

Significance of 'Eid-ul-Fitr

'Eid is a Day of Islam and a Day of God

by Imam Faisal Abdur-Razak

'Eid-ul-Fitr is the annual festival for Muslims throughout the world. It occurs at the end of the month of Ramadan, on the first day of the month of Shawwal, which is the tenth month of the Islamic year. It is the festival or feast after the fast of Ramadan.

'Eid-ul-Fitr means "recurring happiness or festivity," and the Day of 'Eid is very important for all Muslims.

'Eid-ul-Fitr is unique in every way. It has the merits of the daily prayers, the effects of the weekly congregation (Jumu'ah), and the characteristics of annual reunions between Muslims.

There are many spiritual and moral virtues of 'Eid-ul-Fitr.

It is a wholesome celebration of a remarkable achievement of the individual Muslim in the service of Almighty God. It comes at the end of a month of fasting and abstinence for the pleasure of Almighty God. This is certainly a great accomplishment for the Believer.

'Eid-ul-Fitr is a Day of Thanksgiving where Muslims assemble in a brotherly and joyful atmosphere to offer their thanks and gratitude to Almighty God for helping them fulfil their spiritual obligations during the month of Ramadan. This form of Thanksgiving is not confined to spiritual devotion and verbal expressions; it goes far beyond that to manifest itself in an amazing expression of social and humanitarian concern. The Muslims, having completed the month-long fast of Ramadan, distribute charity among the poor and needy on this day. And so, even when in his happiest mood, a Muslim is required not only to express thanks to Almighty God, but also

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Ramadan: A Fasting and Festive Season for Muslims

All three dimensions of human personality — physiological, psychological, and spiritual — are developed through Ramadan's wholesome training in excellence

by Ayub A. Hamid

The visibility of the new moon on the North American horizon starts the blessed month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar. Ramadan has a very special significance for over one billion Muslims in the world.

It was one night during Ramadan that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) started receiving the revelation of the Word of God through Archangel Gabriel. Muhammad (pbuh) was meditating and reflecting upon the plight of humanity when Angel Gabriel appeared to him with the Revelation. Caught by surprise, Muhammad (pbuh) was terrified and shaken by this first experience. The Revelations continued for the next twenty-three years. These revelations constitute the Qur'an, which we as Muslims, believe is the precise and literal Word of God.

For Muslims, the Qur'an is the fundamental source of divine guidance and a complete code of life. It is also seen as a living miracle that non-Muslims of any time, era, or age can experience until the Last Day. Although Muslims are required to read and benefit from the Qur'an daily, Qur'anic recitations becomes much more important during Ramadan. Muslims try to read the entire Qur'an at least once during this month. At night, Muslims are encouraged to offer special prayers with extra readings from the Qur'an.

The most important feature of Ramadan is fasting. The fast prohibits all eating, drinking, and sexual activity from dawn to sunset, every day for the entire month. The normal satisfaction of bodily needs can be resumed, in moderation, each evening. No one is required to fast while sick, travelling, or menstruating. Such people, however, must fast for the missed days when they are feeling well and less vulnerable.

The fast, however, is much

more than a restriction on bodily appetites. The fast is intended to prevail over all our senses. It is to help us guard against seeing, hearing, or even contemplating any undesirable activity. Behaviours and social vices that are normally undesirable and unlawful for a Muslim become even more offensive and sinful during fasting. Lying, jealousy, arguments, fighting, use of abusive language, harsh words, gossiping, and vain talk are some of the things that observant Muslims always try to avoid. These kinds of undesirable behaviours are avoided extra-carefully

when fasting during Ramadan. Forgiveness, graciousness, and generosity are the kind of qualities Islam strongly encourages in its followers at all times. They become a vital part the Muslim personality during fasting.

This wholesome concept of fasting is designed to train Muslims to practise restraint, to resist temptations, to control their emotions, to improve their behaviour, and to get rid of undesirable traits they may have acquired throughout the year. In fact, fasting can have a profound effect on human

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Muslims and the Vote

By not voting and making their voices heard, Muslims are ignoring an important religious and civic duty.

by Dr. Mohamed Elmasry

Students learn in Politics 101 that an individual's private life — that which affects him or her and the family — would not be possible without the overarching public world of the state, which sustains a structure of laws appropriate for ensuring individual rights and freedoms. Moreover, those freedoms include every person's choice and practice of religious faith.

Students also learn in Politics

101 that the broad genre termed "politics" used to refer almost exclusively to the actions of presidents, monarchs, statesmen, or ministers, as well as to politically-committed collectives such as parliaments, councils, assemblies, or legislatures. But with our modern-day expansion of governmental influence into virtually every sphere of human activity, all that we are and do has come to be described, in one way or another, as "political."

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Please treat this Islamic Journal with respect!

Editorial

The Importance of Jerusalem In Islam and to All Muslims

The stories and teachings of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Zechariah, John the Baptist, and Jesus — peace be upon them all — are told throughout the Qur'an. They are among the honoured Prophets and Messengers of Allah. Jews and Christians also recognise Prophets David and Solomon as great kings and patriarchs of ancient Israel.

Since the City of Jerusalem is historically associated with these Prophets, it naturally becomes a sacred city to Muslims, as Islam considers itself a continuation of the same spiritual and ethical movement that began with the earlier Messengers. In Arabic, Jerusalem is called *Al-Quds al-Sharif* (the Noble Sanctuary). It is among the three most sacred cities in Islam.

Makkah is blessed due to its association with Prophets Abraham, Ishmael, and Muhammad (peace be upon them). Madinah is sacred because Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) lived and died there. Similarly, Jerusalem is blessed and important in Islam because of its association with Prophets David, Solomon, and Jesus (peace be upon them).

Due to its religious status, Jerusalem had a very important place in the life of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) himself. In 620 CE, a year before his *Hijrah* (migration) from Makkah to Madinah, the famous events of *Al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj* (the Night Journey and the Ascension) occurred.

One night, in a miraculous way, the Prophet was taken by Archangel Gabriel on a momentous journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and then from Jerusalem to the Seven Heavens. It is reported that he stood on the Sacred Rock (now under the Dome of the Rock), went to the Heavens, returned to Jerusalem and met with many Prophets and Messengers, who had gathered together for him on that occasion, and led them in prayers. During *Al-Mi'raj*, the Prophet (pbuh) received from Allah the commandment of five daily prayers that all Muslims must perform.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the early Muslims used Jerusalem as their *Qibla* (direction of worship) during their stay in Makkah. After the *Hijrah*, Muslims in Madinah also continued to pray facing Jerusalem for more than sixteen months. Then came down Allah's command that they must face Makkah instead (Qur'an 2:142-150).

However, this change in no way diminished Jerusalem's status in Islam, as the Ka'bah in Makkah was always meant to be the *Qibla* from the beginning (Qur'an 3:96) — established for humankind to worship the One God. Since the Ka'bah was full of idols when the Prophet (pbuh) began preaching Islam, Jerusalem served as *Qibla* by distancing the people from their pagan heritage. Once monotheism had been fully established, the way was clear to pray towards the Ka'bah once more.

Interestingly, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that one should not undertake a journey (with the intention of worshipping) except to three mosques, which included *Al-Masjid al-Aqsa* in Jerusalem (related by Al-Bukhari). Therefore, Muslims have always considered it a religious deed to visit Jerusalem, its mosque, and its sacred and blessed precincts.

In 638 CE, Jerusalem came under Islamic rule during the reign of the second Righteous Caliph, 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). The site of *Al-Masjid al-Aqsa* and the Rock was desolate, as the Romans had destroyed the so-called Second Temple in 70 CE. According to historians, it had become a garbage dump. Upon hearing this, 'Umar cleaned the site with his own hands and put his forehead in prayer on its ground. In 691 CE, the Dome of Rock was constructed and a more elaborate mosque was rebuilt.

History has shown that Muslims have always recognised the rights of Jews and Christians to live freely within Jerusalem's walls. However, Jews and Muslims were banned from the city during the Crusades, from 1099-1187 CE. Shortly afterwards, it was re-conquered by Salahuddin and the Jews were once again permitted to live peacefully in the city.

Salahuddin and his successors ruled Jerusalem and the land surrounding it, namely Palestine. Allah's blessings are extended to this land, as the site of *Al-Masjid al-Aqsa* is called "the Holy Land" (Qur'an 5:21) and its surroundings are known as "God's Blessed Precincts" (Qur'an 17:1). Palestine was the land place where *Wahy* (revelation) came down to the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. Now it is the homeland of millions of refugees waiting to return — waiting to live and move freely through its valleys and streets, just as many Prophets and Messengers did so long ago.

The events and Qur'anic verses mentioned above are unequivocal proof that Jerusalem and Palestine hold a sacred place in Islam and in the hearts of all Muslims. As Muslims, we have a right to the City of Jerusalem religiously, historically, and legally under international law. In its entire history, the longest rule has belonged to Muslims, and through Islam, the sacredness of Jerusalem was maintained, in the full sense of the word.

Hence, the current conflict in Jerusalem and Palestine should not be viewed as one of nationalism. Our fellow Muslims are sacrificing their lives to establish the rule of Islam over a land that has always enjoyed the most tolerant multi-faith policies, which were established and practised during Muslim rule. We ask Allah that their struggles are fruitful and that peace prevails once more — a peace that the region has lacked for over fifty years.

Muhammad Basil Ahmad

Our Mail

Reader keeps record of Muslim medal winners at the Summer Olympics

As an Olympics fan, I watched the Sydney Games with some level of disappointment. I saw our athletes defeated one after another or completely ignored. But then I got down to tracking each team and compiled a list of all the Muslim medal winners. Just that exercise gave me some joy and I would like to share this information, which I have collected after a painstakingly difficult weekend. **Out of 928 medals awarded at the Games, Muslim athletes won 43.** I have some conclusions and observations based on the results but I will ask if you notice any trends in these results. Hats off to these Muslim athletes who for a brief moment gave me a sense of pride.

GOLD Medallists (16)

1. Brahim Asloun of France (Boxing)
2. Hamza Yerlikaya of Turkey (Greco-Roman Wrestling)
3. Hussein Ozkan of Turkey (Judo)
4. Halil Mothe of Turkey (Weightlifting)
5. Mourad Oumakhanov of Russia (Freestyle Wrestling)
6. Saghid Montasaliyer of Russia (Freestyle Wrestling)
7. Mourat Kardanov of Russia (Greco-Roman Wrestling)
8. Nouria Berida of Algeria (Women's 1,500-Metres)
9. Hendrowan of Indonesia (Men's Badminton)
10. Behzat Sattarkhanov of Kazakhstan (Boxing)
11. Yermankahnov Ibraimov of Kazakhstan (Boxing)
12. Alireaz Dabir of Iran (Freestyle Wrestling)
13. Hossein Rezaaddeh of Iran (Weightlifting)
14. Hosein Tavakoli of Iran (Weightlifting)
15. Naim Abdullayer of Azerbaijan (Freestyle Wrestling)
16. Mahammadkadyz Abdullaer of Uzbekistan (Boxing)

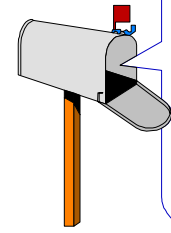
SILVER Medallists (12)

1. Faisal Ebnou-Talib of Germany (Tae-Kwon-Do)
2. Larbi BenbouDaoud of France (Judo)
3. Bulat Jumadilov of Kazakhstan (Boxing)
4. Mukhtarkhan Dildabekov of Kazakhstan (Boxing)
5. Islam Basramkov of Kazakhstan (Freestyle Wrestling)

6. Gaiderbek Gaiderbekov of Russia (Boxing)
7. Sultanahmed Izbazimov of Russia (Boxing)
8. Minarti Timur of Indonesia (Badminton)
9. Ali Saidi-Seif of Algeria
10. Artur Taymazar of Uzbekistan (Wrestling)
11. Hicham El Guerrouj of Morocco (Men's 1,500-Metres)
12. Hadi Souan Somayli of Saudi Arabia (400-Metre Hurdles)

BRONZE Medallists (15)

1. Mohammed Ibragimov of Macedonia (Wrestling)
2. Saif Said Ali of Qatar (Weightlifting)
3. Fehaid Ali Dehavi of Kuwait (Shooting)
4. Khaled Al Eid of Saudi Arabia (Equestrian Events)
5. Nouzha Bidoune of Morocco (Women's 400-Metre Hurdles)



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letters@theambition.com

6. Tahar Tamsaman of Morocco (Boxing)
7. Ali Ezzine of Morocco (3,000-Metre Steeplechase)
8. Brakmin Lalilafi of Morocco (5,000 Metres)
9. Abdelrahman Hammad of Algeria (High Jump)
10. Alissa Said Guerni of Algeria (800-Metres)
11. Binti Slammat of Indonesia (Women's Weightlifting)
12. Hamide Bikan of Turkey (Women's Tae-Kwon-Do)
13. Hadi Saebonehkoal of Iran (Tae-Kwon-Do)
14. Tamerlane Menor of Russia (Judo)
15. Kamil Dzamalutdinov of Russia (Boxing)

Tarek Fatah

Toronto Muslims rally for peace in Palestine

by Farah Ali

TORONTO (15/10/2000)— Although it was far from a bright, sunny Sunday, an estimated 3,000 Muslims of all nationalities and ages gathered to show their support and concern over the violence and conflict in the Middle East.

