

OUR VOICES

The Latest News and Updates from the Students of Darul Uloom Leicester



THE YEAR SO FAR

by Hasan Urfan Malik, Year 7

On my first day of Darul Uloom Leicester I was happy and excited to begin my journey on a great path. My first night was ok to begin with but later on in the night I got more and more homesick. It took me a month to settle in properly, after which I got used to everything here, for example: the food, timings and fellow students. The students and teachers helped me settle in a lot better. I also used the environment around me to forget about home. For example, reading the Qur'an and hadith books or playing games.

When you wake up you just know that the day will be good. When you wake up and realise that you just woke up in a place of knowledge (Darul Uloom) we should be grateful that we are alive to see the next day.

Alhamdulillah, I have settled in properly. My madrasah and school is going well and I am studying hard to achieve my goals. My main goal, what I came here for, is to become a hāfiz of the Qur'an. Alhamdulillah Allāh (SWT) chose me to come to this Darul Uloom and I will strive to achieve my goal and become a guardian of His words.

OTHER STORIES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Life during a
National Lockdown

What is Aqidah?

Curriculum Updates

Islam & Racism

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ
" خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ "

The Prophet ﷺ said,
"The best among you (Muslims) are those
who learn the Qur'an and teach it."

[Sahih al-Bukhāri 5027]



LIFE DURING A NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

a Q&A with Inayat Kabir and Sohail Mehta, Year 11

What was your reaction when you first found out that a lockdown was going to take place?

Well, first of all, I couldn't believe it. The news of a lockdown taking place completely baffled me. The thought of staying at home for a good four to five months was a bittersweet one. The idea of being at home with my family was amazing, but the idea of being away from my teachers and friends was quite upsetting. I knew I would miss them, hence I tried to keep in contact with them as much as possible.

How did you keep in contact with friends, families and teachers?

I would communicate and stay in contact with my loved ones in different ways. With my friends, I would be talking to them mostly all day! We would communicate via WhatsApp Messenger and the PlayStation party function. I preferred the PlayStation party function, as you could hear your friends' voices. With my family, we would arrange Zoom meeting calls every now and then to stay in contact. With my teachers, I would use the Google classroom chat function to stay in touch. That was also nice as I got to know how the teachers lockdown was going as well.

What would you do differently if you had another lockdown?

I would change a lot of things to be completely honest! First of all, I would increase the amount of time I spent studying. As a year 11 student, this lockdown affected us very much, as we covered less GCSE content. This meant that we now have to speed up, which will give us less time to do revision. Secondly, I would participate in more exercise activities. Exercise was very important in those circumstances as you would be at home all day. It would give you some fresh air as well as make sure that you didn't put on some weight! All in all, lockdown was a nice experience, however I would not like to experience another one.

How much did you play in the lockdown?

In the lockdown I did play lots of PlayStation and football and so on. But I did not let it get in the way of my studies, as I knew how easily all the free time could have gone to waste. So considering that, I had set times to play so I could focus on all my tasks at hand.

How much did you study in the lockdown?

As I said before I did the right task at the right time. I had a timetable set to control how much studying I do and how much playing. I usually studied two-and-a-half hours outside of school and this was enough to help me in my studies .



WHAT IS AQIDAH?

by Sufyan Salloo, 3rd Year Alim Class

Aqīdah is a science that discusses all matters that are compulsory to believe in. By studying this science, our faith is fortified and we are protected from falling into doubt and confusion regarding our creed. Learning the science of aqīdah these days is very important because of the threat posed by the rise of those who wish to discredit Islam.

The book on aqīdah that is studied in the third and fourth years of the 'Ālimiyyah course at Darul Uloom Leicester is Al-'Aqīda al-Tahāwiyya. Al-'Aqīda al-Tahāwiyya is a seminal work written by Imām Abū Ja'far Tahāwi, a renowned Egyptian scholar from the third century AH, who has also authored the famous book of hadīth, Sharh Ma'āni al-Āthār, (also known as Tahāwi Sharif) which is studied in the fifth year.

