

MALAY NEWS LETTER

TERANG

SURAT KHABAR MELAYU SRI LANKA

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Some Observations on Sri Lankan Malays and Marriage

by M. Zain Rahman

Sudara M.A. Sourjah, in his article on "Unmarried Malay girls in Sri Lanka." in TERANG of January to March 1999, points out that there is a growing number of Malay girls who are unmarried. He states that the chief cause for this situation is the dowry system which is un-Islamic. Every effort should be made to abolish this practise by the Malays.

Among the Malays in Sri Lanka there are some enlightened parents who do not seek the dowry. It is the mothers of bachelors, who have lived among the moors that are vociferous in the demand of dowry.

I have spoken to a number of unmarried Malay girls, both employed and unemployed, regarding marriage. The majority of employed girls, state that they prefer to marry a non-Malay or remain single than lead a miserable life with an uneducated Malay man,

who is invariably addicted to liquor. The unemployed girls prefer to remain single rather than marry a Malay who demands a dowry.

Sudara Sourjah states that a computer-based marriage data bank to store particulars of each applicant will be set up. I am aware that the computer has been used in the U.K. for the same purpose. It has not proved very successful, although the organisation, which owned the computer, made a lot of money.

I wish to point out that the particulars of the applicant should be very comprehensive. Name, date, of birth, height, complexion alone will not do. Details of hobbies, interests, economic status, education, number of brothers and sisters are some of the particulars a potential bridegroom would look for.

A very important consideration is the matching of the social status of

the two parties. Both parties to a marriage should be of the same social and economic standing. A young man from a low-income group, who has by dint of hard work qualified as a professional and is in a highly paid job, is usually proposed to a girl from an affluent family. It has been seen that this marriage has resulted in misery. The wife wants to have birthday parties and go for coffee-mornings and fashion shows, while the husband, owing to his frugal upbringing objects to his wife's desires. The result is bickering and unpleasantness and even end up in a divorce.

I hope the abolition of the dowry system by the Malays and with the help of computer-based marriage data banks the number of unmarried Malay girls in Sri Lanka will reduce.

I would advise the Malay bachelors to say NO to dowry and not to marry non-Malay girls.

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KANDY M.A. ELECTS NEW OFFICER BEARERS FOR 1999 /2000

The 24th Annual General Meeting of the Kandy M.A. was held on 24th May, 1999 at the Al Imran International School, Kandy preceded by the Recital of Asoora and Thalai - Fathiha. All members present was hosted to lunch and 'Neeyath' choochur were distributed at the end of the day's programme.

Patron - Sdr. J.A. Mustaffa
(re-elected)

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Sdr. T.S. Ahamdeen

Hony. Auditor - Sdr. M.J.Cassiere

* **LET'S LEARN ISLAM** *

by Maas L Usuf (Abu Dhabi)

Muslim have been influenced by the VICIOUS dowry system which is an alien practice, and follow it as a religious ritual if not, a commonly accepted practice. Many girls are helpless pawns and would be first to rise up if only they could. The majority of today's youth are however, beginning to dislike the dowry system but sometimes give into satisfy parent's wishful thinking. Obedience to parent's when they are wrong is condemned in Islam.

"Obedience to anyone in a sinful thing is forbidden.

Obedience is obligatory only in right thing"
(IHadith in Sahih Buhari)

True Muslims should then eradicate this evil practice, that keeps many deserving virgins and women longing and wanting but, hopelessly deprived of marital life. It is your duty.

Is not your loving grown up daughter, your despairingly aging sister, your loving niece of marriageable age or, you, yourself a victim of this evil system? Remember in Islam, marriage is governed by certain rights, duties and obligations rightly

placed on either of the partners and is not a relationship where the women slaves herself under the chauvinistic dominion of the male.

Oh, you Honourable Parents,

Just because you are rich and able, do not take pride in following this evil system thus bringing upon the society ruination. Voluntary gift for the welfare of one's child or the new couple should be distinguished from that of the present dowry system. Be sincere (?) when you differentiate.

Oh, you Honourable Women,

Demand for your right of dowry from your man and refuse to marry blood sucking men who come on their knees begging for dowry from you, whatever their justifications be, and who wants you to be an object to sexually satisfy them, physically slave for them and mentally be with them. Remember sisters, the woman has her own rights in Islam.

Oh, you Honourable Men,

Earn respect to yourselves by refusing to marry those who offer dowry by you, your profession, your dignity and all of yours. Pay the woman her dowry and grant her the rights that Islam has given her and be dignified.

The Rights of Elders

by : Sdr. M. A. Sourjah .

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the United Nations Programme on Ageing are organising a special worldwide campaign to honour the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and the 1999 International Year of Older Persons. It is a campaign to raise awareness about the meaning of human rights for the older persons and the importance of protecting those rights.

This is a unique opportunity to consider the human rights of older persons in our society. Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes fundamental rights and freedoms for everyone we know that the struggle for economic, social, and cultural rights can be a persistent reality in every corner of the earth. Like all members of our society, older persons have the right to be free from the hardships of poverty and hunger, and to participate throughout life with dignity, independence, and safe and adequate access to all models of care.

The Islamic Perspective

The Islamic perspective in guaranteeing the basic needs: such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education of all individuals including the elders, through an equitable distributional scheme, merits examination. The majority of the world's inhabitants are poor while a small minority are rich. Distribution has always been a burning issue in any economic system, because the socioeconomic welfare of the individual and of the society depends upon the degree of justice and equity in the prevailing distribution patterns.