Muslims in Canada want to show the grief and sorrow they feel for fellow Muslims in Palestine. "No Justice, No Peace" was the general chant of Muslims and slogans such as "Stop the Bloodshed" were displayed. Among the crowd, one could see many little children who accompanied their parents. While walking with his parents, one little boy holding a small Palestinian flag shouted, "Stop killing the children!"

The rally, which lasted for approximately 2 1/2 hours, started in front of the US Consulate on University Avenue and ended at the Israeli Consulate on Bloor Street West. As the protesters marched, they chanted "Allahu-Akbar" (God is Great) and "La-ilaha-ill-Allah, Muhammadur-Rasulullah" (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger).

Some demonstrators became a little emotional because of their strong ties with Palestine.

In general, the slogans and chants were intended to send the message that Muslims want peace and justice in Palestine and that Muslims in North America feel that Canada and the US should aid in this cause and make this dream a reality. (Palestinian and Canadian flags were upheld at the rally.) The Palestinians at the rally said that they wanted back their own land, recognition of their nationhood, and for the fighting to cease.

Among supporters for Palestine were Scarborough-Agincourt Liberal MP Jim Karygiannis and Niagara Centre New Democrat MPP Peter Kormos.

A Canadian protester had this to say: "I am here to show support for all those who died, including the young children. I was very distressed when I saw the killing of the 12-year-old boy, Muhammad Al-Dura, who was shot while in the arms of his father. It is upsetting to see Palestinians throwing rocks while the Israelis have big tanks and machine guns. I am here to show my support for peace and justice in the Middle East."

Overall, those who were at the rally considered the demonstra-

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Lailatul-Qadr: The Night of Power

by Nosheen Mian, University of Toronto (St. George campus)

Lailatul-Qadr (the Night of Power) marks one of history's most important moments. It is the night during which Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) descended from the Heavens with the Qur'an, to reveal it to Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) by Allah's command. The paramount importance and benefits of Lailatul-Qadr are best described in Surah Al-Qadr, where Allah (swt) has stated: "Indeed, We sent it (i.e., the Qur'an) down during the Night of Power. And what can make you know what is the Night of Power? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. The Angels and the Spirit (i.e., Gabriel) descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace it is until the emergence of dawn" (Qur'an 97).

The blessed night, whose value is greater than 30,000 nights, lies anywhere in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan (the nights before the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th day of fasting). It is narrated in various Hadiths (that have unanimously been agreed

upon as being authentic), that the Prophet (pbuh) was once on his way to tell the people during an argument amongst two men, of the exact night of Lailatul-Qadr, but was made to forget by Allah. So it can be understood that Allah does not want the Believers to give up the *Salat* (prayers) of all the other nights by knowing which night is the Night of Power. Thus, the faithful believer, who does not want to give up the chance to reap the many benefits of this night, strives to find it every night during the last ten days of Ramadan, so that he/she may be forgiven for his/her sins, gain Allah's blessings, and increase his/her righteous deeds, amongst countless other things.

So, what should one do during the last ten days of Ramadan in pursuit of Lailatul-Qadr? The devoted servants of Allah spend these nights awake, and fills them with prayer, reading and reflecting on Qur'an, making *Du'a* (supplication) to Allah, and asking for forgiveness. For a time, the Believers' only objective is to cleanse themselves of the forgetfulness, the insensitivity, and the sins that

this life has inflicted them with.

It is a time where one can sharply increase one's *Iman* (faith), *Taqwa* (God-consciousness), and number of good deeds. The devout Muslim is inspired by the Prophet's words: "Our Lord — Most Exalted, Most High — comes down to the lowest Heaven during the last third of each night and announces (reassuringly): 'Whoever makes *Du'a*, I shall answer it. Whoever asks (for something Halal) I shall grant it, and whoever seeks forgiveness, I shall forgive him'" (related by Al-Bukhari).

Having spent the entire night in devout prayer, *Dhikr* (remembering God) and *Du'a*, the Believer rejoices. Hoping that this was quite possibly Lailatul-Qadr and remembering that "whoever stays up (in prayer and remembrance of Allah) on the Night of Qadr, fully believing (in Allah's promise of reward for that night) and hoping to seek reward (from Allah alone and not from people), he shall be forgiven for his past sins" (related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim), brings about hope and joy in one's life.

An interesting analogy comes to mind. Suppose you had a job, and during one of the last five odd nights of a particular month each year, your boss offered to pay you the equivalent of 30,000 days of work. Would you not be the first person to offer your labour those nights in hope to catch that one lucky night? Would a few extra hours of sleep be your top priority? Ponder this for a moment or two and the answers become quite clear and obvious.

So, my Brothers and Sisters in Islam, I sincerely hope that this Ramadan we will all actively take part in the festivities and reap the numerous benefits and blessings of this holy month, and stay up in worship during the last ten nights of Ramadan seeking Lailatul-Qadr.

Insha-Allah, I make *Du'a* that Allah will forgive us for our sins and guide us all to the right path: the path of those whom He has favoured and away from the path of those whom have earned His Wrath, so that on the Day of Judgement He may open the Doors of *Jannah* (Paradise) for us and close the doors of *Jahannam* (Hell). Ameen.

From the Qur'an

Exalted is He who took His Servant (i.e., Prophet Muhammad) by night from Al-Masjid al-Haram to Al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our Signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

(Qur'an 17:1)

From the Hadith

Abu Hurayra (ra) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Do not set out on a journey except for three Mosques, i.e., Al-Masjid al-Haram (in Makkah), the Mosque of Allah's Messenger (in Madinah), and Al-Masjid al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem)."

(Al-Bukhari 2:281)

Toronto Rally for Palestine

Continued from page 2

tion peaceful and successful. However, at one point a few teenagers burnt an Israeli flag. Nevertheless, demonstration leaders and organisers did a good job of controlling the crowd. Although there was a large police presence, there was no cause for any action by them.

At the Sharm-el-Sheikh Summit in Egypt, Middle Eastern leaders agreed to try to end the conflict and to set up of a fact-finding committee on the violence.

Percepta refuses to compensate Muslim

OTTAWA — Percepta, an American-based venture of the Ford Motor Company, is refusing to pay damages to a Muslim job applicant who says company officials discriminated against him.

The applicant was rejected from a job with Percepta in June after explaining that he was required by his religion to attend Friday prayers and pray at appointed times while on the job. The prospective employee says that a Percepta recruiting officer told him his qualifications were "excellent," but the company would not allow him to attend prayer and that if he did not withdraw his request for religious accommodation, he would not be included in the remainder of the selection process.

Percepta does not deny that it refused to accommodate the applicant's religious practices. A Percepta official told a Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) representative that the applicant's request to pray on the job was "problematic" and would cause "difficulties."

Following intervention by CAIR-CAN, Percepta

invited the applicant to re-apply for the position, but the company has not said it will change its policy and accommodate the religious practices of its employees. The applicant rejected the offer to re-apply and is instead seeking compensation for the wages he lost as a result of Percepta's policy." Percepta's conduct in this case is sending a clear message that they will not tolerate religious diversity in its work force," said Nancy Neville, a director of CAIR-CAN. "If this company wants to be a responsible member of this community, then it needs to respond to the Muslim community's reasonable requests for the resolution of this issue."

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CAIR Action Alert: Support the Victims of Israeli Aggression

Muslims must defend their holy sites in Palestine and Jerusalem

WASHINGTON, DC (1/10/2000) — The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is asking that Muslims do what they can to alleviate the suffering of civilians in the Occupied Territories of Palestine. Scores of civilians, including children, have been killed and hundreds have been wounded by Israeli armed forces using anti-tank missiles, grenades, and helicopter gunships. Many of these weapons are paid for using American taxpayer dollars.

The Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF), an American Muslim relief group that works with needy Palestinians, estimates that more than 100 children have been orphaned as a result of Israeli attacks. HLF reports that more than half of the bullet

wounds are in the chest or above. Hospitals are overloaded and short of supplies.

The bloodshed began on Thursday, September 28, 2000, after Israeli right-wing extremist Ariel Sharon forced his way into the Haram Al-Sharif, Islam's holiest site in Jerusalem, accompanied by 1,000 heavily armed troops. Palestinians protesting this intentional provocation have been brutally suppressed by the Israeli army. In October 1990, occupation forces massacred 17 worshippers at the Haram Al-Sharif, and again stormed the compound in September 1996, killing fifty-nine Palestinians in clashes that followed.

Ariel Sharon was the mastermind behind Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, which claimed more

than 20,000 Palestinian and Lebanese lives, and the notorious massacres of thousands of Palestinian men, women, and children at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon during the same year.

In one of the most horrifying scenes shown on world television, 12-year-old Muhammad Al-Dura was shot dead in cold blood by an Israeli sniper, while his father, Jamal, was trying to protect him from the hail of Israeli bullets. Shortly thereafter, when Palestinian Red Crescent Society ambulance driver Bassam Al-Balbisi, approached the father and son in order to move them into an ambulance, he was shot and killed by the Israeli sniper as well. Jamal Al-Dura, the father of five remaining

children, remains in critical condition, having sustained five bullet wounds to the upper thigh, pelvis, stomach, and lower leg.

"The events of recent days have clearly shown that there will never be peace in the region as long as Israeli forces occupy Jerusalem," said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad.

Immediate action requested:

1) Make Du'a (supplications) for those who are suffering.

2) Contact your elected representatives to demand that Israeli troops withdraw from Palestinian cities and Islamic holy sites, and that the government denounces and not turn a blind-eye toward Israeli use of excessive force against civilians.

3) Contact US President

Clinton by telephone (202) 456-1414, fax (202) 456-2461, or e-mail president@whitehouse.gov. E-mail Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien at pm@pm.gc.ca.

4) Sponsor a Palestinian child orphaned in the recent massacres by contacting the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, 525 International Parkway, Suite 509, Richardson, TX 75081, USA. Visit their website at www.hlf.org. In Canada, contact the Jerusalem Fund for Human Services by telephone (905) 897-8772, fax (905) 897-7820, or e-mail info@jfhs.ca.

5) Attend or sponsor a rally in your city in support of the Palestinian people.

Go to www.palestine-un.org for a history of Palestine and all UN Resolutions concerning it.

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Investing for Canadian Muslims

Muslims need to put their money where their mouths are

by Gemma Salamat,

CFP, CHRP, CEB, Financial Advisor

A new mutual fund is now available for the estimated 750,000 Muslims who make Canada their home. The fund is known as Socially Acceptable Market Investments (SAMI) and was introduced last fall by Nova Bancorp, now StrategicNova.

Islamic investing is governed by the principles of the Islamic Shari'ah, mainly derived from the Qur'an (the Muslim holy book) and the Sunnah (the traditions of Prophet Muhammad). Islamic scholars have further clarified these principles for modern-day application. Under these principles, there can be no paying or receiving of interest and no invest-

ments in companies whose businesses and activities are in any way related to pork, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, cinema, gambling, pornography, and entertainment.

Until the SAMI fund, devout Muslims wanting a pure fund had to devise their own methods to invest within our traditional banking system. Their only options were to try to find companies in Islamic businesses or invest in real estate. This prevented many from investing, particularly those with only little start-up money or those who could not afford the money, or did not want to do research and use brokers.

To get around this, some asked

their banks to withhold the "interest" amounts, which obviously led to administrative and legal challenges for the institutions concerned. However, some ultra-conservatives ignored the banks to the extent possible by operating predominantly in a cash or "under-the-mattress" world.

The SAMI is a mutual fund and it is one of more than 3,000 available to the Canadian public. It can be used for all types of savings, including RRSP's. A mutual fund is a pool of investors' money managed to generate investment income. Investors purchase units of a fund at a price called the unit value and would profit or lose when the unit value increased or

decreased.

The fund can invest up to 25% of its assets in foreign companies to remain qualified for RRSP monies and next year this will increase to 30%. Its holdings are predominantly in oil and gas, industrial products, metals and minerals, gold and silver, and software and telecommunications companies. Currently, its portfolio includes shares of Alcan, Imperial Oil, Nortel, Magna, Barrick, and Petro-Canada to name a few.

According to one of SAMI's devout Muslim investors, the ability to invest in an Islamic way is a relief as the non-Islamic way was yet another "demerit point" to Hell. Yet, another says, "At last I

can save for my Hajj with a clear conscience, knowing that this money is Halal."

The people who manage SAMI and an advisor from Dow Jones who put together the Islamic Market Index, or list of companies which are acceptable for Islamic investments, were at the TARIC Islamic Centre immediately after Jumu'ah on October 20, 2000. According to them, very soon you can use SAMI for Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP's). Other Islamic funds will be added in the near future.

The legal minimum investment to get into this fund now is \$3,000 (smaller amounts are accepted), but this will soon change to \$500 when a new prospectus becomes final. A prospectus is the document filed with the provincial regulators, which sets out how a mutual fund is to be run. A simplified copy of a fund's prospectus is to be made available to investors before they purchase units of a fund. Its purpose is for consumer protection and information.

Each mutual fund must state in broad terms what it can or cannot invest in and sets out its unique investment policy. The most common mutual funds are equity or stock funds, bond funds, and money market funds. Then there are specialty funds such as real estate and ethical funds. Some are Canadian based, others are foreign, and some will mix and match from all available classes of investments.