The main areas of discussion in the science of aqeedah are the following:

- Our belief regarding the attributes of Allah's essence and his qualities
- His angels
- His books
- His prophets
- The day of judgment
- The life after death
- The differences between the sects of Islam

In our lessons we are encouraged to memorise the one hundred and five points that Imām Tahāwi has written (pertaining to the points above) by our respected teacher. Our respected teacher explains the whole lesson with evidence from the Qur'ān and hadīth as well as incorporating logical proofs and any answers to countering arguments that could be proposed.

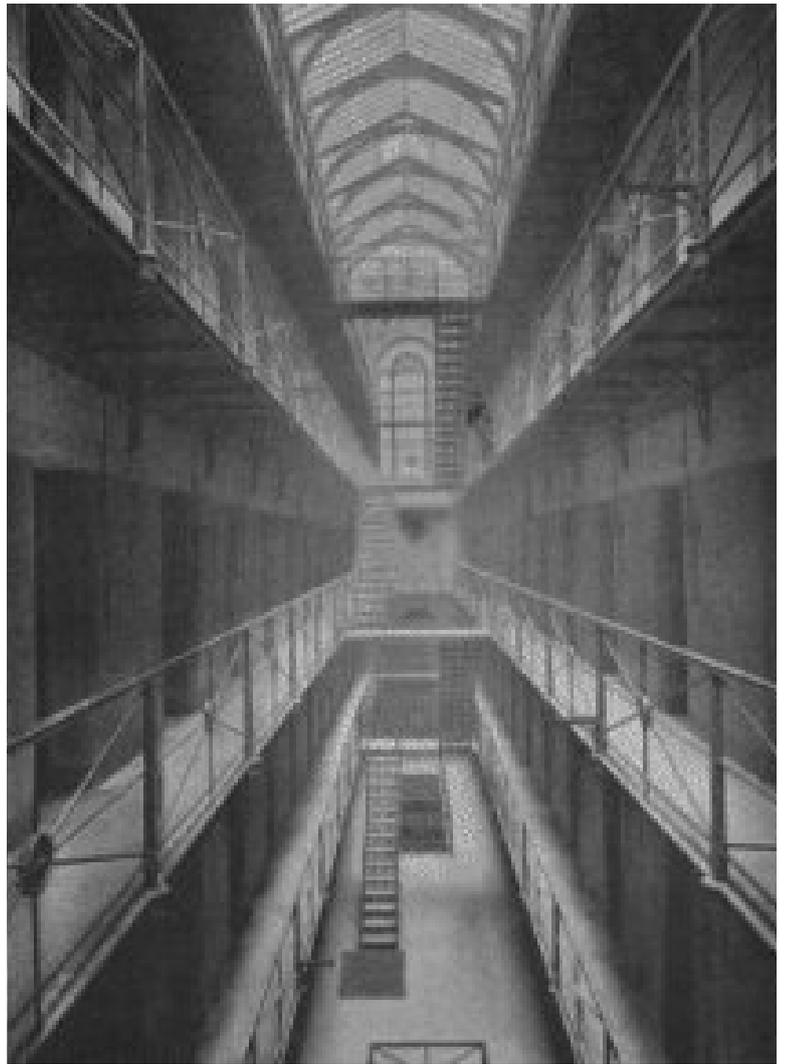
UPDATES ON THE CURRICULUM

HISTORY

by Abdullah Natha, Year 10

This term we have been learning about how crime and Punishment has changed from the 1000s to 1900s. This is the topic of one of the four books we have been covering for our GCSEs. Punishment for crimes back in 1000 was slow and unreliable. Police were non-existent and criminals were expected to be caught and turned in by citizens. From these, derived groups aiming to abolish crime, which then evolved into the first organised policing units.

This organisation advanced into creating prisons to hold offenders and forming larger police units specialising in a wider area of abilities. Police even trained to utilise dogs by training them to sniff intoxicants and to chase offenders. Civilians were employed by police to supervise their villages and to report any suspicious activity.



We finally learnt about how technology was brought along to greatly decrease crime rates and make it nearly impossible for any offender to escape punishment. Crime punishment at present is greatly improved and risk of crime in any area in the UK has been greatly reduced.



