

Al - Qalam

Southern Africa's Muslim Newspaper

Volume 52 | No. 4 | April 2026 | Dhul Qa'dah 1447 A.H.

INSIDE

Middle Powers – Coping with a Rogue Superpower

Page 5



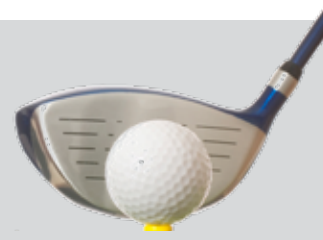
A Muslim call to stand with Pope Leo XIV

Page 7



'Charity Golf Day' supports Aman School

Page 16



Judge Jappie: Gone, never forgotten!

See page 3



UPGRADE YOUR PATIO



MANY MORE DESIGNS & STYLES AVAILABLE!



Shop Online - We Deliver!

expert
Here for you.



LUCKYS
DISCOUNT CENTRE

EST. 1986



Scan to Shop Online | Pictures for Illustration Purposes | T's & C's Apply | E & OE | 039 317 3036 | 073 810 0701

OPINION

Haj...and the deepening understanding of Islam across Africa

By Zubeida Jaffer

On 24 May 2026, more than 1000 South Africans will enter the vast tented camp of Mina at the start of their Hajj journey. I recall that moment nine years ago when I performed my Hajj. It came as a bit of a surprise when I saw our white tents were a small little piece of a zone set up for Non-Arab Africans.

The exact number housed on any given Hajj year can vary slightly depending on overall Mina capacity limits, tent layouts, and Saudi space-management rules, but the planned capacity for the Non-Arab African-countries sector is generally on the order of 150,000–180,000 pilgrims.

Arab African countries like Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and others are placed closer to Arabic speaking countries. This year, our country's allocated number is 1140. For years we largely

remained unaware that we are thrust together with our African Muslims in a sea of devotion. We balance only on our little wave unaware how far the other waves around us could take us on our journey of achieving the Islamic commitment to the unity of all of humanity.

As I recall, most of that day was spent in prayer and reflection. The only opportunity to meet women from other countries came when we visited the ablution facilities before sunrise and during the day. It struck me then that those moments were not conducive at all to striking up a good conversation or making an unexpected friend. Most of us make lasting friendships with other South Africans but seldom with pilgrims from other countries which I have always understood to be part of the exercise.

It occurred to me then that it was a pity that there was not a structured opportunity to hear about Islam in another African country from their women so that we could

increase our understanding and knowledge. We should deepen our understanding of others who are our neighbours on this vast continent destined to be propelled forward in the coming decades. I understand this to be a Qur'anic obligation.

Then across my desk came the news that former Member of Parliament, Dr Ismail Vadi has recently launched a research entity to increase our awareness and understanding of Islam in Africa. It gave me such a great pleasure not only to report this on my website (www.zubeidajaffer.co.za) but also to publish in full the inaugural 66-page booklet should you wish to read the initial findings.

He launched the new research institution, the Centre for Islamic Research - Africa (CIRA), in Johannesburg to deepen understanding of Islam across the continent among South Africa's two million Muslims. In the preface to its inaugural booklet, CIRA founder Vadi notes that South African

Muslims – just 0.4% of Africa's estimated 500 million Muslims – know little about their co-religionists in the continent's 54 nations.

“Continued ignorance of our diverse Islamic history, legacy, traditions, and traits is intolerable,” he said, urging a correction of this “intellectual and spiritual imbalance.” South Africa's Muslim community, tracing roots to Indian, Southeast Asian, and indigenous origins, has grown post-apartheid with arrivals from Somalia, Nigeria, Palestine, and beyond. Diverse across socio-economic lines, they form influential middle classes in Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu-Natal, and the Western Cape, he said. The initiative arrives amid global and African conflicts, positioning South African Muslims to engage broader continental narratives.

According to the booklet, approximately 45-50 percent of Africa's total population identified itself as Muslim in 2025 with the total population of Africa



estimated at approximately 1.56 billion people. This represents about 18.8 percent of the total world population ranking Africa as the second-most populous continent second to Asia.

CIRA will research political, economic, social, cultural, and religious trends through an Islamic lens, partnering with organizations continent-wide. The booklet, drawn from open sources, offers a “small step” toward awareness, acknowledging Africa's predominantly Christian

other half. If I am allowed to dream, perhaps my granddaughter will one day arrive in Mina to perform her hajj and meet other African women forming friendships that will solidify continental unity.

Perhaps her generation will understand that we could form part of a sea of devotion in Africa if the waves of Islam and all other faiths seek cooperation. They will stand as testament to a rejection of separateness that is so fashionable in the world today.



Quality & Style

Our customers whether big or small are given the best attention and service at all times.

8 Bauhinia Road, Ind.Township, Stanger
P. O. Box 4701, Stanger 4450
-Tel: 032 551 1113 • Fax: 032 551 4531
Email: yusuf@cantonilounge.co.za

Ibn Umar (r.a.) narrates the Nabi (SAW) said: “The place of prayer (salah) in religion is like the place of the head in the body.”
Tabarani



TWIN CLOTHING MANUFACTURERS (PTY) LTD.

MAKERS OF THE FAMOUS “TWIN” GARMENTS








Office / Factory / Showroom:
 858 Umgeni Road, Durban 4001 • ☎ 581, Durban 4000 • 📞 031 303 2970 • Fax: 031 312 6789 • E-mail: orders@twinclimbing.co.za



ASAD AMEEN & Co.
 Attorneys, Notaries, Conveyancers

OUR SERVICES

- ☑ PROPERTY TRANSFERS
- ☑ PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS
- ☑ BOND REGISTRATIONS & CANCELLATIONS
- ☑ SUBDIVISION & CONSOLIDATION OF LAND
- ☑ ADMINISTRATION OF DECEASED ESTATES
- ☑ DRAFTING OF WILLS
- ☑ FORMATION OF TRUSTS
- ☑ ANTENUPTIAL CONTRACTS

+27 33 345 1319
www.ameens.co.za
reception@ameens.co.za
 18 MONTROSE PARK BOULEVARD, VICTORIA COUNTRY CLUB ESTATE
 110 PETER BRONKHORST DRIVE, PRETORIA

Al-Qalam

Southern Africa's Muslim Newspaper

CONTRIBUTORS

Editor: Imraan Buccas
Contributors: Azra Hoosen, Ismail Suder, Imam A. Rashied Omar, Ebrahim Rasool
Design And Layout: DocDesigns





www.alqalam.co.za

• Views and opinions expressed by contributors and advertisers in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board or publishers. COPYRIGHT: The Copyright material in this newspaper is reserved. The Editor will, however, consider reasonable requests for usage provided that the sources of articles and/or adverts are clearly attributed. Handle with respect - This publication contains Holy verses.

P.O. Box 48112, Qualbert, 4078
TEL: (031) 306 0615 | EMAIL: admin@alqalam.co.za | www.alqalam.co.za

Farewell Judge Achmat Jappie, a humble soul

One of South Africa's distinguished Muslim jurists has passed on. *Al-Qalam* reporter **Ismail Suder**, reports

A humble soul – that's how most people described retired KZN Judge President Achmat Jappie who passed away in the early hours of Wednesday.

Jappie (70) passed away of a suspected heart attack. He was buried in Sherwood, Durban, with many from the legal fraternity and the larger Muslim community attending his Janaza that took place after Zohr salaah at the Soofie Bhaijaan Hall on 45th Cutting. Jappie, who was born in Port Elizabeth, leaves behind his wife, Judge Soraya Hassim, and three adult children.

Jappie was one of the first Muslims lawyers to be appointed to the bench in 1998. He later served as Deputy Judge President before being appointed as the Judge President of the Kwa-

Zulu-Natal Division of the High Court in June 2015.

Prior to that, he served as an acting judge of the Constitutional Court from February to March 2015.

President Cyril Ramaphosa expressed his condolences. He said: "During his 28 years as a judge, Justice Jappie entrenched the rule of law. He ensured that the law protected the interests and dignity of those who deserved relief, and that those who breached the law, felt the consequences of their actions or attitudes. May Allah have mercy on him."

