

# The Ambition

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## The Year of The Elephant and The Birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

*"Praised by God in Heaven and by men on Earth"*

by Muhammad Basil Ahmad  
and Reema Kamboh

Long before the advent of Is-

lam, the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula slowly stopped worshipping the God of Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) and began praying to stone meteorites that had fallen from the sky. Not only would they worship the Black Stone in the Ka'bah, but they would also take such stones with them as protection on their journeys. Paganism was soon established and sacrifices were made to idols that had now become sacred.

The Ka'bah eventually housed over three hundred idols and Makkah had become an esteemed city in the eyes of pagan pilgrims from all over Arabia. Other towns wanted to attract similar attention to themselves and many built holy houses for their own gods. Abrahah al-Ashram, vice-regent of the Negus in Abyssinia (Ethiopia), built such a temple in Yemen. However, none of these other centres succeeded in drawing the Arabs away from Makkah's house of worship.

Although Abrahah had decorated his temple with expensive furniture and statues of gold, marble, and ivory, he still found the Arabs travelling to worship in Makkah, even those from Yemen! In a fit of rage, Abrahah decided to end the pilgrimage to Makkah once and for all, by destroying the House built by Prophets Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be upon them), the Ka'bah itself.

Abrahah quickly equipped a large army for war. He rode upon an elephant, as he marched his forces towards Makkah. When the Arabs heard of Abrahah's plans, they feared that the Ka'bah and the annual pilgrimage to Makkah would truly vanish. Many tried to persuade Abrahah to change his course of action, but without success. When the people of Ta'if learned that it was not their house he intended to destroy, they actually co-operated with him and sent a guide to show him the way to Makkah.

When Abrahah arrived at the outskirts of Makkah, the Quraysh and other Arab tribes first thought of fighting, but soon realised that it would have been futile to resist such a powerful army. Abrahah's army had already captured two hundred camels belonging to 'Abd al-Muttalib, de facto chief of Makkah.

Abrahah sent a messenger to the Makkans, informing them that he had not come to fight them, but only to destroy the Ka'bah, and that they should not impede his advance. 'Abd al-Muttalib went back with the messenger to Abrahah's camp. When Abrahah saw him, he was so impressed by his appearance that he asked his interpreter to inquire if 'Abd al-Muttalib had a favour to ask. He replied that Abrahah should return

*Continued on page 14*

## The Ka'bah: Its Size and History

*Ka'bah in Arabic means a high place with respect and prestige.*

From the Internet

The small, cubed building known as the Ka'bah may not rival skyscrapers in height or mansions in width, but its impact on

history and human beings goes unmatched.

The Ka'bah is the building towards which Muslims face five times a day, everyday, in prayer. This has been the case since the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) over 1,400 years ago.

The current height of the Ka'bah is about 12 metres. The inside room of the Ka'bah is 13 by 9 metres. The Ka'bah's walls are one metre wide. The floor inside is 2.2 metres higher than the ground level outside, where people perform Tawaf.

The ceiling and roof form two levels made out of wood. They were reconstructed with teak, which is capped with stainless steel. The walls are all made of stone. The stones inside are unpolished, while the ones outside are polished.

This small building has been constructed and reconstructed by Prophets Adam, Ibrahim, Isma'il, and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). No other building has had this honour. Yet, not very much is known about the details of this small but significant building.

Did you know that the Ka'bah was reconstructed as recently as close to four years ago? Did you know that the Ka'bah has been subjected to danger by natural disasters such as flooding, as well as human attacks? If you didn't, then keep reading. You'll find some rarely heard of information discussed below and discover facts

about the Ka'bah that many are unaware of.

Literally, Ka'bah in Arabic means a high place with respect and prestige. The word Ka'bah may also be derivative of a word meaning a cube. Some of its other names include "Bait-ul-Ateeq," which means, according to one meaning, the earliest and ancient. According to the second meaning, it means independent and liberating. Both meanings could be taken. Another is "Bait-ul-Haram," or the honourable house.

Scholars and historians say that the Ka'bah has been reconstructed between five to twelve times. The very first construction of the Ka'bah was done by Prophet Adam (pbuh). Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an that this was the first house that was built for humanity to worship Him. After this, Prophet Ibrahim and Isma'il rebuilt the Ka'bah. The measurements of the Ka'bah's Ibrahimic foundation are

*Continued on page 13*

### Inside This Issue

Ruling on Maulud .....	4
CIC 3rd Annual Conference	5
gtaparents.com .....	6
Conflict over Kashmir .....	8
Chechnya is Burning .....	8
Rehma Foundation .....	12
Con Artist .....	13
Domestic Violence .....	14

### Departments

<b>Editorial</b>	
Mothers' and Fathers' Day celebrations .....	2
<b>Our Mail</b>	
.....	2
<b>Newsroom</b>	
.....	10
<b>Kid's Korner</b>	
.....	15
<b>Success Story</b>	
.....	16
<b>Community in Action</b>	
.....	16

## Muslims in TV Media - A Local Survey

by Nasir Syed

Western governments are greatly influenced by public opinion. In turn, public opinion is influenced greatly by the Media. This observation has guided many astute people in furthering their

goals. However, perhaps because of the prevalence of state-controlled media in their countries of origin, few Muslims have made conscious observations about the role of media in public policy, even fewer have acted upon it, and rare

are those who have acted effectively.

For some time now, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has also been a home-base for many Muslim producers and broadcasters. This writer sought to sample the works and experiences of some of these rare and interesting individuals in our community to find ways to encourage more people to get involved in media production.

Syed Ghulam-e-Panjatan Jafry (S.G.P. Jafry, for short) was born in Jaipur, India, educated in Pakistan and the United Kingdom, and came to Canada in 1966. Recently

*Continued on page 3*

## Editorial

### Mother's Day and Father's Day

There is a tradition in most Western countries to set aside a day to remember mothers in May with another one following in June to remember fathers. These days are known as Mother's Day and Father's Day, respectively. It is a custom to acknowledge mothers and fathers on these days. People usually send flowers, gifts, or gift certificates to their parents, take them out, and spend the day, or at least the evening, with them to remind their parents of their love.

This day, the parents become the centre of all activities. Children show their love to their parents by serving breakfast in bed, giving parents a book of coupons to do chores for them, and so on. Even little children make cute cards for Mom and Dad and show their respect and gratitude to their parents. Each child tells his or her parents that "they are the best in the world."

All this is good and well and there is no harm in telling your parents how much you love them. But why limit it to only ONE DAY?

Also, remembering or reminding implies that you had forgotten something and just collected back the memory of it. In this busy Western society, sometimes this is what the reality is. Grown-up children, engaged in their own world and the daily rat race, sometimes don't find time to spend with their ageing parents.

Many old people in seniors' homes keep their eyes peeled towards the open door for a son or daughter to appear, but in vain. They are all ears to hear that familiar sound of footsteps of their beloved ones, but they are disappointed. Then suddenly, Mother's or Father's Day arrives and that child comes with a big bouquet of flowers, wearing a big smile saying, "I love you Mom" or "I love you Dad."

Is this love? Is it fair to express your love only once a year? No it is not. It is just a formality. It is all a practical joke.

It is easy to say, "I love you," but very difficult to live up to it! It does not take any effort to express your feelings but it is really hard to act as such.

But that is exactly what Allah (swt) tells us. It's our actions and deeds that will take us to Paradise or Hell. Allah (swt) has mentioned several times in the Qur'an that only believing is not good enough: "Aamanu wa amelus-saalihat" (*Believe and do good deeds*) come hand-in-hand.

"And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff" (expression of disapproval or irritation), and do not repel them, but speak to them a noble word" (Qur'an 17:23).

What the above verse means is that only professing the belief in One God is not sufficient: Worshipping only Him is the decree. Similarly, just uttering "I love you" is not acceptable. Being kind is the word. By placing kindness to parents next to worship, Allah (swt) has established the position of parents. He has also made it clear that it is not a choice to be kind to one's parents, but rather, it is compulsory.

"And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination" (Qur'an 31:14).

When praying, pray for your parents and always remember how they took care of you when you were weak and dependant upon them: "And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small'" (Qur'an 17:24).

A man once said to the Prophet (pbuh), "O Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), what rights can parents demand from their children?" He replied, "They are your Paradise and your Hell" (Al-Tirmidhi). According to other famous Ahadith, the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Paradise lies under the feet of your mother" and that "to acquire the pleasure of your father is to acquire the pleasure of Allah."

Flowers, gifts, dinners, outings, and movies do not translate into love. Whereas exchanging gifts is a sign of love and highly recommended by the Prophet (pbuh), love is basically about caring. It is about living up to your parents' needs. It is about being obedient and respectful throughout your life. It is about sacrificing your time and energy. It is about not letting them down. It is about not losing their trust. It is about being there for them. It is about listening to your ageing parents' unfair complaints with a soft smile. It is about reassuring them that everything will be all right. It is about not grumbling at their old-fashioned advice. It is about not showing frustration when they repeat themselves, as their memories become foggy.

Let's love and respect our parents every single day and make ourselves deserving of Allah's pleasure in this world and of the Paradise in the Hereafter.

Asma Warsi

## Our Mail

### Kind words from two readers!

It seems to me that the Ambition is becoming an ideal forum for the Muslim community, and as such it fulfills a great need. may Allah SWT reward you for all the efforts. I know that I have been relatively away lately, but I'm keen on following the Ambition closely.

I still maintain it's one of the best publications currently available in the Muslim community, and I do hope that the readers will become more engaged in the various discussions raised in it.

Osman Bakhach

Visited your website today, it's very interesting and very informative. Congratulations!

Also, I read your Nov/Dec.1999 issue thoroughly. all the articles are from very good to excellent.

May Allah reward you all with the blessings of this month. Amin!

Adeel A. Siddiqi

Supervisor Teaching Labs./  
WHMIS Co-ordinator,  
Department of Zoology,  
University of Toronto

### You thought the Y2K problem was bad?

In March 1992, a man living in Newton (near Boston), Massachusetts received a bill for his as yet unused gas line stating that he owed \$0.00. He ignored it and threw it away.

In April he received another and threw that one away too. The following month, the gas company sent him a very nasty note stating they were going to cancel his gas line if he didn't send them \$0.00 by return mail. He called them and they said it was a computer error, which they would take care of. The following month he decided that it was about time that he tried out the troublesome gas line, figuring that if there were usage on the account, it would put an end to his ridiculous predicament. However, when he went to use the gas, it had been cut off.

He called the gas company, who apologised for the computer error once again and said that they would take care of it. The next day he got a bill for \$0.00 stating that payment was now overdue. Assuming that having spoken to them the previous day the latest bill was yet another mistake, he ignored it, trusting that the company would be as good as their word and sort the problem out.

The next month he got a bill for \$0.00 stating that he had 10 days to pay his account or the company would have to take steps to recover the debt.

Finally, giving in, he thought he would beat the company at their own game and mailed them a cheque for \$0.00. The computer duly processed his account and returned a statement to the effect that he now owed the gas company nothing at all. A week later, the man's bank called him asking him what he was doing writing a

cheque for \$0.00. After a lengthy explanation, the bank replied that the \$0.00 cheque had caused their cheque-processing software to fail. The bank could therefore not process ANY cheques from ANY of their customers that day because the cheque for \$0.00 was causing the computer to crash.

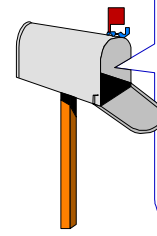
The following month the man received a letter from the gas company claiming that his cheque had bounced and that he now owed them \$0.00 and unless he sent a cheque by return of post they

### Getting involved important but train us from childhood: a youth suggests

The other day I went to a symposium called "Islam in Canada 2000." There were many interesting lectures and they talked about many different things that are very important. One thing that they talked about in particular was of course the youth. I feel it's essential that the youth get involved in Islamic activities because we are the future of Islam in Canada, but in my opinion, there is one problem.

We keep hearing that same cliché: Youth need to get involved. I guess people don't understand that many are involved, but there are some reasons why some youth aren't involved.

First of all, I don't think the youth really know how important it is to be a part of these activities. Some people think that if they have something to say, it makes a difference that they are young, and people won't take them seriously. I pretty much agree with them because older people keep saying the youth don't do anything, but



Letters to the editors are published unedited regardless of the paper's policy. We entertain all letters except ones with impolite language. Please include your name, address and telephone number. Only names are published.

### Reader upset by our overlook.

Re: *Children: A blessing from God, Mar-April, 2000*. To my astonishment you stated "We cannot bring back little Farah Khan one of God's innocent childre." Correct me if I am wrong but Allah clearly states in the Holy Qur'an in surah Ikhlas: "Say: He is one, the eternal, He begets not, nor is begotten, and there is none unto like Him."

Can you please tell me where you got your information from? I believe you have an apology and correction to all the readers of *The Ambition*. To the best of my knowledge, I know that we are God's creations.

Z. Khan

[We sincerely apologize for our neglect. Editors]

would be taking steps to recover the debt . . . (The sender of this e-mail claimed that it was a true story!)

### Five Good Reasons to Advertise in The Ambition

- |                                                                                    |                                                                                      |                                                                                  |                                                                    |                                                           |
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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|

# The Cliff

Author Unknown

A man named Jack was walking along a steep cliff one day when he accidentally got too close to the edge and fell. On the way down he grabbed a branch, which temporarily stopped his fall. He looked down and to his horror saw that the canyon fell straight down for more than a thousand feet. He couldn't hang onto the branch forever, and there was no way for him to climb up the steep wall of the cliff.

So Jack began yelling for help, hoping that someone passing by would hear him and lower a rope or something. "HELP! HELP! Is anyone up there? HELP!" He yelled for hours, but no one heard him.

He was about to give up when he heard a voice. "Jack, Jack. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, yes! I can hear you. I'm down here!"

"I can see you, Jack. Are you all right?"

"Yes, but . . . Who are you, and where are you?"

"I am the Lord, Jack. I'm everywhere."

"The Lord? You mean, GOD?"  
"That's Me."

"God, please help me! I promise if You'll get me down from here, I'll stop sinning. I'll be a really good person. I'll serve You for the rest of my life."

"Easy on the promises, Jack. Let's just get you down from there; then we can talk. Now, here's what I want you to do. Listen carefully."

"I'll do anything, Lord. Just tell me what to do."

"Okay. Let go of the branch."  
"What?"

"I said, let go of the branch. Just trust Me. Let go."

There was a long silence. Finally Jack yelled, "HELP! HELP! IS ANYONE ELSE UP THERE?"

Have you ever felt like Jack? We say that we want to know the will of God, but when we find out what it is, we can't handle it. It sounds too scary, too difficult. We decide to look elsewhere. When He says, "Let go of the things that stand between you and Me, and trust Me with your life," it sounds pretty scary. But when we let go, we find freedom and safety in His hands."