SCIENCE

by Samiul Hasan, Year 9

This year we have started the new curriculum for GCSE Science. In Biology we started the curriculum by learning about "The Key Concepts of Biology", such as cells and enzymes. My favourite lesson during biology was about cells. I have enjoyed learning about cells and their properties. Cells are a vital part of biology, and I have enjoyed going into the topic in great depth as well as using tools such as microscopes. This term has been amazing! Everyone loved learning and we have been taught science in its simplest form.



This term's Chemistry lessons were focused on "States of Matter" and "Methods of Separating and Purifying Substances". I really enjoyed the lesson that went into the states of matter and their properties. I enjoyed the lesson because it was the basis of all chemistry. By using different chemicals, our awareness of the important solids, liquids and gases in chemistry increased. In our lessons we conducted great experiments, which increased our love for science. Experimenting with chemicals is a dream for a science student.

This year so far in Physics we have learnt about "Motion". I found the lesson on distance and speed to be the most interesting. We studied this topic using many different ways, such as videos, charts, books and the internet. This lesson also taught us how maths can be applied to science, showing the importance of science overall.

This year so far has been very good. We have all enjoyed science so far and learnt about the expected GCSE standards for this subject. Learning is not just about copying work down in books, learning is about understanding what we are studying through different methods available to us such as videos, books, our teacher, computers and different experimental tools. That's exactly what we have done so far this year! We have used all the methods available to us to get the best education possible!



COMPUTER SCIENCE

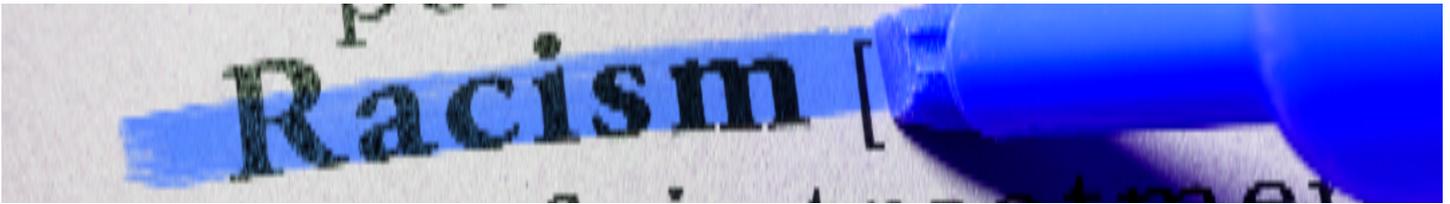
by Abdus Samad Mahommad, Year 8

Incorrect electronic disposal is taking a toll on our planet. It is poisoning the lands and water. It is a growing problem as people are getting hungrier for the latest technology; so when the slightest issue occurs people dispose of their electronics and flock to shops to buy a new one.

Disposing phones in landfills can leak toxic chemicals into the land, damaging wildlife and making nearby water sources hazardous, this can lead to the loss of many lives.

Many devices contain materials that are very valuable, it is estimated that over £35 billion worth of materials can be found in landfills. Due to the value of these metals many people search landfills to earn money. Poor children are also involved in the search and are exposed to deadly fumes and suffer many injuries.

To stop this, many companies were set up to recycle discarded technology responsibly. Some companies have also introduced new techniques, for example Samsung and Apple have introduced a trade in service, where you give your old device in exchange for a discount on a new one. If we continue to discard our devices in the right way, hopefully we can eradicate this threat to our planet.



ISLAM & RACISM

by Saiyed Mahmud, 7th Year Alim Class

It is simply breathtaking that in the 21st century we continue to find ourselves engulfed by the tides of racism, resulting in continued injustice – particularly towards black communities in America and other western nations. The fight against oppression and denial of basic human rights of BAME groups has been an ongoing struggle for centuries. However Islam has addressed this issue over 1,400 years ago, categorically forbidding every form of racism, nationalism and tribalism.

