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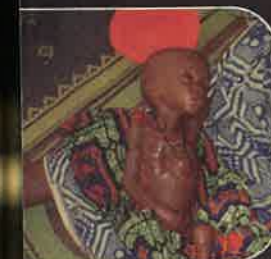
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All references to the Qur'an made are from *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Amana, Brentwood, MD.

Care for Those WHO CARED

Inspiring stories about elders being respectfully cared for by their children and families continue to come from the Muslim community in the U.S. and Canada. It is indeed heartening to note that there are many who strive to live by the teachings of the Qur'an (especially 17:23-24) and Sunnah, which mandate such care of parents.

The acknowledgement of these teachings is typically coupled with the belief that our religion absolves us of the need for specialized centers designed to care for the aging. There are many elder or aging individuals, however, that lack families, immediate and extended, because they have been separated through immigration, conversion, or death. These individuals do not have the support that they need and are placed in a dire situation, a situation where they may end up thrown by the wayside or institutionalized in facilities that have no understanding of the needs of Muslims in general and Muslim elders specifically. Horror stories about treatment in elder care facilities include reports of lack of understanding of dietary requirements, Islamic bodily purity, modesty, and religious needs.

For those blessed to have familial support, modern living has changed the way families live, especially in the West; most families no longer live in a multi-generational family home. The nuclear family unit means that elders may live by themselves, or individual children may be faced with the burden of figuring out how to care for their own children and their parents simultaneously. Added to this is the reality that many elderly parents require specialized or intensive care, skills and knowledge that children may not possess. These factors can force children to seek out alternative options, such as hospices or nursing homes. These, of course, are only options when finances permit. In these instances, children may deeply regret such decisions, but feel their options are limited. Unfortunately, there are also some children who feel no obligation to enact the Islamic teachings on parental care.

The Qur'anic and the Prophetic guidance regarding the care of elderly assigns this responsibility to the family, but there are many who have no family or who cannot rely upon their families. For such individuals, their family is the community. National organizations, local Islamic centers, and *masajid* must develop strategies and mechanisms for addressing this situation and catering to elderly people and their families. The need is to examine the issue of aging from the ground up and to develop strategies for action. The project should include education on the Islamic responsibility to care for parents; founding of socialization groups, such as Jewels of Islam [featured in this issue]; development of informational literature and training to support families in caring for their elders; and creation of communities of seniors and Islamic care facilities that cater to the needs of Muslim elders who require intensive medical care and/or have no family.

In the past, some such initiatives have been planned but have yet to come to fruition. There is no time to wait on this issue. It must become a priority of the community. Islamic organizations, professionals in fields relevant to elder care, and family and community members must come together to tackle this situation and create a caring and supportive network. Our seniors are valuable resources. They not only need and deserve loving and appropriate care, they also need opportunities to continue to contribute to and interact in our community and society as a whole.



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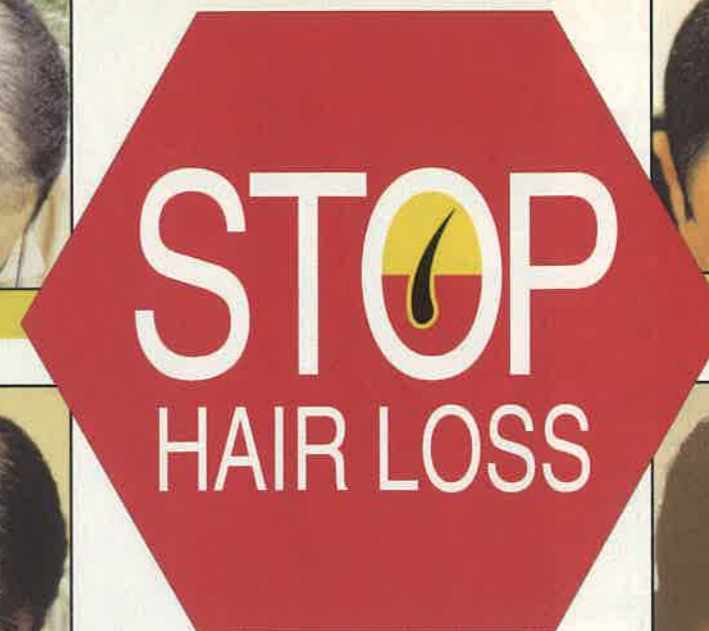
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Peace PRAYER

Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, national director of the ISNA Office of Interfaith and Community Relations (IOICR), attended a two-day conference entitled International Prayer for Peace, April 26-27, at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

The conference's keynote address was delivered by Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen P. Hughes and was attended by some 150 Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scholars. Among them were Imam Warith D. Mohammed; more than 15 cardinals, including Cardinal J. Francis Stafford of the Apostolic Penitentiary at the Vatican; and Dr. Muhammad Tayeb, president of Al-Azhar University.

Discussion topics included peace and war, spiritualizing politics without politicizing religion, dialogue between religions and cultures, solving the crisis of HIV, and religions facing terrorism. The conference concluded with a procession attended by all leaders and guests, including Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the outgoing Archbishop of Washington.

The International Prayer for Peace has been an annual event since 1986, when initiated by the late Pope John Paul II in Assisi, Italy. ■



MARCHING IN FAITH: Leaders from many faiths, including ISNA's Dr. Sayyid Syeed (far right), rallied for interfaith understanding.

LEARNING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Some 41 Dallas residents attended a workshop on conflict resolution presented by Dr. Louay Safi at the Islamic Association of Carrollton, TX, April 22.

Dr. Safi focused on the role of community leaders in setting the tone for an open atmosphere that invites cooperation and involvement from community members and takes essential steps to lessen the possibility of conflict. He underscored the need for developing and instituting procedures for dealing with grievances and addressing tensions and instances of conflict. Islamic centers, he advised, should establish Arbitration Boards to address grievances.

Louai Haffar, a graduate student at George Mason University, reviewed factors that



PEACE TOOLS: Dr. Louay Safi visits communities to share peacebuilding skills.

lead to conflict and identified useful approaches for handling conflict. Drawing from both Islamic and western scholarship, Haffar introduced a model of conflict analysis and resolution and discussed several steps to be

followed by mediators.

The workshop is part of Community Empowerment (LCE), a new ILDC program that exposes communities to integrated leadership and management skills; addresses challenges and issues facing

the growing Muslim community; and provides knowledge of Islamic principles and their application in North America. ■

LEARNING PEACE BUILDING

ISNNA joined the Washington, DC-based Salam Institute to organize the first annual Conference on Muslim Peace Building, Justice, and Interfaith Dialogue, April 29-30.

Acting ISNA Secretary General Ahmad Elhattab, in his opening address, reminded that these are the principles that Islam embodies and thus it is incumbent upon all Muslims to practice and popularize these ideals. He added that the traditions of peace-building, justice, and

interfaith dialog are based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam*), and can continue to be enriched by Muslims today.

Dr. Louay Safi, executive director of the ISNA Leadership Development Center (ILDC), and Dr. Abu Nimr, executive director of the Salam Institute, asked participants to play an active role in peace-building, interfaith dialogue, and conflict resolution. They pointed out that it is essential for the Muslim community to establish leadership skills and learn how to prevent and resolve inevitable conflicts among themselves and with other faith groups by engaging in dialogue and building connections.

The conference offered several panels on intra-Muslim dialogue, Islamic approaches to interfaith dialogue, peace-building, democracy, human

rights, and conflict resolution in the Islamic context.

Dr. Safi also conducted a leadership training program on conflict resolution for community leaders and imams held in the collaboration with the Salam Institute. The workshop discussed the concepts and tools of conflict resolution from the Islamic perspective and how to utilize them to restore harmony and prevent community division and splintering. ■

CORRIGENDUM

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SECRETARY GENERAL

The Islamic Society of North America

The Search Committee for the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) Secretary General invites nominations and applications for the position of Secretary General, to succeed Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed who is taking up a new position as the National Director, ISNA Office of Interfaith and Community Relations located in Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

As a national umbrella organization embracing community and professional associations, ISNA serves to promote the interests of Muslim Americans at levels of community and public domain. Today, ISNA is widely acknowledged as the leading and representative organization of Muslim Americans in the US, Canada, and worldwide.

ISNA, which evolved out of the Muslim Students Association of the US & Canada that was founded in 1963, has its headquarters on 165 acres in Plainfield, IN, just minutes from Indianapolis international airport. ISNA has ten departments, including its own endowment managed under the ISNA Development Foundation.

The successful candidate will possess the drive and leadership to guide ISNA's mission as a premier national religious and community organization, and a demonstrated ability to articulate and advance the national and international reputation and goals established by ISNA, to generate external support, and to manage a complex organization.

The Search Committee will begin reviewing materials immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

For best consideration, please forward materials not later than June 2006.

Nominations and applications should be sent, in confidence and preferably in electronic form to the following:

Chair
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ISNA is a duly registered nonprofit religious organization centered on promoting the interests of Muslim Americans. ISNA serves to educate, empower, and involve Muslim Americans in shaping their lives and future in keeping within Islamic teachings, while respecting the national laws.

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SERENE INTERACTION

Dalai Lama advances compassion, respect, and understanding for Islam and Muslims. **BY UMBERINE ABDULLAH**

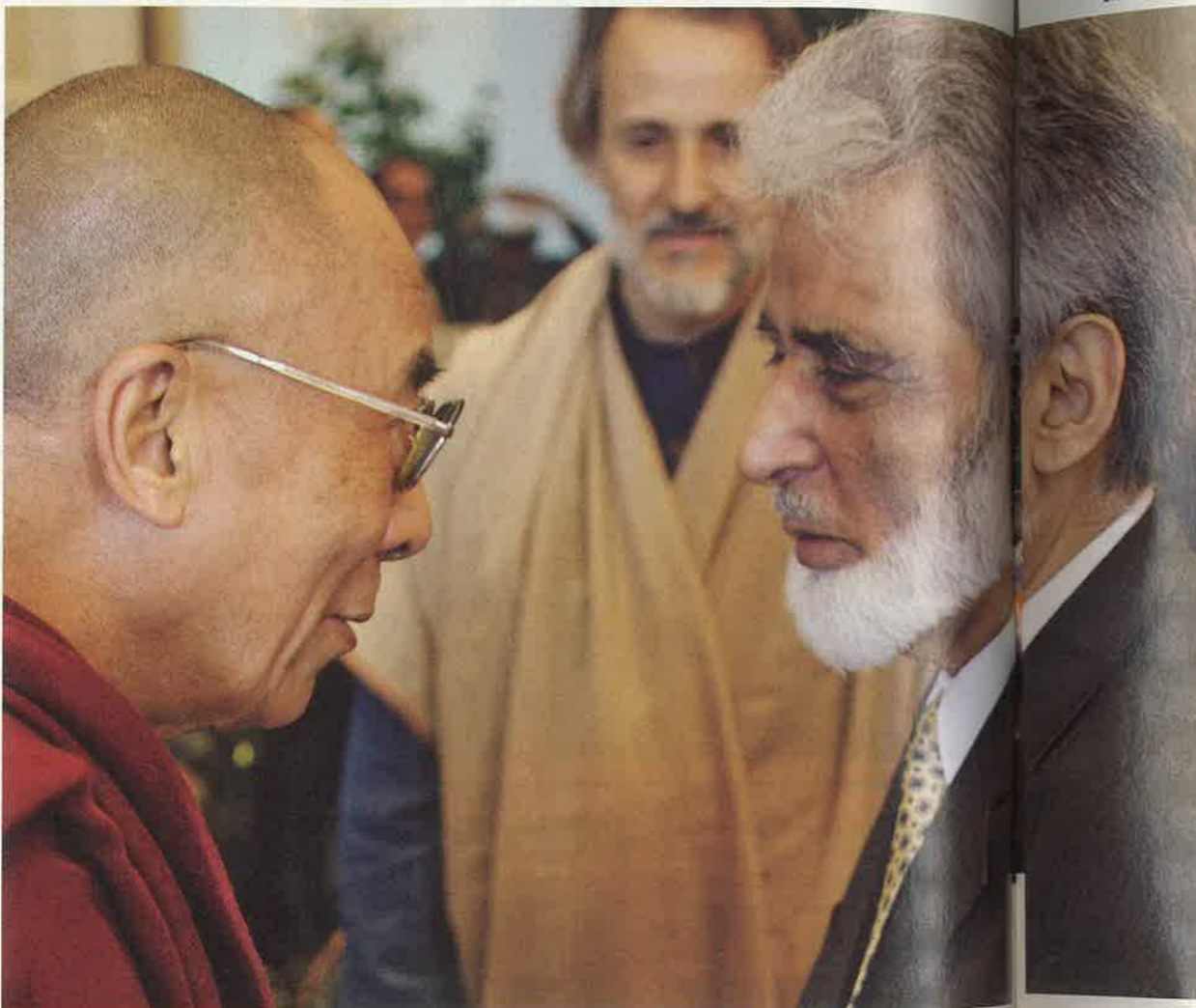
The Dalai Lama proclaimed himself a "defender of Muslim teachings" during a groundbreaking interfaith conference in San Francisco, April 15. "In some respects, I am one of the defenders of Muslim tradition," he said, "If one believer, one tradition, is getting criticism, we have to act ... I feel, this moment, we Buddhists and other traditions must come together."

"The Muslim tradition, like others, also deserves respect," said the Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, noting that Muslims and Buddhists had coexisted peacefully in Tibet for four centuries. He added, "Muslims [are] like any other traditions—same message, same practice. That is a practice of compassion."

The Dalai Lama told attendees at "A Gathering of Hearts Illuminating Compassion" that many people see and hear news of suicide bombings in predominantly Muslim countries but don't hear about how Muslims often work with the poor. He also told conference attendees that religious traditions must work harder to live together in peace, citing religious violence in Northern Ireland, Pakistan, and Iraq.

The Divine is too great for human minds to fully comprehend, the Dalai Lama expanded, adding that people understand it in different ways—as Buddhists, as Muslims, as Jews, as Christians, as Hindus. In ancient times, different cultures were isolated so differences mattered little. With globalization, however, people must learn to work together since the "whole world is becoming one entity, one community."

The Dalai Lama also stated, "Nowadays, to some people, the Muslim tradition appears more militant. I feel that's totally wrong." He opined that suicide bombings and other violence by extremists have un-



Dr. Syeed greets the Dalai Lama, sharing ISNA's efforts in pursuing interfaith understanding

the Hindus, the Christians, the Buddhists. In any community, a few mischievous people are always there."

Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, national director of the ISNA Office of Interfaith and Community Relations (IOICR), responding to the Buddhist leader's address, said that the Dalai Lama's advice on diver-

fairly skewed the world's perception of Islam. "Such mischievous people are not just in the Muslim community, but among

sity and pluralism was welcomed and also familiar, as it echoed verses of the Qur'an that command us to recognize God's plan for a diverse humanity, including multiple religions and cultures. Our responsibility as Muslims, Dr. Syeed assured Dalai Lama, is to translate these Divine commands into practice. He also added that the existence of non-Muslims in Muslim countries and Muslims in non-Muslim countries demonstrates recognition of this Divine plan.

Quoting the Dalai Lama's 1991 U.S. Congress address in which he asked for the initiation of a dialogue to create an action plan for freeing the world of exploitation

and injustice, Dr. Syeed said Muslims globally have joined him to advance that vision, which is in accord with Islamic religious obligations.

ISNA Vice President Dr. Ingrid Mattson, who is also a professor of Islamic Studies at the Hartford Seminary, responding to the Dalai Lama's statement, said, "This act of solidarity and compassion; it gives me so much hope and courage to feel I can go forward and not feel alone."

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, founder of the Zaytuna Institute, said the conference could help build relationships between Buddhists and Muslims and promote a greater understanding of Islam. He noted that Muslims and Buddhists lived together peacefully for hundreds of years in Tibet. Yusuf also said, "He [the Dalai Lama] wanted to meet us in solidarity as a community because he felt like people were attacking Islam."

Sayed Ali Ghazvini of the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno said he hoped the conference would encourage Muslims to be more visible and active in the U.S.

The Dalai Lama—born Lhamo Dhondrub on 6 July 1935 and considered by many to be the incarnation of Divine compassion—has become an international symbol of peace.

The Dalai Lama, who was awarded the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, fled Tibet in 1959 following an aborted uprising against Chinese rule in the territory and now is in exile in the Himalayan town of Dharmasala, India.

Representatives from the world's major religions—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and American Indian traditions—came from as far away as Egypt to attend the event. The meeting was initiated by Imam Seyed Mehdi Khorasani, who invited the Nobel Peace laureate to the two-day conference after befriending him in September. The gathering was organized by a volunteer group of individuals and several organizations, including the Myers Group, Fons Vitae, the Kirilin Foundation, the Islamic Society of California, and the Zaytuna Institute. ■

"If one believer, one tradition, is getting criticism, we have to act ... I feel, this moment, we Buddhists and other traditions must come together." —DALAI LAMA

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QUALITY Education

Muslim educators, administrators, and leaders convene to exchange expertise and network. **BY ABU ALI BAFQUIH**

All future ISNA conferences will have an education track, said Acting Secretary General Ahmad Elhattab, in his welcome address at the 7th Annual ISNA Education Forum in Chicago, April 14-16. He said that this has already been implemented in the East Zone and South Zone conferences and that the trend will continue. The ISNA Annual Convention already offers sessions on education. Elhattab invited teachers not only to attend but to participate fully to help make these sessions as beneficial as possible.

ISNA's association with education is age old. The focus on education started soon after the organization of the MSA. ISNA established the first full-time Islamic school in North America, has had an Education De-

partment for many years, and in 1999 initiated the Education Forum, which brings together educators, administrators, and leaders to share, learn, and network. With the help of educators, "Islamic Horizons" magazine also produces special issues on education matters, which—with its 60,000 copy distribution—serves as a broad platform for sharing knowledge about education.

Educator and attorney Dr. Safaa Zarzour, who is also program chair and secretary of the Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA); Dr. Abdalla Idris Ali, a former ISNA president and now chairman of the ISNA Education Committee; Zahra Williams, principal of the Islamic Foundation School, Villa Park, IL; and Elhattab, dedicated the opening session and the theme "Islamic Education: Strengthening Faith

and Enhancing Quality".

The conference program—organized into 7 tracks covering all areas of education, including weekend schools—brought forth papers from educators, administrators, researchers, and community leaders. Parallel sessions covering the seven tracks were offered, allowing participants to select. The program sought to share knowledge in areas of interest to educators, administrators, researchers, and community leaders.

Topics addressed included Husain Nuri's paper on "Integrating U.S. Context in Syllabus to Focus Spiritual, Intellectual, and Practical Needs of Students in Higher Classes"; Valencia Community College's Dr. Yasmeen Qadri's presentation on the Accreditation Process from A-Z; and Rochester University doctoral student Shaza Khan paper "De-MIST-ifying After school Activities and Youth Programming."

Rochester University doctoral student Shaza Khan focuses on youth issues



PHOTOGRAPH BY ZAIN GHANI

Fiqh Council of North America Member Zainab Alwani addressed the issue of "Present Challenges in Developing a Balanced Islamic Studies Curriculum". Dr. Shafi Khaled, executive director of the North American Bangladeshi Islamic Community (NABIC), shared his expertise on weekend schools in a presentation entitled "Enhanced Curriculum & TA Training for Senior Students of the Weekend School". The topic of "Fund-raising or Friend-raising" was presented by Necva Ozyur of New Horizon School, Pasadena, CA.

America", arguing that successful and proven systems and guidelines from other school systems, such as the ISO9004-2000 (Performance Improvement Guideline) and the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria (www.baldrige.nist.gov), can be used to improve quality and excellence in our school systems. ISO (the International Organization for Standardization), he said, is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies, whose guidelines are applicable to any type of manufacturing and service businesses, including education and the health sector.

The Forum also presented vital opportunities for educators from across the U.S. and Canada and overseas to network and share experiences. For graduate students and researchers it was a time to obtain critiques of their work and meet peers and teachers.

The Forum's program and arrangement earned high praise from participants, who were profuse in their acknowledgement of ISNA and ISNA Director of Programs Mukhar Ahmad. IUPUI's Dr. Khadija Khaja said, "The presentations were so wonderful, and helpful that I truly felt honored to be a part of the conference. I have presented at and attended many conferences, but this experience was the best. In fact, my co-presenter and guest loved it... May God Bless you all for the work you do for our community."

Loretta Abbasi, principal of Cleveland, OH-based Al Ihsan School, said that the Forum was "wonderfully organized and very informative." Ahmad Elghamrawy thanked ISNA for doing a "wonderful job." Islamic Center of Southern California Weekend School Principal Shahida Alikhan also thanked ISNA for the "hard work and time [that] has gone into it to make it such a success." University of Toronto doctoral candidate Nadeem Memon said, "The ISNA team did a tremendous job in putting on this forum for a much needed discussion," adding that he "was able to benefit greatly through making contacts and presenting my work." ■



Dr. Mazhar Hussaini introduced halal standards, which could become the benchmark for USDA. (right) Acting Secretary General Ahmad Elhattab calls for united efforts to promote halal standards

Enforceable Standards

Muslim Americans must provide the benchmarks to help USDA regulate halal products. **BY ABU ALI BAFQUIH**

The State of Illinois adopted the Halal Food Act in 2002. New York Governor Pataki signed the Halal Meats Protection Act in 2005. Four other states have adopted similar measures, and efforts continue in states, such as Virginia, to pass

identical legislation. The question, however, is upon which standards will such protection be based. The state authorities are left in a quandary when a seller may argue—with due support from a local imam—that his way is also a halal way of slaughtering animals.