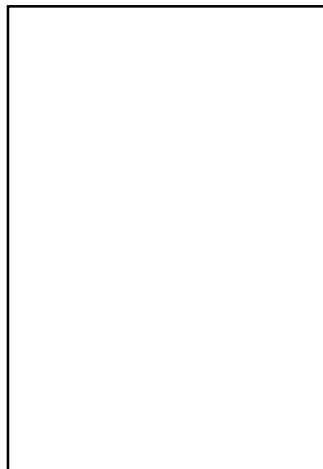
## Voice of a Destitute and Paraplegic person

Please **Help Javed Iqbal**, a legal Canadian entrant on a **MINISTER'S Permit**, who became completely paraplegic in a bad car accident. By the Grace of God he survived after long **hospitalization**. The insurance company has exhausted all the specified fund on his treatment.

Now he totally depends on the community for help. **He does not have any access to the Ontario Health Insurance Plan and Services Assistance until the year 2003** (proof of documents can be sent on request).

Please come forward and generously spare even a dollar for this innocent person. May God help you, bless you and reward you in this world and in the Hereafter.

To those who have already donated, my heartfelt thanks and any further dona-



tion would be greatly appreciated.

Please make cheques payable to Javed Iqbal, 403-180 Sheridan Ave. Toronto, Ontario M6K 3C7. Phone (416) 588-6667 or send it directly to his bank account no 3140340, transit no. 16042-004 TD bank, St. Clair and Oakwood branch, 948 St. Clair Ave. West, TO, Ont. M6C 1C8

## From the Qur'an

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern [to follow] for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often."  
(Qur'an 33:21)

## From the Hadith

"Both legal and illegal things are evident, but in between them there are doubtful (unclear) things, and most of the people have no knowledge about them. So whoever saves himself from these doubtful things, he saves his religion and his honour. And whoever indulges in these doubtful things, is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the Hima (private pasture) of someone else, and at any moment he is liable to get in it. (O people!) Beware! Every king has a Hima and the Hima of Allah on the Earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body. If it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart."  
(Bukhari 1:49)

## Getting involved important but train us from childhood: a youth suggests

Continued from page 2

girls have to sit in a study circle most of the time and have all work and no play. I feel there should be some sort of balance here so that girls become interested in doing things while knowing that they will have some fun too.

The last point I want to make is that youth are tired of going to conferences and hearing the same topics over and over. I think a key issue to talk about is how to deal with being a Muslim in this kind of society. Another thing is being able to appreciate being a Muslim and not trying to hide our identity. The youth have to face it: they can be as Canadian or modern as they wish, but as long as their name is Aisha or Muhammad, they are going to be recognised as Muslims. And it is important to learn not to be ashamed of it.

Like I said before, we are the future. Things like this should be included in the lectures and conferences. I am not trying to blame or offend anyone; just giving my opinion and looking at this issue from another perspective.

Zarreen Warsi

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# Celebrating the Prophet's Birthday: The Ruling on Maulud-un-Nabi

Many people have asked about the ruling concerning celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (pbuh), standing up for him, sending Salaam (greetings) upon him, and reading Surahs from the Qur'an during such celebrations, holding gatherings of dhikr (remembrance), doing various things to show their joy, reciting Qaseedahs and poems, and other things that are done to commemorate "Maulid," which many people celebrate on the 12th day of Rabee' al-Awwal each Hijri year.

The answer is that it is not permitted to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (pbuh), or the birthday of any other person, because this is a matter that has been innovated in the religion. The Prophet (pbuh) did not do this, neither did his successors, the Rightly-Guided Khalifahs, or others among his companions (may Allah be pleased with them), or those who followed them exactly (in faith) during the best centuries--these are the people who had the best knowledge of the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh), who loved him the most and followed the Shari'ah most perfectly, better than any who came after them.

It is proven that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam), will have it rejected (i.e., it will be thrown back at him)." In another Hadith, he said: "I advise you to adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly-Guided Successors who will come after me, and to cling stubbornly to it. Beware of newly-invented things (in religion), for every newly-invented thing is an innovation and every innovation is a going astray." These two Ahadith contain a very stern warning against coming up with innovations (Bid'ah) and acting on them.

Allah (swt) says in His Clear Book: "And whatever the Messenger has given you, take; and what he has forbidden you, refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty" (Qur'an 59:7). Another verse mentions: "So let those beware who dissent from his [i.e., the Prophet's] order, lest Fitnah [i.e., disbelief, trials, afflictions, etc.] strike them or a painful punishment" (Qur'an 24:63).

There are many other verses that convey the same meaning. Innovating things like "Maulid" could be interpreted as meaning that Allah (swt) did not complete the religion for this Ummah, that the Messenger (pbuh) failed to convey to this Ummah all that they should do, until those people came along later and innovated things in the religion that Allah (swt) had not permitted, claiming that these were things that would bring them closer to Him.

Without a doubt, this is a very serious matter, which indicates opposition and resistance towards Allah (swt) and His Messenger (pbuh). Allah (swt) has perfected the religion for His slaves and

completed His Favour upon them: "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My Favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion" (Qur'an 5:3). The Messenger (pbuh) has conveyed the Message clearly, and there is no way of reaching Paradise and avoiding Hell that he has not explained to his Ummah, as is clear from the authentic Hadith narrated by `Abd-Allah ibn `Amr (ra), in which the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "Allah has not sent any prophet but it was his duty to point out to his Ummah the best of what he knew, and to warn them against the worst of what he knows" (Muslim).

It is well known that our Prophet (pbuh) is the best and the Seal of the Prophets, the most eloquent and the most sincere in advice. If celebrating his birthday had been a part of the religion that Allah (swt) liked, His Prophet (pbuh) would have told his Ummah about it, and he would have done it during his lifetime, or his companions would have done it. Since nothing of the sort happened, we know that this is not part of Islam at all, rather it is one of the innovations about which the Messenger (pbuh) warned his Ummah, as stated in the Hadith quoted above.

Many scholars have condemned the practice of celebrating the Prophet's birthday and warned against it, in accordance with the evidence quoted above and other texts. Some of the later scholars went against this and allowed these celebrations as long as they did not involve anything forbidden such as exaggerating about the Prophet (pbuh), mixing between men and women, playing musical instruments, etc. They thought that this was a kind of "Bid'ah Hasana" or good innovation. But the rule is to refer disputed matters to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger Muhammad (pbuh), as Allah (swt) says: "O you who have believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result" (Qur'an 4:59).

So, let us refer this matter, celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (pbuh), to the Book of Allah (swt). We find that the Qur'an commands us to follow the Messenger (pbuh) in that which he has brought to us, and warns us to shun that which he has forbidden, and it tells us that the religion (Islam) has been completed and perfected for this Ummah. This celebration is not a part of that which the Messenger (pbuh) brought, so it is not a part of this religion which Allah (swt) has per-

fectured for us and in which He has Commanded us to follow His Messenger (pbuh). Let us also refer this matter to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). We will find that he did not do this, or command others to do it, and his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did not do it either. So it is not part of the religion; it is a newly-invented innovation, and an imitation of the Jews and Christians in their festivals.

It should be clear to anyone who has the slightest common sense, sincere desire for the truth and open-mindedness, that celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (pbuh) is not a part of Islam; it is an innovation, which Allah (swt) and His Messenger (pbuh) warned us against and told us to shun. A wise person should not be swayed by the fact that so many people all over the world do this. Truth is not known by how many people follow it; it is known through the evidence of Shari'ah, as Allah (swt) says of the Jews and Christians: "And they say, 'None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.' That is [merely] their wishful thinking. Say, 'Produce your proof, if you should be truthful'" (Qur'an 2:111). Another verse goes on to mention: "And if you obey most of those upon the Earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying" (Qur'an 6:116).

Somehow, celebrating "Maulid" has become a sign of one's "love" for the Prophet (pbuh). However, Allah (swt) tells us that love of the Prophet (pbuh) is demonstrated by following the guidance he has brought: "Say, [O Muhammad], 'If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.' Say, 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then indeed, Allah does not like the disbelievers" (Qur'an 3:31-32).

The first verse explains that love is just a claim, but the proof of sincerity is following what the Prophet (pbuh) has brought. The second verse reaffirms the importance and necessity of obeying Allah (swt) and His Messenger (pbuh). Hence Allah (swt) ended the verse with a very stern warning in which those who refuse to obey are described as Kafirs, and Allah (swt) does not love the disbelievers. We ask Allah (swt) to keep us safe from that. The Prophet (pbuh) told us of the danger of not obeying him, and the danger of adding to what he has brought. The celebration of "Maulid" or his birthday is indeed an addition to what he has brought, as all the scholars agree.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to

mention in his Friday sermons: "The best of speech is the Book of Allah and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The most evil of things are those which are newly-invented (in religion), and every innovation is a going astray" (Muslim).

Most of these "Maulid" celebrations, besides being Bid'ah (innovation), are also not free from other sinful practices, such as the mixing of men and women, use of songs and musical instruments, sometimes even the consumption of alcohol and other intoxicants, and other evils. They could even involve something worse, which is Shirk Al-Akbar, in the form of exaggeration about the Prophet (pbuh) or other so-called "saints" (Auliya). They may even pray to him, calling out for his help and support, claiming that he knows the Unseen, and other forms of Kufr that many people indulge in when they celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (pbuh) or others whom they call Auliya.

In an authentic Hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Beware of going to extremes in religion, for those who came before you were destroyed by their going to extremes in religion." He also said: "Do not exaggerate about me as the Christians exaggerated about the son of Maryam. I am only a slave, so say 'the slave and Messenger of Allah'" (Bukhari). It is most strange indeed that many people make huge efforts to attend these innovated gatherings and to defend them, when they do not do this in the case of the duties that have been enjoined on them, like attending Jum'ah (Friday) prayers and prayers in congregation. They do not care about these duties and do not think that they are doing anything wrong. There is no doubt that this is due to weakness of faith, lack of understanding and the effects of sins piling up in one's heart. We ask Allah (swt) to keep us and all the Muslims safe from that.

Some people think that the Prophet (pbuh) actually attends the "Maulid" celebration, so they stand up to greet and welcome him. This is a serious falsehood and a form of gross ignorance. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) will not come out of his grave, or contact anybody, or attend any gatherings. He will remain in his grave until the Day of Resurrection, and his soul is in the highest `Illiyoon (Paradise), with his Lord in the Abode of Honour, as Allah (swt) says: "Then indeed, after that you are to die. Then indeed, you, on the Day of Resurrection, will be resurrected" (Qur'an 23:15-16). The Prophet (pbuh) said: "I will be the first whose grave will be opened on the Day of Resurrection, and I will be the first to intercede and the first to be asked

to intercede."

The above verse and Hadith, and others that say the same thing, all indicate that the Prophet (pbuh) and everyone else who has died will only emerge from their graves on the Day of Resurrection. This is something on which all the Muslim scholars agree; there is no controversy here. Every Muslim should pay attention to these matters and be careful to avoid the innovations and illusions introduced with no authority or permission from Allah (swt) by those who are ignorant. Allah (swt) is the One whom we ask for help, and in Him we put our trust. There is no power and no strength except with Him.

Sending prayers and blessings upon the Prophet (pbuh) is one of the righteous deeds that bring a person closer to Allah (swt), as Allah (swt) says: "Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His Angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace" (Qur'an 33:56). The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever sends one blessing on me, Allah will send ten on him." This sending of blessings is recommended on all occasions, and is prescribed at the end of every prayer, indeed, according to all scholars, it is obligatory in the final Tashahhud of every Salat (prayer), and it is Sunnah Mu'akkadah (confirmed Sunnah) on a number of other occasions, such as after the Adhan (call to prayer), when the Prophet (pbuh) is mentioned, and during the day and night of Jum'ah (i.e., from Maghrib on Thursday until Maghrib on Friday), as is indicated in a number of Ahadith.

We ask Allah (swt) to help us and all the Muslims to understand His religion and adhere to it, to bless us all by making us follow the Sunnah, and to protect us from Bid'ah, for He is the Most Kind and Generous. May Allah (swt) bless our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and his family and companions.

Source - <http://www.islam-qa.com/>  
For further reading: "The Observance of Mawlid An-Nabawi and Other Birthdays" by Umm Muhammad (Abul Qasim Publications).

## Six Thousand copies

of *The Ambition* are distributed free of charge every two months at several mosques in and around Metro from as far as Ajax in the east to Brampton, Burlington, and Kitchener-Waterloo in the west and as far as our volunteers go. You can also pick up your copy at many Muslim grocery stores.

## CIC's Third Annual Conference: Changing The Media's Effects On Our Lives

Reported by Asma Warsi

There is entertainment and then there is Value-Added Entertainment. This was the focus of the Third Annual Conference of the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC), held on the beautiful sunny morning of Saturday, May 6, 2000, at the Ramada Inn across from TARIC Islamic Centre in Toronto.

The session opened with the recitation from the Holy Qur'an and welcoming remarks from Professor Mohamed Elmasry, President of CIC. Several awards were also given to people for certain services to the community.

The Award for Acts of Heroism was given to Mohammad Nematian-Zaroor who had courageously helped save a wounded Toronto police officer in 1999.

Awards for Media Excellence went to Eric Margolis of The Toronto Sun, and Haroon Siddiqui of The Toronto Star, whereas Haroon Salamat, President of TARIC, got the Award in Recognition of Excellence and Dedication in Serving Local Communities.

The Youth Community Service Award was given to Abdul Rahman Lawendy of London, Ontario, a medical student who bicycled 7,400 km across Canada to raise donations for Bosnia.

Finally, a User-Friendly Mosque Award, to recognise a mosque for outstanding efforts to serve the entire community, espe-

cially the needs of youth and women, went to the Islamic Centre of Kingston, Ontario (Kingston Mosque). The award included \$100 from CIC and \$100 from CCMW (Canadian Council of Muslim Women).

After the coffee break, the first panel session began. "Does the Entertainment Industry Reflect Canadian Values?" was the topic of discussion. Interestingly, the speakers were selected from the Canadian mainstream media and included Mr. Fil Fraser, President of Vision TV, Mr. Richard Landau, Executive Producer of CTS, Mr. Michael Coren, CTS TV host and columnist with The Toronto Sun, and a well-known children's story-writer, Rukhsana Khan.

In his speech, Mr. Fraser brought many good points about the entertainment industry in Canada: "It is a business and is value-neutral," he said. In this changing society, it is hard to say what are "Canadian Values," he noted. Vision TV, he said, provides a platform for every culture and religion, so "you can see yourself" on this channel. There is a lot of stereotyping, racism, and sexism in the media, but the only solution is to "put in good stuff into it," he said.

Sister Rukhsana cleared a myth about the media: "Most people think it is controlled by Jews," she said, "but it is not true. It just happens that they are the people who support and buy the most books and time slots on TV, etc. Hence they have the greatest effect on the media." But, according to her, there is a shift in the values and it can also be as much positive as it can be negative. She totally rejected the popular idea that there is a conspiracy against ethnic or religious minorities to exclude them from the mainstream media. "On the contrary," she said, "they don't know how to include them." And that's where we have to be openly available to guide them.

Mr. Landau, while feeling proud about Canada for being a leader in documentaries and animation, admitted that the media only represents the values of a very narrow segment of Canadian society and is driven by economics. "Muslims have a role to play to criticise the Canadian media," he said. "Muslims have a challenge. You have to give as much as you take," he announced. "Tell right from wrong," he said.

