

ILS *DIGEST*

A Quarterly Dive
into Books,
Publishing, and
Literary Treasures



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TABLE OF CONTENT

04 LATEST BOOK

Contemplating Sufism: Dialogue and Tradition Across Southeast Asia
by Dr. Khairudin Aljunied

06 EDITOR'S PICKS

Look into the editor's recommended reads

07 ILLUMINATIONS: SUBMITTED ESSAYS

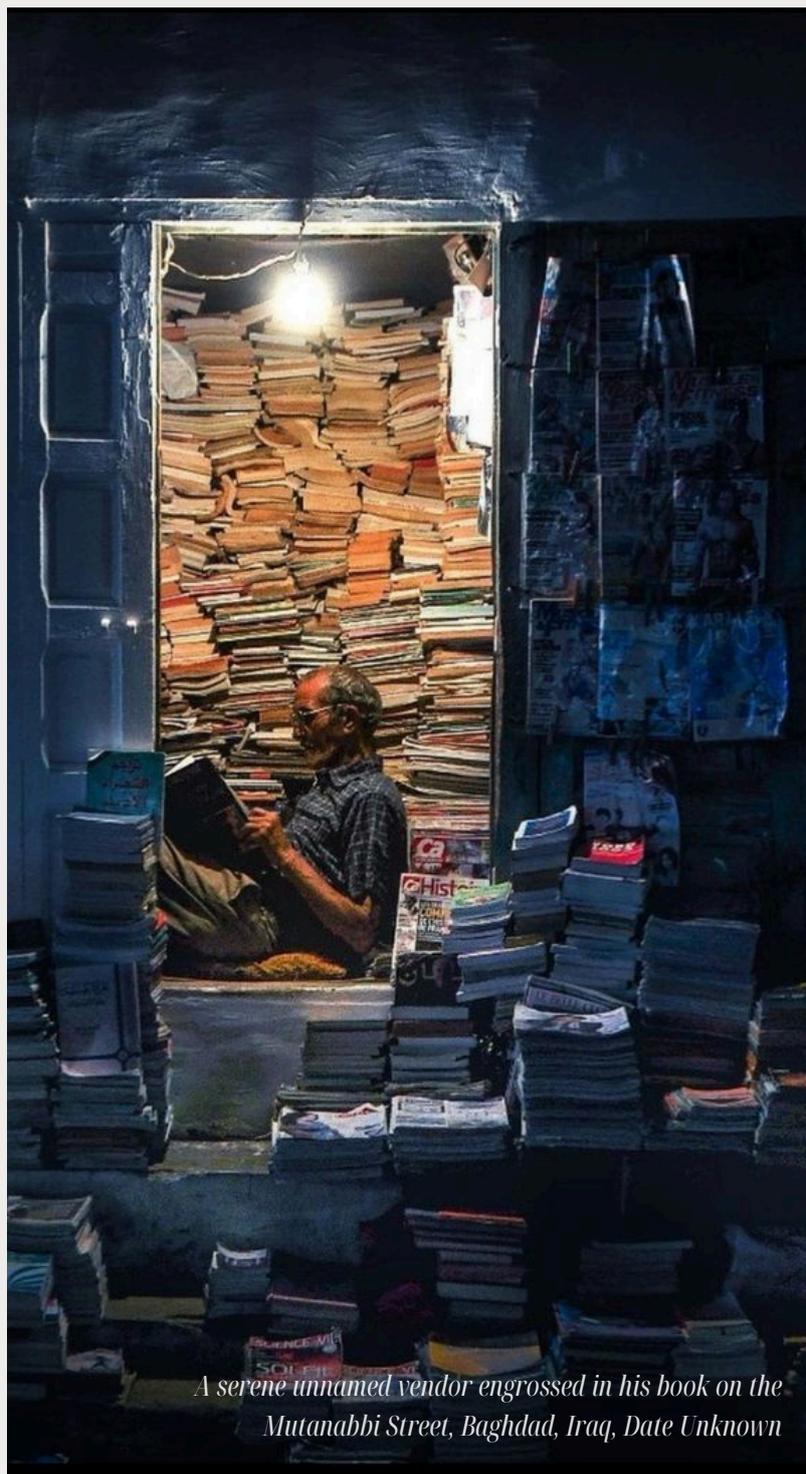
Contemplating Al-Mutanabbi's Famous Saying, "If You See the Lion Bare Its Teeth, Do Not Assume It is Smiling at You."

A Critique on the Arab States and the proxy Ulema Class: Adversaries of the Palestinian Cause

13 REFLECTIONS

Abu Talhah's Reflections on Hājīj – The Journey that Rewrote the Soul

What Message are We Mediating? by Dr Imran



A serene unnamed vendor engrossed in his book on the Mutanabbi Street, Baghdad, Iraq, Date Unknown



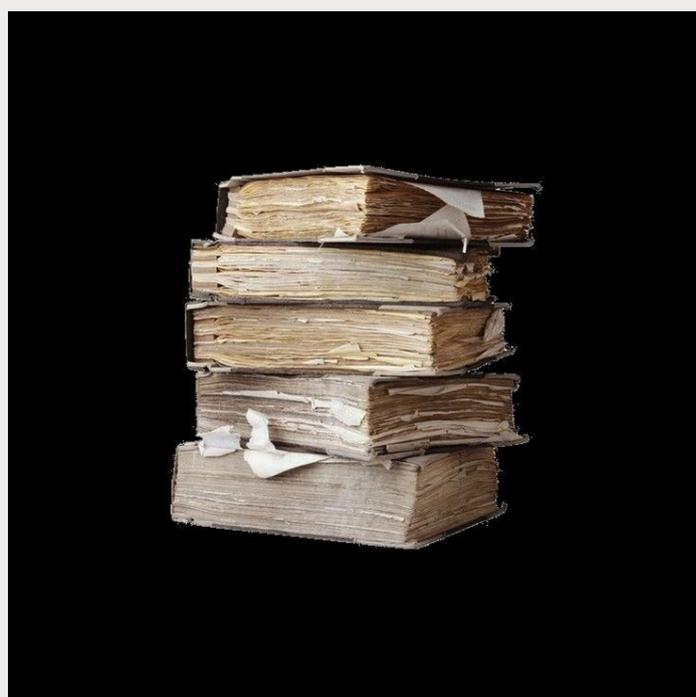
A Moroccan calligraphy of Islamic invocations (“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, there is no God but Allah, Muhammad is His messenger”), circa 19th century.