It was such issues that inspired Illinois Muslims to work in collaboration with ISNA to draft the "Standards for Halal Slaughter", which were unveiled at the landmark "ISNA Halal Foods and Consumables Conference" held in Chicago, April 15. The proposed legislation, presented to the Illinois Department of Agriculture on behalf of the Muslim community of Illinois, is a furtherance of the previously passed landmark Illinois legislation against misuse of the halal designation. These proposed standards have been developed by Illi-

nois' Muslim representatives over the past year in consultation with community leaders, experts, and religious scholars; they are expected to be refined over the coming months before being formalized. Encouragingly, IDOA has expressed an urgent need for such standards as part of its efforts in applying the Illinois Halal law.

ISNA Acting Secretary General Ahmad Elhattab said, "Today, when—despite all the challenges—Muslims are more determined to seek their rightful share in national affairs, the issue of obtaining officially supervised halal certification is an important issue."

Dr. Mazhar Hussaini, director of the ISNA Halal Program, said that the Conference will serve as a platform to bring together interested, involved, and affected parties, including producers, manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, consumers, food and nutrition experts, standards developers, government agencies, religious scholars, leaders, and activists to cover the current situation, build networks, develop relationships, and implement structured plans for moving forward with this

ILLINOIS EXPRESSED AN URGENT NEED FOR AGREED UPON HALAL STANDARDS AS PART OF ITS EFFORTS IN APPLYING THE ILLINOIS HALAL LAW.

important initiative.

One session discussed the halal food market, highlighting its annual U.S. growth rate of 25-30 percent. Dr. Adnan Al-Dayel, president of Dakota Halal, Inc., discussed consumer insights and forecasts of halal certified food and Muslim markets. Azhar Azeed, a member of the ISNA Executive Council, moderated.

Dr. Hussaini spoke on "The Role of Halal Dietary Standards in Future Trends". Dr. Khurshid Qureshi, ISNA Majlis ash Shura and president of the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), presented an overview of "The Development of Modern Standards and Certification". He is striving to start a consensus process and develop a standard, which is universally acceptable and written in conformity with ISO, FDA, and CODEX. Ahmed Alhattab moderated this session.

The importance of establishing halal businesses at the local, regional,

and national levels was discussed by Syed Amjad Abbasi (ZMP, CA) and Bill Aosse, founder and president of Midamar, IA. Panelists Shireen Pishdada of Taqwa Co-op and Yusuf Khan of Halal Co-op explained the co-op model for Halal business development.

Mohamed Omer of the Amir Halal Committee, New Jersey Shura, and Dr. Salman Z. Shaikh shared their ex-

periences in successfully obtaining halal legislation in the state of New Jersey, which is considered a model.

There are more than 8,000 grocery items in a typical U.S. supermarket. Syed Rasheeduddin Ahmed, president of the Muslim Consumer Group, educated Muslim consumers on techniques for making proper halal selections. He was introduced by Dr. Khaja Aliuddin, secretary of the Muslim Community Center. Basharat Saleem, director of the ISNA Convention Department, moderated.

Dr. Collins O'Keefe from the Bureau of Meat and Poultry Inspection of the Illinois Department of Agriculture discussed halal rule-making in the State of Illinois. Brother Hussaini and Shahnawaz Khan facilitated a discussion among representatives of the National Fiqh Council of North America, the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC), Muslim community and business leaders, and community members.

Expressing his impressions of the conference, Dr. Shaikh congratulated the organizers for effectively utilizing the 4 years of groundwork laid by the Halal Law effort in New Jersey. He also expressed his satisfaction over the general agreement by participants, including Dr. O'Keefe, on using the Halal Disclosure Form, as used in New Jersey.

About 150 participants attended the conference, including delegates from Canada, Pakistan, and the Philippines. A six-member delegation from Belgium, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, was also present.



Muslim American Aspects

Scholars and researchers find a platform to share knowledge and focus on issues of Muslims living in the North. **BY ABU ALI BAFAQUIH**

Muslims and Islam continue to be in the focus. Some 10 years go, ISNA, realizing the growing interest in and importance of this newly emerging field of research, introduced its Annual Islam in America Conference.

This year, the 10th such conference was held in Chicago, April 14-16, bringing together scholars, researchers, and community leaders to focus on topics such as interfaith initiatives in America, leadership development, conflict resolution/peace building in Muslim communities, social service models in America, and current youth trends.

ISNA, the MSA of the U.S. and Canada, and Muslim communities have a robust tradition of interfaith activities. This tradition was reflected in a conference session in which Dr. Omar H. Altalib (advisor to the Minaret of Freedom Institute) shared some 20 years of experiences in interfaith initiatives from the American Midwest. He said that the Muslim tradition can be successfully shared in a way that leads to productive dialogue instead of destructive competition. Dr. Muhammad Shafiq (director of the Islamic Center of Rochester, NY and director of the Interfaith Center at Nazareth College) presented the "Qur'anic Perspective of Interfaith Relations and Dialogue and Some Models of Interfaith Work". Dr. Saleem Ahmed (University of Hawaii) introduced the All Believers Network (Belnet, www.allbelievers.net), which was established in Hawaii in 2004. He also explored possible implications for Muslims of adopting extremist or peaceful approaches as means to grapple with political challenges.

Dr. Khadija Khaja (Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI)) and two of her former students—Karen Butterworth and Jonathan Stephenson [who could not attend due to a sudden illness]—presented "A Diverse University Classroom Teaching Model: Breaking Stereotyping to Build Understanding and Appreciation of Muslims in America". This presentation illustrated an innovative university classroom teaching model developed at Indiana University in a Social Work Diversity course. In the model, a student was assigned to visit ISNA headquarters and assess various rumors about the facility. The findings were a revelation, destroying stereotypes that had been aired about ISNA.

Faizan Haq (SUNY-Buffalo) focused on the "Cross Cultural Communication Crisis



Dr. Khadija Khaja, Karen Butterworth, and Jonathan Stephenson presented an innovative university classroom teaching model developed at Indiana University in a Social Work Diversity course. In the model, a student was assigned to visit ISNA headquarters and assess various rumors about the facility. The findings were a revelation, destroying stereotypes that had been aired about ISNA.

Shazia Siddiqui presents her experiences in launching a youth centered activities program

between the West and the Muslim World". Shaza Khan (a doctoral candidate at Rochester University) offered her research on "the adolescent experiences of diasporic Muslim females", highlighting how second generation Muslim women are expressing their identity. Civil Rights Attorney Kamran Memon highlighted his efforts in "Defusing America's Fear of Muslims".

Dr. Unus (director of The Fairfax Institute) explored governance and accountability in the context of Islam-based organizations. He reviewed sample case studies of such organizations engaged in strategic planning and examined the role that strategic planning has played and can play in improving governance and accountability in Muslim community organizations.

Zainab Alwani (a member of the Fiqh Council of North America) discussed the structure of *Maqaasid al Shari'ah* (the ob-

jectives of shari'ah), highlighting the role of this essential methodology in dealing with Muslim American family challenges.

Dr. Louay Safi (executive director of the ISNA Leadership Development Center) discussed the issue of leadership and cultural change.

Shariq A. Siddiqui, a Ph.D student in Philanthropic Studies at IUPUI, looked at philanthropic behavior amongst Muslim Americans.

Dr. Shafi A. Khaled, executive director of the North American Bangladeshi Islamic Community, spoke on "Privacy and the Path to Faith and Practice".

Dr. Dilnawaz Siddiqui, chairman of the Islamic Horizons' editorial advisory board, Dr. Unus, executive director, Fairfax Institute, and Dr. Safi, served as program committee members, with Mukhtar Ahmad, ISNA programs director. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ZAIN GHANI

The Islamic Society of North America ISNA East Zone Conference

Tel: 317-839-8157 • www.isna.net • convention



The Message Shared

East Coast Muslims host their first and successful ISNA regional conference, focusing on the Seerah. **BY ABU AMAL HADHRAMI**

The inaugural session of the ISNA East Zone Conference, held under the theme "Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam): The Man and the Message", in Washington, DC, May 27-29, featured a succession of speakers introducing national Muslim organizations that are working to establish justice and peace through education and da'wah in the U.S.

The opening session was also addressed by ISNA Acting Secretary General Ahmad Elhatab; Host Committee Chair and President of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society Rizwan Jaka; National Director of the ISNA Office of Interfaith and Community Relations (IOICR) Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed; Ahmed Younis of the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC); Arsalan Ifikhar of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR); Mahdi Bray of the Muslim American Society; Radwan Majidi of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA); Aly Abuzaakouk of the Council on the Study of Islam and Democracy; President

of the MSA National Mohamed Sheibani; and President of the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) Zaki Barzinji.

The conference, attended by more than 1100 Muslims from various communities, offered inspiring talks on all aspects of the Prophetic life. The speakers included national as well as international figures such as ISNA President Shaykh Muhammad Nur Abdullah, ISNA Vice President Dr. Ingrid Mattson, former Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Former ISNA president Dr. Abdalla Idris Ali, Egyptian scholar Moez Masoud, and ADAMS Executive Director Imam Mohamed Magid.

The conference program was structured into "tracks" that included the Seerah of the Prophet, Family, Leadership, Community, MSA, and MYNA. Conference Program Chair Dr. Iqbal Unus explained that the tracks allowed attendees to follow particular tracks, attending several panel discussions in the area, and sharpening their knowledge and skills. This, he said, is typical of professional conferences. ISNA Leadership

Development Center awarded certificates to those who attended 3 out of 4 panels in the Leadership track.

ADAMS Deputy Imam Sheikh Rashid Lamprey and Dr. Mattson focused on "Connecting with Allah: Nurturing the Prophetic Tradition in Our Daily Lives", pointing out that although we live in a time long after the Prophet's death and in a land far away from where the message began, this connection is certainly attainable for us.

Dr. Mattson and Dr. Abdalla Idris Ali highlighted how the Prophet affected societal change through his vision, planning, work ethic, and determination. Dr. Idris Ali reflected on the importance of spreading the Prophet's message through our actions, not just our sayings.

Since its founding, family has been central to ISNA. This is now being emphasized through the inclusion of matrimonial events in regional conferences,

ALERT MESSAGE: Anwar Ibrahim reminded that Muslims must affect reforms and strive for higher goals.

rather than only at the national convention. Imam Magid and his wife, Amaarah Decuir, who conduct a popular matrimonial program in the ADAMS community, offered a one hour lecture style session followed by a two hour interactive program, where participants had the opportunity to connect with others looking for spouses.

The conference also provided education on essential matters such as estate planning. Dr. Yaqub Mirza of Sterling Management discussed the nuances of wills, trusts, and estate planning.

The "Family" track included speakers such as Salma Abugideiri, an experienced counselor, Dr. Tanveer Mirza, Imam Johari Abdul Malik, and FAITH Director Ambreen Ahmed. They discussed topics including marriage, family life, and domestic violence.

Standing room only in the panel on "Speaking Up: Muslims in the Media" testified to the community's concerns. The session, addressed by Omar Mullick, Younis, and Jaka, was designed for those who wish to become more involved in working with the media and offered ideas for a coherent and cohesive media strategy.

Moderator Farhad Chaudhury introduced the Muslim American Journalists Association (MAJA) during the session.

ISNA is dedicated to nurturing leadership skills in the youth, and many youth, including Uzma Unus, Dania

Ayoubi, Uroosa Khan, Asma Mirza, Fatima Mirza, Sana Pasha, Owais Balti and Zaki Barzinji, served as moderators.

Attendees appreciated conference presentations, especially those by Imam Sheikh Rashid Lamprey, Moez Masoud, and Imam Johari. There was also wide agreement that the volunteers did an excellent job and that overall it was a well-organized event. ■



Conference attendees Mrs. Naz Malik (left) and Rafia Syeed



Chicago Readies **Welcome**

Chicago is once again readying to welcome participants to the Annual ISNA Convention. This year marks the Convention's 43rd year and the theme will be "Achieving Balance in Faith, Family and Community".

The Convention offers socialization for Muslims living in the U.S. and Canada, but it also strives to empower them with the knowledge and skills they need for everyday life, to fulfill their civic duties and obligations, and of course to safeguard their rights. The program includes sessions on topics such as fiqh issues, civic involvement, Islamophobia, education, da'wah, family and youth issues, and masjid organization. Another important component of the program is fiscal issues, including Islamic investing, retirement planning, and informed giving.

The excitement is building in Chicago and at the ISNA headquarters in suburban Indianapolis, IN. In Chicago, ISNA's long-term convention partner, the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, is working hand in hand with ISNA staff. CIOGC Chair Dr. Abdul-Malik Mujahid serves as the convention co-chair, and ISNA Vice President Dr. Ingrid Mattson serves as program chair.

At ISNA headquarters, a skeletal staff miraculously works to organize the Convention details. Routine jobs include invit-

ing speakers to attend, arranging travel for speakers, and accommodating overseas visitors and their interpreters. At the heart of the preparations are scores of volunteers from across the U.S. and Canada who assist with everything from program content to participant registration to security procedures. Volunteers also run crucial programs, such as the babysitting services and children's programs, which are essential to the positive experience of parents.

Mukhtar Ahmad, director of Convention, Conferences, and Programs, and Sadiya Ali are currently working hard to fine tune the program.

This year's program will include well-known speakers such as Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, Sulayman Nyang, Imam Hassan Al-Qazwini of the Detroit-based Islamic Center of America (ICOA), and Imam Zaid Shakir of Deen Intensive Foundation.

It will also feature the usual Qur'an Competition, Art Exhibition, and Entertainment Program. The Meet the Author program, which has become a Convention regular, will again offer authors the opportunity to meet and interact with other authors and readers. Ameena Jandali, who is

Chicago Muslims set the stage for another memorable ISNA Convention.
By Umerine Abdullah

Convention coordinator Sadiya Ali updates fellow staff in Plainfield, IN about the progress of preparations in Chicago

chairing the Women's Entertainment subcommittee, promises an exciting program.

Last year, the Convention provided the Muslim American Journalists Association (MAJA) with an opportunity to introduce itself. This year, MAJA will have two sessions.

In keeping with the community needs, ISNA continues to offer matrimonial advertising in its "Islamic Horizons" magazine, and the Convention Matrimonial Banquet serves as an opportunity for families and perspective spouses to meet.

The Muslim Students Association of U.S. & Canada (MSA) and the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) will hold their own parallel programs, sharing several sessions with the main ISNA Convention.

According to ISNA Conventions Director Basharat Saleem, more than 600 booths in the Convention bazaar have already been reserved by merchandisers, service providers, and nonprofit organizations. Hotel accommodations are also quickly filling up.

For more information, contact ISNA Conventions Department: 317-839-8157 ext. 241; email—convention@isna.net; or fax—317-839-1822.

Volunteers from across the U.S. and Canada are assisting with everything from program content to participant registration to security procedures.



THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

43rd Annual ISNA Convention

ACHIEVING BALANCE IN FAITH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

September 1 – 4, 2006

Donald E. Stephens Convention Center
5555 North River Road • Rosemont, Illinois 60018

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.ISNA.NET



Main Phone: 317 • 839 • 8157

Housing & Registration: ext 241 • Bazaar: ext 244 • Sponsorship: ext 239

REGISTRATION FORM

Avoid Delays

REGISTER ONLINE SAVE TIME AND MONEY WWW.ISNA.NET

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Home Phone															Fax														
First Name															Last Name														
Street Address																													
City										State/Prov.										Postal Code									
E-mail Address (required)															Profession														
Spouse's First Name															Spouse's Last Name														

Dependents (please list in order by age)

First Name															Last Name															Age				
First Name															Last Name															Age				
First Name															Last Name															Age				
First Name															Last Name															Age				

MUST READ

It is our commitment to provide you and your family an enlightening and safe environment during the ISNA Convention. In this regard ISNA holds the right to remove any person whom ISNA deems necessary to maintain order or for any other reason. By registering for the ISNA Convention I agree that if any member in my group, whose names are written on this form, or myself cause any disturbance during the convention, I or any member of my group will leave the convention center immediately on order of ISNA official. The judgment of term "disturbance" will be determined solely by ISNA officials.

Registration Fess (US \$)

Adult (19+ years)	\$ 75 X _____ = \$ _____
Husband and Wife	\$ 135 X _____ = \$ _____
University Students/MSA (Provide Copy of I.D.)	\$ 55 X _____ = \$ _____
MYNA (12 - 18 years) Per Youth	\$ 20 X _____ = \$ _____
Children's Program (6-12 years) Each Child	\$ 20 X _____ = \$ _____

Babysitting (\$50 per child/per event)

TIMING:

Friday 3:00 pm - 10:30 pm
Saturday and Sunday 9:00 am - 10:30 pm

TOTAL: \$ _____

Add \$30 per form after August 1, 2006

Method of Payment (US)

Section	Transferred Totals
Registration Fee	\$ _____
Donation to Brotherhood Fund	\$ _____
MYNA Scholarship Fund	\$ _____
Membership Fees	\$ _____
Saturday Community Service	\$ _____
Recognition Luncheon	\$ _____
(\$100 per Individual and \$1000 per table)	
TOTAL DUE	\$ _____

☐ **CHECK** (Payable to ISNA) # _____
Amount \$ _____

☐ **CHARGE** to the following Card:
☐ Master ☐ Visa ☐ AMEX ☐ Discover

Card # _____

Printed Name As Appears on Credit Card: _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

HOTEL RESERVATION

REGISTRATION DEADLINE AUGUST 1, 2006

How to Reserve Your Room

September 1 - 4, 2006

- Reservations must be made on the official form and must be sent along with your registration form before August 1, 2006. You should receive your confirmation within 3 weeks. Confirmation for on-line reservations will be received by e-mail immediately.
- Rooms are assigned on a first-come first-serve, available basis as received. If the hotel of your choice is full, you will be assigned to the next alternative.
- Bed type is not guaranteed & subject to availability. There may be an extra charge for rollaway beds. (The hotel at check in will notify you.) Since there are a limited number of rooms with two double beds, and in consideration for those with families, please only request rooms with 2 beds if it is absolutely necessary.
- CANCELLATION:** You will receive your confirmation directly from the hotel. If you do not cancel 3-weeks prior to your arrival date, your deposit is forfeited. Cancellations will be done only by ISNA. Fax your written request to 317-839-1822.
- If you need to make a change or cancellation after you received your confirmation, please follow the instructions on your confirmation form.

Please review your confirmation letter.

First Name																								
Last Name																								
Street Address																								
City										State/Province										Postal Code				
Telephone																								
Fax																								
E-mail																								



Please list any special needs

Mail or fax this form with your completed registration form. Housing forms will not be processed without registration forms and payment.

Hotel Information

Rates do not include state or local taxes.

	Rates Per Night	Rank Your Preference (1, 2, 3, 4)
Hyatt Regency O'Hare (Connected to Rosemont Convention Center)	\$99.00	_____
Doubletree (Across from Convention Center)	\$97.00	_____
Sofitel (Connected to Rosemont Convention Center)	\$84.00	_____
Crown Plaza (Across from Convention Center)	\$79.00	_____

Room Type

Check One: ☐ 1 Bed in room ☐ 2 Beds in room

Name of person #2 _____

Name of person #3 _____

Name of person #4 _____

Arrival Date* _____

Departure Date* _____

* Recommended Dates Arrive 9/1/2006 Depart 9/4/2006

Method of Payment (US \$)

- To guarantee your reservation, a deposit for the first night is required.
- Deposits may be made by check or credit card.
- Deposits are completely non-refundable as of 3 weeks to arrival.

