

the top trading partner in 2004 with total trade valued at S\$88.3 billion or 15 per cent of the country's trade with the world (p. xvii). These two chapters should open the eyes of sceptics about the future of close economic relations between the two countries. The recent decision to set up the Iskandar Development Region in Johor, for instance, has reportedly excited Singaporean investors.

Chapter 6, "Renewing Educational and Sporting Events," looks at two important but hitherto neglected areas where both Malaysia and Singapore stand to gain a lot from close cooperation. This chapter refers to a number of educational and sporting events held annually between the two. But there is a need to do more. In addition to the existing links between University Malaya and National University of Singapore, linkages between other universities in both countries should be seriously explored.

The last chapter of this book is appropriately titled "Uplifting Future Relations." It duly notes the fact that with the settlement of the reclamation issue and the arbitration of *Pulau Batu Puteh* by the ICJ, there stands a good chance that Malaysia-Singapore relations can be set on a more even keel benefiting the people on both sides of the causeway. Indeed, difficult issues between the two countries still remain to be settled. But solutions to these are to be found through quiet diplomacy. There is no alternative to better relations between Malaysia and Singapore because there is no escaping the fact that geography and history place the two countries in a relationship of interdependence.

Al-Diyah as Compensation for Homicide and Wounding in Malaysia. By Syed Ahmad Alsagoff. Kuala Lumpur: Research Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2006, pp.436. ISBN: 983-3855-04-0 (PB).

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This publication concerns itself mainly with the law of *diyah* as compensation for homicide and wounding. It attempts to show that

the idea of victim compensation, which conforms to the dictates of reason, justice and humanity, is applicable as a common law for all Malaysians.

Alsagoff argues that human life is sacred; his historical survey of how earlier communities responded to homicide and wounding leads him to deduce that there is an underlying common thread of victim compensation which has been superseded by the notion of crime against society. As a result, society today tends to vindicate itself by punishing the offender with death, imprisonment or fines and the idea of compensating the victim or his family has gone into near-oblivion. The book, however, emphasises that there is a growing acceptance, amongst Western and common law countries, of the importance of victim compensation. This acceptance brings them closer to the law of *diyah*.

The Islamic *Shari'ah* has invariably upheld the victim's right to compensation; and the author's study of contemporary legislations in Pakistan, Sudan, Iran and the state of Kelantan in Malaysia in implementing the law of *diyah* shows its suitability for general application in Malaysia. Alsagoff argues that the practice of punishing the offender with fines payable to the state for homicide and wounding needs reappraisal in favour of compensation to the victim. He further argues that a compulsory insurance scheme using the system of *takāful* will ensure compensation to all victims of homicide and wounding. In the absence of such a scheme, the author recommends that the state should compensate victims in cases where the offender is impecunious.

The book is composed of fifteen chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction to the book. Chapter Two looks at the sanctity of human life and demonstrates how extensively this issue is dealt in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. In chapter Three, the author looks at the custom of retaliation and blood money for homicide and wounding, which was common amongst ancient communities.

Chapter Four traces the transition of homicide and wounding at common law from civil actions to public offences or crimes punished by the State. Chapter Five looks into the *Shari'ah's* classification of homicide into willful murder, homicide resembling murder and homicide by mistake. In this and the following chapters, the author

refers to the experiences of Pakistan, Sudan, Kelantan and Iran to explore contemporary attempts at implementing the *Sharī'ah* law of *qisās* and *diyāh*. Chapter Six looks at the punishment of *qisās* for willful murder, its administration and contemporary legislation for its implementation.

Chapter Seven looks at *diyāh* as the alternative punishment for willful murder and as the original punishment for homicide resembling murder and homicide by mistake. Chapter Eight discusses the definition, classification and the enforcement of *qisās* as punishment for wounding in Islamic law. Chapters Nine to Eleven discuss the *diyāh* payable for the various types of wounds – the loss of limbs and organs of the body, the loss of the function of the faculties, injury to the head, face and other parts of the body.

Chapter Twelve discusses *diyāh* payable for certain categories of persons – in particular the *diyāh* for a woman and for a non-Muslim living in a Muslim state – and consider how to implement the *Sharī'ah* taking into account the present cosmopolitan and technologically advanced state of Malaysian society. Chapter Thirteen looks at the *diyāh* for causing miscarriage and related offences, infanticide and suicide. Chapter Fourteen discusses the issue of who shoulders the liability to pay the *diyāh*, the payment of *diyāh* by the *'aqilah* and whether this practice is applicable in today's society. In chapter Fifteen the author summarises the findings presented in earlier chapters, recommends that the law of *diyāh* be a common law for all Malaysians and proposes the necessary amendments to the relevant legislations presently in force.

Originally a doctoral dissertation, this is a superb piece of scholarship. The book is comprehensive and highly readable, and it stands out for its admirable charity and accessibility. Alsagoff makes good use of quotations from the two primary sources of Islamic law: the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. The book should excite and enthuse all students interested in the subject of the *diyāh* law.

Angry Wind: Through Muslim Black Africa by Truck, Bus, Boat and Camel. By Jeffrey Tayler. Houghton-Mifflin Co, February 2005, pp. 256. ISBN: 061833467X.