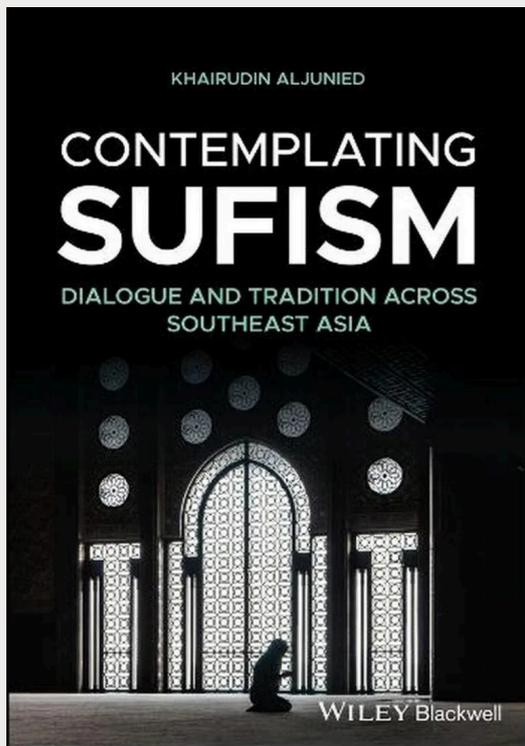
17 TRANSLATIONS & WORLD LITERATURE

A Brief Introduction to Farrukh Ahmad (1918-1974) by Adnan Mahmud

19 SPOTLIGHT: LITERARY EVENTS & FESTIVALS

The 42nd International Istanbul Book Fair: A Celebration of Literature and Culture





Contemplating Sufism: Dialogue and Tradition Across Southeast Asia

by *Dr. Khairudin Aljunied*

In “Contemplating Sufism,” Khairudin Aljunied embarks on a pioneering exploration of Islamic spirituality in Southeast Asia, offering readers an original perspective on the resilience of the Sufi dialogical tradition in the region. Through an innovative “contemplative histories” approach, Aljunied uncovers the enduring cultural and ideological forces that have sustained Sufi influence for centuries, demonstrating how Sufi communities embraced dynamic, introspective dialogues with both themselves and others to foster lasting significance.

“A Fresh Lens on Sufi Spirituality in Southeast Asia: Exploring the Enduring Legacy of Dialogue in Contemplating Sufism.”

This compelling study interweaves historical and ethnographic insights with Aljunied’s own personal encounters and observations, providing readers with vivid portraits of Sufism’s evolution and impact in Southeast Asia. In engaging prose, each chapter brings to life the inventive

strategies of Sufi thinkers and practitioners, revealing their role in shaping political, social, emotional, and cultural shifts across the region. Through richly detailed narratives, “Contemplating Sufism” captures the transformative power of Sufi ideas, practices, and dialogues, illuminating how this spiritual tradition grew into a vibrant force within Southeast Asian history.

Highlights of the book include:

- *A cohesive synthesis of contemporary scholarship on Southeast Asian Sufism*
- *Exploration of diverse modes of Sufi interaction and tradition-making across Southeast Asia, with a special emphasis on dialogue*
- *Vivid depictions and analyses of the texts, practices, people, and institutions that contributed to the spread and development of Sufism*
- *Newly uncovered archives across Southeast Asia and beyond.*

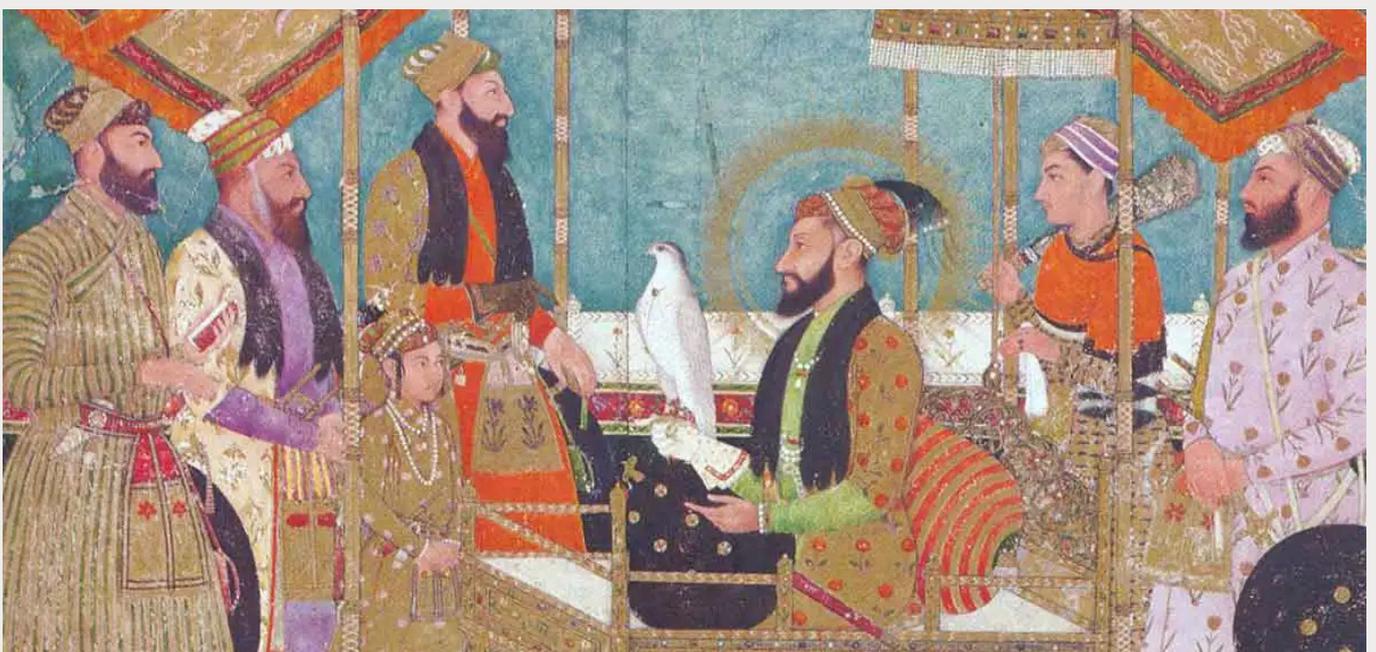


Dr. Khairudin Aljunied is a tenured Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore and a Senior Fellow at Georgetown University’s Alwaleed Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding, where he previously served as Malaysia Chair of Islam in SEA. He has held visiting professorships at Columbia University, University of Brunei Darussalam and University of Malaya. In 2024, he was named as one of the world’s 500 influential Muslims.