The trend today is for consolidation in the financial services industry with buyouts, strategic alliances, and mergers. A larger player in this business, such as Fidelity, AIM, or one of the major banks, could typically offer 400-500 funds — 30-60 of its own funds and the rest from its alliance partners. This gives investors more choice, but for the unsophisticated or new investor, the choice is overwhelming, confusing, and at times, frightening. Essential in this situation is the valuable assistance of a trusted financial advisor who will spend the time to provide education, assess your situation, and match you up with appropriate funds.

The SAMI fund is sold on a load basis, where investors pay a charge either at the time of purchase or redemption. Muslims wanting to transfer to this fund, or invest in it, should contact a financial advisor to discuss it. Generally, it is as simple as making an application and completing the necessary transfer forms, which can be done in one meeting. Your job will be to make sure you understand the options and the ramifications of investing.

A question I was asked recently was why are ethical funds

Continued on page 6

Pop quiz on the Middle East (Answers may surprise you!)

by Charley Reese,
The Orlando Sentinel
Sunday, February 8, 1998

Just so you can keep up with the perpetual crisis in the Middle East, I have a little quiz for you.

Question: Which country alone in the Middle East has nuclear weapons?

Answer: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East refuses to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and bars international inspections?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East seized the sovereign territory of other nations by military force and continues to occupy it in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East routinely violates the in-

ternational borders of another sovereign state with warplanes and artillery and naval gunfire?

A: Israel

Q: What American ally in the Middle East has for years sent assassins into other countries to kill its political enemies (a practice known as exporting terrorism)?

A: Israel

Q: In which country in the Middle East have high-ranking military officers admitted publicly that unarmed prisoners of war were executed?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East refuses to prosecute its soldiers who have acknowledged executing prisoners of war?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East created 762,000 refugees and refuses to allow them to return to their homes, farms, and businesses?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East refuses to pay compensation to people whose land, bank accounts, and businesses it confiscated?

A: Israel

Q: In which country in the Middle East was a diplomat assassinated?

A: Israel

Q: In which country in the Middle East did the man who ordered the assassination of a high-

ranking UN diplomat become prime minister?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East blew up an American diplomatic facility in Egypt and attacked a US ship in international waters, killing 33 and wounding 177 American sailors?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East employed a spy (Jonathan Pollard) to steal classified documents and then gave some of them to the former Soviet Union?

A: Israel

Q: Which country at first denied any official connection to Pollard, then voted to make him a citizen and has continuously de-

manded that the American president grant Pollard a full pardon?

A: Israel

Q: Which country on Earth has the second most powerful lobby in the United States, according to a recent *Fortune* magazine survey of Washington insiders?

A: Israel

Q: Which country in the Middle East is in defiance of 69 United Nations Security Council resolutions and has been protected from 29 more by US vetoes?

A: Israel

Q: Which country is the United States bombing for years because "UN Security Council resolutions must be obeyed?"

A: Iraq

Islamic Investment

Continued from page 5

not considered "Halal." The main reason is that they do not exclude investments in pork, entertainment, and interest in financial companies.

Typically, ethical funds are run on an ideological basis, investing only in companies that are good for humanity. These funds were not created for religious reasons. They promote socially conscious and ethical behaviours by encouraging investment in "good" industries and prohibiting investments in "bad" businesses. Restrictions include restrictive regimes and companies which carry on business undesirable for the environment or humanity such as tobacco, alcohol, weapons, sweatshops, pornography, child labour, gambling, birth control, abortion, and animal welfare.

The SAMI is the only Islamic and Shari'ah compliant mutual fund in Canada today. However, to realise its full potential, generate stable results, and become a real force in the industry, the fund will undoubtedly have to become larger. Assets are now close to \$1,000,000. Therefore, Muslims need to put their money where their mouths are and not sit on the fence to wait and see what happens. Their commitment is needed in this building stage — for this fund and for other Islamic funds, which will surely come with greater utilisation.

You may contact the author at (905) 855-3332 or e-mail her at gemma@sympatico.ca for more information on the SAMI Fund. She manages investment portfolios for individuals and their families, develops strategies for wealth accumulation and estate planning, and provides insurance and retirement needs analysis and solutions. She also consults on the design and set up of company employee benefit programs.

Muslims Also Believe in Jesus (peace be upon him)

by Dr. Mohamed Elmasry, Ph.D., P.Eng. (As published by Canadian newspapers)

A few days before Christmas, a friend greeted me by saying, "Have a Merry Christmas." "Thank you," I replied. "I am a Muslim. Muslims don't celebrate Christmas, but they believe in Jesus." He was surprised and he was not alone.

Many Christians do not know Jesus (peace be upon him) holds an exalted place in Islam. Other than Christianity, Islam is the only religion that holds such deep love and respect for Jesus. The Qur'an, considered by Muslims to be the Last Testament from God Almighty, confirms that Jesus was born of a virgin by the same power and will of God Almighty who brought Adam (peace be upon him) into being without a father or a mother.

Jesus is the son of Mary, Spirit from God, and Word of God. He is the Messiah, a Prophet of God, and a Messenger of God. The Qur'an says: "God revealed to Jesus a book of guidance." He performed miracles by God's permission, including speaking coherently in infancy, raising the dead and healing the sick. He was "a model of love and humility," but "he never thought of claiming di-

Many Christians do not know he holds an exalted place in Islam

vine status." His message was: "God is your Lord and my Lord, so worship Him." When he was in danger of being killed, he was raised up to God without dying.

Although the position of Jesus in Islam is extraordinary, the Trinitarian concept is alien. The Divine Unity of God Almighty is a cornerstone in Islam. Muslims do not believe that Jesus is a divine incarnation and that his crucifixion and resurrection redeemed the sins of humankind and saved only those who have believed in Him. This puzzles many Christians.

Muslims do not believe in original sin. We believe faith without deeds is as insufficient as deeds without faith. We believe that the human race is not condemned from birth but has the gift of rational faculties, spiritual aspirations, and power of action.

Our understanding of each other's faith, based on facts, not stereotypes, is very important for both Muslims and Christians. Communication, debates, and dialogues are the keys to a better understanding.

Islam and Christianity are the two religious superpowers at present. The estimated number of the adherents in each is over one billion. Both faiths maintain their leadership by propagating their teachings effectively and retaining their appeal on the grounds that they are of universal relevance. Muslims feel that they know more about Christianity than Christians know about Islam. Muslims suffer from a thoroughly distorted medieval European image of Islam. Only through education can the immense gulf be crossed.

The doctrines that separate the two faiths, although profound, are few. Many beliefs, values, moral injunctions, and principles of behaviour are common. During any theological argument, the Qur'an advises Muslims to address Christians with respect as the "People of the Book," emphasising "our God and your God is One." The need of the moment is education. The attitude of many people, including many Muslims and Christians, is to regard all reli-

gions other than their own as inferior. However, the great need is the pursuit of peace, justice, and equality; three elements indispensable to the survival of humanity.

Understanding between Muslims and Christians must match the

urgency provoked by contemporary issues. As the number of Muslims in Canada increases, we hope to make Islam's view better known. Indeed, both Islam and Christianity can, and need to, work with others for a better world, not only for its survival.

Dr. Mohamed Elmasry is President of the Canadian Islamic Congress.

CTI Logistx accommodates Friday prayers

OTTAWA — CTI Logistx, located in Bramalea, Ontario has agreed to allow a Muslim employee to attend Friday prayers following intervention by the Canadian office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN).

The employee had approached CTI a few months ago with a request to attend Friday afternoon prayers. At the company's request, he provided religious documentation from local Muslim organisations. CTI initially approved the request, with the condition that there be a re-

placement for the employee during his absence. Since it was not always possible to fulfil this condition, the employee was unable to attend Friday prayers on a regular basis.

The employee contacted CAIR-CAN to resolve the dispute. Following discussions with CTI Contract Manager Mr. Gregory Lewis, the company immediately acknowledged that the employee's religious right to worship should be accommodated and agreed to his request without any conditions.

Ramadan: A Fasting and Festive Season

Continued from page 1

behaviour if practised properly.

Just imagine, what a splendid society we would have if every human being learned to control his or her temptations, urges, desires, and lusts. After all, aren't most crimes and social problems caused by people's lack of control over their behaviour?

Fasting is an act of worship with no outwardly visible manifestations. Whether someone is fasting or just pretending, only God will ever know. Similarly, when a fasting Believer endures hunger and thirst all day, he or she feels the presence of God more intensely. Subconsciously, the faster becomes increasingly aware of God's infinite knowledge of our motives, intentions, ideas, and actions. As this awareness grows and becomes part of the faster's personality, he becomes more vigilant over his own actions and intentions. In this way, fasting reforms the person from inside.

Although fasting is beneficial as an individual act, its benefits multiply when an entire community fasts together for a month. It creates a communal environment in which personal reformation and discipline penetrates quickly, deeply, and more permanently into

the hearts of individuals. During the fasting month, Muslims gather socially in the evenings to break the fast together. They also spend more time worshipping together in the mosques. All this social interaction creates stronger bonds among community members.

Ramadan is also the month in which charity, an important theme in the Holy Qur'an, is most strongly emphasised. Fasting is intended to remind Muslims of the importance of helping fellow human beings. The pangs of hunger during the day remind fasters of the agony of the deprived and starving people of the world. Being charitable, both financially and socially, is a life long responsibility of a Muslim, but one that he or she must make a top priority during this month.

Thus, the month of Ramadan with the fasting, charity, and worship that go with it, provides a holistic and comprehensive training program for the human personality.

The human personality has three dimensions: physiological, psychological, and spiritual. All three dimensions are developed through Ramadan's wholesome

training in excellence. Abstinence from physical needs during the day and reduction of sleep at night brings human urges under control and fine-tunes the physiological systems. Resisting temptations trains people psychologically. Also, the fact that the whole fasting exercise is only for God's pleasure makes it a superb spiritual experience which is further enhanced by additional prayers and Qur'anic recitation.

From a macro-perspective, a society is made up of individuals who interact socially and economically. Fasting influences both the individuals and their interactions. It is a very individual and private act of worship. Yet, it works to strengthen the social bonds and takes care of the economic needs of the deprived segments of our society.

Therefore, however you look at it, Ramadan is a month of blessings and virtues. The goodness of humanity blossoms in Ramadan like flowers in the spring. If all Muslims start fasting in the proper spirit, Muslim society will be at peace within itself and its surroundings, and all humanity will benefit from its ripple effect.

Significance of 'Eid-ul-Fitr

Continued from page 1

to remember his poor and needy brethren in a practical manner. This expression of Thanksgiving for 'Eid-ul-Fitr is a wholesome combination of spiritual devotion and humanitarian benevolence.

It is a Day of Remembrance. Even in their most joyful state, the Muslims make a fresh start on the Day of 'Eid by a session of worship and prayer to Almighty God. They pray to Him and glorify His Name in order to demonstrate their remembrance of His Favours. Along with that, they remember the deceased and pray for their souls, they remember the needy and extend a helping hand, they remember the grieved ones by showing them sympathy and consolation, and they remember the sick by cheerful visits and utterances of good wishes. Thus 'Eid-ul-Fitr is truly a Day of Remembrance.

It is also a Day of Victory. The Muslim individual who succeeds in securing his spiritual rights and growth receives 'Eid with a victorious spirit. A believer who faithfully observes his duties during Ramadan, feels triumphant on this Day of 'Eid. He proves that he holds a strong command over his desires, exercises sound self-control, and enjoys the taste of a disciplinary life. This is his greatest victory, because the person who knows how to control himself and discipline his desires is free from sin and evil actions, from fear and insecurity, from vice and inde-

centy, from jealousy and greed, and from all other causes of human enslavement. So, on this day, which marks the achievement of this freedom, he is celebrating his greatest victory. Indeed, 'Eid-ul-Fitr is a Day of Victory.

'Eid-ul-Fitr is a Day of Harvest. All the good workers in the service of Almighty God, all the faithful believers reap the fruits of their good deeds on the Day of 'Eid, for Almighty Allah grants His Mercy and Blessings abundantly on this Day. Almighty God gives infinitely, especially to those who are sincerely concerned with the general welfare of their fellow human beings. Those who cannot afford to give will receive the gifts of others, so everyone enjoys the providence of Almighty God on this Day. This is certainly a Day of Harvest.

'Eid is a Day of Forgiveness. Muslims assemble on this Day and pray sincerely to Almighty God for forgiveness. And God has assured those who approach Him with sincerity, of His Mercy and Forgiveness. The Muslim individual finds himself moving along with others, responding to the spirit of the Day to purify his heart and soul. Thus, he forgives those who might have wronged him. When he forgives his fellow Muslim, the virtue of forgiveness is mercifully exercised by Almighty God, and widely exchanged among the Muslims. Therefore, that marks this Day as a Day of Forgiveness.

These are the true meanings of 'Eid-ul-Fitr: a Day of Peace and Thanksgiving, a Day of Forgiveness and Moral Victory, a Day of Good Harvest and Remarkable Achievements, and a Day of Remembrance and Joyous Festivity.

The Islamic 'Eid is all this and much more, because it is a **Day of Islam, a Day of God.**

I pray that Almighty Allah guide us to recognise Truth for what it is and give us the strength to follow it, and I pray that He guide us to recognise falsehood for what it is and give us the determination to keep away from it.