In a media statement, the Chief Justice of SA, Mandisa Maya described Judge Jappie as a "distinguished jurist who served the people of South Africa with honour and integrity." "Judge Jappie was widely admired for his calm temperament, fairness, humility, and commitment to justice. He earned the respect of colleagues, legal practitioners, and court users alike for his integrity

and deep knowledge of the law."

"Following his retirement in 2021, Judge Jappie continued to serve the country, including as Chairperson of a Judicial Conduct Tribunal".

Paying tribute, Shabir Chohan, the Chairman of the Association of Muslim Lawyers & Accountants (AMAL) said he and his colleagues were saddened at the passing of Judge Jappie who served the legal fraternity with "absolute distinction". "Judge Jappie was a man of immense integrity and proponent of human rights, being granted the honour of serving as Judge President of KwaZulu-Natal. "We pray that Allah (S.W.T) grants Judge Jappie the highest ranks in Jannah, forgives his shortcomings, and envelops him in mercy. May his family and loved ones be granted the strength and patience to endure this immense loss," he said. Well known Durban lawyer

and human rights activist, Aslam Mayat told *Al-Qalam* that Jappie was admired and loved by fellow judges and legal practitioners alike.

"Like other previously disadvantaged lawyers during the apartheid era, after the advent of democracy, Achmat and other fine advocates from Group Seven, like Pius Langa (who became Chief Justice in the Constitutional Court), Ponen (who served on the Supreme Court of Appeal) and Sham Gyanda, were appointed as judges.

"Achmat followed the constitutional dictates by bringing a humanist (or ubuntu) approach to the KZN bench, providing justice above legal technicalities." Senior Durban lawyer, Zain Fakroodeen, vice-chairman of AMAL, told *Al-Qalam* that Jappie was a humble soul who did not have any airs and graces about his status as a judge president of KwaZulu-Natal. He recalled how once at a braai among friends, Jappie was present.



He always displayed a casual and humble demeanour whenever he was introduced to other guests.

Fakroodeen said despite being a judge president, he would quietly give free advice to poor people in the community. He remembered how on two separate occasions, two elderly women – visited his office. They told him they were sent by Judge President Jappie with a message that they should be assisted in their legal matters.

This reporter Ismail Suder who was assigned by The Daily News to cover criminal trials in the Durban High Court was a regular in Jappie's courtroom to report on proceedings. "While passing his office one day, he spotted me and said: 'Would you

like some tea?"

"Naturally, I was taken aback and nervously answered: 'yes, thank you judge.'" While sipping my tea, he made casual talk about my work as reporter at The Daily News, about the mosque I usually attend for Ju'muah prayers, etc. No doubt, that brief interaction helped to break the ice, and after that, whenever I was in his courtroom, he would acknowledge my presence with a light nod."

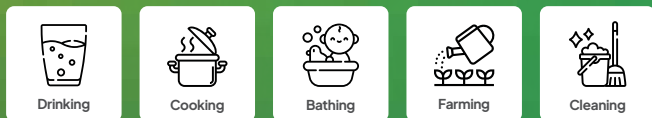
"He had an air of authority about him – he had a rugged, yet good-looking appearance - a mix between boxer Muhammed Ali and fighter Khabib Nurmagomedov – but I realised that behind the hard exterior, he was a humble and friendly soul."



AMA
AFRICA MUSLIMS AGENCY

Give Water, Change Lives.

Villagers use the water for:



Placing a waterwell/borehole in a village also allows for children to receive an education as they currently walk kilometres to fetch water daily.



Africa

Waterwell



R17 000

Africa | Afghanistan

Borehole



R65 000

africamuslimsagency.co.za

connect. [f](#) [@](#) [in](#) [d](#)

email. amasa@iafrica.com

head office. +27 11 834 8685/6/7

24hour number. +27 81 030 8241



Standard Bank
Africa Muslims Agency

acc no. 242017223

branch code. 005205

reference. Waterwell/Borehole + Cell



LOCAL NEWS

Al Falaah alumni restoring Gaza school

By Azra Hoosen

Durban's Al Falaah College (AFC) Alumni are currently helping to restore a partially damaged school in Gaza – and when completed – will accommodate up to 900 pupils.

The Gaza School Project, as it is called, seeks to restore education for hundreds of displaced children affected by the genocide.

Moulana Mohammed Motala, AFC Alumni member, told *Al-Qalam* how the project came into being and what it aims to achieve.

Moulana Motala described the scale of devastation following the recent ceasefire, when families began returning to what remained of their homes. "Everything was in rubble," he said.

But the destruction also left the education system in ruins and children without access to schooling. It was in this context that he was contacted by teams on the ground, who highlighted an urgent need beyond food

and shelter: the restoration of education.

At the same time, an opportunity for collaboration presented itself.

"It just so happened that Al Falaah College alumni also contacted me wanting to do a project for the people of Gaza. This was the ideal idea to propose to them," explained Moulana Motala.

Thus, the Gaza School project was born and put into action through Allah's divine decree. "Within a few days, they raised the funds they needed and are now committed 100%, for this project," he said.

Moulana Motala said that the focus was on restoring a partially damaged school structure that could still be salvaged.

They looked at a building that was only partially damaged, which could be patched up and refurbished. Plans were shared and approved, allowing work to begin quickly. The refurbishment process includes basic but essential class-

room restoration.

"The refurbishment was the first phase, which involved patching up the building, painting the interior, and furnishing it, including installing classroom boards, as well as makeshift desks and benches," he said.

Moulana Motala said artisans in Gaza are repurposing any material they can find. "These are not the type of desks, chairs, and benches we would find in an ideal school in South Africa. These are currently being made in Gaza using whatever wood they are able to find," he said.

Despite these challenges, progress has already been made. "The refurbishment phase is now coming to a successful end," he said.

Once completed, the school will serve around 900 enrolled students, operating in structured cycles. "There have been 900 students who have enrolled in the school. Each cycle will serve 300 students, and the school will operate six days a week," he added. He also explained



how attendance will be managed practically: "This will be a separated and gender-segregated system, where boys and girls will attend on alternate days, Insha'Allah."

Beyond infrastructure, the initiative also includes full

operational support for its first year.

The project has been carefully structured into two funding streams, Lillah and Zakat. Lillah contributions were allocated towards the refurbishment of the school, while the Zakat component

is dedicated to covering operational costs. This operational budget has been calculated at R1680 per learner per annum, based on 900 learners. To ensure sustainability, the AFC Alumni have further committed to managing these operational costs on an annual basis.

Lake Glencairn
Book at stunning private game farm **Sani Pass**

- 50 Hectare Lake with great bass & trout fishing.
- Stunning chalets with modern finishes and self catering.
- Alpacas, horses, zebra and more!
- Long walks and hiking.

Lake Glencairn, Underberg
Sani Pass Road,
Southern Drakensberg

Book now directly with us

Bookings: 078 678 6156
E-mail: reception@lakeglencairn.co.za
Website: www.lakeglencairn.co.za

AQUA SPRING WATER
Fresh and Revitalising

"From the fountains of the Maloti Mountains."

AQUA
By LAKE GLENCAIRN
NATURAL SPRING WATER

330ml, 500ml, 1.5L & 5L Plastic
350ml & 750ml Glass

Bottled at the source.
Underberg,
Southern Drakensberg

Contact: 072 367 1410
E-mail: aqua@luckys.co.za

DON'T JUST DRINK WATER,
DRINK AQUA

BRING STYLE HOME

MANY MORE DESIGNS & STYLES AVAILABLE!

expert
Here for you.

Luckys
DISCOUNT CENTRE

EST. 1986

Scan to Shop Online | Pictures for Illustration Purposes | T's & C's Apply E & OE | 039 317 3036 | 073 810 0701

As Sunnah

QURBANI 1447 / 2026

INDIA

R3000 Per Share

R2100 PER CATTLE

Spread joy & compassion this Eid.
Let your Qurbani bring hope to those in need!

- Pricing includes slaughtering & distribution.
- All Qurbani are personally supervised.
- Qurbani in Uganda/Malawi - from R800 per animal.
- Aqeeqa & Sadaqa performed throughout the year.
- Water wells constructed for Esale Sawaab.