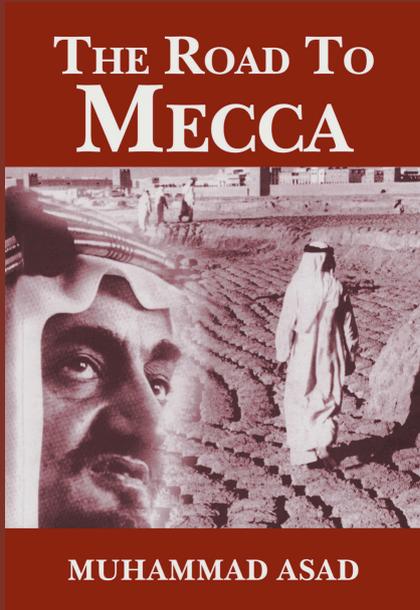


Palembang, Indonesia, under Dutch rule, by Johannes Ykema (Uitgever), before 1950, Source: Wikimedia Commons

“Contemplating Sufism” is a valuable resource not only for students and scholars of Sufism, philosophy, political science, and religious studies, but also for anyone interested in the rich spiritual heritage of Southeast Asia. This volume serves as both an academic textbook and an accessible guide for those seeking to understand the lasting legacy and vibrant dynamics of Sufi spirituality in the region.



The Mughal ruler Aurangzeb, by Bichitr, c. 1660, Source: Wikimedia Commons



The Road to Mecca by Muhammad Asad

“The Road to Mecca” by Muhammad Asad is a profound and captivating memoir that artfully blends travel writing, autobiography, and spiritual exploration. Born a Jewish Austrian, Asad recounts his journey through the Middle East in the early 20th century, detailing the experiences that ultimately led him to embrace Islam. His eloquent prose vividly evokes the landscapes and cultures he encounters, while his reflections provide an intimate perspective on faith, identity, and belonging. This work is not merely an adventure across deserts and ancient cities but also a deeply moving exploration of Islam and personal transformation. It is highly recommended for readers interested in spiritual journeys, Islamic history, and the richness of cross-cultural understanding.



Islam and Western Society by Maryam Jameelah

Maryam Jameelah (1934–2012), a Jewish convert to Islam and companion of Indian Muslim philosopher Maulana Abul Ala Maududi, became an influential figure in modern Islamic thought. As a prolific author and critic of Western civilization, she authored 32 books, including “Islam and Western Society”, a collection of essays addressing themes like feminism, the role of Muslim women, technology, and the generation gap. “Islam and Western Society” aimed at educated Muslims, warns against the allure of Western values and advocates a life grounded in Islamic principles. Her writings, especially this book, remain valuable for Muslims seeking insight into faith amid modern influences.

ILLUMINATIONS: SUBMITTED ESSAYS



Géza Vastagh (Hungarian, 1866-1919) A Lion Walking

“If you see the lion bare its teeth, do not assume it is smiling at you.” -- Al-Mutanabbi

This famous quote was from an Iraqi poet known as al-Mutanabbi. His full name is Abu al-Tayyib Ahmad ibn al-Husayn. He earned the nickname al-Mutanabbi—the would-be prophet—after he claimed that he was a prophet when he was younger.

Al-Mutanabbi was deemed by many as one of the greatest poets from the Arab world for his powerful imagery and flowery language in his poems. Some people even dub him as the Shakespeare of the Arabs.

The above quote was one of his most famous quotes. In its original language, it reads:

إذا رأيت نيوب الليث بارزة فلا تظنن أن
الليث يبتسم

The meaning is apparent; appearances can be deceiving. Yet the message stands true to this day, and we would be wise to keep this warning as a reminder when interacting with people.

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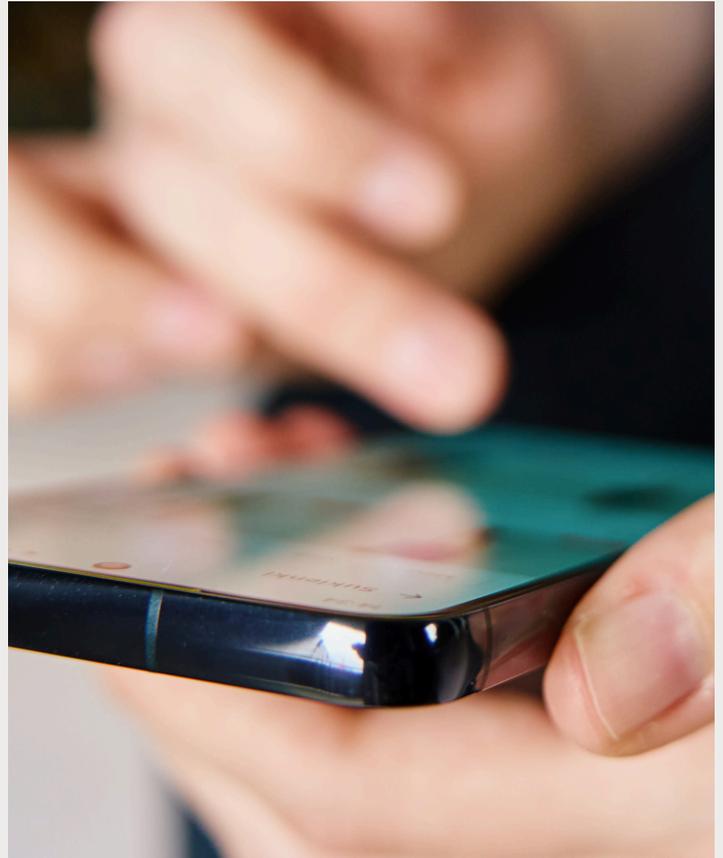
This quote, however, not only serves as a warning for us to be cautious when interacting with people, but more importantly, it reminds us to not be the lion that bares its teeth to unsuspecting people.

Simply put, having power over someone else, be it socially, physically, mentally, or in any way at all, doesn't warrant the right to maul them for your own good. After all, we are not animals that are stuck in a cycle of survival of the fittest.

