

THE GOLDEN RULE: Each religion is different, but all teach people to be good. They teach the "Golden Rule": that we should treat others the way we'd like to be treated. Here's the Muslim version of the Golden Rule...

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

– Sayings of Prophet Mohammed.

Spreading friendship

A Muslim group encourages people to connect with one another across boundaries.

In 2004 and 2006, students from Singapore and New York exchanged visits to learn about each others' cultures. The American students visiting Singapore got the chance to attend a Malay wedding and some of them even conducted a baseball workshop for children from a home.

In New York, the Singaporean students visited a Buddhist lodge and Christian churches, and helped out at a community kitchen feeding the needy. They also found out what young people in New York felt about such events as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Mohammad Hosni Abdul Malik, one of the Singaporean participants, says he is still in contact with some of his new American friends through the internet.

This international programme, called Touch of Harmony, was started by Jamiyah, a Muslim group in Singapore. Islam, like other faiths, tells its followers to build peace in the world and Jamiyah is one of the groups that takes this responsibility seriously.

Jamiyah helped set up the first Inter-Religious Organisation in 1949. It arranged



An American student visiting kids at a Jamiyah centre in Singapore as part of an exchange programme.

for religious leaders of Singapore to meet and discuss their common beliefs. Since then, Jamiyah has been active in getting religious groups from all over the world to meet and learn about them, including a Taoist group from the Mianshan Mountain Temple in Shianxi province, China.

The Muslim holy book, the Qu'ran, says, "We created you from a single pair of a male and a female into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other, not that ye may despise each other." This means that Muslims are encouraged to take an interest in people who are different, and appreciate the rich diversity of humanity.

Muslims themselves are extremely diverse. Muslim communities can be found from China

to India to Canada and Africa, and all have their own unique cultures. In Singapore, although many Muslims are Malay, there are also Indian Muslims, Arab Muslims, Chinese Muslims, Iranian Muslims, and many more.

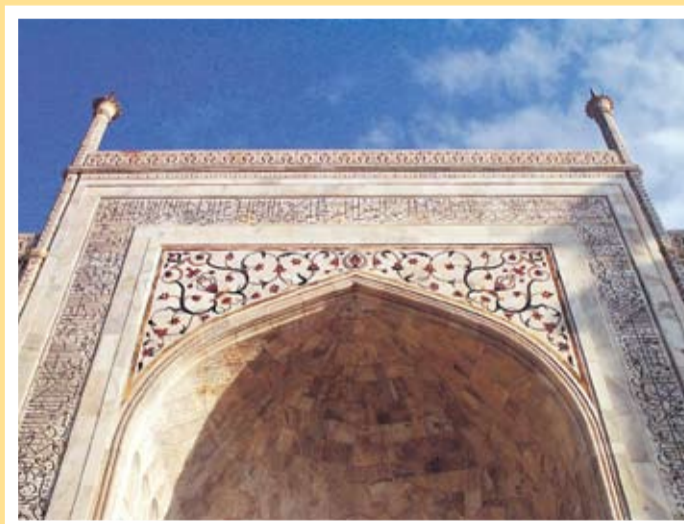
When immigrants from different parts of the world came to Singapore, they first looked for people like themselves to network with, like from the same village or language group. But, then, they would go to the mosque and meet Muslims from different places. This widened their circle of contacts. The same happened with people of other religions. Churches and temples helped immigrants settle and get rooted in their new home, Singapore.

More about Muslims

ONE GOD: Muslims believe in one God, Allah. The name "Allah" is the Arabic word for God.

THE PROPHET: Muslims believe that God's final messenger was Muhammed, who lived in Arabia around 1,400 years ago. They don't think he created the religion, since God has always existed, but they believe the Prophet Muhammed helped to show people the correct way. God's message, revealed to Muhammed, is recorded in the verses of the Qu'ran, which is the holy book of the Muslims. Muslims respect Moses (who taught and led the Jewish people) and Jesus (who is the centre of the Christian faith) as earlier prophets of God.

FIVE PILLARS: Islamic faith is centred around five major rules, including a rule to give



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charitable donations to the needy, and a rule to pray five times a day.

ART: Islamic art is widely admired, which is interesting because most of it doesn't involve pictures. Some Muslims felt that it was wrong to try to copy God's work by painting living things like humans and animals realistically. But, just like Christians and Buddhists, Muslims love beauty and want to decorate buildings they value, like mosques and palaces. So, Muslim artists learned to create intricate and lovely patterns out of mosaic to decorate their buildings. Some of these patterns required a very advanced understanding of geometry. Many centuries on, these buildings – including the Taj Mahal (left), one of the New 7 Wonders of the World – still wow visitors from all over.

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