The Alternative For Her Community Centre (TAFHCC)

TAFHCC is a multilingual organisation whose mission is to arrange and provide sports, recreational programs, and culturally-sensitive social services for women and girls in Ontario. Our organisation is made up of and accountable to women and girls from diverse ethno-cultural and racial backgrounds.

TAFHCC's programs and services are particularly designed to increase participation of women and girls, including those who face barriers in access to programs and services due to their cultural traditions, which includes gender segregation.

TAFHCC is committed to rebuilding system structures through education and advocacy to achieve social justice for all women and girls.

For more information, please visit our website at tafhcc.tripod.com

TAFHCC's "I Swim Too" Program

The Alternative For Her Community Centre is offering one hour of recreational swimming every Saturday for women and girls of all ages. Lessons by qualified instructors are also available. The program is flexible with nominal "pay-as-you-go" fees: \$1/session (50¢ per additional family member). It is held every Saturday (4:00-5:00 p.m.) from October 14 to December 2, 2000, at George S. Vanier Pool (3000 Don Mills Road, north of Sheppard). For more information, please call (416) 491-7411 or e-mail tafhcc@yahoo.com. (Funding for this program has been provided by the North York Heart Health Network.)

Muslims and the Vote

Continued from page 1

Although there is a popular tendency to profess a casual, even cynical attitude toward politics, the majority of citizens living in liberal democratic countries like Canada or the United States, recognise that they have the freedom to take sides on important issues affecting our society, security and economy — if only around the dinner table or in coffee-break discussions at work. But that is enough to show that they are indeed politically involved, so why should they not articulate their views in a more public forum by voting for the candidate(s) of their choice and joining or supporting a political party?

Using today's civic language and terminology, Islam teaches Muslims to be activists according to the precepts of their faith. In fact, it is a religious duty, rewarded by Allah (swt) in both this life and the Hereafter, to enjoin what is good and disallow evil-doing — to work, for example, in furthering social justice and world peace. To become a politician oneself is not a career-choice available to all, nor are all people even suited for it, regardless of their personal aspirations. However, Muslims also cannot remain passive onlookers. They are forbidden to hold back in giving their public testimony (*Shahadah*) and expert opinions on civic issues, or on the suitability of any candidate running for public office.

Yet, many Muslims in Canada and the US are discouraged by the corrupt and/or immoral conduct of their political leaders. They feel most politicians are too willing to appease the rich and powerful, so a sense of powerlessness sets in and they either do not make the best choices, or simply do not go out and vote at all. Casting such a "negative vote," however, can ac-

tually help less-desirable candidates become elected by default. Thus, by not voting and making their voices heard, Muslims are ignoring an important religious and civic duty.



As Canada and the United States gear up for November's federal elections and a municipal election

in Toronto, Muslims everywhere in North America should become personally aware of the issues at stake and of the campaign platforms presented by their local and national electoral candidates. It is part of their *Amanah* (trustworthiness) to vote for those discerned to be the most worthy.

But this is not always easy and straightforward, for at election time, all parties compete vigorously for our votes with promises of increased social and economic benefits, assurances that our problems will be addressed and solved, etc. Therefore, it is more important than ever to study the issues and the candidates scientifically and impartially; those who do so gain individually, while contributing to a more informed and proactive society.

After all, politics can also be described as "navigation by ideals." Once we give in to cynicism or passivity and neglect those ideals, the casting of votes becomes an empty and powerless exercise in which everyone loses. Neither our nations, nor we, can afford such a dire alternative . . . we can no longer afford to cut classes in Politics 101.

Dr. Mohamed Elmasry is professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Waterloo and National President of the Canadian Islamic Congress.

Faith groups join hands in bid to fight for morality

September 23rd of the new millennium saw a great exhibit of friendship and brotherhood among several religious groups in Toronto. It was heart-warming to see Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs sitting side-by-side at the Islamic Foundation, trying to uphold higher moral values that have been under attack by the TDSB's recent Equity Policy.

(For those who are not familiar with the issue, please visit gtaparents.com or theambition.com for our previous issues where we have discussed the policy, according to which, gay education is forced upon our children throughout the curriculum, from KG to Grade 12.)

Among the speakers were Michael Coren, Dr. Munir El-Kassem, Minister Reverend Wendell Gibbs, and Vice-President of the Islamic Foundation, Mohammed Anwar. Each of them emphasised the need to check the secular onslaught on the education.

Minister Wendell Gibbs began his speech with a joke that shook everyone's conscience:

A child asked God: "Dear God, Why didn't you save the children in the [Columbine] school shooting?" God replied: "I am not allowed in schools."

The little joke spoke volumes. He then continued with his speech: "They have removed prayer and scripture from our schools. We encourage abortions to students and hide it from their parents. We give out condoms to encourage safe sex. We expose our kids to profanity, violence, illicit sex, rape, drugs, murder, suicide, and Satanic themes. And now we're asking ourselves, why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it

doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves. If we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with *We reap what we sow.*"

Minister Gibbs grew up in a large family. The values and morals established in their home were clear, acceptable, and uncompromising. They believed in God and modelled their life after His Divine precepts.

"Today my wife and I are passing on the same family values to our children because we know it is OUR responsibility. To have someone else impose contrary beliefs to our children therefore, infringes on our right as parents," said the Reverend.

He stressed that he was "not here to advocate or support any hate or angry agenda against any group, but to simply protect our freedom to 'start a boy on the right road, and even in old age he will not leave it' (Proverbs 22:6)."

Mr. Gibbs, who is a husband and Christian parent from Heron Park Church, is not the only one. Many others in his church community stand in support of the candidates who were there and are willing to do all they can to see these candidates elected as the new School Trustees this coming election on November 13, 2000.

The Minister concluded by urging everyone to exercise their right to vote for the most suitable candidate for Trustee, one who

would represent and preserve our family values and consequently protect our children's essential school education and will represent our values.

Michael Coren spoke next, noting that Muslims and Christians were sitting together for a common cause although they still disagree a lot on many issues.

As a devout Christian himself, Mr. Coren said he sends three of his four children to a private Christian school. As a television and radio personality, he has been known to speak freely in support of morality on many issues.

For example, he brought up the case of a couple in PEI who ran a bed-and-breakfast in a small town. Being religious Christians, the couple refused to allow two gay men to use the same bed for a night. So what did the gay men do? They took the Christian couple to the Human Rights Commission for a monetary settlement.

Mr. Coren also spoke about another case, in which a Christian printer refused to print material for a gay group because he did not wish to promote their cause; it bothered his conscience to do so. He was also taken to the Human Rights Commission at the cost of



Michael Coren

losing his business and becoming bankrupt (\$10,000 settlement). Mr. Coren said he admired people who stood up for their religious convictions and that we must defend them against immoral lobbyists.

Michael Coren later made an interesting point: "It seems that the anger of social liberals is righteous, but the passion of social conservatives is bigotry."

As a community, we could fall in two areas: "To think that this is-

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Visit us on the Web at www.theambition.com

Some Candidates for School Trustees



Mr. Ron McNaughton
Candidate for Ward 20

Mr. Ron McNaughton has been the Trustee for Scarborough-Agincourt for the past three years. He has eight grandchildren and thinks it is important he keeps a pulse on the education system. If elected, he plans to protect such programs as art, music, and outdoor centres. On family values and the issue of homosexuality in public schools, his position is clear: "My priorities are God and family. Back in December, I put forth a motion to have the equity policy postponed for two months to allow public consultation. This motion was defeated. Parents must have the rights to say, 'My child will not participate in the class where this is taught.'" He wants to have a choice for all.



His message to our readers: "It is important that you as parents get involved with school councils and make your voice heard."



Mr. Younus Dasoo
Candidate for Ward 15

Younus Dasoo is an Immigration and Legal Consultant and is a Trustee candidate for Broadview-Greenwood. With an objective to influence government policies on education and promote the interest of the local community in decision making, he makes it a point to represent the ones who might be adversely affected by the system. A father of three, he declared that he is not a politician but has the dedication to defend racial harmony, religious tolerance, and basic discipline in Toronto and affiliated school boards. He will fight against funding cuts, the dismantling of playgrounds, school closings, and programs that are against family values.



Vote on November 13, 2000
Your child's future is at stake!



Ms Emilsa Sealy
Candidate for Ward 4

Ms Emilsa Sealy is a School Trustee candidate for York West (formerly called Don Valley North).

A dynamic speaker, originally from Panama, Emilsa came to Canada in 1977. She has recently completed her two last courses at York University towards her BA in sociology, with a concentration on Gender and Families. She has worked at York Co-operative Daycare for 12 years.

She has volunteered in the Summer Booster program and is presently involved in the Parent Teacher Advisory Board. With three of her four children in the system, she is constantly involved with school board policies.

"The reasons to run for a Trustee's position are my children, issues and interests in what is going on with the various trends in the school board, and equity issues," she says.

As a trustee she would be committed in raising attention to parents about issues brought up to the Board, so that they are fully aware of what is going on. Issues of curriculum changes, budget, and changes in the school system are all important matters to her.

"As a candidate, I would do my best to fulfil my duties as a trustee, I would be true to you and would fight for those issues I truly believe in," she says.



Dr. Abdi Ulusso, Ph.D.
Candidate for Ward 1

Dr. Ulusso has a Ph.D. from Cornell University in Education and speaks four languages: English, Italian, Arabic, and Somali. He has been involved as a community activist with schools in Etobicoke North, intervening on behalf of parents and students in the area. He was also a volunteer at Westmount Junior School.

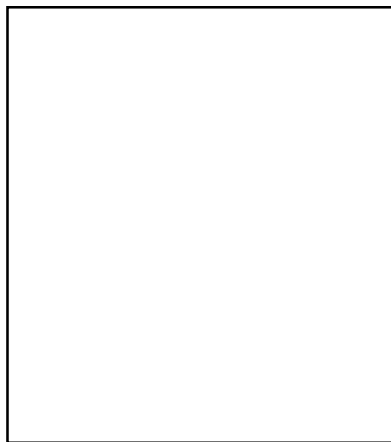
"I am interested in contributing to help the kids in the city. I believe in the public system of education. My motto is: 'No kids should be left behind.' School systems should fulfil promises," he says. What are some significant issues that he hopes to address if elected? To improve the quality of education, focus on needs of students, raise academic scores, and develop a solid foundation for kids to succeed and achieve their goals. He also wants to give parents a voice with meaningful impact on governance of education and to make sure parents have access to accurate up-to-date information.

He stands firm on family values: "I don't want to impose my values and morals on others and don't want them imposed on me and my kids. I will respect human rights. It should be up to parents to decide and teach their

kids about these issues," Mr. Ulusso says.

"I will stand up for them. The society and economy are changing. If we want shared values to survive, the form and function of education will have to change. We have a moral obligation to lead the debate in the education of our children," says Dr. Ulusso.

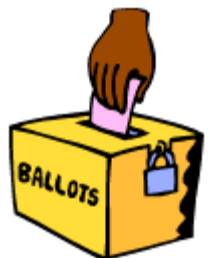
He is a believer in safe school environment and promotes conflict resolution among children at schools to combat anti-social aggressive behaviour leading to verbal, physical, and psychological bullying. He is also dedicated to working with government to maintain and improve for greater stability of school programs based on enrolment, and not on taxes of a local community raised by school boards.



ELECTION INFORMATION

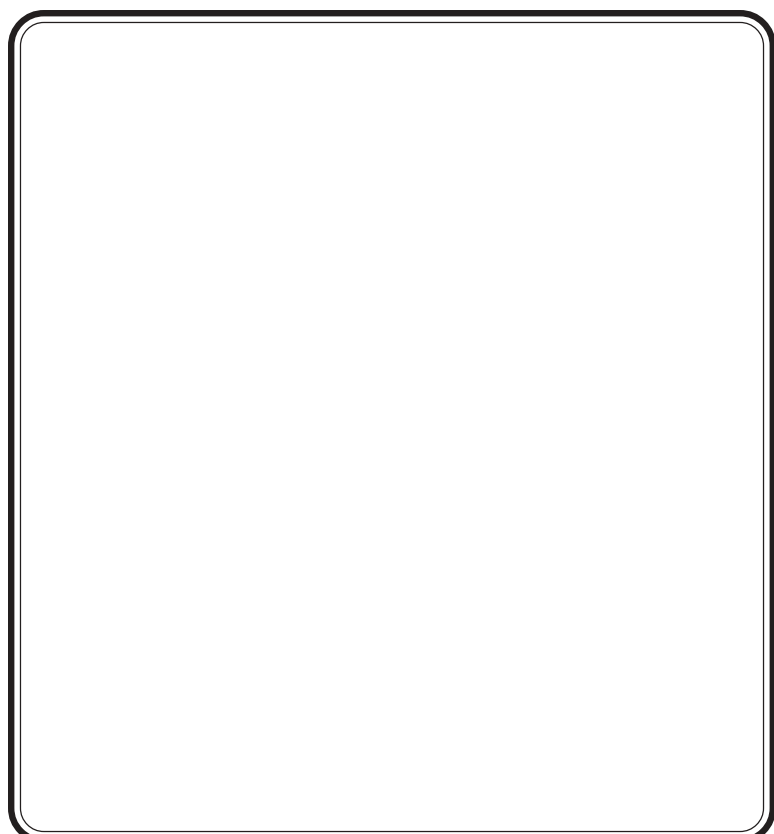
Call (416) 338-1111 to ensure that you are on the list of voters. You may also ask for voting times and/or locations. Website:

www.city.toronto.on.ca/vote2000



Below is a list of School Trustee candidates that uphold traditional family values. Exercise your right to vote on **November 13, 2000.**

Trustee Candidate	Toronto District School Ward	City Wards
Abtidon, Hassan	Toronto Centre-Rosedale (14)	27, 28
Badger, Karma	Scarborough East (22)	43, 44
Chanicka, Jeewan	Scarborough Centre (19)	37, 38
Dasoo, Younus	Broadview-Greenwood (15)	29, 30
Dhanju, Iqbal	Scarborough-Rouge River (21)	41, 42
El-Sayed, Ibrahim	Scarborough Southwest (18)	35, 36
El-Sayed, Ihsan	Etobicoke Centre (2)	3, 4
Hossain, Monowar	Etobicoke North (1)	1, 2
Ingar, Abdul	Don Valley West (13)	25, 26
Khan, Yaqoob	Parkdale-High Park (7)	13, 14
McNaughton, Ron	Scarborough-Agincourt (20)	39, 40
Moyer, Elizebeth	Scarborough Southwest (18)	35, 36
Sealy, Emilsa	York West (4)	7, 8
Stephens, Doug	Don Valley East (17)	33, 34
Ulusso, Abdi	Etobicoke North (1)	1, 2



on the Toronto District School Board



Dr. Yaqoob Khan Candidate for Ward 7

Dr. Yaqoob Khan, candidate for **Parkdale-High Park** is a retired teacher who has taught in elementary, middle, and high schools, although he has mainly taught Grades 4-8. His qualifications include being a fully qualified counsellor and a Physical Education teacher. During his career, he also has acted in the role of Officiating Principal for three schools.