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO HOTEL(S)

☐ Check # _____ Amount \$ _____

☐ Charge to the following Card:

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Credit Card Number _____

Printed Name as Appears on Credit Card _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

NATIONAL NEWS

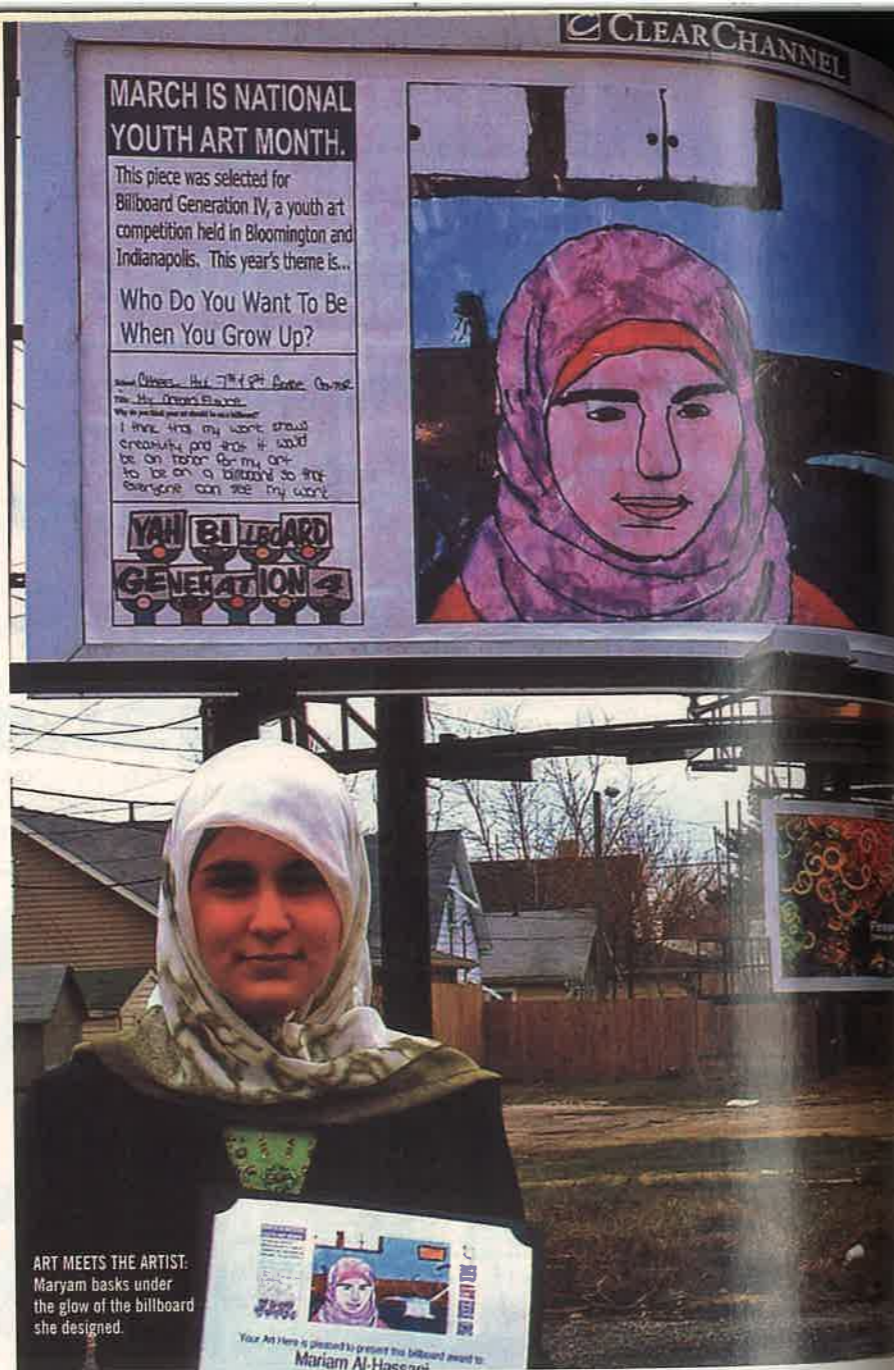
A PUBLIC FACE

What was a hijab-clad teenager doing on a billboard in Indianapolis, IN? She was telling the world that she, a Muslim American, aspires to be a dentist.

Mariam Al-Hassani, 13, won the right to share her future dreams with the city in an art contest sponsored by Your Art Here (YAH), an Indiana-based nonprofit public art organization, which put her winning artwork on the billboard during March 2006.

The organization, which was created to provide the Bloomington and Indianapolis communities with an opportunity to engage in visual, public dialogue via the appropriation of billboards and other public spaces in celebration of National Youth Art Month, invited art on the topic "Who Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?" YAH aspires to extend visual expression beyond traditional museum and gallery spaces to the community-at-large by creating a public space where art and ideas can be expressed freely to a wide, diverse audience. This year's topic asked participants to self-reflect on the kind of person they want to be as an adult and how they can have a positive effect through their work, their family, and their community. Students communicated their hopes, dreams, and questions about their futures, imagining such things as career choices, what they will look like, and what it will mean to be true to themselves as grown-ups in the world.

Al-Hassani, currently in seventh grade, loves mathematics and social sciences. Her father, Dr. Mohammed A. Al-Hassani, teaches at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI), and her mother teaches at an Islamic pre-school. ■



ART MEETS THE ARTIST: Maryam basks under the glow of the billboard she designed.

CANADA RADIO ADMITS ERROR

CAIR-Canada settled a defamation lawsuit against David Harris and CFRA Radio arising from an April 1, 2004 broadcast, where Harris, president of Insignis Strategic Research and former chief of Strategic Planning for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), implied that CAIR-Canada was a terrorist organization.

CFRA Radio settled and offered Sheema Khan, former chair of CAIR-Canada, an opportunity to rebut Harris' Sept. 2004 comments. CFRA also had former executive director Riad



Saloojee as a guest with Steve Madely on the Lunch Bunch, a noon-hour roundtable news discussion. Since the launch of the

lawsuit, it appears that CFRA has not used Harris as a guest commentator. Last year, CAIR-Canada also sued David Frum, a former White House speechwriter who helped coin George Bush's "axis of evil" phrase, and the "National Post", who suggested that CAIR-Canada had terrorist

affiliations. In the settlement against Frum, the "Post" published an Editor's Note stating, "David Frum and the National

Post acknowledge that the Council on American-Islamic Relations Canada is a national grassroots organization with the stated purpose of empowering Canadian Muslims through community education, media relations, anti-discrimination and public advocacy...David Frum and the National Post acknowledge that neither Sheema Khan nor the Council on American-Islamic Relations Canada advocates or promotes terrorism...It is acknowledged that Sheema Khan and the Council on American-Islamic Relations Canada have repeatedly affirmed the importance of an understanding and appreciation of Islam in Canadian society." ■

POSITIVE VIDEO

JustSayGo Films (www.JustSayGoFilms.com), a Dallas, TX-based media company, vows to counter the negative Muslim stereotype in the mainstream media and meet the growing demand for positive Muslim content, says its founder Naeem Randhawa.

Randhawa, who describes his venture as "a diversity focused film company", says, "We have been working with the local and national Muslim communities to film and produce news and in-depth stories that bring attention to the diversity that exists in America, and to build bridges between all Americans."

He says that "recent mainstream interest in more di-

versified films" makes it "imperative for us to bring to the forefront, high-quality media productions for television and film that portray Muslims in a realistic, non-biased point of view."

JustSayGo Films is currently providing events and news coverage for a national satellite network. In addition to filming news segments, JustSayGo Films also produces an entertainment show. Also in the works are a documentary, "American Ramadan"—an introspective look at 5 families in Dallas and Los Angeles, observing and practicing their faith in America—and, a first, a Muslim travel show, which is to be aired in Fall 2006.



Muslim Woman Takes the Bench

Charlene Mekled Elder, 36, was appointed to the 3rd Circuit Court of Wayne County by Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm. Judge Elder becomes the state's first female, first Arab, and first Muslim American judge, and her appointment comes from the state's first female governor.

A fluent Arabic speaker, Judge Elder brings to the bench a solid legal background and a diverse upbringing. Wayne County has the largest concentration of Arab Americans outside the Middle East, roughly 350,000, and Michigan is home to approximately 400,000 Muslims.

Judge Elder never opted for the easy road. At 22, she set out to have a career, a marriage, and children. Today, she has all three as a judge, wife to the deputy CEO of Wayne County, Azzam Elder, and mother of four children, Madina (12), Nozmi (10), Yasmine (9), and Adam (7).

When not on the bench, she coaches her youngest son's soccer team and participates in the sporting events of her other three children. Elder, who most recently served as

magistrate for Dearborn's 19th District Court and as a lawyer in private practice, volunteers for various notable civic organizations, including but not limited to the Dearborn Rotary Club, the Seeds of Peace, the Arab-American Institute, the Islamic Center of America, the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, and the Alliance for a Safer, Greater Detroit.

The University of Michigan alum, who received her law degree from the Detroit College of Law (1995), reminds, "Education is your salvation. Our children will have no excuse to not get educated."

Evil Dumped

Some cab drivers at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International airport are refusing to take passengers who carry alcohol, such as bot-



tles of wine or cases of beer, because it conflicts with their religious beliefs, reported KSTP-TV, April 27.

Muslim drivers, airport staff said, have refused to take passengers with alcohol 922 times in the past year. Airport policy does allow drivers to refuse a fare, only if they return to the beginning of the cab line, which can mean a wait of 3 to 4 hours until their next fare.

Airport officials have met with the Cab Driver Advisory Board to resolve the issue. They say they have investigated policies at other airports but concluded that the problem is unique to MSP.

Conscientious Muslims everywhere share such abhorrence of alcohol. South Africa's newly-emergent star Hashim Amla—the first cricketer of South Asian descent to represent his country—told his sports board that he will not wear any sponsorship logos on his playing kit that relate to alcohol as it goes against his religion.

Similarly, last year, during Australia versus the World, Pakistani cricket players refused to wear logos of alcoholic beverages.

SCIENCE ACHIEVER

Dr. Zuber D. Mulla will receive the Professional

Achievement Award from the University of Arizona Alumni Association (UAAA). An associate professor and assistant director of Clinical Research in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Texas Tech University School of Medicine, Dr. Mulla

was recognized in part for his research on the clinical epidemiology of necrotizing fasci-

itis caused by the "flesh-eating" bacterium group A *Streptococcus*. The award ceremony will be held in Tucson this November. Dr. Mulla is also currently serving on the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Center of El Paso.



Milestone Award Winner

Abdul Malik Mujahid, chairman of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, received the Milestone Award, presented by the Asian American Institute to Asian community leaders to mark their contributions to society.

Dr. Mujahid previously served as National coordinator for the Bosnia Task Force, USA and Kosovo Task Force, USA, both of which were coalitions of North America's leading Muslim organizations. It was in this capacity that he initiated the formation of the Islamic Shura Council of North America. His other civic commitments include successfully initiating a joint campaign between American Muslims and the National Organization of Women (NOW) to declare rape a war crime in 1993.

The Institute, established in 1992 as a pan-Asian not-for-profit organization, strives to empower the Asian American community through advocacy, research, education, and coalition building.

TINY OVER ACHIEVER

No one group appeared on stage more, receiving more recognition than The Muslim Student Association. The group of 15 full-time students received four awards, including the Outstanding Overall Program Award for their '15th Annual Islamic Cultural Night' and Exceptional Small Organization Award," stated Ben Aaker of "The Rocky Mountain Collegian" (5/4/06), reporting on Colorado State University's fourth annual Student Organizations Awards and Recognition (SOAR).

There are over 300 registered student organizations on the Ft. Collins campus, and SOAR recognized 25 or-



ganizations and nine individuals in seven different categories.

"We've worked so hard to achieve our goal of showing the Fort Collins community about the Islamic culture and heritage in hopes of bridging the gap," said Zaki Safar, vice-president of the Muslim Student Association. "It feels

A BEVY OF HONORS: A team was required to handle the large number of awards garnered by the tiny MSA chapter.

so nice to be recognized for all our hard work."

The MSA's "15th Annual Islamic Cultural Night" was declared Outstanding Overall Program and its website was recognized as the best.



The chapel of the new Clarian North Hospital in Indianapolis, IN was dedicated, May 2. Diverse religious leaders were invited to offer prayers and blessings. Dr. Shahid Athar, a former president of the Islamic Medical Association of North America, offered prayers for patients and healthcare providers, gifted a copy of the Qur'an to the chapel, and recited Surah Al-Fatihah. (from right) Rev. Elizabeth Price, Chaplain Judy Doll, Hospital CEO Jonathan Goble, Director of Ethics Dr. Steve Ivy, Rabbi Jonathan Adland, Dr. Shahid Athar, and Rabbi Arnold Beinstock.

ENSHRINED in Memory

Sharifa Alkhateeb was honored with yet another tribute; this time by the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation at their May 6th Standing for Justice banquet in suburban Washington, DC.

Alkhateeb, who died of cancer last year, was a pillar of the Greater Washington Muslim community. She championed the causes of education, civic affairs, women's issues, family counseling, and mediation, while all the time combating anti-Muslim bias.

"Sharifa Alkhateeb spent her life 'Standing for Justice' for Muslims and non-Muslims alike," said Mahdi Bray, executive director of MAS Freedom Foundation.

Speakers at the banquet—held under the theme of "defending our image, our rights and our faith"—included nationally renowned radio and television personality Amy Goodman, news director and Morning Show host at Pacifica station WBAI in New York City; Muslim Association of Britain President Sir Iqbal Sacranie; Imam Siraj Wahhaj; and others in solidarity with MAS Freedom.

FITNESS with Modesty

A Lincoln Park, MI fitness center, after receiving pressure from Muslim and non-Muslim women, has agreed to place a divider and frosted glass to ensure that women will not be able to see men, and vice-versa, while working out in a new co-ed section of the gym, reports "Detroit Free Press" (4/26/06).

"We hope all of our female members will be pleased," said Jodi Berry, administrative director for Fitness USA.

The move came after almost 200 Muslim women members of Fitness USA signed a petition saying that the company reneged on a promise to maintain gender separation in its Lincoln Park facility.

"We try to avoid as much as possible placing ourselves in situations where we can be seen in immodest ways in front of the other gender," Dawud Walid, executive director of the Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, told the "Detroit Free Press".

The West Bloomfield-based company has announced that other Fitness USA facilities in Westland, Dearborn, Harper Woods, and Royal Oak will continue to accommodate privacy concerns.

AFRICA FOOD CRISIS



OVER 11 MILLION FACE STARVATION IN KENYA, MALAWI, ETHIOPIA, AND SOMALIA

Islamic Relief's Emergency Appeal

- Islamic Relief has allocated an initial budget of \$250,000 and is appealing for \$1.2 million to provide emergency assistance for the starving populations in Kenya and Malawi.
- Islamic Relief has previously assisted the people of Malawi during the 2002 food crisis.
- Islamic Relief is assisting the victims of the food crisis through projects implemented through its field offices in Malawi, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

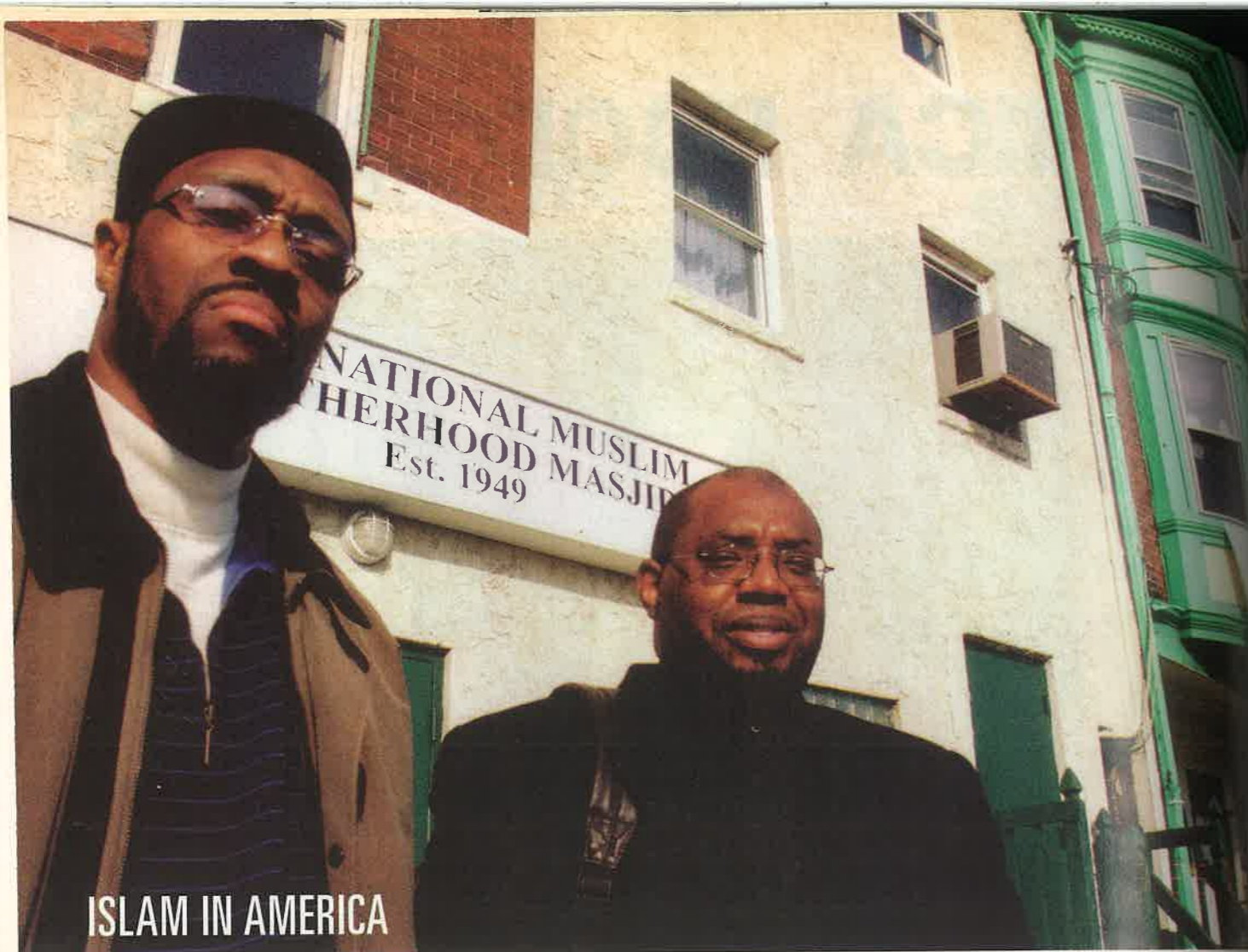
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ISLAM IN AMERICA

LIVING ISLAM

Two Philadelphia Muslims offer a living example that dedication leads to successful community building. **BY OBAIDULLAH SIDDIQUI**

INSIDE THE CONFINES OF A small studio, a calm, calculated voice, oblivious to the buzz of the highway outside, dominates the still air. Speaking into a large microphone, the dignified voice, stressing the last syllable of every word, invitingly hooks the unseen audience with a simple phrase, "You are now listening to Living Islam." Thus, begins the weekly radio program hosted by the International Muslim Brotherhood (IMB), aired every Saturday afternoon for the past three years.

Today's host, Imam Rashid Abdullah, speaks about Prophet Noah's life and times, and for him, speaking comes natural. His booming voice commands attention; his knowledge commands respect. The Imam's orange beard belies his age, but his eyes reveal a timeworn wisdom. He is an elder of the West Philadelphia IMB community, which produced and maintains the city's oldest indigenous masjid. The community now stands as a beacon of Islam in the inner city, and at its base is Sheikh Anwar Muhaimin.

Sheikh Anwar, along with his brother Ustadh Anas and a handful of dedicated Muslims, have committed themselves to the IMB mission—to enlighten others and help them evolve as Muslims. Such is evident in the community's focus on education. Quba Insti-

tute—an IMB subsidiary and full-time, state accredited school—enrolls 80 students from pre-kindergarten to the 12th grade. Quba also runs an adult weekend school and the Sheikh Nafea Muhaimin Qur'an School, named for their [late] father. The strong emphasis on education was instilled in Anwar and Anas by their father, whose pursuit of knowledge originally led him to the IMB.

Prior to embracing Islam, Sheikh Nafea was a jazz musician. Through music he was introduced to Islam, as he met and played with other musicians who were Muslim. These musicians used music as a tool for da'wah, using their free time to discuss Islam. In their company, Nafea witnessed prayer and Qur'an recitation, which appealed to his musical nature. He sought to learn the beautiful sounds. They invited him to IMB, where Nafea initially intended only to learn Arabic. Nafea, however, grew to love Islam and in 1954 took shahadah.

The IMB was founded in 1949 by Imam Nasir Ahmed, an African-American from Philadelphia, who was originally associated with the Qadiani cult in Pittsburgh, but later worked with Prof. Muhammad Ezzaldeen. Ezzaldeen established the Adenu Allahu Universal Arabic Association, which sought to build a network of Islamic social communities across the eastern United States. Ezzaldeen villages were established in New Jersey, Ohio, New York, and Florida. Nasir modified Ezzaldeen's model and developed the IMB to address the needs of urban residents. Although little else is definitively known about IMB's early days, community members are actively sifting through the different, sometimes conflicting, oral histories to authenti-

cate a single account. Sheikh Anwar recognizes that validating the IMB's history is of great importance, "We want people to be very clear about their history and origin."

SHEIKH ANWAR, ALONG WITH HIS BROTHER USTADH ANAS AND A HANDFUL OF DEDICATED MUSLIMS, HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE IMB MISSION—TO ENLIGHTEN OTHERS AND HELP THEM EVOLVE AS MUSLIMS.

For Anwar, his own origin is inseparable from that of the community. He was born and raised Muslim in Philadelphia, where he resided until the age of 11. Before his twelfth birthday, his father made a choice that would eventually steer the family's future; he moved them to Saudi Arabia. The opportunity presented itself to Sheikh Nafea while on hajj in 1972, when invited to stay and study Islam. Nafea knew that Muslim communities in America would advance only as far as the knowledge of their members. At that point, much of the knowledge presented to the IMB community was from students affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University Muslim Student Associations (MSA). Of course, IMB could not rely solely on students who taught classes and gave khutbahs in their spare time. So with the pursuit of knowledge as his goal, Nafea accepted the invitation.

But not everyone was looking forward to the move. Anwar did not accept the news with an open mind. For him, Saudi Arabia was another world, especially some 40 years ago. For an 11-year-old from inner city Philadelphia, it was a world beyond his imagination. To him, everyone else was alien. It quickly became apparent

that he was the stranger, the foreigner. Although in America Anwar was in the sixth grade, in the Saudi Arabian school system he was required to begin from the first grade. He

was bigger than the other kids, black, American, and he did not speak Arabic. Anwar and Anas were teased, and the transition was difficult. Their support of each other however allowed them to harness the childish negativity and apply themselves to their studies.