Islam is much more than just a religion or faith; its compass directs us to a complete way of life. The guidance we receive through the teachings of Islam is comprehensive and includes not just the spiritual aspects of life, but also the social, political, economic as well as moral aspects too. By saying that it is a complete way of life, we mean that it serves for all possible fields of human existence. Our beloved messenger Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as a mercy to all mankind, seeking to remove all forms of oppression- however and whenever they manifested. By removing the highest pillar of oppression, that of the worship of idols, false gods and the ego, and only condoning the worship of Allah alone, Islam has removed all avenues for superiority based on race, gender and other superficial factors.

Racism defined:

Racism is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another; that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. It is the idea that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another. Such racist attitudes are abhorred and condemned in Islam. Differentiation and rank between individuals in Islam is not based on race, but rather it is measured by the piety within the hearts of the believers. Allah says in the Qur'an:

'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you nations and tribes so that you may recognise one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.' (49:13)

All races that are found in the world today are, in fact, the branches of one initial race that started with one mother and one father. In this process of creation there is no basis whatsoever for the divisions and distinctions simply based on false notions. The origin of everyone is one, and we were all created by the same Creator.

Unity through Diversity:

The appreciation of the variety of Allah's creation and rejection of racism is a sentiment mentioned in the Qur'an:

'And of His signs is the creation of the heaven and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. There truly are signs in this for those who know.' (30:22)

Since its inception in the sandy deserts of Arabia over 14 centuries ago, Islam has now spread far and wide to all four corners of the globe. Currently ranked as the second largest religion after Christianity, Islam boasts approximately 1.8 billion followers- which makes up about 24.1% of the entire world population! Our Ummah consists of Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds and this is evident by the astounding diversity we find within our own Muslim communities and societies. Diversity is one of the basic characteristics of any human society and is an asset indispensable to the progress of humanity as a whole. Islam advocates the utilisation of cultural dialogue and commonalities for maintaining peaceful co-existence. Peaceful co-existence is favoured by knowledge, learned from other cultures and supported by multi-culturalism.

Early Islam also attracted non-Arabs, outsiders with little standing in traditional Arab society. These included Salman (R.A) the Persian, who traveled to the Arabian Peninsula seeking religious truth, Suhayb (R.A) the Roman, a trader, and an enslaved Ethiopian named Bilal (R.A). All three personalities would rise to prominence in Islam during Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) lifetime.

Bilal's (R.A) much-improved fortunes, in particular, illustrate how the egalitarianism preached by Islam transformed Arab society. An enslaved servant of a Makkan aristocrat named Umayya, Bilal (R.A) was persecuted by his owner for embracing Islam. Umayya would place a rock on Bilal's chest, trying to choke the air out of his body in an effort to force Bilal (R.A) to abandon Islam. Moved by Bilal's (R.A) suffering, it was Abu Bakr (R.A) - the close companion of the Messenger (PBUH) - who eventually set him free. Bilal (R.A) would go on to create a close bond with the Prophet (PBUH) and become exceptionally close to him. In 622 AH, the Prophet (PBUH) appointed him as the first person to give the public call to prayer in recognition of his powerful, pleasing voice and personal piety. Bilal (R.A) would later marry an Arab woman from a respectable tribe – unthinkable for an enslaved African in the pre-Islamic period. Bilal's (R.A) incredible journey and rise to such an honourable position was due to the even playing field set out by Islam; all members of the Muslim society were granted equal opportunity and rank was only measured by righteousness, not skin colour, financial status or otherwise.