"Media affects people's opinion about things and people believe what is presented to them in the form of advertising," said Michael Coren. "Our families are being raped everyday by the entertainment industry," he compassionately declared. He emphasised on demanding the media for eternal virtues, which are agreed upon by people of all faiths, rather than ever-changing values, that are being forced upon the viewers in the name of "lifestyle liberalism." He also said that it was time that all faiths join hands together and say "enough is enough."

During the panel discussion, some important and interesting ideas came up. It was suggested that people should lobby the TV channels to produce family-friendly programs and contact the advertisers who sponsor vulgar or biased programs to inform them politely about what is offensive. Moreover, parents have a duty to teach their children to use the TV and Internet wisely and flip the channel if something does not confirm to their morality.

At this point, the session adjourned for a delicious lunch that was arranged by CIC and served at TARIC Islamic Centre. After the lunch and Zuhr prayer, the audience watched the video presentation of the day's keynote speaker, Dr. Jamal Badawi, who could not come to the conference in person due to some unforeseen reasons.

Dr. Badawi's speech was about the Islamic Perspective of

*Continued on page 12*



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### ISSA Conference

*continued from page 16*

Dr. Basheer Ahmed, Dr. Aly Abuzaakouk, Rashad Vahed, Rosemarie Chadwick, Judith Mohammad, and Hafisaah Abdur Rahim.

By far, the highlight of the conference was the fund-raising dinner speech by Dr. Ahmad Sakr, which helped to raise over \$40,000 for ISSA's helpful activities. Dr. Sakr's thought-provoking and humorous remarks ("I am at your service, use me, abuse me, reuse me! I will help in whatever way I can") helped to open people's hearts and wallets towards the future of social services in North America.

ISSA thanks the many organisations that helped sponsor this conference, including Islamic Party of North America, Islamic Social Services Resource Agency, Muslim Community Centre for Human Services, Muslim Welfare Centre, and Hidayat Muslim Family and Child Centre.

For more information about ISSA and their activities, you can visit their website at <http://www.issaservices.com/>. To order audio/video copies of the above resourceful speeches, please call Br. Tariq Hussain at (416) 562-2262. Prices: Audio US\$2.50 and Video US\$5.00 (shipping included).

## Muslims in the media

Continued from page 1

retired after nearly 30 years, he estimates that he has produced more than 3,000 hour-long radio programs and more than 3,200 half-hour television programs. He is perhaps best known for "Radio Jultrung" and "Jafry's TV Asia" sharing credit with his wife Farida Nuzhat Jafry, but he also produced Islamic radio programs and helped in the introduction of the "Islam in Focus" and the "Muslim Chronicle" programs on Vision TV.

Mr. Jafry's original profession and education was in textile production, but he began a side business showing Indian movies in school auditoriums. Later, a generous severance package provided him with the financial means to become a full-time producer and when CHIN radio became licensed and ran as a source of non-English radio broadcast he bought one hour per week for his own live show, often playing borrowed Indian and Pakistani music records.

His commitment and investment deepened in the early 70's when he bought the College Cinema and later the Parliament Cinema and ran South Asian movies. He also organized live entertainment programs and soon began a second radio show.

Although he had begun some television programming as early as 1969 on community Cable TV in Scarborough, it was in the late 70's that he began producing programs for network television with Voice of Asia and then Sounds of Asia. Throughout the 1980's he expanded his radio broadcasting, including Islamic programs such as Qur'an e Kareem on 790 radio.

In the 1990's Mr. Jafry again broke new ground in community programming by producing live television broadcasts and Canada-wide Telethons, including an extremely successful one for the Scarborough Muslim Association that resulted in 1400 pledge calls and helped to eventually raise over a million dollars.

Most broadcast media relies on advertising revenues for support. Mr. Jafry was often his own best customer, cross-promoting his other businesses on the TV and radio programs. He stresses the importance of creating a base of finance, experience and knowledge. One should be prepared to finance their personal and business expenses for at least three months (until advertisers come) and be prepared to lose up to \$30,000. According to his figures, radio airtime now costs about \$500/hr to buy and television time ranges from \$800 to \$1500 per half-hour.

Mr. Jafry says that most television stations regard ethnic programming as a "circus" and give them "dead" time-slots such as Saturday mornings and evenings for broadcast. Television stations have operating costs in the \$20,000-25,000/hr range which they can make up during prime time, so they just try to save production costs by offering other

time slots for ethnic programming. Except for community cable stations, ethnic television programs are usually recorded in private studios. Studios cost about \$250,000 to set-up, but could be rented for about \$100-200/hour plus editing costs.

Mr. Jafry is a valuable asset in the role of executive producer for start-ups because television stations will only give time-slots when assured that the producer is experienced, will adhere to broadcast laws, and provide some quality of production.

When asked why he also helps in the broadcasts of other religious communities, he says that he is a firm believer in Islam and considers himself to be doing dawah work. He figures that he is perhaps the largest Muslim broadcaster in the world with his programs seen in 71 countries. He says that Muslims are themselves very "anti-Islam" and portray Islam in the wrong way, "While our Prophet [on whom be peace] called and reached out to talk to non-Muslims, our community does not make the [same] effort talk to non-Muslims."

Bashir Khan, President of Third World Broadcasting Inc., also recently marked 25 years of broadcasting since arriving as a fresh college graduate from Pakistan in the early 1970's. Mr. Khan started his first program in 1974 in Hamilton on the community cable station. In 1982, he launched his first commercial Pakistani TV program on Global Television network. Later, in 1989 he started his weekly program on Vision TV which is currently running as "Visions of Pakistan". The show is an eclectic combination of news, entertainment and religious segments recorded in a studio or on-site or from other broadcast sources.

One of the distinguishing features that sets Mr. Khan apart from many ethnic and religious broadcasters is the time, effort and cost he puts towards professional graphics and editing. The 45-second introduction to his show cost several thousand dollars to produce, but creates a dramatic signature. With so many different types of content for only a half-hour show, he carefully plans the broadcast time in segments ranging from several seconds to a few minutes. He also considers how segments are arranged and the way in which they flow from one to another. With foresight he creates an extensive video library of original interviews for future use as required for a given occasion. The interview format plays a larger role in Mr. Khan's relatively new "Islam in Canada" television program which is broadcast on CTS.

As part of his formal education for this business, Mr. Khan took extensive courses in management and business administration as well as training in journalism and radio and TV broadcasting. His wife is also active in his business

## We are gtaparents.com

In December of last year, the Board of Trustees for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) put into effect a policy on sexual orientation. The purpose of this policy was, ostensibly, to combat homophobia — the harassment and intimidation of gays and lesbians. But the policy in fact goes far beyond that.

The policy clearly sets forth an agenda for the promotion of the homosexual lifestyle as being good and normal. It also calls for promoting this idea in all areas of the curriculum and at all grade levels. Whether your child is doing finger painting in kindergarten or studying OAC calculus, he or she will be targeted for this kind of teaching.

The TDSB's draft Human Rights Policy defines homophobia as including even feelings of "disquiet." In other words, if someone even vaguely thinks homosexuality is morally wrong, he or she is considered homophobic.

### What You Can Do

#### 1. Tell Others!

Communicate the following facts to as many people as possible:

The TDSB's Anti-Homophobia Policy makes it compulsory to teach children of ALL ages in ALL grades that homosexual lifestyles are normal.

Sections of the policy go against the spiritual traditions and observances of many large communities that cherish traditional family values. Many teachers will have to choose between their faith or this TDSB policy!

This policy provides for NO alternatives to parents and parental consent is NOT required.

The TDSB adopted this policy without full public hearings. Many teachers and principals did not even

know that this policy was adopted!

#### 2. Know Your Rights!

By law, schools are required to remove your child from any teaching that conflicts with your spiritual or religious traditions. If you as a parent or guardian **write a letter** to your child's school, you can make sure your child is not taught beliefs that you disagree with. See sample letter for more details.

The Board of Trustees at the Toronto District School Board are elected by the people. They are up for re-election in **November 2000**. Make sure you vote for a school trustee candidate that supports your values!

Write to the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustees demanding that implementation be withheld until the document is made available for full, city-wide public consultation.

#### 3. You CAN Make a Difference!

Make sure the TDSB lives up to its promise to implement a faith accommodation policy by the new school year, September 2000. This policy can offer some protection to children of faith communities. See accommodation measures for Muslim Community. Visit our website.

**Volunteer your time** to work with concerned groups that are involved in trying to bring about the desired change in policies and practices.

If you would like to volunteer with **gtaparents**, please contact us.

**Lobby** members of the provincial government to get this inequitable policy changed.

### LETTER REQUESTING RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To the Principal of \_\_\_\_\_ School,

Dear Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing you to request religious accommodation for my child/ren attending your school. In a diverse society such as ours, tolerance and mutual respect are important in creating a harmonious atmosphere in our schools. It is in this spirit that I am making this request.

In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances, I am respectfully requesting educational alternatives for my child/ren \_\_\_\_\_ in grade/s \_\_\_\_\_.

The policy states that "when a person's religious beliefs conflict with a requirement, qualification or practice" in schools and workplaces, then these places have a "duty" to accommodate that person. I am requesting alternatives for my children should issues of sexuality be taught in any area of the school curriculum, including the introduction of books, videos, guest speakers, and literature.

For members of my faith group, all matters related to sexuality, including sexual orientation, are determined by our religion, which we regard as our primary source of guidance in such matters. I would also request that I be informed prior to the introduction of any curricula dealing with sexuality.

I appreciate that in the past, schools have respected faith communities by providing exemptions from sexual education upon request. I hope your school will act in accordance with the existing human rights legislation and continue to promote the values of equity and inclusion.

Respectfully yours,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign your name.

by providing administrative support while he keeps \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the few \_\_\_\_\_ program deals with Is- \_\_\_\_\_ and has \_\_\_\_\_ address religious is- \_\_\_\_\_ Islam relevant to Mus- \_\_\_\_\_ n-Muslims. \_\_\_\_\_ program is strictly i- \_\_\_\_\_ except for Arabic recit- \_\_\_\_\_ the production of \_\_\_\_\_ to reach any par- \_\_\_\_\_ d on page 7

## Muslims in the TV media: A local survey

Continued from page 1

his program is generally financed by one-time and regular monthly donations from individuals. The annual fund-raising dinner is one of the best-known and attended community events in Toronto as is the Eid Party for children.

In its early years in the 1980's, the program format was strictly a sober monologue by Mr. Gad with no other features. But gradually, he managed to improve the background settings, added more graphics and occasional video and created a softer, kinder persona by shedding his glasses and smiling more. Now, the Eid party, the use of illustrated stories and contests for children are unique and important features of Mr. Gad's program and combine to go a long way to encourage both children and adults by letting them see that religious programs need not always be glum

Jawad Jafry is an example of what the "Second Generation" of Muslims in North America can do. Born and raised in Toronto, he couldn't help but learn from his parents business (see above), but he also enrolled in the Radio and TV Arts program at Ryerson University in 1984.

In his second year at Ryerson he became more aware of Islam and realized how the media could be important to convey the message. He worked for a while with Mr. Gad on the children's stories segment of Reflections on Islam, writing the script, voice-overs and sound-effects. He enjoyed it so much that in finishing his degree, Jawad changed his original direction and took Children's Broadcasting. As part of a project he came up with an "Adam's World" proposal with elements to meet cognitive and production standards.

After graduation, Jawad freelanced until joining up with SoundVision of Chicago, a Muslim media company that would produce documentaries and children's programming for the video market. Jawad directed and wrote part of SoundVision's first video, "Let's Pray" with "Adam", a puppet Muslim character. Originally designed for children in the 3 to 5 year-old age category, the video proved to be extremely popular with higher age groups too. In 1991 the Adam's World series of videos was formally launched and by this year there will have been nearly a dozen produced.

Jawad and Sound Vision display North American-style acumen in their approach. They analyze the market to see what people ask for, estimate the time and cost involved, and the subjects that are covered. Some programs could cost as much as \$2,000 per minute to produce. However, esthetically pleasing and informative materials have to be produced in order to reach Muslims and non-Muslims. About half of the costs involved in the venture are overhead-related in-

cluding packaging and marketing, but the company aims to recover their costs of production in the first year.

SoundVision's start-up was financed by sales and donations. Later, it changed from a not-for-profit to a for profit company and increased its production and marketing capacity to be able to produce and sell more. Sound Vision now has 3 offices located Chicago, Toronto and London (U.K.) and about 12 full-time people.

Jawad describes the Muslim world as a "cultural dumping ground" where programs produced in the West are sold at a very cheap price. This deflates the cultural industries of the Muslim countries and creates a disincentive to produce local programming.

"Cultural Imperialism" convinces people that the West is to be emulated, he says, "If you can enslave the minds of the people, you don't need troops on the ground."

In the United States, SoundVision has interns come in on a regular basis. In Toronto, Jawad does have a high-school co-op student, but cautions that without formal training a lot of time can be taken up in learning the basics. SoundVision looks for people with skills in writing, graphic design, Internet Web-page design, research skills, and needs volunteers in production crews.

The Scarborough Muslim Association has for many years produced the Muslim Chronicle on Vision TV. However, this program has undergone recent changes

whereby the current presentation is made by another organization usually in the Urdu language and often with non-original content recorded overseas. One of the long-time previous hosts of the program, Tarek Fatah, had been interviewed in an earlier issue of the Ambition. During his tenure, the program usually included local persons and discussed current domestic and international political and social affairs affecting Muslims.

What conclusions can be drawn from this brief and limited survey of Muslim TV media producers? While there has been some recent proliferation in the number and interest of Muslims involved in this field, only a few members of the community now

have the experience, skills and sustained financing to consistently produce high-quality programming. Imagine the possibilities if capable Muslims followed the lead of mainstream media companies in North America by merging or cooperating to combine their strengths and increase their efficiencies and competitiveness in the marketplace. The GTA is home to many peoples with many messages to share. Should not Muslims, having the Best Message, present it in the language of the people who have not heard it and should they not do so in a manner that is in fact the best? Instead of being vulnerable consumers in the marketplace of ideas, Muslims can become suppliers of the best provisions for all.

**World Affairs**

by Safoora Ahmad

As the world denounced the massacre of innocent Kosovars, thousands of Kashmiris continue to bleed. While the Serbian government was condemned for denying citizens some basic rights, the Indian government continues to commit some of the worst human rights violations in history.

For over half a century, the Kashmiri people have been downgraded by the Indian government and treated as lower than animals. The beautiful valley of Kashmir has been turned into a concentration camp. These and many other facts may come as a surprise to many, for the truth about the conflict in Kashmir has been hidden from the international community. The media portrays it as little more than a freedom struggle by a few fanatics. On the surface, it seems no more than a fight between two stubborn nations over a piece of territory.

So the world was caught by surprise at the recent clash in Kargil. Kashmir has been brought back to the world's attention. It can no longer be ignored. By turning a blind eye on the atrocities of the Indian government, as it did on the excessive demands of Hitler, the world is asking for a Third World War. Only standing up against injustice can prevent this. Peace and justice can be established in Kashmir through a thorough understanding of its history, people, and

present situation.