As a teacher, he has taught at Ryerson, Davenport, Kensington, and Alexander Muir, and is retired from Spruce School. He is running for Trustee as he feels that he owes some time to the children. While in the school system himself, he and Mr. Menzies started a breakfast programme. If he is elected, he hopes to promote proper training of administrators conducive to the discipline of the school in general and the students in particular, as well as curriculum and classroom assistance to the teachers, which he feels should be the top priority of administrators.

He also feels that early identification of academic deficiencies in children should be reported to parents so that they can take early measures to remedy the situation. Early identification is necessary, in his view. Curriculum should be sensitive and conducive to our country in general.

He further stated that in our education system, family education is stressed in the health and education classes that are held. A deviation from those lines of teaching of health and family living should not be taught because of young children's level of understanding. It is his belief that no sexual preference should be taught other than in a family and reproductive context.

The message he would like to leave with our readers is that "every Canadian is a person with the utmost privilege on this surface of the Earth, and that is why we are Number One in the world and our city is also Number One. This quality should be instilled in our children so that they are proud as perfect human representatives of the world."



Mr. Doug Stephens Candidate for Ward 17

Mr. Doug Stephens, a candidate for **Don Valley East**, with his educational background of a degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Toronto and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from York University, has been elected twice before as a Trustee.

His business experience includes over thirty years as Director of Education for Kodak here in Toronto. His decision to run again is to help facilitate the transition from the old school boards to the new amalgamated one. He will continue to look at the funding issues facing the School Board as well as try to look at a funding model that will not affect the classrooms.

As a husband and father of five children, he is very strong on family values. He believes, though, that nobody should be discriminated against on the basis of whatever orientation they may have. He also believes that parents should have the right to withdraw their children from any part of the curriculum that they object to due to their belief system. At the close of the interview, he left us with the message that if he is elected again, he will continue to work hard to positively affect the quality of education in Toronto's schools.



Mr. Jeewan Chanicka Candidate for Ward 19

Jeewan Chanicka is a School Trustee candidate for **Scarborough Centre**. He is married with a young son. Mr. Chanicka graduated from York University with Honours in Conflict Resolution. He has also won several awards from the Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education.

Mr. Chanicka has always been involved with the community and has extensive experience in working with teachers, principals, guidance counsellors, parents, and youth in different capacities. He has run many counselling and training sessions. He has done extensive youth counselling on a wide range of issues and has conducted sensitivity training workshop for guidance counsellors.

He has also been a literacy tutor for Self-Directed Studies. He worked with the former Scarborough Board of Education to address the needs and concerns of various student communities, conducted training sessions in cultural diversity and race relations for school officials, and worked as an anti-hate crime and anti-racism co-ordinator.

"I am committed to making the public education system stronger, having equity for all, more community consultation and addressing safety issues," says Chanicka.



Mr. Abdul Ingar Candidate for Ward 13

Abdul Ingar is a Trustee candidate for **Don Valley West**.

A dedicated, hard working, and result-oriented person, Mr. Ingar has been involved in many community projects over the past twenty years. He is an Engineering Technologist and speaks four other languages beside English, one of them being French.

"I will lobby the government for increased funding," He says. He is committed to ensuring accountable school administration, efficient budget management, more community involvement, and bringing mutual respect among all the players in the school system. Affordable community use of school premises is also on his agenda. "I have a vision dedicated to our children and the future of our community. This I believe should start in our schools," says Ingar.



Ms Karma Badger Candidate for Ward 22

Ms Karma Badger is running for **Scarborough East**. She is a parent of four children, three of who are currently attending Scarborough schools and one is in university. Her experience as a classroom volunteer for more than twelve years, as President of a local elementary school parents' group and Vice-Chair of a high school advisory council, has provided her with hands-on knowledge of the school system. As a board member of Scarborough Block Parents and the Toronto Children's Safety Villages, her knowledge and understanding of the issues today has expanded beyond the school community. She realises the need to work in partnership with parents, teachers, government, and the School Board to address and resolve the complex issues that we are faced with today.

It is her belief that to make a difference and to provide our children with the best education possible, we must work together. People need to ensure that a Board of Trustees will be elected to best serve and meet the needs of students and parents. At the same time, Trustees must work effectively within the Board.

Asked about some significant issues that she hopes to address if elected, she said: "I believe that we need to strengthen the working relationships between parents, teachers, the school board, and the government. We need to open the lines of communication and make sure that parents have all the facts, so that they are able to make informed decisions. We need to build on existing community and business partnerships, and work with the community to find solutions to the changing needs of the educational system. Equity for all students and school safety issues must be addressed."

On family values and how she would tackle the issue of homosexual curriculum in public schools, Ms Badger established her position by declaring her belief in equity for all students: "All children must learn to respect their fellow human beings; to be kind and considerate towards one another. At the same time, we must be careful not to isolate or offend one culture or belief in order to support another. More input, research, and discussion by parents, teachers, the school board, and government must occur to ensure that everyone is fairly represented, all issues are addressed, and solutions are found," she stressed.

And her message to our readers? "We must all work together to find solutions to the issues we are faced with today, so that our children can continue to receive the quality education that they will need to move forward in life. We must lead by example and focus on results."



Mr. Hassan Ibtidon Candidate for Ward 14

Mr. Hassan Ibtidon is a School Trustee candidate for **Toronto Centre-Rosedale**. He used to be an economist in Somalia and was also the head of the Finance and Revenue Section in Somalia. He was also a teacher for the M.B.A. program there at the University of Fresno and at the National University of Somalia, Economics Department.

He believes that as long as we are here and part of the community, we should have a voice and should be part of the decision-making process.

Some significant issues that he hopes to address if elected are the school system in general and the accommodation of minorities and immigrants in the process. Certain decisions, he believes, are currently being made without the proper background and/or input from the public or even, parents. Having our voice there would be helpful for both the new and mainstream Canadians.

A man of strong family values, he is dedicated to promoting the same values in the society that he has adopted as his new home. "It is a good idea if all of us as a people, including minorities, are part of the elected decision-making process," he says.

Dental Hygiene During Ramadan

Keep your mouth fresh while fasting by brushing teeth frequently

by Amjad Syed

Many Muslims have heard the Hadith: "The odour from the mouth of a fasting person is better to Allah than the smell of musk" (related by Al-Bukhari). However, this does not mean that a fasting Muslim should neglect the odour coming from his or her mouth!

One should consider how much more Allah, His Angels, and His Messenger would love a fasting Muslim or Muslimah who is conscious of oral hygiene. It is proper etiquette in any society to be presentable and mindful of our personal hygiene amongst family and friends. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: "If I did not think it is hard, I would have ordered cleaning of teeth for every prayer" (Al-Bukhari).

Fasting alone does not necessarily cause bad breath. Other reasons include the following:

- Lack of brushing with or without toothpaste
- Food particles decaying between teeth cavities
- Lack of flossing
- Seldom cleaning of tongue (by using a scraper)
- Tooth decay
- Gum disease
- Lung or stomach disease
- Hairy tongue (abnormal growth of taste buds)

Now that the causes of bad breath have been identified, we can examine ways in which a fasting Muslim can fix the problem. Performing Wudu (ablution) for each of the five daily prayers will help to keep the breath fresh. During Wudu, the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions would brush their teeth with Miswak, or *Salvadora persica* as it is known scientifically. It was the Prophet's wish that his Ummah use Miswak during every Wudu, but he did not enforce the practice because it might pose some difficulty.

Nevertheless, Muslims should follow the Prophet's example by cleaning their teeth thoroughly during Wudu. This includes brushing, gargling, cleansing the buckle cavity, and cleaning the tongue. To clean the tongue effectively, a plastic or metal device, known better as a tongue scraper, is recommended. It is always a good idea to brush (without paste) the area between the teeth and gums. This is one area where anaerobic bacteria are often lodged and produce bad odour. It is also the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) to wash the hands and rinse the mouth before and after each meal, and to floss teeth if necessary.

It is the opinion of learned Muslims that the use of toothpaste or powder is permitted during fasting. Yet some learned Muslims are of the opinion that the use of toothpaste or powder is Makrooh (undesirable). The reason for not using toothpaste by some Muslims while fasting is that the lining of the mouth would absorb the sugar content of toothpaste, and thereby the fasting person would get food energy as well as taste! Some others might think that the Islamic way of cleaning teeth is only with Miswak and not a plastic brush. These arguments are frivolous and perhaps trying to split hair.

If a person does not want to use toothpaste during while fasting, then he/she can use finely powdered charcoal. Charcoal has no food value and it absorbs organic odours, which form bad breath. Wood charcoal can be collected from a fireplace.

Secondly, the secret of maintaining one's health is to follow the Sunnah regarding eating. Eat just enough food to satisfy your hunger. Thereby, one does not

suffer from an upset stomach or other illnesses. Do not overeat during Suhoor (morning meal) or at Iftar (breaking of fast). If you are eating some strong-smelling foods, certainly brush your teeth before going outside or to the mosque for Taraweeh prayers. Especially before Ramadan, it is a great idea to see the dentist and get the teeth cleaned. It could be expensive, but it is worth it!

During the month of Ramadan, one should floss and brush teeth with toothpaste soon after the Suhoor. If there is not much room between teeth to run floss, use a specially designed inexpensive plastic fork, which is designed to hold flossing thread tightly during use. This is available in drug stores. Plain flossing thread is supposed to work better than the waxed type.

While fasting, brush your teeth to keep the mouth fresh. If the problem of bad breath persists, it is certainly time to see a physician. It is worth the happy life among family and friends at the cost of a doctor's bill.

Amjad and his wife, Malik, are volunteers with the Muslim Patient Visitation Program in Mississauga and Oakville hospitals. They can be contacted through ISNA at (905) 403-8407.

Ahmed Deedat's Book on Middle East Now Online

Ahmad Deedat's book entitled Arabs and Israelis: Conflict or Conciliation? is now online. This version includes all pictures, newspaper clippings, etc. from Br. Deedat's book, including a very moving photo album that he compiled and labelled himself.

Currently, all five chapters and the album are available under the *Updates/What's New?* section at www.themodernreligion.com.

Faith groups join hands against immorality

Continued from page 9

sue [of immoral curriculum] is very important or to think that it doesn't matter," Mr. Coren said. "Neither is good."

After asking many rhetorical questions to make us see where we should stand, Mr. Coren ended his speech by saying: "There is no compromise on truth, no compromise on love . . . We should love the sinner, but hate the sin."

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Foundation, Br. Mohammed Anwar welcomed us all and hoped that the dinner would be a new beginning of political awareness.

"Islamic Foundation of Toronto is an integral part of 'uphold[ing] what is good and forbid[ding] what is wrong' as prescribed by the Qur'an," he said.

"What makes me extremely delighted is that the good and upright people of other faiths are joining hands to fight this forced preaching of homosexuality to our children. It's a good beginning — a small step in the right direction."

He noted the need to have a permanent body of different faiths joined together to promote harmony and ethics not only in the education system, but at all levels in our country's decision making process.

He mentioned his firm belief that we should take full part in the decision-making levels of the government of Canada by using our vote, fielding our combined candidates and helping them to become elected. We have to be in the driver's seat. We have been in

the passenger's seats long enough. "After all there is so much common among all the major religions of the world to work together for humanity rather than to fight on petty issues. United we win, divided we all lose," he said.

The final keynote speaker was Dr. Munir El-Kassem, a well known figure among the Muslim community and a dental surgeon from London, Ontario.

