

2 MINUTES WITH Zubair Saqafi Al Kamil

Zubair Saqafi Al Kamil is the imam at the Tawa Islamic Centre. Since the March 15 Christchurch tragedy closer links have been built with him and other Muslims in the Tawa community. In mid-April an "Invitation from our Muslim neighbours in Tawa" to locals to a Saturday afternoon gathering at Tawa School saw 120 people take part in improving community connections.



Zubair Saqafi is seen in the photo below right with Prime Minister Jacinda Adern at the prayer meeting at Parliament for victims of the Christchurch massacre. He and his family have lived in this country for more than 11 years. He says, "I am a citizen of New Zealand. In all these years I have never come across anyone who nurtures hatred towards Muslims. I move around in my Islamic dress and headgear and no-one looks at me with suspicion or hatred." *May that always be the case! - Ed.*

For an interesting article featuring Zubair, see <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/abu-dhabi/indian-imam-thanks-new-zealand-for-making-muslims-feel-safer-12>

Where were you born?

Malappuram in the state of Kerala, India. I grew up there too.

Where were you educated?

Jamia Markaz (an Islamic university) in Calicut, Kerala, India.

How long have you lived in Tawa?

9 years. We came to New Zealand in 2008 and spent our first two years in Porirua.

What about family?

My wife is Fathima. We have four children, two girls and two boys. Three of them were born in New Zealand, one in India. Three of my children go to Tawa school, the youngest one is at Tawa Central Kindergarten.



Work experience over the years

I have spent 18 years in my field which is as an Islamic priest. My training was at university. I was an Islamic priest in Maha Rashtra in India before coming to New Zealand.

What are your interests and hobbies?

Reading books, especially religious books like the Quraan and the Bible.

I used to play football. It was the main sport in my school years. I still enjoy a kicking a ball with my kids.

Favourite sport or sports team? Football

Favourite musical group and/or individual singer?

Sami Yusuf. [Sami Yusuf is a British singer and songwriter, born in Iran. With over 34 million albums sold, he performs at venues around the world. Wikipedia – Ed.]

What is your favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?

As a family we are hoping to visit the South Island. My children in particular want to go there.

What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you the most satisfaction/pride?

I am proud of my education in my field. It was my dream to finish my course, mainly Islamic study, and help others. That's what I am doing now.

I gained a B.A. in India, and have recently completed a Computer course Level 3.

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I am now an online student of Massey University studying psychology. My next goal is to complete that course.

What are three things you would like to do before you die?

To clear misunderstanding about Islam.

Help to get homes for homeless people. I am mostly responsible for one particular house currently being built in India. People here are helping with donations towards it. I am hoping it will be completed this year.

My university is doing a lot for homeless people in India: it has completed 30 houses, is digging wells, and helping 3000 orphans to get education, and more.



Last month Faraha, daughter of Zubair Saqafi, wrote a letter to the Prime Minister thanking her for her love and support to the Muslim community in the aftermath of the Christchurch tragedy. The letter was presented to the Prime Minister by Greg O'Connor, Ohariu MP, as shown at left.

(Compiled June 2019)