BANK DETAILS

BANK : STANDARD
ACCOUNT NAME : AS SUNNAH
ACCOUNT NUMBER : 258 364 092
BRANCH : MUSGRAVE
CODE : 04 26 26

Email the proof of payment & list of names to info@assunnah.co.za

Or send via WhatsApp to **083 786 5629**

www.assunnah.co.za

Contact Ml Mohammed Ally/ Ismail Kajee
076 770 2786 / 083 786 5629

Middle Powers – Coping with a Rogue Superpower



By Ebrahim Rassol
(Former Ambassador to the USA)

Indonesia recently hosted foreign policy practitioners from middle powers – countries with significant regional influence, catalysts for multi-lateral reach, and while having some military and economic leverage, they hone a diplomatic ability to secure stability and development. Jakarta gathered two

such categories (traditional north/western and emergent middle powers from the Global South) at a critical moment in the history of the world in which the United States, and its regional ally in the Middle East, Israel, are conducting a war of choice against Iran, with negative global reverberations in supply chains, inflation, and security.

But Iran is proving more resilient than expected, and survival itself is victory. The United States, however, no longer appears impervious to resistance, but while it is vulnerable as a superpower, it still retains sufficient superpowers to prevail. Middle powers, traditional and emergent, are now forced to consider what a post-American world would look like. In the interim they have to cope with an America that is an incoherent, rogue,

and punitive superpower, bereft of strategic vision.

Among middle powers, South Africa is regarded as significant, despite our own challenges and self-doubt: it is regarded as credible for its convening of BRICS and the G20, courageous for charging Israel with genocide; garnered great sympathy for bearing the brunt of Trump's lies about a 'white genocide' and his punitive measures; and in turn, there are great expectations about SA's role in strategizing a way out of the current impasse. My input articulated a few key themes, culminating in a set of five scenarios on offer for a world needing to respond to an unhinged superpower dealing with its eclipse.

The foundational theme is to recognise a transition from the unilateralism of a dominant United States

that took the world through 30 years of wars, running up a deficit of 39 trillion US dollars and creating a war-weary US citizenry. Now we are witnessing the emergence of multipolarity - competing poles in the world: some regional, like ASEAN; some a collection of emergent economies, like BRICS; and some tentatively defensive, like the EU. But none, yet, in any position to challenge the dominance of the USA.

The corollary theme is that the Middle East, as the theatre of conflict, demonstrates the erosion of consent. The dominant consensus that existed, of Israel's impunity, following the Jewish Holocaust, is increasingly coming to an end. In the United States, where most citizens are denying Israel such a free pass - US arms fuel unjust aggression and the genocide of Pal-



estinians. This has severe implications for whether Trump will be able to carry through the Netanyahu playbook of destroying Iran. Already Trump is hesitant as Iran's resilience creates discontent at home and among allies, and this is translating into a war effort that is regarded as pointless and operationally inept, all at the behest of Israel. Yet, while the

US may appear to be erratic, declining, and run by a narcissist, we must not underestimate the United States. The emerging multipolarity that can assert itself against the USA has not yet been established. Despite disenchantment with, and fragmentation from, the USA, few can act decisively.

Continued on page 6

It's amazing!



2-in-1 pack

Crème + 60ml Tissue Oil

3.5 X more
Tissue Oil*
for stretch marks

- 🔥 Deeply nourishes skin
- 🔥 48hr intense moisture
- 🔥 Soft, smooth radiant skin

love  your beautiful skin™

*Compared to Clere Repairing Crème 500ml tub

OPINION

Continued from page 5

Therefore, the world requires a set of strategies to respond smartly and collectively to the USA. What then are the scenarios for such a strategic response to the United States of America by middle powers? The scenarios posited for middle power relations with the USA currently are five.

The Ideal Scenario is one of Mutuality and Reciprocity and premised on cooperation and exchange based on mutual need, in which the USA walks on two legs – soft and hard power – and therefore invests in other countries a combination of exchanges of markets for trade, investments in capacity, and development aid against vulnerability, to ensure mutual development and security, with limited migration to the north.

This is obviously the scenario spurned by Trump in his amputation of the leg of soft power, and for the immediate future is highly unlikely.

Trump's preferred scenario is the Scenario of Surrender. Surrender Greenland,

the Panama Canal, national sovereignty, energy, critical minerals, and rare earth elements, and in the case of Iran and Palestine, sovereignty, land, resources, and dignity.

Venezuela is the template, and SA is on the menu. For Middle Powers this scenario is not tolerable.

The instinctive, responsive scenario is one of Retaliation against the USA. Only China comes close to having the wherewithal for retaliation, and even then, not in a sustained and sustainable way. When China withheld rare earth elements, like Gallium, in response to 250% tariffs by the USA, it forced Trump to go to Seoul and negotiate a reprieve. Iran is proving the workability of such a scenario – only because it has nothing to lose. But for everyone else this will remain a difficult scenario while no multilateral capacity exists.

These 3 scenarios are not possible or probable in the current context, which therefore, compels the search for intermediate scenarios. Therefore, the



fourth lies between Mutuality and Surrender - the Scenario of Appeasement. It means conceding to pacify an aggressive party to prevent a conflict by satisfying its demands.

This was the word used to describe the initial approach to Hitler, and various countries are trying this with Trump, offering jets, Trump Towers, deals for his children and investments in the USA. Alternatively, such propitiation can often take the form of smiling through blatant lies and ad hominem attacks. This

is currently the most likely scenario in relation to the USA.

The fifth scenario lies between Mutuality and Retaliation and can be called a Scenario of Contingency. It is a soft retaliation in which insurance policies are taken out to mitigate the shocks of a capricious power.

This is sophisticated, necessarily so, and involves a series of mitigation measures like finding alternative markets for tariffed goods, alternative sources of investment and devel-

opment aid, and basically ensuring that your eggs are not all in one basket. Simultaneously, this must be accompanied by tying your wagon to other multi-lateral engines and ensuring that the world is building a collective insurance against unilateral actions.

In working through these scenarios and finding one, or a combination of a few, the middle powers must divine whether the scenario is a holding operation – to see out the Trump years – before returning to 'normal' or whether this is perma-

nent – on the assumption that the USA is fundamentally altered and, once it tastes the power of tariffs and bellicosity, it will not return to the status quo ante, even though that was itself aggressive and invasive.

However, the erosion of trust in the USA – whether by NATO or the Global South – is such that there must be an unstoppable momentum to transform the emerging multi-polarity into an effective multi-lateralism that can withstand an untethered superpower.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NB. All letters MUST be accompanied by the writer's correct name and contact details, or it will not be published. A nom-de-plume will be accepted only for publication purposes. NB. All views reflected in this column are the opinion of the writer and do NOT necessarily reflect the views of the Editor.

We would like to thank all our respected readers for sending in your comments, views and opinions to our 'Letters to the Editor' column. We value your thoughts on the various aspects affecting the Muslim community. Keep them rolling in.

'Judge Jappie: one of the most erudite judges Africa ever produced'

I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Judge Achmat Jappie, a most outstanding and dedicated patriot who served our country with unwavering commitment.

He stands out as a legal giant among those whose contributions have served and continue to serve us in our struggle to build a nation out of scattered hopes and lofty aspirations. South Africa is now bereft of one of its longstanding founding heroes and his passing is a tremendous loss to the national community.

We should be assured that while great people will die, death can never kill their names. Judge Achmat Jappie was one of the most courageous and erudite Judges that the African continent has ever produced. We shall sure-

ly miss him. Our obvious consolation is that he has left indelible imprints and footprints on the sands of time for us to continually remember him. His death represents the end of an era of those eminent jurists who presented legal arguments at our courts and made indelible marks in the judiciary.

Judge President Jappie, was one of a very few whose legal brilliance shone beyond the nation's horizon. Achmat was purely a classical, erudite and distinguished jurist.

Very eloquent, brilliant and with such jurisprudential sagacity of a rare breed, he was an epitome of judicial uprightness. His contributions to our law and jurisprudence are unrivalled. He provided superb leadership for the legal system, improved the delivery of

justice for the people, and earned the admiration of his colleagues throughout the judiciary. He led the judiciary with tremendous skill and wisdom. He honoured his country with a lifetime of service, and this country will honour his memory.

His commitment to the rule of law and justice for all, was total. He left us something to emulate, decipher and make marks on in the course of our life experiences to make this country better. Achmat Jappie's death is a huge loss to the law profession and of course our dear country. He was a great mentor and seemingly fixed like the Northern Star. We thank Almighty Allah for his life and times. May his profound soul rest in perfect peace.

