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# Half a Century! 50 Years!

SUCH MILESTONES ABOUND, AND many of us get bills and mass mail bearing faux engraved stickers bearing such news. However, Asad Ba-Yunus, a member at large of the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura, writing in this issue of "Islamic Horizons," succinctly sums up the spirit of ISNA attaining this milestone: "Insha Allah, when we celebrate ISNA's centenary in 2063, our grandchildren will look back to our first 50 years of intense activity and see ISNA's involvement at the local level to be just as strong as our national advocacy, and will celebrate our efforts toward building the benevolent community."

First there was one, which gathered 12 more, and it was this group of 13 that laid the foundation of a building, where the future generation, like Asad, talks confidently of seeing their grandchildren celebrating the centenary in 2063.

The reality lies in the dedication to the mission and not numbers. Yes, it was in 1754 that 13 colonies on the Atlantic coast of North America began collaborating at the Albany Congress to demand their rights and set up a Congress that declared independence in 1776 and formed the United States of America. It was not the magic of 13, but a determination to order their own destiny that brought about this reality.

Of course, MSA chapters were not as populous as today, but there was

among them a small band of people who had the future in their sight, a goal of founding a community that will be Islamic and also part of the national fabric. They were volunteers who worked single-mindedly for a cause that they all shared. When need arose, they adorned more hats than a head could accommodate. And when need arose, they gave up their own aspirations and comforts to ensure that the mission may thrive.

This issue of the magazine names the foundation builders who are no longer with us but their work abides. And of course, space did not allow us to include each and everyone of the living foundation builders.

Each of them has contributed toward creating a dynamic organization that has secured a milestone and heads toward newer ones. On their part, the founding parents have started the process of inducting the new generation; it is this generation that needs to make community building incumbent upon themselves just as the founding parents did half a century ago.

The foundations are there, the building is there, but it is a building that needs constant addition, care and love. And the example is there to emulate. Remember 2063 is not far! This generation has to step forward and move ISNA to a position where it becomes an even more powerful voice for all Muslim Americans. ■

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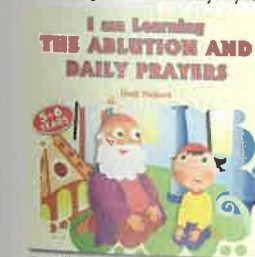
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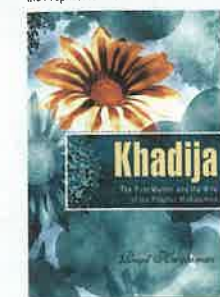
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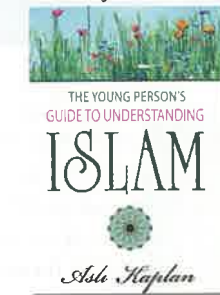
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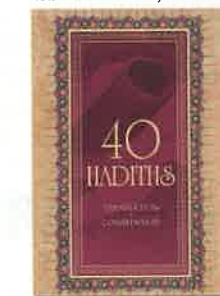
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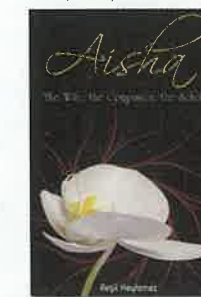
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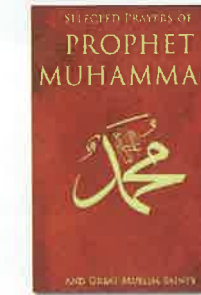
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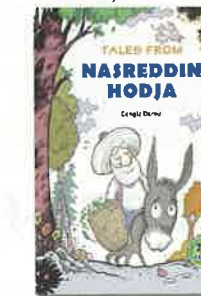
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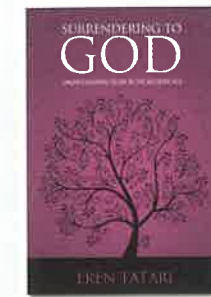
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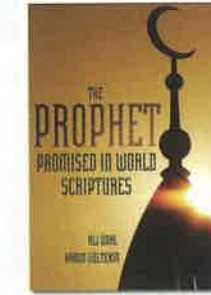
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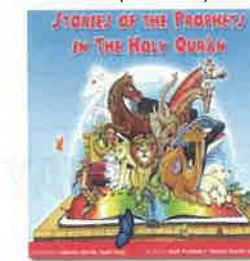
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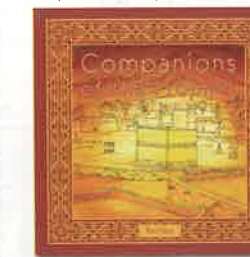
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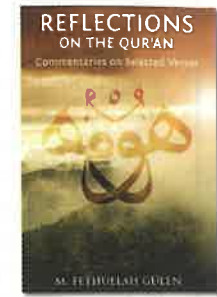
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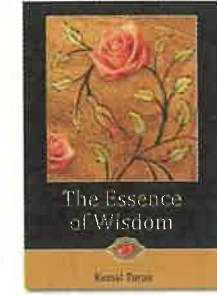
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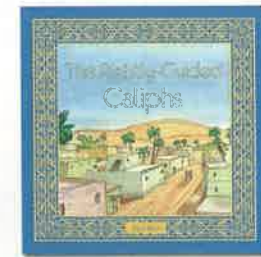
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## MOBILIZING FAITH FOR WOMEN

ISNA PRESIDENT IMAM MOHAMED

Magid joined other top religious leaders, activists and scholars, representing more than 15 countries and over 35 faith-based organizations, universities and religious bodies, for a conference entitled "Mobilizing Faith for Women: Engaging the Power of Religion and Belief to Advance Human Rights and Dignity."

The event was organized by The Carter Center under former President Jimmy Carter's leadership, in Atlanta, Ga. June 28.

Imam Magid described it as one of the most important human rights conferences he had ever attended. He said, "It was eye-opening to see the scope and depth of efforts that people are engaged in around the world to protect and advance women's rights. I could also see the potential for us to do so much more when people of faith join together to challenge violations of women's rights, some of the most unaddressed human rights violations of all time." He appreciated President Carter's work and looks forward to working with other participants on women rights. Imam Magid spoke on the



forum's final panel about connecting religious study, action and advocacy in order to transform local actions into a global movement.

The conference highlighted the influence of religion on women's rights and called on people of faith and religious leaders to assume their responsibility to advance equally the well being of all members of society. Discussions focused on aligning religious life with human rights, stopping human trafficking, connecting religious study to advocacy and the impact of war on women.

President Carter called the abuse of

women "the most pervasive and unaddressed human rights violation on earth..." which "can be and should be addressed courageously." He added, "The tremendous influence exerted by religious leaders carries with it the moral responsibility for them to take action to address human rights violations of girls and women, including the global problem of sexual violence."

The leaders asked all believers to work within their communities to seek positive solutions for violence against women and other gender-based violations of human rights. ■

## ISNA LEADS THE WAY IN INTRA-FAITH UNDERSTANDING

ON JULY 1, DR. SAYYID M. SYEED, National Director of ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances (IOICA) joined the Michigan Muslim Community Council (MMCC) in Detroit

for a dialogue between Sunni and Shia leaders.

The forum began with this objective: that there are significant areas of shared beliefs and values held in common

between the two communities, as well as their organizations and service institutions.

Dr. Syeed thanked MMCC for organizing the conference at this critical time in order to send a message of solidarity to the Muslim community. He reminded the attendees that the Muslim American community is an experiment in the growth and development of a tolerant community that is respectful of diversity, adding, "We rejected an interpretation of Islam that would have set us against each other."

ISNA and MSA have had both Sunni and Shia leaders. In 2006, the former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami addressed the ISNA Convention. Muslims of all persuasions felt proud and empowered by his presence.

In 2007, all major American Sunni and Shia leaders gathered in Chicago and



announced a Muslim Code of Honor that was committed to and signed in front of thousands of rejoicing Muslims. This Code of Honor has had an incredible international effect. It was translated in several different languages.

"ISNA," Dr. Syeed said, "seeks understanding among people." He highlighted the organization's interfaith initiatives. He pointed out how under the Shoulder to Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values, campaign, Jews, Christian, and Muslim orga-

nizations work to ensure that anti-Muslim sentiment never becomes mainstream in America.

The participants identified tangible steps for relationship-building, along with follow-up action items such as the creation of a task force delegated with the responsibility of cultivating and nurturing the relationship-building process.

The Shia and Sunni co-chairs of the MMCC Imams Council joined 60 Muslim community leaders and area imams representing various mosques across

the tri-county area to pledge to keep the sectarian influences currently plaguing the Middle East out of American Muslim communities, reaffirming American and Islamic values of religious tolerance.

The Imams' Council of the MMCC and other Islamic leaders in Michigan meet regularly to enhance communication within the diverse Muslim community as well as to reach out to the interfaith community, building relationships and alliance in pursuit of an inclusive community and peaceful neighborhoods. ■

## ISNA RAISES AWARENESS AGAINST TORTURE

ON JUNE 22, THE ISLAMIC CENTER of Central Missouri hosted ISNA and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) for an event about how to end American-sponsored torture. Dr. Rashed Nizam of Columbia, Mo. invited NRCAT after ISNA introduced him to their work.

Since its inception in 2006, ISNA has been a founding member of NRCAT, an organization which now has more than 300 participating member organizations.

A key way to end torture is for Americans to become aware of what is happening and take action to change it. Over the past several years, NRCAT has mobilized people of faith to end torture in United States policy, practice and culture. "It's wrong to harm people and to not respect the dignity of each person," said NRCAT Executive Director Rev. Richard Killmer. "Even if (torture) worked, it'd still be wrong."

Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi, director of community outreach at IOICA, spoke about ISNA and NRCAT's joint efforts in the interfaith campaign to end anti-Muslim sentiment, called Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values.

In Washington, D.C., Dr. Syeed spoke at a Public Witness Against Torture in front of the White House June 27.

Speaking at the United Nations International Day in Support of Torture Victims and to call for the closure of the prison at Guantanamo Bay, he said that torture is forbidden in every religion and it is not surprising that all faith groups



have stood up against the use of torture by the United States. He appealed for the closure of Guantanamo, which he said had become stigma on the name of the United States.

Muslim Americans, he said, are extremely pained that their country has not only practiced torture as a means

of interrogation but has also uses the services of Muslim dictators through rendition to torture prisoners, making it a standard practice for suppressing freedom of speech in Muslim countries. He said that some of the tyrants have been disgraced and he hopes that others will follow.

Other speakers at the event included torture victims, religious leaders and human rights advocates.

NRCAT is also actively working to ask the United States Senate Intelligence Committee to release a 6,000-page report on CIA torture and curbing the use of prolonged solitary confinement in United States

prisons. The event was also sponsored by Amnesty International, Center for Constitutional Rights, Disciples Justice Action Network, Interfaith Action for Human Rights, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Torture Abolition and Survivor Support Coalition, Witness Against Torture and World Can't Wait. ■



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## Tampa Celebrates a Day with ISNA

BY ISLAMIC HORIZONS STAFF

**I**SNA HELD A COMMUNITY DAY ON JUNE 29 IN TAMPA, FLA. ATTENDED by more than 200 people from the Tampa Bay area and other parts of the state. The event, themed "The American Muslim Identity: Challenges to Opportunities," offered sessions for educators, the youth and the community on topics relevant to each group.

ISNA interim secretary general Dr. Iqbal Unus, who addressed the session on "Integrating Islam into the Science Curricula," stressed that teaching science without supplementing popular textbooks denies Muslim students the opportunity to develop a deep understanding of God as the Creator of all that exists, to appreciate that values and attitudes influence scientific inventiveness and to be inspired by the legacy of pioneering Muslims scientists.

Motasem Atiya of the Maryland-based Al-Madina Institute, and Jenan Kurdi of Tampa, Fla., addressed the session on "Muslim in the Mirror - Your Identity in the Community." They spoke to the youth about the importance of maintaining their Muslim identities, offering real-life examples of how to accomplish this sometimes seemingly impossible task. Hassan Shibly, executive director of the Council on American-

Islamic Relations of Florida, moderated the session, which sought to help young Muslims understand their identity and find a place in society.

Sheikh Mokhtar Maghraoui, a foundation scholar for Al-Madina Institute, addressed two inspiring and enlightening sessions: one with Dr. Ghiath Mahmaljy about the concept of God and His love for humanity, even when He is testing them with adversity and hardship.

Maghraoui explained how get to a state where we can once again feel God's loving presence in our lives, emotionally and spiritually.

Atiya and Maghraoui, in his second session, addressing the topic of "Promoting Spiritual Environment in our Schools and Homes," explained the importance of spirituality (taqwa) at home and at school. They explained that the home is the first place

of education and schools the second, so it is safe to say that these are the places that should guide Muslims to make the proper connection between our actions and our purpose in life. The session about spirituality attracted the largest number of attendees.

ISNA vice president-U.S., Azhar Azeez, Dr. Iqbal Unus, and Rev. Charles McKenzie of Rev. Jesse Jackson's of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition addressed the banquet attendees. Wajahat Ali delivered the keynote speech. Dr. Hussain Saba, who is active in community and civic affairs, and founded the Red Crescent Clinic for the needy, was presented the Community Service Award. He has been active in the Islamic Society of Tampa Bay Area since its beginning. The banquet dinner was followed by entertainment by country music singer Kareem Salama. ISNA Development Foundation executive director, Ahmed M. Elhattab said that it was an honor to bring ISNA's programs and activities to our Muslim American communities. He lauded the Tampa Muslim community, which was so welcoming, particularly the youth, whose dedication and energy were amazing. ■



## Islamic Networks Group (ING) seeks a highly qualified and motivated Executive Director

ING is a non-profit educational organization based in the San Jose, California, home of one of the largest American Muslim communities in the United States, where Stanford University, UC Berkeley and Zaytuna College are located.

Founded in 1993, ING's mission is to counter prejudice and discrimination against American Muslims by teaching about their traditions and contributions in the context of America's history and cultural diversity, while building relations between American Muslims and other groups.



ING achieves its mission through educational and community engagement programs. We work through regional volunteers and affiliated organizations across the country that provide thousands of presentations, training seminars and workshops, and panel discussions annually in schools, colleges and universities, law enforcement agencies, corporations, healthcare facilities, and community organizations as part of cultural diversity curricula and programs.

**See [www.ing.org](http://www.ing.org) for an overview of the organization.**

## Islamic Networks Group is seeking an Executive Director

**Job Description:** The Executive Director is responsible for leading and managing ING in accordance with the organization's mission and strategic objectives. Areas of responsibility include content and program development and management, fund development, operational and fiscal management, administrative oversight and staff supervision, as well as community and public relations. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Trustees, and works with the Board of Directors. Full duties and responsibilities can be downloaded from this page: <http://www.ing.org/EDsearch>

**Requirements:** Candidates should be American citizens, possessing at least a master's degree (or equivalent job experience) in non-profit management, education, religious studies, social sciences, global studies, business administration, or related field, with proven leadership skills and experience of at least five years in senior management positions within the non-profit or business sector.

**Compensation:** Salary & benefits negotiable based on experience and qualifications.

**To apply:** Write to the chairman of the ING Transition Committee, Naeem Raza at [EDsearch@ing.org](mailto:EDsearch@ing.org).





## Judge Sheila Abdus-Salaam Joins Top NY State Court

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC Holder was present in Albany, N.Y. on June 20 to formally start the New York state Court of Appeals tenure of its newest member, Judge Sheila Abdus-Salaam.

Holder, who attended Columbia University Law School with Abdus-Salaam, and Lieutenant Gov. Robert Duffy witnessed the formal swearing-in ceremony for the first African-American woman to serve on the state's top court, reported New York Daily News, June 20.

"Shelia Abdus-Salaam has proven herself to be brilliant attorney, tireless worker

and a principled advocate for the American people...She has defined herself by her relentless pursuit of excellence," Holder said.

Abdus-Salaam was nominated by Gov. Cuomo in April to replace Judge Theodore T. Jones, who died in November of last year. Her nomination was unanimously approved by the state Senate's Judiciary Committee June 18, after a hearing that lasted barely an hour. Lawmakers from both parties praised Abdus-Salaam's experience. Prior to her elevation, Abdus-Salaam served as an associate justice of the state Appellate Division. ■

## Masjid Muhammad Hosts Seniors Halal Nutrition Site

DR. JOHN M. THOMPSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WASHINGTON, D.C.'S OFFICE ON Aging (DCA), inaugurated the District's first public Senior Citizen Halal Nutrition Site at Masjid Muhammad on June 3. Imam Talib Shareef and Ahmad Nurridin, a long-time member of Masjid Muhammad, led the efforts to get the site opened. The program, which serves meals during weekdays, is overseen by site manager Tahira Shareef. This program is open to all eligible Washington, D.C. seniors. Besides serving lunch, it includes activities such as chair exercises, health lectures and checks, hand dancing, movies, board games and more. ■



## Mahdi Bray Heads AMA Washington, D.C. Office

IMAM MAHDI BRAY TOOK CHARGE AS American Muslim Alliance (AMA)'s new Washington, D.C. director and its national director for development, organization and outreach.

"My hope is to bring the concerns and aspirations of our community to civil libertarians, political activists, the media and public officials," Bray said.

Announcing the appointment, AMA national chairman Dr. Agha Saeed said Imam Bray will help "lead our campaigns to empower our community...[he] comes with vast experience to lead our efforts in the nation's capital."

Imam Bray, a passionate civil and human rights activist, formerly served as the executive director of the Muslim American Society's Freedom Foundation (MASF) based in Washington, D.C. Imam Bray also serves on the boards of the Interfaith Alliance and the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. He is also a national co-convenor of Religions for Peace-USA. In addition, Imam Bray has been a television and radio talk show host for many years.

He is the former president of the Coordinating Council of Muslim Organizations (CCMO); has led peace missions in Bosnia, East Africa and Darfur and has also served as a liaison between the White House Faith-Based Initiative Program and the Muslim community.

Imam Bray is also the author of "The Mosque Voter's Guide and The Political Guide for Mosque Activists." ■

## Stockton Muslim Elected UC Student Regent

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY senior Sadia Saifuddin is a 21-year-old social welfare major who has been active in student government and Mideast issues. On July 17, she was elected as University of California student regent (2014-15), joining the policy-making board for the 10-campus system. Her resounding victory did not come easy. Her detractors included some Jewish groups such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

The Stockton, Calif., resident, a fully empowered student representative who worked three jobs to keep herself in school, told "Islamic Horizons" that she applied for this position because "... As a student myself, I understand how difficult it can be to attend a UC while still dealing with the rising cost of tuition and state divestment in public higher education. I am an ardent believer in the California Master Plan and I hope to pave a way back to the promises made by the state to ensure that our world-class university system stays affordable and accessible."

Saifuddin will begin her one-year term in July 2014, after serving one year as student regent-designate.

Saifuddin becomes the first Muslim to serve as student regent of the UC system,



which has more than 222,000 students. Earlier, she was a senator in Berkeley's student government and founded a UC system-wide committee seeking to improve conditions on campus for minority students. She was co-sponsor of the student Senate resolution that called for the UC system to divest companies that do business with the Israeli military in its occupation of Palestinian territory; the Berkeley student Senate adopted that nonbinding resolution in April. ■

## Shariq Siddiqui Heads Volunteer Advocacy

SHARIQ SIDDIQUI assumed charge as executive director of the Indianapolis-based Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) on June 10.

Siddiqui, who is licensed to practice law in Indiana, is pursuing a doctoral degree in philanthropic studies at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

Siddiqui has served as the director of development at the Indiana University School of Education, as well as a practicing attorney and as associate faculty at the Indiana University School of Social Work. Prior to this, he served as the legal services director of the Julian Center in Indianapolis; the executive director, Muslim Alliance of Indiana; director, special projects, ISNA and civil rights specialist, Indiana Civil Rights Commission.

ARNOVA, founded 1971, is a United States-based, national and international association that connects scholars, teachers and practice leaders interested in research on nonprofit organizations, voluntary action, philanthropy and civil society. ■



## Muslims & Rights Group Join to Void Negative Ads



Rep. Jim McDermott



Mayor Mike McGinn



Rod Dembowski

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF State withdrew at least one of its metro bus ads in Seattle, Wash., promoting the "Rewards for Justice" campaign, after Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.), Seattle mayor Mike McGinn and King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski joined with others

in the community, as well as organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), to raise concerns about the ads. The program offers rewards for providing leads about the location of wanted terrorists.

McGinn reported that CAIR-Wash., director Arsalan Bulhari worked with ACLU of Washington State to convene a meeting that included Magdaleno Rose-Avila and Sahar Fathi of Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. The State Department's "Rewards for Justice" program's Tim Corso, acknowledged their concerns with the ad that featured the language "Global Faces of Terrorism" along with photos of men from the Philippines, Somalia, Russia, Sudan and Algeria. Seattle's opposition, McGinn said, would make a difference elsewhere as "Seattle is the first city to receive these ads and the recommendations provided by the community will drive how the program is implemented in other cities across the country."

Meanwhile, FBI also withdrew 46 bus ads featuring photos of wanted terrorists and will replace them with photo-less ads. ■

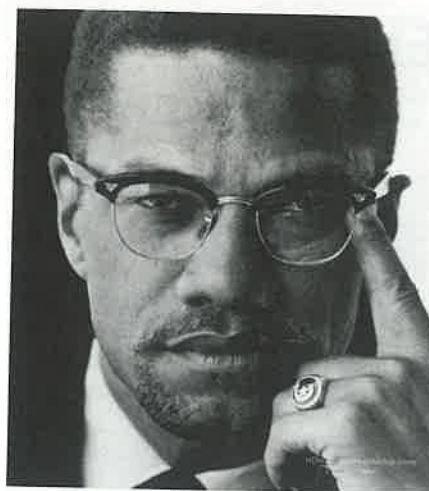


## Remembering Malcolm X

THE DEEN INTENSIVE FOUNDATION (DIF; [www.deenintensive.com](http://www.deenintensive.com)) is launching Preserve the X Fundraising Project, in partnership with the Ella Collins Institute and Historic Boston, Inc., to raise an estimated \$750,000 for preservation of the Malcolm X - Ella Little Collins House.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) has named the childhood home of Malcolm X as an addition to its list of 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. This home is the last known surviving childhood residence of Malcolm X. It has been vacant for the last 30 years and is in serious need of rehabilitation.

The fundraising appeal is being supported by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, Imam Zaid



Shakir, Imam Suhaib Webb, and the Ella Little Collins family to help save this piece of Muslim American history, DIF project manager Maliha Khan said.

Feb. 26, 2015, will mark the 50th anniversary of Malcolm X's assassination. ■

## Mothers Against Bullying

SINCE THE FALL OF 2005, A GROUP OF Muslim women at the Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati (ICGC; [www.cincinnatiislamiccenter.org](http://www.cincinnatiislamiccenter.org)) has been making a difference in the community with one strong message of nonviolence.

The ICGC-based Muslim Mothers Against Violence (MMAV; <http://www.mmaav.us/>) is offering Bullying Prevention Guides for "Parents and Teachers," "Students" and "Good Sportsmanship" for use by Muslim American communities. These guides can be downloaded from MMAV and ICGC websites, says founder Shakila T. Ahmad.

MMAV serves to educate the community, especially Muslim youth, about identifying and preventing bullying. During 2011-12, Ahmad partnered with Dr. Saba Chughtai, a local psychiatrist, and Mona Malik Baig, a social worker, to survey more than 250 Muslim youth at ICGC and in the Virginia area about experiences with bullying. Results showed that nearly 50% of the youth indicated having been bullied, with youth ages 14-18 sharing that over 70% of them had been bullied. Almost none of these students had shared the harassment with their parents or school officials. Subsequently, MMAV has held various adult and

youth forums encouraging an open discussion on bullying and intervention strategies.

