Research on the Prophet’s Teachings Recognized at HBKU’s Seerah Competition

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The Muhammad Bin Hamad Al Thani Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization (CMCC), part of Hamad Bin Khalifa University’s (HBKU) College of Islamic Studies (CIS), recently announced Abdul Basit Baba Issah as the winner of the
Center’s international research competition on the Prophet’s Seerah – the Arabic word for the Prophet’s biography.

Titled ‘Guidance of the Messenger (PBUH) on the Relationships among Nations,’ the competition highlighted the life of the Prophet and his teachings on relationship-building with communities of different cultures and religions, which is considered by Muslims to be an extension of the Quran, as a way to gain deeper understanding of the faith and Islamic culture. It was an opportunity for budding Islamic scholars from around the world to submit research papers based on the life of the Prophet (PBUH).

The competition sought to inspire an interpretation of Islam that accurately portrays it as a faith of tolerance and peace. Submissions from local and international applicants focused on a range of topics, all tied to the morals of promoting harmony and coexistence among different cultures, within the context of Islam and Sharia – the Arabic term for Islamic law. Participants were given a six-month period to submit their research papers, which were then evaluated by a panel of judges comprised of scholars, academics and researchers, many of whom are leading names in the field of Islamic studies and comparative religions.

Commenting on the role of the competition in correcting public perceptions to combat Islamophobia, Dr. Aisha Yousef Al-Mannai, director of the Sheikh Muhammad Bin Hamad Al-Thani Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization said that “the Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is an inspiration to Muslim youth, whose awakening and motivation is stemmed from the Prophet’s (PBUH) guidance and morals. The importance of studying and analyzing the Messenger’s (PBUH) biography is a driving force behind hosting competitions like this at HBKU.”

The HBKU Seerah competition’s winner, Abdul Basit Baba Issah, a Ghanaian undergraduate student from Turkey’s Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University in Istanbul, was awarded $5,000 for his scholarly work. Focusing on Islamic laws, teachings, and doctrines set forth by the Quran and Hadiths – the Prophet’s collection of tradition and sayings - the research delved into how the Prophet applied the teachings and interpretations of the faith in his own daily life.

“I’m honored to be chosen as the winner of HBKU’s Seerah competition. My primary motivation for submitting my research was to dispel common myths and fallacies about what is often perceived as ‘Sharia Law,’ ” Baba Issah said. “My research is aimed at giving the world an unabridged picture of Islam, inspired by the guidance from the Prophet’s (PBUH) life, and his teachings for all of humanity.”

Launched last November, the competition was open to undergraduates from all over the world and of all faiths. Participants from around the globe representing a range of cultures and backgrounds submitted academic research papers on the Prophet’s life pertaining to his interactions with people and nations with different religions and ideologies.

The organizer of the competition, the Muhammad Bin Hamad Al Thani Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization ilization. As part of HBKU’s College of Islamic Studies, the Center hosts various scientific and research activities on human civilization and the contributions of Muslims towards it.