After three straight years in Saudi Arabia, the Muhaimin family began to make annual summer trips to America. Once again, however, Anwar found himself in culture shock. What was once his home was now an unfamiliar land. He viewed Philadelphia and its people in an unusual light, which prompted his father to swiftly remind him of his roots. "This is where you're from, who your people are, and what you're coming back too," Anwar remembers his father saying. The Muhaimin family traveled to the South, visiting family in South Carolina and Georgia. (While his nuclear family was Muslim, his extended family was not.) Being exposed to African-American life with an Islamic perspective during his formative years honed a skill Anwar would brandish many times in his future—that of relating to others.

Also during these summer breaks, Anwar would meet with his friend, Zubair Abdus-Shaheed. Zubair came into Islam at the age of five, after his parents, discontent with Christianity, took shahadah. Together, Anwar and Zubair shared their perspectives, each bringing a unique view of the world to the table. These interactions, while helping them broaden their view of Islam, were also the seeds of their future roles in the community.

Back in Saudi Arabia, Anwar and Anas soon learned how to navigate through Arab society and the school system. They developed friendships, and as for school, to say they excelled is an understatement. By 15, Anwar had memorized the entire Qur'an. He went on to graduate first in his high school class of over 400 students and third in his class with honors from the Islamic University of Medina. He received *ijazah* in Aqeedah, Hadith, Tafsir, and Fiqh. Anas also memorized the Qur'an and received *ijazah* in the same subjects. Shortly after 1983, however, Anas cut his studies short to care for his parents who had left Saudi Arabia. Sheikh Nafea, a Korean War veteran, had a heart condition requiring greater care than Saudi Arabia's healthcare system at the time

(left) Zubair Abdus-Salaam, left, and Sheikh Anwar outside the Muslim Brotherhood Masjid; The lime-green building, which now houses the Quba Institute, was Sheikh Anwar's childhood home.



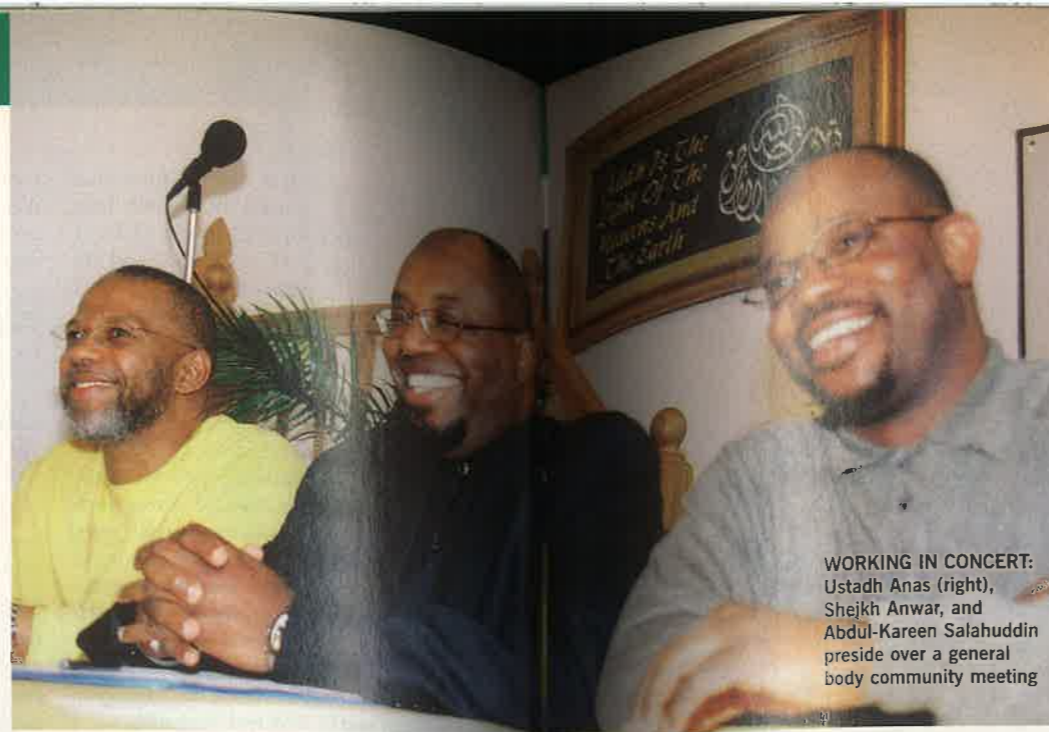
ISLAM IN AMERICA

could provide. Anwar stayed, completed his studies in 1989, and returned to America.

When he arrived in America, however, taking over the masjid was not in his plans. On the contrary, Anwar wanted to be an international corporate lawyer. He knew his intimate knowledge of the Middle East could land him a lucrative position with a large firm. However, something held him back; he was too connected to the community. Sheikh Nafea had imparted the importance of working within the community for social justice and enlightening others. This was the IMB's mission. It was what Anwar's father did for him and his brother. And is what they choose to do for others.

Spreading da'wah, through words and actions, is a paramount mission for every Muslim and masjid. To accomplish this, Anwar and Anas opened the Quba school, along with numerous other IMB expansions, including a funeral home, publishing company, arbitra-

tivists to foster the growth of the IMB. One such person is Suad Islam, Anas's wife. Being principal of Quba Institute is just one of her many roles and accomplishments. With Master's degrees in education from Temple and in urban studies from Temple and the University of Pennsylvania, and after completing a graduate program for principals at Harvard, Suad is currently working toward a Ph.D. in the sociology of education at Temple. She has recharged the Quba mission, focusing on holistic education and encouraging students to transcend borders and accept otherness. Quba does so by involving them in numerous interfaith projects in hopes of making them comfortable working with non-Muslims, while maintaining a strong sense of self. Her belief is that those who cannot negotiate such inter-



WORKING IN CONCERT: Ustadh Anas (right), Sheikh Anwar, and Abdul-Kareem Salahuddin preside over a general body community meeting

SHEIKH ANWAR FEELS THAT VERY FEW MUSLIM LEADERS ACCEPT THE YOUTH AS THEY ARE—FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS, ARROGANCE, AND, AT TIMES, RAGE. HE HOPES THE YOUTH SUMMIT WILL EXPLORE AND HELP ALLEVIATE THOSE CONCERNS.

tion center, and community development corporation. Since few great tasks are rarely done alone, it took the help of many other Muslim professionals, educators, and community ac-

actions will not succeed.

Such negotiation is especially important for new Muslims. IMB teacher Aminah Shalabi spends Sunday afternoons with students in the

new shahadah class. One of the students, John, converted to Islam a year ago, but floated around from masjid to masjid feeling isolated and uncomfortable, as assistance in the transi-

tion to understanding and living Islam was not available. At IMB, though, John feels welcome in the company of Muslims who take great interest in helping him learn Islam. Another student, Antonio, took shahadah a few years ago, but was still lured by the street life, like many of Philadelphia's young Muslim men. He now regularly attends the Sunday class because his "eyes are open" to Islam.

If any of the students miss class, Aminah will call them to ensure things are alright. "I love my class. My brothers and sisters think enough of me to come and I love them for their effort," Aminah says. A cancer survivor, Aminah feels that "seeing their faces is like medicine." All of the students agree that Aminah's compassion, patience, and loving character help them return week after week. She guides them and gives them the tools to practice Islam. "It's hard as an outsider to come and find the information you're looking for, but it's been real nice and easy here," says Laura, a new Muslim and dedicated student.

Such da'wah is not simply for converting, Sheikh Anwar believes. It is a bridge for forming alliances and nurturing mutual support. That's why he speaks at local churches and is involved in numerous interfaith projects. It is also a reason why Quba Institute has partnered with the University of Pennsylvania. His wife, Saida Abdul-Aziz, is actively involved with the University's Center for Community Partnerships, which has led to interactive graduate courses for Penn students. Currently, first year Ph.D. candidates studying ethnomusicology are working with Quba students, from whom they study the art of Qur'anic recitation and with whom they have developed numerous educational audio and video projects.

To reach out to those who have the desire to learn is one thing, but to inspire those who

annual Youth Summit, that language, the halal version, is embraced through performances by Muslim rap groups and comedians.

The Summit provides a desperately needed alternative source of entertainment, while also supporting Muslim artists. One such artist is comedian Azhar Usman, who has reached an international audience with the "Allah Made Me Funny" tour. "It is important that scholars and community leaders like Imam Anwar take a very reasonable and balanced position on the role of culture and the arts in promoting healthy psychologies among American Muslims," Azhar says. "Every little bit of positive inspiration helps." Azhar, a Chicago resident, plans on performing again at this year's event. "The IMB community was nothing but loving, warm, and appreciative," continues Azhar, and Sheikh Anwar "is a man of tremendous honor, integrity, and spiritual insight."

Looking back over 40 years of friendship, Sheikh Anwar and Zubair have witnessed changes in their community. Zubair, now a security specialist and owner of a security company, realizes a shift has taken place. Their fathers gave them the Islamic tools to navigate through society. Now they hold the tools, and just like their fathers, are passing on them to the numerous outgrowths of the IMB.

Back at the studio, Imam Rashid is wrapping up his educational presentation. The show's producer, Sahir Muhammad, gets the Imam's attention with a sheet of paper displaying the amount of time left. The story of Noah was too long for this week's one-hour show. Without missing a beat, the Imam informs his audience that he will revisit the story next time. With his sign-off, Imam Rashid concludes the Living Islam show. Living Islam, indeed. ■

Obaidullah Siddiqui is a technical writer based in Philadelphia.

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 - g. Post Islamic Horizons issues on ISNA website
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He is a ground-breaker and activist to colleagues, a mentor to students, and a brother to fellow artists. Meet

Najjar Abdul-Musawwir, an artist and a professor in studio art and art history in the School of Art and Design at the Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

Abdul-Musawwir, who surfaced against all odds to become an artist, and today, fulfilling his lifelong dream of painting for a living, has evolved a unique style, combining his African American heritage and Islamic beliefs to capture the hearts of local, national, and international communities.

"He's a wonderful developing artist," said Hajjah Ann Saunders, a fellow artist now in Washington, DC and a former SIU colleague. She adds, "I've been inspired by him, especially with his study and pursuit of Islamic art in America."

"What I love about Najjar's work—he's passionate, energizing, uplifting," said Nate Steinbrink, SIU museum exhibits designer, who works with Abdul-Musawwir (BA '92, MFA '97) to help students. "I've always valued his positive energy force."

Abdul-Musawwir's work has been exhibited in galleries, museums, and colleges across the Midwest and, internationally, in Japan, England, Malaysia, Africa, and Saudi Arabia.

The philosophy and inspiration behind his paintings often lie in Islamic beliefs and his African Ameri-

Overcoming challenges, an
artist realizes his dream
and shares it with the world.

BY AISHA QIDWAE

A Groundbreaker with a BRUSH

Abdul-Musawwir in his studio

doing what he always wanted to do,

making a living and life out of art.

can experiences. Qur'anic verses, such as 55:1-5, inspire Abdul-Musawwir to invest energy and passion in his talent of painting. »

"My work is based on the natural order, deen al-fitrah. Its narrative, abstractive or something that relates to history—no matter what they're linked together," he explains. "I am an African American Muslim, and I am American. I never personally had a problem with that." Some of his works include "Garment Series", "Ghanaian Stool Series", "Islamic Love Letters", "Breast Cancer Series", "Works of Najjar", "Wings of Discovery", and "Brown v. Board of Education."

How He Paints. As an undergraduate at SIU, he completed a series of paintings on freedom after hearing a speech on its meaning in Islam by Imam Warith Deen Mohammed. "As Muslims, religious freedom in this country is not hindered. I have the freedom to say anything insulting," said Abdul-Musawwir. "If you put the *dom* suffix it becomes contained. You have that freedom, but you have to be guided and contained."

That's how this painting became the Free-Dom Series. He tells his students about *ruh al-ilham*, the inspiration of the soul, "Islamic terminology helps them understand the attitude about art."

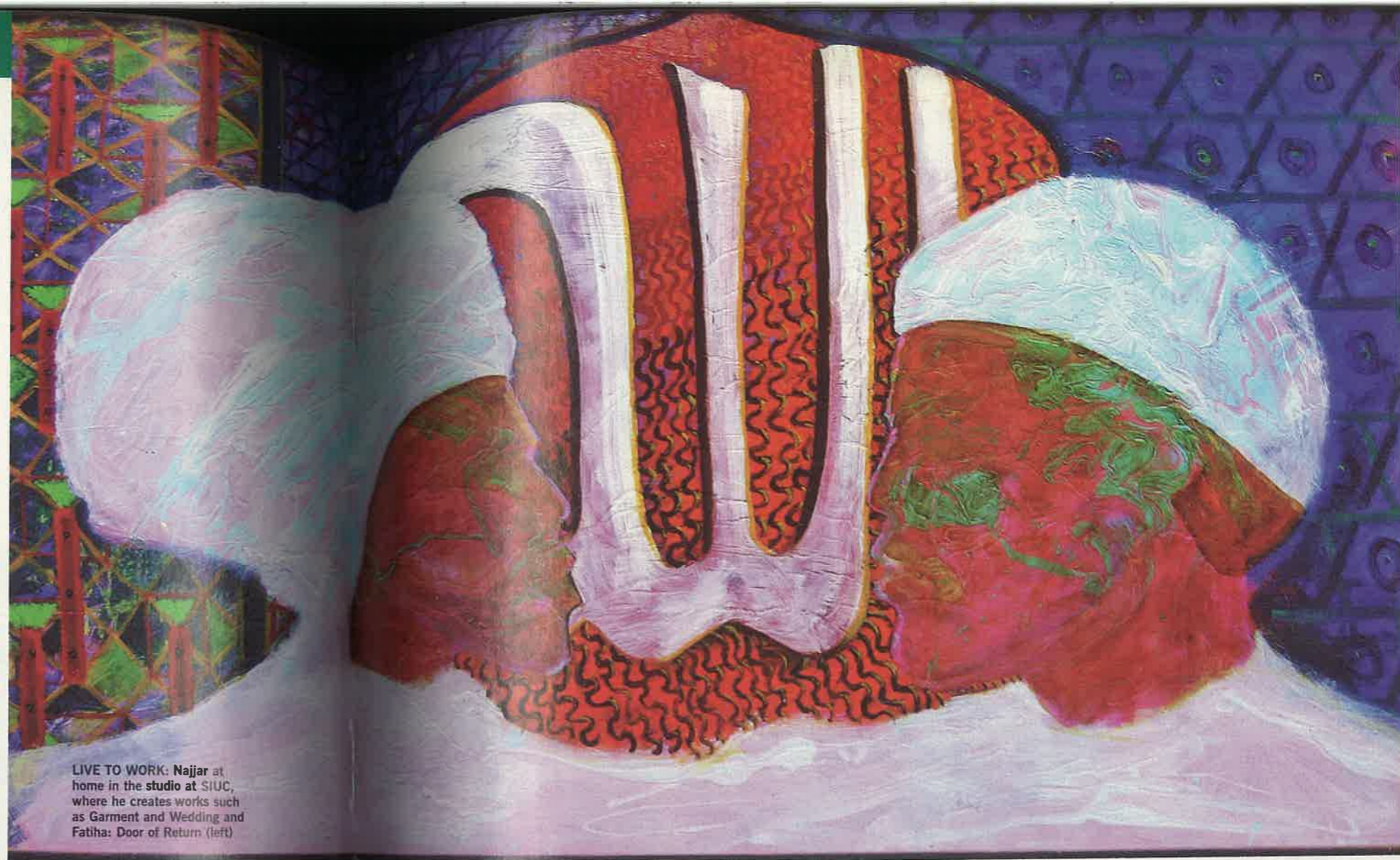
In 1999, Abdul-Musawwir traveled to Ghana to the Panafest Conference to give a speech and exhibit his artwork. During this trip, he visited a slave castle, where he saw "The Door Returns" written on a door. That started him thinking about his experience in Africa and his understanding of Fatiha. How many Fatihas have been recited by our grandmothers, mothers, fathers, and ourselves, he asked himself. After eight drafts, his piece came together in "Fatiha and Door of Return", showing how many times we return to Surah Fatiha in our lives.

Abdul-Musawwir said he paints in three processes. First, in the random movement stage, he looks at things randomly, selects a few things, and jots

11th grader, he could not read, but his school overlooked that and kept him in school because he was a gold medal gymnast in 1974. When he chose not to carry through with the sport, he was kicked out of school. He ended up being incarcerated for 10 years; during that time, he became Muslim and began to seriously pursue art.

Abdul-Musawwir says his Muslim brothers recognized his talent and encouraged him to study, become an artist, and teach art. That's when he adopted his new name to keep him humble. Najjar means carpenter and Abdul-Musawwir means Servant of the Fashioner; "I am an artist, but He is The Artist."

Abdul-Musawwir shares his life lessons with people he meets everyday. Najee Dorsey, a fellow artist in Atlanta, GA, has had a 13-year relationship with Abdul-Musawwir, who took him under his wing. "He



LIVE TO WORK: Najjar at home in the studio at SIUC, where he creates works such as Garment and Wedding and Fatiha: Door of Return (left)

The art community either wants images of black radical Muslims or Muslim women being oppressed that they can present as Islamic art and ideology.

things down on a piece of paper. In his rationalization process, he looks to pinpoint the concepts. And finally, he seeks resolutions and asks himself questions about what colors to use, how to mix paint, and whether he needs to edit. He views his work critically and takes responsibility for his work. At that point, it's done. "If artists put their art work out there, they put their self out," said Abdul-Musawwir.

Life Takes a Turn for the Better. Abdul-Musawwir said making a living and life out of art is what he always wanted to do, but he admits life hasn't always been so smooth. As an

taught me that there's a big world out there," said Dorsey. "He's a brother to me." The two worked together in 1993, until Dorsey found his own style. "God gives us the talent," said Dorsey. "Najee gave me inspiration and kept me motivated to keep going."

Along this "wonderful journey," Dorsey said, Abdul-Musawwir introduced him to Islam, and Dorsey eventually took shahadah; "Najjar's been a blessing, to say the least."

Najee Dorsey, whose first name means communicator, said he chose a name and signature close to Najjar Abdul-Musawwir's because of the latter's effect on him.



Using Art to Convey Islam. Abdul-Musawwir uses his art to convey messages about Islam. "Since 9-11, even the most open-minded, are not open-minded. Is it the work? Is it me being African American? Is it me being Muslim?" asks Abdul-Musawwir.

He believes people see two versions of Islam: Islam in the media, which is contrary to the Islam in the neighborhood.

"Artists, like a writer or any communicator, make statements about color, form, culture, identity, and formal issues," said Abdul-

Musawwir. "We visual artists have a special responsibility to convey the ideas of faith."

He said the art community either wants images of black radical Muslims or Muslim women being oppressed that they can present as Islamic art and ideology. "The art community wants to see the degradation, not celebration of black art and even Islamic art," said Abdul-Musawwir.

His colleague, Steinbrink, often thinks that art of different cultures gets pigeonholed. "In the temporary art world in the U.S., anything that has different culture, it doesn't get the same value as a regular American artist might," said Steinbrink, who disagrees with this approach.

Abdul-Musawwir also believes that people equate oriental and traditional with Islamic art. "So what is Islamic art? A prayer rug? Calligraphy?" he asks. He believes professional Muslim artists need to address this issue.


"We agree that people in this country look to the East for Islamic art, instead of looking in their own backyard," said Saunders, who Abdul-Musawwir lists in the artists that influence him. "He's developing an art form that reflects Islamic culture, but also Western/American culture, but the broader

art community doesn't seem to know that."

The rule about not using images pronounced by different schools of thought doesn't hinder Abdul-Musawwir from drawing faces. He believes it's not the created things that you should worry about, it is your approach to them. "Najjar came to me and began a dialogue that I found exciting," said Saunders. "As Muslim artists do we feel inhibited by what Muslims are saying, the need to avoid the figure in Islamic art...encouraged me to speak out and move beyond traditional approaches I was taking."

Abdul-Musawwir, who wants Muslim artists to come together in a dialogue, not to sell their work, but to discuss these issues, is currently putting together a publication on the contemporary art and philosophy of the Islamic world. "The artwork of African-American Muslim artists has not been fully examined by the art world, and the contribution is beyond one dimensional," said Abdul-Musawwir. "The contribution is to the art community of mainstream, African-Americans, and Muslims alike." ■

Aisha Qidwae, a junior at Chicago's Columbia College majoring in print journalism, aspires to work as a foreign correspondent to help the voices of the underrepresented.



Aging MUSLIM IN AMERICA

Tuesday: "Dear doctor! My husband is very sick. He cannot even walk. Please pay us a home visit." Wednesday: "Doctor! We cannot make to your office. Could you please visit us at home?" Thursday: The doctor visits his patients at home. "We have been unable to eat anything for last three days because I have severe arthritis and cannot open anything, not even the milk bottle. And my husband is in bed and so weak that he cannot walk to toilet." This is a real story of aging Muslims in America. It should be a wakeup call to us all. BY ZAHEER UDDIN

According to the data provided by the World Health Organization and the UN, currently, one tenth of the world's population is 60 years old or over. It is expected, however, that this number will increase to 2 billion by the year 2050. This increase is not just in absolute numbers but also reflects the proportional increase of the aging population with respect to the other age groups in society. In developed Western countries, the proportion of the aging to the general population is more than 20 percent; in developing countries, especially majority Muslim countries, the aging population is increasing at an even faster pace. This rate is not limited only to Muslim countries; the number of aging Muslims living in countries, including Germany, England, Belgium, Holland and France, is also increasing at a fast pace.