MMAV welcomes opportunities to share its experience with communities that desire to introduce similar programs. MMAV can be contacted through ICGC at [islamiccenter@fuse.net](mailto:islamiccenter@fuse.net).



MMAV emphasizes that Islam values the sanctity of human life and considers attacks on innocent lives as inexcusable and contradictory to the teachings of Islam. MMAV have pledged: (a) to unequivocally condemn all acts of terrorism and violence against innocent civilians; (b) to support educational, religious, social and cultural opportunities that can promote and teach nonviolent methods of resolving conflicts to our youth; and (c) to reach out and collaborate with others of different faiths who have similar objectives. ■

## NEWS BRIEFS



Wael Alkhairo assumed charge as executive director of the Sterling, Va.-based All-Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS), July 15.

The ADAMS board of trustees and executive committee, acting on the recommendations of their consultant, had been seeking a qualified individual for the post. Toward this end, they appointed a three-member independent selection committee, which asked Alkhairo to accept this position. Alkhairo, who was serving as chair and member of the board of trustees, resigned his position to move into his new appointment. Alkhairo, who has an MS in engineering administration from Virginia Tech, has previously served as ADAMS president for two terms.

Alkhairo is author of "Speaking for Change" (Amana, 1998)—a guide for those who deliver sermons, as well as for those who manage mosques in the West.



ELIF BILGIN, 16, FROM TURKEY, RECEIVED the second annual Scientific American Science in Action Award, powered by the Google Science Fair, June 27. Her winning project, "Going Bananas! Using Banana Peels in the Production of Bio-Plastic as a Replacement for Traditional Petroleum-Based Plastic," has the potential to decrease

the amount of pollution created due to the use of plastics, which contain petroleum derivatives.

In addition to the \$50,000 prize, Bilgin will have access to a year's mentorship and is invited to Google's California headquarters in September to compete in the 15-to-16-year-old age category in the overall Google Science Fair. She will present the project to an international panel of finalist judges, including science luminaries, technology innovators and Nobel laureates. She will compete for prizes that include: \$100,000 in scholarship funds; real-life experiences at CERN, Google or the LEGO Group; a trip to the Galápagos Islands courtesy of National Geographic Expeditions; and a \$10,000 grant to the Grand Prize winner's school. The winners will be announced at a gala on Sept. 23, which will be streamed live on the Fair's YouTube channel.

Bilgin's extremely nature-friendly and cheap process was selected by Scientific American's independent judging panel from a pool of 15 Scientific American Science in Action Award finalists, who were culled from thousands of submissions from more than 120 countries for the 2013 Google Science Fair.



A THREE-YEAR, \$600,000 HENRY R. LUCE Foundation grant will support the Andover Newton Theological School and the neighboring Hebrew College to jointly appoint a Muslim scholar-practitioner.

The two schools are partners in the Center for Inter-Religious and Communal Leadership Education (CIRCLE), a nationally recognized collaboration to prepare religious and ethical leaders for service in a religiously diverse society.

The Andover Newton Theological School, founded in 1807, is the first graduate school in America.

"This desire to strengthen relations with our Muslim brothers and sisters is not simply an abstract imperative, but is also based on

the fact that there is a significant and growing Muslim community in Greater Boston, with whom we wish to engage in deeper and more sustained ways," said Rabbi Or Rose, CIRCLE's co-director at Hebrew College.



THE COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS of Greater Chicago (CIOGC) and the Presbytery of Chicago unanimously approved a covenant between the Muslim and Presbyterian communities, in June.

The document was developed by CIOGC's interfaith committee and the Presbytery. Dr. Shakir Moiduddin, chair of CIOGC's interfaith committee, and Karen Danielson, secretary on CIOGC's Board of Directors, addressed the Presbytery's voting assembly about the development of the covenant before the vote, June 18.

"It was very heartwarming to be welcomed into the gathering of the Chicago Presbytery and to be present during their vote. This signifies a deepening of the relationship between the Presbytery of Chicago and CIOGC," Danielson said.



GIVE 30, LAUNCHED LAST YEAR BY Toronto lawyer Ziyaad Mia, encourages diverting daily coffee money saved during Ramadan to a food bank. It has struck a chord, culminating with nearly Can\$40,000 going to Daily Bread Food Bank, the largest supplier of emergency food in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), reports the "Toronto Star," July 16.

Mia told the Star just as his family donated to food banks during Thanksgiving

and Christmas, he thought Ramadan could inspire people, regardless of their religion, to give to those in need. He said offers of support poured in from cities across the country and that this year Give 30 added Calgary and other cities to its efforts. Islamic Relief Canada conducted a parallel campaign this year, matching donations through Give 30 or the Daily Bread Food Bank dollar-for-dollar.

According to a Daily Bread report, there were more than 1.1 million visits to GTA food banks during 2012.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, responding to Muslim cabdrivers' requests, has provided a wudu area on the ground floor of the main garage, right next to where they congregate for their breaks.

The drivers said that Christians generally pray at church on Sundays, while for working Muslims, required to pray five times a day, the ritual is woven into their daily routine.

Previously the drivers used to use the airport terminal restrooms. The airport costs were nominal, with the work done by in-house plumbers.



PHILADELPHIA'S MASJIDULLAH IS CONVERTING a former church building, that it purchased for \$1 million, into one of the city's largest Islamic institutions.

The campus includes a prayer area that can hold up to 1,500 people, a banquet hall that can accommodate 300 people, a 14-classroom school that can hold 300 students and an administrative building with 10 offices. In addition to prayer services, the Board of Trustees plans to develop a progressive Islamic school. The three-year plan includes early childhood education, out-of-school programming and an Arabic language charter school.

"The acquisition of this property was made possible through the contributions of hundreds of supporters, including many non-Muslims," Michael A. Rashid, chair of the Masjid's Special Projects Committee and President/CEO of AmeriHealth Caritas, a



## COMMUNITY MATTERS

managed Medicaid company, told the Philadelphia Sun, June 13. "The Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation helped facilitate the transaction and financing was provided by United Bank."

The 1947 structure was first home to Temple Sinai; in the 1970s, the West Oak Lane Church of God community moved in and remained active until the building's sale in June this year, when the church outgrew the building.

The community seeks to raise an additional \$300,000 to prepare the facility for opening.



THE 98<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ILLINOIS House of Representatives acknowledged Lombard, Ill. resident Shaan Mobin Khan, a Glenbard South High School graduate, in recognition of his admission in Howard University's medical program with the institution's prestigious Founders Merit Scholarship. Illinois General Assembly Speaker, Michael Madigan, signed the recognition declaration, which was sponsored by state Rep. Sandi Pihos (R-42).



SEATTLE HUMAN SERVICES COALITION presented the Ron Chisom Anti-Racism Award to CAIR-Washington State in Seattle, June 13.

The award, presented by City Council President Sally Clark, recognized CAIR's "mission to enhance the understanding of Islam, encouraging dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower Muslims and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding."

CAIR-Wash. Executive Director Arsan Bukhari, who accepted the award on his organization's behalf, said the struggle against racism continues. He referenced the controversial Metro bus ads as an example of racism that still exists on a large scale.

The ads, paid for by the United States Department of State and promoted locally by the FBI Seattle office, were plastered on the sides of city buses. They called for citizens to keep an eye out with the large headline, "Faces of Global Terrorism", accompanied by photos and names of about 15 Muslims and the phrase "Stop a terrorist", among other content.

JUNE 22, UTAH VALLEY'S MUSLIM COMMUNITY broke ground for Utah County's first mosque in Orem.

The Utah Valley Islamic Center, an \$800,000 project includes a 3,300-square-foot structure. The area has only 15 or 20 Muslim families and the center hopes to attract donors from across the country to help complete the project. The community went through a hard-fought struggle to obtain a building permit.



HICKORY HILLS, ILL. MAYOR MIKE HOWLEY and the city council appointed Syed Shahab Imam as chairman of Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, May 9, after the Board's approval. Imam, the first Muslim to hold this position, served the Board as secretary since 1998. He was a project manager with the Illinois Department of Transportation for 28 years and has been retired for nearly 10 years.

ON JUNE 18, THE BLAINE, MINN. CITY Council voted 5-0 to approve a conditional use permit for the Darul Arqam Center of Excellence, a Quran learning center.

The approval means the Islamic school, which already is offering classes to a handful of students, will be allowed to stay in its present premises and to expand its programs.



THE ISLAMIC CENTER OF SAN GABRIEL Valley, Ca. formally opened its new mosque on June 22. After four years of construction and \$5.5 million in fundraising, the community now has a 45,000-square-foot structure complete with a school, mortuary, health clinic and three libraries, which marks a coming of age for their community. Dr. Syed Arif A. Rizvi, the center's president, said that all of funding from local sources.

THE 2012 LONG ISLAND PRESS' POWER List, which lists the 50 most influential Long Islanders, includes Dr. Farouque Ahmad Khan, who played a central role in founding of the Islamic Center of Long Island in Westbury, N.Y. He serves as a board member. Ever since he retired as chairman of medicine at Nassau University Medical Center, he has served as the unofficial spokesman for the Muslim-American community on Long Island.

THE ISLAMIC CENTER OF BOULDER, COLO. formally inaugurated its new center June 29 with an open house event titled "Getting to Know Your Muslim Neighbors."

The event, which brought nearly 250 attendees, was focused on opening up a community dialogue and showcasing Islamic teachings and customs. Attendees toured the building, enjoyed refreshments and participated in a detailed question-and-answer session about Islam and Muslims.



DR. MUSHTAQ SHAH M.D. WAS ELECTED Medical Staff President at Doctors Community Hospital, Greenbelt, Md., in recognition of his high standards of professionalism in the medical field.

He did his fellowship in gastroenterology in 1979 at the Georgetown University medical Center and at the Washington, D.C. General Hospital. He is board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology.

Shah was the chief of gastroenterology at Doctors Community Hospital for 10 years and has been chairman of the department of medicine at Doctors Community Hospital for six years. Shah has a special interest and expertise in biliary endoscopy.

IN JULY, DR. ANIS ANSARI WAS ELECTED secretary/treasurer of Mercy Medical Center, Clinton, Iowa for 2013-14. This is his third time serving in this capacity in his 14 years of practicing medicine in Clinton. He recently completed his third stint as department of medicine chair. Also, recently, the International Association of Health Professionals named him as "The Leading Physician of the World and Top Nephrologist."

IMAM TALIB M. SHAREEF, PRESIDENT OF Washington, D.C.'s Masjid Muhammad was invited to open the United States Congress with prayer on Capitol Hill, July 31. It was aired live on CSPAN.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HELD ITS 15th annual Iftar, July 12, at the Pentagon.

Attending the event were senior defense leaders, White House and congressional staffers, foreign dignitaries, defense attachés, imams, Gold Star families and Muslims who work in the defense community, reported the Army News Service, July 15.

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), who has a son serving in the army, was the guest speaker at this year's Iftar, speaking about

serving humanity. Serving others by tutoring, visiting shut-ins, volunteering time to feed the homeless and building relationships with people less fortunate will help change America, according to Ellison.

Col. Thomas Waynick, the Pentagon chaplain, highlighted the goals of Ramadan.

In 1999, the Pentagon Chaplain's office first hosted such a dinner, and they have been doing so each year since. ■



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IMAM POSITION AT ATTAWHEED ISLAMIC CENTER, CARNEGIE, PA

401 Washington Ave, Carnegie, PA 15106

Tel: (412) 344-4404

E-mail: board@attawheed.org

Attawheed Islamic Center (AIC) is inviting applications for an Imam position for its location in Carnegie, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. All information and documentation provided by applicants and discovered by AIC through selection process becomes the property of AIC and will be kept confidential. This position is anticipated to remain open until filled.

- Imam, in addition to traditional responsibilities, will promote quality in all activities and advance our religious, social, and youth services to the community.
- Imam at AIC is expected to be an educational leader setting up and managing programs for children, youth, new Muslims, men, and women in the subjects such as Qur'an, Tajweed, Hadith, and Arabic Language.
- Imam is expected to be able to work diligently with different segments of the community, especially youth and women, and interact with all community members from different cultural backgrounds.
- Imam is expected to meet procedural needs of the community including but not limited to marriage, Janazah, youth camps, zakah/sadaqa collection and distribution, and limited counseling.
- Imam is expected to actively participate in planning and leading social and community driven events with a "Community Building" focus.

Qualifications sought includes:

- A degree in Islamic studies with high level of knowledge.
- Certificate of being hafiz with inspiring recitation is preferred.
- Effective delivery of khutba in English is preferred but will be a mandatory requirement for future contract renewal.
- Two years of experience as Imam in mid to large congregation is preferred.

To be considered for this position, please send an e-mail to this address: board@attawheed.org with your application package attached. Recommended application package includes a cover letter, resume, documents of your qualifications, a narrative of your vision, and overall plans for an Imam position in USA. You may visit [www.attawheed.org](http://www.attawheed.org) to learn about Attawheed Islamic Center.





## The Road to Seeking a Lifelong Partner

**M**ANY BACHELORS AND BACHELOTTES eagerly look forward to the annual matrimonial banquets held at the ISNA Convention over Labor Day weekend. However, this year, potential attendees had the opportunity of joining ISNA at its first Matrimonial Conference and Banquet, held in Rosemont, Ill.

This day-long event not only included a platform for singles and their families to meet and mingle in an Islamic environment, but also featured seminar-style discussions on issues Muslims face when choosing the appropriate spouse, including potential roadblocks and how to navigate around them.

The first-of-its-kind Muslim event was another upgrade of the matrimonial services by ISNA that MSA has been providing since its founding. In fact, this conference was not only for singles. It was also for couples/families to seek ways to face post-marital challenges.

Presenters included ISNA president

Imam Mohamed Magid, ISNA Majlis as-Shura member Dr. Altaf Husain, clinical social worker Shamim Sufi, and interim ISNA Secretary General Dr. Iqbal Unus.

Sufi focused on disproving some commonly held myths among those interested in marriage. For example, that having a child in the first year of marriage is important and that maintaining traditional gender roles is a must. Dr. Unus added that when it comes to roles and responsibilities in marriage, the key is outlining assigned roles, which should be unique to each couple and understood by both partners.

Sufi urged attendees to avoid "waswasa," or whisperings that engender suspicion. "Waswasa creates doubt. Have faith in Allah and communicate with your partner to avoid waswasa." Sufi also emphasized that marriage is something that grows and evolves, and that both individuals must work to sustain and keep it stable.

Several speakers warned against losing respect for your spouse, using demeaning language or, even worse, doing so in front

of your children. A very vibrant question-and-answer session, popular among attendees, was also held as part of the conference program.

Imam Magid closed the question-and-answer session by warning participants not to "keep shopping" for a spouse just because they fear someone better might be out there. "Have a sense of tawakul, consult others, and perform istikhara."

Besides hosting such banquets, ISNA offers other opportunities, such as the "ISNA Online Matrimonial Service" which is a web-based service that provides networking opportunities for Muslims seeking a spouse.

Tabasum Ahmad, ISNA Matrimonial Coordinator, reminded that besides hosting matrimonial banquets in different cities, ISNA will be hosting more of these conferences in the future.

ISNA can bring their matrimonial banquet to local communities based upon the demand of single Muslims in that area. Those interested can go to <http://www.isna.net/matrimonial-services.html> and fill out the survey to let ISNA know if they wish to host such an event. Further information can be obtained from Tabasum Ahmad, ISNA Matrimonial Coordinator, Conventions Department (317) 839 8157 ext 133 or [matrimonial@isna.net](mailto:matrimonial@isna.net)



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## Dallas Muslims Refresh their Resolve

### Will Muslim Americans attain the position where the nation is proud of them?

BY ZULIKHA HUSSAIN

**Y**OUNG MUSLIMS NEED TO OVERCOME their fears and seek leadership roles within their respective communities, said Aisha Noor, who joined the MYNA leadership at 14.

Noor, who spoke at ISNA's South-Central Zone Conference (ISNA Day)—held in Dallas, Tex. on June 15 and themed "Developing our Communities, Strengthening our Faith"—thanked the community leaders, and ISNA, MSA and MYNA leaders for their encouragement and guidance.

Imam Yusuf Ziya Kavakci emphasized that without MSA, there would be little chance of leaving behind any Muslim legacy, especially in the absence of masajid, schools and other organizations during those days.

ISNA vice president-U.S., Azhar Azeez, singled out the hard work, sacrifices and creativity of those young Muslim students who, 50 years ago, created the MSA, which he said is ISNA's "mother organization." He shared how, in Minneapolis, Mohammad Abdul-Mateen Chida, an MSA pioneer, and his fellow students launched a ten-dollar donation campaign to establish their first masjid. Today, there are 2,106 Islamic centers around North America.

ISNA interim secretary general Dr. Iqbal Unus elaborated that the MSA's goal was to regain the Islamic identity, educate people about their faith and to practice their religion as Muslims in a foreign land. MSA's success, he said, was due largely to the simple fact that it did not differentiate between socioeconomic differences or cultural backgrounds or set sectarian barriers to membership. As a matter of fact, MSA's main purpose was to bring Muslim immigrants and Muslim students together in order to practice their religion and secure their Islamic identity. As the students completed their education and joined the workforce they soon realized that they needed to continue their mission beyond the college campuses which then led to the formation of ISNA.

Dr. Unus highlighted areas where ISNA works such as in civil rights, human rights

and developing policy issues at both federal and local levels.

He emphasized that while we celebrate the past, we also look to the future. He encouraged all to get involved and support ISNA's mission and its goals.

Dr. Jamal Badawi, addressing the session on "Reawakening the Spirit of Islam in Our Lives," stressed the importance of focusing on spirituality rather than just rituals and family traditions in internalizing Islam. With Ramadan just approaching, his advice was enlightening. Aisha Noor moderated.

Dr. Altaf Hussain said, to restore the legacy and the Golden Era, we need to reawaken our spirituality. He said that despite the challenges and bigotry and obstacles, Muslims are still allowed to practice their religion in this country, adding, "Whatever stops us now is within ourselves!"

**MSA's success is due largely to the simple fact that it did not differentiate between socioeconomic differences or cultural backgrounds or set sectarian barriers to membership.**

Imam Siraj Wahhaj, retelling his journey to Islam starting 1975, thanked Dr. Badawi for his amazing dedication to ISNA and all great memories of him as his teacher and his Sheikh. He rearticulated that parents are responsible and accountable for teaching their children about faith and spirituality.

Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi, director of the ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances (IOICA), elaborated on how IOICA is serving as an outreach resource to the Muslim American community and promoting a positive image of Islam and Muslims to the nation's political leaders.

Shoulder-to-Shoulder project director Christina Warner introduced the program's mission and goals, inviting all to get involved.

The session on "Fostering Healthy Environment for Muslim Families" was addressed by MSA-National president Ali Fiaz, Muhammad Ninowy, Siraj Wahhaj, Gyas McKenzie and Altaf Hussain. Imam Yusuf Kavakci, Dr. Badawi and Abdul Nasir Jangda led the session "Understanding Shari'ah."



ISNA vice president Azhar Azeez

Dallas' Northwood Church is an Evangelical Church. Pastor Bob Roberts told Muslims, "but we care about you, you matter to us." He narrated how his wife, Nikki's cooking club turned into interfaith "Embrace Group," which focuses on community projects.

Rabbi Joshua S. Taub discussed his accomplishments in Beaumont, Tex. and how his "Love The Neighbor" program is a work in progress.

The day concluded with a banquet dinner, a performance from Tariq Hussain and a special award presentation to Dr. Farooq Selod. Dallas' very own Rashad Hussain, President Obama's special envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in his keynote address, he reminisced about his years spent in the area and praised ISNA and the leadership of the Dallas Muslim organizations for their growth and achievements made over the past 15 years. He concluded by motivating us to have foresight and to continue to be a part of these organizations achieving goals together.

Azeez highlighted his fundraising appeal with a clip of ISNA's achievements. He offered a quote from Abraham Lincoln, which he said was relevant to Muslims living in North America: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him."

The conference's success certainly rests on the selfless efforts of the organizers, planners and volunteers. ■

Zulikha Hussain is a volunteer and youth activist.



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HOW CAN ONE UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTERS OF THE  
**CALIPH ABU BAKR AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN AS A LESSON IN**  
 INSTILLING BOTH INNER AND COMMUNAL UNITY?

# Paradox and Perfection

BY SAAD ANSARI

**U**NITY TRANSCENDING MULTIPLICITY, EVEN PARADOX, is the keystone of perfection. God, in His names of Beauty and Majesty, is at once the Giver of Life and the Bringer of Death, the All-Powerful and the Most Gentle, the One who exalts and the One who abases, and so on. While true Perfection is His, humans are bidden to continuously venture toward the horizon, the journey never done, with the speed and determination of Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)'s humble stride (Surah Furqan: 63). Only by unifying the paradoxical characteristics of humility and conviction within ourselves, may we attain the similarly paradoxical communal goal of unifying a breathtakingly diverse Muslim American community. Understanding the lives of two great leaders, one Muslim, one American, whose own uniting of the paradoxical traits of humility and conviction led their people to union, gives us clues on how this may be achieved.

Throughout his life, people identified Caliph Abu Bakr (*'alayhi rahmat*) as mild in his judgments and gentle in his demeanor. At night, he would recite the Quran nearly at a whisper, so the Prophet told him to recite a bit louder. When dealing with prisoners of war, he advised the lenient option. His characteristic deeds were freeing slaves and secretly donating his entire wealth. Even his nickname, Abu Bakr, owes its origin to his compassion in dealing with camel foals. Yet, precisely when necessary, his will could be as hard as diamond. He affirmed Prophet Muhammad's prophecy and Ascension (*mi'raj*) without an iota of hesitation in the usually horrifying face of ridicule. It is easy to oppose others, but opposing one's own social base without forsaking them is the epitome of courage and tact. Twice, he differed with the Muslim community, alone, and on the strength of his own conviction, averted the disaster of disunion. After the Prophet's demise, Abu Bakr led the community out of a stunned spiritual crisis by redirecting their focus on God's

everlastingness, reifying his apex standing amongst the Muslims and foreshadowing his eventual role as Caliph, the appointment of which cooled the divisive arguments between the Ansar and Muhajirin. Having kept Madinah and the political core together, Abu Bakr then dealt with the secession of the Bedouin tribes living on the periphery of the Muslim polity with a combination of rigor and gentleness. He used military force, but only insofar as was required to return the periphery intact to the central authority of Madinah. Rebels not guilty of war crimes were allowed to rejoin. Abu Bakr clearly viewed himself a fallible human and asked, in his inaugural address, to be set aright in case of error.