Today, especially, it will do well for us to remember this in the context of social media interaction. It is very easy indeed for us to pretend and put on a face that does not reflect who we truly are on the internet. Various instances of catfishing incidents happen on the internet and victims that fell prey to these crimes often face substantial consequences.

Therefore, as users, we not only must be cautious of our online interactions, but we must also remember to not be the one deceiving people for selfish reasons.

Allah ﷻ's jurisdiction does not stop at the screen. No matter how invincible you think you are behind the persona you've created online, your actions won't remain unchecked in the Hereafter.



Hannaan Fuad is an English Language and Literature undergraduate at IIUM. Her main interest is speculative fiction and its exploration of socio-political issues, especially themes of tragedy, spectacle, nationalism, and resistance. She seeks to understand how Islamization of Knowledge can enhance literary studies beyond simple classification.



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Arab States and the Proxy Ulema Class: Adversaries of the Palestinian Cause.

By Abdul Hai

The US President Donald Trump implied that Israel could encounter significant regional challenges without the support and presence of Saudi Arabia. [1] This has significant implications, given that Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, supporting Israel against fellow co-religionists would signify betrayal. This goes beyond nation-state considerations; it extends to betrayal from an Islamic standpoint, carrying legal implications from the perspective of Shari'ah law.[2] Under the Abraham Accords, certain Arab countries have normalised relationships with Israel. The recent diplomatic interactions between Saudi Arabia and the State of Israel, facilitated by the United States of America cast doubt upon the credibility of Saudi Arabia and other Arab states' assertions of genuine care and concern for the Palestinian cause and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Despite the ongoing issues of terrorism and genocide inflicted upon Palestinians by the terrorist state of Israel, these states have not progressed beyond mere verbal condemnation, a stance they adopt with apparent reluctance.

The current situation indicates that a significant number of Arab states, including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, as well as states such as Egypt and Jordan, show little interest in actively supporting the Palestinian cause. Instead, they appear to be complicit in maintaining silence and preventing public expressions of solidarity with the Palestinians. This complicity extends to suppressing any dissent against the ongoing genocide, especially public demonstrations of support for Palestinians are restricted.[3]

Despite ongoing destruction and the continued tragedy of the Palestinian people, these Arab states seem more focused on advancing the normalisation process with Israel.[4]



It would be incorrect and naive for Muslims, especially in Palestine, to believe that Saudi Arabia and other Arab State genuinely prioritise the interests of the Palestinian people. There is a growing perception that Saudi Arabia, potentially with the assistance of Israel and the United States, is exploiting the situation in Gaza to normalise relations with Israel.

There were multiple opportunities, particularly after October 7th, for the Arab States to demonstrate sincere solidarity with the Palestinian cause and intervene to halt the ongoing humanitarian crisis. By exerting pressure on the Israeli government and its allies, these states could advocate for the realisation of Palestinian rights and the establishment of an independent state. However, a deliberate choice has been made by these States to abstain from such actions. In essence, despite the Arab States acknowledging the predicament of Palestine they have

consistently refrained from leveraging their influence to bring about meaningful change and alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. A series of meetings convened by the Arab League has witnessed the presentation of several proposals aimed at addressing the terrorist and genocidal actions undertaken by the Israeli government. Notably, proposals advocating for the disruption of oil supplies to Israel and its allies were put forth, with Algeria, Libya, Syria, and Lebanon actively promoting this course of action. However, it is noteworthy that the Arab States, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, expressed opposition to such proposals. This opposition suggests that these Arab States may primarily serve as platforms for discussion and dialogue, lacking a substantive commitment to instigate significant changes.[5]

There have been several reports indicating that, behind the scenes, certain Arab states are not only expressing support for Israel but are also actively assisting them by supplying essential goods, following disruptions caused by the Houthi blockade of international trade routes. Numerous agencies have reported that the goods destined for Israel are now being transported



via road through Saudi Arabia and passing through Jordan before reaching Israel.[6] Additionally, there exist other clandestine relationships involving technological collaboration and military agreements between the State of Israel and these Arab nations.[7]

The discourse from certain nations, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and others, has been vehemently critical of Israel, condemning its actions and calling for accountability before the International Court of Justice. However, the strength of these condemnations, criticisms, and calls for action appears to be limited to mere rhetoric. Paradoxically, rather than deterring Israel, such strong language seems to embolden and provide a peculiar assurance to Israeli authorities that they will not face substantial consequences for their actions. This situation brings to mind the couplet by Ibn Jarir advising Murabba not to worry about Al-Fazadaq's threat to kill him, as Al-Fazadaq's words are likely to be empty and lack the substance of genuine action.

زعم الفرزدق أن سيقتل مربعا ... أبشر بطول
سلامة يا مربع [8]

“Al-Farazdaq claims he will kill Murabba, but be reassured of your safety, O Murabba”

Despite the public display of support for the Palestinian cause, it becomes evident that behind the scenes, these Arab states are the ones aiding Israel and its actions against the Palestinian population. It is imperative for the Palestinian community, in the aftermath of conflict, should always remember that it was South Africa, Ireland, and South American countries that came to the aid of the Palestinians. Unfortunately, it was fellow Muslim countries, the Arab states, that betrayed them. This betrayal must be ingrained in the song of the Palestinian future generation so that they remember who their real adversaries were.

There has been a notable absence of interest and genuine concern within the scholarly[9] class in the Arab states regarding the Palestinian cause. Instead of actively advocating for the rights and struggles of the Palestinian people, the scholarly circles in these states have functioned more as conduits for the views of rulers and dictators.[10]

Their role appears to be aligned with promoting the agenda dictated by those in power. This alignment represents a betrayal not only to the Palestinian people but also to the principles espoused by Allah and His Messenger. These scholars have not only forsaken the Palestinian cause but have also violated their moral and ethical obligations. Their silence and reluctance to take a stand during critical times can be viewed as indirect support for the Zionist state. [11] The proxy Ulama class of Arab states has consistently played a prominent role in advocating for and serving as the voice of dictatorial regimes in the Arab world. This phenomenon is not exclusive to the current circumstances in Palestine; rather, these agents of oppression have historically undertaken operations against significant populations. As an illustrative instance, consider the the Arab Revolution of 2011 exemplified the active involvement of proxy Ulama class in the advocacy and defense of the directives issued by Arab dictators.

