



Stephen Hawking - Time and Islam

Speaking at the Suleman Lockhat Auditorium at the Mariam Bee Sultan Islamic Centre in Overport, Durban, Advocate Moosa told the Islamic Forum sponsored event, "Stephen Hawking - Time and Islam", that people should guard against relying on science to validate faith. He said that in his experience of studying Astronomy and Cosmology for over fifty years, he found that science was forever catching up with what was stated in the Holy Quran. He also said that it was to be regretted that Christians and Muslims alike saw fit to attack Stephen Hawking, the successor to Newton and Einstein, personally because Hawking was an avowed atheist. To Moosa, this kind of ad hominem attack betrayed an insecurity in belief in the Almighty on the basis that it appeared that people of faith were afraid that an understanding of Hawking's contribution to science might shake the foundations of their belief.

Moosa said that Hawking's contribution to the advancement of science lay primarily in Hawking's work whereby he applied the principles of quantum mechanics to Einstein's theory of relativity in order to explain how the Big Bang could be scientifically understood even though the normal laws of physics broke down at that point. His other major contribution was his work relating to Black Holes in the Universe, where it is theorised that matter and time come to an end.

Insofar as Hawking's lack of belief in God is concerned, Moosa said that Hawking had conceded that he could not disprove the existence of God. However, in Hawking's view Hawking did not find it necessary to explain the creation of the Universe some fourteen billion years ago through an agency of an outside force. While Hawking accepted that time can only exist in space and matter, and that real time only came into existence at the Big Bang, when a point of light, measuring one billionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a centimetre, kick started the creation of the Universe, in order to propound his theory of a spontaneous creation of the Universe

Hawking developed the notion of imaginary time which existed before real time.

In Moosa's view, there is no point in people of faith trying to establish the existence of God through some kind of mathematical formula such as one plus one equals two. If it were possible to do so, there would simply be little purpose in the earthly life which is fundamentally a test to determine whether people will believe in God regard being had to all the signs in creation which point to such existence. That aside, however, Moosa said that the Almighty has given to humankind a unique gift of intellect and rationality which is extremely useful for purposes of worldly existence. Humankind must use the intellect and rationality to explore and develop knowledge as much as possible.

Whilst therefore one could not prove or disprove the existence of God through some kind of scientific experiment in a laboratory, one could debate, rationally, whether the logic adopted by Hawking and his fellow Scientists in the Western world, over ninety percent of whom are atheists, is inherently sound. Moosa said that, in his respectful view, this is where the postulations of such Scientists broke down in terms of rationality.

Intrinsic to the thesis that God does not exist, and that God was not the external agent that started the creation of the Universe, was an assumption, without anything scientific to back it up, that nothingness and creation are both Absolutes. Whilst Hawking accepted that time and space are not Absolutes and that the Universe was not imposed on pre-existing time and space but rather that time and space are products of creation, starting from the Big Bang, Hawking assumed that nothingness existed prior to the Universe coming into being. Where is the evidence for this, Moosa asked? In Moosa's view, a proper understanding of Islamic Theology requires an acceptance that God alone is the only reality and that nothingness did not exist alongside God but that nothingness is something that God first created before bringing forth something-ness from that nothingness. In any event, according to



Moosa, it is accepted conventional wisdom that most of the so called visible Universe is made up of dark matter and dark energy which no one has seen but whose existence has been established because of the gravitational effect that they have on visible objects. Similarly, with regard to humankind's attempt to create vacuums in laboratory settings. It is accepted scientific wisdom that virtual particles keep appearing and disappearing from such vacuums.

According to Moosa, when Hawking and other Scientists ask questions such as what it is that God was doing before He created these questions are self-contradictory because it is accepted conventional scientific wisdom that time did not exist before creation. If that is so, then it is illogical to ask any question about God that involves the word "before".