During his speech, he mentioned the Hadith of the Prophet (pbuh), in which it states that all benefits from our deeds will stop at death, except for the reward from any knowledge we have established for others, the reward of perpetual charity, and the reward from a child who will pray for his parents and keep their legacy.

Later, Dr. El-Kassem said that he could no longer see properly with his right eye and this would affect his dental practice. However, he considered this much better than losing his children to an immoral society. Currently, his top priority is investing in his "most valuable asset" of five daughters.

He also said that "people all over the world have different moralities, but only true, absolute morality is from Divine Scripture."

Dr. El-Kassem concluded his motivating speech by saying that "the silent majority should now be called the vocal majority!"

Organised by GTA Parents, the fundraising event was successful in bringing educational issues to the community's attention. We should now remember to exercise our right to vote for good School Trustees on November 13.

World Renowned Qaris Visit Canada

TORONTO (29/10/2000) — The 2nd International *Mehfil-e-Husan-e-Qirat* was held today in Mississauga. The Qur'an was beautifully recited by Qaris from countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, India, Turkey, Bangladesh, Canada, England, etc.

Among the world renowned Qaris were the Imam of the Proph-

et's Mosque in Madinah, Ali Al-Hudhayfi, as well as Ahmed Karali, Mohammad Mozammel Hossain, Muhammad Ihsan Ullah, Muhammad Akhtar, Ghulam Radhidi, Hamid Malik, Eham Rehawi, Saeed Uddin Faizi, Dilawar Shah, Shabbir Saifi, and Raghbir Mustafa Ghalwish.

This memorable event was organised by Jamia Islamia Canada (www.jamiaislamia.org).

Pen is mightier than the sword
So why not write?

We invite writers,
children's story writers,
interviewers, news
reporters, etc. to send
us their contributions.

Send your work by
November 30, 2000
to be included in the
Jan-Feb 2001 issue

Articles should be less
than 1,500 words

Include your full name, address,
and phone number. You may also
wish to send your picture and a
little introduction about yourself.

Side by Side



They lie on the table, side by side:
The Holy Qur'an and the TV Guide.

One is well worn and cherished with pride.
Not the Qur'an, but the TV Guide.

One is used daily to help folks decide.
No, not the Qur'an, but the TV Guide.

As the pages are turned, what shall they
see?
Oh, what does it matter, turn on the TV.

So, they open the book in which they con-
fide.
No, not the Qur'an, but the TV Guide.

The Word of Allah is seldom read,
Maybe a verse before they fall into bed.

Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be.
Not from reading the Qur'an, but from
watching TV.

So then, back to the table, side by side,
Lie the Holy Qur'an and the TV Guide.

No time for prayer, no time for the Word,
The plan of Istiqamah is seldom heard.

But forgiveness of sin, so full and free,
Is found in the Qur'an, not on TV.

Author Unknown

Newsroom

Mailing Address for Jailed Imam

Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin is being held in prison in connection with the shooting death of a sheriff's deputy in Atlanta, Georgia. If you would like to write to the Imam, his mailing address is:

Jamil Al-Amin (0013284-06-06)
Fulton County Jail
901 Rice Street
Atlanta, Georgia
USA 30318

Islam & Smoking on the Internet

Suicide by Smoking

<http://islam.about.com/religion/islam/library/weekly/aa090600a.htm>

Smoking: A Social Poison

<http://www.qss.org/articles/smoking.html>

CAIR-Michigan Trains Liz Claiborne Staff

LATHRUP VILLAGE, MI — Director of Communications for the Michigan office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Kay Siblani, conducted a two-hour training session in New York on September 20, 2000 for the fashion design and production team at Liz Claiborne, Inc. About sixty artists, CAD designers, and production staffers at the firm's headquarters in Manhattan heard a presentation on the religion of Islam, Islamic values and dress, and Islamic art.

The training session followed an incident in which Liz Claiborne produced and distributed a pair of women's jeans with verses from the Qur'an printed on the back pocket. When CAIR contacted the design firm with their concerns,

Muslims Request City of Montréal to Respect Religious Expression

OTTAWA (25/9/2000) — The Canadian office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) today expressed its concern regarding a proposed Montréal municipal policy that would forbid the operation of houses of worship in residential neighbourhoods. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms makes "freedom of conscience and religion" a fundamental right, which raises constitutional questions about the proposed policy. CAIR-CAN also responded to claims by city officials that they are acting in the best interest of residents.

In a letter sent to Mayor Pierre Bourque and Executive Council Member Mr. Saulie Zajdel, Riad Saloojee of CAIR-CAN's legal department, maintained that any legislative attempt to hinder the establishment of a mosque would gravely prejudice the religious expression of Montréal's diverse Muslim community.

The letter read in part:

Killer Fever Claims Lives in Saudi Arabia

DUBAI (30/9/2000) — Saudi Arabia said on Saturday that five more people have died from Rift Valley Fever, raising to 74 the official toll from the disease in the kingdom and in neighbouring Yemen.

several meetings between CAIR officials and Claiborne executives followed, after which Claiborne halted production and recalled the jeans from the market. Sensitivity training was requested to prevent future incidents.

"Islamic religious expression has a distinctly communal element and the mosque is not simply a place of worship for the obligatory prayers: it is a point of contact, assembly, and a social and educational forum. The mosque is a community centre, par excellence, that provides for both spiritual and secular needs. Indeed, for both well-established and fledgling Muslim communities, the mosque is the most identifiable link with their past, present, and future.

"The current proposal is neither an equitable nor a productive solution. The city has unfortunately overlooked the fact that places of spiritual expression create a sense of community and provide opportunities for inter-faith and inter-cultural understanding. An interactive, constructive approach — one that facilitates discussion among all the parties involved and tries to ameliorate residential concerns by better planning, administration and communication — is more conducive to harmonious relations and a healthier community for the future. Such an initiative is needed and would be welcomed by the Muslim community."

Mr. Riad Saloojee may be contacted at (613) 798-0003.

A Saudi Health Ministry statement, quoted by the official Saudi Press Agency, said a total of 43 people there had died among the 201 who contracted the viral disease which broke out around three weeks ago.

It is thought to be the first outbreak of the disease outside Africa, where it originates. The disease is transmitted by mosquitoes or by human contact with infected animals.

The two Arab states, which are working together and with the help of international experts and organisations to fight the disease, had earlier said the disease had claimed 69 lives. Newspapers and local medical sources had said that more than 200 people have died.

Sudan Blasted on Women's Ban

WASHINGTON, DC (8/9/2000) — Human Rights Watch today condemned the ban imposed on September 3, 2000, by the Governor of the State of Khartoum and former minister of social planning, Mr. Mazjoub Al-Khalifa, that prevents women from working in public places where they come into direct contact with men . . . The decree bars women from working in hotels, restaurants, and gas stations. The governor justified the ban as "intended to honour women," to uphold their status in line with Islamic Law, and to respect the values and the traditions of the nation. He asserted that women should not be harmed by this decree because they could be employed in other areas. For the complete story, visit www.hrw.org/press/2000/09/sudan908.htm

Hackers crash Israeli websites

JERUSALEM (26/10/2000) — Several official Israeli websites crashed after being flooded by thousands of simultaneous hits in a digital onslaught by Muslim groups abroad, officials said on Thursday.

The cyber attack is the most intense since Israel's government launched its Internet sites several years ago. It opens a new front in Israel's confrontation with the Muslim world. Both sides are emphasising the public relations aspect of their conflict. Interest in Israeli government websites has increased noticeably since the riots began on September 28, 2000, as they provide information from an Israeli viewpoint.

Some Israeli teenagers, who bragged to a local newspaper last week that they had succeeded in sabotaging a website run by the Hezbollah in Lebanon, apparently fired the first shot in the cyber war. Return fire was not long in com-

Protest Against Gay Curriculum

TORONTO (27/9/2000) — Muslims and Christians from all walks of life gathered today on the lawn of the Ontario Legislature at Queen's Park to protest against new policies set out by the Toronto District School Board. These policies include the promotion of homosexual lifestyles as being "normal" and span from kindergarten to high school throughout the curriculum. The protest reached its climax as about 500 people made their way down to TDSB's head office at 155 College Street. The gathering included everyone from young children in strollers to senior citizens. It was organised by Ontarians for Traditional Family Values (OTFV) and the Toronto District Muslim Education Assembly (www.tdmea.com).

Protest Against Israeli Aggression

TORONTO (6/10/2000) — More than 500 people showed up in front of the Israeli Consulate at 180 Bloor Street West yesterday, to protest against Israel's recent aggression towards Palestinian civilians. The protesters included Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, Christians, and their well-wishers. The rally began at 4:30 p.m. and ended at 7:30 p.m., as rain began to pour down heavily. A similar protest was held today in front of the US Consulate on University Avenue. Other protests across Canada included one in Montréal, in which over 1,000 people attended, and another in front of the Israeli Embassy in Ottawa.

ing. Uri Noy, who oversees the Foreign Ministry website, said that several Muslim websites called on their users to attack Israeli sites, providing them access to computer programs that allow users to flood sites with huge

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National Day of Silence for the Children of Iraq 2000

Please help the people of Iraq. The *National Day of Silence for the Children of Iraq: Veteran's Day 2000* will take place on **November 11, 2000**. An hour of silence and prayer for the suffering people of Iraq will be held from 12-1 p.m. PST (3-4 p.m. EST).

Insha-Allah, this hour of remembrance and reflection will be honoured by both Muslims and non-Muslims all over the United States and beyond. As of now, mass silent demonstrations will be held simultaneously in Los Angeles and New York for the Day of Silence.

Help spread the word! Help co-ordinate a silent demonstration in your city! The more widespread we can make this campaign, the more impact it will have and the greater our chances to initiate actual change.

If you have any questions or want to get involved, please e-mail us at info@dayofsilence.com or visit our website at www.dayofsilence.com.

*Ramadhan and Eid Mubarak
to our readers!*

Buenos Aires Gets Biggest Mosque in Latin America

BUENOS AIRES (25/9/2000)— President Fernando de la Rúa inaugurated Latin America's largest mosque and Muslim community centre today before elite members of Argentina's Middle Eastern community.

"In Argentina, we feel proud that ethnic and religious differences do not divide us but rather bear the fruit of a richer society," De la Rúa told over a thousand onlookers.

Among the high-profile guests at the ceremony were Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul-Aziz, brother of King Fahd, and the new Saudi Ambassador to Argentina, Adnan Abaghdadi.

An enormous sand-coloured temple with Arabian-style arches and minarets soaring nearly 165 feet high, the mosque is the largest in Latin America, with a capacity for 1,500 people. The 390,000 square-foot building has an auditorium for exhibits, a primary and secondary school, a sports complex, a café, dormitories, and underground parking. The \$22 million structure took nearly two years to build and is similar to other Islamic centres in Rome and Madrid.

King Fahd paid for the centre as part of a \$20 billion program under which his country has restored and built more than 200 Islamic centres and 1,500 mosques around the world.

It was former President Carlos Menem — a Roman Catholic and the son of Syrian Muslim immigrants — who donated the 7.5 acres on which the King Fahd Islamic Cultural Center was built.

Menem's gift came under fire in 1995 from De la Rúa, then a senator, and others. Local residents protested against the pending construction, fearful of an incident like the two bomb blasts that killed 115 people at the Israeli Embassy and a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in the early 1990's.

According to Mahmud Hussein, the mosque's first Imam who came from Saudi Arabia, there are 500,000 practising Muslims in Argentina.

Hackers crash Israeli websites

Continued from page 14

amounts of electronic mail, essentially jamming them.

Israeli sites bombarded include those of the Prime Minister's office, the Foreign Ministry, the Knesset (Parliament), and the Army's website, which switched from a local server to one connected to US communications giant AT&T to increase security.

"You cannot be perfectly safe. Any system can be infiltrated," Miki Buzaglo, an Israeli who took credit for first sabotaging the Hezbollah site, said on Israel TV. "There is a war of brains going on here."

"World's Strongest Man" is Muslim

SYDNEY (27/9/2000) — The Bulgarian head coach of the national Iranian weightlifting team, Georgy Ivanov, said at the end of the Tuesday Olympic competitions that the two gold medals Iranian champions bagged in Sydney belong to all Iranians.

Hussein Rezazadeh, dubbed as "the world's strongest man," set a new world record in the Over-105-kg category by lifting a combined total of 472.5 kg on Tuesday. His big lift in the clean-and-jerk was 260 kg (573 lbs). He reportedly asked Allah for help just before he attempted each lift.

Rezazadeh's super-heavy-weight gold brought to an end Russia's 44-year-old domination

of this category.

Hojatoleslam Mehdi Karroubi, Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis), in a fax addressed to the Iranian weightlifters congratulated them on the achievement. He said in his message of congratulations that "hero Iranian youth" scored another honourable achievement for the Islamic Republic of Iran in an international sport event.

Another Iranian weightlifter, Hussein Tavakoli of the 105-kg category, won the gold medal on Monday. The two gold medals promoted Iran to the 25th place in the list of the medal winners of the Summer Olympics by Tuesday.

Turkish Virtue Party Representative Visits City of Montréal Paints grim picture of Muslims' condition in Turkey

by Yahya Abdul Rahman

MONTRÉAL — On Sunday, September 10, 2000, the Message of Islam Foundation hosted a talk on *The Condition of Muslims in Turkey*. The speaker was Lutfu Esengun, who is a sitting member of the Turkish parliament and the Deputy Chairman of the Turkish Islamist Virtue Party (in Turkish, the Fazilet Party).