Historically, the land of Kashmir has been visited by a number of conquerors and has passed through the hands of various rulers: "The kings of Kashmir excelled as conquerors. Kashmiris became famous throughout Asia as learned, cultured, and humane, and the intellectual contribution of writers, poets, musicians, scientists to the rest of India was comparable to that of Ancient Greece to European civilisation" (Schofield, Victoria. "Kashmir in the Crossfire." London: I. B. Tauris, 1996).

Kashmir's splendid history coupled with its breathtaking landscape has made it time and again as vulnerable as a nation: "In 1757, it was conquered by Ahmed Shah Durrani and became part of Afghanistan. In 1819, Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir and made it part of his Sikh empire. In 1846, when the British defeated the Sikhs and annexed Punjab, they sold Kashmir to Ghulab Singh of Jammu for 7.5 million rupees under the Treaty of Amritsar. Ghulab Singh, who entitled himself the Maharaja, signed a separate

treaty with the British that in effect, gave him the status of an independent princely ruler of Kashmir. He added to his dominion by conquering Ladakh. Ghulab Singh died in 1857 and was replaced by Rambir Singh (1857-1885). Two other Maharajas, Partab Singh (1885-1925) and Hari Sing (1925-1949) ruled in succession". (http://www.ummah.org.uk).

As revolts were uncommon, it may be assumed that most conquerors were either welcomed by Kashmiris for having rid their land of a tyrannical ruler, or accepted for having treated their subjects

Around the same time, neighbouring India was demanding independence from British colonialism. After Independence, the Muslim minorities of India felt threatened by the Hindu majority government, which did not address their concerns. As a result, another state (i.e., Pakistan) was created for Muslims.

Finding themselves between the two states and looking for an end to their sufferings under their Hindu ruler, Kashmiris (being mostly Muslim) naturally felt inclined to join adjacent Pakistan: "According to the instruments of partition of India in 1947, the rulers of princely states were given the choice to freely accede to either India or Pakistan, or to remain independent. They were, however, advised to accede to the contiguous dominion, taking into consideration the geographical and ethnic issues" (ibid).

Although the people of Kashmir demanded to join Pakistan, the Maharaja (under Indian pressure) agreed to join India. By making this agreement without the consent of his people, the Maharaja sold Kashmir and her people, like a commodity with no value, at a very low price. As a famous poet once put it: "Each hill, each garden, field / Each farmer too they sold / A nation for a price / That makes my blood ice-cold" (Muhammad Iqbal).

Lord Mountbatten, Governor-General of India, accepted the Maharaja's decision, under the condition of a free and impartial plebiscite. India has since obstructed every effort to hold a

plebiscite. In fact, India has used every possible means to keep Kashmir under her control.

"On the contrary, Pakistan has a positive cause to offer and the people of Kashmir have on several occasions made no distinction between Kashmir and Pakistan. The people of Pakistan and Kashmir are linked by common frontiers, and their religion is Islam. The people of Pakistan have always supported and are supporting the right of self-determination and plebiscite under the supervision of the UN. They have fought and are fighting against occupation forces shoulder to shoulder voluntarily with Kashmiris" (http://www.ummah.org.uk/).

Like their brethren in occupied Palestine, the Muslims of Kashmir are determined to break free from the clutches of illegal occupation. What ties them with many other oppressed people in the world is their struggle for justice: "Kashmiris are an undaunted people. They do not fear any Earthly god. No goddess of wealth or power can allure them. Nor old wine in new bottles could ever satisfy them. Look at how beautifully Napoleon Bonaparte defined the goal of mankind on Earth: 'There are only two powers in the world, the sword and the spirit. In the long run, the sword is always defeated by the spirit'" (ibid).

The spirit of self-determination is a unifying factor in the otherwise culturally and ethnically diverse Kashmir. Among its many attempts to weaken the struggle of self-determination, the Indian government sowed seeds of hatred and mistrust between the different ethnic groups in Kashmir.

Continued on page 7

# The Conflict Over Kashmir

*To tell a Kashmiri militant to put down his gun, is to tell him to continue his suffering silently as did those before him, for the world is deaf to the cries of his raped mothers, sisters, and daughters, and blind to the wounds of his fathers, brothers, and sons.*

(i.e., the Kashmiris) well. After the rule of Ghulab Singh (1857) however, Kashmir became restless: "Ghulab Singh and his successors ruled Kashmir in a tyrannical and repressive way" (ibid).

Public uprisings were ruthlessly crushed in 1931. This led to the formation of Kashmir's first political party: the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference.

## Chechnya is Bleeding

Kavkaz-Tsentr reports: (http://www.kavkaz.org/)

More and more prisoners in the Russian concentration camp of Chernokozovo report satanic crimes committed by the Putinists and Kremlin mercenaries.

According to these eye-witnesses the guards of the concentration camp, while torturing the prisoners, frankly admit belonging to a satanic movement and that their task is the physical and moral destruction of Muslims. The higher-up guards, calling themselves officers, frankly admit that they were ordered by the Kremlin to physically destroy not less than 150,000 young Chechen men and women.

Prisoners report that not less than 200 children, aged between 10 and 15, are kept in the camp and are subjected to maiming and satanic torture. The Russians have cut off the fingers, noses, and ears of hundreds of prisoners. Many inmates' feet and hands are cut off. They die several days later.

According to Daud Rizvanov from Shali, a prisoner who escaped from the camp, the Russian guards, intoxicated by vodka and narcotics, even cut off pieces of the bodies of still living people, boil these pieces and eat them before the eyes of the other prisoners. They did this with the body the 17-year-old Aslan Supyanov from Maas. It is reported that the guards tor-

ture their victims to death by ramming empty sub-machine gun cartridges into their bodies. Afterwards they often rape the corpses.

The rape of the corpses is practised in full view of other prisoners. The guards wear black masks. After these acts of necrophilia the guards announce to the prisoners who the next victim is going to be.

Ibragim Vakhayev confirms that he witnessed the murder of a 10-year-old boy whose name he doesn't know. The corpse was raped by five guards with black masks, cut to pieces afterwards and put into a plastic sack. The Prosecutor-General of the ChRI has made it known that special inquiries about the mass atrocities in the concentration camp of Chernokozovo are being made.

Patrick Cockburn writes for *The Independent*: (17 February 2000)

http://www.independent.co.uk

Here are some excerpts from his article which can be read at the above website address.

"Ruslan, a 21-year-old man from Grozny, the Chechen capital, who does not want to give his family name, is one of the few prisoners to be freed. He has described how girls, as young as 12, were raped by Russian soldiers. Ruslan said: 'I was over there for a month. I saw a metal cage with a metal bar over it. The Russian soldiers said: 'I t

ing could be worse than the rubber sticks. Then I realised that the rubber sticks were nothing in comparison to the hammer.' When Ruslan was first arrested he was stripped of his clothes and kept in a specially refrigerated room at the camp in Chernokozovo..."

"General Viktor Kazantsev, the Russian army commander in the north Caucasus, announced that all Chechen males between the ages of 10 and 60 would be considered as suspects..."

"They are literally being killed here, one just has to hear the cries of robust healthy guys whose bones are being broken..."

"There is growing evidence that the treatment inflicted on the Chechen prisoners by Russian soldiers is equal in brutality to that suffered by Bosnian Muslims in the early Nineties for which some of the perpetrators are now on trial for war crimes..."

"Ruslan was among the first Chechens taken by van to Chernokozovo...As the prisoners left the van, they were forced to run between lines of soldiers who beat them with rubber batons. The Russian soldiers, who were always masked, worked in shifts of twelve to carry out the beatings. "I was like a ball between them," says Ruslan. The only Russian whom he saw unmasked was the official investigator. Ruslan said: "He knew I was a fighter."

"The beatings appear to be aimed at maiming young Chechens, breaking their ribs and fingers and bursting their eardrums. From 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. the prisoners were forced to stand with their arms raised. "He read out a decree that was on his desk," said Ruslan. "It said that 150,000 Chechens have to pass through the filtration camps." The official investigator added that the purpose of the camp was that those who survived would go out of it "crippled for the rest of their lives."

"Ruslan claims that the sol-



Continued from page 6

This plan however has backfired, for the Kashmiri struggle has only intensified. Although the Kashmiris have become divided on many lines, India's brutal suppression over the years has alienated even the minorities who previously favoured ascension to India.

"Even the Indian media has acknowledged that Kashmir has been severed from India both psychologically and politically" (ibid). Various political groups have sprung up in Kashmir. Whereas earlier generations focused on peaceful means and tried to arrive at a political solution, the generations that followed, resorted more and more to militancy.

This should not come as a surprise, for the youth that are leading the struggle today, were born "under occupation." They do not know the peaceful Kashmir their forefathers knew. To tell a Kashmiri militant to put down his gun, is to tell him to continue his suffering silently as did those before him, for the world is deaf to the cries of his raped mothers, sisters, and daughters, and blind to the wounds of his fathers, brothers, and sons.

Many of Kashmir's political groups have resorted to militancy only after struggling long and hard unsuccessfully to solve their issue politically. Although each group has its own view of the conflict in Kashmir, their objectives are the same: mobilising the population, paralysing the Indian administration, and internationalising the issue. The year of 1990 saw the beginning of a new phase in the Kashmiri struggle, as the Kashmiris had risen in armed revolt against India's military occupation:

"The Kashmiris were generally supposed to be a mild and gentle people and not very keen on war, but the Kashmiri movement had now entered a new stage in its long and hard freedom struggle. Contrary to Indian propaganda and international amnesia, it was clearly evident

## The Conflict Over Kashmir

that in spite of 43 years of social engineering and military subjugation, the Kashmiris had not accepted occupation and remained determined to liberate themselves from Indian rule" (Faruqi, M. H. "Born To Be Pakistani, Fighting To Be Free." Impact International, April 1999).

The valley of Kashmir seems to be locked in time. The present situation doesn't look much dif-



ferent from what it did 47 years ago. As one Kashmiri leader said: "History has seen such times, when the crime was committed by a moment, but the punishment was suffered by centuries" (Schofield). Not only was the crime (i.e., subjugation of Kashmiris) committed by a moment, but the very victims of the crime were made to suffer the punishment.

Far from coming to an end, the suffering of the Kashmiris has increased with India's recent deployment of 500,000 troops to silence their voices. India's "final solution" has resulted in routine gross violations of human rights. Due to political and extra-judicial killings, disappearances, rape, torture, custodial abuse, and numer-

dian connection. Seeing "no other avenues of legitimate expression of political will, the growing number of educated, unemployed youth" have turned to militancy as a last resort (Rahman, Mushtaqur. "Divided Kashmir." Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1996). "Kashmiris turned to such action after realising that India would not hold the plebiscite that was promised, that Pakistan could not force or persuade India to meet its international commitments, and that the Kashmir dispute was no longer important or urgent to the United Nations" (ibid).

Kashmiris have become disillusioned by world politics. They do not understand why they are being treated differently than were their neighbours in Afghanistan not too long ago. When Soviet Russia invaded Afghanistan, America, the world's superpower, rushed to support the Afghans: "Then Jihad was all right. Money, men, flow and stockpile of arms and ammunition in Afghanistan and Pakistan was okay and in the best interests of the region. Neither Pakistan nor the Jihadi groups were declared terrorists or fundamentalists then. But, over-night, the meaning and definition of arms and men, words and actions changed, and Kashmiris were dubbed as terrorists or fundamentalists and Pakistan was threatened to be declared a terrorist country. A search for men and people among Kashmiris inside and outside Kashmir began, to suit new meanings and interpretations of freedom"

(http://www.ummah.org.uk/).

Not only are the Kashmiris downplayed by world opinion, but they are caught between two nations who have already fought three wars over their valley. As India continues to subjugate the people of Kashmir, Pakistan continues to lend them assistance. Each country claims to be rightfully present in Kashmir: "In the midst of these conflicting views, the Kashmiri people are, as ever, caught in their verbal crossfire. The valley, surrounded by the magnificent Himalayan mountains, whose

beauty has for centuries attracted visitors from far and wide, is still the home of tragedy" (Schofield).

In the spring of 1995, India tried to thrust an election process on the Kashmiris, to show the world that it believed in democracy. But "no Indian plan to bury the issue of plebiscite or substitute it with a farce of eight elections has succeeded during the last four decades" (http://www.ummah.org.uk/).

Many people within India itself are recognising that holding Kashmir by force is not compatible with the non-violent image India presents (Rahman). The few people concerned are advocating that the world community should come up with a quick and just solution to this impending problem: "The problem with the people of Kashmir is that they are Muslims and without oil wealth, and the problem of Kashmir has been allowed to get complicated by not implementing resolutions on Kashmir. The Cold War scenario contributed to the Indian intransigence as Kashmiris became repeatedly the victims of the former Soviet Union's veto. The world body has not upheld the voice of the oppressed and subjugated people of Kashmir, when they most needed help. Will the United States and some other economic and military powers ponder over the idea that the world body will not survive and the progress of man will not continue without durable and just solutions of some burning political problems of the world?"

(http://www.ummah.org.uk/).

The involvement of the United Nations in solving the Kashmiri dispute is no new idea. In fact this dispute, which started before 1947, was one of the first major issues with which the newly formed world body was to deal. The solution to the problem of Kashmir is not as complicated as it may seem. It is no longer a question of whether Kashmir should join India or Pakistan: "For some time,

the discussion [of who to join] caused some concern, confusion and division among the people. But nowadays, no patriot looks confused, because there is consensus over the idea of 'freedom' from India as the primary objective of every group and section of society" (ibid).

If the international community acknowledges the role of Kashmiris and respects their urge for self-determination, the problem will quickly come to an end. Inaction has kept the world from becoming a true "global community." Self-interest has to stop governing one country's assistance (or lack of it) to another. The request of the people in Kashmir is quite plain: "We never grudge the efforts for a peaceful resolution of Kashmir, being tried by world leaders and NGO's. But, such efforts will pay dividends only when India is forced to stop the present brutal onslaught against Kashmiris and all present draconian laws are withdrawn from Kashmir" (ibid).

It is truly a sad state in which the Muslim world is in today. Muslims have forgotten a very important lesson Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) taught when he advised his people to help the oppressed as well as the oppressor. When asked how to help the oppressor, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) answered: "By preventing him from oppressing others."