In addition, there is also an assumption amongst such scientists that the notion of creation is an Absolute. Again, Moosa asks where is the proof for this? Moosa says that according to Islamic Theology there is no such Absolute as creation. The whole notion of creation, that is of bringing forth something which did not exist before, is itself a creation of the Almighty. It is therefore fallacious to ask questions such as "who created God?" As the Holy Quran itself says, the Almighty does not beget nor is he begotten!

The People's Champion is no more

Mohamed Bhai Dhai took leave of this world on Friday, 16th march 2018, bringing to an end an era of philanthropy which enhanced the lives of many, added value to communities and made a contribution in the struggle against apartheid.

Bhai Dhai as he was known was born in Asherville, but spent much of his time in the Casbah area of the Durban Business District. He was one of the founding members of the Sporting Club D'Alborton Callies, which was launched by the great Rajendra Chetty to provide a healthy outlet for children who found themselves in the streets and subject to a gang ridden, drug-peddling, booze guzzling culture. Mr Dhai

served on the organizing committee of the Club's national soccer tournament, which was launched in 1967, which attracted sides from Southern Africa.

He graduated to the ranks of professional soccer and was part owner of the Avalon Athletic Football Club and it was here that he faced the harsh realities of apartheid. Police raided the dressing rooms of his team because he had players from the various racial groups. He was ordered to report each Monday morning to the Group Areas Board Police Station in Masonic Grove and lodge the name and addresses of all his players and officials.

He was staggered; after all, the only



crime they committed was to play soccer. Mr Dhai was not having any of it and decided to sign some of the top most flight players from various racial communities to play for his team at Curries Fountain. One of his stars was Kaizer Motaung whom he signed up for R200 way back in 1971. The self same Boy Boy who owns Kaizer Chiefs, which has 20 million, card carrying, subscription paying supporters. His battle in soccer ended when apartheid collapsed.

But Mr Dhai also addressed the issue of poverty. During his lifetime, he must have provided uniforms for countless children, shoes, school bags, blazers and of course food. He saved many families from being evicted from their homes, paid their electricity bills and medical costs. When South African Airways jumbo jet, the Helderberg crashed into the sea near Mauritius, he was among the first to comfort families who had lost relatives in the crash.

All his working life, he served the family owned business, Kingsgate Clothing in

Leopold Street. When the company expanded and a major operation centre was launched in Stamford Hill Road, Mr Bhai assumed a senior managerial position and became the Deputy Chairman and Executive Director. The Kingsgate Clothing Group has developed into one of the leading clothing manufacturers in Durban, as well as one of the largest privately owned manufacturers and wholesalers in South Africa.

He also ensured that the family's long association with the Orient High School which began since its inception. Three generations served the school, his grandfather, Mr A M Moolla, his uncle Mr Ismail Kathrada and then Mr Dhai. At the time of his death he was a senior Board member and played a leading role in the development of the school and the quality education the children received. He was among those who introduced a strong sports ethic at this institution. The Orient Old Boys Club was another area of activism for him, being Community Safety was another concern

and he worked with police officers, activists and volunteers to ensure that the Asherville-Sydenham area was relatively safe. Mr Dhai was very much a news man and befriended many journalists and as such was one of the more informed businessmen in the city who knew what was going on in practically all spheres.

Soft spoken, compassionate, the safety of the people of Durban was a major concern and kept in touch with emergency workers, the police journalists to make sure that any "event" was taken care off quickly and efficiently without further suffering or loss of life. He was also a family man who made sure that the greater family were protected, took charge of family functions ranging from marriages, births and deaths.

When he was admitted to hospital two weeks ago, those who knew him believed that he would recuperate quickly. Instead, he suffered a major heart attack and died aged 70. He is survived by his wife Khatija, daughters Rashida, Fatima, son Ahmed, 8 grandchildren and 1 great grand child.

Shahnaaz Paruk - Small Change - Big Difference

Muslims are a generous people, but we must do a little more of everything righteous, so said Shahnaaz Paruk who heads Penny Appeal South Africa - a UK based charity who recently established an office in SA.