One of the important responsibilities to be shouldered by the members of the family is the good relations between children and their parents/ elders. The father, from an Islamic viewpoint has a great number of duties towards his children and the society. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has repeatedly stressed the importance and high value of respecting parents. He who wishes to enter paradise must please his father and mother. In this regard Al Quran states:

" AND your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and goodness to

your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you,

Say not to them (so much as) Ugh' nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourselves submissively gentle to them with compassion and say :

"O my Lord ! Have compassion on them as they brought me up (when I was) little."

17:23 - 24

According to Islam, the Universe was created by God. Humanity, which represents the best of creation, was created to serve as His vicegerent on Earth (Fil - arli - Khalifa) and in order to accomplish this trust, was endowed with sufficient faculties and resources within divinely ordained constraints:

" It is We Who have placed you with authority on earth, and provided you therein with means for the fulfillment of your life. Small are the thanks that you give "

7:10

As God has provided sufficient means for fulfilling all " genuine " human needs, there is no scarcity of resources in an absolute sense. Keeping this fundamental fact in mind, it can be concluded that economic problems result from a lack of effort or mismanagement of existing resources by humanity. Islam solves this problem by teaching that not every "want" is valid and deserves to be fulfilled. Instead, it emphasizes the fulfillment of " needs ".

From the Islamic viewpoint , God is the real owner of wealth, and humanity has been entrusted with looking after it as a test:

"Believe in Allah and His Apostle and spend in charity out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs (or trustees) . For those of you who believe and spend (in charity), for them is a great reward."

57:7.

As trustee, humanity is responsible for making the best and most effective use of these resources in ways acceptable to God. He has made these ways known through the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

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Individuals will be held accountable in the here-after for how they managed this trust.

In the fore-going context "An Islamic Scheme of Equitable Distribution of Income and wealth" by Muhammad Iqbal Anjuman of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, (synopsis below) appears to guarantee the Islamic approach for the successful global coexistence of the young and the elderly; the rich and the poor: The Islamic scheme of equitable distribution is based on:

- a) a long - term institutional approach that is totally consistent with the goals the Islamic system;
- b) encourages a decentralized framework of efficiency;
- c) consists of set of compulsory (i.e. zakat) voluntary (i.e. sadaqat) permanent (i.e. zakat)

and ush) and temporary (i.e. Sadaqat - al fitr and inheritance) measures. Permanent distributive measures take care of the permanent needs of the poor/ elderly while temporary distributive measures finance the needs in extraordinary circumstances:

- d) ensures an ideal pattern of distribution wherein all aspects of individual as well as social life reflect Islamic values
- e) is broader than other schemes, for it not only seeks to eliminate poverty but also to maximize social welfare by relieving all types of economic hardships. An example of this is the provision of financial support to needy travellers, debtors, students and the elderly.

The Islamic belief of universal brotherhood affords the spiritual infrastructure that creates a strong feeling of mutual respect, trust and cooperation in the cause of human welfare in a global context.

IN MEMORIAM

Eshan Sourjah

"A REFLECTIVE & THOUGHTFUL JOURNALIST"

19th June, 1999, marks the turn around of the (13th) Death Anniversary of the late Mohamed Ehsan Sourjah - a Senior Journalist. He was an old Royalist and a class-mate of the late Lalith Athulathmudali-a former Minister of Education, & c. But Ehsan was a simple, self-made journalist and more like the Sufic Philosopher; Omar Khayyam - was content to be his self; disinclined to ask for favours from colleagues of influential standing.

He was a bright student at school with English being his forte. The germ of his literary talent; he inherited from his beloved father, the late L.J. Sourjah - a master of the rhetoric and took to journalism like the proverb "duck taking to water". Starting at the bottom of the ladder; recognition of his talents came to this "chip of the old block", who took in his stride, the news paper assignments of Sub-Editor, Features Editor, Art & Literary Critic, Editor of the prestigious column Round -About-By contact, &c. At the height of his literary career he could have been classed among such giants like Maas Juragan Majeed and Taib Jamion.

Ehsan was a man of few words-an enigma to his colleagues. But that too was a reflection of his mind. He was a reflective and thoughtful writer and a very sensitive being. He is no more but memories will linger.

Many a tribute was paid on his demise as the one below too did ;

"What is paradoxical is that so many good people should die when they should be living and inspiring others during these dark times through which the country is passing. When hope is all but extinguished the lights too are going out one by one..."

Aravinda.

May Almighty Allah in His Infinite Mercy forgive Ehsan his sins and trespasses and admit his soul into "Jennathul - Firdouse" - Ameen.

*M. A. Sourjah
Battaramulla ..*

If you have forgotten to send your subscriptions for 1999 please do so. Your kind response will be highly appreciated - Terimah Kasi

The Purport of "Terang"

(Oleh : M.A. Sourjah)

Many a reader would gladly acknowledge and greatly appreciate it as a highly deserving token of recognition and a signal honour conferred on Saudara Farook Thaliph, for his pioneering and selfless service of over a decade, rendered to the Malay community as former Founder Editor of the only Newsletter "Terang" of the community, when he was invited to present a paper entitled: Experience in Documenting Malay Society and Culture in Sri Lanka "Terang Newsletter" at the Symposium Antarabangsa Melayu Polynesia Commonwealth by the organizers at Kuala Lumpur, in late November, 1998.

