

BIG STORY
big story

Promoting Islamic way of life, Al Zayani style

Yousif Al Zayani, a social activist and custodian of a mosque, organises programmes to encourage the visitors of his mosque to commit to the Islamic teachings and culture. 98 per cent of his visitors are Asian labourers as the mosque in Hamala is surrounded by hundreds of garages and workshops. Some of the programmes include redistributing used clothes, mainly Bahrain's traditional attire (Thobe), among the labourers



The Asian labourers choosing Thobes donated by citizens

TDT | Manama

Muhannad Mansour

Yousif Al Zayani, a social activist and the custodian of Yousif Sami Al Zayani Mosque in Hamala, has embarked on a mission to encourage Muslim foreign workers to adopt Islamic way of life, offering attractive rewards.

Al Zayani told *Tribune* yesterday that he organises numerous programmes to encourage the visitors of his mosque to commit to the Islamic teachings and culture, adding that 98 per cent of his visitors are Asian labourers as the mosque is surrounded by hundreds of garages and workshops.

Some of the programmes include redistributing used clothes, mainly Bahrain's traditional attire (Thobe), among the labourers.

Al Zayani explained in an interview with *Tribune* that he has been implementing this idea since ten years, with the aim of benefiting from citizens' old clothes and encouraging low-income labourers to dress well while performing prayers and attending sermons at mosques.

"It has been noticed that many of the labourers come to the mosque wearing indecent clothing such as the lungi/wizar (a cloth wrapped on the waist extending to the ankles commonly worn by the people of the Indian subcontinent) or other undergarments. The mosque is the house of Allah, the almighty, and they must come here well-dressed. They wouldn't go to government authorities or formal visits in this attire. Hence, I thought that the Thobe is the

best replacement as it's the national dress of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf, easy to wear and alter, could be donated by many citizens and is accepted by the Asian nationals," he clarified.

Al Zayani also said, "Since it has begun almost a decade ago, the campaign received a positive reaction from citizens who usually dispose of their old Thobes. I personally gather the clothes and distribute it among the worshippers and visitors of the mosque. This has left a great impact on the donors and receivers. I have also hired a tailor to alter the Thobes and refit them for their new owners."

Al Zayani explained that the mosque is established on top of an automobile workshop and that it's visited by hundreds of worshippers, especially on Fridays when the weekly Friday sermons and prayers are held.

"We have other programmes and initiatives to encourage the worshippers to perform prayers



Worshippers having an iftar meal near the mosque last Ramadan

on time and commit to attending the religious sermons and lessons. We distribute cards offering free meals from certain co-operating restaurants in the area among those who attend the Fajr (early morning) prayers," the activist told.

He elaborated more saying, "Those who are committed to

performing the Fajr prayers on time for at least five consecutive months are rewarded with Umrah (pilgrimage) trips. These trips are expensive and 90 pc of the labourers didn't expect to be granted an opportunity to visit the Holy Mosque in Mecca when they came here for employment. We pay an insurance

amount of BD2,500 for each labourer we send to perform Umrah as a guarantee to the Saudi authorities that the labourers will return to Bahrain after performing the rite. BD25,000 is paid for every trip that consists of at least 10 labourers. A trip is organised every other month."

Al Zayani also confirmed that being active on social media networks, such as Instagram and YouTube, has contributed to attracting many donors and volunteers to implement such charity initiatives.

The activist added that the mosque frequently distributes gifts, rewards and free meals among the visitors of the mosque, adding that such initiatives even attracted non-Muslims to convert to Islam after seeing the unity and humanitarian values Islam introduces.

"Everything could be donated. We receive garments, plastic utensils, flatware and plates, meals, fruits and vegetables and a lot more. Giving is a noble human gesture and is the core of the Islamic teachings," Al Zayani said.



Queues of worshippers receiving free meals as a reward for their commitment



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