It is crucial to recollect and critically assess this historical juncture, particularly scrutinising the actions of these states and their proxy Ulama classes. It becomes apparent that they were instrumental in facilitating the tragic loss of thousands of children indirectly. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that these entities, rather than being advocates for Palestine, emerged as the true adversaries, undermining the cause they purportedly support.

The imperative consideration for Muslims, both in the Western world and globally, involves comprehending that during critical junctures, it was the Arab states and their scholarly class that conspicuously betrayed the Muslim cause. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to engage in a thorough examination of their actions, maintaining a vigilant awareness of these betrayals. In the event of triumphs within the Muslim community, a paradigm shift is advocated: perceiving these entities as betrayers to Islam and Muslims, with an unwavering

commitment to neither forget nor forgive their transgressions. This resolve is particularly salient when reflecting upon their failure to take action against the Zionist Terrorist state despite possessing the full capacity to do so.

Concluding this discourse, there exists a compelling necessity to reconsider the reverence that Muslims hold for these states and their religious authorities. This entails a deliberate redirection of such esteem towards individuals and entities genuinely devoted to the welfare of Islam and the populace within the state. This paradigmatic shift in allegiance contributes meaningfully to the advancement of the Islamic faith and the overall prosperity of Muslim communities.



[1] Times of Israel. (2018). Trump: Israel would be in big trouble without Saudi Arabia. [online] Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-israel-would-be-in-big-trouble-without-saudi-arabia/> [Accessed 18 February 2024].

[2]. (2023) الشيخ الطريفي: حكم إعانة الكافر على المسلم [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKaR2dleejM> [Accessed 18 February 2024].

[3] Dalloul, M. A. (2023). Saudi Arabia does not care about Palestine or Jerusalem; it cares about Israel. Middle East Monitor. [Online] Available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230921-saudi-arabia-does-not-care-about-palestine-or-jerusalem-it-cares-about-israel/> [Accessed 19 Feb 2024].

[4] Middle East Eye. (2024). War on Gaza: Saudi Arabia still interested in Israel normalization after war ends. [Online] Available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-saudi-arabia-interested-israel-normalisation-after-war-ends> [Accessed 19 Feb 2024].

[5] France 24. (2023). Arab, Muslim leaders slam Israel, but differ on response. [online] Available at: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231111-gaza-in-spotlight-as-arab-muslim-blocs-meet-in-saudi> [Accessed 22 February 2024].

[6] Wrobel, S. (2024) 'Houthi bypass: Quietly, goods forge overland path to Israel via Saudi Arabia, Jordan', The Times of Israel. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/houthi-bypass-quietly-goods-forge-overland-path-to-israel-via-saudi-arabia-jordan/> (Accessed: February 22, 2024).

[7] Al Jazeera. (2021, November 24). Morocco, Israel sign first-ever defence agreement in Rabat. Available online at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/24/morocco-israel-sign-first-ever-defence-agreement-in-rabat>

[8] ديوان الفرزدق

[9] My critique of the scholarly class within certain Arab states is specifically confined to those individuals who are actively collaborating with the state to advance its agenda. It is essential to clarify that my criticism does not extend directly or indirectly to scholars who have sincerely dedicated themselves to serving Islam and the Muslim community. Regrettably, a significant portion of these scholars find themselves incarcerated. Consequently, it is imperative to contextualise my critique within the framework of those scholars who are actively involved in articulating and furthering the agenda of Arab rulers.

[10] Fathimathu Shana (Editor). (2023). Did Sheikh Sudais Ask Muslims To Stay Away From The Issue Of Israel-Palestine? [online] Timeline Daily. Available at: <https://timelinedaily.com/west-asia/did-sheikh-sudais-ask-muslims-to-stay-away-from-the-issue-of-israel-palestine> [Accessed 22 February 2024].

[11] Consider, for instance, the case of Abdullah ibn Bayyah, a Mauritanian scholar based in the UAE. His conspicuously silent endorsement of the Zionist entity has provided a semblance of legitimacy to the disregard for the Palestinian people. Notably, Abdullah ibn Bayyah recently received an Award for Peace from the Zionist entity. see <https://5pillarsuk.com/2022/07/05/abdullah-bin-bayyah-meets-with-zionist-rabbi-in-london/>

About the author:

Abdul Hai is a passionate enthusiast of literature, adept in various roles within the realm of books: he's a devoted reader, skilled bookbinder, meticulous book restorer, and a leisure writer. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Social Science from Birkbeck, University of London, complemented by a certificate of higher education from the same institution. Presently, he's pursuing postgraduate studies at the University of Wolverhampton.