The readership is all the more happy in sharing the Editor's delight of realizing that he had veritably achieved the main purport of "Terang" as evinced inter alia, his statement.

"I for my part, was made to realise of the real purport of publishing the Newsletter.

It dawned on me that the purport was to bring together the Malays who were hitherto unknown...."

in his paper referred to, as reproduced in the January - March, 1999 issue of the "Terang".

It is certainly conceded that there would have been many instances whereby the veracity of his statement would have been proved, as many would have been brought together by the medium of "Terang. However, the latest instance I experienced in this regard, was after I had read Lillian Rajaratnam's articles titled "SHARIA" not Barbaric or Uncivilized", which also appeared in the same issue of the "Terang" referred to above. In it she vehemently decries the Western authors of giving wrong impressions of the "Sharia" and mislead non-Muslims by calling it barbaric and uncivilized. She further proceeds on to prove with time tested examples of how the Europeans had borrowed many words from Islam and the Muslims, whereby the European languages were enriched for their own literary advancement. However, the Islamic belief of the universal brotherhood affords the spiritual infrastructure that creates a strong feeling of mutual trust, respect and cooperation in the cause of human welfare (Barakat-ul-insan), that never fails to stand in good stead, in the global context.

Perhaps, had I not read Lillian's article it would not have occurred to me : when I came across the Arabic word, "BANTHALOONUN" meaning a pair of trousers : was the origin from which the similar sounding English word : "PANTALOON" was derived ! Similarly that : "SUGAR" was derived from (Arabic) : " SUKKARUN"; " COTTON" was derived from (Arabic) : "KUTHUNUN" and that "LEMON" was derived from (Arabic) : "Laimoonun", only to mention a few . And of course on the historical side there is a host of names from the dawn of humanity, ranging from "ADAM" derived from (Arabic) "AADAM" right down the generations to "JESUS" derived from (ARABIC) "EASA".

Speaking of Arabic as a language - over 100 million people speak the language in the world today.

"The Arabic language, in terms of the number of speakers and extent of its influence, is by far the most important Semitic language today and must be regarded as one of the important world languages" C.A. Ferguson - 1

".....Arabic does not lack precision, it is syntactically capable of expressing subtle ideas and the faintest shades of meaning.

Arabic was the language of natural science
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and medicine in the Middle Ages : Arabic translations were the instrument whereby Greek, science and philosophy were transmitted to medieval Europe"

Prof; E1 Sayed Yacoub Bakr 0 2

".....the cultivation of science and all other forms of learning is one of the aims of Islam. Had it not been for the Muslims, Europe would never have seen its way to the Renaissance and the modern scientific era would never have dawned. His Exalted Eminence Maulana Mohamed Abdul Aleem Siddiquei - 3

Perhaps, we would have to pay closer attention to aspects of etymological relevance in regard to Arabic / English words, if we are to comprehend and realize the magnanimity of the world language of Arabic and its global literary impact.

Last but not least, Lillian merits our kind gratitude in bringing alive not only the purport of but also for the enhancing of the quality of the Newsletter by dwelling on this fascinating subject which motivated some useful views.

Reference :

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica.
2. World Importance of Arabic.
3. Cultivation of Science by the Muslims.

MARRIAGE PROPOSALS

A respectable Malay family from Colombo seeks suitable partner for their daughter 38 years old pretty, medium height and kind hearted working as Product Manager in prestigious International Liason buying office in Colombo having own vehicle and drawing a high five figure salary. Please Reply to the Editor.

MP/03/99

ORDER NOW.

A few copies of the "TERANG" Commemorative Issue is available for sale on first come first serve basis. Please send M.00 / P.00 / Cheque for Rs. 60/- (Inclusive of Postage) to the Editor - Terang.

A souvenir - a must - for all Malays.

The Kandy Malay Association will be conducting it's 30th Annual Recital of Mowlood in memory of the Holy Prophet (SAL) Inshallah, on the 11th of July, 1999, at the residence of Mr. Feizal Dole, at Mulgampola Road, Kandy. As in the past, all members have been informed and a very large gathering is expected with their Malay Guru, Sadara M.J. Cassiere leading the recital with his assistant, Saudara Rizvi Mohamed. All members, together with their families, friends and relations have been invited to grace the occasion and thereafter to lunch.

My Experiences in Malaysia during the International Symposium on Malayo Polynesians In the Commonwealth 27 - 29 November 1998

in lighter vein

By B.D.K. Saldin B.A. (Econ) F.C.A.

I was invited to read a paper at the International Symposium on Malayo Polynesians in the Commonwealth held at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur from 27-29 November 1998 under the auspices of Gapena and the University. The other delegates from Sri Lanka were Dr. Jaldeen, Farook Thaliph, Kartini Mohamed, who was accompanied by her husband Akiel, T.K. Azoor and S.B. Halaldeen. The only delegate from the UK Malays, Usoof Cuttilan joined us in Colombo.

We arrived at the new KL airport on time. This new airport is huge and easily rivals Changi airport of Singapore. We had to take a train to reach the exit. However the usual hustle and bustle of an international airport was missing. Perhaps ours was the only flight that had arrived at that time. Representatives of the University met us and took us along. The University was about 60 km away but we covered it in about half an hour.

The university guests quarters where we were accommodated would be 4 star class. Not the same as Holiday Inn at Shah Alam but comfortable with a TV, fridge, telephone and hot water. The food was not as lavish as before. It would be perverse to grumble, after all this was gratis but I am only comparing it with the last time. More anon about what Malaysia is now going through.

