(or scientific) bases of human life is overwhelming. He produces competent, if devastatingly brief, arguments extracted from anthropology, biology, chemistry and physics, and firmly repudiates the notion of developing a secular ethical code. Time and again, the lawyer from Bosnia forcefully demonstrates how the loose woolly concepts popular in humanistic philosophy (such as justice and equality) are totally devoid of meaning if they are not squarely anchored in belief in God.

In the final analysis, *Islam Between East and West* is an outstanding book that should be on every Muslim's bookshelf. The presentation is lucid and engaging, the text bursting with insightful observations and clarifications on various issues concerning moral and social philosophy. The author himself has a well-versed and masterly grasp of his subject and he knows the West inside-out: unlike some other Muslim writers who have compared Islam and the West in terms of their own intellectual traditions and philosophies, Izetbegovic does not acknowledge or impose a simplistic standard of orthodoxy in approaching the West's entire intellectual history. Rather he undertakes a more nuanced view and deliberates on significant areas of both divergence and convergence within the various atheistic, secular and religious traditions. Izetbegovic draws productive appraisals of these opposing intellectual trends, and recognises and signals critical cultural and historic affinities between Islam and some features of Western thought and praxis. Finally he presents Islam as a type of all-encompassing spiritual and intellectual synthesis that incorporates the best values of both Asia and Europe.

Iqra Academy year-end celebration

The year-end programme of the Iqra Academy was held on 20 December at the Mount Albert YMCA premises, the regular venue for our classes. Parents, children and friends of the Iqra communal family celebrated the day with enthusiasm, fun and joy.

Iqra has now completed 16 years of providing Islamic education to children of all races.

The day began with students' performances, with children receiving their awards from the teachers and parents. It ended with a delicious shared lunch of different cultural flavours.

Enjoying lots of fun, the Iqra family headed home, to commence classroom business as usual on 7 February 2015, with renewed spirits for the next academic year, our 17th.



Voice of Islam

VOI delivers the message of Islam based on the teachings of the Noble Quran and the Sunnah (practices) of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

VOI television is broadcast on:

- SKYTV CH 83 (Face TV) in New Zealand (11.30 am Sat & 9.00 am Sun)
- CTV in Christchurch (see TV guide for times)
- Channel 9 in Dunedin (see TV guide for times)
- Fiji Broadcasting Corporation in Fiji (9.00 am Sun)
- METRO TV in Ghana, West Africa (see TV guide for times)

3 January

Quran 4: 131-134.

LECTURE: From Gangster to Guidance by Mutah Beale (aka Napoleon).

DOCUMENTARY: The truth of the life of this world introduction & the name of Allah – Al-Shafi (the healer).

10 January

Quran 57: 1-4 Allah is the Creator of everything.

LECTURE: Scientific proofs for the scientists by Sheikh Yusuf Estes .

My path to Islam by Ayesha Alzomor.

Fact of Creation clip.

17 January

Quran 57: 1-4 Allah is the Creator of everything.

LECTURE: Deceit of Atheism by Abdur Raheem Green.

DOCUMENTARY: Deep Thinking part 1.

24 January

Quran 57: 1-4 Allah is the Creator of everything.

LECTURE: Tawheed 101 by Dr Bilal Philips.

DOCUMENTARY: Deep Thinking part 2.

Fact of Creation clip.

31 January

Quran 17: 88-89 Miracle of the Quran.

LECTURE: Changing ourselves from within by Abdul Hakim Quick.

DOCUMENTARY: The miracle of the ants.



Mutah Beale
(aka Napoleon)

Watch VOI online, or order a free copy of the Quran: www.voitv.org

Auckland prayer timetable for January 2015

(from www.islamicFinder.org. For other cities in New Zealand, see www.fianz.co.nz).