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REFLECTIONS

The Journey That Rewrote a Soul – Reflections on Ḥajj

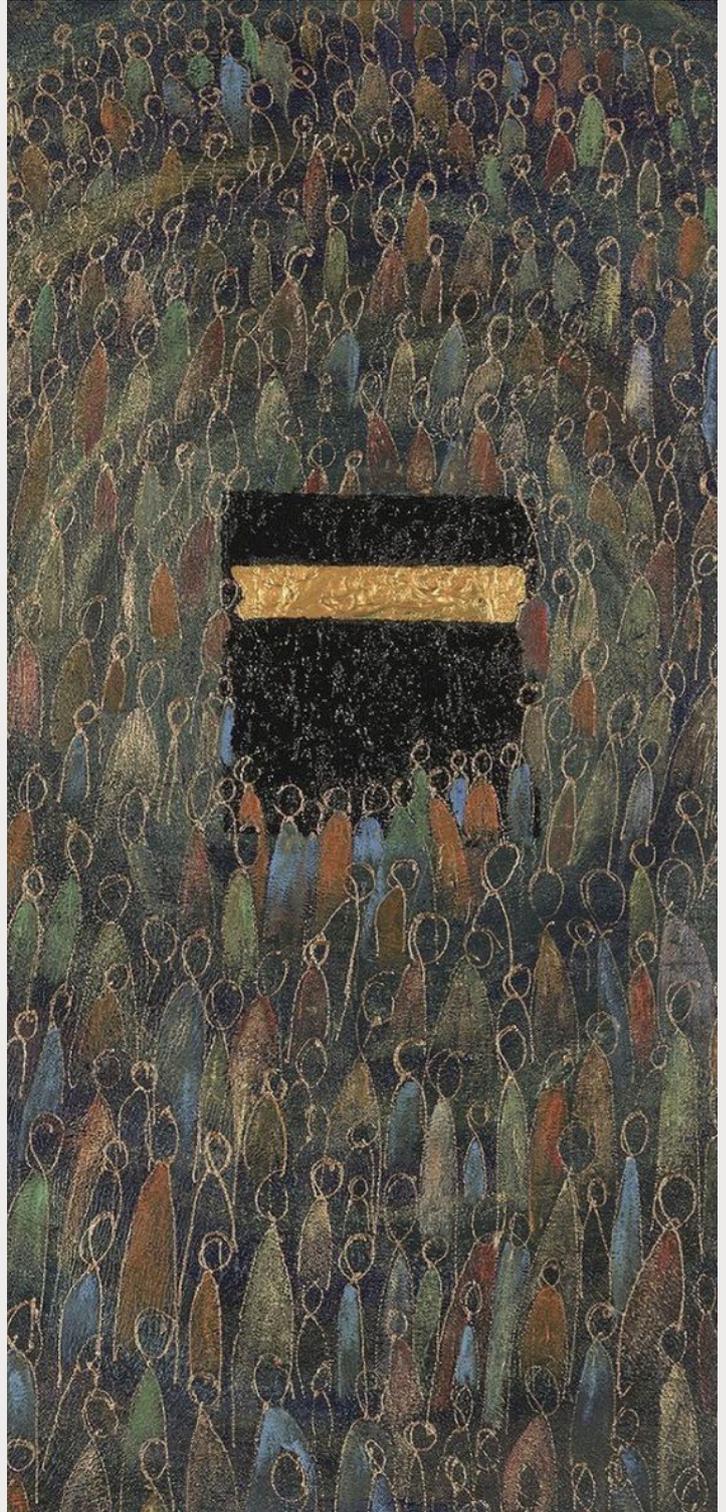
By Abu Talhah

Ḥajj is a pilgrimage that reshapes the very core of one's being. For most, it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, a journey of spiritual awakening that no words can truly capture. Throughout history, people from every corner of the world have travelled to a single sacred city, drawn together by an unshakable devotion.

This journey demands endurance—physically gruelling, financially significant, yet profoundly transformative. Stripped of worldly titles and comforts, each pilgrim walks a deeply personal path, seeking renewal and a closer connection with the Divine (Allāh). In this sacred gathering, wealth and status fade; only faith remains.

From deserts and metropolises, from villages and rainforests, they arrive, their voices merging in a single declaration of devotion. The scorching sands of Arabia greet them, carrying echoes of ancient prayers. Anticipation weighs heavily upon every heart, culminating in an indescribable moment—the first sight of the Ka'bah. Time slows, emotions swell, and the soul feels truly seen—not by the multitude, but by the One who has always known them.

The pilgrimage is an intense test of body and



spirit. The relentless heat, the unceasing movement, the overwhelming crowds—each hardship peels away the layers of ego, leaving only a heart yearning for mercy. Yet, within these struggles, an indescribable peace emerges.

Arafah marks the pinnacle, a vast plain where pilgrims stand beneath an endless open sky, completely severed from worldly distractions. Here, surrender is absolute. Hands are raised, voices tremble, and prayers pour forth—not just for oneself, but for loved ones, for those unable to make the journey, for all of humanity. It is the purest moment of humility, the soul laid bare before its Creator, pleading for forgiveness and grace.

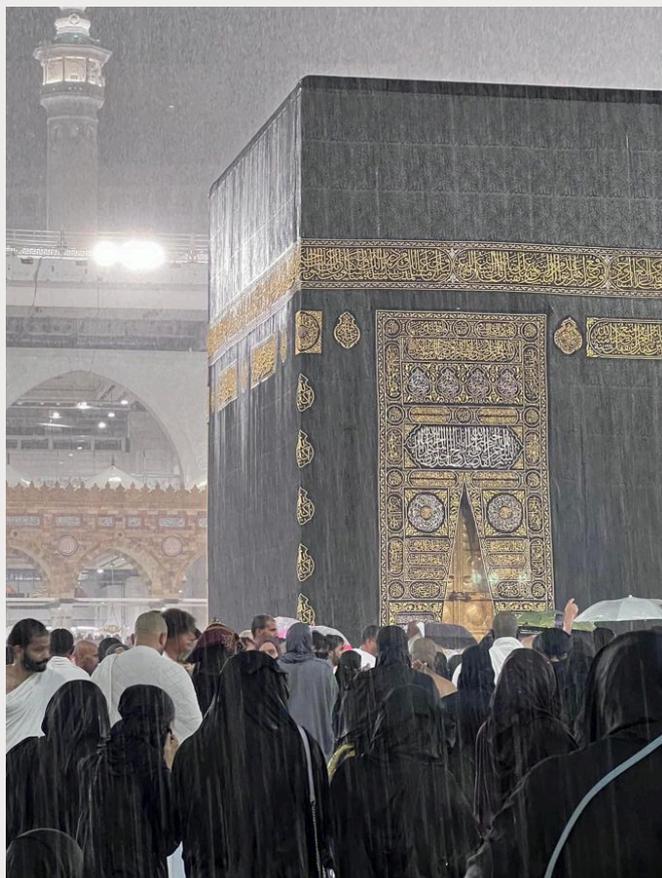
Each rite carries echoes of those who came before—centuries of faithful footsteps imprinted upon this sacred land. We stand and walk in the footsteps of prophets, saints and scholars. The circling of the Ka'bah, the hurried strides between mount Aş-Şafā and Al-Marwah, the symbolic stoning of temptation—each act mirrors life's struggles, a testament to

perseverance, faith, and redemption. The realization dawns: Ḥajj is not merely a set of rituals but a journey of profound self-discovery.

Nowhere is humanity's shared destiny more evident than in this gathering of millions. Rich and poor, strong and weak, ruler and orphan—all are the same. Men draped in two simple white garments, there are no barriers, no distinctions. Only one truth prevails: every soul is in need of mercy.

But Ḥajj does not end with the final farewell. It is not a conclusion, but a new beginning—one that ignites a desire to live with greater purpose. This transformation inspired me to write *The Essential Ḥajj and Umrah Guide*. Designed to be visually stunning and easy to read, it weaves together spirituality, history, geography, prophetic traditions, and the necessary rites of Ḥajj and 'Umrah—preparing the reader for a Ḥajj Mabruṛ, an accepted pilgrimage in the sight of the Almighty.

The echoes of devotion continue across lands and generations: Here I am, O Allah, here I am.