Farouk Araie Benoni

Unity through giving this Eid



The KFC Moral Foods Phoenix team generously sponsored a mass feeding at Aleemia Mosque, where thousands gathered to share in a meal. The event reflected true unity, as people from all racial backgrounds came together and enjoyed a delicious chicken breyani. Moulana Mohamed Tariq, High Priest of Aleemia Mosque, expressed his sincere gratitude to KFC Moral Foods for this meaningful gesture. As Eid is a time of celebration, compassion, and giving, this initiative truly embodied the spirit of remembering and supporting the underprivileged. Such acts of kindness strengthen community bonds and remind us all of the importance of sharing during blessed occasions like Eid.

A Muslim call to stand with Pope Leo XIV



By Imam A. Rashied Omar

At a moment marked by escalating global tensions and a deepening moral crisis, Pope Leo XIV stands out as one of the few global religious leaders willing to speak with moral clarity against the US/Israeli military campaign against Iran, whose underlying dynamics remain unresolved despite a temporary ceasefire.

His principled critique of war, his call for restraint, his commitment to peace with justice, and his unwavering insistence on the sanctity of human life have provoked controversy, particularly among those who view such moral interven-

tions as an unwelcome intrusion into the domain of political statecraft. From the perspective of Islamic ethics and peacebuilding, however, Pope Leo's stance is neither surprising nor misplaced.

On the contrary, it exemplifies the moral vocation of religious leadership: to speak truth to power, to resist the normalization of violence, and to affirm the primacy of justice and human dignity in the face of unjust war. In moments such as these, silence is not neutrality, it is complicity. Pope Leo's intervention thus stands as a necessary and principled witness, one that resonates deeply with the ethical imperatives at the heart of the Islamic tradition.

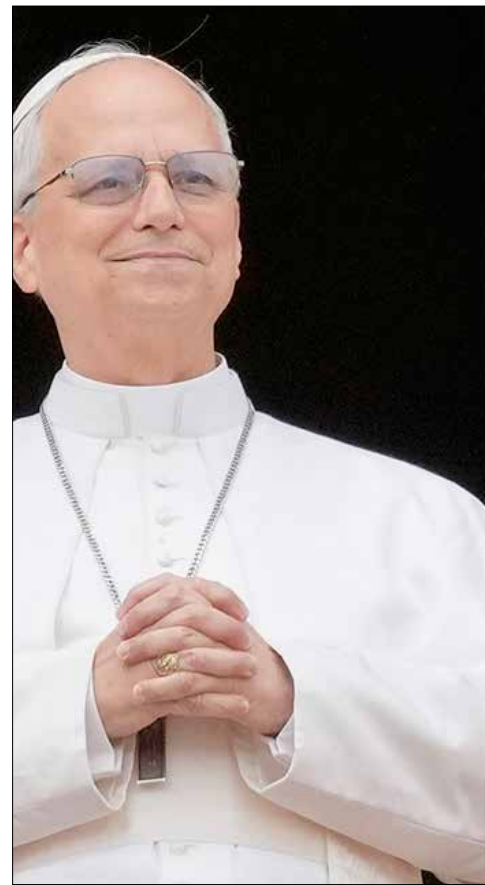
The controversy this has provoked is therefore revealing. At its core is a troubling expectation that religious leaders should remain silent when moral truth confronts oppressive and unjust political narratives and calls into question the legitimacy of state violence and terror.

Pope Leo's intervention offers an unequivocal answer to this misguided expect-

ation. His critique of war, echoing the moral trajectory set by his predecessor, Pope Francis, rejects the normalization of violence and calls into question the enduring legitimacy of "just war" reasoning in an age of devastating military technologies. This position has drawn sharp criticism from those who defend the geopolitical logic of deterrence, security, and pre-emptive force. Yet such criticism misses a deeper moral point.

It is precisely this deeper moral horizon that must inform contemporary religious ethics. In my earlier reflections on Pope Francis's encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, I argued that religious ethics today must move beyond narrow conceptions of charity and embrace a broader commitment to transforming the structural conditions that produce suffering and violence.

Peace, in this understanding, is not merely the absence of war, but what peace scholars have described as "positive peace", a condition grounded in justice, human dignity, and the equitable distribution of resources.



This vision of positive peace resonates closely with the ethical imperative of peace with justice. It calls not only for the cessation of violence, but for the active

dismantling of the structures of domination and inequality that sustain it. In this light, opposition to war is not an abstract moral posture; it is a concrete commitment to

building a more just and humane social order in which the dignity of all people is affirmed and protected.

Continued on page 8

Give

QURBANI

Give LOVE ❤️

FROM

R1,300

GIVE IN OVER 30 COUNTRIES

Islamic Relief SA
Standard Bank
005318459
Ref: Your number + QUR26

Scan here!

DONATE NOW

ISLAMIC-RELIEF.ORG.ZA
0800 111 898

OPINION

Continued from page 7

From an Islamic perspective, this moral vision resonates deeply with the Qur’anic commitment to justice (‘adl), compassion (rahma), and human dignity (karama al-insan) as well as with the Prophetic mandate to establish justice and to resist oppression. The Qur’an issues a stark warning:

“Do not show any inclination toward those who commit oppression and injustice (zulm), lest the Fire should seize you.” (Qur’an 11:113)

This Qur’anic verse is not merely a caution against complicity; it is a moral injunction to maintain ethical distance from injustice and those who perpetrate it.

Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) elevated the act of moral courage in the face of tyranny to the highest form of struggle: “The highest form of moral struggle (jihad) is to speak a word of truth in the presence of an unjust and oppressive ruler.”

(The hadith was reported on the authority of Abu Sa’id al-Khudri and found in Sunan al-Tirmidhi and Sunan Abi Dawud)

It is precisely this prophet-

ic ethic that Pope Leo has embodied in his principled opposition to war and injustice. Yet it is at this very point that we must confront a deeply uncomfortable reality. With the notable exception of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the response from major contemporary Muslim institutions and religious leaders to Pope Leo’s principled stance against the unjust, illegal and immoral war waged by the US and Israel against Iran has been marked by a troubling silence.

CAIR, to its credit, issued a statement expressing solidarity with the Catholic community in the wake of attacks on Pope Leo following his moral critique of the war. As it noted, “We stand in solidarity with the Catholic community...”

This intervention goes well beyond interfaith courtesy. It reflects CAIR’s unequivocal opposition to the war and, in that light, amounts to a clear and principled affirmation of Pope Leo’s courageous rejection of it as unjust. In doing so, CAIR not only defended the dignity of a religious leader, but also aligned itself with a morally grounded stance that rejects the normalization of violence and affirms the sanctity of human life. By contrast, the relative absence

of similar moral clarity from other Muslim institutions raises urgent and disquieting questions about the state of contemporary Islamic leadership and its willingness to speak truth to power in moments of profound moral crisis. This pattern of silence is not incidental.

Elsewhere, I have argued that one of the central challenges facing contemporary interreligious peacebuilding is the extent to which many religious leaders and institutions have become entangled with, or beholden to, state power. In such contexts, speaking truth to power is often discouraged, or even punished, giving rise to a form of religious quietism that prioritizes institutional survival over moral witness. This is particularly evident in regions where religious authorities are state-appointed or operate within tightly controlled political environments. Here, the prophetic voice of religion is often muted, reduced to legitimating the very structures of power that perpetuate injustice.

Against this backdrop, Pope Leo’s intervention stands in stark contrast. It is a reminder that authentic religious leadership is not measured by proximity to power, but by the capacity to maintain moral distance from it. It is



about the courage to name injustice, to challenge violence, and to stand in solidarity with the victims of war—regardless of political convenience.

For Muslims, this moment presents both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge to reclaim the rich ethical resources within our own tradition, resources rooted in nonviolence, justice, and moral courage, that have too often been eclipsed by hegemonic interpretations of state power and violence.

As I have argued elsewhere, the Islamic tradition contains significant, though underdeveloped, foundations for articulating a robust

theology of nonviolence and peacebuilding.

It is also an opportunity to deepen interreligious solidarity on principled grounds. In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis invited Muslims and Christians into a shared moral struggle for a more just and peaceful world. I argued then that this invitation should be taken seriously, not as a matter of diplomacy, but as an ethical and spiritual imperative.