For all their obvious differences, the parallels of Abraham Lincoln's life with Abu Bakr's are striking and should be explored by Muslim American thinkers. Like Abu Bakr, Lincoln was also an introvert, nigh perpetually radiating a perceptible melancholy as well. Silences and moments of self-deprecating humor were hallmarks of Lincoln's speech. He never thought himself above the task of comforting lower-downs. During the midst of his own electoral campaign, he took the time to write a deeply thoughtful letter of sympathy and encouragement to an applicant who had just been rejected from Harvard. When he assumed the presidency, his Secretary of State and recent competitor, William Seward, figured he would be able to easily drive Lincoln's policies from the backseat. Nevertheless, Lincoln tamed his cabinet and relentlessly pursued the Confederate rebels after their secession in order to prevent the American experiment of a government of, by and for the people from extinction. When pressured by Congress and many of his own cabinet members to accept Confederate peace before the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery passed, Lincoln persevered based upon his own conviction and utilized every tool possible to pass the amendment and end the war on Union terms, despite the horrible toll in life. Though conducting the war against the

South, Lincoln spoke as the reconciler in his second inaugural address, while also revealing a humble theology: "Both [the Union and Confederacy] read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other...let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes." Lincoln's wise words shame contemporary Muslim agitators who argue with contempt for their opponents that God is on their side or that they are the true fighters of God. No, God has His own purposes. He decides those who are with Him. We merely try to align with the divine will, but acknowledge that we may fail. Upon the surrender of the Confederacy, Lincoln issued his generals orders to be lenient and entered the capitol Richmond, Va., without triumph or pomp, his first softly spoken words in the Confederacy's presidential office being a request for water. When black laborers saw Lincoln, they called him the "great Messiah" and fell to their knees in front of him. "Don't kneel to me," Lincoln said, his voice full of emotion, "that is not right. You must kneel to God only, and thank him for the liberty you will hereafter enjoy." (Team of Rivals, Goodwin, 719)

Of course, neither Abu Bakr's nor Lincoln's unions were perfect—division and persecution persisted long after each leader's passing.

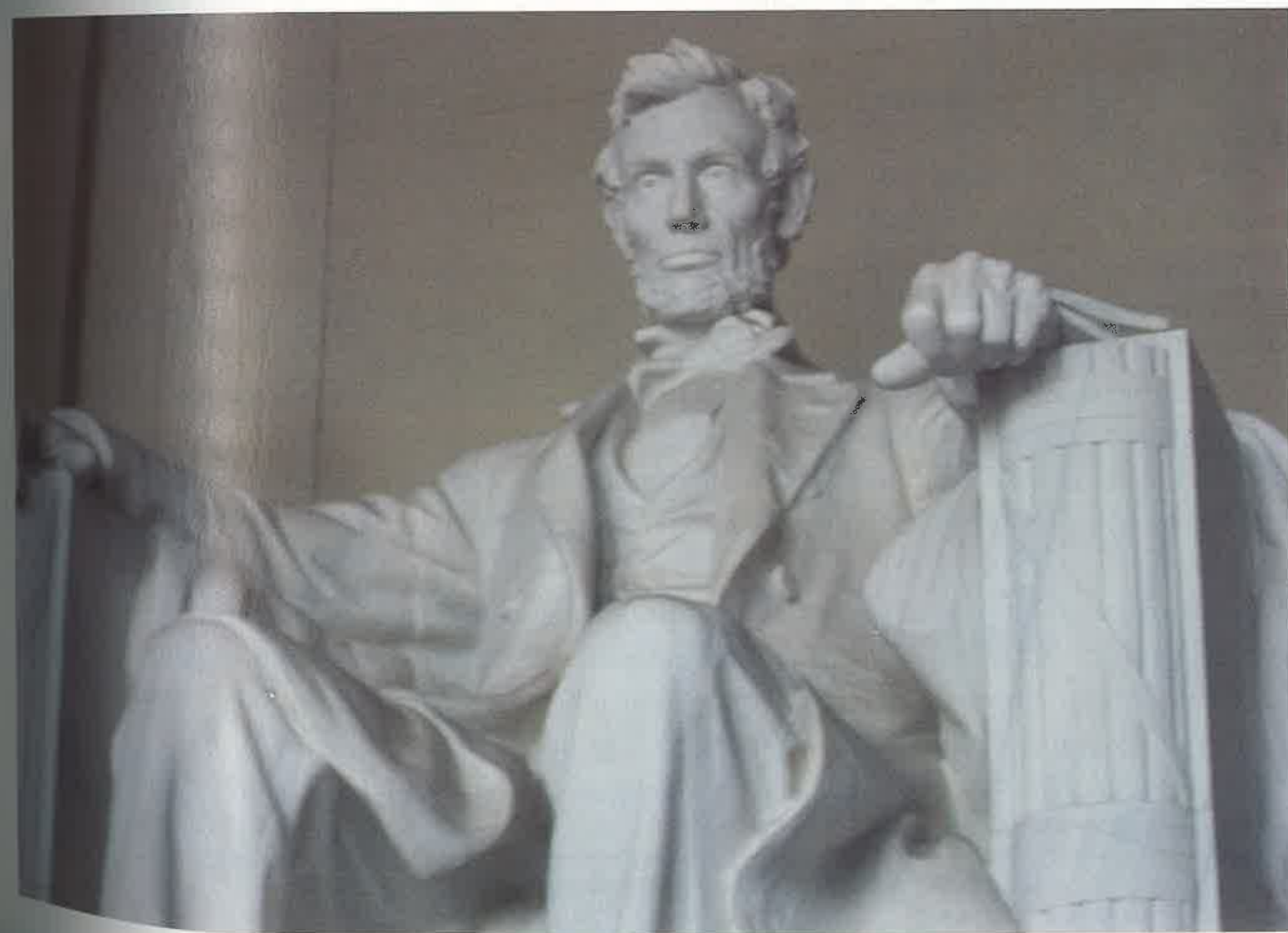
**If Muslim Americans master their souls (*nafs*), they may be given the blessing of a unified, diverse community, beloved to God: the Madinah of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

The horizon is not to be reached in this life. Nevertheless, both overcame fatalism and pressed forward with conviction.

If Muslim Americans master their souls (*nafs*), they may be given the blessing of a unified, diverse community, beloved to God: the Madinah of the 21st century. Indeed, the stakes are unimaginable. With the larger Muslim world at civil war on many fronts, sectarian, ethnic and national, Muslim Americans represent the most complete microcosm of the Muslim world's diversity and enjoy the great opportunities America offers her citizens. If they cannot

reconcile themselves here, whether Sunni-Shi'i, or Salafi-Sufi, with their small numbers, resources and energetic, youthful Islam, where shall the wider Muslim world go? The Shi'i scholar, Ali al-Sistani, has the right idea: protecting each other is the Muslim's great priority. Paradoxically, Muslims must be able to hold firm to their own beliefs, but have the humility to tolerate others and welcome them as honored guests from whom they learn a great deal. Spaces for inclusion, but also a culture of sincere, educated debate needs to flourish amongst us. This does not start at some institution or secret elite gathering. Rather, it starts in you, the reader. In that, have conviction. ■

Saad Ansari is a graduate student at Yale University, where he studies the rule of law, serves as a teaching fellow, and is the executive director of the Yale Journal of International Affairs.







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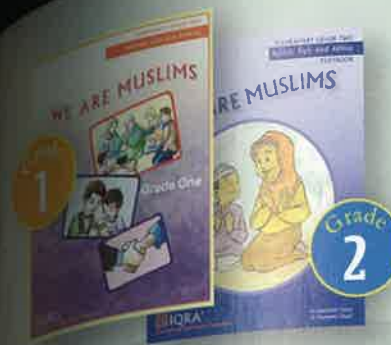
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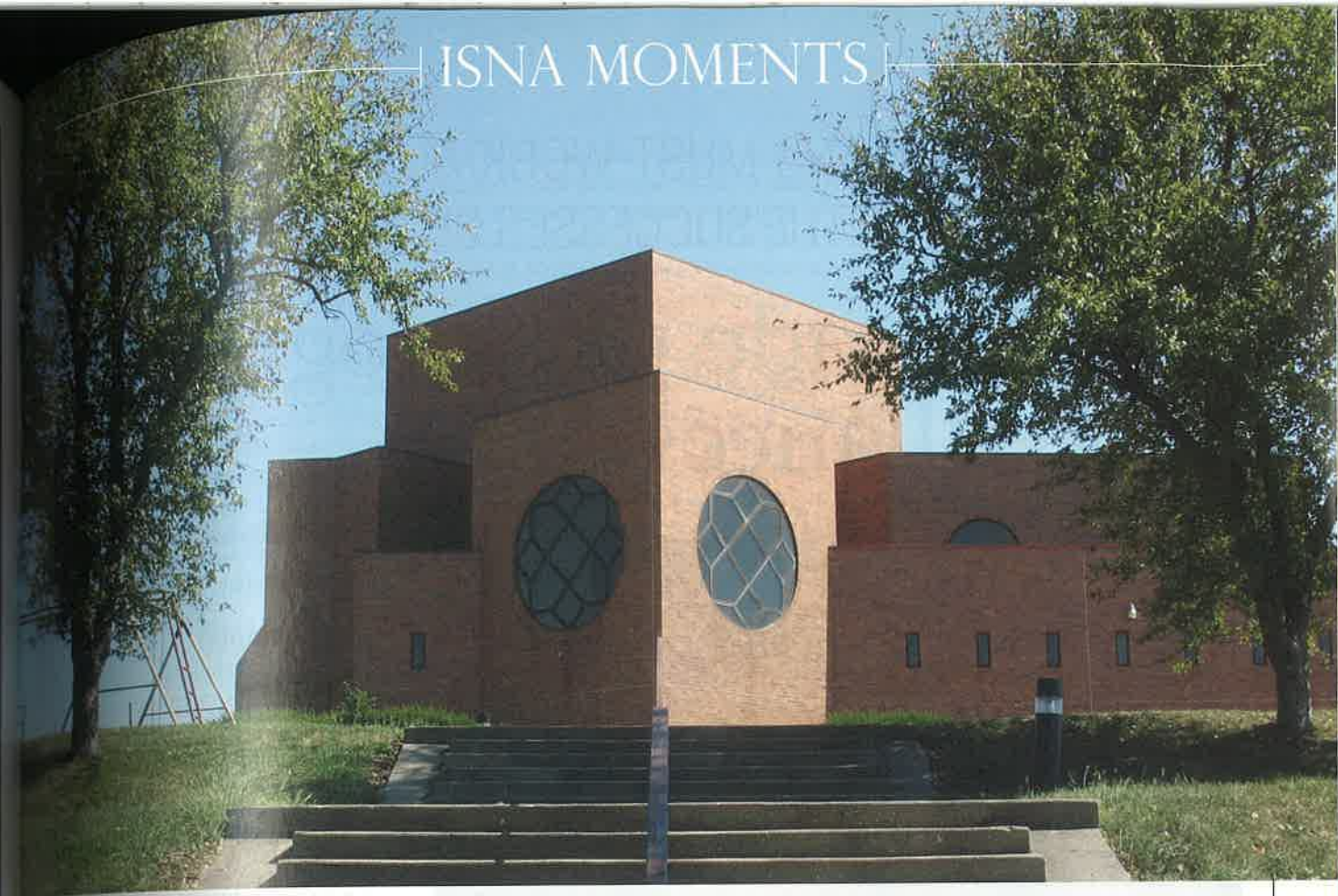
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## Fifty Years and Strong

**T**HE MSA, AND BY EXTENSION ISNA, IS CELEBRATING 2013 AS THE 50<sup>TH</sup> year of their founding. The very reality that a small group of students—mostly transient—were able to lay the foundations of a mighty building is a celebration in itself. Such milestones are not just to envision the future and look at the past, but also to remember those whose efforts helped build the foundations that not only stand today, but look toward the future. It is also time to share the reflections of the workers and those who shared the MSA experience as it grew into ISNA.

At this juncture, it is also opportune to share the stories about those who grew from within and have become fine independent organizations serving humanity.

MSA laid the foundations of inclusiveness and this issue delves into the stories of the young women who became trailblazers in their own right.

Since its inception, MSA sought interfaith understanding, reaching to share Islam, while learning about other faith traditions. Today, ISNA has dedicated a department for community outreach and initiatives. Some of the partners in dialogue and action have also shared their experiences. ■



MUSLIM AMERICANS MUST WORK ALONGSIDE ISNA TO  
HELP BUILD UPON THE SUCCESSES OF THE LAST DECADE.

## The Decade of Recognition and Alliances



### ISLAMIC HORIZONS STAFF

**I**N THE 50 YEARS SINCE ITS FOUNDING as a student organization in 1963, ISNA has not only grown but has indeed sharpened its focus on projects and persuasions that are and will continue to contribute to the recognition and establishment of Muslims as part of the national fabric.

The last decade, 2003-13, has seen creation of initiatives and forging of partnerships to meet the new challenges and to provide services to an ever-growing and maturing Muslim population.

In keeping with its tradition of consultation, ISNA has periodically organized strategic planning retreats, which led to identifying priorities. The most recent retreats were held in 2003, 2007 and 2012.

Among the priorities identified at the 2003 Kansas City retreat was the need for training imams and community leaders in a variety of disciplines, from theology/fiqh to interfaith dialogue to contemporary issues. This took shape in the founding of the ISNA Leadership

Development Center (ILDC), headed by an executive director, on Jan. 1, 2004.

Another priority was that ISNA increase its focus on youth. Subsequently, ISNA set up a committee comprising Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) alum and youth and community leaders whose recommendations were utilized for reviving MYNA. ISNA expanded its youth activities by establishing an ISNA Youth Programming and Leadership Development Department, headed by a director. MYNA has a voting voice in the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura.

Recognizing the centrality of trained professionals in the field of philanthropy and the management of nonprofit organizations, ISNA established ties with Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy to help impart such training.

A major step was the creation of the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal ISNA Fellowship Program that offers the opportunity for graduate level courses in the study of philanthropy and nonprofit management, essential skills needed to lead successful nonprofit organizations in North America.

Many of these fellows are now contributing to society in a variety of ways.

### THE SECRETARIAT

In 2005, Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, who had served as secretary general since 1994, was assigned to lead the newly established ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances in the nation's capital. Since then, this office has built thriving relationships and joint projects with organizations of various faiths and traditions.

A long and arduous search led to the appointment of Dr. Muneer Fareed as secretary general. A scholar and academician, who, after a two-year stint (2006-08), returned to academia. This led to another search, and during all these searches, the long-serving Ahmad ElHattab served as acting secretary general. In 2010, the ISNA executive committee selected Safaa Zarzour, a Chicago attorney as secretary general. However, in early 2013, Zarzour decided to return to his hometown. Since then, Dr. Iqbal Unus, who had previously served as secretary general, has agreed to serve as interim secretary general.

Dr. Ingrid Mattson, elected vice-president of ISNA in 2001, was elected president in 2006, and served two terms. She is the first woman, the first non-immigrant and the first convert to head ISNA.

In 2008, ISNA started paving the way for the new generation to take over the body that their parents' generation helped build from scratch. This led to the induction of Florida attorney Asad Ba-Yunus, whose father, the late Dr. Ilyas Ba-Yunus, being the last pre-ISNA president of MSA, became the first ISNA president. Other entrants were Rizwan Jaka, Sohaib Sultan, whose father, Dr. Talat Sultan, was MSA's director of education, and Asma Mirza, whose father, Dr. M. Yaqub Mirza, had served as MSA president.

### INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING

Muslim students have always been engaged in discussions and activities with people of other faiths. The evolution of MSA provided an impetus for organized work in advancing this mission of understanding.

ISNA carried this torch forward. ISNA, which began developing strong relationships with Catholic and Protestant communities in the 1990s, established a formal dialogue with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 1996. The National Council of Churches and ISNA have been engaging in rich Muslim-Christian dialogue since Jan. 2008.

In 2005, when the Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) issued a fatwa against extremism and terrorism, ISNA played a major role in publicizing this fatwa through its partners, especially its interfaith partners.

Also in 2005, ISNA teamed with the Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy to form the Muslim-Christian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons Danger (MCI-NWD).

In 2006, when news surfaced about atrocities involving American troops, ISNA expressed its concern by co-founding the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). An interfaith organization, NRCAT is now made up of over 300 member organizations dedicated to ending United States-sponsored torture, indefinite detention and anti-Muslim sentiment.

In 2007, ISNA invited Rabbi Eric Yoffie, then president of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the largest American Jewish denomination, to speak at the ISNA Convention. In reciprocity, the then president Dr. Mattson was invited to address the URJ's Biennial Convention that year.

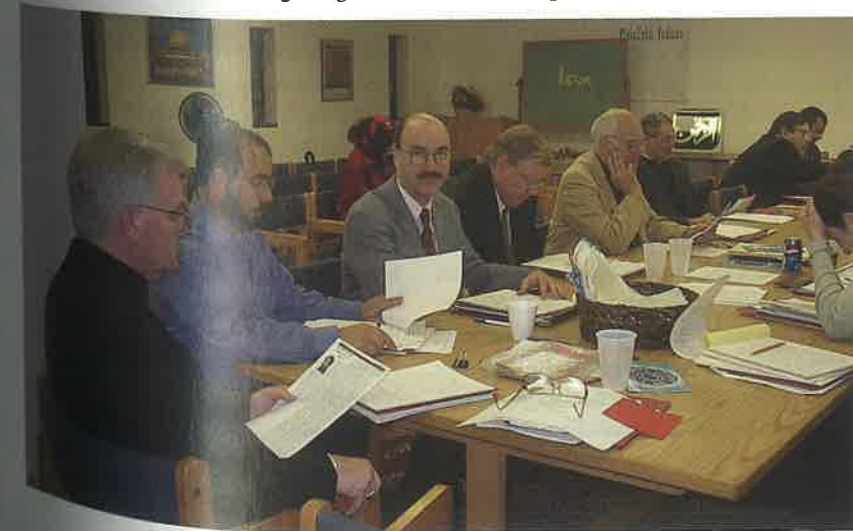
On Sept. 2, 2007, ISNA brought together

both Sunni and Shia leaders to sign the Muslim Code of Honor at the Annual ISNA Convention in front of thousands of Muslims. It was a collective action that provided Muslim American leaders with the opportunity to join together in forging a common understanding and in rejecting divisive practices.

The NCC was also vocal in condemning anti-Muslim sentiment in 2010; and in March 2011 helped convene Shoulder-to-Shoulder whose members have vowed to stand together as a faith community. It encourages all faiths to help put an end to anti-Muslim intolerance by engaging in dialogue and discussion with their community as well as their respected representatives.

In Jan. 2008, leaders from ISNA, the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), and the Alliance of Baptists, meeting in Hartford, Conn., discussed ways that Baptists and Muslims could speak, share and learn from each other. The first-ever National Baptist-Muslim Dialogue took place in 2009, in response to a dialogue called, "A Common Word Between Us and You," initiated by international Muslim scholars and joined by the Baptist World Alliance.

ISNA works with the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and the Rabbinical College through a variety of interfaith coalitions. In 2010, ISNA embarked on an interfaith venture with the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), the largest Jewish Studies and rabbinic ordination institution in North America based in the conservative Jewish tradition, and Hartford Seminary, a unique Christian Seminary that trains Muslim chaplains.



The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (FEEU), co-founded by orthodox Rabbi Marc Schneier, seeks to dispel notions of racism and intolerance by committing itself to the belief that dialogue can lead to reconciliation. ISNA partners with FEEU in the annual Weekend of Twinning that provides an opportunity for synagogues, mosques and other Muslim and Jewish groups to form partnerships and hold joint programs together with the goal of building ties of communication, reconciliation and cooperation between Muslims and Jews. In 2011, thousands of people from over 250 synagogues, mosques and Muslim and Jewish groups took part in the Weekend of Twinning in 16 countries around the world.

ISNA remains active in initiating and working with various faith groups in advancing civil causes such as poverty alleviation, civil rights, health, equal opportunity and education.

### INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

ISNA, a catalyst for promoting interfaith understanding across borders, participates in the Annual Doha Conference of Interfaith Dialogue in Doha, Qatar and has hosted its leadership twice in conferences in the United States to share interfaith work in America.

Since 2011, ISNA has been working with Muslim scholars worldwide to address challenges faced by religious minorities in Muslim-majority communities around the world. In 2011, ISNA Director of Outreach Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi joined leaders from across the Middle East and North Africa in Morocco to develop a mutual plan to promote religious pluralism and the common good of the people in both regions.

ISNA has been a formative part of National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILE) since its establishment in 2003, building consensus among Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders and working in a bipartisan manner with policymakers and members of Congress to build public support for comprehensive, just and lasting Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace.

### GOVERNMENT OUTREACH

In this past decade, ISNA has become active in participating in events related to the Presidential Inauguration. ISNA presidents Dr. Mattson and Imam Mohamed Magid have both led prayers at the national prayer service



## ISNA MOMENTS

for the inauguration. ISNA has increased its work with government agencies on a number of issues, including civil rights, disaster relief, healthcare and homeland security. Many in the White House approach ISNA as their primary means of reaching out to the Muslim American community.

The Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives established by President George W. Bush included Muslims in its annual conference. President Barack Obama changed the office's name to the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (OFNP) and established a Faith-Based Advisory Council. Through the OFNP, ISNA connects its international interfaith partners with the White House and works on numerous social issues like bullying, fatherhood and domestic violence.



The White House Office of Public Engagement (OPE; formerly the Office of Public Liaison) was established under President Obama. ISNA raises most of its concerns through this office. Through the OPE, ISNA has been able to shift the focus to engaging Muslims in domestic issues like poverty, civil rights and education, not just foreign policy and homeland security.

ISNA coordinated engagement between OPE and Muslim Diaspora communities during the Arab Spring.

After the Shoulder-to-Shoulder campaign raised ISNA's profile as an organization with strong interfaith relationships, all interfaith engagements at the White House included ISNA.

The Department of Health and Human Services was the first major government agency with which ISNA engaged, beginning in the 1990s. Since then, ISNA has contributed to various programs initiated by the agency, such as mental health and substance abuse programs.

ISNA works with the United States

Department of State in pursuing various programs aimed at initiating better understanding of the United States among Muslims and with Muslim majority countries.

ISNA has met with numerous leaders from the Department of Justice, including attorney generals Alberto Gonzales, John Ashcroft and Eric Holder, to voice Muslim American concerns about discrimination after 9/11. ISNA works to connect the DoJ Civil Rights Division with Muslim American communities at a local level to address specific concerns. For instance, in 2010, following backlash against a mosque in Murfreesboro, Tenn., ISNA arranged a meeting between Muslims in Tennessee and Assistant Attorney General Tom Perez at the Attorney General's office in Nashville. ISNA continues to work with DoJ in addressing issues of



community and individual concern.

ISNA maintains an outreach with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its departments such as the Transportation Security Administration to deal with issues of Muslim concern.

ISNA and the Department of Defense have had a relationship for several years. ISNA, which is the official endorser of military chaplains, helped organize two conferences for military chaplains. The DoD leadership has actively attended the ISNA Convention for several years, including former Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England. The DoD approaches ISNA when it needs help sending a message to the Muslim community, such as to condemn an action by individual military service members overseas. ISNA President Imam Mohamed Magid has been consulted for the development of DoD training materials on Islam.

Another area of active engagement for ISNA has been the Department of Treasury, especially where its actions concern charitable giving, such as Zakat.

## ISNA ANNUAL CONVENTION

The first activity initiated by the newly formed MSA was to organize a convention. These became much-awaited events, providing attendees an opportunity to renew friendships and share learning.

Over the years, Labor Day weekend has become linked with ISNA because ISNA holds its Annual Convention over that weekend. In fact, some Muslim Americans also call it "The ISNA Weekend." Over the years, this convention has seen tremendous growth and now continues to be the single largest event of Muslims in North America, truly a microcosm of the Muslim American community. Every year this convention brings together thousands of attendees, hundreds of prominent speakers and organizations from across the country as well as

and central zone conferences and ISNA Days. Through these events, ISNA brings quality programming and special events to the grassroots. These conferences provide excellent programs, workshops, speakers and many special events to the community. ISNA serves to ensure that it provides a convention-like experience at a local level. Because of this, the conferences and ISNA Days have seen growth over the years, says Saleem. For the local community, these conferences provide access to great speakers as well as a platform for discussion, learning and networking.