She is the latest high profile civil society activist to feature on Radio Al-Ansar's hard hitting talk show, 90 Minutes. Ms Paruk said that life is not just about making money. "If we unite there is much we can do. We should do a little more, love a little more, pray a little more, care a little more, give and do a little more of everything. It will make a big difference," she said.

Penny Appeal is not going on massive fund raising campaigns, rather people are asked to donate their small change and this money is used on sustainable projects. Penny Appeal's philosophy is that of affordable charity, which includes all people being able to contribute toward changing the lives of millions.

"We provide food, water, sanitation, health care, and provide for children, especially orphans. We equip them for life after school and to do this they need the best teachers who influence them with values and life skills. We run projects with the hope of creating employment which help to build homes in which families live in a positive environment," she added.

Penny Appeal has a number of projects which focus on care of the elderly including provision of food, shelter, clothing, and dealing with health issues like providing access to eyesight saving cataract operations. "Its very special to work with the elderly. At one stage they were us (younger generation) and they built a society in which we were born. They nurtured entire villages. We need to protect and care for the elderly. Another area of our work is to tackle the issue of violence against women. It is there amongst all people, all races, all religions. Yet we are silent. Their suffering does not come out in the open. It takes a very strong woman to stand up and speak out. Advocates of change is not a path we can walk alone."

Presently Penny Appeal are looking to recruitment volunteers for one of Penny Appeal's most successful global

project called "TeamOrange." The idea is to bring like minded people together to serve communities throughout the length and breadth of the country. "They will be engaged in a host of projects in which Penny Appeal is involved and I believe that once we get the volunteers, we will be able to develop a powerful human resource to serve the nation."



Changing the subject and addressing the issue of water shortage, not only in the present but also in the future, Ms Paruk said that there was an urgent need to take a long hard look at what the situation would be like in two, maybe five years and it's the long terms effect. "We in the Southern African Development Community (SADAC) have been adversely affected by the El-Nino effect, and long term water solutions have to be found. What is currently happening in Cape Town is a disaster and it could get worse for other regions and the entire continent."

Shahnaaz Paruk was born in Durban to a family in the clothing manufacturing industry. She received her early education

at the Ridge Park College before going onto the Lockhat Islamia School where she matriculated. She went to university to study media and communications before joining the family business in the Marketing and Human Resources Department. Next came the Gordon Institute of Business Science.

Ms Paruk decided that she wanted to be of service to the community and joined SANZAF where she worked for a few years before moving to Islamic Relief South Africa. Amongst the projects she worked on at Sanzaf was the organisation's development of skills for individuals so that they could hold down sustainable jobs, and at Islamic Relief she was responsible for multiple roles during her tenure at the organisation.

When Penny Appeal decided to come into South Africa, she was head hunted to lead their operations. After much thought, she decided that it presented a challenge, which would keep her stimulated. Mr Adeem Yunus, founder of Penny Appeal from the United Kingdom ran an online matrimonial service online before launching Penny Appeal. His philosophy: "The Penny Appeal way of doing charity is simple - we take small change and make a BIG difference with it! Our unique approach makes charitable giving affordable and rewardable, and allows us to transform lives in ways that cost us just a few pennies each day. Your donations provide aid to poor and needy people"

It was through his interest in helping the less fortunate that he found that there were entire communities in dire need of basic essentials. He started collecting food, medicine, clothes and asked a few friends to help with their distribution. Before long, he had to set up a modern-day NGO infrastructure to launch Penny Appeal which has now become a world wide movement making great changes for people, especially in impoverished and needy countries.

