

## Islam, Religion and Progress: A Workshop Series

*Religion, as many observers had pointed out, has a dual capacity. It can be a vehicle for progress, as well as a hindrance to it. What is the role of religion in contributing towards the progress and development of a society?*

*The Reading Group, in collaboration with NLB, will be organizing a series of workshops to engage young activists and intelligentsias on issues of religion and progress. These workshops hope to inculcate a diagnostic spirit and raise greater awareness, especially amongst the youths, on the need to discuss with serious earnestness, factors that will promote or hinder the progress and development of a society.*

The following workshops are open to Tertiary Students, Youth Activists and Young Professionals. Participants can sign up for 1, 2 or 3 sessions.

Admission is FREE but registration is required due to limited vacancies. To register, please email to: [imran@thereadinggroup.sg](mailto:imran@thereadinggroup.sg), indicating your name, contact number and the sessions you would like to attend.

**Date** : 2 September 2006  
**Time** : 3.00pm – 5.00pm  
**Venue** : Level 5 National Library, Imagination Room  
**Topic** : The Intelligentsias and the Intellectuals in Community Development  
**Facilitator** : Mr. Azhar Ibrahim Alwee

The role of intellectuals and intelligentsias are crucial in all developing societies. Not only can they be instrumental in directing policy formulations, their ability to speak against aberrations, vested interest, and ideological distortions is significant in ensuring substantive development and accountability. As they are instrumental in public enlightenment, their will to bear the torch against hopelessness and indifference requires not only intellectual acumen, but also moral courage and the empathy for the predicament of their time.

Mr. Azhar Ibrahim Alwee is a lecturer at the Department for Asian Languages and Cultures, National Institute of Education, Singapore. He holds an MA from National University of Singapore and is currently pursuing his PhD from the same university.

**Date** : 9 September 2006  
**Time** : 3.00pm – 5.00pm  
**Venue** : Level 5 National Library, Imagination Room  
**Topic** : Science and Rational Thinking in Malay Community  
**Facilitator** : Mr. Zaki Jalil

Negative attitudes towards science and rational thinking can be crippling for the development and progress of a community. Within the Malay/Muslim community negative attitudes towards science and reason is often disguised under religiosity. This problem becomes more acute if we were to observe the Malay/Muslims' academic underperformance in Science for national examinations for the past few decades. It is thus an imperative for leaders and the elites of the community to develop a pedagogy that promotes scientific and rational thinking within the community.

Mr. Zaki Jalil is a teacher and holds BA in Education (1st Class Hons.) from NTU-NIE. He is currently pursuing his Masters in Education from the National Institute of Education, Singapore.

**Date** : 16 September 2006  
**Time** : 3.00pm – 5.00pm  
**Venue** : Level 5 National Library, Possibility Room  
**Topic** : Religious Resurgence in Malay Society  
**Facilitator** : Mr. Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib

Religious resurgence is a phenomenon that has swept many nations. Much studies has been done to discuss the emergence and impact of religious resurgence in Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Yet, there have been little discussions on religious resurgence in Malay society. How does religious resurgence manifest in the Malay world? How does it come about? What are their impacts on the development of Islam amongst the Malays? These are crucial questions to ask for those interested in the issue of development and progress of the Malays in contemporary society.

Mr. Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib is a research executive. He holds a BA in Philosophy (Hons) from University of London and is coordinator for The Reading Group.