## MATRIMONIAL BANQUETS AND ONLINE SERVICES

Considering Islam's emphasis on the family, MSA delved into this area early on. Now, to



fulfill this need, ISNA organizes matrimonial banquets at the annual convention and regional conferences. From two matrimonial banquets in 2003, ISNA is now organizing more than six banquets on average per year. With the growing need in this area, ISNA has started stand-alone matrimonial banquets in various cities. Not only are matrimonial banquets included in almost all regional conferences, but ISNA also conducts such banquets upon request.

ISNA's online matrimonial website, [www.isnamatrimonials.net](http://www.isnamatrimonials.net), provides the opportunity to explore matrimonial options online. In June 2013, ISNA organized the first "Matrimonial Conference and Banquet" in Chicago. This conference brought together families, single Muslims seeking a spouse and renowned speakers to talk about healthy families and challenges in finding suitable spouses.

ISNA has kept pace with technology, including the move 11 years ago from paper-based to online convention and conference registration.

However, not everyone is able to attend the annual convention. To carry the convention benefit to local levels, throughout the year, ISNA holds east, west, south-central

Ahmed Sakr, the California-based scholar and scientist, who had played a crucial role in the founding of MSA.

In the year 2000, what used to be called the annual ISNA Founders' Luncheon became the Community Service Recognition Luncheon (CSRL). This event brings together the nation's Muslim leaders, scholars and government officials to honor an individual dedicated to community service of the Muslim community.

It was also decided to institute the Community Service Recognition Award to honor the memory, efforts and achievements of Dr. Mahboob Khan (1939-99), who had devoted his life to serving Muslims and the cause of God, as well to serve as an example and inspiration to others.

Sakr had been preceded by Dr. Jamal

Badawi (2000), Dr. Ahmed Elkadi (2001), and Dr. Moinuddin Siddiqui (2002). In the following years, the awardees have included Sharifa Alkhateeb (2004), Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi (2004), Dr. Ilyas BaYunus (2005), Dr. Mohammad Cheema (2006), Dr. Ahmad Totonji (2007), Dr. Jamal Barzinji (2008), Dr. Mahmoud Rashdan (2009), Imam Siraj Wahhaj (2010), Dr. Hisham Altalib (2011), and Dr. Iqbal Unus (2012).

## ISNA FOUNDERS' COMMITTEE

In 1994, the Majlis Ash-Shura established the ISNA Development Foundation (IDF) as the formal fundraising entity with dedicated staff and an executive director. Since then, Ahmad ElHattab has held the post of executive director. Following the establishment of IDF, the Founders' Committee was officially created. Over the years the donors' group has been assigned various titles, and is currently designated as ISNA Founders' Committee (IFC). Their first formal retreat was held in April 2005 in Chicago, and the latest was held in Washington, D.C. during Feb. 2013.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE RECOGNITION LUNCHEON (CSRL)

ISNA marked the 40th year of its founding in 2003 by recognizing the services of Dr.

## EDUCATION FORUM THEMES

- 2013: Islamic Schools: Champions of Faith, Achievement and Service
- 2012: Islamic Schools—Engaging Learning Communities
- 2012: (West Coast EF) Educating our Children for a Brighter Future
- 2011: Understanding, Living and Sharing Islam
- 2010: Crayons to College: Empowering Muslim Students to Color a Brighter World
- 2009: Celebrating a Decade of Leadership—Preserving the Legacy, Shaping the Future
- 2008: Sustaining Progress: Cultivating Stewardship
- 2007: Role of Standards in Our Spiritual Journey
- 2006: Islamic Education: Strengthening Faith & Enhancing Quality
- 2005: Islamic Education in America: A Pursuit of Excellence
- 2004: Islamic Schools: Developing the Emerging Muslim American Character (Repeat)
- 2003: Islamic Schools: Developing the Emerging Muslim American Character
- 2002: Islamic Schools Contributing to a Better America

IFC serves to support ISNA and the IDF by serving as an advisor, helping ISNA's strategic priorities and creating a sound financial base needed by ISNA to serve the Muslim community and society at large, independently and perpetually. IFC also promotes the role of philanthropy in the Muslim community.

## EDUCATION FORUM

Education has been pivotal to the organization since its founding as a students body. The MSA established its first full-time, and still operational, school in Canada. Today, the United States is home to over one thousand weekend Islamic schools and several hundred full-time Islamic schools.

With the growing body and the need to strengthen the cause of Islamic education, ISNA established in 2000 the ISNA Education Forum, which has continued to grow over the years. This forum brings together teachers, principals, board members and administrators to discuss issues, provide solutions, offer best





practices and network with each other. This has become the largest Islamic education forum in the country.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, who now heads ISNA's Programs and Educational Services department, recalls, "I had attended the first education forum which had about 150 attendees and now [2013] we get more than 700 attendees, speakers and guests at this event."

The forum, Ahmad says, was a good start because it provided a platform to Islamic school teachers to come, meet and greet, network, share success stories and talk about the challenges they face in the classroom with the management, parents and the community. Some mainstream experts also come and talk about the solutions and resources that exist outside the Islamic schools.

In 2012 ISNA started the "West Coast Education Forum" in California. In its first year, about 200 educators attended. The number grew to 300 in 2013. The attendees and the program content at this forum directly cater to teachers, principals, school administrators and board members.

## DIVERSITY FORUM

In 2011, ISNA started an annual Diversity Forum, which addresses the growing diversity in the community. In its first year, the Diversity Forum attracted more than 600 attendees and 20 speakers and panelists.

## ISLAMIC HORIZONS

The flagship of ISNA, the "Islamic Horizons" magazine has been published with a new vigor since 1995. In 2006 and 2010, its peers recognized the magazine with awards presented by the Religion Communicators Council (RCC). RCC founded in 1929, is an interfaith association of religion communicators at work in print and electronic

communication, marketing and in public relations.

Possibly, "Islamic Horizons" is the first publication of a Muslim organization to document its parent's history. During 2003-04, it published a series of six cover reports tracing the organization's progress from a student body, embracing 13 chapters or campuses. It thus created a document of the 40 years that will be of use to researchers and scholars, an account of Muslim organizations written by Muslims.

During this decade, "Islamic Horizons" maintained its creed of empowering communities and sharing their experiences with the general public. The thinking behind these community profiles is that no one should hear from their grandchildren asking if a particular masjid, center or school had dropped from heaven! Instead, there is a document to read how the grandparents struggled establishing a prayer room, and then many food sales



and fundraisers later, were able to create these infrastructures.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

Even in their founding stages, the young MSA founders were acutely aware and involved in sharing the message of Islam with the incarcerated. In effect, they were involved in chaplaincy. Such efforts continued, and with the evolution of ISNA, such outreach drew greater attention.

In order to further this work, and to serve the special needs of not just the institutionalized but also groups such as students and service personnel, ISNA sought to help advance the skills of those who desired to serve in such areas. It was this that led to the creation the Chaplaincy Leadership Department (CLD) in 2004. Today, CLD functions as a nucleus of leadership development for the Muslim American community and offers a fully equipped facility to conduct occasional and regular programs to train chaplains, imams, youth and community leaders. Since 2005, the Annual Conference of Muslim Chaplains provides Muslim chaplains the opportunity to share experiences, evaluate concerns and challenges, and plan for the future. The conference is open to Muslim chaplains working with hospitals, universities, the military and federal and state prisons from around the country.

ISNA played an active role in supporting the military in its efforts to induct Muslim chaplains. The first entrant was Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad, who served from 1994 until he retired as Lieutenant Colonel. Today, all services have their own Muslim chaplains, and ISNA continues to provide endorser services to new entrants.

ISNA has also supported the development of Muslim chaplaincy programs at several colleges and universities.

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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF ISLAMIC WORK IN NORTH AMERICA, MUSLIMS ARE POISED FOR GROWTH.

## The Catalyst Feeding Community Growth

BY ASAD BA-YUNUS



**S**HAIKH HAMZA YUSUF ONCE ASKED a gathering what was North America's most important Muslim institution. His own answer: "ISNA." He explained that no other organization has had a continuous impact on American society for 50 years, and has been the catalyst feeding the Muslim community's growth.

Half-a-century ago this year, a small group of Muslim students from around North America were invited to a meeting at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. These young men, were graduate students at North American universities with the hopes of returning to their homelands, bringing with them the newfound skills and knowledge their education would instill in them. In the meantime, however, this small band felt a burning desire to work together as students around the continent to bring awareness of Islam to the college campus. Thus the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada (MSA) was born. Over the next twenty years, MSA would sprout many offshoots, including the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), Islamic Medi-

cal Association (IMA — now the Islamic Medical Association of North America [IMANA]), International Graphics Printing Service, and the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT). New organizations, including the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) and Muslim American Society (MAS) grew out of the MSA.

My late father, Dr. Ilyas Ba-Yunus, was among that small group of people in 1963. He continued to work for the MSA, serving as its vice president and then its president in 1969. Two years before my own birth, as a newly-tenured professor of sociology, he authored an article, published in the MSA Newsletter, highlighting the new trend among Muslim students: instead of returning to their home countries, they were getting married, settling down, building careers and building families, right here in North America. He argued that organizations like the MSA, which were focused on college campuses, but were having to necessarily branch out to help establish communities, were not well suited to a community-based model. Thus he proposed forming a community-based organization, that would unite the forces of the professional organizations (such as AMSE,

AMSS, IMA), and help develop resources and strategies to provide the burgeoning Muslim communities around the continent with a forum for meeting their needs. Thus, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was born and my father was elected as its first president.

As we celebrate the 50th year of the movement that is MSA and ISNA, and by common heritage, ICNA, MAS, NAIT, AMSS, AMSE, and IMANA, it is the spirit of the activism and the vision of those pioneers that frames our achievements today.

ISNA president, Imam Mohamed Magid, appointed a committee to plan, organize and impart a specific theme to ISNA's 50th anniversary year activities. This committee, made up largely of those who have direct knowledge of ISNA's history, as well as the children of those initial pioneers, has great symbolic purpose. While it is meant to bring a common theme to ISNA's activities this year, it reflects a "changing of the guard" so-to-speak, where the leaders of the MSA/ISNA movement from the late '60s and '70s are interacting directly with the new generation of ISNA leaders, including many of us who as children were brought up surrounded by MSA and ISNA our whole lives. It is a transition from fulfilling the previous generation's vision to taking Islamic work in North America to the next level.

If nothing else, the one single unifying theme throughout this year's activity is activism. Activism begins at the local level, grows at the regional level and blossoms at the national level. In 1995, MSA was reconstituted, from a relatively hollowed out shell to a full-fledged, meaty, vibrant organization. Since then, MSA National, as it was rebranded, has continued its growth and activity such that it rivals its activity in the 1960s and 70s.

This was, in part, due to the growing up of those active in Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA). MYNA, created by ISNA in 1985, helped train youth, often children of the pioneers, to develop leadership and management skills that would help form the backbone of our communities in the future. Indeed, as these MYNA kids went to college, joined, revitalized or formed MSAs, the MSA chapters themselves began to flourish, and continue to do so to this day.

Today, many of those MSA leaders have become leaders not only of local mosques, but also of regional and national Muslim organizations, including ISNA itself.

Today, many of those MSA leaders have become leaders not only of local mosques, but also of regional and national Muslim organizations, including ISNA itself.

While ISNA has maintained its community focus through its programming, support of Islamic education and youth activity, it has grown into a new role: interfacing with government and religious interfaith partners. In the Shoulder-to-Shoulder campaign, the National Religious Coalition Against Torture, as well as meeting regularly with the White House, and government agencies, ISNA has emerged as a national leader in working with key elements of the society and government around us. This is a reflection in the changing priorities of ISNA's leadership, with a stronger focus on interacting with those essential forces in society to help really make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Finally, ISNA is bringing the community back into its decision-making. In 2011, after

nearly a decade of failed attempts, the ISNA House of Community Representatives was able to hold elections. After a number of constitutional issues were resolved, the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura welcomed the elected representatives of the Muslim communities as full voting members, giving the communities a direct role in ISNA's highest policymaking body.

*Insha Allah*, when we celebrate ISNA's centenary in 2063, our grandchildren will look back to our first 50 years of intense activity and see ISNA's involvement at the local level to be just as strong as our national advocacy, and will celebrate our efforts toward building the benevolent community. ■

Asad Ba-Yunus, a Florida attorney, is member at large of the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura.



## ISNA Seeks Applications for the Position of SECRETARY GENERAL

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) seeks applications and nominations for the position of Secretary General.

The ISNA Secretary General plays a leading role in the development and articulation of ISNA's programs and services. The Secretary General is responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the ISNA Headquarters, managing ISNA's staff, and acting as a public representative. Other responsibilities include facilitating fundraising, working with local and national community leaders, and promoting the programs and services of ISNA. The Secretary General works closely with ISNA's elected leadership and reports directly to the Executive Council.

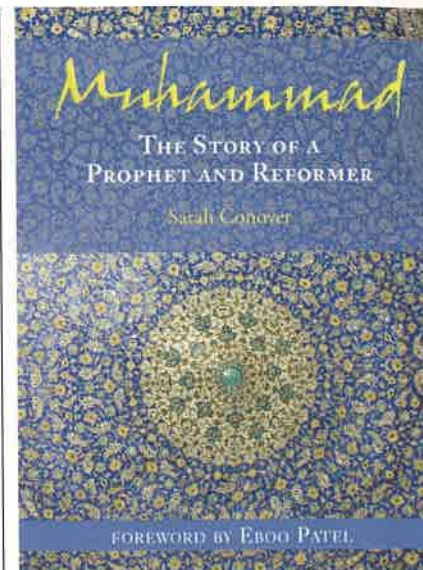
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[www.isna.net/careers.html](http://www.isna.net/careers.html)

The Search Committee will begin reviewing materials immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Nominations and applications should be sent, in confidence and preferably in electronic form to the following:

Chair, ISNA Secretary General Search Committee  
c/o Sr. Habibe Ali, ISNA HQ Chief Operations Officer  
PO Box 38, Plainfield, IN 46168  
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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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# ISNA SERVES AS A CRADLE FOR MUSLIM AMERICAN INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ADVANCEMENT.

## Springing from the Mother's Lap

### ISLAMIC HORIZONS STAFF

**T**HE MSA, LATER ISNA, IS A springboard to many successful ventures that continue to benefit humanity in their own ways. It is not just that the MSA inspired the building of mosques and schools, but also institutions that are serving humanity. Two such successful projects are the Islamic Medical Association of North America and the Indian Muslim Relief & Charities (IMRC).

In 1966, the idea of the Islamic Medical Association (IMA; later the Islamic Medical Association of North America [IMANA]) was developed by a handful of Muslim pioneering physicians, who had met at the MSA annual convention in Greenlake, Wisc., recalls IMANA past president Dr. Husain Nagamia MD, FRCS.

Among the pioneers were Dr. Mubin Akhtar, Dr. Bashir Zikria, Dr. Al Askari, Dr. Ahmed Elkadi, Dr. Tajuddin Ahmed, and few others. It was not until 1967 that a formal meeting of Muslim physicians of the United States was held in New York where about 80-90 physicians gathered and elected

Akhtar as the organization's first president, and Zikria as vice president. It was in the same year that the organization's constitution was adopted and the bylaws were formulated.

In 1968, Dr. Zikria took charge when Dr. Akhtar decided to return to Pakistan to take up a job in psychiatry. The relationship between MSA and IMANA continued to grow as sister organizations catering for the needs of the growing Muslim immigrant community in North America. It was then to blossom further when, in 1981, MSA became ISNA.

Although IMANA started having their own annual conventions and then added an international convention every other year, a concurrently held IMANA meeting with ISNA has also featured at most ISNA conventions. IMANA was offered and serves as a council member on the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura and the two organizations have worked closely on matters of shared interests, especially in health related matters of the community. IMANA features a health clinic at ISNA annual conventions.

In early 1971, IMANA started a publication, Bulletin, highlighting medical research,

medical innovations and history of Islamic Medicine. Dr. Asma Hamdan was the first editor, and it was later tended by Dr. Zikria. In 1975, the Bulletin's title was changed to the Journal of Islamic Medical Association of North America (JIMA). Later the chief editors were Nagamia and Dr. Hossam Fadel.

In 1976, Dr. Zikria created the Oath of the Muslim Physician, which is now accepted as the oath of all Muslim physicians worldwide.

IMANA set up a committee on Islamic Medical Ethics, which defined the Islamic viewpoint on issues of medical ethics in collaboration with the Fiqh Council of North America. This committee was led by physicians who have also been past presidents and include Dr. Wahaj Ahmed, Dr. Shahid Athar and Dr. Fadel. IMANA has published a paper on the present consensus on Islamic Medical Ethics Issues, which is available at the IMANA headquarters in Lombard, Ill.

In 1992, IMANA endorsed the formation of the International Institute of Islamic Medicine (IIIM), which is dedicated to doing research, as well as promoting the History of Islamic medicine. This institute, presided by Nagamia, has gained international recognition

It is not just that the MSA inspired the building of mosques and schools, but also institutions that are serving humanity.

for its work. It runs a website: www.iiim.org, and a library. Its traveling exhibition has toured several cities in the United States and around the world. IIIM also offers an annual research scholarship in Islamic medical history. IIIM has held national and international conferences on the History of Islamic Medicine.

In recent years IMANA has forged alliances with universities and institutions to foster exchange of medical knowledge and expertise. Notable is the effort of Dr. Farouque Khan, past president of IMANA, to facilitate a physician exchange program with the King Fahd University in Saudi Arabia.

IMANA is involved in relief efforts around the world, such as the tsunami in Indonesia, the earthquakes in Pakistan and Haiti.

IMANA Relief has been set up under the leadership of Dr. Ismail Mehr, who is also the current president of IMANA. Dr. Khalique Zahir, a well-known plastic surgeon in Virginia, and a past IMANA president, have pioneered an upper cleft clinic that serves in poor countries.

### RELIEF FOR INDIAN MUSLIMS

Manzoor Ghori, who continues at the helm of the San Jose, Calif.-based Indian Muslim Relief and Charities (IMRC), which has grown into a formidable entity serving the needs of India's Muslim population, recalls his organization's founding.

In 1982, Ghori, who made home in California, was MSA West Coast Regional Representative. At the time, the MSA headquarters was located in Gary, Ind., where they received a letter from a person they had never met or even talked to, Shamsul Huda. He had written from India and was asking for help. His letter stated that the 1981 anti-Muslim riots in Jamshedpur (in the northeastern Indian state of Jharkand) had rendered many homeless, widows and orphans. And he was caring for 50 of these orphans. He continued that he could no longer afford to provide them assistance and needed MSA's help. The then MSA president,

Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, forwarded the letter to Ghori.

In end, Ghori's efforts to seek support for the orphans did not garner any enthusiasm in his area. Considering the challenge, MSA took the initiative and set up the Indian Muslim Relief Committee to help these orphans. This was only the beginning of IMRC's relief efforts.

The Nelli Massacre broke out on Feb. 18, 1983. During a six-hour period, more than 2,000 Muslims were massacred, hundreds of villages were burned and more than 12,000 people became homeless. A few days later, in March, Ghori decided to visit Assam to assess the situation for himself. He traveled alone and stayed in the area for a month with the other volunteers. He wanted to meet the victims and see what tragedy they had faced and experience what it really meant to be in a relief camp. Nothing could have prepared him for what he saw. He was in the field daily, working with local relief organizations in providing food and clothing to the refugees, who were once independent business owners with homes and families in good health.

Ghori recalls, "It was this trip that broke any myth that I had ever heard or read. Even after being born and raised in India, it was the first time that I truly witnessed what poverty was. I saw children suffering in 110°F heat with humidity. They hardly had any clothes to cover themselves. Boys and girls up to the age of 8 and 9 hardly had undershirts and underwear to put on. The women wore and bathed in the piece of cloth they owned."

Even after his return to the United States, the pain he had witnessed continued to haunt him. Ghori, who was invited to share his experience at the 1983 MSA Convention, recalls, "On stage, I choked and broke down while speaking. They could never understand the girl I met, Fatima, who had machete marks on her arms, the grave of 300 children who were buried on top of each other. How could I relate and share

with the audience what I had experienced. I knew that my return trip from India wouldn't be the last."

In 2001, ISNA changed its focus towards United States activities only, thus allowing Indian Muslim Relief Committee to continue its activities in India on its own as a nonprofit as Indian Muslim Relief & Charities. It's been nearly 33 years since the mission first began.

IMRC has come a long way. Ghori adds that he "could have never imagined going from supporting 50 orphans to building a university, a hospital, providing over 300,000 scholarships and now providing on average 4 million meals a year."

Ghori is confident that with the generosity of the Muslim American community, IMRC has assisted with the building and support of more than 1,000 schools across India. He says, "Each day, with its 200 volunteers in the United States and more than 1,000 in India, we are fulfilling the mission that IMRC established over 30 years ago. In our 33 years, we distributed approximately \$34 million to the needy in India. It's a promise we made, and we continue to keep it. *Insha Allah.*" ■



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Manzoor Ghori



Dr. Husain Nagamia



# Fifty Years and Counting

BY KIRAN ANSARI

**S**INCE ITS FOUNDING HALF A CENTURY ago, MSA (and later ISNA) has meant various things to different people; even to those who never formally joined, but have remained close to the organization, and to this day, work closely with it.

They have their own experiences to share.

Abdul Malik Mujahid, president of the Chicago-based Sound Vision, felicitating ISNA and MSA, told "Islamic Horizons," "I don't know if Muslim Americans can ever be separated from the contribution of these two organizations [MSA and ISNA]."

Although, Mujahid was a speaker at the MSA 1977 annual convention, he had no idea about ISNA. He recalls that as a student at the University of Chicago, he had a Malaysian roommate Wan Nor Wan Daud. Wan Daud, the last president of the pre-ISNA era MSA, was "the person who signed the papers to transfer all assets to something called the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)."

Mujahid remembered how he tried to persuade Wan Daud, now a professor and a leading Islamic intellectual in the Malay world, not to transfer any assets to ISNA.

Eventually, Mujahid learned about the transformation of MSA to ISNA.

Today, Mujahid hopes that this 50th anniversary celebration will restore the memory and importance of MSA. He added that ISNA has emerged as the leading organization of the Muslim community in North America whose convention provides an opportunity for the Muslim community to learn, share and exchange ideas for community development.

However, Mujahid said, "with the challenges facing the Muslim youth today, the MSA needs to be stronger and more resourceful."

Seema Imam, a professor at the National Louis University (Lisle, Ill.) has known ISNA since it was MSA. She was part of the very early

and small ('70s) conventions in Michigan, Chicago and Ohio. She also spoke at several early conventions on lesson planning and educational goals for Muslims. She still attends ISNA conventions and conferences almost every year, even those held outside of Chicago.

Imam worked closely with the two-term ISNA president Shaikh Ahmad Zaki Hammad who has since translated what she describes as "the absolute best interpretation and translation of the Quran, in modern contemporary English, The Gracious Quran."

The ISNA convention, she emphasizes, does have a bazaar, but more importantly, it has programs for those who are inclined to sit and learn something. Thus, it serves a lot of people every year. "There have been some themes over the years that I always thought would have made a great yearlong curriculum for community development. A weekend is never enough to do some of the Muslim issues justice, if you know what I mean. I wish that there could have been a more cohesive plan but many things have made that difficult, money being one."

She said that she also enjoys reading the "Islamic Horizons" magazine.

Sabiha Ansari, co-founder and event director, American Muslim Consumer in New Jersey, said, "It's such an inspiration to see how in 1963, a small group of individuals, mostly students, had the vision to create this organization for the benefit of the Muslim community. I think that even they may not have predicted how ISNA would become one of the premier Islamic organizations representing the voice of Muslims in the United States."