The opening ceremony was not as grand as the one at Shah Alam in 1993. Perhaps it had something to do with the economic melt down. The Maori delegates gave an impromptu performance. There was one who looked a real savage with his loincloth and spear, but in reality he was cultured and had a masters and a doctorate to boot. Talks about looks being deceptive !.

On the first day the sessions went on after dinner till 10 p.m. and it was quite exhausting. The next day simultaneous sessions were held with the result that we were forced to miss some. Kartini's talk coincided with Thaliph's and therefore I was unable to hear his speech.

My talk was at 2 p.m. in the afternoon. Sleepy time and therefore not as well attended as the others. I counted and there were 36 in the audience in all. Professor Jainudeen and his wife Dilani were there to give me moral support. I spoke in Malay, which came as a

surprise to quite a few. Since this was an international symposium attended by several delegates who did not know Malay, I gave the gist of my talk in English. In fact there was a Professor from Madagascar who spoke in French with a translator. The two other speakers in my session were a Samoan and a Maori from New Zealand.

An interesting issue that cropped up was whether, if you did not talk Malay would that make you less of a Malay? Someone brought in the subject of religion and that made the discussion more complicated and the chairperson wisely brought the session to an end. Dilani says what surprised the non- Malays were not that I spoke in Malay but that I was fluent in English. The Malay was from a prepared text but the English was off the cuff at question time.

We were asked to give an item at the end of the formal ending of the sessions, which was preceded by a sumptuous dinner. For once I relaxed my self-imposed rules and enjoyed ice kacang tanah. We sang a typical S L pantun "Sayang kecil anak" Kartini's favourite. Usoof has videoed the proceedings and you can see for yourself how we made asses of ourselves. But it was all in good fun!

Usoof Cuttian and I were to go to the residence of professor Junaideen at the end of the proceedings that night but because it went on till late we arranged for him to pick us up early in the morning. It was our intention to pay a visit to the east coast of Malaysia.

We left for Kota Baru about 7 am and reached it at about 3 pm. It was a pleasant drive, a wide road through oil palm plantations and paddy fields like the drive to Dambulla without the pot holes and "the wandering kine-a la Sigiriya". Certainly pleasanter than the drive to Pattaya from Bangkok. Delani had provided us with sandwiches and a flask of tea which we had for lunch on the run. We went to the first departmental store we came across and managed to buy our songkoks and seledangs and started looking for a hotel. We found hotel Tomenggong where we spent the night at RM 61 double and RM 15 for an extra bed. Having freshened ourselves we went for dinner at a wayside market cum eating-place. It was a few minutes before Maghrib and the lady who served us

told us to hurry as she had to close shop during the prayer time. We quickly purchased our food and sat down at a nearby table only to find the place quickly deserted. We partook of our meal and were surprised to see an individual with a cane chasing away all the urchins who were attempting to eat. Fortunately for us we had finished our dinner and I hate to think what would have been our fate had that person found us.

We left early in the morning on our way to Teranggannu which is on the east coast of Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur where we had our symposium is on the west coast. Jainu was determined to show us a krupuk factory for which he had obtained directions from a friend of his. Unfortunately we were to find that those directions were for a place selling krupuk, umpteen of which we could have found on our own. I was given the task of asking for directions as I was supposed to be more conversant with Malay than Usoof. This was no easy task as I was familiar with neither their accent nor their dialect. But I managed.

At question at the symposium Professor Wan Hashim Wan Teh had asked me "The Sri Lanka Malays claim that their ancestors came from the Indonesian archipelago but how is it that some of their speech patterns resemble those of the people of Terangganu? For instances they pronounce certain words with the ending ng like *malang jalang* and *ikang* when the standard pronunciation is without the g *malan*, *jalan* and *ikan*. I replied that after the English overthrew the Dutch in Ceylon and they needed to replenish the numbers in the Malay regiment they went across to the Federated Malay States for their recruitment. Malaya and Ceylon were both under their suzerainty at that time. Perhaps candidates may have been recruited from Terangganu as well. This question by Wan Hashim whetted my appetite to see for myself or rather hear for myself this similarity in speech between the people from Terangganu and the Sri Lanka Malays. Thus it was Usoof and I elected to turn down the kind offer of Tan Sri Ismail Hussain to take us to his holiday home at Lankawi. Tan Sri Hussain tried to dissuade us from going to the east coast as there were reports that the north east monsoon was in full swing in that part of Malaysia and there were reports of floods. I had of course been to Lankawi earlier.

Here were we on our way to Terangganu I was as keen as ever to witness myself. What had hitherto been hearsay. On the way we stopped at away side warung to make some purchases of krupuk and sotong. And Eureka! I was delighted to hear the sales woman say *ikang* with the accent on the ng the same as we do in SL. *Malang* and *jalang* too were in evidence. Here was first hand confirmation that the people of Teranggannu pronounce certain words like the SL Malays. The purpose of my visit to Teranggannu had been fruitful.

Fool that I was, I failed to tape her conversation even though I had a recorder in my brief case. I had got a mental block about this recorder because at the symposium I had intended to record my speech and I had set it up on the table but due to the excitement failed to press the record button;

We noticed that all the selling at the warungs were being done by the women folk and the men were conspicuous by their absence. Jainu told us that this was a womens world and the men were sleeping at home. Here I have to break the sequence of this narrative to pursue this theory of Jainu. A few days later we were traveling in a train and were forced to ask for direction from a lady who turned out be a nurse from the Kelantan area. I posed the question to her as to whether it was true that the men were drones. Her reply was that the men were working in the paddy fields and tapping rubber and performing other kinds of physical labour. The women were wizards at trading and therefore they stuck to it as commerce was their forte. So much for these theories.

