



Salam and peace be upon you.

I am Sheikh Dr Hj Faizal Al-Hakim, an educator and principal who has served in several Islamic schools for more than two decades and currently as the Director of Academic - Young Aviator Academy, Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport. I hold a degree in Psychology and Islamic Revealed Knowledge, and a doctorate in Aviation Education and Management.

Throughout my life, I have remained a devoted student of the Islamic sciences, blessed with the guidance of many respected scholars. I was honoured to study Fiqh al-Shafi'i and Sufism under Sheikh Prof Abdul Hadi Palazzi, the Mufti & Director of the Italian Muslim Assembly; Tasawwuf and the Creed of the Ash'ariyyah under Sheikh Dr Uthman El-Muhammadi, a Tokoh of Ma'al Hijrah 2005; Islamic and Western Philosophy under Prof. Dato' Dr Baharudin Hj Ahmad; Islamic Art and Culture under Prof. Dr Amir Hosein Zekrgoo; Islamic Music with Prof. Dr Fakhariah Dato' Lokman; and Islamic Spiritual Healing under Tuan Guru Hj Hassan Rais Al-Minangkabawi. These encounters deepened my understanding of Islam as a path of beauty, balance, and compassion — a faith that calls for mercy not only to humankind but to all living creations of Allah.

My love for animals began in childhood with two dear companions — a white duck and a rooster — who were my closest friends. Whenever they fell ill, I would feel unwell too, as if our hearts were bound together. During my primary school years, after attending sekolah agama, I would stop by a small water tank house that resembled a white UFO to feed two stray dogs, sharing with them the karipap I had saved from recess. That simple act grew into a lifelong devotion to care for animals in need — a reflection of the mercy I believe Islam teaches at its core.

As a Muslim, I hold that dogs have a special and dignified place in our faith. The Qur'an speaks of them with honour, especially in Surah Al-Kahfi and Surah Al-Ma'idah. Many

great scholars — among them Imam Malik, Imam At-Thauri, Imam Hasan al-Basri, Imam Ibn Hazm, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, and the Sufi masters Imam Junaid al-Baghdadi, Sheikh Abu Yazid al-Bistami, Malik bin Dinar, Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, and Jalaluddin Rumi — viewed dogs as pure and ritually clean. Even within the Shafi'i school, Imam An-Nawawi and Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haitami permitted keeping dogs for any beneficial reason. Closer to home, the late Sheikh Yusof al-Zawawi, former Mufti of Terengganu and a scholar of four mazhabs, was known to lovingly take his dog on healing car rides around Masjid Putih — a beautiful example of compassion in action.

Today, with the same spirit of childhood compassion and the spiritual grounding of Sufism, I serve as a Community Lead of #ExecuteAWA — Malaysia's First National Humanity Mission for Greater Animal Welfare, and as Director of Education with the American-based NGO Filbert's Foundation for Furry Friends (F5). My mission is to help protect the dignity and wellbeing of all animals, especially our Malaysian stray dogs.

For indeed, Allah reminds us in Surah Al-An'am, verse 38:

“All creatures on earth are communities like you.”

Let us cherish their lives — for they too are nations like ours