Ansari says, "The earliest and fondest memories I have of attending the ISNA convention was way back in 1980 when it was still referred to as MSA and took place at a college campus. Our parents 'mysteriously' stayed inside all day listening to speakers, while we kids had a grand time playing outside."

Throughout the years, she added, "I have regularly attended the conventions, and it has always given me a sense of community and belonging. To be a part of a gathering of 20,000 plus Muslims under one roof really helps to ground your identity as a Muslim living in America. It's equally amazing to see how ISNA has kept reinventing themselves and their programs to keep up with latest pulse of the community. Congratulations to ISNA on celebrating 50 years! And best wishes for another 50!"

Naim Mansour, community activist, said that he has been attending the ISNA conventions nearly every year since 1989. He added, "I never miss it in Chicago and have even traveled to Indiana and Ohio to attend. I believe ISNA is doing a good job, but with any organization, regardless of how new or old it is, there is room for improvement."

He said, "... while I thoroughly enjoy the networking opportunities there and meeting up with old friends, I wish that parallel youth programming was better developed so we don't see our next generation just roaming the halls mindlessly."

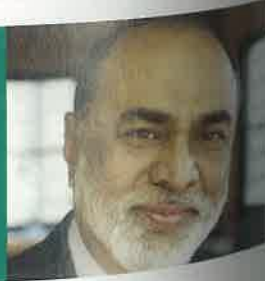
The convention is an annual event, he added, but during the rest of the year, ISNA has the opportunity to capitalize on its membership and get involved in the local communities as well.

Faten Salameh, a social worker, said her memories from the ISNA convention "are still vibrant and I have kept in touch with all the friends I made from across the nation."

She added, "What I remember the most is that a few years ago, a few of my friends and I started an informal matchmaking service for fun. We met many young men and women who came forward we set up a handful of couples. Masha Allah they married and a few have kids each."

Last year, she coordinated with all the friends she had met at previous conventions to catch up, adding, "I know the children we had with us enjoyed it very much."

Kiran Ansari is a Chicago-based writer, editor and entrepreneur.



**"I don't know if Muslim Americans can ever be separated from the contribution of these two organizations [MSA and ISNA]."**

—Abdul Malik Mujahid,  
President of the Chicago-based Sound Vision

# A Worker Reminisces

Can Muslim Americans continue the spirit of caring and sharing to advance ISNA to greater success?

BY MAYSSUN MUBARAK KAHF

**W**HEN THE MSA WOMEN'S Committee was constituted, I became its first chairperson, serving two terms, 1976-78 and 1978-80. This Committee included regional representatives for the United States and Canada.

Among those whom I worked with were Lamaya Farouqi and Sharifa Alkhatib (may God have mercy on their souls), Khadija Hafijee, Shaheen Tabatabai and many others.

The Women's Committee approved holding women's seminars throughout MSA regional chapters, focusing on educating Muslim women. The first seminar that I helped organize was held at the MSA headquarters in Plainfield, in what is called the "Muhajereen House," where I delivered the keynote lecture.

The Women's Committee also started an annual camp for teen Muslim girls who came from various states and Canada to attend. It was headed by Anisah Ahmed. This was the first weeklong residential event for girls held at the headquarters, and it continued for several years, with about 30 to 40 girls attending. Many local women, such as Nudrat Unus, helped and even women from other states and Canada came, such as Hafijee and Ameena Jandali.

I also represented MSA—now MSA National—in national and international conferences such as the one held in the United Kingdom and the other in Mauritius in 1976.

I was involved in many MSA regional conferences and the MSA national convention around that time. My duties as Women's Committee chairperson, and later as ex-officio, included attending all the MSA—now ISNA—Executive Committee meetings.

During my stay at the MSA headquarters during 1974-80, where my husband, Dr. Monzer Kahf, was director of finance, one of my main focuses was the study of Quran.

My friends Halimah Abdumajid, Anisah Ahmed, Wadiha Jones, Naimah, a few others, and I held a weekly Quran study circle that we called Ta'leem. It was held in our homes

in rotation, in north Indianapolis, south Indianapolis, and Plainfield, Ind.

Today, this exercise may appear mundane, but my oldest son puts it succinctly: "while these may not be 'direct' MSA activities, it was work like this that allowed the young MSA to take its roots in Plainfield and grow. Without these activities both the MSA and their founding families would have had far more problems or issues to work on. So by doing all of this, we allowed the MSA to actually focus on its core goals."

About 12 to 25 women attended. Our Ta'leem Circle emphasized that we can study the Quran's meaning and discuss it. For some, that had been a new notion. We

**Our focus was to bring about unity and cooperation among women of different backgrounds, emphasizing that we are one Ummah no matter how we spoke, dressed or looked.**

were not waiting for a sheikh to teach us. Instead, we had taken our Islamic education in our own hands, with the help of recognized Arabic Tafseer books. It helped that I had a background in Islamic education in Syria. We studied approximately 10 ayat at a time. At the MSA headquarters, we, the Ta'leem Circle members, printed a summary of our study of surah 4 (al-Nisa) and sura 24 (al-Noor) and distributed this by mail, the old-fashioned postal kind, which was all we had then, to MSA's women members. Anisah Ahmad, and I, along with Halimah and Naimah, used to work at the headquarters keeping the mailing list up-to-date.

Another focus was to bring about unity and cooperation among women of different backgrounds, emphasizing that we are one Ummah no matter how we spoke, dressed or looked. More than half the women of

the Ta'leem Circle were African American; others were immigrants, mainly from Muslim-majority countries. After each Quran study, we had potluck refreshments, where the table was like an international smorgasbord. Whether we were immigrants or American converts, we supported each other and our homes were open to each other. Most of us were in our twenties and thirties, getting married, having children and many other life experiences. For example, during this period, 1977-81, I gave birth twice. We all supported each other during these milestones. I, along with other friends, created a support network for Muslim women converts or new Muslim families who moved to the area.

After MSA moved its headquarters from a rented space in an office building in Indianapolis to a farm in a small town outside Indianapolis, Plainfield, many local residents became hostile to our presence. In fact, some Plainfield citizens filed a zoning laws appeal against the still un-built headquarters. However, the local Quaker church was among

those who invited the Muslim community to a friendly dialogue. I attended with my family, and we had good interaction with the congregation. Monzer and I also held an open house in our home in Plainfield shortly after we moved there in 1977, inviting our neighbors to meet and get to know their Muslim neighbors.

In Plainfield, I gave presentations about Islam to help reduce the tensions that existed. I made presentation at the public library and to a women's group that met in the home of one of its members. I went to churches and public schools to speak about Islam and Muslim women.

I helped to organized Muslim women to participate in MSA activities locally and nationally. ■

Mayssun Mubarak Kahf was at the ISNA headquarters during 1974-80, where her husband, Dr. Monzer Kahf was director of finance.





## Women of MYNA

Can young Muslim Americans take up the challenges of leadership?

BY RUTH NASRULLAH

**A** CELEBRATION OF ISNA'S 50TH anniversary would be incomplete without recognizing one of its distinctive hallmarks: the founding of the Muslim Youth of North America, or MYNA.

Founded in 1985, MYNA focused on addressing the needs of Muslim youth, 12 through 18-years-old, by providing an organizational structure through which they could explore their identity as Muslim Americans and develop programs in response to their concerns. Over the last 18 years, MYNA has changed and developed in response to the needs of its membership, and by the early '90s, MYNA was an exciting group that succeeded in helping Muslim youth to excel and grow.

During its first decade, MYNA's leadership was remarkable in that three consecutive presidents, from 1992 to 1998, were women, in a culture where men dominated leadership positions both in national organizations and at the local masjid level.

Three of these pioneer teenage leaders share their impressions of MYNA yesterday and their visions for tomorrow, and how the experience of serving as president shaped their lives for the future.

### THE FIRST: INAYET ŞAHİN

Inayet is now a homeschooling mom of four boys and runs Beyond Green Living, a consulting and educational business that helps transform clients to organic living. It's a busy life and she credits her experience serving as MYNA president with her success today.

"I was already a very outgoing person," she says. "But MYNA specifically honed my leadership skills. By the end of [my presidency] I not only had skills but I had practical experience, as well."

During Şahin's involvement with MYNA, the organization flourished and grew. She devoted much time and effort to MYNA's growing activities including regional and national conferences, the creation of a scholarship program and the start-up of MYNA Raps, the famous Islamic musical anthologies produced by the organization. It was a period referred to as the "Golden Age" by writer Fawad Siddiqui in a 2004 issue of "Islamic Horizons."

Serving at the helm of an organization with representatives of five North American zones (modeled after ISNA's own structure) was rewarding but hard work. Şahin looks back at all the position called on her to do.

"My responsibilities included coordinating the executive council, which had five

representatives from five zones of North America and coordinating with them," Şahin recalls. "Then we had the national training conference and a couple of national projects. There was lots of traveling, lots of long-distance calls."

Her presidency also oversaw the re-birth of the Field Youth Leadership Training Programs (commonly known as FYLTP). Organization of the FYLTPs demanded much of her.

"It basically involved finding a place, getting speakers, finding leaders from different communities all over Canada, all over the United States, then having them for a weeklong program and ensuring that it happens the next year, as well," she says. "It's all about the details and knowing what goes into making something happen. You have to know every single aspect to make something run smoothly."

She carried those skills throughout her collegiate career and now her life managing a house full of homeschooled boys.

Looking forward, she recognizes MYNA's historic vision to assist Muslim American youth in exploring and developing their identity. She envisions adding to that a focus on specific aspects of Muslim youth's lives.

"Empowerment of the youth is something very practical," Şahin says. "I don't think MYNA has made that step. I was involved in the revival process and we tried to change MYNA and make it more practical with the times, where Muslim youth would see a purpose in them joining it."

**AN INSPIRING TIME: FATIMA SALMAN**  
From 1994 to 1995, MYNA continued its tradition of women in leadership with the

**Inayet Şahin, Fatima Salman and Hanaa Unus were pioneers both as women in command and as leaders of a singular youth leadership program that changed not just the teens involved with the organization, but themselves as well.**

presidency of Fatima Salman, now a Michigan mother of three, former schoolteacher and current graduate student. Since her time with MYNA, she has continued to be involved in community activities, and although none has been as intense as heading MYNA (with the exception perhaps of raising three children!), she has always drawn upon the skills she learned through her experience with MYNA.

"For everybody that was part of MYNA: every single person, leader or not, we all learned how to be very organized," Fatima remembers. "We learned publicity, marketing, PR, networking ... Even today when I deal with youth or other organizations, those skills have helped me."

Such organizational skills are sometimes lacking in her view of today's Muslim youth, and in her current service on the MYNA advisory board, she envisions the opportunity to address that need for skills development.

Asked to describe aspects of what she learned in her role as MYNA president that she still calls upon, she emphasizes the need for youth to hone organizational and motivational skills.

"Organizational skills, marketing skills, how to mobilize communities and how to organize the things around you in order to

mobilize for a cause," she suggests. "I probably use those skills all the time with other organizations I work with today."

Salman is pleased to see more structure and a stronger presence of advisors in current MYNA programs, in comparison to MYNA of the '90s.

"Back then it was very much for the youth, by the youth and things would come up because kids were running things," she recalls. "Now with the new structure there are more advisors, and the advisors are very diligent over the youth."

She notes, "Also, a lot of us are parents."

MYNA has had its ups and downs through the nearly 20 years of its existence. Its development reflects different leadership styles, organizational structures and its relationship with the ISNA parent organization. At every point in its history, though, it's clear that the youth, at the helm, were working hard to see MYNA succeed.

Salman sums up the experience. Inayet Şahin and Fatima Salman were pioneers both as women in command and as leaders of a singular youth leadership program that changed not just the teens involved with the organization, but themselves, as well.

"During my term I traveled all over north America meeting so many people whom I'm

still in touch with today," she says. "It's incredible because it's the bond you build in the most random places in the world. It's really nice to see people who were active back then are still active and committed to service to God."

### TAKING CHARGE: HANAA UNUS

During the "crisis years" for MYNA, the organization was chaired by Hanaa Unus. Reflecting on her time as MYNA president, Unus, who was president from 2002-04, emphasizes that getting the work done took precedence over her leadership position.

"I don't think that being one of the few female presidents was something I really thought about. I was heavily involved in MYNA," she says. "And it was a natural next step to take on a greater leadership role if the organization felt they needed me to do that."

Looking back, Unus says she feels proud of MYNA and the advisors of her time at the helm, for their commitment to training and empowering youth—particularly young women.

"My advice to today's youth and to future leaders is to be proud of your Muslim identity," Unus says. "You are living in a difficult time for the Muslim community and for the world but if you stay strong, be proud of who you are and always remember that when you strive for the cause of Allah, you will always have Allah on your side."

Whatever MYNA has achieved or what their future goals are, Unus encourages today's youth to remember that true success, whether personal or organizational, comes from pleasing God. That, probably more than anything, is the greatest lesson she learned through her work as MYNA president. ■



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**50** YEARS FROM NOW, THEY HOPE TO SEE A HUGE CONVENTION, WITH ALL THE MUSLIMS IN AMERICA AND MORE MUSLIMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD GATHERING TO FACE THEIR SIMILAR CHALLENGES ON A UNITED FRONT.

## The Emerging Future

Can Muslim American youth take up the challenge of nurturing the plant their grandparents and parents planted?

BY FARIHA HOSSAIN



Sidra



Rahma

**T**HE SAYING "THE YOUTH ARE THE FUTURE" HAS BECOME BORDERLINE cliché due its overuse, which is a direct result of the truth resonating from the statement. Today, the youth are growing, using whichever resources they can attain to learn from the past and begin shaping the future, our shared future.

ISNA's 50th anniversary is an opportunity for everyone, young and old, to reflect on the breathtaking growth of a community that has shaped, and continues to shape, generations of Muslims. For many, this Labor Day weekend brings reunion of family and friends, as well as a reminder of their purpose in life: to serve God in every way.

ISNA, which had its first convention as MSA in 1963, has learned over the years to cater to people of all ages, thus providing the perfect environment for families. The simplicity of this has enabled many youth, such as Sidra, 16, and Rahma, 13, to be a part of ISNA since they were born.

For Sidra, growing up, ISNA was a foundation of her family that helped to strengthen her Muslim identity and created a comfortable environment in which she could learn about her religion. In her life, "ISNA's like a safe haven from the rest of the world. It's like a summer home," giving her a place to relax, reflect and be grateful of the world around her.

Similarly, Rahma, from Flint, Mich., has

always appreciated ISNA for providing her with the opportunity to see other Muslims and meet new people outside of her community. Rahma's family has also been involved with ISNA for many years. Her grandfather was once the vice president of the organization and growing up, both her parents were involved with ISNA and MYNA. Wanting to follow in her parents' footsteps, Rahma hopes to help out with events in the future.

In addition to the family aspect of ISNA, there is a religious component essential to and appreciated by those who attend. For youth, this component includes learning about Quran, hadith, and the example of Prophet Muhammad (*Salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), but it also includes finding the confidence and the means of dealing with peer pressure and the bad influences that surround them.

ISNA and MYNA have found a way to deliver the needed support in the shape of lectures and people. For the youth, most of whom are a part of MYNA, they learn from

their role models, who both understand and advocate their struggles. One adult, Wafa Safi-Hassan, has affected Rahma's life through her words and stories. As a MYNA participant, Rahma appreciates Hassan's involvement in MYNA because "Wafa's talks are amazing... she makes it easier to understand how to process things." Other adults that can be found at MYNA events also change lives through their actions and words. Sidra believes her MYNA (and ISNA) role models to be former ISNA Youth Department director Iyad Alnachef and MYNA advisory board member Fatima Salman. It is their dedication and constant support to the youth, without any immediate reward, that she finds inspiring and astounding. These resources are among many that show the youth their role in society and motivate them to be the needed change in their community.

Now, take a second and look closer at these resources.

Safi-Hassan and Salman are both MYNA alumni. They organized MYNA conventions and camps and events when they were younger and now they are the ones who are advising and teaching and motivating the MYNA youth. It is a circle that has gone through a full turn. And, God willing, it will continue to spin as the years go by and the current youth get older to make room for new MYNA participants who need teachers and adults on their side.

Though they are largely involved with MYNA, both girls recognize the significance of the 50th convention, especially to the adults that they know. In attempts to picture past conventions, both agree that ISNA was probably smaller 50 years ago, but probably had the same enthused environment as today.

Fifty years from now, they hope to see a huge convention, with all the Muslims in America and more Muslims from all over the world gathering to face their similar challenges on a united front. For this convention, however, both are excited to see their favorite speakers and their best friends. Sidra, in particular, just hopes to see one thing: a convention even better than the one last year! ■

Fariha Hossain is MYNA Midwest Regional Chair.



## JOBS AT ISNA HEADQUARTERS

### ISNA Communications Director

Requires a Communications Director for its public outreach, communicating organization's mission and activities to its members, the media, public officials, government agencies, and the general public, and establishing and maintaining relationships with them.

Is a full-time position based at the ISNA headquarters in Plainfield, Ind.

#### Responsibilities

Works closely with the Secretary General and ISNA leadership on all aspects of public outreach and communications. This includes the creation and implementation of public relations strategies and management of all program elements, including media advisories, press releases, online media and other forms of targeted press outreach.

Keeps management aware of public attitudes and concerns of the many groups and organizations with which they must deal.

Supervise all external communications related to ISNA affairs including press releases, presentations and talking points for leadership for various events and press conferences.

Responds to the general public and media inquiries.

Raises awareness of ISNA's strategic partnerships, and cultivates new or strengthens existing relationships with reporters and editors at the regional, national and international levels.

Works closely with the Secretary General to provide strategic counsel to Department Directors regarding general public relations opportunities and services. This includes but is not limited to developing press outreach, retaining external public relations support, and working with outside vendors to produce, monitor and evaluate coverage.

Serves as liaison with publications, multimedia outlets, and production companies.

Supervises the website — content; updates; web-based methods for better communication and marketing.

Supervises the production of Islamic Horizons, ISNA's flagship publication.

Supervises staff and budget, develops and execute plans for the organization's communication.

#### Working Conditions

Must be available beyond the 40-hour week, especially if there is an emergency or crisis.

Work schedules often have to be rearranged to meet deadlines, deliver speeches, attend meetings and community activities, or travel.

#### Qualifications/Required Skills

Minimum five years work experience in communications, public relations or journalism as well as managing staff, budgeting, and planning.

Extensive knowledge of the media, and demonstrated expertise in media outreach with proven results.

English as a primary language; verbal, multilingual skills are a plus.

Excellent communication and presentation skills including writing and speaking.

Able to work within budget constraints on multiple projects, and to meet deadlines.

Comfortable interacting with senior executives and board members as well as the diversity of the North American Muslim community.

Good familiarity with the Muslim community in America.

Team player with a positive "can do" approach to work.

Experience handling sensitive and confidential issues.

Proficient in MS Office and Internet/Web design.

Minimum level degree or higher in a related area (Public Relations, Media Management, Journalism, Communications).

### ISNA Youth Director

ISNA has identified the youth as one of its most important priorities for the next decade. Our goal is to nurture, facilitate and promote youth programs and activities that will help young people build strong identities and become exemplary youth with knowledge skills and abilities.

The Youth Director will help plan, promote and coordinate programs for and by the youth aimed at their greater participation in Muslim community life and in acquiring leadership skills.

The Youth Director is a full-time position based at the ISNA headquarters in Plainfield, Ind.

#### Responsibilities

- Create youth program model that would involve and motivate youth to practice the values of Islam in their daily lives, and to get them actively involved in the civic life of the American society.

- Develop and oversee youth programs that will include opportunities for spiritual, physical and mental development.

- Develop a strategic plan for the YPS Department.

- Develop, train, and coordinate a team of volunteer leaders.

- Work with ISNA committees on multiple levels to tackle issues related to you.

- Develop a work plan for the entire year, including summer programs, camps, and retreats, and maintain a calendar of events.

- Network with other local, regional and national youth-related organizations and youth professionals.

- Participate in and administer youth programming in ISNA's national and regional conferences and activities.

- Create a list of professional Muslim counselors that can provide counseling services to youth and families that need counseling.

- Create a list of resources for the youth leaders and advisors to include books, periodicals and multimedia products on youth culture and youth development.

- Provide content about youth activities to the ISNA website and the Islamic Horizons.

- Stay informed about current youth development and leadership programs by attending professional development programs.

#### Qualifications/Required Skills

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college in a related field
- 2 – 4 years work experience in an Islamic community and/or youth development setting

- Self-motivated project starter who works well with minimal supervision in fast-paced, multicultural environment

- Understands and relates to youth and is passionate about reaching out to Muslim youth, encouraging them to grow in Islam

- Able to effectively communicate with both youth and adults, with outstanding written and verbal English

- Able to conceptualize, develop, plan and execute all stages of youth program development according to the needs of youth

- Able to select and train youth volunteers as well as volunteers working with youth

- Is knowledgeable about Islamic beliefs, principles and etiquette

**SALARY:** Salary is commensurate with level of degree and experience. Medical and other benefits provided.

**TO APPLY:** Please send a resume with cover letter and three references to Habibe Ali, ISNA Chief Operations Officer, at: [habibe@isna.net](mailto:habibe@isna.net).



*How will Muslim Americans of today care for the legacy betrothed to them by their elders have founded?*

# Those Who Served

## ISLAMIC HORIZONS STAFF

**M**SA, WHICH GRADUATED TO ISNA, WAS FOUNDED and nurtured by people who not only cared to uplift and advance their own community but also to give back to America. They came to the United States to gain knowledge and advance their skills but foremost in their hearts and minds was to preserve their faith, pass on the legacy to future generations and share Islam with others.

This year, MSA, and ISNA, turned 50, and the presence of the foundation builders is missed. They might have shared stories of years past, like when the MSA Newsletter was a two-side cyclo-styled sheet of paper, or when one person wore half a dozen hats, running the convention. Or even when the entire print material for the MSA Convention in Bloomington, Ind., fit in the rear area of a station wagon and made it in time from MSA's own International Graphics Press in Maryland.

They have laid the foundations and made them firm, now it is for the generations of today to continue the organization's growth and development. Some of the names of those who are no longer with us, stand out.

Since its inception, the MSA was inclusive, and, among the first two women to join MSA, soon after its founding, was Temple University undergraduate Sharifa Alkhateeb (1946-2004). She immersed herself in the service to Islam and Muslims without break until her passing in 2004.

Alkhateeb was there wherever Islam and Muslims could be served and had a knack for inspiring others to serve. An outspoken advocate of women's rights, Alkhateeb also founded the North American Council for Muslim Women (NACMW). In this capacity, she served as advisor to the Muslim Women's Delegation to the United Nations Beijing Conference on Women. In 1993, NACMW became the first national Muslim organization to discuss abuse and violence against women and children during a national convention. Alkhateeb also founded and directed the Peaceful Families Project at the Faith Trust Institute—a nationwide survey of domestic violence within the Muslim community.

Post 9/11, she was at the fore-



front to espouse the Muslim viewpoint. She was a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Religion and Abuse and served as managing editor of The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (AJISS) till 1990.

In 2004, as she lay dying of cancer, Sharifa became the first woman to receive the Mahboob Khan Community Service Award, which recognizes outstanding service to the Muslim community in North America.

## THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF ISNA



Dr. Ilyas Ba-Yunus (1932-2007) was a Muslim-American sociologist and persistent advocate for the protection of Muslim families and communities. He was also among the founders of MSA and the first ISNA president.