Date	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr 1	Asr 2	Maghrib	Isha
1	4:14	6:04	1:25	5:16	6:30	8:44	10:27
2	4:15	6:05	1:25	5:17	6:31	8:44	10:27
3	4:16	6:06	1:26	5:17	6:31	8:44	10:27
4	4:18	6:07	1:26	5:18	6:31	8:44	10:27
5	4:19	6:07	1:26	5:18	6:32	8:44	10:27
6	4:20	6:08	1:27	5:18	6:32	8:44	10:27
7	4:21	6:09	1:27	5:19	6:32	8:44	10:26
8	4:21	6:09	1:27	5:19	6:32	8:44	10:26
9	4:22	6:10	1:28	5:19	6:32	8:44	10:26
10	4:25	6:12	1:29	5:20	6:33	8:44	10:25
11	4:26	6:13	1:29	5:20	6:33	8:44	10:25
12	4:27	6:14	1:29	5:20	6:33	8:44	10:24
13	4:29	6:15	1:30	5:21	6:33	8:43	10:24
14	4:30	6:16	1:30	5:21	6:33	8:43	10:23
15	4:32	6:17	1:31	5:21	6:33	8:43	10:22
16	4:33	6:18	1:31	5:22	6:33	8:43	10:22
17	4:34	6:19	1:31	5:22	6:33	8:42	10:21
18	4:36	6:20	1:32	5:22	6:33	8:42	10:20
19	4:37	6:21	1:32	5:22	6:33	8:41	10:20
20	4:39	6:22	1:32	5:22	6:33	8:41	10:19
21	4:40	6:23	1:33	5:23	6:33	8:40	10:18
22	4:42	6:24	1:33	5:23	6:33	8:40	10:17
23	4:42	6:24	1:33	5:23	6:33	8:40	10:17
24	4:45	6:26	1:33	5:23	6:32	8:39	10:15
25	4:46	6:28	1:34	5:23	6:32	8:38	10:14
26	4:48	6:29	1:34	5:23	6:32	8:37	10:13
27	4:49	6:30	1:34	5:23	6:32	8:37	10:12
28	4:51	6:31	1:34	5:23	6:31	8:36	10:11
29	4:53	6:32	1:34	5:23	6:31	8:35	10:10
30	4:54	6:33	1:35	5:23	6:31	8:35	10:09
31	4:56	6:34	1:35	5:23	6:30	8:34	10:07

Asr 1: Maliki, Shafii and Hanbali schools (single shadow length)

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

"The five daily prayers and the Friday prayer until the next Friday prayer are expiation for what is between them." (hadith)

Credits

Rocket Science is a monthly newsletter produced by the Mount Albert Islamic Trust.

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Why attend Rocket Park jumuah?

- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Facilities for ladies
- ✓ Bayaan (religious talk) before jumuah prayers
- ✓ All bayaan and khutbah in English

NB We are only open for Friday prayers – not for the five daily prayers.

In December 2010, the **Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert**, was closed for renovation by the Auckland City Council. Following these renovations, we believe we are the only jumuah in New Zealand with air-conditioning and heating.

Subscribing / unsubscribing

If you have received this newsletter and want to unsubscribe (ie do not want to receive future issues), please send an email to masjidnews@gmail.com with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line. Vice versa, if you have received this newsletter indirectly, and would like to have future issues sent to your email address each month, please send an email to masjidnews@gmail.com with "Subscribe" in the subject line.

Back issues of Rocket Science

Missed an issue of *Rocket Science*? All our monthly issues are available online at the Mount Albert Islamic Trust website: www.mtalbertislamiccentre.org

Swt, saw, as, ra

SWT: subhanahu wa ta'ala "Glory to Him, the Exalted" (when mentioning Allah)

SAW: salallahu alaihi wassalam "May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him" (when mentioning Muhammad)

AS: alaihis salam "Peace be on him" (when mentioning other prophets)

RA: radi allahu anhu/ha/hum "May Allah be pleased with him/her/them" (when mentioning members of Muhammad's family, companions, etc)