America is also getting older. This is now common knowledge among policymakers, planners, service providers, and scholars who work with our nation's elderly population. The most common indicator of a population's "aging" is the change in the percentage aged 65 years and over. In 1940, this indicator was 6.8 percent; by 2000, it had grown to 12.4 percent. Simultaneously, the median age increased from 29 to 35.3 years. Such measures, however, mask the true demand for goods and services. While the percentage did not quite double over 60 years, the absolute number of elders expanded from about 9 million in 1940 to over 35 million in 2000, almost a 6-fold increase.



According to a CAMRI demographic study Muslim seniors (55 years and up) make up only 5.25 percent of the total Muslim population at present. This ratio, however, will be drastically changed in the next ten or so years by Muslim baby boomers.

According to the study "A Report on Muslim Population in the United States of America" by the Center for American Muslim Research and Information (CAMRI)—a New York city-based think tank—Muslim seniors (55 years and up) fortunately make up only 5.25 percent of the total Muslim population at present. This ratio, however, will be drastically changed in the next ten or so years by Muslim baby boomers.

Caring For The Elderly. No matter how healthy or autonomous older people appear to be, the fact remains that age brings heightened risks of a variety of diseases and psychosocial concerns. Among the common health problems elderly suffer are cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, osteoporosis, and difficulties with hearing and vision, not to mention Parkinson's disease and dementia. While many of these

illnesses are treatable, they show few signs of being cured. Instead, they are becoming the chronic diseases of modern society, chronic diseases that are often difficult to manage socially and even more costly to manage medically.

Today, many people spend their final years unable to care for themselves. As they enter their 70s and 80s, many can expect several years marked by frequent trips to doctors and emergency rooms and years spent in assisted living and long-term care facilities. Ultimately, the consequences of aging will be physically represented by catheters, appliances, and feeding tubes. In short, the future challenge is caring for the elderly.

Horror Stories. There is no doubt many Muslim families in North America take good care of their elders and there are many remarkable examples of sacrifice

from children. However, there are also many horror stories. Even though Islam strongly condemns such events, they continue to occur.

Many young professionals keep their parents in the basements of their multimillion dollar homes. Some parents are not even able to go to Friday prayers due to lack of transportation. In one instance, children did not want their friends to see their parents and one of the parents was "instructed" to stay in his room during a party. When the party concluded at midnight, the son realized that his father had died some hours earlier due to a severe heart attack.

In another instance, a Muslim relative came to know only after a month that one of his uncles had died and was cremated because his wife could not afford the burial expenses. In some Muslim families elder parents are admitted to nursing or senior

citizen homes, and children don't have time to visit. There are other instances where no next to kin showed up when a Muslim senior died in a hospital.

Senior citizens in Muslim countries and in many developing countries generally don't experience such neglect or loneliness. A joint or extended family social structure provides them with a pleasant, supportive environment replete with children, grandchildren, and sometimes peers of their age and gender.

Who Is Responsible? Everyone in the community shares responsibility. Some senior citizens were not able to teach Islamic values to their children. Some were too busy with the quest for "worldly" needs; others did not have the knowledge to convey. Many children are grown, married, and professionally successful, but do not live in the same town as their parents. Such distance makes ongoing care and support difficult. Some children also forget how their parents toiled day in and day out to raise them, how they sacrificed for their well-being. Others don't know how to care for their older parents.

The Muslim community and Islamic organizations are also responsible for this situation. They lack the agendas, support structures, and resources necessary to support aging Muslims and their families. Muslim communities are also being affected by many of mainstream society's ills. Muslim children are increasingly filling nursing and senior citizen homes with their elderly. This phenomenon was unheard of in the past and is still an alien idea in Muslim countries. Elder parents and grandparents were once revered members of a household whose advice and guidance was valued; now many are regarded as a burden to be managed.

Obligations Toward Parents. Islam emphasizes kindness to and good treatment of parents. God in the Qur'an frequently lists kindness to parents as being among the central obligations of every Muslim: "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor" (17:13) and "Worship none but God (Alone) and be dutiful and good to parents..." (2:83). Explaining these verses, Ibn 'Abbas said, "This means treating them with respect and kindness, and lowering the wing of humility to them, not answering one's voice to them, not raising one's voice towards them as a slave towards his master."

God reminds us of the effort that our parents expended to raise us and asks us to return that good with good in the form of kind-

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ness and prayers: "And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), 'Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal'" (31:14).

God also specifically addresses treatment of parents in old age: "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small'" (17:23-24).

Al-Baghawi said: "This means not saying anything that may contain the slightest hint of irritation. (The word 'uff' in the verse, translated here as 'a word of disrespect') comes from the word 'aff', which is similar to the word 'taff'; both words refer to the dirt that collects under fingernails, and (in Arabic) when one is annoyed and fed up with something, one says 'uff!' to it."

The rights of parents are so central that they are not even obliterated in the case of differences in faith. God says: "We have enjoined on man kindness to parents: but if they (either of them) strive (to force) thee to join with Me (in worship) anything of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not."

Ye have (all) to return to me, and I will tell you (the truth) of all that ye did" (29:8). Muslims are obligated to respect, be kind towards, and obey their parents, regardless of faith, with the exception of when parents attempt to lead them away from Islam.

In Islam, mothers have special rights over children and are very deserving of good companionship. According to a Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, a man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of God, who among the people is most deserving of my good companionship?" He said, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He said, "Your mother." He asked,

"Then who?" He said, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He said, "Then your father." (Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim). Love between mothers and children is something that God has naturally instilled, but it is sometimes overlooked as children grow into adults. God reminds us of our mothers' hardships and commands us to repay them in adulthood: "We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says, 'O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favor which Thou has bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as Thou may approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow (to Thee) in Islam'" (46:15).

The obligation towards parents can even take precedence over jihad. 'Abd-Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas narrated that a



COMBINED BLESSINGS: The author, his wife, and children enjoyed the loving company of his parents.

MUTUAL JOY

Muslim Americans can reap benefits through reviving the tradition of joint family living. BY AZIZ JUNEJO

Occasions, such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Presidents Day, that are set aside to show gratitude for special people and events are significant. However, as the anniversary of my father's death approached, I started to feel uneasy about the ones for our parents. While I admire children who remember their parents on such occasions by sending cards and gifts, it appalls me to see so many abandon and alienate their elderly parents. Visit a nursing home and you will see many older Americans tucked away, rarely visited by their families.

To a person of any faith, this is seen as unkind, if not cruel. Throughout the Qur'an, parents are mentioned with appreciation and respect, treating them in a beautiful way and seeking God's "... mercy on them both, as they did cherish me in childhood" (17: 23-24).

My parents always recognized my love and appreciation for them. In 1998, after I traveled to Pakistan to marry, they insisted that we all live as one family. We did so in the Junejo family home in West

Seattle. This practice is quite common in our culture; the oldest son is expected to take care of his parents. Though the tradition was largely abandoned here by my generation, I willingly assumed the responsibility. My example first sparked community whispers, but, slowly, the tradition is starting to rekindle.

My wife and I both realized the benefits of my parents living with us for ourselves, our future children, and our community. My father, who explored most every mountain range in the world, would walk to Lincoln Park with my wife and then with his grandchildren. He eventually stopped climbing altogether but continued to take the kids on short hikes in the Cascades, venturing off-trail to show them places few people ever get to see. I saw a renewed spirit in him as he read them storybooks and often fell asleep on the couch cuddling with one of them in his arms. My American mother again took pride in helping around the house. While I worked at my office, she spent her days

with my wife and the grandchildren, which resulted in her feeling more purpose in her life. When I was growing up, she kept an immaculate house, taking care of five children, three of them adopted from Pakistan, so it was amazing to see her in her element again after all these years.

Now that we have children, ranging from teenage to newborn, I have come to appreciate my parents' need to be a part of their grandchildren's lives. My parents had so much more patience with them than they did with me. Don't get me wrong—they were always very tolerant—but so much more gentle and open-minded with their grandchildren.

I remember having to discipline my oldest daughter, who was 5 at the time, for pushing her sister and witnessing the horrified reaction of my father. "Son, you don't know how

much it hurts me to see you punish my grandchildren," he said, making me wonder if he had forgotten the punishments I was administered early in life.

Muslims believe that God will bounteously reward one who is good to his parents, and I have loved my parents every day and in every way I could. Their being with us has allowed my own children to see firsthand the importance of and respect due to parents. I am thankful for this. For my parents, their life with me has been happy and blissful, and I will have no regrets when they are called back home to be with Our Lord. But ultimately, I believe that by being the best son I could be, it is I who have been made most happy. ■

Aziz Junejo is host of "Focus on Islam", a weekly Seattle, WA cable television show, and a frequent speaker on Islam. Originally published in the Faith & Values page of "The Seattle Times", March 19, 2005, this article is condensed for "Islamic Horizons" with permission from the author.

In most Muslim countries and developing nations, a joint or extended family social structure provides seniors with a pleasant, supportive environment.

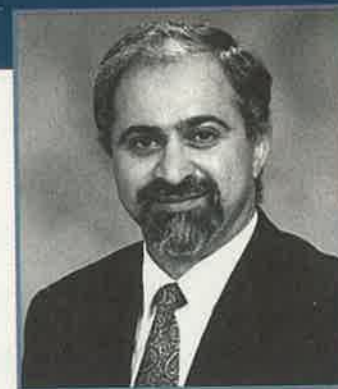
man came to the Prophet and asked him for permission to participate in jihad. The Messenger of God said to him, "Are your parents alive?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet said, "Then your jihad is with them" (Sahih Bukhari and Muslim).

Furthermore, obligations to parents do not end with death. It was reported from Ibn 'Abbas that a woman from Juhaynah came to the Prophet and said, "My mother vowed to go for hajj, but she died before she did so. Can I perform hajj on her behalf?" He said, "Yes, perform hajj on her behalf. Do you not think that if your mother owed a debt that you would pay it off for her? Fulfill her debt to God, for He is more deserving that what is owed to Him should be paid" (Bukhari).

What Can Be Done? First, our community must acknowledge the aging Muslim population and the lack of support for them within our community. National organizations and local Islamic centers and mosques must develop strategies and mechanisms for addressing this situation and catering to elderly people and their families. Such support could include weekly visits to their homes, transport arrangements for Friday prayers and doctor appointments, social gatherings, adult day

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THE JEWELS OF ISLAM

A pioneer program offers comfort and companionship for senior Muslim women. BY ZAHEER UDDIN

Fifty-five percent of our members have performed hajj," informs Hajja Rafiqah Abdul Rasheed, founder and coordinator of Jewels of Islam, the only Muslim, all-volunteer, senior program for women in Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania—possibly the only such senior program in the country.

The idea for the organization emerged some 16 years ago at the home of Hajja Rafiqah (formerly Emilie Harris), then a graduate student at St. Joseph University in Philadelphia. Today, the

city's senior Muslim women seek comfort and companionship in the "Jewels of Islam" (JoI), a pioneering program with a focus on Muslim women 50 years and older.

JoI's Coordinator Hajja Rafiqah has worked as a social gerontologist for 29 years and now works as a social services coordinator at a HUD-run senior citizen program. The planning meeting, she says, that included several older women and two younger women, was held on June 25, 1989 at the John Anderson Cultural Center in the Wynfield section of Philadelphia.

Some 23 women attended.

After searching for a permanent location for meetings and inquiring at various masajid in the city, Masjidullah invited the women to base their program there. JoI continues to meet at Masjidullah on the second Sunday of each month. The program also utilizes

At present, most Jewels of Islam members are African American, but JoI is open to all senior Muslim women.

Masjidullah's van to transport seniors to the monthly meetings.

Currently, there are 94 members—ranging from age 50 to 93—and three volunteers. An average of 30 women attend the monthly program. Jewels members re-

side in Philadelphia, New Jersey, Delaware, Arizona, and Georgia. At present, most JoI members are African American, but JoI is open to all women. Hajja Fatimah M. Ali is the co-chairperson.

The group's programs focus on Islamic education, nutritional and health education, support, recreation, and intergenerational activities. A variety of professional speakers in the field of aging routinely address members on topics pertinent to the older adult population.

Two major JoI goals, says Hajja Rafiqah, are to establish senior Muslim housing and launch JoI in other states. JoI readily shares its expertise with others, such as the Young Muslim Association, that is part of the Masjidullah program. The group is financed through donations and membership dues.

For more information, contact Hajja Rafiqah Abdul-Rasheed at 215-477-2707 or 215-689-0182. ■

care programs, informational classes on aging for family members, medical information classes, et cetera.

Scholars, teachers, and imams should emphasize the importance of caring for elders in their classes and speeches. Islamic centers should likewise organize seminars and workshops on this topic, utilizing resources available from non-Muslim organizations and groups well experienced in the field. Part of this may include sharing stories about the positive impact of caring for parents. For example, the story of a 75-year old, non-Muslim mother of a recent convert, Abdullah, who fell

Although she was not pleased with his conversion, Abdullah's mother was impressed with his treatment of her, treatment that was very different from his pre-conversion days.

seriously ill. When the imam explained to Abdullah the rights of a mother, irrespective of faith, he traveled to visit her. Although she was not pleased with his conversion, she was impressed with his treatment of her, treatment that was very different from his pre-conversion days. Ultimately the mother was so moved that she asked if Islam was the cause of his behavioral change. When he confirmed that it was, she took shahadah. She died as a Muslim one month later.

Whenever possible, elder parents should live with their children. To encourage this, community support and education on caring for aging parents should be available. The important role that parents play in the family should also be reiterated and stressed, as well as the Islamic teachings and responsibilities.

Muslim communities should actively involve elders and learn from their experiences. For example, many Muslim elders were involved in the creation and development of the first Islamic institutions and organizations. They are the rich heritage of Islam in America. The community and leadership should recognize and learn from their remarkable efforts. Recording their histories and stories before they leave this world is another way of involving elders and preserving their experiences for the benefit of future generations.

Caring for aging Muslims is a challenge that must be overcome by Muslims in the U.S. Muslims must strive to overcome barriers and to implement the central Islamic teachings on the obligations to parents. By doing so, not only will our elders benefit, so will our entire communities. ■

Zaheer Uddin is President of Internet Islamic University (info@studyislam.com) and author of "A Handbook of Halaal and Haraam Products".

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99ers Power

Superheroes based on Godly attributes strive to promote tolerance and understanding.

BY FAHMIDA RASHID

Who is stronger, Batman or Superman? Who is cooler, X-Men's Storm or Elektra? Whose power would you rather have—Jabbar, Batina, or Noora? Never heard of them? They are the members of The 99, a new superhero series focusing on Muslim virtues.

Conceived by Kuwaiti businessman Naif Al-Mutawa during a London cab ride, each superhero in The 99 personifies one of God's attributes, such as Jabbar the enforcer, Mumita the destroyer, and Bari the healer. Al-Mutawa emphasized that none of the characters had more than one trait and none of

Naif al-Mutawa hopes that The 99's characters will help convey God's attributes to all, without being overtly religious.

their powers were as strong as God's.

While the series is based on Muslim values, The 99 is not a religious comic. "The story will have an Islamic archetype," he said. "But there won't be prayers or mosques." Al-Mutawa says that he is not interested in attracting extremists on either end of the spectrum—conservatives or ultraliberals. Instead, The 99 reflects Islam's message of tolerance and diversity. "I looked into Islam and saw hope and compassion and moral values that transcend any one sect or political system," he said.

The superheroes come from diverse social and geographic backgrounds. Sami, the Hearer, is from France, and Bari, the Healer, is from South Africa. Although half of the superheroes—45, to be exact—are female, they do not all cover, just like many Muslim women who chose not to wear hijab. "All need to be respected for their decision and how they choose to express their own Muslim identity," he said.

In addition, the seven or eight characters who don hijab wear it in different ways, such as wigs, like in Egypt, showing half the hair, like in Pakistan, and wearing it to the chin, like in Iran.

Each of the characters will wear clothes appropriate to his or her home country, he said, and he doesn't rule out some of the female characters being dressed in skintight clothing. "The 99 is not about one sect enforcing their vision on everyone else," he said. "It is about tolerance and what binds us together as humans, not

what separates us."

The stories take place in modern day—without political or religious themes—with roots in the Golden Age, the 13th Century. When the grandson of Genghis Khan, Hulagu Khan, invaded Baghdad and destroyed the Dar Al Hikma library, the Hur-

ras, or Guardians of Wisdom, encoded all knowledge into 99 gems and smuggled them to Andalusian Spain. The stones were separated with the fall of Granada in 1492. Christopher Columbus unknowingly carried 33 stones to the New World on the Nina, Pinta, and the Santa Maria. Another 33 stones were carried along the Silk Route and hidden in Asia. The remaining 33 gems were hidden throughout Europe.

Fast forward to the modern day. Dr. Ramzi Razem, a descendant of the Hurras, and the villain Rughal are searching for these stones. The characters find the stones and thereby receive their powers. Razem then guides them, in teams of three, to foil Rughal's plans for world domination.

At first, there was some pressure to stereotype female characters, such as Latifa, the gentle. "This had to be cool and edgy," Al-Mutawa said. He, however, de-

cided on a different approach. Thus Mumita, the killer, became a female bombshell from Portugal.

His company, Teshkeel Comics, launched The 99 online in February this year and published it in magazine form in May. Al-Mutawa expects to have four series every month, eventually creating spin-offs to highlight popular characters. The first story was made available online in late March.

Al Mutawa, a 35-year-old father of four, grew up in Kuwait but completed his under-

graduate and doctoral studies in Boston. He received two Master's degrees from Columbia University's Business School and Teacher's College. As a psychologist, he worked with prisoners of war from the 1990 Gulf War and victims of political torture at New York City's Bellevue Hospital. Al-Mutawa addressed the intolerance he saw in the Arab World by writing, illustrating, and distributing a children's book about a ball who wears a tie differently from others. "To Bounce or Not To Bounce" won a UNESCO award for children's literature in the service of tolerance and is now used as a teaching aid. He wrote two more books in the series: "What's In A Color?" and "Get Your Ties Out of Your Eyes". The latter one was banned in Kuwait because censors felt it was commenting on the Qur'an.

For The 99, at least, the censors have approved early mockups.

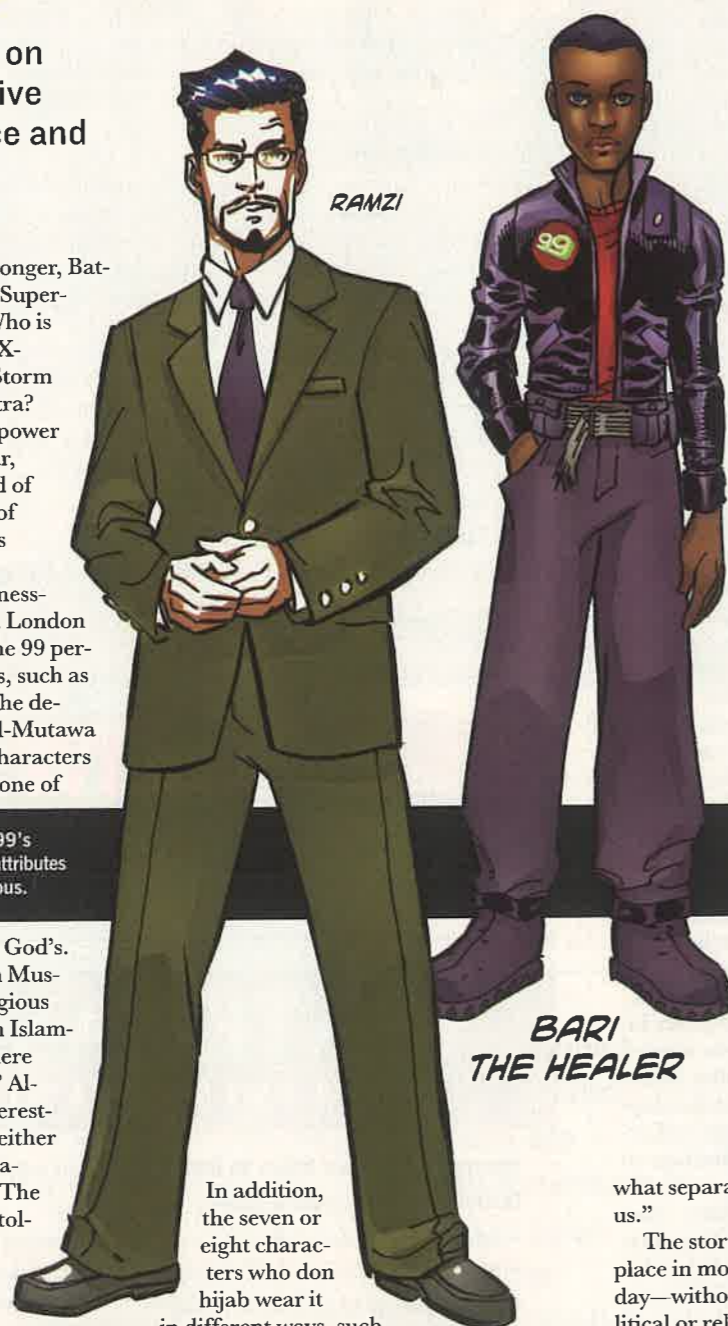
Along with publishing The 99, Teshkeel Comics will distribute Marvel titles like the Fantastic Four and X-Men in the

Middle East. The company released its first issue of Spiderman in Arabic in mid-March. Also, in March, Teshkeel announced a similar deal with Archie and is negotiating final details with DC Comics. According to Al-Mutawa, Teshkeel is also in talks with other publishers in North and South America, Europe, and South Asia to co-brand The 99.