In 1960, as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Minnesota (UM), he became active in the campus Muslim association. The UM Muslim student group, the Islamic Cultural Society, was invited by the MSA of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign—one of the few other Muslim student groups across the nation then—asking them to join to form a national Muslim students organization in the United States and Canada.

As Muslim students began to settle in the country, Ba-Yunus suggested the creation of ISNA to succeed the role of MSA. He was the first ISNA president (1983-85) and worked towards the formation of the ISNA House of Community Representatives to increase direct participation of affiliated Muslim communities in policymaking. The ISNA Matrimonial Referral Service emerged out of his research on divorce among Muslims in North America. After his term, he served on the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura in various capacities.

From 1972 to 2003, he taught at the State University of New York at Cortland, where he retired as a tenured professor. Ba-Yunus published six books and his work appeared in multiple others. In 2006, he was honored with the ISNA Community Service Recognition Award.

## DR. ELTIGANI ABUGIDEIRI



In 1969, Dr. Eltigani Abdelrahman Abugideiri (1935-84) joined the doctoral program in Madison, Wisc. and became an active participant in the MSA chapter. The chapter had a prison program where he counseled the newly converted inmates and educated them on the practice of Islam.

Abugideiri graduated in 1974.

when the MSA was transitioning from a volunteer to an institutionalized organization. The organization also sought to institutionalize da'wah work, which had mostly been done on a voluntary basis. In 1975, when MSA set up its first full-time paid staff headquarters in Indiana, Abugideiri was invited to head MSA's newly established Islamic Teaching Center (ITC). ITC focused on educating new Muslims, particularly African Americans who were entering into Islam in large numbers at the time. Abugideiri also established scholarships for students to study at centers of Islamic learning overseas. ITC informally worked with Imam W.D. Mohammed who had begun to correct the tenets and beliefs that his followers had learned from his father, Elijah Muhammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam.

In 1978, Abugideiri returned to Sudan when a request was made for his expertise in da'wah from his homeland. He is survived by his wife, Hagga, two sons and two daughters.

## DR. AHMED ELKADI



Dr. Ahmed Elkadi (1940-2009), a surgeon, was a leading community worker in the United States since his arrival here in 1965.

He played a pivotal role in establishing numerous Muslim organizations in the United States, including the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) and the Islamic Medical Association (IMA; later Islamic Medical Association of North America [IMANA]). He served as IMANA president during 1974-75.

In 1981, Elkadi helped found the Federation of Islamic Medical Associations (FIMA), an organization spanning 22 countries. He served as its first secretary.

In 2002, he was honored for his service with ISNA's Mahboob Khan Community Service Recognition Award. He also served as the president of the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT).

In his home of Panama City, Fla., Elkadi had been instrumental in establishing a full-time Islamic school and a medical research institute.

## MOHAMMAD NAZIRUDDIN ALI



It was a name that first came to mind when one thought or heard the mention of the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT)—Mohammad Naziruddin Ali (1937-2006).

A founding member of MSA, he served as a chair of some of the early conventions. He worked as the regional representative of MSA/ISNA, then as a zonal representative and finally as MSA president (1978-79). It was two years after he served as MSA president that the MSA was transformed into ISNA.

All this he did as a volunteer. In 1984, he subsumed his personal interests in preference to service to the community when he left his stable engineering job and long-established life in Chicago to take the full time position as general manager of NAIT, then based in Plainfield, Ind. He served NAIT for more than a decade there, which was later moved to Chicago.

He spoke little, smiled a lot and remained humble despite his numerous accomplishments. A man of deep convictions, he lived a disciplined life, making no compromises in matters of faith. He lived modestly, practiced moderation, radiating an example of living with dignity and grace, enduring pain and persevering with patience. Naziruddin never kept away from the community; even weak and seriously ill, he attended the 2006 ISNA Convention in Chicago. Today, a scholarship fund honors his memory.

## MARGHOOB AHMAD QURAISHI

Marghoob Ahmad Quraishi (1931-2005) came to California in 1960 for his graduate studies at Stanford University. After graduation, he established his own financial consultancy.

His social activism dated back to his college days. For more than 45 years, he was involved in founding and organizing a host of Muslim American institutions throughout the country, especially in California. He was one of the founders of the MSA, the United Muslims of America organization and the Muslim Student Network internship program in Washington, DC. Also, he founded the summer Muslim Youth Camp and the Islamic School at Stanford, both of which are still operational. He established and was the executive director of Strategic Research Foundation, a major Muslim think tank. He edited Muslim journals, AlManar and Geopolitic Reviews. He is survived by his wife, Renae Iffat Quraishi, who has been an active equal partner, three daughters, one son, and three grandchildren.

## DR. MAHBOOB KHAN



Dr. Mahboob Khan (1939-99) was the first of his family to receive his high school diploma, and likewise the first to complete his BS degree, which he got from Madras University. In 1966, he came to Boulder, Colo., where he did a PhD in solid state physics. As a student, Dr. Khan was vice president of MSA, its West Zone Representative and served on

the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura.

Dr. Khan moved to southern California in 1975 to work for Rockwell International. There, he was one of the founders of the Islamic Society of Orange County (ISOC), which eventually included an Islamic center, a mosque and a elementary school. He served as ISOC president. In 1980, he moved to San Jose, Calif. to join Fairchild Semiconductor. Dr. Khan later became a manager at Advanced Micro Devices Inc. (AMD).

In San Jose, Dr. Khan worked to establish the Muslim Community Association (MCA). The MCA with his leadership has established two mosques, an Islamic center and the Granada Islamic School (GIS), an elementary. He served as the chairman of MCA and as a member of its board of trustees.

In addition to his regional and national pursuits, Dr. Khan helped establish American Muslims for Global Peace and Justice, an organization dedicated to aid in humanitarian efforts in Iraq and in Kosova.

## DR. MUZAFFAR PARTOWMAH

Dr. Muzaffar Partowmah (1939-2006) was a committed lifelong volunteer, serving to raise the community's Islamic knowledge.



Even during his extended period of illness, he was often attending various activities and functions throughout the New York metropolitan area. He even conducted Quranic classes a couple of days prior to his last hospitalization. And was reviewing his translation of the Quran into Kurdish, along with the tafseer, while in hospital recovering from surgery.

At the University of Wisconsin, he was active with the newly emerging MSA. He served as MSA Convention host (1969-72), MSA vice president, and its ninth president. Later he served as ex-officio and fundraiser, being chairman of the United MSA Fund (UMSAF). In 1974, he served as director of the Gary, Ind. MSA headquarters. In 1977, he returned as director of public relations. He was also a regular contributor to MSA's "Al-Ittihad" magazine.

Upon earning his PhD, Partowmah returned to Iran to teach at the University of Meshad. A year later, he moved to the University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. After the Islamic Revolution, he returned to Iran as an advisor to President Bani Sadr. However, political instability led him back to the United States, spending the last 19 years of his life working as a medical physicist at Nassau University Medical Center in Long Island, N.Y.

Often his passion for justice caused him untold hardships, including detention and torture when in 1989, he was questioned by the Turkish government for delivering humanitarian supplies to Kurdish refugees in southeastern Turkey.

A stickler for volunteering, Partowmah delivered sermons at local masajid and taught Quran and tafseer. He helped establish a masjid in Bellmore, N.Y. and was an active member of the Islamic Center of Long Island. He was also a member of ISNA, AMSE, AMSS, IMANA, and JMB, and served as treasurer for the New York Metropolitan Mosques Majlis Ash-Shura.

He was fervent worker for Kurdish fundamental rights.

He is survived by his wife, Nahid, and daughter, Shahla; and by Jahangeer, Maria, Mohammed, and Jafar, children from his late wife Joyce, who preceded him in death.

## DR. SHA'BAN MUFTAH ISMA'IL

A dedicated educator, Dr. Sha'ban Muftah Isma'il (1947-98) died doing what he loved best, preparing to present a workshop on Islamic education. He had only a day earlier concluded a workshop on: "Toward a Unified Islamic Education Curriculum in Islamic Studies." Isma'il, who was serving as director of education with the Universal Foundation Islamic School of Kansas City, Mo., was also investigating the possibility of establishing an Islamic teacher training college in the city.

The affable Libyan immigrant served as director of Islamic Schools Department at the ISNA headquarters during 1988-91. During his tenure there, he organized two national conferences on Islamic education. The first at the headquarters in Oct. 1989, and the second in Detroit, Mich. in Nov. 1991. The Detroit conference led to the founding of a national organization, the Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA).

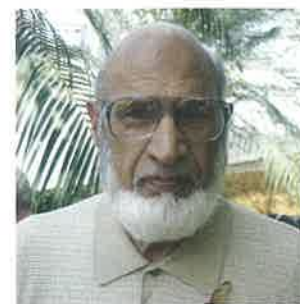
During his tenure at the ISNA headquarters, Isma'il was active in reaching out to Muslim communities and sharing his expertise with educators. In under three years, he visited over 30 communities to share his insights on Islamic education. These efforts led to the foundation of full-time and weekend Islamic schools. He conducted an in depth study on full-time Islamic schools and Islamic education in North America. In 1992, Isma'il was invited to join the fledgling

International Islamic University (IIU) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as an associate professor, rising to full professorship. He authored several books during his association with IIU which have been translated into Malay. Isma'il earned his Ph.D. and MS degrees from the University of Oregon.

In the early 80s, he helped establish the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), where he worked for several years in various capacities, especially focusing on the education of the children in diaspora.

In 1966, upon his return to the United States from Malaysia, he took up a position in Kansas, where he now rests.

## MOHAMMAD ASLAM CHEEMA



Mohammad Aslam Cheema (1927-2012) was active in ISNA and other Islamic organizations, especially those in his hometown, such as the Islamic Society of Milwaukee (ISM), which he helped found.

He served as a member of the ISNA Majlis as-Shura from 1985 to 1988 and as a NAIT trustee from 1988 to 1990. A Milwaukee resident area since 1972, he served as ISM president from 1986 to 1988. Cheema served on the ISM board of trustees, first as its secretary, 2004-09, and then as its chairman from 2009 till his death in 2012. He also participated in the ISM Book Club up until his death, sharing his knowledge with others. In addition to serving as ISM president in its early years, he held a variety of other positions with the ISM or its preceding organizations from 1976 to 1986. Cheema was born in Lyallpur (present day Faisalabad, Pakistan). He came to the United States and completed an internship and residency and postgraduate training in cardiothoracic surgery at Chicago-area hospitals from 1956 to 1962, obtaining a diploma from the American Board of Surgery and American Board of Thoracic Surgery in 1962. He was a fellow with the American College of Surgeons, American College of Cardiology and the American College of Thoracic Surgeons.

## DR. M. ABDUL WAHEED FAKHRI

A pillar of the Chicago Muslim community, Dr. M. Abdul Waheed Fakhri (1929-2011) was the founding president of Muslim Community Center (MCC; Chicago; 1972) the mother mosque of the immigrant Muslim community. He was also founding president of American Muslim Community Center Frankfurt, Ill. (1983).

He was among the earliest Muslim educators and served as chair of the ISNA education committee during 1979-82.

Fakhri, who obtained his PhD in education administration from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich., served as chair of Department of Education Educational Administration at Chicago State University. He passed his rich experience on to the community without demanding compensation or desiring recognition.

He was the founding president, chairman and member of many organizations, which he directed to success, such as the Muslim Community Center of Chicago, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists and the Madrasah Ta'lim al-Islam, among many others.

However, his most enduring contribution to the field of Islamic education came through his leadership as the founding chairman

of IQRA' International Educational Foundation. IQRA' completed its comprehensive program of Islamic Studies and initiated many new projects while under his guidance.

At the time of his death, he was chair of the IQRA International Educational Foundation, and in 2006 received the IQRA' International Lifetime Achievements Award. He also served as president of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (1979-82).

He also wrote poetry in Urdu.

## SHAFI A BALBALE (1942-92)

Like many MSA workers of that generation, Balbale served as Internal Secretary of the organization for many years, assuming, perhaps, the most time consuming and most under-recognized position in the organization. He went on to become vice-president of the MSA.

## NISHAT SHAFI BALBALE

Nishat Shafi Balbale (1940-2005), who—along with her husband, the late Shafi Balbale—was among the pioneers who helped develop the MSA, related the work she and other women did for the MSA in a 1993 interview with the "Islamic Horizons". She said, "I felt as if I was very fortunate, blessed by Allah (*subhanahu wa Ta'ala*), that I was a part of something extraordinary, working with so many people from all over the world."

Nishat Balbale assisted in documenting executive committee meetings. She also helped with recordkeeping, correspondence and hosting these meetings. After attending her first convention in 1967, she worked alongside organizers at the following conventions. She recalled being able to recognize participants' names when working on registration, finding out who was new and welcoming them to the convention. Of course, the attendance list was much smaller then.

In 1968, Nishat Balbale and other women helped plant the sapling that would later become the bazaar, a staple at every convention and conference. In the beginning, she and other women gathered together items in a sort of makeshift garage sale.

She is survived by her children, Mukhlis, Mus'ab, Sumayya, and Muneeb. She also leaves behind a daughter-in-law; son-in-law; grandchild; and brother-in-law, Sami Balbale; and his wife, Sanobar.

## AMINAH ASSILMI



Not every American knows that the Eid stamp they have been using since Sept. 2001 owes part of its existence to Aminah Assilmi (1945-2010). At the time of her death, she was working to make Eid a national holiday and trying to establish a Center for Muslim Women's Studies to instruct converts about Islam and its core beliefs and practices.

Assilmi fondly assigned her journey to Islam to a computer glitch, where a devout Southern Baptist and radical feminist and broadcast journalist was mistakenly assigned to a class

that had a roomful of Arabs. Upset over the possibility of being in such environment; not only she continued, but one day requested one student for a copy of the Quran and another book on Islam. She announced her conversion on May 21, 1977.

This was the beginning of the many challenges and tribulations she would face, among them the court's awarding custody of her two children to her husband, who divorced her after she renounced Christianity. But she triumphed in all her tests. When he turned 21, her son called her and said that he wanted to become a Muslim. 16 years after the divorce, her ex-husband also accepted Islam.

Wearing hijab cost her her job. She battled cancer, and even experienced homelessness.

During her career she founded and served as president of the International Union of Muslim Women ([www.IUMW.org](http://www.IUMW.org)), traveled nationwide to lecture on Islam, and was chosen as one of the top 500 most influential contemporary Muslims in the world.

She is survived by her daughter Amber, sons Whitney and Mohammad, and several grandchildren.

**DR. ABDUL RAHIM ELTILIB** (d. 1997), who was associated with Yale, UCLA, Columbia, the University of Michigan, served as MSA vice-president during 1980-82. During his term, he worked to build bridges between the African-American and immigrant Muslim communities. Eltilib, a graduate of George Washington University, was a faculty member of the Department of Islamic Law at Om Durman University, Sudan.

**HASSAN HATHOUT** (1932-87) was a Muslim doctor and professor of medicine who lived in Britain, the Middle East and the United States. He served on the ISNA Majlis ash-Shura. He was a scholar, author and an inspiring speaker.

**ALI MOHAMMED G. SURTI** (1932-87) served on the first Majlis ash-Shura. He was ISNA west coast representative during 1982-87 and was instrumental in communicating and promoting ISNA policies and programs on the West Coast. A pioneer and community leader, he helped establish the Islamic Center of Los Angeles, 1970-75, and the Jamat-al-Masjid-ul-Islam, Inglewood, Calif., 1975-87.

A tireless worker and community organizer, he raised funds for the establishment of masjids (at a time when none existed), Islamic schools, Muslim graveyards, Muslim youth camps, the sponsoring of Imams and organizing and managing countless fundraisers.

By profession he was a CPA, a businessman and also a partner in a local accounting firm.

**ADIL MARZOUK** (1950-97) worked for ISNA, NAIT and MSA for some 20 years.



He was blessed with a deep understanding of the Islamic law and excelled in its interpretation. A wellspring of love, care and dedication, he was especially popular among children. An ever-filled jar of candies always awaited takers at his office at the ISNA headquarters. He was survived by his wife Constance (Huda) and daughter Marium. ■

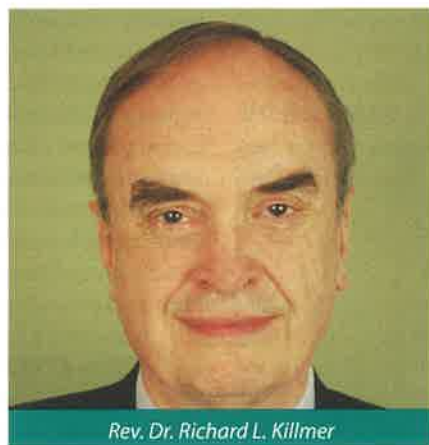


CAN MUSLIM AMERICANS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS TAKE INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING TO NEW REALMS IN SEEKING A JUST SOCIETY?

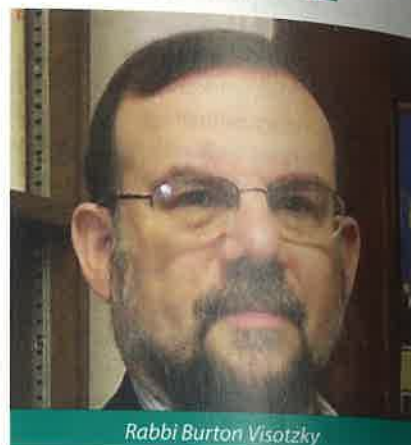
# Interfaith Partnerships

ISLAMIC HORIZONS STAFF

*Over the years, the MSA and ISNA have consistently advanced interfaith partnerships, forming coalitions on major issues of concern, and sharing and caring for each other.*



Rev. Dr. Richard L. Killmer



Rabbi Burton Visotzky

A STUDENT WHO WAS AT A UNIVERSITY in upstate New York, recalls that in 1973 when he was there, when an interfaith discussion group was created, MSA was invited to join. And the international students office, named him on this group. Looking back today, he says that it was no small feat, when the Friday prayer then had a congregation ranging between five to seven people, and the MSA was not beyond the pigeonhole in the international student center's mail section.

Even at age ten, MSA was recognized as an interfaith dialogue partner. This story must have been repeated at many campuses. Over the years, the MSA and then ISNA have consistently advanced such partnerships, forming coalitions on major issues of concern, and sharing and caring for each other. Today, ISNA has full-fledged outreach through its Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances located in the heart of the nation's capital.

Faith leaders value such interaction and mutual understanding and service.

Anthony Cirelli, PhD, is associate director, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, says, "We are proud of our long-standing relationship and collaborative work with ISNA (over 20 years!) — a relationship grounded in mutual esteem and trust, friendship and passionate commitment to interreligious harmony and dia-

logue, as well as to issues of consequence in the public square. We rejoice especially over the work we have been able to accomplish, and the progress we have made in forging strong bonds of friendship, in our Midwest Muslim-Catholic dialogue since 1996. Having produced important reports on Catholic and Muslim understandings of marriage and revelation, this dialogue has demonstrated how it is possible for Christians and Muslims to work well and creatively together and, as a result of our tangible successes, now serves as a paradigm for conducting successful Christian and Muslim dialogues around the nation. Voices of reason, moderation, integrity, and compassion seem to shine forth at ISNA, and so we are proud to stand with you, shoulder-to-shoulder, now and into the future."

Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky, Ph.D., director of the Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue at the Jewish Theological Seminary, recalls, "We began with a meeting in Washington, D.C. in Feb. 2008 and it was, as they say in Casablanca, 'the beginning of a beautiful friendship.'" In late summer 2008, one of our rabbis spoke at the ISNA Convention in Columbus, Ohio. In December of that year we surveyed the Rabbinical Assembly (1,400 Conservative Rabbis) about their interactions with the Muslim community and matched Synagogues with Mosques for joint communal and dialogue programming under ISNA's

auspices." In 2009, Rabbi Visotzky spoke at the ISNA Convention in Washington, D.C. He adds, "In 2010 we began an ambitious three-year project with ISNA and Hartford Seminary called 'Judaism and Islam in America.' With funding from the Carnegie Corporation and other foundations, the workshops of 'Judaism and Islam in America' have met in New York, Hartford, Conn., and Northern Virginia/D.C. to discuss issues of mutual interest to both the academic and broader Jewish and Muslim communities. Our final meeting this past Oct. 2012 included a visit to the White House. Currently we are developing pilot projects for the Jewish and Muslim communities of Maryland, D.C., and Virginia. We are developing a resource guide that will educate each community about the basic tenets of the other. And, we are preparing a scholarly project that should result, *in-sha-Allah*, in a special issue of the academic journal *The Muslim World*, on Judaism and Islam." Rabbi Visotzky, who is also Appleman Professor of Midrash and Interreligious Studies at JTS, concludes, "We at the Jewish Theological Seminary wish all of our friends in ISNA, Mabrouk on your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary!"

In 2006, ISNA was a founding organization of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) to respond to the reality that the United States engaged in torture. ISNA actively participated in the organization and enabled thousands of

Muslims across the country to participate in it, says the organization's executive director Rev. Dr. Richard L. Killmer.

He adds that there are now more than 300 religious organizations engaged in this work, including Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Bahá'í.

In 2010, ISNA supported NRCAT's decision to work for the end of the use of prolonged solitary confinement in American prisons. There are too many Muslims held in long term isolation — a dangerous practice that harms prisoners emotionally and physically. NRCAT has already had success. The state of Maine has reduced the solitary population by 70 percent.

NRCAT, working in partnership with ISNA, is a partner in the creation of the "Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values" initiative.

Walter Ruby, Muslim-Jewish relations program director of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (FEEU), recalls that in Oct. 2007, Dr. Syeed was a keynote speaker at the National Summit of Rabbis and Imams in New York. At this opening event of FEEU's ongoing initiative to nurture ties of communication and cooperation between Muslims and Jews in the United States and around the world, Dr. Syeed made it clear that ISNA strongly supports the effort to bring Muslims and Jews together and is ready to be a full partner in the effort.

In the years since ISNA has more than lived up to that pledge, says Ruby. ISNA, he adds, has served as cosponsor of the annual Weekend of Twinning, FFEU's signature event held every November in which hundreds of mosques, synagogues and Muslim and Jewish organizations hold events together in cities across North America and around the world. As an expression of its commitment to spreading the "American model" of Muslim-Jewish relations to other continents, ISNA has participated with FFEU in three groundbreaking missions of Muslim and Jewish leaders from Europe, Latin America and the Southern Hemisphere, held in to Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, ISNA and FFEU have spearheaded an initiative for Jews and Muslims to stand together against Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. The close cooperation between FFEU and ISNA serves as an example of how Muslims and Jews can work together fruitfully for the benefit of both communities, and for betterment of the many nations in which we live side by side. ■

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# Muslim Americans reach out to understanding and supportive faith communities.

## Standing Shoulder-to-Shoulder in Compassion

BY CHRISTINA WARNER

**I**FIRST STOOD SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER with a Muslim woman in Spring of 2007. I had just arrived in Jerusalem for three months of study and was wandering the Old City for the first time. I grabbed an open seat on a bench and a kind, elderly woman sat with me as we attempted to communicate across language barriers. It is a simple moment of compassion that marks the beginning of my interfaith journey. Now, as Campaign Director for "Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values," I have the privilege of facilitating and supporting many more interactions in the United States that embody this same compassion.

Shoulder-to-Shoulder was born in Sept.

2010 when ISNA gathered 40 of its closest interfaith partners to respond to controversy surrounding the building of Park51 in lower Manhattan and a Christian pastor's first threats to burn copies of the Quran.