We had lunch at a wayside warung around 2 p.m. and continued on our journey. Shortly after 3 p.m. we ran into a tropical storm. It rained buckets and visibility was poor. In spite of good surface drainage the road was soon flooded. At one stage we went over a bridge and I was made to remark that I had heard of much water under the bridge but this was the first time I came across much water over the bridge.

We reached safely around 7 p.m. a day ahead of schedule much to the surprise of the home folks and perhaps to their relief. Rozani had remarked earlier to Jainu "Daddy don't try to be macho". We had done a round trip of over the entire circumference of Sri Lanka.

The following day Usoof and I were left to our own devices, Delani and Jainu having gone to work. Rozani their daughter dropped us at the Subang Jaya railway station and we got off at the Central Bank stop, one stop before KL. Usoof was keen on riding on the Light Rail Train (LRT)- a driverless train running on rails several meters above the ground. We arrived at the LRT station and were confronted by several machines which dispensed tickets. All this was, to use a Sri Lankan expression, "Godayata magic" new to country bumpkins. I don't know about Usoof who hails from the UK, but to me all this was certainly new. With the help of some fellow travelers we managed to get the tickets to travel about half way round the track. We boarded the train which did not have many passengers giving testimony to Jainu's thesis that all this was a waste of money for the glorification of Mahatir. Rozani was however of the view that we were traveling at an off

Kesatuan Melayu Lankapuri

Olch : Major B.G.M. Sariffodeen

Like Rip Van Winkle, I Have Aroused From A Long Slumber. Let me at the outset congratulate the Kandy Malay Association, for keeping the Malay interest at heart. It is to the credit of saudara Farook Thaliph for keeping the flame TERANG alive.

My interest has been awakened by numerous references in the TERANG from time to time about SLAMAC, the April - June issue of TERANG has published an article on the "Fate of SLAMAC" by Capt Anwar Dole from Sydney, Australia. The former Indonesian Ambassador in Sri Lanka had been instrumental in inaugurating the SLAMAC. Evidently he had overlooked the keen interest taken by another Indonesian Ambassador, Al Haj Asa Bafagih, in the affairs of the Sri Lankan Malay community. He hailed the existence of the first umbrella organisation of Malays. In fact it was Ambassador Asa Bafagih, who rendered the translation of the name of that organisation, CONFERENCE OF CEYLON MALAY ORGANISATIONS, to KESATUAN MELAYU LANKAPURI, popularly known by the acronym KEMELA.

KEMELA was inaugurated on 29 December 1958 after three preliminary conference that year, all of which were presided by the late Dr. T. B. Jayah, who had retired as Sri Lanka's first envoy to Pakistan. The initiative for the formation of KEMELA was taken by the Ceylon Malay Youth League during my tenure as its president. However the All Ceylon Malay Association convened the first meeting of Malay organisations in this country, not to be outdone by the CMYL. I led a five-man delegation to the initial conference held at the temporary pavilion of the Malay Cricket Club at Kew Road, Slave Island. Although 12 organisations attended that first conference, the Kandy Malay Association was a notable absentee. I questioned; Why has the headquarters of the upcountry Malays, the Kandy Malay Association, been omitted from the invitees? The diplomat that he was the chairman, Dr. Jayah, pacified the audience stating it was a bona fide mistake.

A perusal of KESATUAN, the official organ of KEMELA, will give all details, of the preliminary conferences.

KEMELA was a vibrant organisation. Dr. Jayah called it 'the common - wealth of the Malays of Ceylon'. The first Joint Secretaries of /the preliminary conferences were Saudara Durham Saldin and myself. At the formal inauguration of KEMELA the office bearers elected were; President; Dr. T.B. Jayah; Vice Presidents; Dr. M.P. Drahaman, M.C.S. Mohamed and T.A. Miskin; Secretary -General; B.G.N. Sariffodeen; Treasurer - General; Al Haj A. Mageedur Rahman. The Executive committee comprised in addition to the office bearers three representatives from each of the constituent member organisations.

KEMELA's very first achievement was the nomination of Dr. M. P. Drahaman as the Malay representative in Parliament. On the latter's demise Saudara B. Zahiere Iye, succeeded him I was at that time President of the Gempola Malay Association. I arranged a reception in his honour at Gampola.

Annual Conferences of KEMELA were held at Colombo, Wattala, Gampola, Nuwera Eliya and Matale. The Matale conference elected saudara Latif Hadgie as President on my proposal. Supporters of Saudara Nasoor Jainu Deen felt the 'humiliation' in his claim being over-looked. So a conspiracy ousted me from my role as Secretary - General. KEMELA broke up into two factions, one led by saudara M.D. Kitchilan and the other by saudara T.A. Miskin. Both saudaras had political ambitions. The impasse led to the disintegration of KEMELA.

SLUMO and SLAMAC likewise had an axe to grind. The fate of SLAMAC is now sealed. Saudara Anwar Dole's article gives the reasons for the 'Sad state of affairs of SLAMAC'.

I have briefly stated KEMELA's role until its demise. Another significant success of KEMELA was the appointment of saudara M.D. Kitchilan as a Senator, by the late Dudley Senanayake, when he was prime Minister. That delegation, too was led by me.