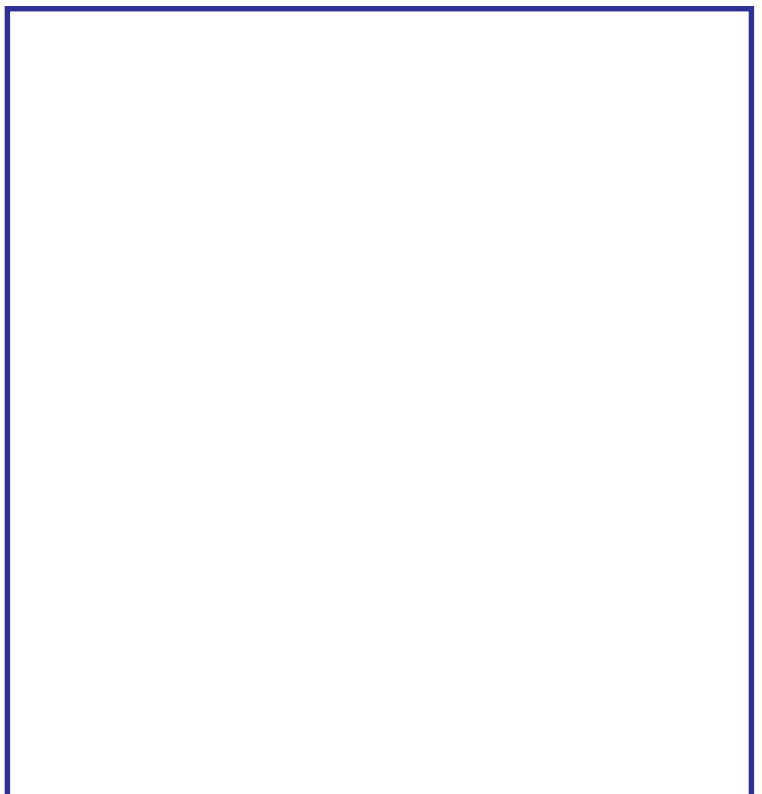
The whole world can benefit from this piece of advice, not just Muslims. Those who wish to see an end to the sufferings of humanity should share the responsibility of finding a just solution to the question of Kashmir. The Kashmiris must be supported internationally in their struggle as were the Afghans, and more recently, the Kosovars.

"The talk of a solution without present struggle or its due recognition by the global community is a cruel joke" (ibid). Until there is justice, there will be no peace. So it is up to us, the justice-loving people of the world, to restore peace and beauty to the bloodstained valley of Kashmir.

Those who wish to see an end to the sufferings of humanity should share the responsibility of finding a just solution to the question of Kashmir.

ous other excesses, more than 50,000 Kashmiris have been killed since 1990, reports the site. (http://www.ummah.org.uk/). The plebiscite guaranteed by the United Nations to the people of Kashmir seems to have been forgotten.

The indifference of the world has turned Kashmiri resentment into defiant antagonism to the In-



## Newsroom

### Canadian Muslims Sue "Jihad Journalist" for Defamation Lawsuit says Steven Emerson's defamatory claims causes "irreparable" damage

(Washington, DC, 3/3/2000)  
The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group, today announced that a Canadian Muslim and the organisation he represents have filed a defamation suit against self-styled "terrorism expert" Steven Emerson. (Emerson is perhaps best known for his controversial 1994 PBS program "Jihad in America." Muslims say he has a long history of defamatory and inaccurate attacks on the Islamic community in North America.)

The action by the Islamic Centre of Quebec and Salam Elmenyawawi, the Centre's spokesman, is in response to an article written by Emerson that appeared in Montreal's "The Gazette" newspaper on November 1, 1999. According to the lawsuit, that article contained "defamatory and incorrect information" that portrayed the plaintiffs as "radical, terrorist, apologist, and fundamentalist." Moral and exemplary damages totalling almost \$200,000 (Canadian) are being sought. The plaintiffs also demand a public retraction of the defamatory material and a permanent injunction on further attacks.

Emerson is the same "expert" who said Muslims were behind the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City, wrongly attributed the 1996 downing of TWA Flight 800 to Muslims and who once claimed Islam sanctions "genocide . . . as part of its religious doctrine" (CBS News, 4/19/95; Reuters, 7/31/96 and CNBC, Rivera Live, 8/23/96; Jewish Monthly, 3/95).

He was allegedly involved in the 1998 international media coverage of a defecting "senior Pakistani weapons scientist" who claimed Pakistan was preparing for a nuclear first strike against India. The story later turned out to be a hoax. ("Steven Emerson's Crusade: Why is a journalist pushing questionable stories from behind

### Islamic Management Resources on the Internet

Reported by Professor Rafik Beekun, University of Nevada

Please visit the Islamic Management Net website at <http://www.islamist.org/> where we have a number of free booklets, transparencies, and online questionnaires presenting management from an Islamic perspective. Many of these resources can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. The areas covered include leadership, strategic planning, conflict management, communication, business ethics, etc.

the scenes?"

<http://www.fair.org/extra/9901/emerson.html>

Emerson is also involved in a multimillion-dollar defamation lawsuit against a Florida newspaper, its senior editor, and a former investigative reporter for The Associated Press (AP). The complaint centres on allegations published by the newspaper that two AP reporters said Emerson gave them a document on terrorism supposedly from FBI files. The reporters said the document was actually authored by Emerson. The lawsuit also disputes allegations that Emerson gave false information to a Senate subcommittee during testimony in 1998.

Last year, Emerson was forced to retract accusations he made about a former journalism lecturer at California State University in Hayward, CA. Along with the retraction, Emerson agreed to pay \$3,000 (US) in damages.

There are an estimated 6 million Muslims in America and some 500,000 in Canada. Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in North America.

### Useful Online Islamic Resources

Reported by Abubakar Kasim

As you might be aware, <http://www.jannah.com/> contains Islamic speeches by various respected scholars. It also contains a page that teaches people how to perform prayers (<http://www.jannah.com/learn/prayer.html>). This site would be helpful for all, especially those new to Islam, Insha-Allah.

### The mobile phone call to prayer

by Ruth Gledhill

<http://www.the-times.co.uk/news/pages/tim/2000/04/14/timnwsnws01041.html>

A MUSLIM family has launched a new service to call believers to prayer on their mobile phones.

Rather than the traditional approach, where a muezzin climbs to the top of a mosque's minaret and calls Muslims to prayer five times a day, the signal will go out as a national "beep" from Preston. The online Azaan, or prayer call, is being offered on a Muslim website, [www.PatelsCornerShop.com](http://www.PatelsCornerShop.com), and is being backed by the Muslim Council of Britain and the Lancashire Council of Mosques.

Prayer times change every day because of the changing times of sunrise and sunset. The site's owners, the Patel family of Preston, are offering to send owners of Internet mobiles the namaaz, or prayer times, as a text alert.

### Canadian Islamic Congress President and Vice-Chair Meet with The National Post

CIC Friday Bulletin

Professor Mohamed Elmasry, National President of the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC), and Mrs. Wahida Valiante, CIC Vice-Chair, met March 13, 2000 with senior editorial and reporting staff of Toronto-based "The National Post."

They gave a background presentation on occurrences of anti-Islamic language in the Canadian media and how it is harming many Canadians, especially children and youth, both within and outside the Muslim population.

While he feels that there is still work to be done, Professor Elmasry took a diplomatic stance following the one-hour meeting: "We will continue our dialogue with The National Post," he said. "We are committed to a zero-tolerance stand when it comes to the negative stereotyping of any group. Stereotyping is dangerous: it leads to hate crimes and discrimination."

Asked for their reaction, several National Post staff who attended the meeting offered brief comments: "I felt it was constructive to hear [CIC's] point of view and for [CIC] to hear ours," said Martin Newland, The Post's Deputy Editor.

Vice-Chair Wahida Valiante

### TARIC helps arrange Muslims to get married

Reported by Abubakar Kassim

On April 1st, the Taric Islamic Center held a program called Marriage Introduction Forum to help Muslim youth who are seriously interested in getting married to a Muslim spouse.

The Mosque invited the youth to get to know the opposite sex and have a friendly chat with each other in a respectable manner and under Islamic environment and code of conduct. Many Muslims have found it helpful and extremely important especially in an environment where youth are under a great pressure to have unclear relationships.

"We are planning to hold this program every three months" said Foad of the Taric Islamic Center who was the main organizer of the event. "We are trying to make it seasonal and hold it in every three months" he stated. Foad also indicated about the problems facing Muslim youth in this environment, which lead them in making wrong decisions over choosing their life-time partners.

What about a youth who is still in school and has no job, do you think he or she could get married and continue his goals in life? I asked.

Not at all, he said. The youth in this environment live with their boy or girlfriends as husbands and wives, why can't our youth get married, please Allah, get a part time job, and in the mean time, continue their goals in life together with their partners? he answered.

observed that the CIC's annual report "Anti-Islam in the Media" is "an important milestone toward achieving fair media representation, free from stereotyping and bias," and added that material from this project (now in its third year) is used at leading Canadian journalism schools, including Ryerson, Concordia, and Carleton.

"Newspapers exert great influence on public perceptions, and targeting Islam and Muslims as 'others, not like us' is dangerous for the safety and security of the Muslim community. We hope that The National Post will reflect on what we have presented, so we can continue to have a dialogue," she said.

The CIC made ten recommendations to enhance the accountability of Canadian newspapers to their readers.

These included membership in provincial press councils, and increasing the space given to Letters-to-the-Editor. "The National Post" is not a member of the Ontario Press Council.

The 2000 edition of "Anti-Islam in the Media" is due for release in September, Insha-Allah.

The 1999 edition is available on the CIC website, <http://www.cicnow.com/>.

In order to participate in

this program, people are asked to fill applications, which are available at the office of the Taric Center.

It was a unique program to be held in the Muslim community of Ontario. Only ISNA Canada has recently initiated a similar one.

The Islamic Society of North America started a similar program about four months ago at their office in Mississauga.

Abdulghafour Choudry, who runs the program, emphasized the necessity of such program in the Muslim community at large. People fill out registration forms and include all the necessary information about them including their interest and so on. Once a match of a couple is found, families of both parents are contacted.

"We don't allow dating in our culture and religion" brother Choudry stated "but unfortunately we didn't develop any alternative mechanism for our youth to get to know each other" he said. He is committed that with this program, which is run under Islamic environment, it will help the Muslim youth in filling the gap of such an important social issue of marriage.

People who are interested in these programs, they can call the Taric Islamic Center at (416) 245-5675. And for more information about the ISNA Canada's program, please call Abdulghafour Choudry at (905) 403-8406 extension 219.

### Muslim Groups to Monitor Trial of Imam Jamil Al-Amin

#### Islamic leaders concerned that justice is served and facts be revealed

Reported by the CAIR

(Washington, DC, 3/21/2000)  
Leaders of national American Muslim organisations, along with representatives from the community of Imam Jamil Al-Amin, held a news conference in reaction to the arrest of Al-Amin and several others Monday night in Alabama. Authorities allege that Al-Amin was involved in a shooting incident late Thursday in Atlanta, GA, which left one sheriff's deputy dead and another critically wounded.

A joint statement issued at the news conference read in part: "We are not here today to judge the guilt or innocence of any party to this tragic series of events. Just as we do not prejudge, we ask that others wait until all the facts are known. In America, as in Islam, anyone accused of a crime is innocent until proven guilty. At this point, the role of the Muslim community is four-fold.

"First, we wish to remind everyone of Imam Jamil Al-Amin's longstanding role as a community leader who had a positive impact on the lives of so many people. The charges against Imam Jamil are especially troubling because they are inconsistent with what is known of his moral character and past behaviour as a Muslim.

"Second, we want to ensure that Imam Jamil receives proper legal representation. To that end, we will offer our services to his legal team in Atlanta. This team will then address all aspects of the case.

"Third, we will see that his trial is monitored by observers who will insist that any legal proceedings be fair and impartial. We also believe that this process can best take place in a location that allows Imam Jamil to be tried by a jury of his peers.

"Finally, we make note of a past incident in which Imam Jamil was apparently falsely accused of a similar, though far less serious crime. At that time, the alleged victim recanted and claimed that he was pressured by the authorities to name Imam Jamil as the perpetrator.

"Our ultimate goal is to see that justice is done. As it says in the Qur'an, Islam's revealed text: 'O you who believe. Stand firmly for justice, as witnesses to God . . .'" (Qur'an 2:135).

### Dow Jones University Introduces New Course on Principles of Islamic Investing

(PRINCETON, February 28, 2000) Dow Jones University (<http://www.dju.com/>) today announced the introduction of "Principles of Islamic Investing," an interactive, online course that covers the precepts of investing according to the Islamic faith. "Principles of Islamic Investing" follows the 1999 introduction of the Dow Jones Islamic Market Index, which was the first global equity benchmark index created by an established index provider for investors seeking to follow Islamic investment guidelines.

Four highly regarded experts in the field of Islamic law and investment principles teach "Principles of Islamic Investing." Justice Muhammad Taqi Usmani of Pakistan has been a member of the Supreme Court of Pakistan since 1982 and is Vice-Chairman of the OIC Fiqh Academy in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Mohamed Elgari of Saudi Arabia is Director of the Centre for Research in Islamic Economics at King Abdul-Aziz University in Saudi Arabia and is an expert Shari'ah (Islamic Law) consultant to the OIC Fiqh Academy. Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo is considered a leading Islamic scholar in the USA

### The Golden Triangle celebrates Eid-UI Adha in True Spirit of Islam

by our reporter

Sunday April 2, 2000 was a special day for the Muslim residents of The Golden Triangle Region that consists of Kitchener, Waterloo and London. This was the first-ever effort to present a united Eid dinner. The celebration was held in the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex in Kitchener, Ontario. The beautiful and spacious hall was filled with over fifteen hundred radiant faces of Muslims from the Triangle and vicinity. Several Muslim organizations had sponsored the event.

The two keynote speakers were Haroon Siddiqi and Dr. Munir

and Rushdi Siddiqui is Director of the Dow Jones Islamic Market Index.

"For generations, Muslims spent years teaching their children the difference between what was lawful and what was unlawful. Only when they had learned the difference, were they allowed to go to the marketplace and make a living," said Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo, one of the principal instructors.

"This course is designed to enable modern Muslim businesspeople and professionals to approach today's financial securities marketplace with the same sort of confidence. Through the technology of the Internet and Dow Jones University, knowledge that may have taken years to acquire in the past is now available to anyone with the will to learn."

"Principles of Islamic Investing" (<http://islamic.dju.com/>) is designed not only for Muslims in the USA and abroad who invest according to their faith, but also for the financial community that serves Muslims and for others interested in Islamic investing as a form of social and ethical investing.

al-Kasim. Both speakers emphasized on the importance of unity among Muslims and also pointed that Muslims should not limit themselves into their self-created ghettos. Instead, they should go out and embrace other fellow human beings in their communities and spread the word of peace to others.

While the parents enjoyed the speeches, children were taken away to have their own fun with brother Dauod and sister Rukhsana who entertained them with songs and stories respectively. A delicious dinner was

Continued on page 13

### MP Honours Muslims' New Year in House of Commons.

From CIC's Friday Bulletin

The Islamic New Year was honored on April 6, 2000 when Derek Lee

(Liberal MP for Scarborough-Rouge River) made the following statement in the House of Commons, Ottawa. Here is the text of his presentation, MUBARAK :

"Mr. Speaker, today is a very special day of celebration for our Muslim community in Canada and elsewhere. It is the commencement of the first day of Muharam, which is the first month of the Hijra calendar [year 1421] in the Islamic religion.

"Muharam marks the new year for approximately 1.2 billion Muslims throughout the world and in Canada... Canadians of the Islamic faith contribute to Canada as citizens in all our provinces. Whether they are Canadian by birth or as new citizens, they manifest their allegiance to Canada and follow the spiritual guidance of the Holy Koran [Qur'an].

"On behalf of all of us in the House of Commons I extend best wishes to all constituents in the Muslim community."

We appreciate the MP's friendly gesture towards Muslim community.