Today, Pope Leo has extended that invitation through action. The question before us is whether we, as Muslims, are prepared to respond with comparable moral clarity. To stand with Pope Leo at this moment is not to

endorse the totality of Catholic theology or Western political discourse. Rather, it is to affirm a shared commitment to the sanctity of life, the rejection of unjust war, and the moral responsibility of religious leaders to speak truth to power.

In a world increasingly marked by violence, polarization, and the systematic dehumanization of the other, such acts of moral solidarity are not optional, they are indispensable. It is my sincere hope that more Muslim scholars, institutions, and leaders will find the courage to follow the example set by CAIR: to raise their voices, to break the silence, and to stand unambiguously on the side of justice.

Al-Qalam

Southern Africa’s Muslim Newspaper

Your Window to the Most Trusted News Source.



 @Al-Qalam

 @Al-Qalam_newspaper

 @Al-Qalam20

FIND US ONLINE @ www.alqalam.co.za

Old church now a masjid masterpiece

By Ismail Suder

A century old disused church in Durban has been converted into a masjid transforming the once neglected structure into an architectural marvel embodying a fusion of Moroccan, Persian and Arabian influences.

Masjid Bilal Ibn Rabah, as it is named and situated on 16 J.B. Marks Road in Berea (Formerly Chelmsford Road), stands out particularly at night when its tasteful lighting, both decorative and functional are switched on, attracting much interest amongst locals and visitors.

A carefully reimagined space of worship and community, the new masjid is the brainchild of Moulana Mohammed Vanker, its donors and the trustees of the An-Nur Foundation.

The architectural firm behind the innovative project is The End Studios, whose director, Idris Hoosain, was responsible for the design, production, and installation, including overseeing the project from concept to completion.

To ensure a unique design direction was established, he worked closely with the trustees – and they were pleased with the end result.

Hoosain told *Al-Qalam* that this deliberate shift away from more familiar contemporary styles gives the masjid a distinctive identity, rooted in classical Islamic design traditions.

He said more than a simple conversion; the project represents a thoughtful balance between preservation and

transformation.

“The original architectural form has been retained, allowing the building’s heritage to remain visible, while a distinct Islamic identity has been layered into its structure — creating a space that feels both rooted and renewed.”

Driven by a long-term vision to elevate the role of the masjid, the An Nur Foundation has approached this project with a clear philosophy: a masjid should not only serve as a place of prayer, but as a centre of dignity, learning and belonging. Stepping into the masjid, one is immediately struck by the richness of detail. The original timber roof structure remains intact, now complemented by intricate geometric ceiling patterns that introduce a distinctly Islamic visual language.

At the heart of the space, the mihrab forms a powerful focal point — framed by detailed woodwork, layered arches and a subtle halo of light. Surrounding this are elements that reflect craftsmanship and depth: laser-cut wooden screens, backlit panels, ornamental features and carefully composed architectural framing.

The polished parquet flooring further anchors the space, with handwoven Persian-style carpets arranged in traditional formation, reinforcing both familiarity and spiritual focus.

Lighting plays a defining role throughout. Warm ambient strips highlight architectural lines, while feature chandeliers introduce a sense of classical elegance. In contrast, softly illuminat-



ed alcoves and lounges add moments of intimacy and reflection, creating a balanced sensory experience.

Hoosain added: “Beyond the main prayer hall, the masjid introduces elements not commonly found in traditional layouts. Recessed majlis-style seating areas provide spaces for conversation and contemplation, inspired by Middle Eastern hospitality traditions. These are complemented by facilities designed for broader

community use, including educational programmes, social engagement spaces, dedicated ladies’ facilities, jamaat area and planned courtyard and garden developments.

“The design intentionally extends beyond functionality, aiming to create an environment that welcomes all — particularly youth and families — into a space that feels accessible and lived-in, rather than purely institutional. “Masjid Bilal Ibn

Rabah is envisioned as a hub of continuous activity. Plans are already underway for maktab classes, hifz programmes and revert support initiatives, alongside regular visits from local and international scholars.

Programmes for women and youth form a central part of this vision, supported by dedicated and comfortable spaces designed with inclusivity in mind.” He added that weekly feeding schemes and community outreach

initiatives further reinforce the masjid’s role beyond its walls, extending its impact into the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Hoosain pointed out the masjid is named after Hazrat Bilal ibn Rabah (RA), the first Mu’azzin of Islam, whose life represents unwavering faith, resilience, and the powerful message of equality in Islam — “reminding all who enter that true honour lies not in status, but in belief and steadfastness.”

YOUR SHARIAH COMPLIANT PATH TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Shariah Income Funds with Above-Market Returns.

Tailored for individuals, families, and businesses. Book Your Free Financial Consultation Today!

Yusuf Nanabawa: 082 665 6665 | yusuf@fwdtrading.co.za
Imraan Moolla: 081 599 1695 | imoolla@fwdtrading.co.za
Anwar Moolla: 083 657 8677 | anver@fwdtrading.co.za





DELICIOUS RECIPES

Asian Dunked Chicken Pitas

Recipe adapted from:
hungryforhalaal.co.za



Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp crushed garlic
- 1 tsp dried red chilli flakes
- 2 Tbsp tomato sauce
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- 2 tsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 2 Tbsp oil
- Chopped fresh coriander
- Ready-made frozen crumbed chicken nuggets (±300g works well for this sauce)
- Mini pitas
- Shredded lettuce

Method

- In a bowl, combine garlic, chilli flakes,

tomato sauce, soy sauce, sweet chilli sauce, sesame seeds, honey, and oil. Mix well.

- Cook the crumbed chicken nuggets according to package instructions until crispy and golden.
- Toss the cooked nuggets in the prepared sauce until well coated.
- Lightly warm the mini pitas.
- Fill each pita with shredded lettuce and saucy chicken nuggets.
- Garnish with chopped fresh coriander.
- Serve immediately and enjoy!

Serving Suggestion

Perfect as a quick snack, lunchbox filler, or a fun family meal. Add a drizzle of mayo or a yoghurt-based sauce for extra creaminess.

WIN WITH AL-QALAM | APRIL NATIONAL COMPETITION



Which ingredient in this recipe adds a sweet touch to balance the flavours?

Enter our competition now to stand a chance to win a Table Pride Foods hamper. To increase your chance of winning share our post on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, tag your family and friends and tag the Al-Qalam page.

Congratulations
to our March **National Table
Pride Foods** Competition Winner

Amaarah Jacobs, Cape Town

Email your answer to admin@alqalam.co.za or WhatsApp us at 074 399 8576

10 Ways of honouring helpers/workers – Jamiatul Ulama KZN

Most Muslims in Eastern countries employ domestic staff as a norm. For some, domestic helpers are a priceless resource who significantly ease our day-to-day chores. Conversely, for others, they can be a source of distress and chagrin.

Many women complain to each other about the trouble they face from the incompetence, treachery, and intentional misdemeanour of their “servants”. However, we need to remind ourselves that it is in managing our helpers according to Islamic injunctions where the secret lies to get the best out of them.

1. Think of their pay as Sadaqah

We need to change the way we view our helper’s wages. By considering it an “expense,” we tend to extract “full value” of the money. For instance, even if a maid is sick, her employer might say, “I pay her to work, so she must work.” But if we consider the salary a “Sadaqah” that helps fill their bellies, we will Insha Allah be more tolerant of

their shortcomings as human beings.

2. Counsel them when they need it

You might notice that your domestic helpers are disturbed on some days. They are human beings who have problems and worries just like us. Ask them what is troubling them; then advise them to have patience and hope in Allah’s mercy. Keep the counsel short but show them that you care.

3. Forgive and forget their mistakes

Just like other human relationships, it is not pleasant to have your past mistakes and wrongs thrown in your face repeatedly. Forgive them for the sake of Allah if they wrong you, and do not be harsh when scolding them.

4. Do not accuse them of stealing, cheating or lying on mere suspicion

Many employers are guilty of this unfair action – as soon as something in the house is missing due to their own absentmindedness, the domestic helper is squarely accused of theft or negligence. _ “O

you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin.” _ (Qur’an, 49:12). Ask them normally if they have seen the missing object, but do not accuse them of theft or misplacement. In most cases, the object is eventually found after the maid has been fired, causing guilt and embarrassment to the employer for life.