These are facts. My role was indeed dynamic. Pardon me for saying so, and also for repeating my roles stated above.

peak hour and therefore the train could not be crowded.

It was our intention to take the next train back, and so we did the very next one that was going in the opposite direction. The booking clerk had either misunderstood us or vice versa when she gave us directions. Sometimes my knowledge of Malay is better than a Malaysians English and the instructions had been given to Usoof in English. So here we were happily traveling along and enjoying the scenery when we discovered that the station at which we were supposed to get off did not appear on the list of stations at which this train was stopping. Once again fellow passengers came to our rescue who told us where to get off (literally). I would not be surprised if the lady whom we chatted up meant it metaphorically as well. She hailed from Kelantan and we just asked her why her men folk lazed around whilst the women did all the work. This was professor Jainudeen's theory to which I had alluded earlier.

All's well that end well and we soon found ourselves in the shopping center looking for batiks for Usoof. Here we drew a blank as batiks seem to be out of fashion. We found that we had easy access to the counters at the Globe, a departmental store which used to be teeming with shoppers with hardly room to move the last time I visited it in 1993. Gulati Silk Store was having a sale and I was able to buy some baju kurung material for my wife. It looked a bargain being 30 - 50% off the normal price, but who was to know that this was one of the most expensive departmental stores in KL according to Delani. Any way I was throwing caution to the winds on this trip as I wanted to act out of character for a change. More regrets were to follow when I returned home when my wife told me that she needed only 2 ¾ meters of material for a costume whereas I had bought 4 meter pieces! Ah we live to learn.

We had lunch at an Indian or was it a Pakistani restaurant - Usoof's favorite buriani - The ayam goreng was crisp and had a special flavour of its own. Usoof drank his teh tarek and I my teh kosong. Teh tarek for the uninitiated is tea prepared by holding one receptacle as far above the others and pouring the tea. This practice used to be prevalent even in Sri Lanka in the kades on the way to the outstations. Unfortunately pepsi and coke has put paid to this tradition. Teh Kosong is plain sugarless tea which all Malaysians drink with their meals to act as a counter to the ill effects of excess oil. Incidentally air putih is plain cold water. We returned to Subang by surface train without any untoward incident. We tried a nearby shopping mall for batiks with no success and returned home by taxi

I met Rohaya Rahaman, the widow of Mansoor Rahaman, the journalist from Sri Lanka who had settled down in Malaysia and met with a tragic death recently. I had the opportunity of discussing with her some customs of Malaysia, a country where one cannot call oneself a Malaysian unless one professes the Islamic faith. That they are an Islamic nation is never in doubt unlike Indonesia which is a panca sila state although it is the country with the largest Islamic population. Rohaya spoke to me about the Malaysian funeral customs where the women folk went to the burial grounds for the final rites, a thing unheard of in Sri Lanka. Here women are not allowed to visit the graves of their loved ones even on Hari Raya days. In fact she paid weekly visit to the grave site of her husband. In Indonesia too I have witnessed women following the men to the burial grounds.

The next day we visited Gapena headquarters and met with Tan Sri Professor Ismail Hussain. We thanked him for inviting us to participate in the symposium and for his hospitality. I had fruitful discussions as to how Gapena could help the Sri Lanka Malays to revive our language.

Ismail Hussain took us to town and offered us a meal. Since we had already breakfasted we had to refuse his kind offer. This restaurant we visited had the best fresh cows milk in KL according to Ismail Hussain. Incidentally Ismail Hussain locked his Mercedes with a special locking device on the steering wheel before we got off, which again surprised me as I thought that the Malaysians had so many cars - two per family and that therefore there were no car thieves. Perhaps car thieves in Malaysia went for Benzes.

The following day Dilani and Usoof left for Sri Lanka. Saturday and Sunday I spent lazing around the house and went to the airport at about 2 p.m. The usually late Air Lanka plane lived up to its reputation by being 2 hours late. I met SBC Halaldeen unexpectedly at the boarding lounge. He had traveled to Patani in the South of Thailand and had several interesting episodes to relate about his stay there. The people there did not know English and spoke only Malay but not the SL variety. He had to use sign language most of the time but was able to get around. I admire his ability to rough it out in spite of his age. I have of course become soft and would not dream of traveling on my own.

This is brief description of my ten days stay in Malaysia from the 27th November to 6th December 1998.

MALAY SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

A Salutary Change in Perspective

Oleh. Saudara M.A. Sourjah

The colonial era is significant in the modern history of the Sri Lanka Malays. It is in this era that the Malays first came to be domiciled in this country. Sri Lanka and other countries in Southeast Asia like Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines came to be ruled from time to time by the western powers. Some of the people of these countries were willy-nilly impelled to socially adapt western culture and names, for obvious reasons of receiving better care and recognition by the imperial nabobs-and not for any lack of pride on the part of these people, of their own heritage and culture.

In this article the writer deals with the Malay Social Conscience in a broad Spectrum, identifying as it were, the contributory factors for this salutary change in the general outlook, especially in the genre of their life-styles, from that which existed over a quarter century ago.

In Sri Lanka, however, some of our parents had a craze then, for calling their children by foreign-sounding pet/names such as: Tony, Harry, Monty Dolly, Susie and so forth, quite endearingly, probably for convenience and also add a touch of the popular west. This bona-fide gesture on our parent's part to install familial love and get togetherness, was really inimical to the beholders of such names, when dispassionately viewed in the context of the wellbeing of their psyche and inner harmony.