About the Author:

Abu Talhah, a science teacher in East London, UK, writes under this pen name. He is a devoted husband and father of four, often crediting his patient wife as his greatest supporter. His writing journey began with the birth of his first son, Talhah, when he struggled to find quality children's books. This led him to self-publish his own stories to inspire young minds. Later, he expanded into adult Islamic texts, like “*The Essential Ḥajj and 'Umrah Guide*”, reflecting his respect for Islamic traditions. Outside teaching and writing, he enjoys traveling, charity work, and reading.

What Message are We Mediating?

By Dr. Imran

I have had the great honour of sitting on a few occasions with a Shaykh, who generously meets to impart the qualities that should imbue the Caller to Allah. It is usually a surreal experience for a myriad of reasons. Most profoundly impactful is the Shaykh's ability to concisely articulate and crystallise my own intuitively gathered pieces of the sense of "the rightness of things" in Calling, that I had accumulated over the last three decades.

After these sessions, I would and do inevitably find myself in a world of deep introspection and reflection. Words make worlds.

We are incessantly bombarded with streams of information, in a variety of mediums. Marshal McLuhan, in his book "The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects" (1967) put forward a concept that the form of a communication medium influences how a message is perceived and affects society, more so than the actual content it delivers.

"It is a noble Quran. In a well-protected Book. None can grasp it except the purified. A revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. Is it this discourse that you take so lightly?"
The Clear Quran 56:77-81



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The Message is noble. The Medium must reflect and embody that nobility. The status of the message requires it. Are we sufficiently cognizant of ourselves as a Medium of the Call?

Nobility, in the modern world is either hidden or scarce, with the exception of those that are oppressed, their steadfastness is a fount of nobility that perhaps will wash the world of its faithless apathy. The discussion of nobility I will save for another time, God-Willing. But there is no doubt that nobility of character is an imperative for the Caller.

**Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, I have only been sent to perfect righteous character."
Musnad Ahmad 8952**

Of course, the primary reason to endeavour to be of beautiful character and noble conduct is for the love of Allah and because Allah loves it. However, if we envisage ourselves as the medium of the message, then we will understand that we ourselves impact the message.

Are we that glass of clear pure water that allows the brightness of the light to pass through, illuminating and beautifying the world beyond? Or are we distorting the light, diminishing it, robbing it of its life saving clarity? Do we enable the assuaging of the brow furrowed by malevolent misconceptions or do we also add the gnashing of teeth to that embattled visage?

Conveying, clarifying, discussing and even debating all have their place. However, callers must understand that they as a medium of the message affect the message, how it is perceived and its actual impact.

The message is sacred and noble, those that endeavour to carry it must represent the nobility of it, with gravitas and avoidance of any behaviour that can ultimately reflect badly upon the sacred message instead.

In a world riddled with existential aimlessness, purposeless and nihilistic angst, let us not become a reason for those afflicted with these conditions to turn away from the true medicine. Let us be healers.

"O humanity! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the believers."

The Clear Quran 10:57

About the author:

Dr Imran is a practising medical doctor, medical educator, mentor, executive coach and life coach. An avid reader, he loves to write and teach. He has been involved in inviting to Islam for almost three decades. He holds a Bachelor of Pharmacy from King's College, University of London and a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from the same university. He also holds a certification in Islamically Integrated Life Coaching. He is very passionate about helping others to live an impactful life, sharing his learning and reading experiences, especially on topics related to Islam.

TRANSLATIONS & WORLD LITERATURE



A Brief Introduction to Farrukh Ahmad (1918-1974)

By Adnan Mahmud

Farrukh Ahmad—affectionately called by his admirers "the Poet of the Bengali-Muslim Renaissance"—was one of the greatest original poets of Bengali literature. He was born on 10 June 1918 in Majh Ail village of Magura district (Greater Jessore). He was a multi-talented writer who enriched Bengali literature through his lyrical poems, sonnets, songs, dramatic poetry, epics, satirical poems, children's poems, short stories, novels, and essays.

In 1938, when the renowned poet-philosopher Allama Iqbal passed away, Ahmad composed a

dedicated poem entitled 'Smoroni' (Memorial)—showing his deep respect for Iqbal's philosophy and works. This admiration would later manifest in his compilation "Iqbal Nirbachito Kobita" (Selected Poems of Iqbal). A significant turning point in his life came in 1941—following the historic Lahore Resolution—when he underwent a profound ideological transformation. Under the mentorship of the distinguished scholar Professor Abdul Khaleq, he gradually moved away from left-wing ideology and became deeply immersed in Islamic thought-consciousness.

His poetic voice stood firmly against Indian regional chauvinism and its imperialistic tendencies towards smaller neighbours like Bangladesh—particularly regarding water-sharing disputes. This resistance reached its zenith in his renowned poem “Farakka Baad” (Down with Farakka Dam), which criticised India's unilateral control over shared water resources in violation of international law.

Following Bangladesh's independence in 1971, Ahmad faced significant persecution due to his Islamic-ideological leanings.

In 1973, he was unjustly removed from his position at Bangladesh Betar (Radio). It was during this difficult period that the renowned Bengali intellectual Ahmad Sofa came to his defence—penning a powerful critique entitled “What is Farrukh Ahmad's Crime?” The persecution had taken its toll on his health. In his final year—1974—whilst his body and spirit were failing,

he continued his literary pursuits, composing his last poem about the devastating famine of 1974, along with various religious-philosophical poems and translations. The poet returned to his Lord on 19 October 1974—during the month of Ramadan—at merely the age of fifty-six.

Adnan Mahmud grew up in Bangladesh and completed both his undergraduate and master's degrees at the University of Cambridge. His keen interest lies in the Indo-Persian-Islamic aesthetic. Deep admiration for Hindustani poetry drives him to passionately delve into the works of esteemed poets such as Allama Iqbal, Rabindranath Tagore, and Farrukh Ahmed. Moreover, he translates sub-continental languages, primarily Bengali and Urdu, as a dedicated hobbyist.