### Muslim Lawyers asked to join CAIR-LEGALNET

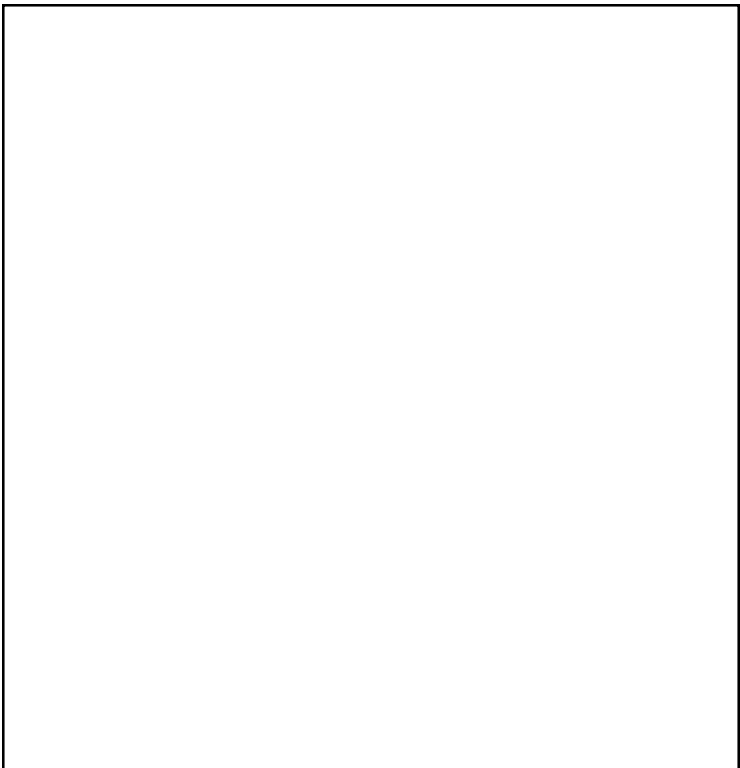
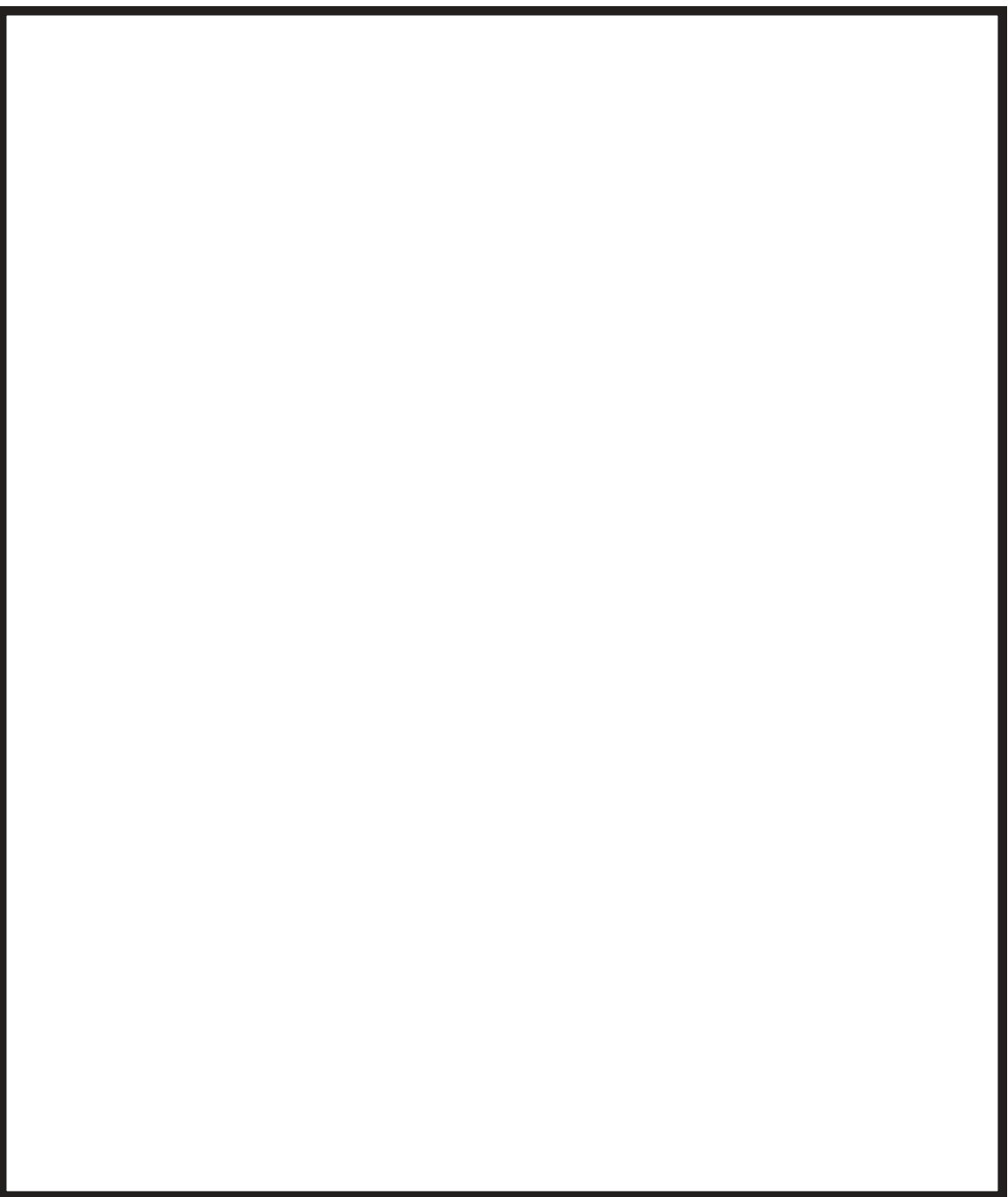
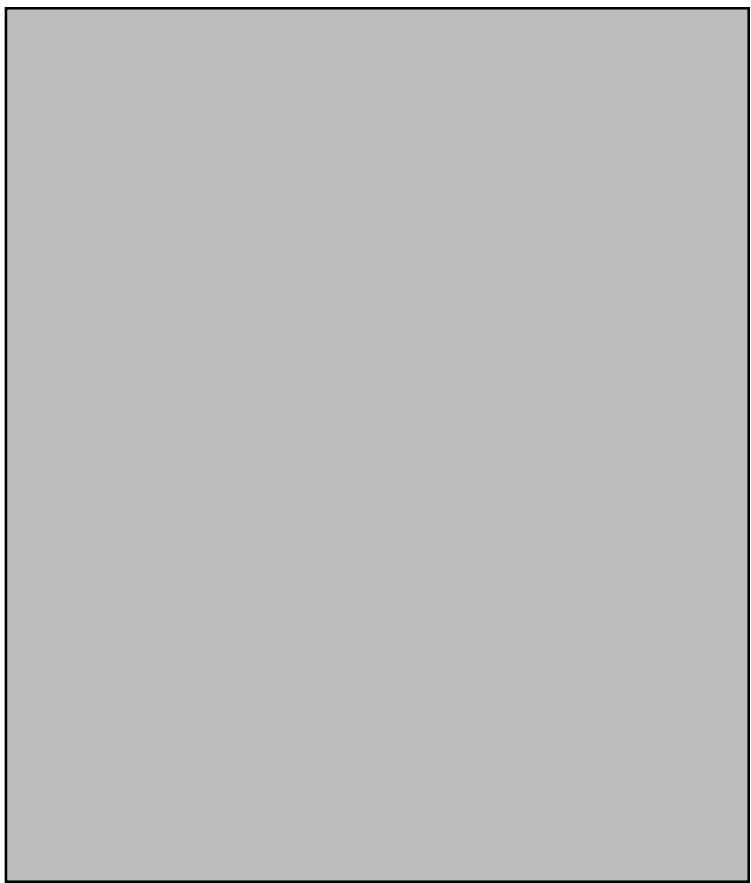
E-Mail list designed to create community service network

(Washington, D.C., 4/19/2000)

- CAIR is calling on Muslim lawyers in the United States and Canada to join its newly formed e-mail list CAIR-LEGALNET. (Muslim lawyers in other countries are also eligible to join the list.) CAIR-LEGALNET is a discussion list designed to create a network of Muslim lawyers who can offer advice and services to the North American Muslim community.

community.

List members will provide a legal viewpoint on issues such as workplace discrimination, religious accommodation in schools and prisons, challenges to Muslim civil liberties (secret evidence, passenger profiling, etc.), as well as other legal issues of importance to Muslims. CAIR receives hundreds of requests for legal assistance each year. This is a good opportunity to serve the community.



## CIC Third Annual Conference

continued from page 5

Entertainment. The presentation consisted of three parts, dealing with methodology of researching, nature of entertainment, and the various forms of entertainment available. Islam is a complete code for living your life. It fulfils the needs of body, mind and spirit. "Entertainment is a part of it," he said. In his well-researched speech he mentioned that some forms of sports like horse-riding, fencing, martial arts, hunting, or fishing can be good entertainment. Good poetry, arts, and some computer games or clean videos are also a form of entertainment. He also emphasised the need of moderation in everything.

Another interesting session followed the afternoon break. It was about Quality Entertainment and the Role of the Family. Among the speakers were Dr. Jane Ledingham, Professor of Psychology with the University of Ottawa, Mrs. Wahida Valiante, Vice-President of CIC, Ms. Nada Basir, a Grade 11 student, and Mr. Mohamed Alarakhia, an OAC student. Each of the speakers excelled at the podium and presented some most valuable suggestions.

Dr. Jane Ledingham opened the session by focusing on national statistics about the positive relationship between the aggressive behaviour among children to the amount of TV they watched. It also conversely affected the amount of time spent on sleeping, attending social gatherings, conversing with family, and leisure activities. Some of the other effects were being more fearful and slow to respond to violence in real life.

Dr. Ledingham did not only point to the adverse effects of TV, but also had some pointers for parents: Do not use TV as a babysitter. Make rules, set an amount of time for TV watching and be consistent with it. Train children to turn off the box when asked. Watch TV with them and keep discussions open. Involve children in activities other than TV. Finally, practice what you preach.

Wahida Valiante referred to the Qur'anic guidance in raising children: Use time constructively, teach them to take responsibility for their actions and making the right choices and to believe that "Allah has made them in the best mould" (Qur'an). "Too many restrictions," she said, "is not the answer, as it turns them into rebels."

The last two speakers were the high school students, Nada and Mohamed. They shed light on different factors, whether on TV or at school, that influence the younger generation. Among them were the physical standards that the advertising industry sets for the female body and looks, bullying by peers, identity crisis, stereotyping by the media, and an overall lack of morality in society.

They had an important mes-

## REH'MA - Bringing the Elder Community Together

by Ahmad Muinuddin

Elders living in Canada today look forward to healthy, comfortable, and independent retirement life with strong family ties. They also wish for the company of people with similar interests. For many non-Muslim Canadians this service is provided by their community organizations supported by government funding. It is esti-

mated that by 2011, there will be more than 115 000 retired persons 50 years or older in the Muslim Community. Yet, the elderly in our community have been overlooked.

Muslim elders are facing several challenges. These include isolation-related problems such as a lack of information and access to care-giving facilities. Many elders feel trapped as they are housebound and do not drive. Traditional interaction between generations is decreasing and the intergenerational gaps are widening. Empty-nest syndrome is very common in our community. Information and education on healthy life styles is not culturally sensitive and lacks Islamic perspective. Furthermore, there is a lack of information on Muslim women's issues related to aging. All of these concerns are creating low self-es-

sage for parents of today: Educate your children, trust their judgement, and let them choose between right and wrong, whether on TV or in the real world.

I came out of the conference room with a sense of accomplishment. The conference did not just point out the problems, but also provided some solutions. Now, it is up to the Muslims to take them or leave them.

teem, alienation, frustration, depression, and the deterioration of physical and mental health of our Muslim Elders. Though all other local communities have a full range of long-term care services, social, and recreational programs for elders, it is apparent that most Muslim elders do not utilize services offered by mainstream agencies.

The REH'MA Foundation was established to provide quality life and culturally sensitive services to Muslim elders. Its core services include information and education on topics of interest, as well as social and cultural activities. Since June 1999, monthly educational workshops have been organized on a range of topics including "Elders in Islamic Traditions", "How to get the most out of Food and the Digestive System", and

"Income Tax Preparation". The inaugural Elder Forum in 1999 attracted over 150 participants and 39 resource people and volunteers. Since then regular Drop-In centers have also been organized where elders can meet and interact with each other and make new friends. Currently in its first phase of operation, REH'MA's core services include educational workshops, information on available services, and social and cultural activities.

Everyone is invited to participate and contribute to The Elder Forum 2 which will be held, inshaAllah, on Sunday June 4, 2000 in the Council Chambers at the Toronto City Hall. For more information on how to participate and get involved please contact Talat Muinuddin (416) 512-2106, Jean Ally (416) 222-2794 or Munir Jan (416) 445-2613.

## The Ka'ba

Continued from page 1

as follows: The Eastern wall was almost 15 metres; the Hateem side wall was 10 metres; the side between the Black Stone and the Yemeni corner was a little over 9 metres; and the Western wall was a little over 14 metres. Following this, there were several constructions before Prophet Muhammad's time.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) participated in one of the Ka'bah's reconstructions before he became a Prophet. After a flash flood, the Ka'bah was damaged and its walls had cracked. It needed rebuilding. This responsibility was divided among the Quraysh's four clans. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) helped with this reconstruction. Once the walls were erected, it was time to place the Black Stone (Hajar-ul-Aswad) on the Eastern wall of the Ka'bah. Arguments erupted about who would have the honour of putting the Black Stone in its place. A fight was about to break out over the issue, when Abu Umayyah, Makkah's oldest man, proposed that the first man to enter the gate of the Mosque the following morning would decide the matter. That man was the Prophet (pbuh). The Makkans were ecstatic: "This is the Trustworthy One (Al-Ameen)," they shouted in a chorus. "This is Muhammad."

The Prophet (pbuh) came to them and they asked him to decide on the matter. He agreed. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) proposed a solution that all agreed to: putting the Black Stone on a cloak with the elders of each of the clans holding on to one edge of the cloak and carrying the Stone to its place. The Prophet (pbuh) then picked up the Stone and placed it on the wall of the Ka'bah.

Since the tribe of Quraysh did not have sufficient funds, this reconstruction did not include the entire foundation of the Ka'bah as built by Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh). This was the first time the Ka'bah acquired the cubical shape it has now, unlike the rectangular shape which it had earlier. The portion of the Ka'bah left out is now called the Hateem.

In Muharram 64 AH, the Syrian army destroyed the Ka'bah and before the next Hajj, Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr, reconstructed the Ka'bah from the ground up. Ibn Az-Zubayr wanted to make the Ka'bah how Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) wanted it, on the foundation left by Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh).

Ibn Az-Zubayr said, "I heard 'Aisha (ra) say, 'The Prophet said: 'If your people had not quite recently abandoned the Ignorance (Unbelief), and if I had sufficient provisions to rebuild it [the Ka'bah], I would have added five cubits to it from the Hijr. Also, I would make two doors; one for people to enter therein and the other to exit' (Bukhari). Ibn Az-Zubayr said, "Today, I can afford to do it and I do not fear the peo-

ple."