However, through the passage of time and consequent on the westerners leaving our shores, generations of our Saudara-Saudari became more free to act in accordance with Malay "adat sadat"

They began to show more fraternal understanding and consideration for their kith and kin. They began to gradually realize their ethnicity and grow out of the black hole of their mistakes that retarded progress. They began to pay more attention to religion and religious observances.

There is no priesthood in Islam. Therefore, Malays made every effort to learn and know the rudiments and observances of their faith, through their elders. The 'Kampong' style of community living in and around 'Kartel' area facilitated unity of the community.

Our ancestors were kings, queens, princes, princesses, noblemen and soldiers. Among them were erudite scholars in religious affairs and savants in literature and arts. There

were great men of religious learning who acquired profound spiritual knowledge. Compared to their miniscule population the numerous *Mosques* they built to serve the religious needs of their community, bear undisputed testimony of their fervent zeal in their faith in Islam. The pinnacle of their devotion saw some of them spiritually elevated to sainthood as evinced by the many shrines and *Mausoleums* erected in different parts of the country.

In such a socio-religious context there appears to be every likelihood that most Malays are genealogically linked to these sacred souls; if we could only trace some of such genealogies. This should remind us with awe, that most of us carry some semblance of their 'inner spark' which could manifest itself when the paradigm of 'ihsan' is practised. More of this aspect will follow elsewhere in this article.

Community-wise, our Malays suffered the 'pall and gloom' of a retrograde ethnic entity. The contributory factors may be put down to the adverse socio-economic patterns of the community who were scattered from their traditional home-Kampong 'Kartel'. Thereby being impelled to subsist in adverse areas where schools and religious organisations were few and hard to reach. The community's socio-economic prospects looked ominous and the proverbial silver lining being enshrouded in persistent clouds.

However, that eluding silver-lining dawned, in a vista of hopeful betterment for the community's economic strangle-hold. In the early '70's, if I am not far wrong, during the period of Madame Srimavo Bandaranaike's, Premiership, the Middle-East flung open their job banks to Sri Lankans. Alhamdulillah. A fair share of our Malay youth joined the mad rush for M.E. jobs and thus even our Saudari made hay while the sun shone. They chattered and jabbered in monetary jargon of Riyals-Saudi, Qatari, Yemeni or Omani, be it.

The socio-economic strata of our Malay youth showed upward growth. Many of them built dwelling houses and joined the ranks of the land-owning-gentry of the country. Many of our Malay girls found, Riyal-rich husbands. The home front was generally up-graded and living conditions ameliorated. It could be said that the general impact of the Middle-East job market brought about a perceptible socio-economic betterment and a salutary change in the genre of our life-styles. The sojourn in the Middle-East brought

about modicum of understanding in the observance of Islam sans the rituals and trappings, to which more importance was being attached here among us. Some of the young Malays took the opportunity to perform sacred Haj, while others did so perfunctorily. Some of them were of the view that we in Sri Lanka believed in the 'shell' rather than in the 'kernel' of Islam. Some attended mosque bare-headed, some cultivated their beards. Others criticized the way 'myths' were enshrouded-especially the placing of the hands in the 'takbir' position and the recital of 'Talkin' at the graveside. The local 'tabligh' may have found some adulators in them.

However, in the foregoing socio-religious context there appears to be a perceptible trend in their adherence to the Islamic precepts. It points to 'ihsan' as referred to earlier. 'Ihsan' signifies the beautifying or perfecting one's behaviour. As an Islamic concept, it denotes the Divine presence. The divine presence finds expression in a special relationship between the individual and God:

"As for those who pursue most earnestly the quest in Us (Allah), We surely guide them in Our paths. And certainly Allah is With those Who practice ihsan." (Quran 29; 69)

One who practices ihsan is a 'muhsin'. This realization motivates him/her to strive in doing what God enjoins and avoiding what He forbids. Thus both faith in and fear of God induce some Islamic values essential for our salutary community-living.

It is a spiritually alleviating sign for the community to observe that more young Malays now attend jummah prayers, presumably because Qutbas are conducted in Sinhala also-a language the younger generation understand. It is also encouraging to note that Saudara Hazrat Muin Ameer conducts Qutba in Bahasa Melayu when he gets his turn to do so at *Jummah Mosque, Wekande*. In fact, during the days of the *Malay Regiment*, the Melayu Guru arrived to the ceremonial accompaniment of the Malay Regimental Band at the Malay Military *Mosque-Masjidul Jamiah* at Java Lane, Slave Island to conduct Jummah prayers in Gundul.

There's every possibility of a pursuer of ihsan and its spiritual and moral consequences to help lead the life of a devout Muslim, as said earlier. So much so that any individual who maximizes such values as efficiency, human dignity, self-control, respect and accountability to God, will be motivating the conception of human nature as an Islamic basis for leading a beneficial pattern of life in human society.

In the above context, Malay youth are becoming more and more aware of the futility of western oriented wedding receptions as totally un-Islamic. They now opt for more meaningful receptions acceptable to the Islamic concept. It will be also more to the point of Islamic values, if some basics like the encouragement

of the offering of two rakats 'Salatul-Is-thi-Khar' by the bridegroom and bride, as a prelude to the commencement of the "Kamar panken" activities, is made aware of. It is customary to offer the Sunnat Prayers prior to starting something good in one's life. Some Malay youth are becoming aware of such essential prayer observations while yet a good many sadly lack it. Knowledgeable preachers like Saudara Hazrat Muin Ameer and others might consider it also beneficial to include such basics in their discourses.