Since then, 29 national religious organizations have joined the campaign and encourage their constituents and congregations to do the same. Rabbis, pastors, imams, priests and lay leaders speak to media, decision-makers and to their own congregations to point out injustice and call for religious freedom and peace.

At a local level, Shoulder-to-Shoulder facilitates a national network of community members: interfaith or religious organizations and congregations that are dedicated to ending Islamophobia. This network is working to ensure that public conversations reflect that Muslims have positive relation-

ships with their interfaith partners and their broader community instead of inaccurate stereotypes or divisiveness.

Because of the work of Shoulder-to-Shoulder members, since the last ISNA convention:

- 170 clergy from the Washington, D.C. area protested the placement of hateful subway ads in the city's metro stations through op/eds, a press conference and asked the transit authority to divert funds received to a local human rights effort.
- 50 advocates from 35 religious organizations learned about what immigration reform means for Muslims, expanding the network of faith organizations that are advocating for a system that accounts for these particular concerns.

Interfaith communities in urban areas like Washington, D.C. and Chicago are

building networks that will prepare them to support victims of religious discrimination, including anti-Muslim sentiment.

Why do people of other faiths do this work? The reasons are as numerous as there are individuals, but some common threads exist.

Everyone wants strong communities and many understand that this requires that they remain engaged. In contrast, exclusion or violence against Muslims weakens a community and causes division. The same is true at a national level with regard to religious freedom. Weakening the right of religious freedom for any community jeopardizes that same religious freedom for all communities.

People of faith respond to discrimination out of a deep commitment to their own traditions. For example, with common imperatives to love one's neighbor and to work for the betterment of society, Christians and Jews challenge discrimination because their traditions call them to this work. In responding to that call they become better Christians and better Jews.

Many do this out of respect for Muslims. Like me, others have experienced the hos-

**People of faith respond to discrimination out of a deep commitment to their own traditions.**

pitality and joy of the Muslim community and want to celebrate the many contributions that Muslims offer.

Of course, Muslim communities can and must lead this struggle. Civic engagement and interfaith dialogue is part of it and can provide people of other faiths with an accurate understanding of Islam and the value of Muslim communities.

Within your local community you can:

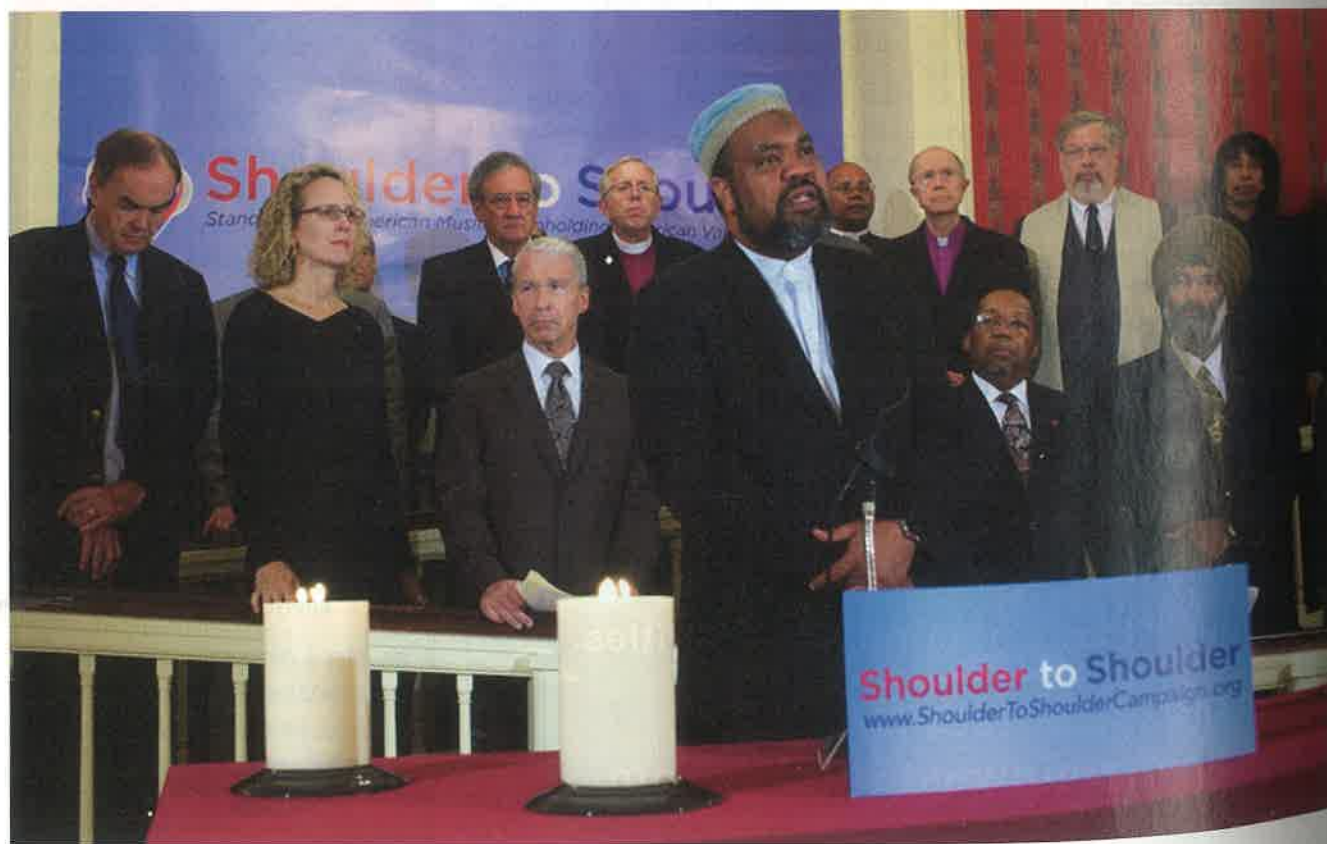
- Accept invitations to participate in interfaith service and dialogue, or issue your own. Dialogue, which must be emphasized, leads not to a compromise of one's own faith, but rather to a deeper commit-

ment to one's own faith. Dialogue allows people with significant differences to better understand those differences and to live side-by-side in a single community.

- Partner with other faith communities in shared service: addressing homelessness, providing food or offering healthcare to the needy. People of other faiths can only benefit from understanding that Muslims regularly serve and give to charity as an expression of faith. Always invite local journalists to cover the service event so that they can spread the news.

Mosques and Islamic centers can join Shoulder-to-Shoulder as community members. This will provide them access to a growing network of interfaith partners who are committed to standing beside them and ending discrimination against the community. In addition, this network provides access to best practices and those who implement them, existing resources and supports a strong voice challenging discrimination. ■

Christina Warner is Campaign Director for Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values. She can be reached at [cwarner@shouldertoshouldercampaign.org](mailto:cwarner@shouldertoshouldercampaign.org)



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# Twinned with Faith

BY GHULAM M. HANIFF

**A**BOUT TEN YEARS AGO, THE STATE THAT IS HOME TO REP. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), had a tiny Muslim population, but deep changes, underway for several decades, have made the place friendly to diversity. More immigrants arrived in Minnesota in 2005 than in any of the past 25 years, noted the "Economist" (Sept. 21, 2006). Among them, those originating in Muslim countries, especially Somalia and Ethiopia, made up a sizable part of the wave. Estimates for the Muslim population range from 50,000 to about 100,000. The state's Muslim population includes the entire spectrum of the global community and would easily exceed the higher estimate if they are included.

Muslims seem to have entered Minnesota during three distinct periods since the end of the Second World War. First, there were students who joined the University of Minnesota and eventually coalesced into a community; second, professionals and skilled

workers who benefited from liberalization of immigration laws and included a wider category of students; and third, refugees and political asylum seekers chiefly the Somalis, Bosnians, Kosovars and others suffering persecution.

## EARLY BEGINNINGS

The Islamic community in the state started when Muslim students began to appear on the University of Minnesota (UM) campus. Initially, in the early 1950s, a few graduate students came, followed by an ever growing mix of graduate and undergraduate students. About that time, in 1954, a leader emerged in the person of Khurram Jah Murad (1932-96), who had served the Islamic movement in Pakistan. As a veteran of organizational efforts, he launched a contact drive. The response to his first call for Friday prayers was encouraging. Little did the attendees of this gathering imagine that this would someday constitute the nucleus of what was going to become the state's Muslim community. No one talked about the future; all were obsessed with their studies, aiming to complete their degrees and return home.

Quran translator Dr. T. B. (Ta'lim Ali Abu Nasr) Irving (1914-2002), who had joined UM about that time, fervently supported Murad's efforts. As a former Fulbright scholar in Iraq, Irving wanted to motivate students to live their faith. Shortly after, Marghoob Ahmad joined the graduate program

in engineering. The threesome soon created a cadre of loyal followers to remain engaged in community-building during their stay on campus.

## THE ISLAMIC CULTURAL SOCIETY

Encouraged by the Friday prayers' success, they created a body for coordinating the logistics inherent in arranging on campus Muslim activities. The numbers grew as more students joined UM in the late 1950s. The organization evolved into the Islamic Cultural Society (ICS) that would engage in outreach programs on and off campus.

Founded in 1956, ICS was the first of its kind established in Minnesota by, for and of the Muslim community. It may also have been one of the earliest Muslims organizations on an American campus. Owing to its campus base, ICS enjoyed a degree of legitimacy.

By the late 1950s, some of largest groups of students arrived from Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, though most Muslim countries had some presence. Both Pakistanis and Egyptians, eager to share Islam, participated enthusiastically in outreach activities. By the late 1950s, the Friday prayers regularly attracted 35-40 participants. ICS also mastered the campus communications network. Today, half a century later, Friday prayers are still conducted in the same, general area where the University had provided space at the student union.

ICS and its successor organization remained a networking conduit for Muslims and played a critical role in promoting cultural adjustment of the new arrivals: community.

## EARLY LINKS

A new generation of students assumed the responsibilities for Islamic activities on campus. By the early 1960s, Muslims with experience in Islamic assertiveness were making their appearance on the campus. For their class projects, two Muslims, searching for signs of earlier Muslim settlements in the area, discovered the presence of four or five families with links going back to the late 1880s. These families vaguely knew one another but had little or no contact among themselves. No one expected to come across people of Middle Eastern origin among the locals, who are of Northern European ancestry. All of them were born in the Midwest, being the descendants of the original immigrants to North Dakota. Their ances-

tors, from Lebanon and Syria, had settled in the prairie state under the Homestead Act, around the 1880s-90s. The respondents to the offer of free land were mostly Arab Christians, but also some Muslims. The preeminent desire of the Muslims was to amass a small fortune and return to their native villages. Quite a few did exactly that while others stayed on as farmers. It was these descendants that were discovered by the Muslim students.

Only one of these five families eventually connected with the larger Muslim community. It was Mary Abraham, the widowed mother of her daughter Ferial. The last link to Lebanon was severed when Abraham died in 2010, shortly after her 100th birthday.

Upon learning of this discovery, Aliya Hasan, a Detroit relative involved in organizing Muslim Americans, visited Minneapolis and met with the researchers and encouraged them to reach beyond the campus. Her visit became a major highlight for ICS in the early 1960s. She was among the founders of the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA), an international organization formed to represent Muslims living in the two countries.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the impact of decolonization and the force of Islamic resurgence impacted Muslims in America. Hasan's visit had a catalyzing effect, and informal discussions started about founding a mosque off-campus, but close to UM.

## THE DINKYTOWN MOSQUE

Frequent fundraisers, donations and rental income helped finalize the purchase of an off-campus building that was housing students. The drive for the Dinkytown Mosque was spearheaded by Esam Awad, an Egyptian physician, who focused on establishing a mosque off-campus. The university neighborhood mosques, usually within walking distance from campus, constitute the heart of the Islamic community in the nation today.

The Dinkytown Mosque or the Islamic Center (the two terms used interchangeably) quickly developed an identity of its own. The Islamic Center of Minnesota (ICM), founded Dec. 1970, a legally-registered body, owns and manages the Dinkytown Mosque.

Ironically, the mosque was "discovered" by many Muslims, a few years after its founding, when the city's major newspaper described the ordinary-looking mosque as a curious phenomenon of the

# Minnesota's Community Activists

BY GHULAM M. HANIFF

**T**HE TASK OF CONVINCING MUSLIMS about the need for community activism was shouldered by two committed University of Minnesota contemporaries.

They sought to establish the community's roots in the state by volunteering in civic, cultural, community and public affairs. When a well-organized Muslim community began to emerge with the founding of the Abu Khadra Mosque, efforts got underway to encourage community involvement. Among the first steps was the drive to get people registered to vote. Only after experiencing several elections, and perhaps being goaded by fellow-workers, did the community make a move. Younger people, mostly college-educated locals, decided to become voters and to attend precinct caucuses. By attending party meetings, and having chosen delegates, they had voluntarily assumed some responsibility: to get involved in the affairs of the larger society. Once they got their feet wet in volunteerism, they forged ahead.

During the last few years, attending party meetings, talking to candidates, organizing fundraisers and helping with campaigns have become routine for these Muslims. They have even contested in elections. In the 2010 election cycle, nine Muslims ran for political offices, with two emerging victorious.

Contributing to the Muslim community's well-being and strengthening its institutional basis has attracted several individuals, including the well-known Tamim Saidi and Asad Zaman. Saidi is one of the founders of the Muslim Youth Leadership Awards (MYLA) program which encourages academic excellence by giving annual scholarships to promising college students. He is also one of the founders of the Northwest Islamic Community Center, the vice-president of the Islamic Resource Group (IRG) and a former board member of the Islamic Center of Minnesota (ICM) Council of Trustees. Zaman is one of the founders of Tarik Ibn Ziyad Academy, a charter school for grades one through eight, which has been noted for high scores in achievement tests, even for the minorities. It has two campuses, one in Blaine and the other in Inver Groves Heights, at which Zaman is the principal. ■



THE LAST BIRTHDAY: The community hosted a 100th birthday party for Mary Abraham, who died shortly after.



times because "The Islamic Center" sign read both in English and Arabic. The following Friday after its publication, several joined the prayer and were delighted to meet fellow Muslims. At the following Eid many of them brought their families. The building could hardly accommodate them all. Two Eids later it became clear that a bigger facility was needed.

## THE ABU KHADRA MOSQUE

The plan was to retain the Dinkytown Mosque owing to its accessibility and because the near-campus, rental housing it provided to Muslim students made it self-financing.

The community found a church, which was easily accessible from campus, with a capacity for up to 300 worshippers, a large number for that time. The price was right and the church management was eager to sell but repeated fundraisers failed to yield the required amount. A newcomer to the community Abu Khadra, a Syrian businessman, upon discovering the roadblock, stepped in. In appreciation, the community decided to call it the Abu Khadra Mosque. Also called the Columbia Heights Islamic Center, it was everything they wanted and more. It needed minimal renovation to turn it into a proper mosque.

Toward the late 1970s, Muslims had discovered the concept of Sunday schools and had developed the capacity for that niche. When classes were announced for the first time, some 50 students registered, which was an inordinately large number for a developing community. In about four years, the facility was cramped and some of the classes had to be moved to an adjacent building which functioned as a vocational school during the week. The additional space bought time for a few more years, but the mosque too was getting crowded. Once again, they needed a bigger facility.

## THE ICM FRIDLEY MOSQUE

Fortunately, the search committee found a school in a well established neighborhood. As a relatively new purpose-built private school, the facility served the needs of K-6. Since education was a high priority, no one wanted to lose out on this useful structure, which also included seven acres of land. The assumption was that the Muslim population would keep growing into the foreseeable future.

The Fridley Islamic Center is still the state's largest Muslim facility, which spreads over 14 acres of land, and includes a soccer

# A Dynamic Presence

BY GHULAM M. HANIFF

**D**URING THE LATE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, the demand for speakers on topics related to Islam exceeded the supply. This development coincided with the influx of Somali immigrants. The rise of Islamic centers and the visible presence of Muslims in America raised many questions, and people wanted answers.

Bosnian victims of the European conflict arrived shortly thereafter. The media covered their plight extensively. People began to wonder why there were Muslims in Minnesota, all of a sudden.

In their quest to dispense information about Islam, the haphazard structure for soliciting volunteer speakers proved unsatisfactory. The enterprise needed a dedicated person. Such an individual eventually emerged when Zafar Siddiqui answered the call. In July 2001, he helped create the Islamic Resource Group (IRG). Later, after 9/11, IRG became even more crucial, offering workshops and forums about Islam. In addition, training sessions were organized for those willing to volunteer to be speakers. IRG affiliated with the of Islamic Networks Group (ING). For more than 12 years, IRG has been offering presentations on Islam at schools, faith communities, civic institutions, service organizations, business enterprises and elsewhere.

IRG's outreach efforts quickly became known in the media and among social activists. It has already compiled an remarkable



record of success beyond all expectations with more than 2,500 presentations to an audience of almost 100,000.

IRG is currently coordinated by Safiya Balioglu, who has been responsible for matching the speakers with the audiences requesting the service. Among the longtime supporters of the project, as well as managers, guides and speakers, are Jill Joseph, Tamim Saidi and Onder Uluyol. Siddiqui continues to provide leadership to the project and has extended its activities in other related areas such as to the Twin Cities Interfaith Network (TCIN) and the Muslim Christian Dialogue Center (MCDC), located at a local Catholic university. He serves on their boards, as well as acting as a chairman on the board of the Al-Amal school. Despite his busy schedule, Siddiqui contributes to an online publication, EngageMN.org, and as a blogger on StarTribune.com. ■

field and an indoor gymnasium. The Sunday and Saturday school, which now enrolls more than 400 students, is one of its major projects.

Besides doing outreach at various civic, educational and religious events, ICM Fridley offers the larger community a Food Shelf (1994), which received government grant in 2010, and the Al Shifa Clinic. Toward late 1990s, Fridley also began to be used for a regular, full-time, K-6 Islamic school. It gradually metamorphosed into the full-time,

pre-K-12 Al-Amal Islamic school housed in a specially-built new wing. It is the state's only full-time Islamic school and currently has an enrollment of more than 400 students.

For the outside community, the media and others seeking information, the Fridley Center is seen as the representative body of the Muslims of Minnesota. Its parent body, the ICM, is the custodian of three mosques: Fridley, Abu Khadra and Dinkytown. It maintains a strong relationship with the UM MSA. Most Minnesotan Muslims are



Al-Amal School

concentrated in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, including their suburbs.

## PROLIFERATION OF MOSQUES

The real influx of Muslims into Minnesota started during the late 1990s, continuing well into the 2000s. Most of the newcomers have been Somalis. Currently, Minnesota has the nation's largest Somali population. Ethnic-cleansing in the former Yugoslavia sent in many Bosnian refugees followed by a very small contingent of Kosovar refugees, as well.

Currently, there are some 15 Somali-run mosques located in various types of buildings. Most mosques also hold weekend schools with classes both on Saturdays and Sundays. For the most part Somalis have been in the vanguard of economic entrepreneurship with setting-up of clothing shops, grocery stores and restaurants especially to cater to the needs of their community. During the past several years they have moved around the entire state in search of better economic opportunities.

## ACTIVISM

For Minnesotan Muslims, the 1990s were a decade of transition and of planting roots. Two individuals attended the inaugural session of the American Muslim Council (AMC) held in Washington, D.C. in 1991 and were inspired to become engaged in civic activism. To motivate the local Muslims, they founded its Minnesota chapter. A few individuals became convinced of the benefits and climbed aboard the bandwagon later. They were called to serve on the Task Force on Former Yugoslavia when the Bosnian conflict broke out in the 1990s, and were among the delegation to lobby (now

late) Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN). At their invitation, Wellstone visited the ICM Fridley, which was the first step in reaching out to the state's civic leadership. Since then, Muslims have been in contact with the Minnesota congressional delegation as well as with state legislators. Another group on which both served was the Joint Religious Legislative Council (JRLC), lobbying the state legislature on behalf of social justice. Eventually, the Muslims were granted membership through the ICM Fridley. This organization holds annual conventions, Days on the Hill, where everyone is encouraged to visit the capitol and lobby their legislators.

Much outreach work and social activism during the 1990s was carried-on by a small group of about six committed activists. Fortunately, they were able to recruit others. Muslims gradually are involving in activism at the level of political parties. Until the late 1990s, Muslim names as delegates of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) state convention were virtually nonexistent. However, in 2000, there was one Muslim. In 2004 convention, there were 12. This was a huge step forward. After 9/11, Muslims became very active in fundraising and in campaigning for the legislators of their choice. One of the first ones to benefit was Ellison.

Minnesota Muslims have also gradually become active in interfaith dialogue and coalition building at several levels. The Interfaith Dialog (est.1990) between Muslims and Christians—represented by ICM and the Minnesota Council of Churches, with more decade-long efforts of Bayunus and Bonn Clayton, co-chairs for Muslims and Christians respectively—now attracts more than 30 churches and mosques and has continued

for over 20 years without break. The most phenomenal result of the ICM dialogue has been the formation of "Muslim-Christian Dialogue Center" (MCDC) at St. Thomas University, an area Catholic university.

The Islamic Resource Group (IRG) is one of the most active organizations working on behalf of Muslims. Headed by Zafar Siddiqui, IRG has a critical role in providing speakers to those requesting such a service. Finding speakers has always been a challenge to the Muslim community, though less so today than previously. The IRG is run by about a dozen volunteers working in the spirit of cooperation. Most have undergone training with other organizations for presentations.

Another similar effort is an informal list serve social collective—Community Activists (COMACT) is coordinated by Mukhtar Thakur and its major thrust is to organize participation in political activities, encourage fundraisers and to provide campaign support to those candidates sympathetic to the aspirations of the community.

Minnesota activism has also produced its own office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). While still relatively new, it has proved to be a tremendous asset in helping the community to deal with civil rights issues. Organized under the watchful eyes of Lori and Kashif Saroya, the project is a tremendous undertaking for the people involved in the initiative. The community is very proud of the two UM alumni, Nihad Awad and Ibrahim Hooper of CAIR.

## NEIGHBORHOOD MOSQUES

As the community has grown and spread across the metro area, some of activists have taken the initiative of establishing area



mosques. One of the earliest among these was Amin Abdel Kader, a former president of ICM Fridley, who founded Masjid-us-Salam in Maplewood, a suburb of St. Paul. Abdel Kader and others established the Islamic Institute of Minnesota. Presently, it is headed by Mohamed Akkad, and oversees two mosques and the Islamic cemetery in Roseville. The other colleague, Ezzeddin Taha helped found the Burnsville Mosque and the adjacent Islamic cemetery.

#### BUILDING SCHOOLS

Muslims have also taken an active interest in founding schools. Most are Sunday or weekend schools. Al-Amal, the state's only full-time Islamic school, has earned praise for its high achievements in test scores. Though it added the senior grade only about five years ago, almost all of its graduates have gone on to universities. The school—privately funded with donations, fees and annual fundraisers—has also won awards for its sixth grade science projects three years in a row.

The state's other Islamically-oriented school, the K-8, Tarik Ibn Ziyad Academy, as a charter school, is mostly state-funded and includes restrictions. Nevertheless, it has earned a positive reputation for high test scores in the state. The school's campus located in Blaine, a northern suburb of Minneapolis, is limited to grades one through six, with plans for adding others as funding becomes available.

Masjid-ul-Huda, offers college-level courses under a separate institution, the Islamic University of Minnesota, which is seeking accreditation. Their first graduation ceremony was held in the summer of 2010, at which 12 students were awarded Bachelor's Degrees or certificates and one a Master's degree in Islamic Studies.