To get Teshkeel and The 99 off the ground, Al-Mutawa secured \$7 million in seed money from 54 investors in eight different countries. His former classmates from the Columbia Business School kicked in \$1 million. Al-Mutawa has put together an experienced team that includes managers, artists, and writers from DC Comics and Marvel. Al-Mutawa will co-write the series with Fabian Nicieza, who wrote for X-Men and Power Rangers comics.

While looking for investors, he came across someone who sold a collective series of stickers of suicide bombers. "My people, it seems, were all too often provided the wrong heroes," Al-Mutawa said. He hopes The 99 will provide better role models to Muslim children. "It has to be as appealing...the best of what's out there." ■

Fahmida Rashid is a business journalist in New York City.





Prof. Bernard Lewis wrote, "By all the standards that matter in the modern world—economic development and job creation, literacy, educational and scientific achievement, political freedom and respect for human rights—what was once a mighty civilization has indeed fallen low. ... Many in the Middle East blame a variety of outside forces. But underlying much of the Muslim world's travail may be a simple lack of freedom" ("What Went Wrong?", "Atlantic Monthly", Jan. 2002).

Apparently, Lewis' diagnosis has served policymakers who feel that, consistent with long-term U.S. interests, there is an urgent need for promoting freedom and democracy in the Muslim world. Indeed, his diagnosis fits the changed rationale for the Iraq war. There is definitely a genuine need to promote democracy in the Muslim world. In this regard, non-Muslims' views on the condition of Muslim societies are important for Muslims. However, the real challenge for Muslims is to adopt a self-critical approach and diagnose their conditions without neglecting either the ground realities or guidance available in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Muslim regimes, although primarily secular, are mostly tyrannical and authoritarian, lending credence to Lewis' assertion. Unfortunately, regimes claiming Islamic orientation have not been illustrious of freedom, nor have Muslim citizens been tolerant of such expression. One need not turn to Lewis—an academic and intellectual inclined to Zionism and loved by Zionists for his service ("The Anti-Zionist Resolution", "Foreign Affairs", Oct. 1976)—to acknowledge serious problems in Muslim countries within the context of freedom. In addition to the secular governments in the Muslim world, the Islamically-oriented governments are also falling seriously short of Islamic standards.

Muslims need to critically reexamine themselves and their societies, and ardently pursue the cause of freedom and democracy. The shaping of today's Muslim societies has been tremendously im-

Freedom of Choice

pacted by the lack of emphasis on freedom and liberty.

Among the themes of freedom articulated by the Qur'an is the following dramatic verse: "I do call to witness this City; And thou are a free person (*hillun*) of this City; And (the mystic ties of) parent and child; Verily We have created man into toil and struggle" (90:1-4). The context in which these verses were revealed relates to what should be the essential aspect of a Muslim personality. Notably, Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa salaam*) was born and raised in that society, where he earned the title *al-Amin* (the trustworthy). Yet, the powerful Makkan Quraish elite considered Islam's egalitarian message a serious challenge to their unjust status quo and would not allow him to stay in that society. Prophet Muhammad overcame all odds, but the verse illustrates that even he, just as other prophets (e.g., Abraham, Moses and Jesus—*'alayhim as salaam*), struggled to earn and retain this freedom so as to deliver the Divine message and carry on his mission to make the truth manifest.

God reaffirmed this fundamental right of freedom of choice and expression, not directing it to the people but to Prophet Muhammad himself, in order to make it more emphatic and dramatic, saying: "No, I witness by this City that you are a

If freedom of choice and expression is the first-order condition in Islam, Muslims must cherish this fundamental right for themselves at the individual and the collective level.

Dr. Mohammad Omar Farooq is an associate professor of economics and finance at Upper Iowa University. www.globalwebpost.com/farooq

free person (*hillun*) of this city." This is God's inalienable blessing directly from Himself. You are free because God has made you—and everyone else—free in this world!

Why is this theme of freedom so vital? Unfortunately, those who believe in *La Ilaha ill Allah* (There is no deity worthy of worship except God) often do not appreciate the freedom they must have, both at the individual and societal levels. Today the majority of Muslims live under tyrannical and un-Islamic conditions. There are fifty-plus countries that claim to be Muslim countries (in reality Muslim-majority countries, in accordance with Islam's pluralistic and inclusive vision and principles), but Islam is hardly practiced as a complete way of life—in a holistic sense, of course, *with* due respect and rights guaranteed to others (non-Muslims). Prevalent democracy and elections in other parts of the Muslim world are mostly pseudo-systems of the post-colonial legacy, denying people tangible benefits of democracy as a representative, participatory, and accountable form of governance. In Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria, for example, elections are regular so long as the outcome coincides with the expectations and/or desires of the establishment. Islamic parties, organizations, and movements also have not made any major progress as most of them are authoritarian,

and their models of an Islamic state or society are rather coercive and imposing, especially for non-Muslims and women. The problem might be deeply rooted in a culture that does not embrace the value and principle of freedom from the Islamic viewpoint. Rather, it is laden with both external aggression and internal tyranny and not engaged in a struggle to secure their own freedom and independence, let alone being reasonably conscientious and respectful of the freedom of others. In this regard, the situation is akin to that faced by Prophet Moses: a culture of slavery in which the Children of Israel grew up that made them unprepared to undertake the struggle to free themselves from the very tyranny that they had been subjected to for generations.

Muslims have yet to comprehend that the contemporary world is governed and dictated by a global system that exploits and oppresses the rest of the world in the very name or cover of some lofty modern labels. They need to realize the true message of *La Ilaha ill Allah* and positively, creatively, and constructively face the so-called new world order with a better model for humanity to emulate. If Muslims are to chart their future course, then, as individuals, they need to purify and educate themselves, working at both the community and ummah levels to reestablish themselves based on the universalistic values of Islam and the post-Prophet legacy of representative, participatory, and accountable governance.

Today, the entire world is concerned about extremism and terrorism by Muslims. Muslims too should have a similar concern about extremism that does not distinguish between the innocent and guilty, civilians and military, ordinary people and combatants. Unfortunately, such extremism develops more commonly where there is a clear lack of freedom, as in the Muslim world. This is exacerbated by the injustice, deprivation, and effrontery that Islam and Muslims have been facing from non-Muslim powers and societies. While freedom and independence of the Muslim world at the collective level remain at jeopardy under the so-called new world order and the freedom and liberty of the people in general in the Muslim world remain shaky, Muslims must be self-critical in determining the indispensable role of freedom in their lives.

God created humankind with the distinct endowment of freedom: the freedom to choose and express choice in this world. This freedom is essential to our human existence, making us moral creatures, creatures that are tested and judged. Freedom to choose is not the last but the first-order condition of Islam. The Qur'an categorically states: "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error..." (2:256). Thus, there is no need to coerce others toward faith and a virtuous life. People should only be offered the pertinent infor-

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mation, education, and enlightenment without coercion. This is a profound issue that seems quite nebulous in traditional Islamic discourses.

If freedom of choice and expression is the first-order condition in Islam, Muslims must cherish this fundamental right for themselves at the individual and the collective level. Second, Muslim-majority countries should seek true independence to serve their own people genuinely and capably and free themselves from the post-colonial legacy of corrupt and undemocratic regimes often subservient to and manipulated by the global powers. Third, based on the principle of "no compulsion in religion", Muslims need to develop a new model society, where people uphold their faith not primarily due to coercion and fear but based on *taqwa* (God-consciousness that motivates the inner self toward what is good and right). A society can have social norms, but their compliance should not be based on "enforcement" by an authority. The Prophet was not a watchman or policeman over society (42:48). Governments must carefully walk the fine line between encouraging a holistic Islamic society and coercion in action alone. Lastly, to be independent, Muslims need to appreciate the

importance of freedom not just for themselves but for all of humanity. The West (and the U.S.), despite its own extremes and shortcomings and many cases of discrimination, is the preferred abode of many because, at the personal level, it offers a very high degree of freedom. While American global aspirations regarding the freedom, liberty, and democracy for all (beyond the American border) might be hollow, hypo-

Prophet's vision—leans toward a strict moral standard, where coercive authority plays a pivotal role. That is not a balanced position either. This is where a new model that better balances personal freedom while also upholding some universal moral values becomes imperative.

A past-enriched, but forward-looking perspective requires that Muslims recognize the importance of freedom and strug-

A new model that better balances personal freedom while also upholding some universal moral values is imperative.

critical, and even arrogant, the personal freedom its citizens and residents, regardless of their background, generally enjoy is remarkable. However, the American example is not a balanced one because the personal freedom it offers is afforded by an utterly loose and relativist standard of morality. In contrast, the traditional Muslim understanding and vision of an Islamic society—one not necessary in line with the

gle for it at all levels. They also need to recognize the challenge of conceiving a model society where merely the freedom of Muslims is not an exclusive concern, but also the freedom of all others. When this occurs, the ummah will aptly be described as being "evolved for the humanity" (3:110). ■

Editor's Note: Adapted from a Friday sermon (*khutbah*) delivered in 1994 at the Islamic Center of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

A DEVOTED LEADER

NAZIR BAIG (1937-2006)

Nazir Baig, a civil engineer who graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1962 and had professional engineer's registrations in Maryland, New Jersey, and Penn-

sylvania, was drawn to the Muslim Community Center in Silver Spring, MD (MCC)—the premier Islamic community center in the Greater Washington, DC in the 1970s. After moving to the area, he plunged himself into serving the area's fledgling Muslim community.

The idea of the suburban Maryland community center was first conceived in Sept. 1976, and the Center was dedicated and occupied for use in May 1981. MCC has since grown into a nationally recognized center. Although Baig was not among its founders, he was a dedicated worker and many value his bold steps in resolving conflicts that riled the community in the 1980s. He was twice elected by his peers as president of the MCC and also chair of the center's Board of Trustees.

When growing health problems obliged him to lessen his involvement at MCC, he started to focus on a mosque being built in his neighborhood in Columbia, MD. Mohamed V. Sharieff, a leader at Dar al-Taqwa in Columbia, MD, recalls how Baig helped start a small Sunday school and became a driving force in helping Columbia area families get organized and start their own center. Baig not only donated generously but also served as a relentless fundraiser for the center's proposed mosque. The Muslim community will miss Baig's unassuming yet dynamic presence, says Sharieff.

In 1973, Baig joined the original environmental planning team assembled in Montgomery County, where he was in charge of developing water resource assessments and inventories of flora and fauna, and producing functional master plans for the major watersheds in the county. A major contributor to the original Environmental Guidelines that are still in use today in the management of nationwide development proposals, he produced creative work on storm water management, sediment, and other water quality programs.

Al Smith, chair of the Patuxent River Commission, said, "We are all better stewards and advocates for water quality because Nazir Baig passed our way during his life. He has taught us a very important lesson about life....it is not how long one lives that determines their legacy....it is more about how one lives that provides that enduring memory! Nazir's family can be proud of his accomplished record of selfless service in his earthly labors to leave things far better than he found them...and that he has done!"

He is survived by his wife, Shahida, son Imran, and daughter Zara.



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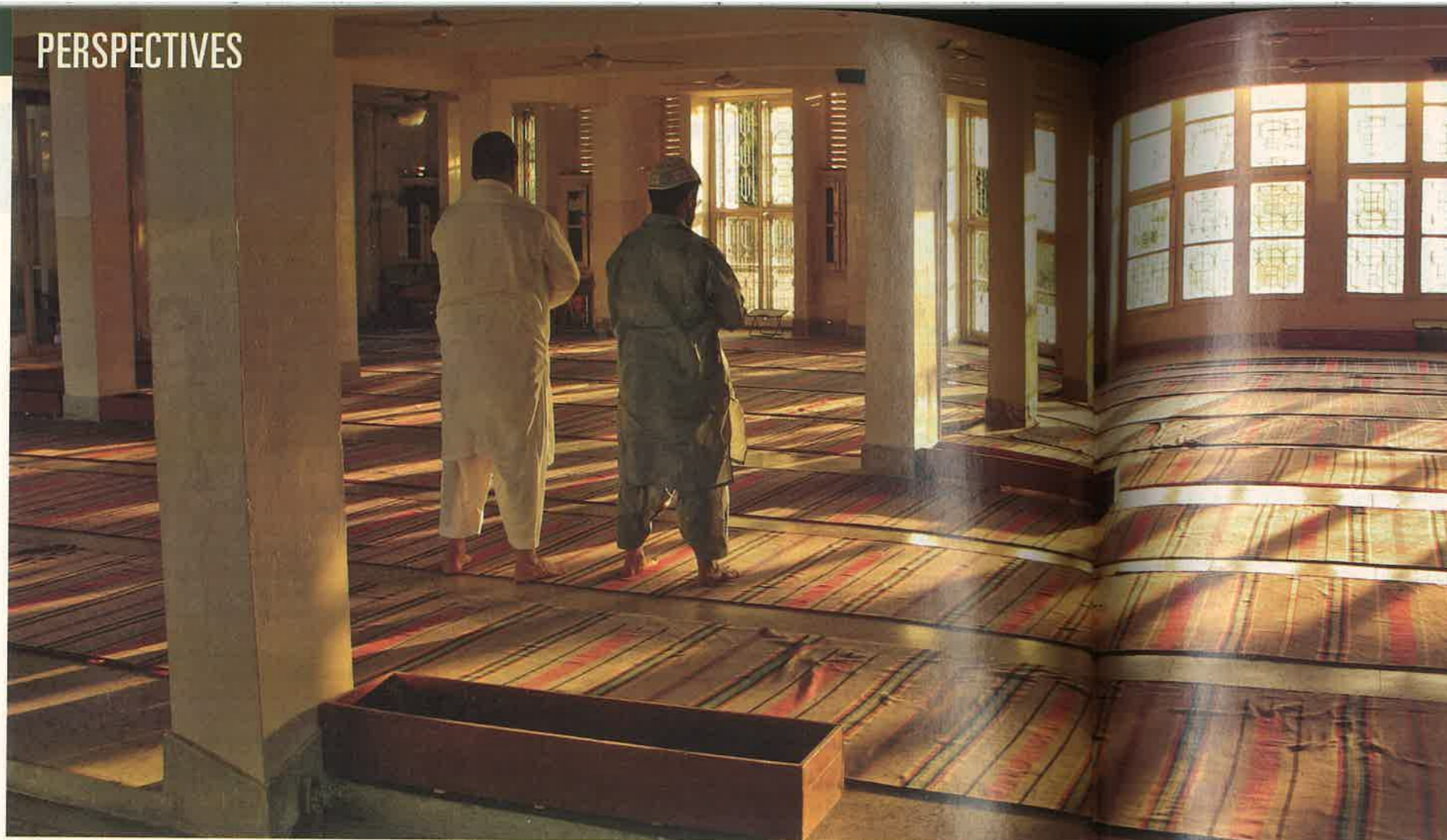
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- Network with other existing youth organizations and activities and youth workers.
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- Work with ISNA leadership to plan and implement youth programs.
- Administer youth programming in ISNA's national activities and attend regional and local activities according to approved work plan.
- Work with and for youth, their parents, acting as liaison between the youth and their parents and imams and community leaders when and if necessary for youth programs and activities.
- Regularly communicate with and seek input from youth and parents regarding the direction, goals, and activities of youth work.
- Maintain a list of resource people (professional Muslim counselors, imams, etc.) to counsel young people, parents and families with special needs (depression, drug dependence, runaway, etc.).
- Maintain a list of educational resources for youth leaders and advisors including books, periodicals, videos, websites, etc. on youth culture and youth development.

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ETIQUETTE OF PRAYER AND THE MASJID

The day seems to be coming when there will be an interfaith conference about dealing with the menace of cell phones in places of worship. CBS News reported (Oct. 15, 2004) that four Monterrey, Mexico Roman Catholic churches are using cell phone jammers tucked unobtrusively among paintings of the Madonna and statues of the saints. Still, priests remind parishioners to turn off their phones before beginning the services, hoping good cell phone etiquette will eventually catch on. A churchgoer,

Margarita Escobedo, told the CBS reporter, "Those who bring cell phones to church are not committed to God. It's very distracting to be praying and suddenly hear birds chirping or techno music."

A Jewish website declares, "A synagogue is a house of God, a place to feel God's presence, worship and join a community in prayer. Behavior in a synagogue should be appropriately respectful." It continues to advise, "The synagogue may be one of the last remaining sanctuaries to escape cell phones and beepers. They should be turned off before entering."

A blogger moans about cell phones in Bangalore temples and resultant circus-like atmosphere.

Are Muslims far behind? "Please Turn Off Your Cell Phone" signs are now com-

mon at masjid entrances. However, compliance is most often less than desired. Such a situation is even more drastic with certain schools of fiqh that believe that additional movements invalidate prayer. Without dis-

puting that school, it is obvious that the sin of disturbing others' prayer is worse than invalidating one's prayer. Indeed, it may be advisable to interrupt your prayer, turn your phone off, and reenter prayer again.

Cell phones are of course not the only thing which disturbs prayer and the masjid environment; many other aspects of proper masjid (mosque) conduct are frequently overlooked.

Salah (prayer) in Islam is so important that it is repetitively mentioned in the Qur'an and ahadith. God inform us: "I have only created Jinns and men, that they

may serve Me" (51:56). With five prayers a day, distributed throughout the day at certain prescribed times—"For such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times" (4:103)—it teaches precision and disci-

pline. It is the focal point of a Muslim's daily life, a constant reminder of the direct connection between the person and his Lord. With its leadership, promptness and accurate timing, discipline, harmony, humbleness, and dedication, it serves as a microcosm of the ideal society. With such emphasis laid on the importance of prayer, there are certain behaviors or *adaab* that we must strive to observe.

The masjid is the House of God, thus it must always be kept in the best shape as far as order, cleanliness, and tranquility. People in the House of God must treat it better

than they treat their own houses. This includes placing one's shoes on a shoe rack, rather than leaving them piled up at the door; maintaining cleanliness in bathrooms and *wudu* areas; and conserving water and electricity within the masjid.

Clothing is also an important topic, and one should remember that he/she is standing before God, Lord of the worlds. Further, God has commanded us to take care of our appearance when going to prayer: "O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer" (7:31). Make sure your clothes are clean and not tight, short, or transparent, and be sure to cover the *'awrah* (areas of your body that must not be revealed to others). Sleeveless or short shirts, as well as those with pictures of humans or animals or improper displays, such as cigarettes or alcohol, should be avoided all times.

Cleanliness is another central aspect of our faith. Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) asked those who ate garlic or onion not to come close to the masjid until the odor was eliminated (Sahih Bukhari: Volume 1, Book 12, Number 814; Narrated by Jabir bin 'Abdullah). Similarly, if you have body odor, bad breath, or your

children shouldn't be left without adult supervision. Additionally, children must not disturb congregants or damage property. Parents must vigilantly monitor their children and educate them on masjid *adaab*. Furthermore, if older children are left alone in the masjid premises, they must be taught to answer the call to prayer and follow masjid *adaab*.

Those who have contagious diseases must not go to the masjid (or any other assembly place) in order to prevent transmission to others. Islam stresses the importance of *huququl ibaad* (our rights to each other), and Prophet Muhammad said, "No harm (should be allowed) to oneself nor to another." Disregarding the well being of others is not acceptable.

In going to the masjid, people should always walk calmly, without running, even if late. Drivers should obey speed limits, stop signs, and parking regulations, especially avoiding blocking other people's cars or paths. You should enter the masjid with your right foot and recite the *du'a*: "...O my Lord! Let my entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honor, and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honor; and grant me from Thy Presence an authority to aid (me)..." (17:80).

Dr. Saleh A. Mubarak, is a management consultant, professor, and an Islamic worker in the Tampa Bay area. An author of two books and numerous articles, he received Islamic education mostly from his late father Shaykh Muhammad Al-Mubarak, a well-known scholar.

Simple guidelines to making the masjid an environment of piety, humility, modesty, and mutual respect. BY SALEH A. MUBARAK

clothes or socks smell badly or strongly, clean and change yourself before entering the masjid. Also keep in mind that some odors, like strong spice or food smells, that may be common to you, may make others

Exit the masjid with your left foot.

When you enter the masjid before the *iqamah*, it is recommended to make two *rak'ahs* as a greeting to the masjid (*tahiyatul-masjid*). However, try to pray on the side

to avoid the path of others. If you are not praying behind an object, place a *sutrah* in front of your *sujud* (prostration) position so others may freely pass. If the *iqamah* starts while you are in the first *rak'ah* of your sunnah, make *tasleem* on the right side, end your prayer, and join the group prayer. If you are already in the second *rak'ah*, finish it quickly and join the group.

While the group prayer (*salatul-jama'ah*) is going on, no other activity is supposed to continue, not even reading Qur'an or *dhikr*. At other times, people may read Qur'an in a low voice; make voluntary prayer (*sunnah*

like anywhere else, small

or *nafl*); perform *dhikr*; or rest. Using a loud voice—except for the imam in group prayer, *adhan*, *iqama*, or formal lectures—must be avoided as it disturbs others. Those who like to chat and socialize are encouraged to do so outside of the masjid or prayer area.