The opportunity also avails me to point out a significant void in the matter of some of our Malay weddings. It is about the total absence of Malay 'adat sadat'. Let me begin with the officiating priest. If he happens to be a Malay Guru he will help the Bridegroom to declare his betrothal/ marriage 'niat' in Bahasa Melayu. Otherwise the niat will be declared in Arabic/ Tamil - an alien language.

The bridegroom wears a Songko, if he is able to find one, if not an Indian or Pakistan variety is opted for. There have been instances of some self-styled mod bridegrooms brave the occasion bareheaded. The western wedding suit out-modes any form of Malay ceremonial outfit. The cynosure of all eyes of the occasion-the Bride wears the western bridal outfit with complete trailing veil, bouquet and other accoutrements.

Bridesmaids adorn dresses matching the Brides dress pattern. The Bride is led to the 'Isthal' to the musical strains of 'Here comes the Bride' to complete as it were the state of the art of mimicry of the west. So much so that even a semblance of the traditional Malay Bridal ensemble-Baju Kuroong, slendang with Batic skirt/sarong and coiffure to match, are relegated to the akimbo of forgotten things.

Coming onto the close relations of the couple and other Malay invitees-only an eagle-eyed entrepreneur would be able to espy a Songko, a Baju Kuroong or a Batic shirt among them, I believe. In the same breath; I might say that the female of our species are quite adept at wearing dress-forms and sarrees of the Indian, Pakistani and Moor modes but not that of our own. The Band or Orchestra if there is one in attendance, is western oriented and plays the jazz, the rock and what not. No vibrant Malay Songs/Pantuns are sung not even recorded ones played. O' tempora O' mores! Even before a non-Malay guest could rightly remark; 'Tis a Malay wedding, eh' Would not our Malay Social Conscience prick and lament; 'Why should we ape other's customs?' surely we could follow ours'.

*"Luar adat tidak peduli
semua Melayu Kalau satu hati
Melayu adat ambil hati
Bangsa Kita suka hati.*

END NOTES:

01. The first batch of exiles included Pangeran Adipati Amungurat III, known in Javanese history as Susunan Mas, who along with his family and retainers was banished (to Ceylon) in 1708. B.D.K. Saldin "THE SRI LANKA MALAYS AND THEIR LANGUAGE"-16.
02. The Grand Mosque at New Moor Street, Colombo, was designed by a Javanese Architect-Mohamed Balankaya, who was the son of Hooloo Balankaya, Minister to the Raja of Goa who was exiled to Ceylon in 1723-I bid-17.
03. Several other mosques built during this period are Located in Colombo, Kandy, Kurunegala, Trincomalee, Hambantota and Kinniya. "Malay Saints lie buried here" -T.P.J.Ahamath "Brochure of Symposium Duniya Melayu, I bid-17, also refer T.P.J.Ahamath-"Malay Mosques, Saints & Shrines"-Terang Surat khabar Orang Melayu Sri Lanka : May 1988-2.5 July 1988 -2.7 August 1988-2-28 and October 1988-2.10
04. The World war II and its aftermath completely disarrayed the housing arrangement of our Malays. Their tenement style of housing in their traditional Kampong' kartel Slave Island and other congested areas like Maradana, Kotahena and Wolvendhal were demolished initially to provide for fire gaps ' as an Air Raid Precaution (ARP) and after the war for town planning and roadwidening purposes Alternate housing accommodation provided in Flat-Type complexes could not meet all those lost theirs. A good number of Malays opted for the suburbs like Mabole, Wattala, Hunupitiya Ragama and Enderamulla for their housing needs.
05. The Wekande Jummaah mosque at Slave Island was gift from a free Javanese prince-Pandan Balie in 1796.
06. There were four Malay Regiments formed in Ceylon by the British, the first in May 1802, the second in January, 1803, the third in November 1805 and the fourth in 1811. Final disbandment in 1873. B.D.K Saldin-I bid, 9.
07. Masjidul Jamiah-Malay Military Mosque at Java Lane, Slave Island was built in 1864 out of the Pensioners Fund of the Ceylon Malay Regiment. I bid-17.

M.A. Sourjah
Battaramulla

A Tale of a Striker

*I went on strike
To assert my right
I went on strike
I lost my job*

*I lost my job
I did not get paid
I lost my pay
I lost my money*

*I had no job, no money, no pay,
My wife did not stay
She went away
My children were afraid
They went with my wife far away*

*My friends thought I was strange
I had no job, no money, no pay
No wife, no children
They did not smile any more
I lost my friends.*

*I am desperate, I am lonely
I am hungry, I am afraid, I am a loser
I have no money to buy my bread
No money to buy my rice*

*What do I do now?
I think crazy
No. Death is no solution
Where there is a will
There is a way.*

*My neighbour whom I rarely meet
Knows my problem
He succours me gives me food,
clothing, shelter and some money,
A good samaritan, my good
Neighbour whom I hardly know.
Gives me a job.*

*I am on my feet again,
I smile again
Every dark cloud has a silver lining.*

*I have my bread now
I have my rice now
All my friends think I am a jolly good fellow
My wife and children they shed
Tears and cry, they all say they missed me and
come back
I am back, on track*

*There is a lesson from this tale
My advice to you dear friends
Better strike a match and burn your fingers
Than go on strike and burn your life.*

Johar Mustafa - Kandy.

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