গলেছে পাহাড়, জুলছে আকাশ, জেগেছে মানুষ
তোমার সাথে,
তোমার পথের যাত্রীরা কভু খামেনি চরম
ব্যর্থতাতে,
তাই সিদ্দিক পেয়েছে বক্ষে অমন সত্য সিন্ধু-দৌল,
তাই উমরের পাতার ডেরার নিখিল জনের ও
কলরোল
তাই ওসমান খুলে গেল দ্বার অতুলন দিল
মণিকোঠার,
তাইত আলীর হাতে চমকায় বাকা বিদ্যুৎ
স্কুলফিকার,
খালেদ, তারেক ঝাণ্ডা ওড়ায় মাশুকের বুকে
প্রেমের টান।

Mountains have melted, the sky is ablaze,
humanity awakens with Thee (ﷺ),
The travellers upon Thy (ﷺ) path never falter in
darkest hour,
And thus did Siddiq (ؓ) receive in his breast the
ocean-waves of truth divine,
And thus in Umar's (ؓ) leaf-tent echoes the
clamours of all mankind,
And thus did Uthman (ؓ) throw wide the door to
chambers of treasure rare,
And thus in Ali's (ؓ) hand flashes forth the
curved lightning of Zulfiqar,
Khalid (ؓ) and Tareq (ؓ) raise their banners,
drawn by love's pull in the beloved's heart.

SPOTLIGHT: LITERARY EVENTS & FESTIVALS



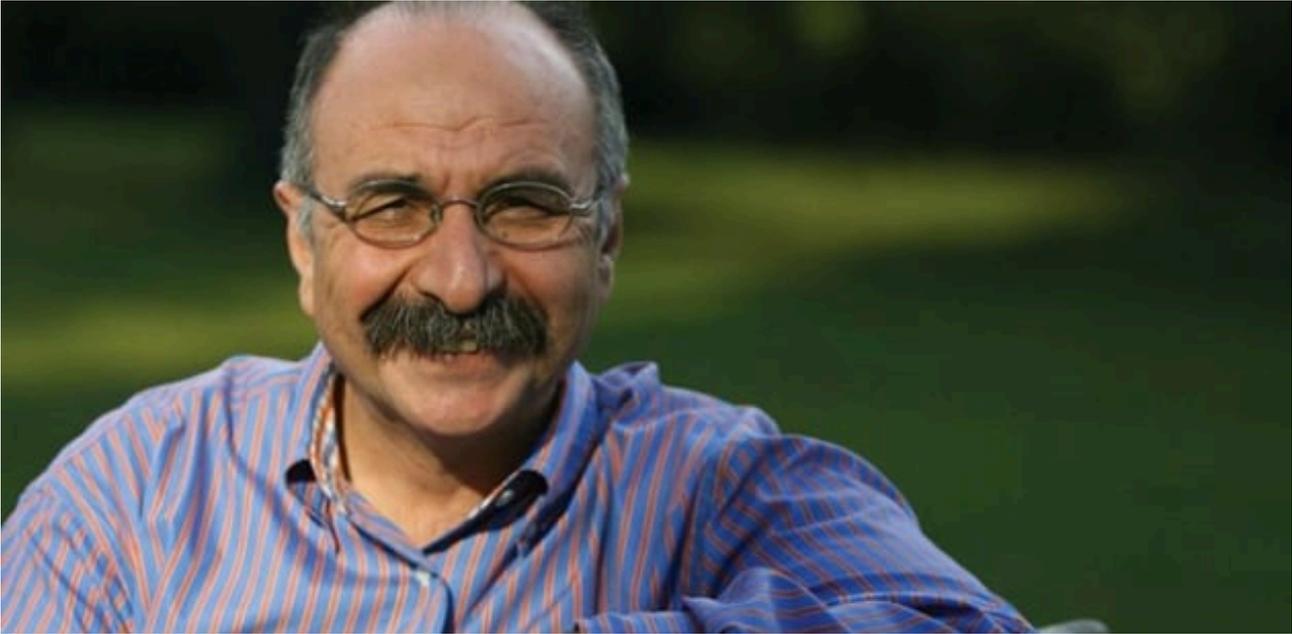
The 42nd International Istanbul Book Fair: A Celebration of Literature and Culture

The 42nd International Istanbul Book Fair is set to take place from December 13 to 21, 2025, at the TÜYAP Fair and Congress Center in Istanbul. Organized by TÜYAP Fairs and Exhibitions Organization Inc. in collaboration with the Turkish Publishers Association, this annual event has been a cornerstone of Turkey's literary scene since 1982. Over the years, it has become one of the most significant book fairs in the region, attracting thousands of visitors, publishers, and literary enthusiasts from around the world.

The Istanbul Book Fair is known for its vast audience, with nearly half a million visitors attending in previous years. The 2025 edition is expected to host over 1,000 publishers and non-governmental organizations from both Turkey and abroad. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore the latest publications, engage in discussions with authors, and participate in various cultural activities that celebrate literature and the arts.



One of the key highlights of the fair is the opportunity to interact with authors. Readers can meet hundreds of writers through book signings and interactive sessions. In 2024, the fair hosted more than 450 cultural events and over 2,500 signing sessions, emphasizing its commitment to fostering direct engagement between authors and their audiences. These events provide an enriching experience for book lovers and aspiring writers alike.



Yalvaç Ural, Turkish poet

Each year, the fair honors a distinguished author who has made significant contributions to literature. In 2024, Yalvaç Ural, a celebrated figure in children's and youth literature, was recognized as the honorary author. The 2025 honorary author will be announced closer to the event date, continuing this esteemed tradition of celebrating literary excellence.

The fair also offers a diverse events program that includes poetry recitals, panel discussions, workshops, and theater performances. These events cater to a wide range of interests, ensuring that both children and adults find activities that resonate with them. With a mix of intellectual discussions and creative showcases, the fair serves as a platform for literary exploration and cultural exchange.

Held at the TÜYAP Fair and Congress Center in Büyükçekmece, Istanbul, the venue is well-equipped to accommodate large-scale events and is easily accessible to both local and international visitors. The modern facility provides an ideal setting for exhibitors and attendees to experience the dynamic world of publishing.

The International Istanbul Book Fair is more than just an exhibition; it is a celebration of literature and culture. Visitors can discover new authors, find rare publications, and participate in enriching cultural experiences. Special discounts and campaigns from various publishing houses add further incentives for book enthusiasts to attend.

For more details and updates, prospective attendees and exhibitors can visit the official fair website. Mark your calendars for December 13 to 21, 2025, and immerse yourself in the vibrant world of books at the International Istanbul Book Fair.

Wan Athilah is an undergraduate English Language and Literature student at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). She is interested in creative writing, literary analysis, and thematic patterns. In her free time, she enjoys reading, researching literary themes, writing, attending workshops, and exploring creative expression.

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