Mr. Esengun began his talk with a brief history of the opposition to Islam in Turkey with the fall of Ottoman Empire, the abolishment of the Caliphate, and the military take-over of Turkey which set up a secular, anti-Islamic constitution. When Kamal Ataturk came to power in Turkey, he laid the foundation of the modern state of Turkey and put the country on the path of secularism. Symbols of the past, including the headscarf for women and the *fez* for men, were banned. The Arabic alphabet was replaced with the Roman alphabet for the Turkish language. In Ataturk's vision, Turkey was to be a European country closely associated with the West.

Mr. Esengun painted a grim picture of the condition of Muslims in his country. The fiercely secular anti-Islamic military has spared no efforts to crush the Islamic movement in Turkey. In recent times, among other things, Turkey has witnessed the closing of Qur'an schools, further banning of the Hijab in the workplace and schools, and not allowing children any Islamic education until the age of sixteen. The army also wants to purge the government of what it sees as a "broad Islamist infiltration," which they feel will undermine and ultimately destroy the Turkish state.

This proposed purge has long been demanded by the army as part of a wider crackdown that resulted in 1997 in the collapse of a year-old Islamist-led government. The newly appointed President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, however, raised military eyebrows by refusing to sign the government decree for the purge, but instead sent the bill to parliament where it is sure to stir a divisive debate.

Many other human rights abuses against Muslims are taking place in Turkey, which are too many to mention here, but most recently, a group called Human Rights Watch issued a report on human rights abuses in Turkey which you can read on their website (www.hrw.org).

Turkey has long sought admission into the European Union (EU). The Virtue Party was initially opposed to Turkey's EU membership, saying that Turkey was more attached to Islamic countries.

Lately however, according to Mr. Esengun, the Virtue party now supports EU membership because it will place pressure on the Turkish military to respect human rights as a result of pressure from the EU, which will not accept Turkey's admission into the EU until it improves its human rights record. Any improvement in human rights in Turkey will only be good for Muslims, Mr. Esengun argues.

The Turkish military's secular vision is staunchly enforced in Turkey, and criticising it can be considered illegal under laws that bar inciting hatred based on religious differences. However, Mr. Esengun stressed that the Turkish constitution, which was written by the military in 1980, and is thus not even an expression of the will of the people, is being violated by the very people who drafted it in the first place. He noted that the constitution guarantees freedom of religion and freedom from harassment from the authorities for holding any religious beliefs. But this is not the case for Muslims: "If Turkey was really secular," said Esengun, "then the military would leave us alone as secularism implies that the government would not interfere in people's religious belief and practice."

The Virtue Party is in jeopardy of being closed down by the military altogether. Its precursor, the Welfare Party, was banned in 1998, and its leader Necmettin Erbakan was banned from politics for life and currently faces a one-year imprisonment for a speech he gave six years ago. In July of this year, after appealing the decision, the courts upheld a one-year prison sentence against the 74-year-old former Prime Minister. In the 1994 speech, for which he is being charged, he criticised the fact that Turkish students open their school day by reciting nationalist slogans and not Qur'anic verses. In addition, he described pro-secular deputies as "infidels." He is due to being arrested any day now.

The Virtue Party is now in a court battle on charges that it is merely a continuation of the banned Welfare party and the centre of "fundamentalist activity," which the military says threatens Turkey's secular order. The case will come to court this month. Although Mr. Esengun is optimistic they will win, it is almost certain that the Virtue Party will be banned too, which could in turn spark another election in Turkey, and be yet another serious setback for the Islamic movement there.

Yahya Abdul Rahman lives in Montréal and is editor of the online Islamic News and Information Network (www.inin.net).

"It's too bad that the Internet has become another battleground," said Member of Parlia-

ment Michael Eitan, the Knesset Internet expert. "We need to have a cease-fire on the Web."

Muslim Victims of Genocide: A Page From History

1. The European Crusaders on July 15, 1099 massacred all 70,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem, mostly Muslims, where accounts of the day report that "the blood was ankle-deep."

2. After the Antioch Massacre of June 1098, also by European Crusaders, historic records say, "No Muslim was alive." During the same period, massacres of Muslims also happened in Askaniya (1099), Aka (1104), Beirut (1110), and Tripoli (1102).

3. During the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, Muslims were given three grim choices: "To leave, convert, or be burnt at the stake." That decree was cancelled on July 15, 1834 — more than eight centuries later — after all the Muslims had been killed or forced out. Breaking their own promises to uphold religious toleration, Spanish and Portuguese authorities condoned Muslim massacres in Toledo (1085), Lisbon (1147), Cordoba (1236), Seville (1248), Maria (1266), and Granada (1492).

4. In less than half a century, between 1219 and 1260, Mongols slaughtered millions of Muslims in India, Persia, Iraq, and Central Asia, including the Abbasid Caliph and his officials. The sack of Baghdad, which began on February 13, 1258 and lasted a horrific 17 days, left an estimated two mil-

lion Muslims dead in that city alone.

5. A little-recognized fact of the American slave trade is that more than half of the 15 million Africans taken from their homelands from the 1500's to 1800's was Muslim. And of the more than 3 million who perished under brutal conditions in the holds of slave-ships, more than half were also Muslim.

6. Millions of Muslim civilians were massacred by the imperial powers of Europe, Africa, and Asia through the 16th to 20th centuries (1500's to 1900's).

7. From 1932 to 1957, at Russia's Vorkuta concentration camps in the high Arctic, a total of 6 million inmates died, of whom more than a third were Muslim.

8. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims were also massacred during and before the partition of India in the 1940's.

9. Following the Deir Yassin massacre in Palestine, April 9-10, 1948, where 250 Muslims were killed by armed Jewish settlers, hundreds of thousands of Muslims fled their homes in fear. Today, the Palestinian Diaspora totals over 4 million Palestinian refugees and exiles world-wide.

10. After the October 29, 1956,

massacre at Kafr Qasem, where 43 were shot by the army, Israeli Lieutenant Dunhan reported to his commanding officer, "Minus 15 Arabs . . . it is difficult to count."

11. Several thousand Muslims have been massacred in the Philippines, Kashmir, and Thailand from the 1970's to the present day.

12. During September 15-18, 1982, the Israeli-backed Phalangist militia massacred thousands of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon.

13. On March 16, 1988, the Kurdish town of Halabja in Iraq (population 45,000) was bombarded with chemical weapons. An estimated 5,000 died and thousands were left seriously wounded.

14. Since 1990, the entire population of Iraq has been subjected to brutal American and UN-backed sanctions. As a direct result of these deprivations, more than 1 million have died, including at least 575,000 children.

15. In Bosnia, Kosova, and Chechnya (from 1992 to the present), more than 200,000 Muslims have been massacred and more than 1.5 million left wounded, homeless, or in exile. The organized, brutal rape of more than 50,000 Muslim women and girls by enemy forces has further height-

ened the tragedy.

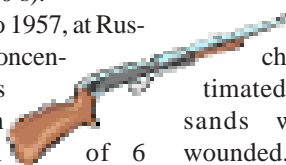
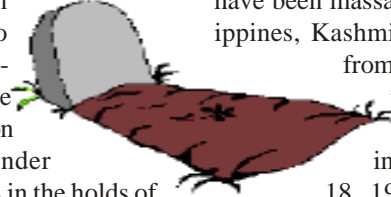
16. In Hebron, on February 25, 1994, a Jewish settler shot and killed, in cold blood, 60 Muslim worshipers at the Ibrahimi Mosque. Thirty more died when they demonstrated against the massacre.

17. On April 18, 1996, more than 100 Muslims were massacred in the UN compound in Qana,

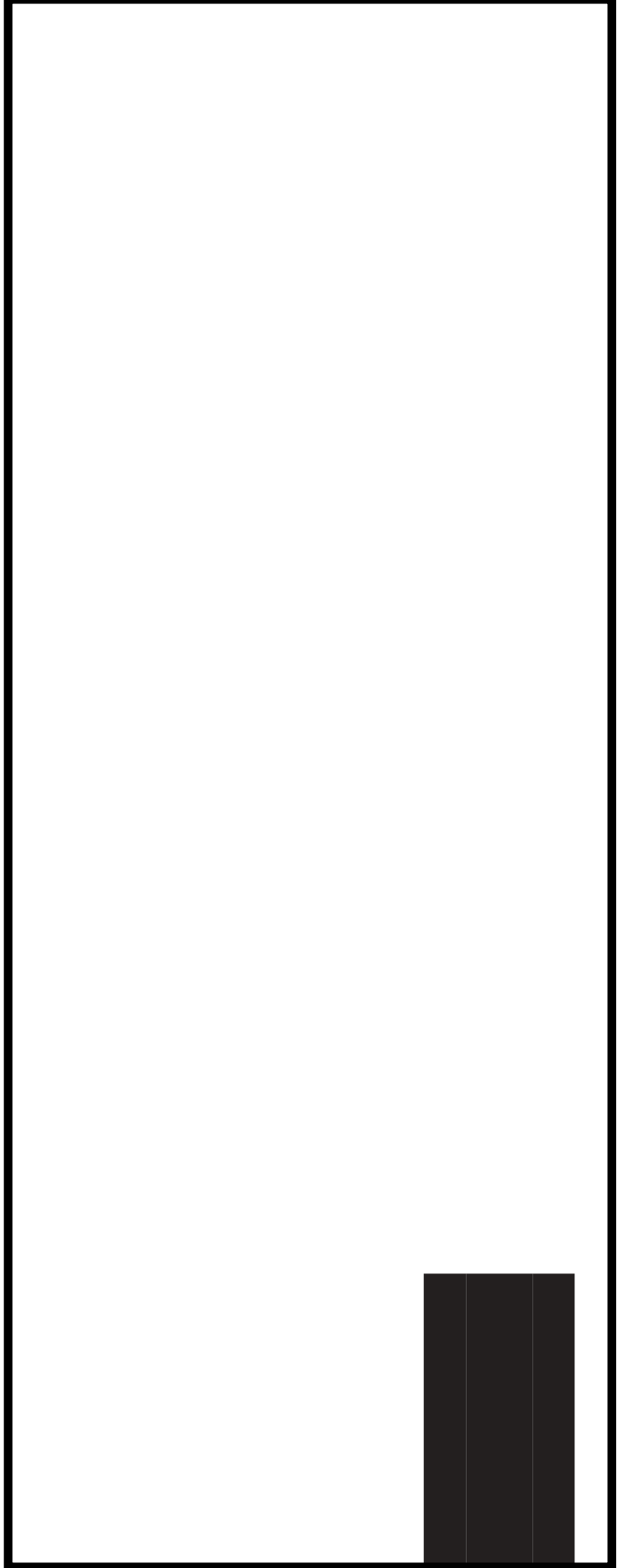
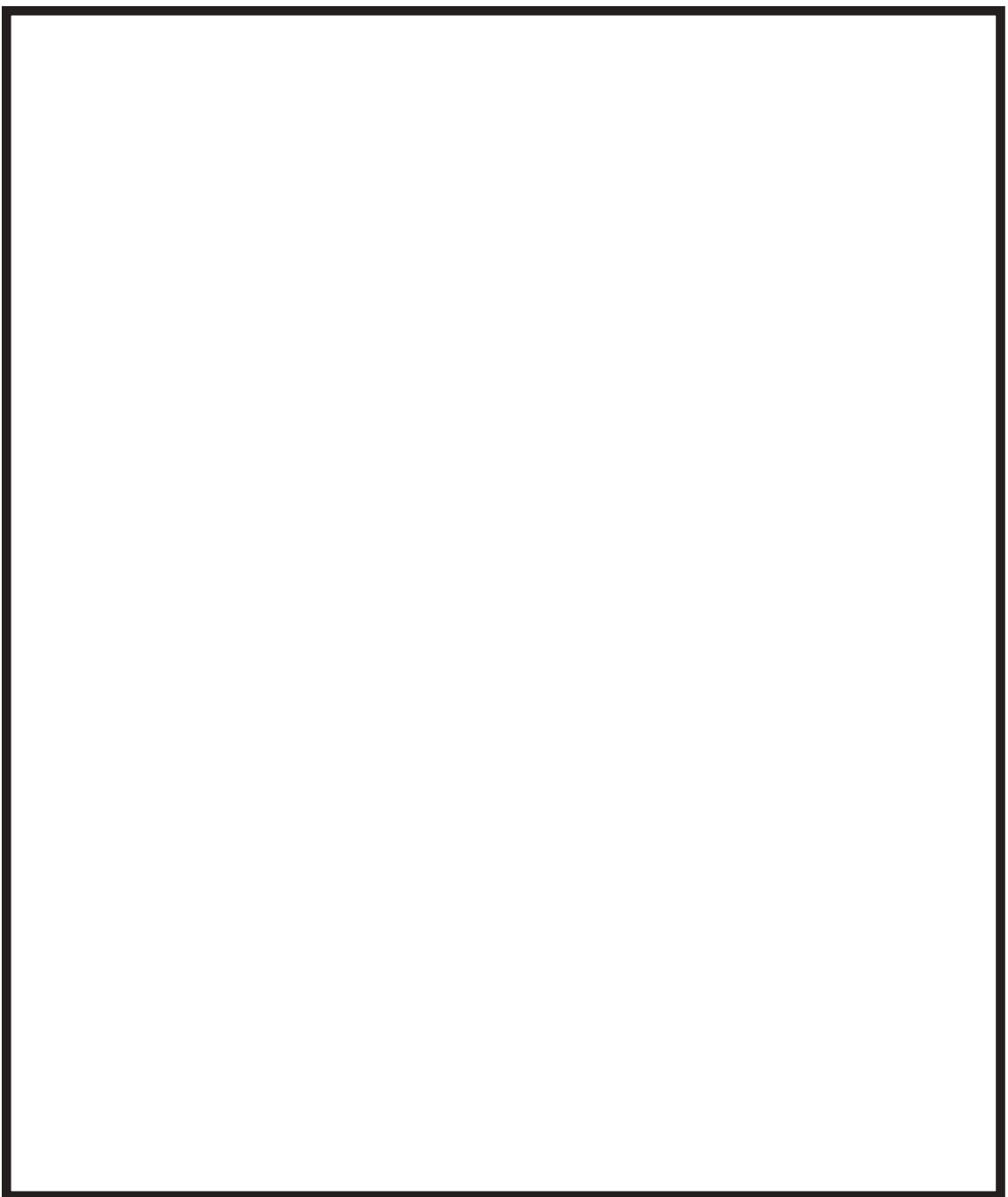
Lebanon, by the Israeli Army.