Ibn Az-Zubayr rebuilt the Ka'bah on Prophet Ibrahim's foundation. He put the roof on three pillars with the wood of Aoud (a perfumed wood with an aroma, which is traditionally burned to get good scent in Arabia). In his reconstruction, he put two doors, one facing the East the other facing the West, as the Prophet (pbuh) wanted, but was not able to do in his lifetime.

He rebuilt the Ka'bah on Prophet Ibrahim's foundation, which meant that the Hateem area was included. The Hateem is the area adjacent to the Ka'bah enclosed by a low semi-circular wall today. Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr also made the following additions and modifications: He put a small window close to the roof of the Ka'bah to allow for light; moved the door of the Ka'bah to ground level and added a second door; added nine cubits to the height of the Ka'bah, making it twenty cubits high with walls being two cubits wide; and reduced the pillars inside the House to three instead of six as were earlier built by the Quraysh. For the reconstruction, Ibn Az-Zubayr put up four pillars around Ka'bah and hung cloth over them until the building was completed. People began to do Tawaf around these pillars at all times, so Tawaf of the Ka'bah was never abandoned, even during reconstruction.

In 74 AH (693 CE), Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi, the known tyrant of that time, with the approval of Umayyad Khalifa Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan, demolished what Ibn Az-Zubayr had added to it from the older foundation of Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh), and restored its old structure as the Quraysh had it.

Some of the changes he made were the following: He rebuilt it in the smaller shape that is found today; took out the Hateem; walled up the Western door (whose signs are still visible today) and left the rest as it was; pulled down the wall in the Hateem area; removed the wooden ladder Ibn Az-Zubayr had put inside the Ka'bah; and reduced the door's height by five cubits.

When Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan came for 'Umra and heard the Hadith that it was the wish of the Prophet (pbuh) for the Ka'bah to be constructed the way Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr had built it, he regretted his actions.

Years later, the Abbasi Khalifa Harun Al-Rasheed wanted to rebuild the Ka'bah the way Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) wanted and the way Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr built it. However, when he consulted Imam Malik (ra), the Imam asked the Khalifa to change his mind because constant demolition and rebuilding is not respectful and would become a toy in the hands of kings. Each one would want to demolish and rebuild the Ka'bah. Based on this advice, Harun Al-Rasheed did not recon-

struct the Ka'bah. The structure remained the same for 966 years, with minor repairs here and there.

In 1039 AH, two of the Ka'bah's walls fell down due to heavy rain, flooding, and hail. The flood began on Wednesday, Sha'ban 19 and continued constantly. The water level in the Ka'bah reached almost half the height of its walls, about 3 metres from ground level. On Sha'ban 20, the Eastern and Western walls fell down. When the flood receded on Friday, Sha'ban 21, the cleanup began.

Again, a curtain, the way Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr established on four pillars, was put up, and the reconstruction started on Ramadan 26, 1039. The rest of the walls, except for the one near the Black Stone, were demolished. By Zhul-Hijjah 2, 1040 the construction was taking place under the guidance of Sultan Murad Khan, the Ottoman Khalifa. From the point of the Black Stone and below, the current construction is the same as that done by Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr. The construction that was done under the auspices of Murad Khan was exactly the same as that of Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan, which is the way the Quraysh had built it before the Prophet's time.

On Rajab 28, 1377, one historian counted the total stones of the Ka'bah and there were 1,614. These stones are of different shapes. However, the visible stones that were inside the outer wall were not counted.

The final major reconstruction of the Ka'bah took place from May to October 1996. This was after a period of about 400 years (since Sultan Murad Khan's time). During this reconstruction the only original portion left from the Ka'bah were the stones. All other material was replaced, including the wood of the ceiling and roof.

What is inside the Ka'bah? Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, President of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), had the opportunity to go inside the Ka'bah in October 1998. In an interview with SoundVision (<http://www.soundvision.com/>), he described the following features:

There are two pillars inside (others report three). There is a table on the side to place items such as perfume. There are two lantern-type lamps hanging from the ceiling (there are no electric lights inside). The space can accommodate about fifty people. The walls and floors are made of marble. There are no windows inside. There is only one door and the upper inside walls of the Ka'bah are covered with some kind of curtain with the Kalimah written on it.

Insha-Allah, may we all have the opportunity to perform an acceptable Hajj at least once in our lifetime and have the chance to see this wonder of the Islamic world for ourselves.

## Con Artist Defrauds Muslims Worldwide

### CAIR warns Islamic community to beware of impostor who asks for money

(Washington, D.C., 4/21/2000) - CAIR is warning Muslims worldwide about a con artist who impersonates well-known Muslim leaders and activists in order to take money from members of the Islamic community. The impostor, who uses an Israeli passport #7402086, issued 12/08/97 in the name of M u h a m a d Almustafa, has several methods of operation:

(He struck as recently as a few days ago in Chicago and New Jersey. Muslims in virtually every state have been targeted. Victims have also been contacted in many Muslim countries and in Europe.

According to Western Union, he was in Canada as late as March 30. To view his enlarged picture, go to:

[http://www.cair-net.org/images/news/con\\_artist.jpg](http://www.cair-net.org/images/news/con_artist.jpg)

\* He has used the names Dr. Mohammad Agbarie, Badrdeen al-Mustapha and Mohammed Al-Mustafa. He has also used a false passport in the name of Dr. Azhar Iqbal. His latest false identity is Mahmoud Ibn-Obeid (He has false documents in these names.)

\* He calls a Muslim individual, often an activist in the local community, claiming to be a stranded traveler whose money, passport and tickets have been stolen or lost.

\* He mentions the names of known Muslim leaders or activists known to the intended victim in order to add to his credibility and to fool those targeted by his scam. He claims to be a friend of known Muslims such as officials of global Islamic institutions, prominent American Muslim leaders and Imams.

\* He has detailed information

### Golden Triangle celebrates Eid-ul-Adha

Continued from page 11

served after the speeches.

The idea behind this well-planned and much-organized function was to bring all the little organizations together and foster brotherhood, promote unity and strengthen the relationships among all sections of Muslim Ummah living in that area.

There is no doubt that the organizers were very successful in achieving their goal. We hope that this effort will bring fruit and will not be limited to this area of Ontario.

and can make himself sound like an old friend of these people.

\* He may pretend to be an official of an Islamic bank, a representative of the Muslim World League (Al-Rabita), an Islamic scholar, physician, or an expert traveling to a Muslim gathering.

\* He often claims to be traveling with his wife and children, with a delegation or on behalf of a cause.

His wife has gone by the name of Patricia Torro.

\* He asks the intended victim to wire him cash (up to thousands of dollars through Moneygram and Western Union) to help him out of his crisis.

\* He collects the money and disappears.

The con artist is fluent in Arabic and English and can use several Arabic dialects. He has played the part of a Saudi, a Palestinian and a Gulf Arab. He is under investigation by a number of law enforcement agencies worldwide and was once deported from Canada.

This man has been operating for at least SEVEN YEARS and has stolen hundreds of thousands of dollars from Muslims.

**Alert your community.** Several hundred muslims have been targeted.

A sample case: The con artist calls a national American Muslim leader to say he is with an internationally-known Islamic organization and that he would like to visit a particular state to make dawah. He asks the Muslim leader for contacts in that state. He also asks that the leader call these contacts and tell them to expect a call from him. He then calls the local Muslim leaders, who have already been called by the national leader, to say that he will arrive on a certain date. On or near that date, he calls the local contacts to say that he is stranded in the airport and needs funds to be wired so that he may complete his journey. The money is sent, the con artist calls back to say thanks and that he will arrive shortly. He is never heard from again.

#### Action requested:

1. DO NOT wire money to anyone claiming to be stranded in an airport.

2. Report requests for money to CAIR, the local office of the FBI (ask for a fraud investigator) and to local police. Obtain a copy of the complaint.

3. If you have already been a victim, send copies of wire transfer documents to CAIR so that a case can be built against this man. (FAX: 202-659-2254)



## The Year of the Elephant

continued from page 1

the two hundred camels his army had captured from him. Abrahah was surprised by his request and said he was disappointed that 'Abd al-Muttalib was thinking about his camels rather than his temple, which he had come to raze to the ground.

'Abd al-Muttalib replied: "I am the lord of the camels, and the temple likewise has a Lord Who will defend it."

"He cannot defend it against me," said Abrahah and gave orders for the camels to be returned.

'Abd al-Muttalib returned to the Quraysh and declared that Makkah would not fight against Abrahah. He immediately ordered his people to evacuate and withdraw to the nearby hills in order to save themselves. Then he went with some of his family to the Ka'bah, knelt under its door, and prayed to God for His help against Abrahah. He later joined the rest of Quraysh in the hills at a point where he could see what would happen in the valley below.

The next morning, Abrahah prepared to march into Makkah with the intention of destroying its holy house. His elephant was led to the front of the army, but upon reaching its position, the mighty creature knelt to the ground. Abrahah and his soldiers did everything they could to bring the elephant to its feet, they even beat it with iron bars and poked it with iron hooks, but it remained frozen. Abrahah then ordered his army to march back towards Yemen, to gauge the animal's reaction. Sure enough, the elephant rose, turned around, and followed the army. The army turned around once more, but the elephant knelt again as soon as they faced Makkah. Apparently, the elephant was obeying commands far more powerful than those of Abrahah or his soldiers.

This was a clear sign from God not to move another step forward, but Abrahah was blinded by his own ambition of making his temple a place of pilgrimage. Had his army returned to Yemen then, they

may have escaped their own destruction. However, it was too late.

The western sky soon grew dark and a strange noise was heard. The sound became louder as a great sea of black swept over them from the direction of the Red Sea. The sky above, as high as they could see, was full of birds. They flew quickly, each with three pebbles that they pelted Abrahah and his army with. The pebbles came down so hard and fast that they even pierced armour. Every stone found its target, for as soon as a soldier was struck, his flesh began to rot and he suffered an agonising death.

Allah (swt) later revealed the following chapter of the Qur'an, named "Al-Feel" (The Elephant): "Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with the Companions of the Elephant? Did He not make their plan into misguidance? And He sent against them birds in flocks, striking them with stones of hard clay. And He made them like eaten straw" (Qur'an 105).

After that day, the Quraysh were called the "People of God," and had greater respect than ever before, for God had answered their prayers and saved the Ka'bah. They are still honoured today, but for a second event that took place in the same year.

'Abd al-Muttalib was seventy years of age or older when Abrahah had arrived in Makkah to destroy the Ka'bah. His son, 'Abdullah, was twenty-four years old and was hence ready for marriage. His father had chosen for him Aminah, daughter of Wahb ibn 'Abd Manaf ibn Zuhrah, the chief of the tribe of Zuhrah. On the same day that 'Abdullah married Aminah, his father married a cousin of hers named Halah. (This is how the Prophet would have an uncle of the same age on his father's side, namely Hamza.)

As was the custom in those days, 'Abdullah lived with Aminah among her relatives for the first three days of the marriage. Soon afterwards, he was called on a trading mission to Al-Sham (Syria). When he left,

Aminah was pregnant.

'Abdullah was absent for several months and missed Abrahah's attempted attack on the Ka'bah. On his way back, he stopped for a long rest in Yathrib (later to be called Madinah), where his maternal uncles lived, and was preparing to join a caravan to Makkah when he became ill. The caravan went on without him and reported the news of his illness. 'Abd al-Muttalib sent one of his sons, Harith, to accompany 'Abdullah back to Makkah once he became well enough to travel. However, when Harith arrived in Yathrib, he learned that his brother had already died.

A great feeling of grief fell over Makkah. Fortunately, Aminah was consoled by her dead husband's unborn child. She was further comforted as the time of her delivery approached.

A few weeks later, her child was born. Aminah immediately sent a messenger to 'Abd al-Muttalib, who was then at the Ka'bah, announcing to him the birth of his grandson. Rushing to his daughter-in-law, he took the new-born in his arms and carried him to the Ka'bah. He took the baby inside the Ka'bah, thanked God for His gift, and named him "Muhammad."

'Abd al-Muttalib then returned the infant to his mother and waited with her for the arrival of wet nurses from the tribe of Bani Sa'd ibn Bakr. It was the practice of Makkan nobility to hire the Bedouin, as they thought the natural desert environment was beneficial for their children's health and upbringing.

On the seventh day after Muhammad's birth, 'Abd al-Muttalib gave a banquet in honour of his grandson, to which he invited a number of Quraysh tribesmen and guests. When they inquired why he had chosen to name the child "Muhammad," a name not common among them and thus changing the practice of using ancestors' names, 'Abd al-Muttalib answered: "I did so with the wish that my grandson would be praised by God in Heaven and by men on Earth."

The majority of scholars agree that Muhammad (pbuh) was born in August, during the Year of the Elephant (570 CE). They also agree that he was born in his grandfather's house on Monday, the twelfth of Rabi' al-Awwal, according to the lunar calendar.

Truly, the birth of our Prophet (pbuh) was a monumental event. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the instrument through which God revealed His Guidance for all of humanity until the Day of Judgment. We must love God and His Prophet (pbuh), even more than we love our parents, as Anas (ra) narrated that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said: "By Him in Whose Hands my life is, none of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father, his children, and all of mankind" (Bukhari 1:14).

## A united grassroots effort to prevent domestic violence

by Abdul Ghafoor Chaudhry

Does domestic violence occur in Muslim homes?

Although it is incomprehensible and unimaginable that a Muslim would be abusive, it does happen. Many of us tend to think that abuse is a phenomenon relevant only to non-Muslims where self-centered, drug addicts, drunk or vicious people abuse their wives and children, especially when intoxicated, stressed out by their gambling losses or strapped for money to buy alcohol or drugs. Or perhaps it happens only when an innocent child disturbs the lifestyle of the people addicted to self-gratification or the care of the child hinders the parents' lustful lifestyle and their concept of fun in life. We tend to think that we Muslims, having superior values and avoidance of substance and alcohol abuse are immune to the abusive behavior. Unfortunately, this is not true! As human beings, many of us have internalized the un-Islamic values from the dominant cultures around us and it shows in our materialistic attitude or self-centered vanities and self-gratification as the goal of life.

A Muslim is the one who is best in conduct, who is caring, loving, kind-hearted, merciful, forgiving, compassionate and generous. The Holy Qur'an has commanded us to be fair, equitable, generous and gracious and to excel in these qualities. The Messenger of Allah has told us that the best of you are the best to their families and that those who are not kind, loving and forgiving the youngsters and who do not show

respect, leniency, tenderness and patience to the elders are not Muslims.

A Muslim does not drink alcohol, does not gamble, does not take drug and is not handicapped by any kind of addictions. A Muslim cannot be self-centered or materialistic. A Muslim is dedicated to raising a family with love and affection and to providing the best comfort and the best environment for their families. A Muslim prefers the comforts of the Hereafter and the pleasure of Allah and for that he/she is willing to make any sacrifice. A Muslim knows that Allah's pleasure is attained through making people around us feel loved, secure, comforted and at peace.

But how many of us care to practice it? How many really understand the true concept of Islam? How many of us view Islam just to be a religion of some rituals so that as long as those rituals are fulfilled, the performer is a good Muslim regardless of one's conduct and dealings with people? It is no wonder many so-called religious people are involved in domestic abuse.