5. Informally teach them Islamic manners and knowledge

One of the rights of our domestic helpers upon us is that they be taught about Islam or given its message if they are non-Muslims. Without being overtly ‘preachy’, give them small doses of the truth. The best way is to act upon Islam yourself. This will eventually make them love and respect you for the sake of Allah – which results in a sincere relationship devoid of mistrust and treachery.

6. Eat with them occasionally without separating utensils

Domestic helpers are not animals. Some people treat them as if they are unhy-

gienic beings from another planet. Allow them to use the utensils from which you and your family eat. If they have dirty habits, teach them hygiene. But do not separate their utensils as if they are untouchables. This will make them feel insulted. They will never return an insult with loyalty or obedience. Abu Bakr Bin Hafsa said: _ “Abdullah Bin Umar RA would never eat food except in the company of an orphan.”

7. Give them gifts

Reward their work – whatever it is like – with occasional bonuses in the form of clothing, shoes or other items that you are yourself using. Do not cast off broken, torn or damaged goods to them unless they agree to take them. This is part of the Islamic etiquette taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): _ “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

8. Ease work when they are sick

Allow your helpers to go home early by reducing

their chores when they are not feeling that well. Help them if they need money for medicines or medical treatment. Consideration such as this, without reminding them of these favours later, is a good way to establish a relationship based on mutual trust and care.

9. They are not robots

Domestic helpers are human beings with feelings and self-esteem. Any treatment that you would dislike for yourself would hurt them too. Scolding them in public, pointing out their faults before others, and allowing your children to mock them or hit them or treat them disrespectfully are totally unacceptable behaviours. Treat them with honour and dignity.

10. You are not superior

“It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world: and We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others.” _ (Qur’an, 43:32)

It is one of Allah’s laws of the universe that some peo-

ple possess higher worldly ranks than others, so that they employ the services of the latter in return for wages. But this doesn’t mean a wealthy person is superior to a poor person. This doesn’t mean you are better than your servant.

Islam has mandated lofty treatment with slaves. But we don’t show that even to helpers who are mere employees, and not slaves.

Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said to Abu Dharr regarding his treatment of his slave: _ “They are your brothers and servants whom Allah has placed under your authority.

Anyone who has his brother under his authority let him feed him the same food as he eats and dress him in the same clothes as he wears. Do not overwhelm them with work and if you give them work to do then help them with it.” _ (Al Bukhari and Muslim)

Our helpers are not our slaves. But is our treatment as good as what the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded regarding slaves during his time.

LAKE GLENCAIRN

The perfect escape

50 Hectare lake with great bass and trout fishing
Stunning chalets with modern finishes
Alpacas, Horses, zebras and more wild game



EXPERIENCE THIS STUNNING PRIVATE GAME FARM IN THE HEART OF UNDERBERG

Bookings: 082 081 6902 | Email: adnaan@luckys.co.za | www.lakeglencairn.co.za

Celebrating Darwish as Gaza, Beirut and Tehran burn

By Richard Pithouse

Mahmoud Darwish, one of the truly great poets of the twentieth century, was born on 13 March, 1941. Today, after the devastation of Gaza, and as Beirut and Tehran burn, we celebrate the 85th anniversary of his birth.

In July 2008 Breyten Breytenbach, one of our own strong poets, was in Arles, in the south of France, when Darwish read in an ancient Roman theatre accompanied by the Palestinian oud ensemble Le Trio Joubran. A few weeks later Darwish died, like Frantz Fanon, in an American hospital.

Breytenbach was on Gorée Island, off the coast of Senegal, when he received news of Darwish's death. He immediately recalled the reading in Arles:

The sun was setting, there was a soundless wind in the trees and from the neighbouring streets we could hear the voices of children playing. And for hours we sat on the ancient stone seats, spellbound by the depth and the beauty of this poetry. Was it about Palestine? Was it about his people dying, the darkening sky, the intimate relationships with those on the other side of the wall, 'soldier' and 'guest', exile and love, the return to what is no longer there, the memory of orchards, the dreams of freedom...? Yes – like a deep stream all of these themes were there, of course they so constantly informed his verses; but it was also about olives and figs and a horse against the skyline and the feel of cloth and the mystery of the colour of a flower and the eyes of a beloved and the imagination of a child and the hands of a grandfather.

And of death.

In this moment in which the world is saturated with death - death in the form of organised mass murder - poetry cannot substitute for force. Nonetheless, the words that Darwish wrote during the siege of Ramallah in 2002 hold the beauty of the cut diamond.

Our coffee cups. And birds.
And the green trees

With blue shadows. And the sun leaping from

one wall to another like a gazelle ...

and the water in clouds with endless shapes

in what is left to us of sky,
and other things of post-

poned memory

indicate that this morning is strong and beautiful, and that we are eternity's guests

This is something I wrote five years ago, for the eightieth anniversary of Darwish's birthday.

Mahmoud Darwish: From Galilee to the world

Mahmoud Darwish is one of the great poets of the 20th century. Like Pablo Neruda, he could read in a stadium, once drawing 25,000 in Beirut, a city that is, he wrote, 'the smell of the sun, sea, smoke, and lemons'.

Born in the village of Al-Birweh in Galilee in 1941, his family fled to Lebanon in 1948 when their village was razed by the Israeli military during the Nakba. In his mid-60s Darwish would recall that 'in one disastrous hour, history like a bold thief came through a door, and the present left by a window'.

A year after the destruction of Al-Birweh the family returned to Israel, too late to be considered Arab Israelis. His once prosperous father had to become a farm labourer. Darwish recited his first poem – a political poem – at the age of eight, and at 17 had achieved a public voice as a poet, a very political poet writing in classical Arabic style and primarily concerned with the Nakba.

In his 20s, inspired by a new generation of poets writing in Arabic, as well as poets like Arthur Rimbaud – the teenage poet of the Paris Commune for whom the poet must commit to 'a long, systematic derangement of all the senses' – Darwish began to break from classical forms. For almost 40 years he would offer an extraordinarily abundant and brilliantly kaleidoscopic poetry of pomegranates, doves, gazelles, olives, salt, blood, love, lust, Jerusalem, Damascus, Andalusia, trees, butterflies, rivers, coffee, memories, dreams, home, rifles, tanks and mourning.

At 22 he fell into a heady love affair with Tamar Ben Ami, a Jewish communist:

Rita's name was a feast in my mouth

Rita's body was a wedding in my blood

But, of course, this love was intolerable to a racist state:

Between Rita and my eyes

There is a rifle

...

And I remember Rita. The way a sparrow remembers its stream

In 1965, at the age of 24, he recited a poem titled ID Card in a cinema in Nazareth. It became a sensation across the Arab world. Darwish would later be placed under house arrest when it was set to music and became a popular protest song. The poem is addressed to an Israeli police officer:

Put it on record.

I am an Arab
Working with comrades of
toil in a quarry.

I have eight children

For them I wrest the loaf of
bread,

The clothes and exercise
books

From the rocks

In the same year Darwish joined Rakah, the Israeli communist party. His work was first published in its literary journal, Al Jadid. He soon became its editor. Darwish spoke excellent Hebrew, and read poets like Neruda and Federico Garcia Lorca in that language. In response to criticism of A Soldier Who Dreams of White Lilies, written after the Six-Day War in 1967, he insisted: "I will continue to humanise even the enemy."

In 1970, after repeated spells in prison, Darwish made the decision to move to Cairo where he worked for Al-Ahram, a daily newspaper. He joined the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1973, and was banned from entering Israel for the next 23 years. This life in exile – 'a long night that stares at the water' – was lived in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, Tunis and Paris. 'I yearn', he wrote, 'for my mother's bread and my mother's coffee'. The longing to 'see again from our own sun, our own sunrise from our own east', and the weight of memory 'like a pomegranate ... of the ruby in metaphor' was carried with a simultaneous enchantment of the present and a profusion of poetic richness. He held fast to the convictions that 'an idea is a coal burning', that 'words are a country' and that, even in the most difficult circumstances, 'singing in a cage is possible and so is happiness'.

Darwish liked to write in the mornings, formally dressed, preferably in a room with a window looking onto a tree, and always sustaining a militant commitment to the value of life: 'We have on this earth what makes life worth living: April's hesitation, the aroma of bread at dawn, a woman's point of view about men, the works of Aeschylus, the beginning



of love, grass on a stone, mothers living on a flute's sigh and the invaders' fear of memories.