It is very important for people to stand in straight lines with no gaps during group prayer. Prophet Muhammad ordered people to stand “shoulder by shoulder and foot by foot”. However, since feet are flexible and shoulders are not, scholars said that connecting must be done first by shoulders. If there is a gap between you and the person next to you, don’t spread your legs to cover the gap. Close the gap by moving towards the imam. For example, if you are standing to the left of the imam and there is a gap to your right, move until you connect to the person on your right. If the gap is to your left, gently pull the person on your left towards you. Always follow the imam in prayer. When the imam finishes the movement and says “*Allahu Akbar*”, follow him. Since people praying must focus on their point of *sujud*, following must be done by hearing, not sight. Many people make mistakes while praying, for example hand positions, not having a horizontal upper body while making *ruku*, looking upwards, closing eyes,

Islam stresses *huququl ibaad* (our rights to each other), and Prophet Muhammad said, “No harm (should be allowed) to oneself nor to another.”

resting arms on the ground while in *sujud*, et cetera. While it is a good idea to point out the mistake in the most discreet and gentle way, it is important to be sure that the person indeed made a mistake and is not simply following a different *madhhab* (school of thought/fiqh). One of the best examples of politely correcting others comes from the story of the Prophet’s grandsons, Hassan and Hussain (*rahma alayhim*). One day they saw an old Bedouin making *wudu*’ incorrectly and wanted to correct him without hurting his feelings. So they came up with a plan. They went to him and said, “My brother and I disagree over who amongst us performs *wudu*’ better. Would you mind watching us make *wudu*’ and being the judge?” The man watched carefully trying to judge who was

better. In the end, he understood what was going on and said, “By God, I did not know how to perform *wudu*’ before this. You have both taught me how to do it correctly.”

Some scholars advise against a second formal group prayer if a group of people come to the masjid after the group prayer has ended. Those scholars who allow a second group prayer advise that the imam of the second group must not stand in the *mihraab* nor should he raise his voice beyond what the people behind him can hear.

Adhering to these guidelines in the masjid will not only ensure that the masjid is an environment of piety, humility, modesty, comfort, and mutual respect among brothers and sisters in faith, but it will also increase our reward from God. ■



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To those who do good, there is good in this world, and the Home of the Hereafter is even better excellent indeed is the Home of the righteous. (Qur’an 16:30)

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A Kinder, Stronger Ummah

Intra-Muslim dialogue needed to overcome negative criticism, differences, and violence. **BY R. DAVID COOLIDGE**

It is so tragic and disheartening to sit here in peace in America and hear everyday about Muslims killing each other around the world. Unfortunately, Muslims have been killing each other since the days of the first *fitnah* (656-661 CE). It seems somehow an inevitable fact that in the absence of the Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), we have a tendency to degenerate into intracommunal violence.

God Himself, however, anticipated this reality (Qur'an, 49:9-10) for right before He reminds us that "the believers are but brothers" (49:10). He taught us how to deal with a situation wherein the believers are killing each other. The inevitability of such violence should not dishearten us and prevent us from trying to stop it. God tells us clearly: "So reconcile between your brothers, and fear God so that you may receive mercy" (49:10). In a way, God was and is saying to us: "I know that you are going to kill each other, but please try to make peace and unity between each other."

Two ways we can attempt to reconcile between Muslims is to encourage bridge building between different schools of thought and to discourage verbal attacks against individuals and communities. We so often hear certain groups and people called heretics (*mubtadi'*), unbelievers (*kuffar*), hypocrites (*munafiqun*), and other such names. Sometimes these words are hurled because of theological or legal differences, or differences in understanding Islamic history, or sometimes simply uneducated spite. What cannot be denied, however, is that these words create an aura of hostility between people and very often can lead to violence committed in the name of silencing those one believes to be outside the fold of Islam.

Differences of opinion have been around since the very beginning of the ummah of Muhammad. When understood properly and acted upon wisely, they have been a source of great strength and blessing for this ummah. Yet, when they are understood carelessly and used ignorantly, they can lead to great harm.

Differences of opinion have been around since the very beginning of the ummah of Muhammad. When understood properly and acted upon wisely, they have been a source of great strength and blessing for this ummah. Yet, when they are understood carelessly and used ignorantly, they can lead to great harm. Sadly, even the Companions fought and killed each other over who should be the caliph. In medieval Iran, as documented by Wilferd Madelung in his book "Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran" (Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies, No. 4, Persian Heritage Founda-



tion, June 1988), rivalries between Hanafis and Shafis led to significant bloodshed and destruction of property. And now, in contemporary Pakistan and Iraq, Sunni and Shia shoot and bomb each other, even during prayer.

Undoubtedly, the differences between the Muslims are real and substantial. Thus, I do not want to disparage the attempts made by different Muslims to call each other to what they believe is the best understanding of Islam and to refute those with whom they disagree. Rather, I want to call us to civility in our engagement with each other. We should all assume the best about each other from the start and make excuses for each other, as was the way of the Prophet. Then we must talk through our differences and seek an understanding based upon mutual respect. Finally, if we reach a point of utter disagreement, we must respectfully part ways in hopes of being guided aright, but not in the hope that the other will be punished. If your adversary continues to believe in God and His Messenger, to read Qur'an, and to face the Qibla, then leave the matter to God. Continue to support

what you think is good but do not begin calling your opponents by names which can lead to violence. If you must use those names in the interest of pointing out what you believe to be errors in the religion, then use those names to attack the ideas with which you disagree, rather than the individuals or communities themselves. Do not pretend to know with absolute certainty who are the friends of God (*awliya' Allah*) and who are the hypocrites (*munafiqun*); God alone knows our true position in relation to Him.

If we stop killing each other, and instead unite despite our differences, then perhaps we can have strength and honor again as an ummah. Perhaps we can be witnesses to humanity, just as the Messenger was a witness to us. Perhaps we can protect the lives and honor of all human beings and defend Islam from those who overtly seek to extinguish the light of God. If we do that, we would truly be following Muhammad ibn Abdullah, whom we all agree was the last Prophet of God and a mercy to the worlds. ■

R. David Coolidge is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Religion, Princeton University.

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The October 2005 earthquake affected parts of Azad Kashmir (AJK), Pakistan, Indian Occupied Kashmir, and Afghanistan. In AJK and Pakistan alone, it left some 80,000 dead, more than 1,200 amputees, and nearly 800 paraplegics.

The option for most amputees and paraplegics is bleak. Begging is their only choice, says Shimmi Kidwai, a long-time volunteer of the Washington, DC-based Friends of Pakistan and chairwoman of



(clockwise from top left) **NEW MOBILITY:** A senior citizen gets a replacement lower leg. Immediately after the earthquake, a British orthopedic group set up a clinic at the Ayub Medical College in Abbottabad and have provided limbs to some 100 amputees. A patient with a spinal cord injury undergoing physical therapy. An amputee awaits his limb fitting.

hospital, two of which, were amputees. Although the number of seriously injured Pakistanis has grown in the last six months, Jaffer said he believes the number to be within a "manageable scope."

In a recent e-mail, Jaffer said, "Our main concerns are to be able to reach out to the affected persons in the remote mountain areas and getting a committed support of the community and family members to extend services on a sustained basis to all disabled." He added that, "Funds are needed to build prosthetic and orthotic centers, train additional technical staff, remodel homes, and help re-train the disabled persons so that they can lead an independent life to the extent possible."

Jaffer said that professional help to train technical staff in Pakistan or elsewhere would be of extreme value. Here in the U.S., one of Jaffer's long time friends, orthopedic surgeon Dr. Hamid Quraishi and his wife, Dr. Shahnaz Quraishi, co-chair of the May gala, are doing their part to help the cause. In March, Hamid Quraishi was in

Pakistan attending one of three fundraising galas held in the region. The galas, held from the last week of March to the first week of April in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, raised Rs 7 million, about \$116,000.

"Our main purpose is to coordinate our efforts and see how we can give financial help," Dr. Quraishi said. "It is less expensive for them to make the limbs and such in Pakistan and more feasible. They have the manpower and know-how, all they need is the money."

Dr. Hamid Quraishi said because prosthetics and orthotic devices are usually changed about once a year due to wear and tear, it wouldn't make sense for doctors in the U.S. or Canada to send medical supplies to Pakistan. Instead, sending financial aid will enable doctors in Pakistan to more efficiently do their job.

CHAL's goal is to open four outreach centers that will serve about 1,000 victims by year-end. ■

Sabrina Enayatulla is a reporter with the Northern Virginia group of "Observer" community newspapers.



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OPERATION EMPOWER

a gala held in May to benefit CHAL, a Pakistan-based charity helping these survivors to walk again.

Kidwai is quick to point out that the need is great because the numbers of handicapped may grow as registration proceeds. She stresses that lack of proper support for the victims now will most definitely have a negative impact on their future; "The old, young, they will become beggars. These people need a lot of support."

The Friends of Pakistan Club—a U.S.-based, tax-ex-

empt, nonprofit organization—plans to raise \$1.6 million for quake victims through events such as the May gala, with all proceeds going to CHAL.

Let's Move, an organization, which is dedicated to building facilities for amputees and others who are now disabled.

The Islamabad-based CHAL—an Urdu word meaning to walk or move—has been working closely with the Pakistan Institute of Prosthetic & Orthotic Sciences in Peshawar, Murshid Hospital & Health Care Center (MHHCC) and

Striving to find funds and support for rehabilitation of people maimed in the October 2005 earthquake.

By Sabrina Enayatulla

the Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences in Muzaffarabad to open rehabilitation facilities in northwestern Pakistan and in Batagram and Bagh, AJK.

Each year, the Friends of Pakistan financially backs a nonprofit organization with a worthy cause. Last year, they helped support The Citizens Foundation by raising \$100,000 for new schools and educational programs in Pakistan. This year, Friends chose CHAL as their beneficiary.

Friends President Norma Sparks said, although the Red

Cross has provided much assistance, Pakistanis are still greatly in need of more help. "Above all, this issue needs to be kept in the forefront," Sparks said. "It hit the news, but we have to keep it public. There is still great need everywhere."

Half way around the world, Haamid Jaffer, a retired business executive, and his wife, Tasnim, have been putting in many volunteer hours to support CHAL. Haamid Jaffer was volunteering at MHHCC when the injured earthquake victims were brought to the



AFFORDABLE WATER

Low-cost water purification can help reduce water-borne diseases in Pakistan. BY B. A. ALIG

Iwould notice the guy in a SUV drinking from a Nestle® water bottle, while his driver drinking contaminated water from a roadside faucet. I found this situation both strange and unfair," says Kabir Omar, founder of Pani Ghar (House of Water) in Lahore, Pakistan.

Potable water in Pakistan is polluted, and the health situation is getting worse. Keeping this in mind, many companies, including Nestle—the undisputed brand leader—have launched bottled water. However, they are catering to the rich. A liter of bottled water costs Rs 22 (37 cents). A price the poor cannot afford. The Economic Survey of Pakistan says that the per capita income for 2004-2005 was \$736.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that worldwide around 1.1 billion people lack access to improved water sources. Diarrhea due to infection is widespread throughout the developing world. The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) launched its "National Water Quality Monitoring Program" in March 2001 to monitor water quality in 21 major cities, six rivers, and 11 storage reservoirs, canals, drains, and natural lakes. Results from various investigations and surveys indicate that pollution levels are higher particularly in and around the big cities where industries are clustered. According to UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 20 to 40 percent of hospital beds in Pakistan are occupied by patients suffering from water-related diseases.

Omar—a business graduate from Western Michigan University—spent 2 years developing a locally manufactured water treatment plant that uses about 15 percent imported components. The machine, he says, evolved after visiting water filtration exhibitions over-



Pani Ghar franchises, especially in earthquake affected areas, help bring clean water to villages and generate income for mosques

seas. The systems he saw there were expensive and difficult to maintain and operate in a developing country like Pakistan. Therefore, he decided to design a system from scratch and manufactured it locally. Omar says, "The salient feature of my machine is that, to start with, it's very robust. It uses very little electricity; it's like operating 5 ceiling fans. As it is designed and manufactured in Pakistan, all spare parts are available locally. It is easy to install and operate; all the mechanical functions are automated, using off the shelf electrical and electronics components. The machine is able to process water from any source, except seawater, due to its high salt content."

Technology available in the West has been tailored to the local needs and environment, putting it within reach of the masses. He explains, "All we claim and do is to make water

safe to drink, free from germs, viruses, bacteria, spores, and parasites. Our processed water is not mineral water; we do not add or take out dissolved minerals naturally present in the source water. We just do multistage filtration and kill virtually all the germs, which may be present in the source water via electromechanical means, which also improves the taste as well."

Omar started selling these commercial units to factories and other large enterprises in Pakistan, however, he said, "[T]he very thought to do something for the people was on my mind. Almost everyday at dinner time, I used to discuss the ideas I had for the day with my family. Then one day my daughter Ayza said, 'Abbu, why can't we take our machines and start opening Pani Ghar for the people?' An idea was born!"

Soon Omar rented a small store in a poor area of Lahore, where water was a real problem. The store was renovated to be aesthetically appealing and to meet the best hygiene standards. Then the fully automatic safe drinking water plant was installed. Omar says that the plant, which is a one

button operation, is visible from outside through a large window.

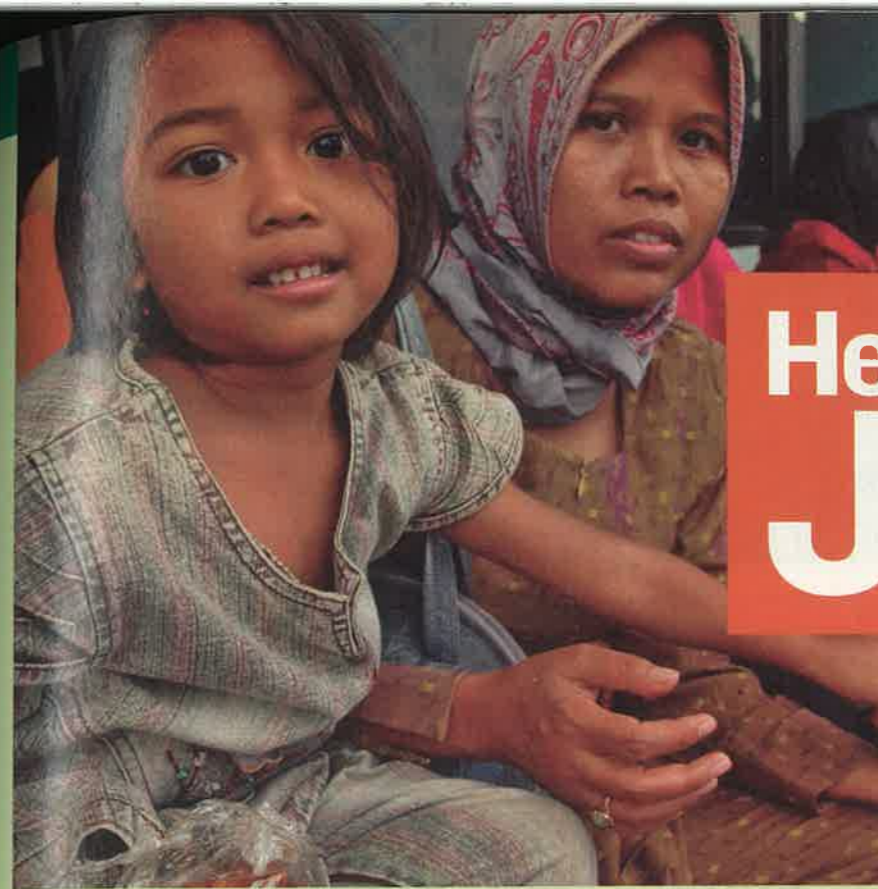
Pani Ghar sells 20, 10, and 5 liter plastic cans to customers at a nominal price, which they can refill at Rs 1 (1.6 cents) per liter. Home delivery contracts require a Rs 600 (\$10) advance payment for a month's supply (20 liters per day). Pani Ghar also serves tea, coffee, and flavored fizzy drinks made from filtered water. During summer, Pani Ghar also sells chilled water and has scored a first in Pakistan, bagged ice cubes made from filtered and treated water.

Omar adds, "My daughter and I were surprised at the success level that we have achieved in such a short time. People are flocking to Pani Ghar and buying water. The feedback we are getting is all positive. You just need to sit in Pani Ghar to hear all the great stories customers tell us. And what a wonderful feeling to make someone's day."

Omar plans to open 10 company operated Pani Ghars in Lahore. A further 1,000 Pani Ghars will be opened in northern Pakistan through franchising. He says that the total cost of a Pani Ghar is Rs 235,000 (\$3915), which includes the equipment and store renovation. It costs about Rs 15,000 (\$250) per month to run, maintain, and operate a Pani Ghar. He has started receiving offers for franchises, which he hopes to finalize within 6 months when all concepts and equipment are fully tested.

He believes some may be motivated to open franchises at mosques in villages, especially in earthquake affected areas. This would not only help bring clean water to villages but also generate income for the mosques.

Omar says, "It satisfies me to give something back, which is so meaningful to my community." ■



Heartbreak JAVA

TRAGEDY REVISITED: Indonesia has been revisited with tragedy, with more than 6000 dead in the Java earthquake. (below) Islamic Relief and the Mormon Church joined to help Javanese earthquake victims.

Muslim charities rush to help earthquake devastated Java.

BY UMBERINE ABDULLAH

Indonesia's earthquake survivors will need a six-month relief operation costing more than \$100 million, UN officials have estimated. They say that nearly half of that money should go toward housing.

The deadly earthquake that struck Indonesia's main island, Java killed at least 6,200 people. World Health Organization (WHO) said that many of those who had died were elderly people who had suffered complications from their injuries or infections of their wounds. At least 30,000 people were injured and more than 105,000 homes destroyed or damaged by the 6.3 magnitude earthquake that hit the ancient city of Yogyakarta early on May 27, leaving hundreds of thousands of people displaced. The region is close to the volcano, Mount Merapi, which had been spewing lava and ash for some weeks before the earthquake.

The area, although not large, is constricted and there are many difficulties in moving relief to difficult areas. The first challenge was to get people out of crowded hospitals to prevent the spread of infection.

Pakistan, which experienced a much bigger earthquake-borne tragedy in October 2005, airlifted a 75-bed field hospital to Indonesia, where casualties were overcrowding hospitals following the May 25 earthquake. The hospital, staffed by 15 specialists and 49 paramedics, with its own operating theater, X-ray unit and field laboratory, serves 300 outdoor patients daily. Its mobile surgical unit is capable of undertaking 25 major surgeries in a day. Pakistan's 7.6 magnitude earthquake claimed more than 73,000 lives, seriously injured nearly 70,000 people and left 3.3 million homeless.



ISNA has established a special Indonesia Relief Fund to aid the victims of the earthquake, said acting secretary general Ahmad ElHattab. ISNA has appealed to all Muslim Americans to donate generously to relief organizations which are aiding the victims of the Java earthquake. Meanwhile, Muslim communities nationwide have launched fundraising drives in conjunction with relief agencies such as Islamic Relief.

Islamic Relief, which allocated over \$928,000 for initial emergency projects, is appealing for a further \$3.7 million for the victims of the disaster. Immediately after the tragedy struck, Islamic Relief began distributing blankets, clean water, food, and hygiene kits, coordinating its efforts with domestic and international agencies in the area, including Oxfam and Plan International. In coordination with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Islamic Relief shipped over 200,000 pounds of urgently needed supplies, valued at over \$1.6 million. The shipment from Salt Lake City included essential items such as hygiene kits, first aid supplies, medical and surgical supplies, tarps, wheel chairs, crutches, and many other items. The supplies—donated by the Church—

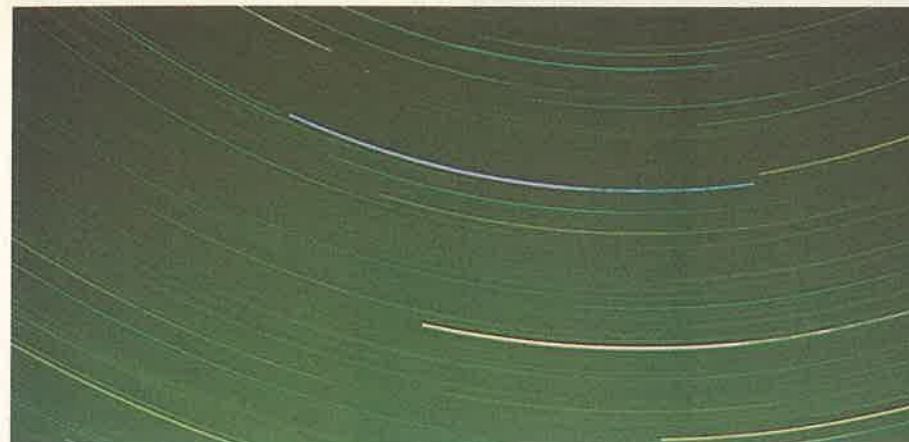
were based on needed items requested by the Indonesian government. Islamic Relief covered the majority of the shipment costs and its ground staff in Indonesia distributed the goods in the affected areas.