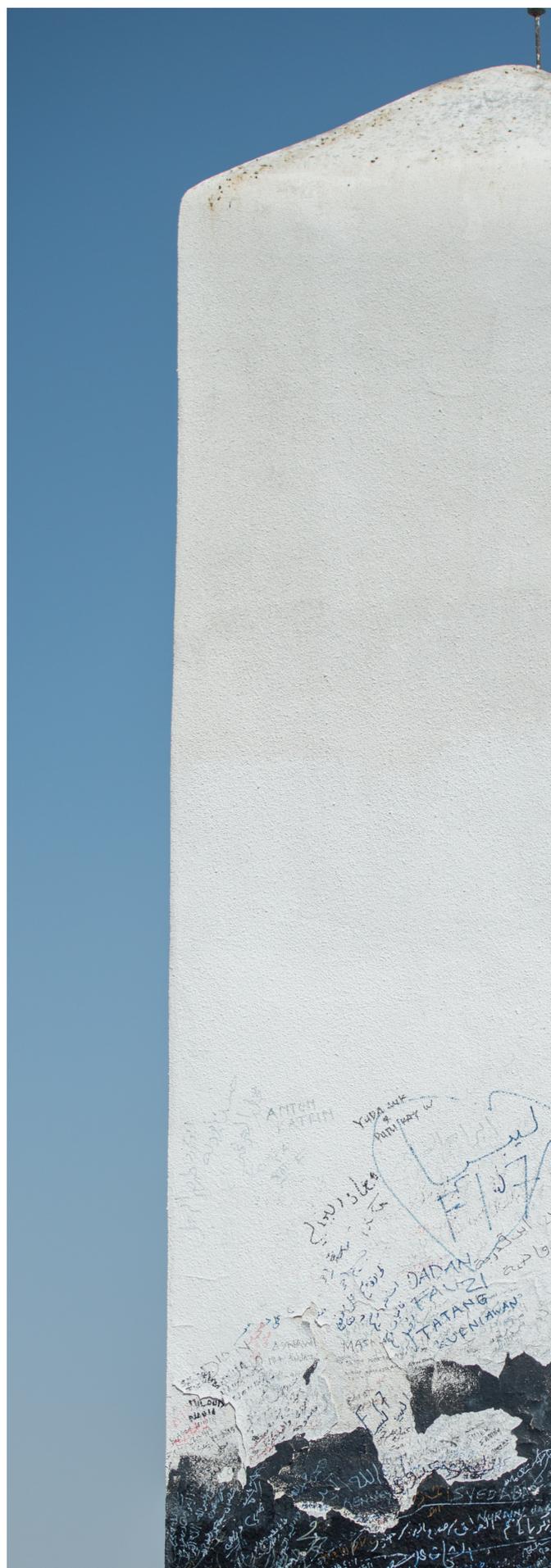
Gems of a crystal clear message:

During the Prophet's (PBUH) last sermon, distinctions based upon a person's colour were cast aside. Rather our united heritage in being from the Prophet Adam (AS) was emphasised:

'O people, your Lord is One, and your father is one: all of you are from Adam, and Adam was from dust. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, and no black person to a white person, nor a white person to a black person except by Taqwa (piety)'.

[Tirmidhi]

The message of the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) is direct and transparent; there is no room for racism in Islam, nor any form of discrimination based on skin colour, ethnicity or lineage. Islam, with its universal concept of brotherhood, rejects all artificial and man-made marks of distinction. As previously mentioned, no claim to superiority over others can be filed on these bases. Supremacy between individuals can only be based on piety and righteousness, and that can only truly be judged by Allah himself.



How can we stand up to racism?

Racism does exist. It's very unfortunate that we often find racism prevalent in attitudes, cultures, typical stereotypes and beliefs simply due to implicit bias. The first step to tackling racism is acknowledging that there is indeed a racial crisis existent. Having accepted this, we must then express our commitment to condemning and suppressing all forms of racial injustice. This can be achieved by initiating productive and respectful discussions, aiming to raise awareness to create a better understanding and overview on issues of racial discrimination. We should also seek to create channels whereby people feel safe speaking up about racial issues they face or have faced previously, offering them support however we can, for instance through advice or referral to the appropriate authorities.

Next we must embed an anti-racist approach to our values and actions; as the prominent saying goes: 'Actions speak louder than words'. Building stronger, healthier and unified societies and communities is dependent on having a solid set of core values that are integrated into every policy, decision and process. These core values can be found within our detailed teachings of Islam through the Qur'an and instructions of our beloved Messenger PBUH. It's critical that there are actions to underpin our words or else they'll remain empty promises.

In an authentic narration, the final Messenger of Allah advises us to practically and actively combat oppression within our means:

'Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.' (Muslim)

We can all make a difference if we stand together as one Ummah, preventing racial injustice from dividing us. We must challenge all microaggressions we face or see others experiencing in our everyday lives in the fight against racism. The time is now to step up, stand up and speak out in support of the oppressed and act in unison to help lift the barriers and burden of fighting everyday racism for a better tomorrow.