By 1977 he had sold more than a million books in Arabic. But for three years after the invasion of Lebanon and the siege and shelling of Beirut in 1982, Darwish was not able to write. That silence was broken with the long prose poem Memory for Forgetfulness, written in Paris over 90 days. The poem is set on 6 August 1982, a day of heavy Israeli shelling: 'The street. Seven o'clock. The horizon is a huge egg made of steel.'

In the midst of this day – Hiroshima Day he called it – the poet turns to ordinary rituals of daily life:

I want the aroma of coffee.
I need five minutes. I want
a five-minute truce for the
sake of coffee. I have no
personal wish other than to
make a cup of coffee. With
this madness I define my
task and my aim. All my
senses are on their mark,
ready at the call to propel my
thirst in the direction of the
one and only goal: coffee.

The poem carried a new pessimism:

I don't like the sea. I don't
want the sea, because I don't
see a shore, or a dove. I see
in the sea nothing except a
sea. I don't see a shore. I
don't see a dove.

In 1988, Darwish was asked to write the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. He sat on the executive committee of the PLO until 1993,

when, unable to accept the Oslo Accords, he offered his resignation.

In exile Darwish became a global figure, reading in English and French as well as Arabic, and receiving a trove of prizes, although not the Nobel Prize, which many felt he had earned several times over.

Darwish was able to return to Ramallah, to what remained of Palestine, in the late 1990s where he made his life until his death in 2008. This was not a return to any kind of freedom. In March 2002, during the Second Intifada, he read to a large audience with other writers – including Wole Soyinka, Jose Saramago and Breyten Breytenbach – that he had invited to witness the occupation. Four days later Israeli tanks entered Ramallah and a cultural centre where he edited a literary review was ransacked by the Israeli military, his work left scattered and trampled on the floor.

A State of Siege, published in 2002, deals with this period in which:

Whenever they find a reality
that doesn't suit them

they alter it with a bulldozer

And:

The soldiers measure the
distance between being

And nonbeing

With a tank's scope

This is a poetry resolved to

'besiege the siege', a poetry in which soldiers 'urinate under a tank's guard/ and the autumn day completes its golden stroll'. There are still 'green trees with blue shadows' and 'life to be lived on earth, among the pines'. The names of the dead may yet be 'written in letters of lapis'.

Darwish died in a hospital in Houston at the age of 67 after undergoing open-heart surgery. He left more than 30 volumes of poetry, eight books of prose and, many would argue, a reputation as the greatest poet of the second half of the twentieth century.

His body was returned to Palestine. He had wanted to be buried in Galilee but even that last desire was refused. Instead, on a sunny winter morning, tens of thousands followed the funeral procession to a grave dug in the pines on Al Rabweh, a hilltop looking over Ramallah. Many recalled a few lines from the last poem that Darwish had read before his death, The Dice Player:

When the sky appears ashen

and I see a rose that has suddenly burst out of a crack in a wall I don't say:

The sky is ashen!

I extend my study of the rose and say to it: What a day!

This article was first published in New Frame, and then republished elsewhere. The illustration is by Anasztasya Eliseeva.

'Hajj in an age of distraction'

As the Saudis adopt more Western influences in the Holy Land, hujjaj must be careful not to be side-tracked, warns **Moulana Afzal Ismail**

As Saudi Arabia increasingly absorbs Western influences, through music concerts, cinemas, fashion shows, global brands, mixed-gender environments and life-style trends, changes are becoming visible even in the blessed lands of Makkah and Madinah.

Practices once regarded as forbidden or taboo are gradually being normalised.

In this climate, Hujjaj must remain especially vigilant. During the journey of Hajj, they are exposed to a constant stream of external influences that can distract from the purpose of their sacred journey. Without due care, there is a real risk that the spiritual rewards of their efforts may be diminished.

Areas of concern :

- Time spent in coffee shops, malls and shopping centres, leading to unnecessary wandering and excessive shopping
- Attraction to Western-style clothing and accessories at the various branded fashion outlets
- Increasing interaction of men with women who are not mahrams in public spaces such as at hotel check-ins, retail stores and even in promotional activities on the streets
- Treating sacred sites of ziyaarah, like Jabal al-Noor and Uhud, as part of a holiday touristic experience, by taking selfies, group photographs and videos
- The consumption of doubtful meat and other food items imported from non-Muslim sources across the world
- Engagement in leisure



activities, such as quad biking, that detract from the spirit of Hajj. A conscious effort is required from Hujjaj to remain focused on the true purpose of the Hajj journey. The aim should be to seek closeness to Allah, attain guidance and return with a transformed life.

Al-Qalam



IN GOOD TIMES, PEOPLE WANT TO ADVERTISE; IN BAD TIMES, THEY HAVE TO

We offer tailor made packages to suit every business. Call our Sales Executives now on **031 306 0615**

www.alqalam.co.za



BE THE VOICE OF YOUR GENERATION!

Want to lead at school, campus or uplift your community, and stand up for what's right?

The Ambassadors for Change 5,5-day workshop is officially open for

- Step up with **Ambassadors for Change!**
 - We're looking for the next wave of young leaders to join our intensive 5,5-day facilitator training in Durban.
 - This isn't just a workshop - it's your toolkit to help you create a better society.
- What you will Master:**

 - Practical and theoretical **Facilitation and Leadership** techniques.
 - Expert insight on Human Rights, the SA Constitution, GBV.
 - Addressing contemporary issues: Substance Abuse, Bullying, Social Justice.
 - To analyze the myself and my strengths and challenges.



Dates: 29 June – 4 July 2026
Where: Al-Ansaar Conference Centre
Duration: 5.5 days of pure impact

Note: Selection is competitive. Shortlisted legends will be invited for an interview!

Applications close: 30 April 2026
 Contact: 031-3062011 | Email: kzn@mym.za.org

LOCAL NEWS

SAMNET to UCT: ‘Recognition of Dr Imtiaz Sooliman’s service well deserved’

By Al-Qalam Reporter

Dr Faisal Suliman, Chairperson of The South African Muslim Network (SAMNET) has sent a letter of appreciation to the University of Cape Town for its decision to award an honorary Doctor of Philosophy (honoris causa) to humanitarian, Dr Imtiaz Sooliman.

In its letter to the Vice-Chancellor and Members of Senate, he said this recognition of Dr Sooliman’s three decades of service was well deserved.

It read: Dr Sooliman has spent more than 30 years serving people across South Africa and beyond. Through Gift of the Givers, he has built an organisation that responds to disasters, conflict, and humanitarian crises with speed, care, and consis-

tency. The scale of this work speaks for itself, but more importantly, so does its impact on ordinary people in moments of real need.

“In South Africa alone, many communities have relied on Gift of the Givers during times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the looting in July 2021 in KZN, in particular, and the repeated KwaZulu-Natal floods. When systems have been overwhelmed, his organisation has stepped in and made a real difference.

“UCT has stated that an honorary doctorate is its highest form of recognition, awarded to individuals who have made meaningful contributions to society. Dr Sooliman clearly meets that standard. His work reflects values that universities aim to instil, including compassion, responsibility, and a commitment to

human dignity.

“We are aware that there has been some opposition to this award. While open discussion is important, I believe it is necessary to separate political disagreement from humanitarian recognition. This award does not mean that the University agrees with every view Dr Sooliman may hold. It recognises the work he has done and the lives he has impacted.

“Humanitarian work is often done in complex and difficult environments. Expecting complete neutrality in all circumstances is not realistic, and it should not take away from the value of the work itself.”

SAMNET added ironically, most of the signatories – who are healthcare professional signed a letter opposing the award to Dr Sooliman – “support a racist, ethnocentric,



colonial ideology that is responsible for the genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people, in complete contradiction and violation of the Hippocratic oath they swore to uphold.”

The letter continued:

“Most people across our country support your decision because they have seen the difference Dr Sooliman has made. His work goes beyond politics and speaks to something more basic: helping people when they need it most. “We respectfully

encourage the University to stand by its decision and to continue recognising individuals who have made a meaningful contribution to society. Dr Sooliman’s work represents the kind of leadership and service that deserves recognition.”