The December 2004 tsunami, claimed over 170,000 Indonesian lives and left more than 500,000 people homeless. Islamic Relief's post-tsunami activities have benefited about 150,000 people in Indonesia thus far. For its tsunami relief efforts, Islamic Relief collected over \$29 million of aid in the form of cash, pledges and in-kind donations.

The Maryland based Asia Relief is responding to the Indonesian earthquake with a two phase approach. The first phase is aimed at saving lives by sending medical supplies and surgeons. The second phase involves helping the survivors to put their communities and lives together. Asia Relief founder Rizwan Mowlana said: "Work on the second phase needs to begin now so that families can get back into homes, have their means of livelihood restored and the children are able to return to school."

Saudi Arabia has promised \$5 million, plus food, medical equipment, and tents, while the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait have each pledged \$4 million. The EU has promised up to \$3.82 million in aid. The US has pledged \$2.5 million and is also sent doctors and nurses from a military base in Okinawa, while Canada has offered \$1.8 million. Australia has pledged \$2.2 million. China has offered \$2 million in cash aid, as well as a 44-person team of medical and earthquake experts. Japan is sending \$10 million plus troops to help with relief work. Britain is channeling \$5.5 million through the UN and \$1.8 million through the Red Cross. The Asian Development Bank has promised \$60 million in aid and loans to help the affected region.

UNICEF sent tents, tarpaulins, health kits and school equipment, the World Food Program begun distributing emergency food rations and has sent 80 tons of fortified noodles. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has appealed for \$9.79 million to help survivors. Save the Children Alliance has launched an appeal for \$3 million to fund household kits for affected families. ■



Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the great English poet, once defined poetry as "the best words in the best order." For in their careful alignment, words like tiles fit to a mosaic, giving birth to beauty. As with words, so are actions. The best deeds in their respective contexts can give birth to beauty; one's life can be a veritable poem of action. Our beloved Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) once expressed this when he described a third of one's religion as *ihsan*, a word that literally means 'spiritual excellence' and 'beneficence' but is also related to the word *husnun*, which means beauty.

How do we know the best way to act in a given circumstance? How do we know with the certainty of the master calligrapher where to direct the pen that is recording the history of our lives? How often do we feel like amateurs unable to realize the *ihsan* we yearn for?

Among God's illimitable mercies showered upon His creation, surely one of the greatest, is that He has granted us not only a soul yearning for reunion with Him, a conscience from which to intuit right and wrong, and a scripture from which to discern moral principles, but He also sent the most exalted human model of those principles—a radiant script from which to imitate and pen beauty ourselves; "You have indeed in the Messenger of God a beautiful pattern of conduct for him who looks forward to God and the Last Day and remembers God Much" (Qur'an, 33:21). So inspiring was his example that some of the coarsest hearts—hearts calloused from incessant raiding and killing, oppressive social hierarchies, and wanton materialism—were softened with mercy. In one generation, elite-born Arabs like Abu Bakr and Umar (*'alayhim rahmah*) found themselves standing in the same prayer line as Bilal, a slave, and Salman, a foreigner. The people of Ansar, who had once fought each other in endless campaigns of reprisal, abandoned fighting altogether and united in brotherhood.

This article, the second in a series of two on the Prophet's Sunnah, will, in-

FOOD FOR THE SPIRIT

Living the Sunnah: Part II

sha'Allah, be devoted to exploring the outward aspects of the Prophet's "beautiful pattern of conduct" so that we might draw nearer to the one whom God called a "mercy to all the worlds" (21:107).

Below you will find some examples of the Prophet's human relationships, as well as some questions to reflect upon and an activity to try. In reading these examples and asking these questions, let us throw open our homes, our hearts, our neighborhoods, and our workplaces for

By comparing ourselves to Prophet Muhammad's exalted example, we can identify where we fall short and need to exert more effort.

Imam Mohammed ibn Hagmagid is executive director of the ADAMS Center in Sterling, Virginia. His father was an Azhar graduate and a leading scholar in Sudan. Imam Magid studied at the hand of his father and other notable scholars, gaining *ijaza* in several disciplines, including Maliki Fiqh and Imam Ghazali's *Ihya ulum Al-deen*. He delivers lectures throughout the U.S. Sam Ross is a student of the Arabic language.

inspection. Let us ask ourselves if Prophet Muhammad visited us today, would he feel loved? Would he feel as though his Sunnah, which God called "an exalted model of character" (68:4), was being enacted?

Let us strive to focus on one aspect each week and to use his example as fuel for change in our own selves and in the lives of our families. By comparing ourselves to his exalted example, we can identify where we fall short and need to exert more effort. May God help us to be among those whose love for and emulation of the Prophet's noble example draws us closer to God in this world and the Hereafter. *Ameen*.

We look forward to incorporating your feedback and questions into our future columns. Please send all correspondence to: foodforthespirit@isna.net.

Please feel free to cut out the exercises below and use them in your home, office, car, etc.

Week 1: Parents

■ "Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you show kindness to your two parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow upon them Thy Mercy even as they

cherished me in Childhood.'" (Qur'an, 17:23-24)

■ Though the Prophet was an orphan and never knew his parents as an adult, we can still learn much about the treatment of parents from his example. First, in our old age many of us become more forgetful, more needy, more set in our ways, and slower to move and act. This can be challenging for our children. The Prophet never expressed frustration in such situations. Anas bin Maalik (*'alayhi rahmah*) said, "He never once told me 'Oof!' when I did something. He never asked me, 'Why did you do such and such?' When I did not do a certain task, he never asked me why I did not do it" (Shma'ail, Imam Tirmidhi #328). The Prophet would also always make the one with whom he was speaking feel special. Amr ibn Aas said, "He used to give attention, and spoke to me in a manner that I began to feel that I was the best among the community" (Shma'ail, Imam Tirmidhi #327). He would never speak harshly. The Prophet's grandson Husayn (*'alayhi rahmah*) likewise reported, "He never spoke in a harsh tone nor was he rude. He did not seek the faults of others and was quick to forgive" (Shma'ail, Imam Tirmidhi #334).

■ If tension emerged in a relationship, the Prophet was proactive in maintaining the relationship. The Prophet counseled, "The one who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not the one who reciprocates whatever good is done to him. The one who maintains ties of kinship is the one who, when his relatives cut him off, maintains the ties" (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 8, Book 72, No. 20).

■ Moreover, the Prophet would have recognized that he was not on equal footing with his parents. Once a man carried his mother on his back in *tawaaf* and asked the Prophet if he had fulfilled his obligations to her. The Prophet responded that his kindness in carrying her did not equal even one portion of her pain of delivery.

Questions for Reflection

- What kind of relationship do you have with your parents?
- If they are alive, how do you express your appreciation?
- If you meet God today, would he be satisfied with your care of them?
- How much quality time do you spend with them every week?
- If they have passed away, how often do you remember them in your prayer?

Activity

Plan an activity with your parents that they would enjoy. Include them in your planning and seek their advice.

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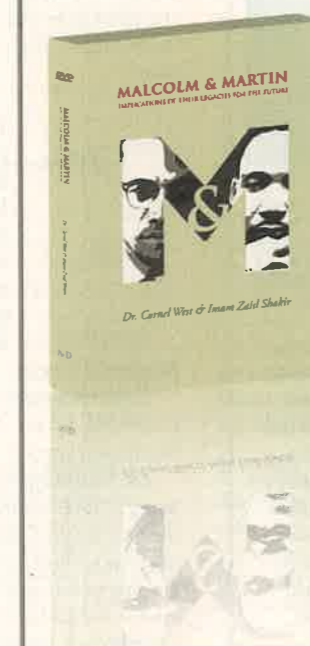
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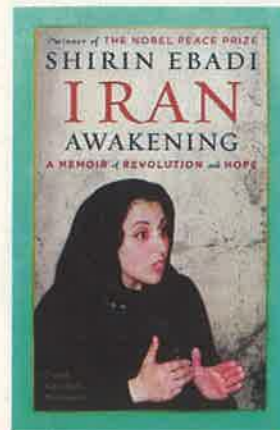
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Iran Awakening: A Memoir of Revolution and Hope
Shirin Ebadi, with Azadeh Moaveni
2006. pp. 256. HB. \$24.95.
Random House

If Shirin Ebadi had handpicked the release date for her memoir, "Iran Awakening", she could not have chosen better. Into the boiling cauldron of tension between Iran and the U.S. over Iranian nuclear ambitions, comes a cooling influence, a peek into the life and thoughts of everyday Iranian people and a plea for sanity and calm, for restraint and mutual understanding between Americans and Iranians. "In the Islamic Republic," Ebadi writes, "we have a problem with representation. Our diplomats around the world are, naturally, loyal to the regime, and the regime's credibility is not such that it reflects the true opinions of the people. The responsibility falls, then, on unofficial ambassadors to relate Iranians' perceptions and hopes to the world."

Ebadi is one such unofficial ambassador, and a brilliant one at that. A devout Muslim and fiercely loyal to her country, she has become the face of human rights in Iran, focusing her legal practice on pro bono defense of women, children, and writers. For her work, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003.

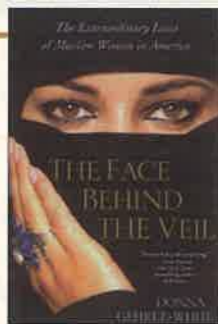
Ebadi's memoir weaves the story of her life—starting with childhood and following her path through college, judgeship, being stripped of her title after the 1979 Revolution, and finally her practice of law under Islamic theocracy—with the story of Iran's political upheaval. It is a story at once lyrical and evocative, at times inspiring, and often chilling, one which presents the human side of Iran that is so often lacking in Western media. REVIEW BY PAMELA K. TAYLOR

SHATTERED Stereotypes

Gehrke-White embarked on a journey to 'un-veil' the image of Muslim women in America.

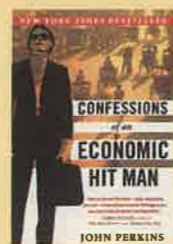
This journey opened a window on a group of people as diverse as misunderstood. She met with women achievers and innovators who are changing the face of America and Islam and each contributing to their families, communities, and the nation. The author's palette includes Muslim women from a broad spectrum, from the conservative to the ultra-liberal, from housewives to entrepreneurs, from leaders to workers.

Gehrke-White states that while researching her book, she "found Muslims are among the most achieving women in the United States. They are doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, social workers and artists...Indeed, we should be exporting the success story to the rest of the world...I found Muslim women achieving from coast to coast. They are leading worldwide humanitarian groups in Washington, presiding over juvenile court in Baltimore, delivering babies in Los Angeles, teaching in Miami, and helping the homeless in Las Vegas."



The Face Behind the Veil: The Extraordinary Lives of Muslim Women in America
Donna Gehrke-White
2006. pp. xiv+299. HB. \$22.95.
Citadel/Kensington Publishing, New York, NY

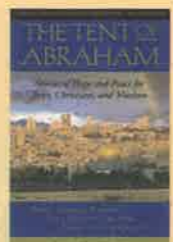
Short Takes



Confessions of an Economic Hit Man
John Perkins
2006 (new ed.). pp. xxv+303.
PB. \$15.00.

Plume/Penguin Books, New York, NY

A revealing and disturbing memoir by a member of a group that schemed to befuddle less developed countries into accepting projects that did not suit their economies, and as a result caused the countries to end up as prisoners of debt and finally devoid of sovereign authority.



The Tent of Abraham: Stories of Hope and Peace for Jews, Christians, and Muslims
Arthur Waskow, Joan Chittister, and Saadi Shakur Chishti (Neil Douglas-Klotz). 2006. pp. 224. PB. \$18.00. HB. \$24.95.
Beacon Press, Boston, MA

Compiled by a Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim, this book analyzes the deeper, religious significance of the three versions of the story and brings the roots of reconciliation, buried in the texts, to the forefront.

The authors discuss doctrinal issues that highlight the Sunni-Shi'a divide, focusing on the obstacles to unity that lie in the burden of attitudes inherited from the past. The authors also highlight the points of unity, such as shared values and aspirations to create a better world for all humanity.



The Intelligent Heart, the Pure Heart: An Insight into the Heart based on the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Modern Science
Gohar Mushtaq. 2006. pp. xi+ii+89. PB. \$4.00. Ta-Ha Publishers, London

Dr. Mushtaq examines the heart's "intelligence" in light of the Qur'an and ahadith, showing how science is only now beginning to uncover the wisdom known to Muslims for more than 14 centuries. He examines the

CARE FOR MUSLIM MINDS

The "Journal of Muslim Mental Health", edited by Northwestern University's Dr. Abdul Basit, will make its debut this year. Published twice yearly by Routledge's Taylor & Francis Group, the "JMMH"

will serve as a forum for professionals to identify and explore the mental healthcare needs of Muslims. "JMMH" makes its debut at a time when the void in Muslim mental health literature has become increasingly glaring, generating a number of important questions. To subscribe, contact: customerservice@taylorandfrancis.com or 1-800-354-1420 (press "4").

diseases of the heart and their cures as prescribed by Islam.



Facing One Qiblah: Legal and Doctrinal Aspects of Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims
Karim D. Crow & Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi. 2005. pp. xviii+245. PB. Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd., Singapore

The authors discuss doctrinal issues that highlight the Sunni-Shi'a divide, focusing on the obstacles to unity that lie in the burden of attitudes inherited from the past. The authors also highlight the points of unity, such as shared values and aspirations to create a better world for all humanity.

The authors ask if Muslims are prisoners of their past and suggest that only by focusing on injustices and inequities within and outside of the ummah will Muslims leaders and thinkers overcome internal schisms and forge true unity. They remind that in order to play a vital part in any future world order, Muslims must find ways to wisely address their divergences with pragmatism and sincerity.

Matrimonials

And of His signs is this; He created for you spouses from yourselves that you might find peace in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are signs for people who reflect. (Qur'an 30:21)

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SEEKING HUSBAND

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Pakistani parents invite correspondence for their U.S. born/raised daughter (26, 5'6", attractive, practicing Muslimah, BA/MA from top university). Please send resume and picture to jeewansathi92@yahoo.com. (CA)

✳ **SO262 July/August 2006**
Sunni Muslim, Indian parents invite correspondence for their U.S. born/raised daughter (27, first year medical resident) from a medical doctor or professional (27-32). Contact: ajmal@teleport.com or (503) 524-6124.

✳ **SO283 July/August 2006**
Sunni Muslim, Indian parents invite correspondence for their daughter (25 years old, 3rd year medical student) from Muslim professionals (25-30) in the U.S. or Canada. Contact: javed967@yahoo.com or (630) 335-1713. (IL)

✳ **SO291 July/August 2006**
Sunni Muslim parents invite correspondence for their daughter (U.S. raised/citizen, teaching professional, B.S. California Board Certified Teacher) from a professional, educated, and employed person (28-34) of Indo-Pak origin. Contact (408) 603-9718 or ansaril@yahoo.com. (AZ)

✳ **SO292 July/August 2006**
Indo-Pak, Sunni Muslim parents invite correspondence for their U.S. raised dentist daughter (27 years old, slim, 5'4") from a doctor, lawyer, PhD or MBA. Contact: dsmail786@yahoo.com. (MT)

✳ **SO293 July/August 2006**
Gujarati, Sunni Muslim parents invite correspondence for their U.S. born/raised daughter (21 years old, undergraduate degree from an Ivy League university, candidate for law school) from a U.S. born/raised professional. Please contact: matrimonial06@comcast.net. (IL)

✳ **SO294 July/Aug 2006**
Sunni Indian parents invite correspondence for their U.S. born/raised daughter (23, 5'7", 3rd year PharmD Student) from U.S. born/raised, Sunni, medical Doctor, 26-28 years. E-mail a photograph to zjk51748@yahoo.com.

✳ **SO295 July/Aug 2006**
Sunni Muslim, Indo/Pak parents invite correspondence for their daughter (25, U.S. born, fair, 5'5", new medical graduate) from individual of similar background. E-mail: DrNabbu@aol.com. (CA)

✳ **SO296 July/Aug 2006**
Sunni, Pakistani parents seek a physician/medical student of Pakistani origin for their 23 year old daughter, who is a 2nd year medical student in the U.S. Contact: zeecamelot@hotmail.com. (NV)

✳ **SO297 July/Aug 2006**
Muslim parents invite correspondence from educated, practicing Muslim family for their U.S. born/raised, 22 year old daughter, who is a medical student at prestigious U.S. medical school. Please respond to zawata_afnan83@yahoo.com. (FL)

✳ **SO298 July/Aug 2006**
Sunni Muslim, Pakistani parents seek correspondence for their U.S. born and raised daughter (24, wears hijab) from likeminded professionals, 24-30 years old. Contact: silverspring2006@gmail.com.

SO299 July/Aug 2006
Parents seeking a U.S. raised professional Indo/Pak, never married, 29-35, practicing Muslim for their U.S. born/raised daughter (27, religious, beautiful, lawyer). Contact: nmadni786@yahoo.com (WA)

SO300 July/Aug 2006
Sunni Muslim, Indo/Pak parents invite correspondence for their U.S. born daughter (23, 5'4", BS, practicing Muslim, wears hijab) from an educated and practicing Muslim, 25-30, of Indo/Pak origin. Contact: muslimparents@gmail.com (TN)

SEEKING WIFE

✳ **BO76 July/Aug 2006**
Moderate Sunni Muslim male (MS, 40ish, U.S. citizen, great looks, moral values, 5'5", Civil Eng. (PE)) seeking Caucasian lady (U.S./Europe/other) with great looks, moral values, soft manners, education, a convert moderate Muslim or sensitive Christian. Please e-mail with photos to karimyousof@msn.com or call (702) 326-6600.

✳ **BO80 July/Aug 2006**
Sunni Muslim, Kashmiri parents of 29 year old resident physician (U.S. born and raised) looking for Kashmiri American girl, age 21-26. Contact: (913) 345-9448.

✳ **BO81 July/Aug 2006**
Intelligent and handsome doctor from top-ranked medical school in a prestigious residency (27, U.S. born, from highly-educated, practicing Sunni Muslim family) seeks life partner: a professional with similar level of education and religious commitment. Contact: zam256@yahoo.com. (IL)

✳ **BO82 July/Aug 2006**
Practicing Sunni Muslim, Pakistani parents of a 29 year old (U.S. born, tall, handsome, physician, in prestigious residency) looking for a beautiful, professional, and practicing Muslimah. Contact: bismillah429@yahoo.com.

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A vaccination camp organized by Hidayah Foundation



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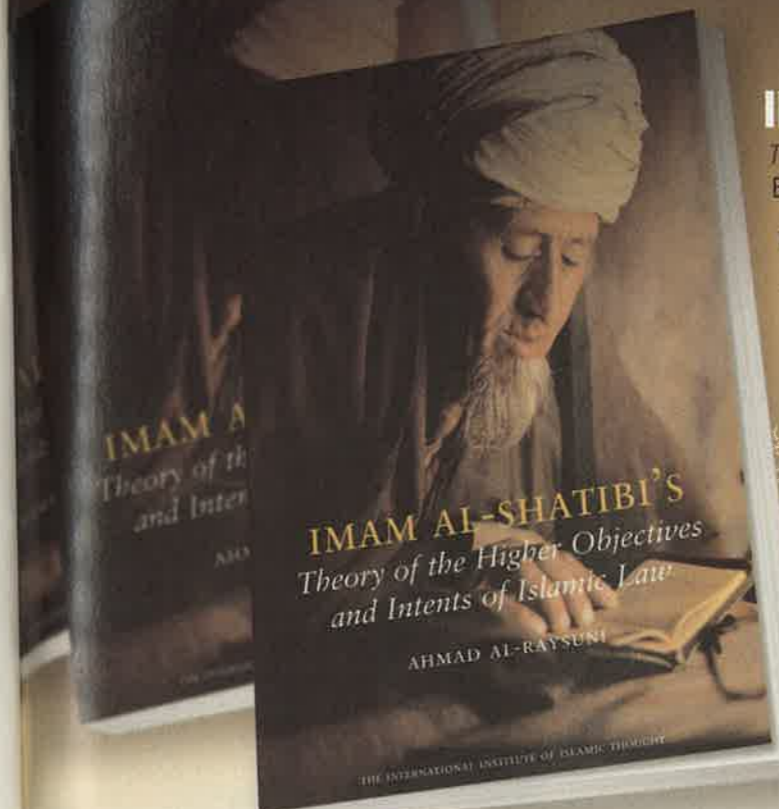
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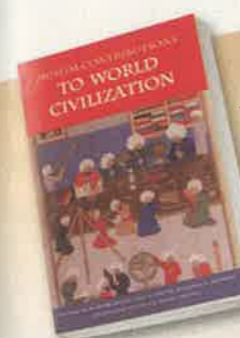
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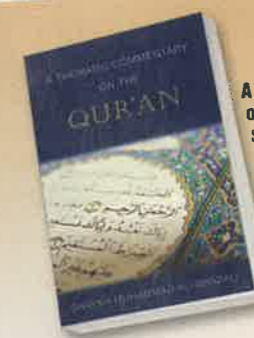
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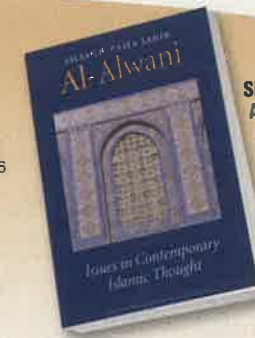


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