For Ms Paruk a new journey has begun and already she is caught in a whirlpool of activities which has already brought noticeable changes for the better for so many communities. **Farook Khan - 90 Minutes - Al Ansar Radio 23 March 2018**

Day Zero has arrived - Relief on way

The Breede Valley, Drakenstein and surrounding areas have reached Day Zero, according to Gift of the Givers' Dr Imtiaz Sooliman. He said that there is NO drinking water in these areas and that taps have run dry. Western Cape Provincial Disaster Management contacted Gift of the Givers over the weekend requesting urgent support for these regions. Four trucks left Bramley this morning carrying 120 tons of water. Mayor Coonrad Poole and possibly Mayor Antoinette Steyn or the Speaker of the Parliament was on hand to met the trucks on arrival.

"Farmers, managers, labourers and their families are urgently in need of drinking water. The rivers are dry and the dams are virtually empty. Gift of the Givers have received tremendous support from the people of South Africa for drought

intervention. One agency has offered us 20 million litres of water, delivery of which commences this week," said Dr Sooliman.

In the meantime truck loads of water by road and container loads by ship have already been sent to Cape Town. Water is being stored in various government facilities. He said distribution has been taking place to many institutions desperately requesting water. In essence when supply can't meet demand then "we are at Day Zero. At many schools the taps have run dry already, there is no water for toilets nor for flushing. Requests for assistance is pouring in from multiple institutions throughout the Western Cape region and we are delivering as fast as we can."

Earlier this last week, Gift of the Givers began the process of loading 42 containers



of bottled water from its Logistics Centre at Bramley, and sent to Durban harbor bound for Cape Town. Gift of the Givers has been very active drilling boreholes in multiple areas to "save" as many communities as possible. Details Increased funding for boreholes will assist to increase the intervention exponentially.

Sadathullah Khan - Living with Purpose

The Islamic Forum hosted internationally renowned motivational speaker Sadathullah Khan at the Suleman Lockhat Auditorium on Friday 18th March 2018 where he presented his lecture on "Living with Purpose - a path of self discovery" He is in South Africa on a lecture tour organised and will be delivering a series of two days intensive workshops on "Discover Yourself". Sadatullah Khan is an energetic man from Bangalore, a man on a mission to change the world one heart

at a time. If you happen to miss out on his lecture series you may watch his many talks on Youtube where he has a large following.

Peace For You International Foundation is a non-profit, educational and awareness Organization engaged in empowering people through self-introspection and was founded by Khan in 2002. For more information check out their website - it may change your life.



Mosques Changing the British Landscape

The Islamic Forum in association with the Association of Muslim Built Environment Professionals (AMBEP) will be hosting Architect and author Shahed Saleem on the overview of Muslim Architecture in Britain.

Surprisingly the history in South Africa of Muslim Architecture is not very much different. In Britain Shahed will discuss the key stages of the history from the 19th Century to the present alongside the social history and growth of Muslims in Britain with particular reference to their mosque architecture. He has researched how this new building type has impacted on the urban landscape, socially, culturally and architecturally.

The British Mosque describes the evolution of Britain's Muslim communities through the buildings they have built. The architectural story charts a course from the earliest mosques formed through the conversion of houses, to other large scale conversions through to purpose built mosques and with these the emergence of an Islamic architectural expression in Britain. The future of Islamic architecture in Britain is also considered, and how this will be affected by the growing cultural and social diversification of Britain's Muslim communities.

Shahed Saleem is a practicing architect, teaches architecture at the University of Westminster, and is a Senior Research Fellow at the Bartlett School of Architecture. His particular research and practice interests



are in the architecture of migrant and post-migrant communities, and in particular their relationship to notions of heritage, belonging and nationhood. Saleem has worked with faith communities across the UK in designing and delivering places of worship. His design work has been nominated for the V&A Jameel Prize 2013 and the Aga Khan



Award for Architecture 2016.

The lecture will be held at the Suleman Lockhat Auditorium. Mariam Bee Sultan Islamic Centre, 222 Kenilworth Road on Thursday 11th April. 8pm and will be of interest to Architects but also to those interested in Muslim History and the development of their communities through the built form especially as reflected in their religious architecture.