From the
Fountains of
the Maloti
Mountains
Southern Drakensberg

AQUA
UUA

By
LAKE GLENCAIRN

Pure Refreshing Spring Water

Want to stock AQUA?
Contact Us on 039 317 3036
Follow us on IG at @aquaspringwater

Failure to comprehend Iran's strategic independence leads to despair



By Iqbal Jassat

As tension and uncertainty continues over the second round of talks in Islamabad, Tehran has thus far refrained from committing to negotiations, with authorities citing Washington's ridiculous demands as amounting to surrender. Along with the "naval blockade" of Iran as the main impediments to permanently end the US/Israel imposed war.

On April 8, forty days into the unprovoked war, a Pakistan-brokered two-week ceasefire went into effect but the first round of Tehran-Washington negotiations failed to reach an agreement.

It must be recalled and emphasized that the war was not initiated by Iran. Many commentators and analysts seem to overlook this crucial fact whenever it is discussed.

While many will argue that it is generally overlooked without any malice, many more who are inclined towards the US/Israeli narrative, find it convenient for obvious reasons to treat this fact as a footnote.

The United States and Israel launched their illegal, unprovoked war of aggression against Iran on February 28, assassinating the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and striking military installations and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and bridges.

To the amazement of the world, Iran emerged victorious from the 40-day war and its devastating aftermath. The leadership



of the Islamic Republic demonstrated resilience and determination to defend the country against the combined military and naval power thrown at it by the aggressors.

Now that Iran has the upper hand having successfully crushed Trump and Netanyahu's war aims, and as the undisputed victor on the battlefield, the Islamic Republic is able to dictate the terms of any future agreement with the US.

Notwithstanding his bloodied nose, Trump's oversized ego and the circle of Zionist-allied sycophants he surrounds himself with in addition to Netanyahu's hold over him, is a factor to be mindful of.

As expected, the US has returned to the same old playbook of economic pressure, this time threatening a naval blockade

hoping to cripple Iran economically. What Trump has failed to comprehend is that whereas the past four decades and more were defined by restrictive unjust sanctions against Iran with the option of war, the current round is fundamentally different.

Having failed to obtain any of its war-goals, the military option is no longer the case for the US. Its much-hyped "military options" have been discredited on the battlefield by the Iranian armed forces who inflicted painful blows on it and its military bases across the Gulf.

Press TV's Strategic Analysis Desk sums it up perfectly:

"Another critical difference sets this round apart: Iran now possesses its own highly effective economic and sanctions tool

– the Strait of Hormuz, which some have even referred to as "economic nuclear weapon" due to its impact on the global economy.

"In the past several decades, Iran was merely at the receiving end of pressure and sanctions. Today, it is the imposer of economic pressure on the United States and its allies.

"This symmetric capability has fundamentally altered the nature of the economic confrontation. Washington threatens a blockade; Tehran can respond in kind, but with far greater regional impact. The US is no longer the only party holding economic weapons".

Contrary to the spin by Trump's team and echoed by Israel, Iran will neither negotiate under the shadow of blackmail, nor will it allow jeopardizing the

nuclear file. An honest assessment by pundits will reveal that the nuclear issue is a source of national pride anchored in its strategic independence.

On the other hand, a bitter Netanyahu, facing increasing domestic pressure for exposing the regime's military vulnerabilities and subjecting the population to cramped bunkers at regular intervals -night and day – throughout Iran's sustained missile attacks, still dreams of obliterating the Islamic Republic.

Netanyahu's recent statement that the war with Iran is "not over" is thus not only reflective of his despair but an attempt to display fake bravado.

A study of Israeli media reveals that the fallout from Netanyahu's war is bad across all fronts and that his army is "con-

fused" by Trump's erratic statements: Maariv reported that Israel's overall situation across all fronts is now worse than before the war.

The report said senior military officials are struggling to deal with statements by Donald Trump, citing frequent shifts in his positions.

According to the report, these contradictory statements are causing confusion among army officers, leaving uncertainty about the direction of developments.

What we are clear about is that the confusion within Trump's circle fuelled by Netanyahu's delusory manipulation has added to their collective inability to reignite a full scale war on Iran.

Iqbal Jassat is an Executive Member of MEDIA REVIEW NETWORK

SPORT

How AMA's 'Charity Golf Day' supports Aman School

By Azra Hoosen

On a crisp Sunday morning in Johannesburg, the fairway became more than a sporting ground as the inaugural K7 Africa Muslims Agency (AMA) Charity Golf Day brought together the sporting and business community in support of education and local upliftment.

The event, hosted at the Royal Johannesburg Golf Club on 19 April 2026, marked a new approach by AMA, combining sport and corporate social responsibility. While the organisation hosts various initiatives throughout the year, this was its first venture into the golfing space.

At the centre of the initiative was the Aman School of Excellence in Finetown, the chosen beneficiary of the day.

AMA Events and Volunteer Coordinator, Mohammed Tahir Hamid, told *Al-Qalam* that the concept was driven by a desire to connect with new audiences. "We try to reach different audiences through our events, and the sporting community has

been very supportive. This was an opportunity to link the game to a greater cause," he said.

Hamid added that the scale of planning reflected the importance of the cause. "The planning that went into this took a lot of time and effort, but it's for Aman School, and we know these efforts will help change the trajectory for these children," he said.

Hamid emphasised that collaboration remains central to the success of such initiatives: "Projects like these need support from multiple angles: funding, skills, awareness and community involvement. It is about building relationships that can make a long-term difference."

Participants responded positively. "People were keen to understand the difference they could make, not just as players, but by raising awareness in their own spaces," he said.

The focus on education was intentional. "By providing a high standard of education, these children are given an opportunity to further their

studies and access meaningful employment. That is how cycles of poverty can be broken," said Hamid.

Funds raised will support both learner needs and infrastructure development, including upgrades to the school's computer room and science laboratory.

Golf Day Director Shaheen Essop highlighted that the focus remained on creating an enjoyable experience for participants while advancing a meaningful cause.

Essop described the initiative as a different approach to fundraising. "We believe this will be more beneficial but also showcases how we, as Muslims, can do things with integrity and good Akh-laaq," he said.

Essop emphasised that the key is the message of giving and the impact it delivers for the school.

He noted that the choice of venue contributed to the overall experience, describing the Royal Johannesburg Golf Club as one of the country's stalwart courses, offering players a full 18-hole experience in

excellent condition. Adding to the spirit of the day, one of the event's key partners, the AC&E Group, increased the stakes by contributing an additional R10 000 prize for the longest drive on the 18th hole.

Rafeeq Isaacs, Head of Operations and Marketing at AC&E Group, emphasised that *deen* comes first before everything else. "We have to dedicate time to charity and serving Allah," he said.

First prize went to Moulana Tahir Kara and Naeem Isaacs, who competed as a team and emerged victorious. The winners received a golf bag along with a stay at the Hyatt Hotel. In a notable gesture, the winner of the longest drive, representing AC&E Group, donated R5 000 of his prize money to the Aman School.

The school has become a focal point within the surrounding community, serving as a space of development and engagement for families in the area.

From the morning registration, where participants gathered and connected, to the prize-giving ceremony



that concluded the day, a sense of camaraderie was evident throughout.

Following the success of its inaugural edition, AMA hopes to establish the charity golf day as an annual event, with plans to expand participation to other provinces in future. With strong

backing from sponsors and stakeholders, organisers are already planning for the next one.

Hamid had the last word: "It takes a community to uplift a community. When people come together with a shared purpose, the impact goes far beyond a single event."



DAWOOD
FROZEN FOODS

**WHOLESALE PRICES
DIRECT TO
THE PUBLIC**

- Chicken
- Chicken Products
- Fish
- Fish Products
- Frozen Vegetables
- Meat Products



OUR MEGASTORES

<p>Benoni 011 914 1943</p> <p>Crown Mines 011 837 4449</p> <p>Lenasia 011 853 6063</p>	<p>Polokwane 015 297 7366</p> <p>Rustenburg 014 594 2492</p> <p>Nelspruit 013 752 3500</p>	<p>Maydon Wharf 031 305 1724</p> <p>Briardene 031 940 5788</p> <p>Pietermaritzburg 033 940 1178</p>
---	---	--

www.dawood.co.za

[f](#) [@](#) @dawood_megastore_gtn | @dawood_megastore_kzn



OF EVERYTHING CHICKEN AND MORE