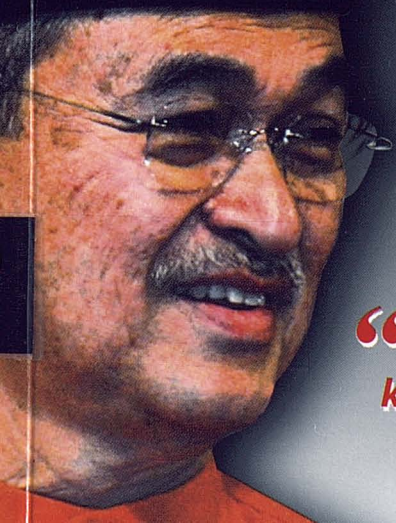


To Digress A Little

By
SYED AKBAR ALI



*“Apa yang kita bagi
kita boleh ambil balik”*



To Digress A Little

by
Syed Akbar Ali

Kuala Lumpur
2005
PUSTAKA PERDANA



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PERDANA
LEADERSHIP
FOUNDATION
YAYASAN
KEPIMPINAN
PERDANA

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Dedication

*I dedicate this book in the memory of my father
who read books and was a good man.*



PERDANA
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YAYASAN
KEPIMPINAN
PERDANA

BIO DATA

The Author Syed Akbar Ali was born in Ipoh, Perak in 1960 but grew up in Malacca and Penang. His schooling was at the Anglo Chinese School in Ipoh and Malacca, the Malacca High School and then the Penang Free School.

He studied management and industrial engineering for three years at Purdue University in the United States and graduated in logistics and management from the University of Oklahoma in 1986.

In 1987 Syed Akbar Ali started a ten year career in banking, beginning with the United Overseas Bank (then known as Chung Khiaw Bank). He went on to become Senior Manager in charge of Project Finance at Malayan Banking and retired from banking in 1997 at age 37 as Assistant General Manager of Corporate Banking with the Arab Malaysian Merchant Bank. During his banking career, Syed relished his involvement to help finance and bring into existence the many industrial manufacturing plants, steel mills, textile plants, electronics plants, roads, highways, rail transport systems, telecommunications systems, power plants and townships that are found all over the country.

Since 1997 till now the Author has been a Director of a group of companies involved in infrastructure development including a gas fired power station, a water treatment plant and railway transportation systems. In 2002 he also served a stint as an Economic Consultant with the Prime Minister's

Department. Together with his wife, the Author also owns and runs a jewellery business in Kuala Lumpur. They have two sons.

Syed Akbar Ali was also a newspaper columnist and wrote the column 'Human Rites' in 'The Sun' English daily for almost six years until 2002 under the pen name of 'Akbar Ali'. He also wrote the Sunday column 'Komentar Hujung Minggu' in the Malay language Berita Minggu from 1999 until February 2004. Both the columns were commentaries on the economy, current affairs, politics, "religion" as well as Islam. Syed also has an interest in defense matters and has briefed foreign military delegations. He has appeared on television as a commentator on current affairs.

The Author began researching and understanding the Quran since 1987 and has written in magazines and newspapers and also produced books and pamphlets about the Quran and Islam.

The Author is also an avid outdoorsman and participates in off road driving, white water activities, jungle trekking, camping and snorkeling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are due to many folks who were part and parcel of the process of writing this book. I have quoted anecdotes, stories and other bits of information from so many people. Not all of them are aware that I have quoted them and they may not even want their names mentioned anyway. To all these friends and acquaintances - thank you. "If you read this book, you will recall the conversations we have had".

I owe a great deal of gratitude to Juhaidi Yean Abdullah who read the manuscript twice, suggested changes and who also helped in the final production of this book.

Similar thanks are also due to Mohan Menon – a brother, lawyer and above all a Muslim who also read the manuscript twice and gave me invaluable advice about the book and reminded me of my obligations to the Quran.

I must thank my wife, the one and only Zeenath, who would ask 'How is the book coming?'. Well its here. I must also thank my two sons Abu Bakar and Ibrahim who were my PDA and mobile technology technicians who would also ask 'How are your books coming?'. Most certainly sons know their fathers.

FOREWORD

This book is written largely in English but some of it is in Malay. Malaysians would grasp the book easily because it is entirely about home. The book is written in a very easy style. The idea is to communicate effectively. Writing is not my profession but more of a passion, therefore in this book I had to curb the urge to ramble on about things. If I digress here and there I hope the reader will bear with me.

My brother who is a lawyer has suggested that I include these words in this Foreward ie to say that “This book is not touted as an exhaustive theses on matters which I have alluded to inside it. They are my personal views and opinions premised on facts as well as my perception of events”. Indeed they are.

The title of the book “*To digress a little*” just came out of the blue. I noticed that I have used this phrase more than a few times in the book. Digress could also mean ‘*menyimpang*’ in Malay - perhaps some fodder for the more leisurely to embark on their interpretations and analysis.

Throughout this book there will be some references to the Quran. The book’s content has much to do with many things Malaysian including Malays and Islam therefore I feel a few quotes here and there are relevant. I can assure the non Muslim reader the quotes will not be onerous for their reading.

I have written the book in such a manner that it is (or should be) thought provoking. Some may not like some of the things I have said in this book but nevertheless I feel that too many things remain unsaid when they should be talked about more openly.