

Impact on the Singapore Muslim Community and the Society

The 10 desired attributes aim to strengthen the Singapore Muslim community and contribute to the well being of the nation.

The attributes reflect a keen appreciation of the need to contextualise one's religious life according to ever-changing circumstances. These attributes recognise the desire of Singaporean Muslims to continue to be open-minded, pluralistic, progressive, and be balanced and active participants in the modern world.

They also support efforts at building good citizenship, and develop Singaporean Muslims to be contributing members of a multi-religious society and secular state.

As a religion for all times, Islam is in harmony with modernity.

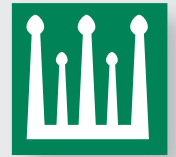
At home, Singapore Muslims value and enjoy their interaction with fellow citizens of all other races that make up the Singapore family. Our mosques collaborate with community development councils, schools, grassroots and voluntary welfare organisations to organise activities that all parties could benefit from.

Evolving the SMI is an ongoing process. It builds on our own experiences and efforts over the years. Lessons are also drawn from the rich experiences of other minority Muslim communities that we have visited such as those in the United Kingdom and Spain as well as Muslim majority communities such as those in Turkey and Egypt.

Similarly, the Distinguished Visitors Programme, incorporating the **MUIS LECTURE**, is an exceptional opportunity to engage the leading minds and spiritual leaders of the Muslim world.

Such engagements will provide great lessons to strengthen the content and process of forging the SMI.

In turn, we hope to offer our experience for the benefit of many other Muslim communities around the world.



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura
Islamic Religious Council of Singapore

THE SINGAPORE MUSLIM IDENTITY

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Muslims around the world live by the same key tenets of Islam. These include its fundamental pillars and the obligatory rituals, basic articles of faith as well as universal principles such as peace, compassion and to be a blessing to all creations.

Beyond these key principles, the religion allows for diversity in its practices depending on the unique context and circumstances as well as the environment that we live in.

No two Muslim communities are entirely alike. Context – be it cultural, historical, philosophical or social – accounts for the variations. However, these variations in no way imply the superiority of one Muslim community over another. The dynamism of Islamic teachings allows Muslims to live in perfect harmony within a unique setting.

Recognising the Context and the Use of Reason

Contextualisation in religion requires the application of sound reasoning. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) showed Muslims the wisdom of being open to learn and adopt from different cultures, peoples and places. This would enhance our abilities to effectively manage our daily life.

Being a Muslim means adhering to a set of core principles and values. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the customs, practices and traditions of local communities that do not contradict with Islamic teachings need to be discarded.

Islamic history has witnessed a considerable absorption and adaptation of local customs, conditions and cultures in the religious life of Muslims in various parts of the world. The Muslim communities had contextualised and adapted their religious life to fit the characteristics of the local communities while upholding Islamic principles.

Over the centuries, the practice of Islam continued to be relevant through ijtihad (exhaustive reasoning). Muslims today need to continue to build on this tradition and fundamental heritage.

Forging Our Own Identity

Why then is forging the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI) important?

The Singapore Muslim community needs to decide its own priorities and how it wants to contribute to Singapore's multi-religious society, secular state in a highly globalised world. It must decide what is relevant and what it stands for.

Thus, it cannot merely adopt the practices and models of religious life of other Muslim communities. Hence, the need to forge our own Muslim identity.

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) realises the importance for Singaporean Muslims to be faithful, practicing and good Muslims while at the same time being able to adapt to Singapore's open social context.

To do this, the 10 Desired Attributes of the Singapore Muslim Community of Excellence, were conceptualised to steer us in the right direction and evolve our own identity.

The ideal Singaporean Muslim is one who:

1. Holds strongly to Islamic principles while adapting to changing context
2. Is morally and spiritually strong to be on top of challenges of modern society
3. Is progressive, practices Islam beyond forms/rituals and rides the modernisation wave
4. Appreciates Islamic civilisation and history, and has a good understanding of contemporary issues
5. Appreciates other civilisations and is confident in interacting and learning from other communities
6. Believes that good Muslims are good citizens
7. Is well-adjusted as a contributing member of a multi-religious society and secular state
8. Is a blessing to all and promotes universal principles and values
9. Is inclusive and practices pluralism, without contradicting Islam
10. Is a model and inspiration to all.