Let us wake up and promote the real Islam where the pillars make us the best people on earth in our conduct! Let us practice Islam in its true spirit! Let us stop domestic abuse! It does not belong to a Muslim home!

For more information contact: Abdul Ghafoor Chaudhry, Director, Department of Community and Social Services, ISNA-Canada Tel. (905) 403-8406 Ext. 219.

## Islam in Canada 2000

Continued from page 16

Masjid and the Imams as a communication channel for the community. It became clear that while Canadian Muslims had come a long way in establishing themselves as part of the larger community, their future battles could only be fought effectively through networking and cohesiveness. A few myths regarding the perception of our youth and domestic scene were shattered as we heard stories about young Muslim offenders and about domestic violence. The Muslim community, and in particular our community's leadership, has to acknowledge the existence of these very serious problems before we can formulate plans to tackle them together. The moderators also agreed that the Muslim community needs to take active interest in broader issues such as poverty and homelessness and not just devote its energies on perceived "Muslim" issues.

The sponsor organisations committed to bringing into action the recommendations as proposed from the workshops and to make them public for greater benefit.

A symposium such as this one that brought together various Islamic organizations and demonstrated how co-operation can be achieved could become an annual event.

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## Kids' Korner

### The Empty Pot

by *Marium Fatima Ahmad*

As a Caliph, 'Umar (ra) had to take care of the Muslims in his state, as a father would to his children. During the day, he would work at home, and at night, he used to walk through the city streets to make sure that not a single Muslim went to sleep on an empty stomach.

One night, as 'Umar (ra) was making his rounds through the city, he heard children crying from a small house nearby. 'Umar (ra) went over to see what the problem was and he saw a woman sitting with her children around a pot that was boiling over a fire. He noticed that they were hungry and the lady seemed sad.

'Umar (ra), seeing the pot over the fire, thought that there was some food in it and that the lady would soon give her crying children something to eat. However, a long time passed and the contents in the pot kept boiling, but the woman never got up to take out some food.

So finally, 'Umar (ra) knocked on the door. After he was given permission to enter the house, 'Umar (ra) asked the lady why the children were crying. She told him that it was because they were hungry. 'Umar (ra) was

puzzled and asked her why she didn't give them any of the food that was in the pot. The woman whispered to 'Umar (ra), telling him not to tell the children that there was nothing in the pot except water and stones and that she was too poor to afford any food. She told him that they would soon cry themselves to sleep.

When the children finally did cry to sleep, the woman told 'Umar (ra) that the reason she had no money was because her husband had died and that the Bait-ul-Maal (welfare office), unfortunately, did not know of this. Otherwise, if they had known, they would surely have helped her.

'Umar (ra) then asked the woman why she had never told the Caliph of her troubles. The lady answered that since she was a woman, it was not right for her to go out seeking help from the Caliph, when it was his duty to make sure that everyone's needs were fulfilled. She also told him that 'Umar (ra) did not deserve to be the Caliph, if this was how he treated his fellow Believers. Of course, during all this time, the woman did not realise that the very person she was talking to

was 'Umar (ra) himself!

'Umar (ra) was very shocked and felt ashamed when he heard what the woman had said. So he ran to the Bait-ul-Maal and filled a bag with some flour, meat, and sugar. As he was leaving to return to the lady's house, one of his servants offered to carry the bag for him. However, 'Umar (ra) refused, saying that his servant would not be able to carry 'Umar's burden for him on the Day of Judgement, so why should he do so now.

When 'Umar (ra) reached that lady's house with the bag full of food, he took it out, cooked it, and fed the children himself until they were satisfied. As he was leaving, the woman thanked him and told him that he should replace 'Umar (ra) as the Caliph, as he was a kind and generous person.

Upon hearing this, 'Umar (ra) told the lady that she was already talking to 'Umar. He further went on to say that it was wrong for him not to have attended to her needs earlier. He promised her that from that day on, the Bait-ul-Maal would give her a grant for her to be able to support her children until they grew up.

### The Prophet's Gift

Whenever the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) followers reaped their first harvest, they brought early, fresh fruits to him. Then he would distribute them among those who sat around him. One morning, a poor man brought one fruit from his small farm and gave it to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) accepted the gift, tasted it and then went on eating it alone while the companions watched. One of those present meekly said:

"O Prophet of Allah, you have overlooked the right of those who watch while you eat?"

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) smiled and waited till the man who had brought the fruit had gone. Then he said:

"I tasted the fruit and it was not yet ripe. Had I allowed you to have some of it, someone would have definitely shown his distaste, thus disappointing the poor man who brought this gift.

Rather than make him feel bitter, I accepted the bitterness."

## Jokes

### WHO'S RICHER?

One day, Yusuf and Yunus were arguing about whose father was richer.

YUSUF: "My father is so rich that he's going to buy the Pacific Ocean!"

YUNUS: "Well, if you don't keep quiet, I'll tell my dad not to sell it."

### UNANSWERABLE

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, he said: "Now boys, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it and I would turn red in the face."

"Yes, sir," the boys said.

"Then, why is it that while I am standing upright, in the ordinary position, the blood doesn't run into my feet?" the teacher asked.

Little Abdullah shouted, "Because your feet ain't empty!"

## Thank You Mom!!

Sent via e-mail

When you came into the world, she held you in her arms. You thanked her by wailing like a banshee.

When you were 1 year old, she fed you and bathed you. You thanked her by crying all night long.

When you were 2 years old, she taught you to walk. You thanked her by running away when she called.

When you were 3 years old, she made all your meals with love. You thanked her by tossing your plate on the floor.

When you were 4 years old, she gave you some crayons. You thanked her by coloring the dining room table.

When you were 5 years old, she dressed you for the holidays. You thanked her by plopping into the nearest pile of mud

When you were 6 years old, she walked you to school. You thanked her by screaming, "I'M NOT GOING!"

When you were 7 years old, she bought you a baseball. You thanked her by throwing it through the next-door-neighbor's window.

When you were 8 years old, she handed you an ice cream. You thanked her by dripping it all over your lap.

When you were 9 years old, she paid for piano lessons. You thanked her by never even bothering to practice.

When you were 10 years old, she drove you all day, from soccer to gymnastics to one birthday party after another. You thanked her by jumping out of the car and never looking back.

When you were 11 years old, she took you and your friends to

the movies. You thanked her by asking to sit in a different row.

When you were 12 years old, she warned you not to watch certain TV shows. You thanked her by waiting until she left the house.

Those teenage years

When you were 13, she suggested a haircut that was becoming. You thanked her by telling her she had no taste.

When you were 14, she paid for a month away at summer camp. You thanked her by forgetting to write a single letter.

When you were 15, she came home from work, looking for a hug. You thanked her by having your bedroom door locked.

When you were 16, she taught you how to driver her car. You thanked her by taking it every chance you could.

When you were 17, she was expecting an important call. You

thanked her by being on the phone all night.

When you were 18, she cried at your high school graduation. You thanked her by staying out partying until dawn.

Growing old and gray

When you were 19, she paid for your college tuition, drove you to campus, carried your bags. You thanked her by saying good-bye outside the dorm so you wouldn't be embarrassed in front of your friends.

When you were 20, she asked whether you were seeing anyone. You thanked her by saying, "It's none of your business."

When you were 21, she suggested certain careers for your future. You thanked her by saying, "I don't want to be like you."

When you were 22, she hugged you at your college graduation. You thanked her by asking

whether she could pay for a trip to Europe.

When you were 23, she gave you furniture for your first apartment. You thanked her by telling your friends it was ugly.

When you were 24, she met your fiancé and asked about your plans for the future. You thanked her by glaring and growling, "Muuhh-ther, please!"

When you were 25, she helped to pay for your wedding, and she cried and told you how deeply she loved you. You thanked her by moving halfway across the country.

When you were 30, she called with some advice on the baby. You thanked her by telling her, "Things are different now."

And then, one day, she quietly died. And everything you never did came crashing down like thunder.

## Community in Action

### Islam in Canada 2000

by our reporters

Participate. Be active. Do not complain. Combine Deen and Dunya. Stand for morals and rights!

These were the messages given by the speakers Haroon Siddiqi and Imam Khalid Abdul Fattah Griggs at the symposium held on Saturday April 29. It was a forum to initiate discussion of major issues that affect the Muslim community and to foster an attitude of co-operation and tolerance among Islamic organizations. Effort was made to re-establish a sense of moderation and mainstream Islam among the Muslim population. An array of sponsors revealed that an attempt was obviously made to bring together different Muslim organizations and their affiliates to work as one body.

The speeches were followed by a series of workshops. Issues dealt with revolved around activism (passiveness?) among the Muslim community, domestic violence, role of our youth in today's society, and the importance of networking or pooling of resources.

Ways were discussed to chart a common vision for Muslims in Canada, involve the community to participate in the Canadian politics and join hands if agreement on issues is 51% rather than waiting to fine 100% similarity in ideas.

The focus of the program was to discuss how Muslim Or-

ganizations could start to work together in common causes. It was noted that a "Generation Gap" exists in many organizations, since most institutions are run by older men in their fifties. Not only was there concern that these institutions were often run as they would be in "Third World" countries, but also that the older generation only used the younger people for specific volunteer tasks, but did not involve them in more meaningful ways. It was humorous when one of the panel members suggested that this older generation not only excludes those in their 20's, but also often those in the 30's and 40's!

An interesting point was brought up when one of the panelists suggested that while the younger generation has ideas, they are the ones that don't have any assets or money in the bank for Islamic causes. The older generation is running the institutions and controls the resources, but lacks new ideas.

Everyone agreed that Muslims do NOT need more new organizations and new institutions, but greater co-operation, information-sharing and mergers between organizations is required to gain economies of scale and become more efficient by reducing duplication. Suggestions for information sharing included greater use of the Internet, media resources, and better Friday Khutbahs that were more relevant to people's real

## ISSA Conference

### A Giant Leap for North American Muslims

ISSA press release

Social services are an integral part of our duty as Muslims. For this reason, a progressive organization named ISSA (Islamic Social Services Association) was born last year at the Annual Conference of Muslim Social Services in Virginia. This year, ISSA had the opportunity to hold their first conference from April 21-23, 2000 in Toronto, Canada.

Alhamdulillah, the conference was a complete success, allowing professionals and Islamic workers from all fields coming from as far as Texas, California, Florida, and Alberta to network, exchange ideas, and encourage the good.

ISSA is a unique organisation since it is not a social service provider, but rather an organisation that can serve "as a network for addressing the social service concerns Muslims have. [It] aims to provide support to social service providers . . . through education, training, services, and advocacy." It is, therefore, an organisation that helps Muslims to set up and successfully provide social services within their own communities, rather than running these services for communities. This approach helps to empower local Muslims

in providing help to their communities and decreases dependency on larger associations. ISSA acts as a national link and resource between these smaller community-based organisations and is the next step necessary for social services in North America.

The "S.O.S. 2000" Conference was held at the beautiful Regal Constellation Hotel in Toronto, and started off with a welcome address by Aneesah Nadir, President of ISSA.

A variety of topics were covered within the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah during the three-day conference. These included neighbourly needs, disabilities, marriage contracts, refugee resettlement, patient-care services, cognitive disorders, the human psyche, caring for elders, Alzheimer's disease and dementia, treating addiction, culturally-related gender bias, and challenges facing Muslim parents and youth.

Among the many inspirational speakers were Omayya Rakieh, Rabia Khedr, Ahmad Kutty, Faisal Kutty, Altaf Hussain, Dr. Fariyal Ross Sheriff, Ahmad Teebi, Ayman Al-Taher, Imam Muhammad, Shahina Siddiqui, Wahida Valiante,

Continued on page 5

## Success Stories

### Dr. Sharifah Mokhtar

by Sister Wilma, Staff Reporter

Dr. Sharifah Mokhtar, her kind face beaming, hurried towards the steps of the restaurant where she was to be interviewed. Despite her very busy schedule at Sick Kids Hospital, she had agreed to meet for a brief time for our little chat.

It was a brisk and cold day, and my mind questioned why this Malaysian-born lady was here in Toronto rather than in her homeland of Malaysia where it was much warmer! The answer came during the process of the interview, her reason an excellent one. She had arrived here in September 1999 to work at Sick Kids for a period of one year as a Paediatric Cardiologist.

Some background information on Malaysia may prove of interest here. Malaysia's population is mainly Muslim. Under the constitution, there is equal opportunity for higher education for both sexes and as a result, there are many women lawyers, doctors, executives, etc.

Women, with their caring nature, are immanently suited to be doctors and Dr. Mokhtar is a good

example of this. In Malaysia, she

worked as a general paediatric doctor as well as a Paediatric Cardiologist. Although cardiology is a tough field and takes years of study, she feels women have a special place in that field due to their empathic and sensitive natures.

When asked what the difference is between cardiology for adults and children, her answer was very enlightening: "Adult cardiology deals more with ischaemic heart diseases where the vessels that nourish the heart muscle are blocked," said Dr. Mokhtar.

"On the other hand, paediatric cardiology deals more with abnormalities in the development of the heart and its anatomy. For an example, the heart may have defects (holes) in it. The blood vessels of the heart may be small, causing obstruction to blood flow or the valves may be small or absent. So, in short there are 1001 abnormalities that can just affect any part of the heart."

The talk turned towards faith in God and how it affected her studies and her life work. In Dr.

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Sunnah, so that we become aware of what is required of us. This will make us less susceptible to following extreme ideas out of ignorance.

The final session of the day saw moderators from each workshop presenting recommendations. A common theme was that of unity among the various organisations and a reaffirmation of the

Continued on page 15

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**The Ambition** to a friend  
after reading.  
Help us bring  
the message of Islam  
to others.

Mokhtar's own words, we learn that "the more I learn about medicine and the higher I go in my education, the stronger is my faith in Allah. He creates it and sometimes medicine cannot explain it. There are a lot of things in medicine that we still cannot explain. It is His Will and His creation. In Islam, it is said that for every disease there is a treatment, though sometimes we can't cure everything."

As a mother of three small children, Dr. Mokhtar finds it difficult to fit any recreational activities in for herself such as reading, television, newspapers, shopping, etc. Her time is confined to hospital and home. She rises very early in the morning to pray, do her studies and her housework, plus cook for her family's needs during the day. After a long and tiring day at the hospital, she comes home to be with her family and to spend quality time with them before settling them to sleep.

When asked how she feels as a Muslim woman to hear reports in the mainstream media of the oppression of women in Muslim countries, her answer was direct and to the point: "In Islam women and men are equal in the eyes of Allah. Oppression of women in particular, and human beings in general, is cruel and should not be happening. In this world, I really hope and pray to God that there will be peace and I always pray for the well being of all Muslims in my daily prayers."

Although Dr. Mokhtar's stay in Toronto will only be a year and her workload heavy, she made it very clear that she admires the hard-working people she has met at her work and looks forward to going to her job each day. She intends to learn as much as she can so that her stay will be fruitful and she can bring back as much knowledge as possible to her own country.

We, at The Ambition, wish her all of God's blessings as she continues her stay among us.