#### OUT-STATE MINNEAPOLIS

During the past several years Muslims have gradually spread statewide. On most campuses statewide, Muslim students were present though in limited numbers. Their ranks were swelled by non-student Muslims, again in small numbers. In a few of the outlying communities, a Muslim presence has manifested itself by the appearance of an Islamic center or some Muslim-owned business. Duluth, St. Cloud, Mankato and Rochester have active Islamic centers frequented by both students, as well as other Muslims. In Rochester, home of the Mayo Clinic, the mosque is open for the five daily prayers. The

town also harbors a sizable Somali community, the vanguard of the initial immigrants to the state, who were encouraged to settle there because of availability of employment. St. Cloud and Mankato also have large Somali and Muslim student communities. However, the Moorhead and Winona have small Muslim communities that are still in the process of formation. In all of these places mosques are generally open for the five daily prayers with the Friday prayers being the largest draw.

In another college town, Marshall, Muslim students have been intermittently enrolled, though Somalis have been living there for several years and holding workplace Friday prayers. In the outlying areas, Muslim student populations are generally small and to connect with their fellow Muslims they have to take the initiative. At these institutions, students are generally undergraduates, not well organized for religious services and somewhat timid to reach out to others.

For the longest time, St. Cloud's Muslim community has been comprised of students and faculty at the St. Cloud State University (SCSU). Sporadically, Muslims present at the nearby St. Benedicts College and St. Johns University, both small liberal arts Catholic institutions, would join the St. Cloud congregation. When Muslims began to dribble in about 30 years ago, an MSA chapter was formed and Friday prayers began to be conducted at the university-provided room in the student union. Several years ago, SCSU administration also created a special wudu area.

In the early 1990s, there were some 200 Muslim students, though their numbers have considerably gone down since then. Most are from Somalia, followed by Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Some 10 years ago, Somali Muslims began to move to St. Cloud in search of employment. Today, they constitute the overwhelming majority of the community. The Somalis are mostly factory workers, but some have become fairly well established with grocery stores, clothing shops and restaurants, while Arabs and South Asians are professionals.

There are estimated 3,000 Muslims in St. Cloud. To meet the increased numbers, a rental facility was used for Friday prayers and, a few years later, a church was purchased and transformed into the St. Cloud Islamic Center (SCIC). Friday prayers are performed both at the campus and at the

Center. The two Eid prayers are held at a sports facility.

One sign of the community's hold on the area is the continuing appearance of Muslim-owned businesses. More of these have been established within the past decade than ever before. Most grocery stores include halal butcher shops with some even stand-alone, selling only meat products. Muslim-owned businesses have been quite generous in supporting Islamic institutions and their causes. The Minnesota experience demonstrates that building a community is a shared responsibility. After all, the Prophet was a businessman who created a community, the ummah, and the community in turn followed and reinforced his teachings. ■

Dr. Ghulam M. Haniff, emeritus professor of political science, St. Cloud State University, served as director, international relations program, chair, faculty senate, president, faculty association and international students advisor. He was involved with ISNA and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) since their inception.

He was governor's appointee on the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation and the Heartland Environmental Education Foundation. He is active in the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL). He is also a longtime columnist for the Pakistan Link.



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# Women Rights Activist Sarwat Malik 1943 – 2013

**D**R. SARWAT MALIK, M.D., F.A.C.P., died July 7 after a long battle with lung cancer. She was cofounder of the Global Partnership for Women and Girls (GPWG).

Malik, who completed her MBBS (MD) at the age of 21 in Pakistan, came to Rochester, N.Y. in 1967 to begin her pioneering medical career. She did an internship in pathology at Rochester General Hospital and subsequently completed her medical residency at The Genesee Hospital.

Her path of activism for women's rights began in 1974, when she learned that her employer, Genesee Health Service was discriminating against its two female physicians. She single-handedly challenged the all-male hospital board and helped reverse its policy. Also during these years, despite a thriving practice and a growing family,



Sarwat became the founding president of Fatima Jinnah Medical College (Lahore, Pakistan) North American Alumni Association and founding president of Medical Women's Association of Rochester. She also served as vice president on the board of the Islamic Center of Rochester and the Pakistani American Association of Rochester.

Malik was a champion for women's rights. A few years ago, she and her daughter, Nadia Malik, founded the GPWG ([www.global-](http://www.global-partnershipforwomenandgirls.org)

[partnershipforwomenandgirls.org](http://partnershipforwomenandgirls.org)) to invest in the education and economic advancement of Muslim women and girls around the world. GPWG currently invests in projects in Senegal, Egypt, Afghanistan and Pakistan and continues to grow.

Two years ago, Malik established the Malik Lecture Series at the State University of New York Brockport in honor of her husband, Salahuddin. The lecture series has an ambitious vision of promoting broader understanding among faith communities.

Malik was a professional Muslim woman before it was fashionable. She was a lifelong advocate of equality, women's rights and social justice, not just through her words but also through her actions and organizational affiliations. She helped countless patients, mentored students and residents and was a beloved and respected member of her community.

Malik is survived by her husband of 47 years, Dr. Salahuddin Malik—a former president of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, her two daughters Sumaiya Malik Wood and Nadia Malik, and her son-in-law Scott Wood. ■



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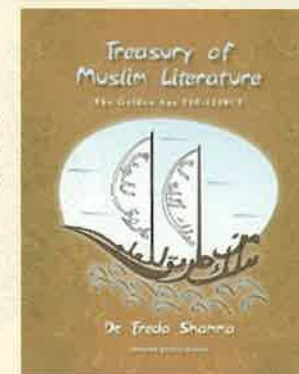
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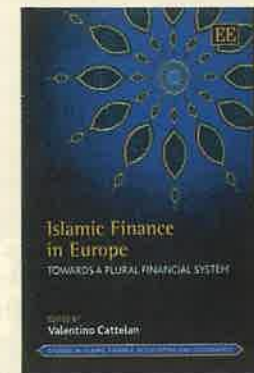
**Treasury of Muslim Literature: The Golden Age 750-1250 CE**  
Dr. Freda Shamma  
2013. Pp. 360. PB. \$21.95  
Amana Publications,  
Beltsville, Md.



**F**REDA SHAMMA, WHO SPENT 14 years working on curriculum development at the International Islamic University in Malaysia, argues that during their golden age of literature, Muslims wrote about everything including poetry, theology, spirituality, philosophy, geography, history, political science, sociology, psychology, belle letters, biography, autobiography and memoirs. Such realization spurred her to action.

Her well-balanced collection, "The Treasury of Muslim Literature," which embraces the writings of some of the most illustrious Muslim scholars, serves as an introduction to a genre of literature with which many, including Muslims, are not too familiar. It is also an overview of the Muslim world's literary excellence that students in secondary and tertiary education should be exposed to. By including works by luminaries such as Imam al-Bukhari and Ibn Sina, she offers them an introduction to young readers. Some of them may decide to do more detailed study of the authors' works. All of the material is translated, well-edited and organized, enhancing the collection's usefulness to English-speakers specially in the West. ■

**Islamic Finance in Europe: Towards a Plural Financial System**  
Valentino Cattelan (ed.)  
2013. Pp. 272. HB. \$120  
Edward Elgar Publishers, Northampton, Mass.



**T**HIS BOOK PROVIDES AN ASSESSMENT of the progress that Islamic finance has made in Europe. Aside from focusing on the European Union countries, it also covers important topics such as women in Islam, as well as financial stability and development in the context of Islam.

This volume investigates Islamic finance in Europe as part of a plural financial system in this age of globalization through a multi- and interdisciplinary approach to law and economics.

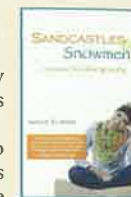
Cattelan, who for a decade has focused on Islamic finance, concludes that "this book implicitly suggests...that the financial system around the plural nature of social life constitutes the only viable way to manage the coexistence of alternative legitimate options in dealing with financial issues."

While the author has assembled a team of contributors, he has overlooked including more background information about them, especially their connection to this field. Such inclusion would have only enhanced the value of the content.

This book will be welcomed by academics, students and policy-makers with an interest in the impact on financial regulation of an increasingly globalized world. ■

## SHORT TAKES

**Sandcastles & Snowmen: A Personal Search for Spirituality**  
Sahar El-Nadi  
2013. Pp. 294. PB. \$16.53  
FB Publishing House, San Clemente, Calif.  
El-Nadi, in her well-written book, touches upon her journey from a liberal lifestyle to a practicing Muslim at age 30. It is a search for spirituality.



In simple and direct language, she introduces Islam to Muslims and to people of other faiths, touching on all aspects of the faith and practice. She cites such moments where she took up reading a biography of Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to start "learning how to be like him." She states, "...a constant reading of the Quran is one of the regular activities of a practicing Muslim."

El-Nadi, who is fluent both in English and French and has read several translations of the Quran in both languages, observes "I actually believe that just by teaching Muslims good Arabic again, we could eliminate many problems of our modern world resulting from ignorance and a cultural deficiency."

**Arts and Crafts of the Islamic Lands: Principles Materials Practice**  
Khaled Azzam (ed.)  
2013. Pp. 288; 1000 + illust., color & black and white. HB. \$60.00  
Thames & Hudson, New York, N.Y.

In creating a valuable reference on Islamic arts and crafts, the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London, connects cultural history with modern practice. The Islamic arts and crafts, it highlights, are alive today where artists and craftspeople in the Islamic tradition draw on their cultural heritage to inform and inspire their work. Each chapter introduces a principle, tool or technique along with examples of masterworks found across the Islamic world before providing a fully illustrated step-by-step guide to creating specific designs.

**Walls: Travels Along the Barricades**  
Marcello di Cintio  
2013. Pp. 288. PB. \$16.95  
Soft Skull Press, Berkeley, Calif.



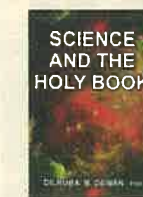
Di Cintio is a travel writer who has been to some of the world's most disputed places to witness life alongside the prohibiting barriers, such as the intimidating Wall blocking the Palestinians, and see how these structures have influenced the lives of those living there. He finds that the walls are never a solution, that every wall fails to accomplish its intent and produces something else.

**The Throne of Adulis: Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam**  
G.W. Bowersock  
2013. Pp. 208. HB. \$24.95  
Oxford University Press, USA  
Bowersock recreates the Red Sea world of Late Antiquity, where Jews and Christian were at each others throats, a time in ancient history—the collapse of the Persian Empire as well the rise of Islam.

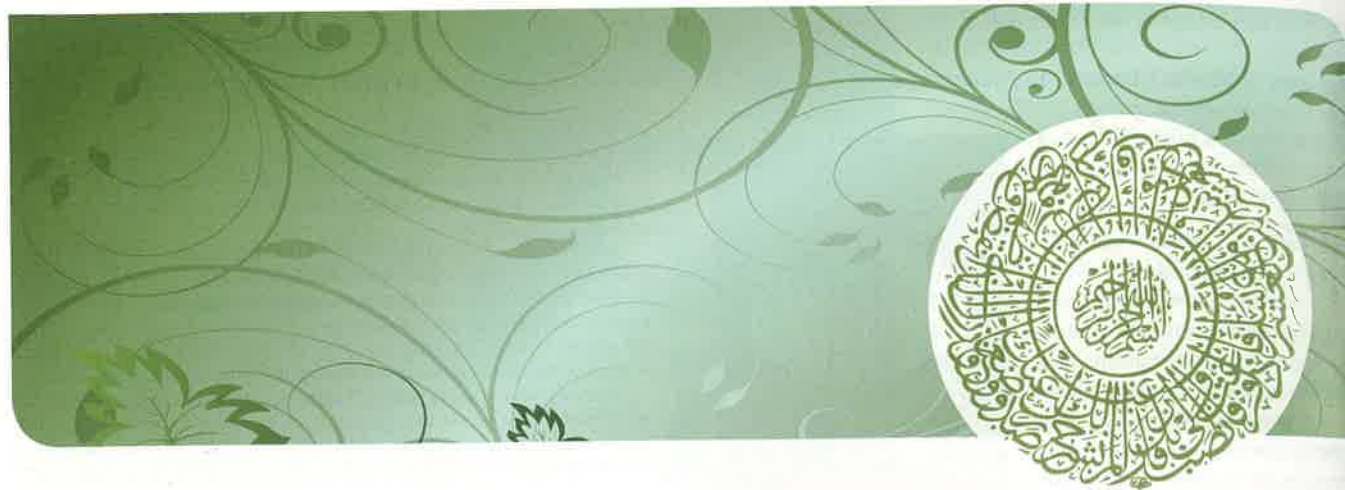
**Ibn Sina: A Concise Life**  
Edoardo Albert  
2013. Pp. 104. PB. \$9.95  
Kube Publishing Ltd., Markfield, Leics., UK  
Albert offers a short biography of Ibn Sina (980-1037 CE; Avicenna)—a true polymath. It is a welcome initiative on the author and the publisher's part to produce such a handy edition which includes illustrations, photographs and maps that figured in his life. Perhaps such an introduction will lead to interest in knowing more about this illustrious scholar.



**Science and the Holy Book**  
Dilruba B. Dewan  
2012. Pp. 191.  
D.B. Dewan, Saskatoon SK, Canada  
The author argues where scientific facts match with the Quran there is no option but to accept them. She compares scientific truths about well-known phenomena with their descriptions given in the Quran. A book that is aimed to educate, especially young Muslims, should have been produced better than this edition. ■







# From Good to Great

BY IMAM MUHAMMAD MAGID WITH SAM ROSS

**Wisdom #73: If you want to know your value with Him, look to what He has established in you.**

**T**HE QUESTION OF HOW GOOD companies become great companies, should also concern Muslims. After all, God and His Messenger (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) often compare our earthly existence to that of a trader in the marketplace, a comparison as accessible to us today as it was to Mecca's mercantile society 14 centuries ago. God and His Messenger speak of the Day of Accounting, when our deeds will be weighed with unmatched precision, our final balance sheets presented and our eternal profit or loss will be disclosed.

In his now classic study of good companies that grew to greatness, "Good to Great", Jim Collins identified several of the best practices, one of which he dubbed, "Confront the Brutal Facts." He writes, "It didn't matter how bleak the situation or how stultifying the mediocrity...they became relentlessly disciplined in confronting the most brutal facts of their current reality."<sup>1</sup>

How can we confront the "brutal facts" about our own spiritual reality, so that we too might grow, through God's generosity and grace, from good to great, God willing? In this beautiful wisdom, Ibn Ata' Allah, points the way to assessing our standing with God: "If you want to know your value with Him, look to what He has established in you."

What does this mean?

Ibn Ata' Allah directs us to reflect upon our hearts' feelings towards God and upon our actions. He refers to both of these as "what He has established in you," because ultimately it is He who brings about our states and actions. We cannot make ourselves fall in love, for example. It is He who empowers us with such emotions. We can simply take the prerequisite steps. Similarly, we do not even move our own bodies. As a paralyzed person knows, we can merely make the intention. It is up to God to move our limbs.

Regarding our hearts' feelings—one of the spiritual giants of the early scholars, Hasan al-Basri, was once asked, "What is my standing with God?" He replied, "What is God's standing with you?"<sup>2</sup>

To the extent that God is tremendous in our eyes—to the extent that we love Him, are in awe of Him, yearn for His nearness, fear His displeasure and exalt Him—we are tremendous in His eyes. As the Prophet taught, "Whoever loves to meet God, He loves to meet him."<sup>3</sup> If God is only secondary to us, a passing thought occasionally occupying our hearts and minds, then we are secondary to Him. As the aforementioned hadith continues, "and whoever dislikes to meet God, He dislikes to meet him."

One very practical manifestation of our feelings toward God is the extent to which we look forward to prayer, prioritize it and

hasten to it. A beautiful memory I have from my youth in Sudan is that of my grandfather who would get visibly excited as prayer time drew near and perform wudu, even before the adhan, preparing for dialogue with his Creator.

When the time for the next prayer draws near, do our thoughts turn to our meeting with our Beloved? At the first opportunity do we seek to meet Him in prayer, like a lover who discovers with excitement that his beloved is in town? Or do we delay our prayers to near the end of the permissible time, as if other things were more important? Or worse, do miss our appointments altogether?

Of course, life's many callings might put off praying at the beginning of the time. There are legitimate reasons permitted by Islam for such a delay. For men, it is best to pray in congregation, even if it entails not praying at the beginning of the time. But when there is nothing to delay prayers, do we hasten to pray at the beginning of the time?

The second thing Ibn Ata' Allah draws our attention to is our actions. While our emotional feelings are important, as the adage of human lovers goes, "Actions speak louder than words." How can we claim to love God and His Prophet but not loyally fulfill what they have asked us to do? What lover can claim to love his beloved, while neglecting their requests? Moreover, true love entails fulfilling the requests of one's beloved in the order of priority, as given by them. God has stated that most beloved to Him is what He has made obligatory upon us: His commands and prohibitions, in worship,

social dealings and good character. Next in importance are all of the recommended but non-obligatory acts: extra dhikr, extra prayers, memorizing the Qur'an, etc.<sup>4</sup>

I can never forget the advice that a father—in Sudan, my home country—gave to his highly socially active son: "Make sure you pray *tahajjud*. If you're not praying *tahajjud*, it is all a waste of time." What he meant was that if his son was truly doing all of these things for God, all of which demanded considerable time and energy, he would also find the time and energy to pray at night, which God has recommended in even stronger terms. If he wasn't praying *tahajjud*, then he should question his sincerity and love for God; he probably wasn't really doing these things purely for His sake. Rather, his intention was probably mixed with other motives: the exhilaration of changing the world that is the hallmark of youth, the desire to spend time with friends, or worse, to be admired by others.

When assessing our actions, it is important to remember that quality is often more important than quantity. Assuming we are fulfilling what is obligatory upon us, what matters most is the sincerity, devotion and

## WHAT SPIRITUAL TOPICS MATTER MOST TO YOU?

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presence of the extra acts we do. Often mothers whose lives are full of service and light in extra worship are far more advanced spiritually than their single peers who have more free time and consequently more works. Though her extra worship may be little, she brings a purified heart to her prayers, making them that much more valuable to God.

In assessing our state, two important caveats are in order. First, we should use Ibn Ata' Allah's metric to reflect upon our own state, not upon the state of others. It is impossible to know their true state—we don't know what actions they perform in private nor the secrets of their hearts. Only God

knows these. Moreover, all that matters is how our lives end, and that has yet to be seen.

Second, whatever good we find in ourselves is from God and it should never be a cause for arrogance. In the Quran, God describes a people whom "He will love and who will love Him" (5:54); and the commentators opine that God's love for them preceded their love for Him, both syntactically and chronologically. It is God's prior love for us that led to our love for Him. Had He not loved us by gifting us with existence and the possibility for eternal paradise, gifting us with His guidance and facilitating our way to where we are now, we would not find any of the good that we find.

May God make us among those dearest to Him. Ameen! ■

<sup>1</sup> Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 87.

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by al-Daraqutni and al-Hakim.

<sup>3</sup> Bukhari

<sup>4</sup> "My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon him; and My servant continues to draw near to Me with extra acts of worship until I love him." (Bukhari)

# HOW MUCH IS FREEDOM WORTH TO YOU?

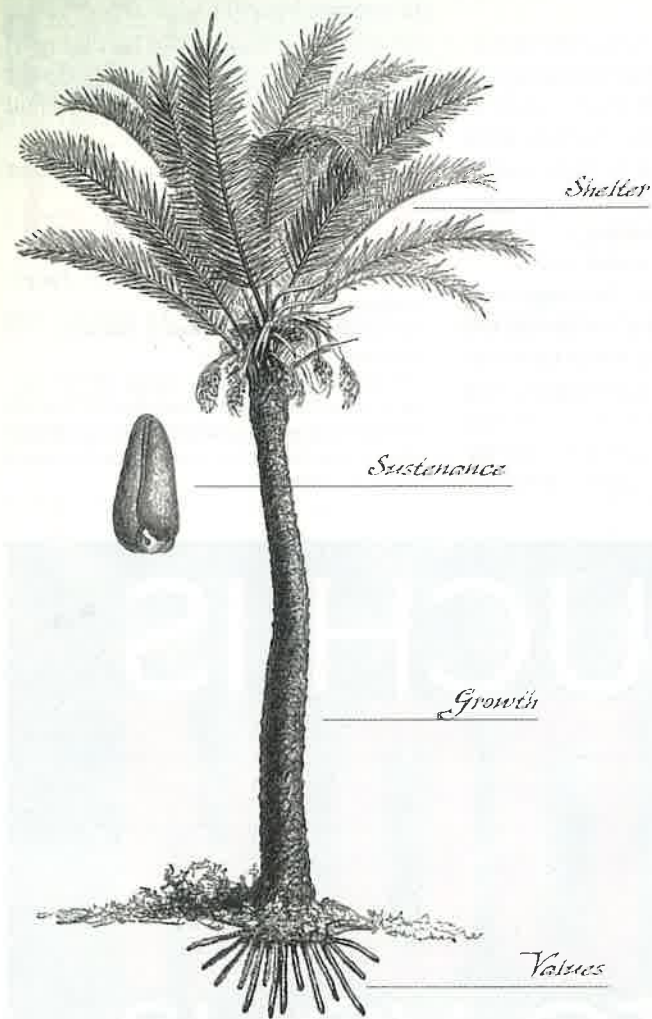


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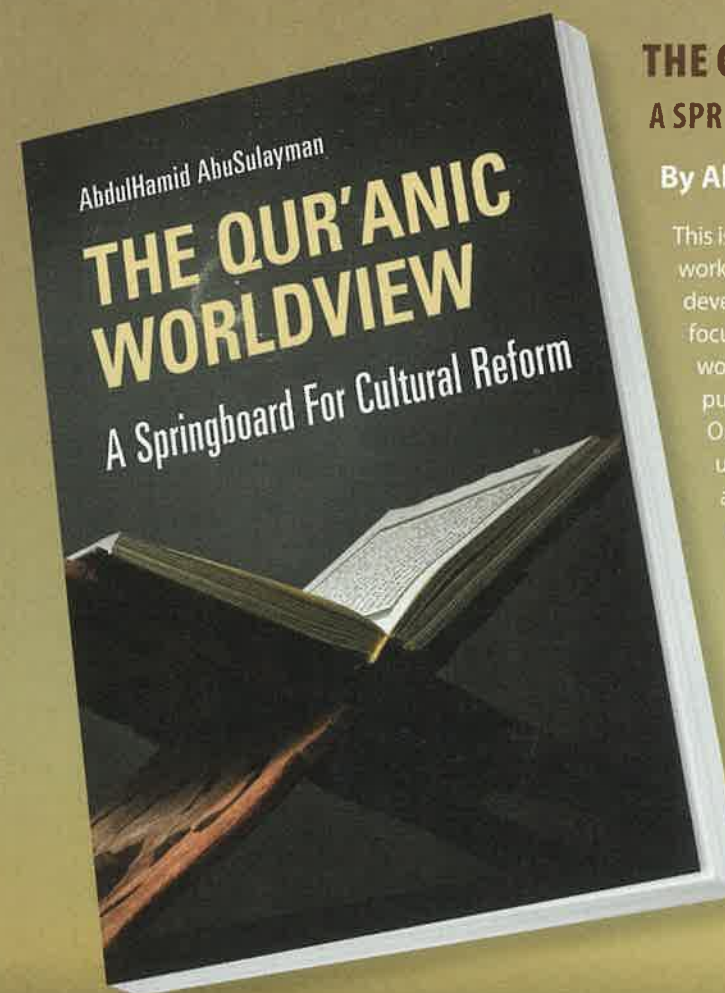
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