18. For the past 26 years, thousands of Muslim civilians have been victims of Israeli bombing and shelling in South Lebanon. Hundreds of thousands more have been displaced during the past quarter-century.

Source: *Canadian Islamic Congress* (www.cicnow.com)



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CAIR-Canada Hosts "Know Your Rights" Seminar

by Yahya Abdul Rahman

OTTAWA -- As the number of Muslims increase in Canada (now currently numbered between 400,000 and 500,000) and they become more visible and active within Canadian society, it can be expected that they will encounter problems and barriers to equal participation as Canadian citizens.

In fact, there are numerous instances of anti-Muslim discrimination and anti-Islam propaganda here in Canada. These range from the blatant violation of religious freedom and freedom of expression, to the more subtle forms including the constant negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims in schools textbooks, the media or from the public pronouncements of so called "Islamic experts." These all contribute to fostering a negative social environment for Muslims who live in Canada and lead to increased acts of discrimination and harassment against members of the Muslim community.

According to Canadian federal and provincial legislation, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone based on creed, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, or citizenship.

To help work towards combating this disturbing trend and educating Muslims of their rights, the Canadian office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) hosted a half-day seminar at Carleton University in Ottawa entitled *Know Your Rights*, on Saturday, September 16, 2000. The guest speakers were Faisal Kutty of the Canadian Muslim Civil Liberties Association (CMCLA), Shirley Sarna of Québec's Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, and Ted Shaw of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

During the seminar, the three speakers reviewed the constitutional rights to employment, education, and access to services. In addition, those present received a folder containing a *Know Your Rights* pocket guide for the Canadian scene. There was also literature available from various governmental agencies.

Sheema Khan, Director of the CAIR's Ottawa office, gave a brief introduction of CAIR's work, which includes combating media stereotypes of Muslims, educating the media on issues sensitive to Muslims in order to ensure better and more accurate coverage, educating Muslims on how the media works, and assisting Muslims when they feel they are victims of discrimination due to their faith and practice.

Shirley Sarna spoke about her Commission's work within the province of Québec. The basic law that regulates human rights in the province is the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. She spoke of the various rights individuals living in Québec have, and

educated the audience on how to detect discrimination. She also let the audience know of what recourse they have if they are victims of discrimination and outlined some of the work of the commission. She stressed that the Commission's services are completely free of charge and also noted that one does not have to be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant to launch a complaint. If you are on Canadian soil, then your rights are protected.

Ted Shaw of the OHRC, talked about the rights and obligations of individuals in Canada, and some of the issues covered in the Ontario Human Rights Code. He also addressed the role of the OHRC, which included investigating complaints of discrimination and harassment, working towards reconciliation between conflicting parties so as to bring about a just settlement, and working towards the overall reduction of discrimination and harassment through public education and public policy. Mr. Shaw stated that the OHRC receives over 2,000 complaints per year regarding discrimination and harassment.

The final speaker was Faisal Kutty, a Toronto lawyer, who spoke on behalf of the CMCLA. Br. Kutty began by stating that the basic rules that govern Canada are enshrined within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and this is the supreme law of the land. This charter guarantees a number of rights and freedoms within Canadian society, including freedom of religion and conscience, which gives us the right to practice the faith of our choice. Any law that infringes on this right may be legally challenged. There are other acts that also protect our rights such as the Criminal Code, the Employment Equity Act and the CRTC Act, which makes it a criminal offence to broadcast hate propaganda against any group. Even within universities, there are mechanisms in place to launch complaints in case of discrimination, but Br. Kutty stated that sadly many people do not take advantage of this.

Br. Kutty further stated that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) was targeting many Muslims for harassment. However, he reminded the audience that you have rights if they approach you and they too must abide by the human rights laws in Canada. You do not have to answer any of their questions unless there is a lawyer present. If you feel you have been harassed by this organisation, mechanisms are in place to launch a complaint. Br. Kutty mentioned several cases where CSIS was challenged by Muslims and lost.

A number of Islamic charitable organisations have also been targeted and accused of supporting "terrorist organisations," said Br. Kutty, but these accusations are largely baseless. He stressed

that the government, after a failed attempt three years ago, is now once again trying to secretly pass legislation that would shut down legal charitable organisations even if they were only suspected (with no proof) of supporting terrorist activity.

He stressed the need for the Muslim community to be informed and to become politically active in order to combat any attack on their rights, and not to take for granted the rights that are currently in place because these can be legislated away also, as in the case cited

above regarding charitable organisations. He also stressed the need for Muslim unity when even one of their members is being singled out, and that members of the Muslim community must support one another. Muslims organisations, such as CAIR-CAN and CMCLA are needed and should be supported, stated Br. Kutty, as they can mobilise community support and challenge any infringement of Muslims rights.

If you feel you have been a victim of discrimination or harassment for any reason, then do not

be afraid to launch a complaint. Some vital contact information is listed below:

Council on American-Islamic Relations - Canada

P.O. Box 67058, Westboro RPO
Ottawa, ON K2A 0E8
Tel: (613) 798-0003
Fax: (613) 798-9645
E-mail: canada@cair-net.org
Website: www.cair-net.org

Canadian Muslim Civil Liberties Association

885 Progress Avenue, UPH 14
Toronto, ON M1H 3G3
Tel: (416) 289 3871
Fax: (416) 289 0339
E-mail: cmcla@cmcla.org
Website: www.cmcla.org

Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (Montréal)

360 St. Jacques St., 2nd Floor
Montréal, QC H2Y 1P5
Tel: (514) 873-5146
or 1-800-361-6477
Fax: (514) 873-6032
E-mail: montreal@cdpdj.qc.ca
Website: www.cdpdj.qc.ca

Ontario Human Rights Commission

180 Dundas St. W., 8th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2R9
Tel: 1-800-387-9080
E-mail: info@ohrc.on.ca
Website: www.ohrc.on.ca

Kellogg's Products That Contain Gelatin

While visiting their website, Muhammad Basil Ahmad, our editor, came across the following information about the use of gelatin by Kellogg's in their products.

Gelatin serves two purposes:

1. It allows the incorporation of air into the icing which gives it the very white, frosted appearance.

2. Gelatin absorbs moisture

and produces a "set." Quick drying is necessary to prevent the icing from scuffing (marking).

The gelatin used in Kellogg's products is derived from either pork or beef. The following Kellogg's products use gelatin as part of their ingredients:

1. *Pop-Tarts* Danish, *Pop-Tarts* Snak Stix, and *Kellogg's Mini-Wheats* Cereal (contain beef)

2. *Kellogg's Rice Krispies Squares* Cereal Bars, and Marshmallow Blasted *Froot Loops* (contain pork)

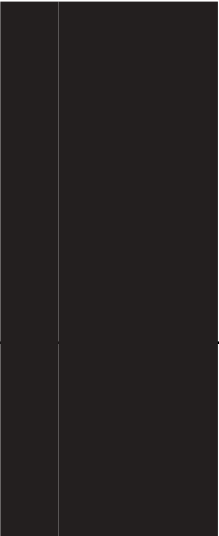
3. *Kellogg's Frosted Pop-Tarts* (contain pork or beef)

For a complete list of Kellogg's products containing animal derivatives and those that are deemed Kosher, visit the Kellogg's website at www.kelloggs.com.

Click the pull-down menu called "Choose a Link" and select "FAQs." At the FAQ's page, click "Nutrition" on the side panel. Then, near the bottom of that page you may read answers to:

1. Which Kellogg products are certified as Kosher products?
2. Which Kellogg products contain ingredients derived from animals?

All articles in **The Ambition** are well researched and checked by the editors. Being human, we may overlook something. If this happens, please call us and correct our mistakes.



Kids' Korner



- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Ansar | Jews |
| Companion | Muhajir |
| Enemies | Munafikun |
| Helpers | Quraysh |
| Hypocrite | Sahabah |

Read the story of the Prophet (pbuh) for their meanings

M	E	H	Y	P	O	C	R	I	T	E
U	A	S	Y	F	K	P	Q	G	X	V
H	B	T	Q	U	R	A	Y	S	H	H
A	J	R	Q	D	L	N	M	P	W	N
J	E	S	Z	E	Z	S	N	D	E	H
I	G	E	H	F	J	A	S	O	N	W
R	C	I	E	C	B	R	A	R	U	R
Q	D	M	P	O	E	O	H	H	Q	X
U	E	E	P	P	I	P	A	S	I	A
R	F	N	L	G	K	B	B	C	F	J
A	G	E	E	S	A	L	O	N	A	E
I	H	U	H	H	N	U	M	B	N	F
S	I	M	A	R	J	Q	H	Y	U	V
S	V	S	W	E	J	X	T	T	M	Z
N	Y	W	Z	N	K	L	M	U	A	U
A	C	O	M	P	A	N	I	O	N	I

Ramadan

by Kiran Ali, Grade 8

Ramadan is the month of fasting. Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. This year Ramadan falls in November and will last until nearly the end of December.

Many of us think that fasting only means not eating and drinking from sunrise until sunset — but in fact, it means more. Fasting is not only a physical act but a spiritual one as well. While fasting, one should keep away from anything that displeases Allah — which even means no fighting with your brother or sister!

Fasting helps us experience the suffering felt by those who live in poor countries and have no food or drink. It helps us build compassion for the poor and makes us realise how lucky we are that Allah has blessed us with his bounties.

Ramadan is a very blessed month. It is in this month that the Holy Qur'an was revealed.

Also, Laylatul Qadr falls in the last ten days of Ramadan. It is on this night that we get the reward of 1,000 months.

During Ramadan, we are encouraged to do as many good deeds as possible because Allah increases our reward during the month. So, we should all make the most out of this blessed month. Read all five of your daily prayers. Go to the mosque as much as possible. Read the night-time Taraweeh prayers. Recite the Holy Qur'an. Listen to your parents and try to be patient with those who are younger than you.

At the end of the month, when Ramadan comes to an end, we should all try to continue with our good deeds. We should try to use this month to change ourselves for the better — not only will you find yourself to be a better person, but Allah will be pleased with you as well.



A page from the Life of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Conspiracy in Madinah Against Islam and Muslims

by Farheen Zahra

As the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers settled in Madinah, the Disbelievers in Makkah were very angry. With the Muslims in Madinah, surely Islam would spread, for the majority of people there were either the *Sahabah* (companions) who migrated to Madinah with the Prophet (pbuh) or the Ansar (people of Madinah and Helpers of Islam) who had promised to take care of Muslims in their new homeland.

They were also afraid that the Muslims would get stronger and so they got together to come up with a plan. The leaders of Quraysh sent a letter to 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the leading chief of Madinah, which stated: "You have given shelter to our man. We tell you to either kill him or turn him out of Madinah. Otherwise, we swear by God that we will attack you and destroy you, and seize your women" (related

by Al-Bukhari).

When the Prophet (pbuh) heard of this, he went to 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy and asked if he would fight his own sons and brothers, as a large number of Ansar had accepted the true religion of Islam. 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy realised this and did not comply with the commands of the Quraysh, which made them angrier. The Disbelievers decided that perhaps the enemies of Islam would help them in their fight against Islam.

Meanwhile, Islam was rapidly growing in Madinah. Many people saw the true message of Allah and openly accepted Islam. However, there were also those who said, "We are Muslims," but were really lying. These people were called *Munafikun* (hypocrites) and were very dangerous to Islam for they said one thing but did another. The *Munafikun* soon started to help the Disbelievers of Makkah.

Many Jews also populated Madinah. While the Jews believed in Prophet Musa (pbuh) and the To-

rah (Ten Commandments), they also believed that they were the "Chosen People" and therefore, only they could have prophets. While a few did accept Islam, many of them refused to believe that Muhammad (pbuh) was a real prophet and so they too became enemies of Islam.

When the Disbelievers of Makkah learned of the hypocrites and Jews, they were pleased. They believed that the Jews and hypocrites would help them. So, the Disbelievers decided to make war. "Let us fight," they said. "We will show the Muslims how strong we really are."

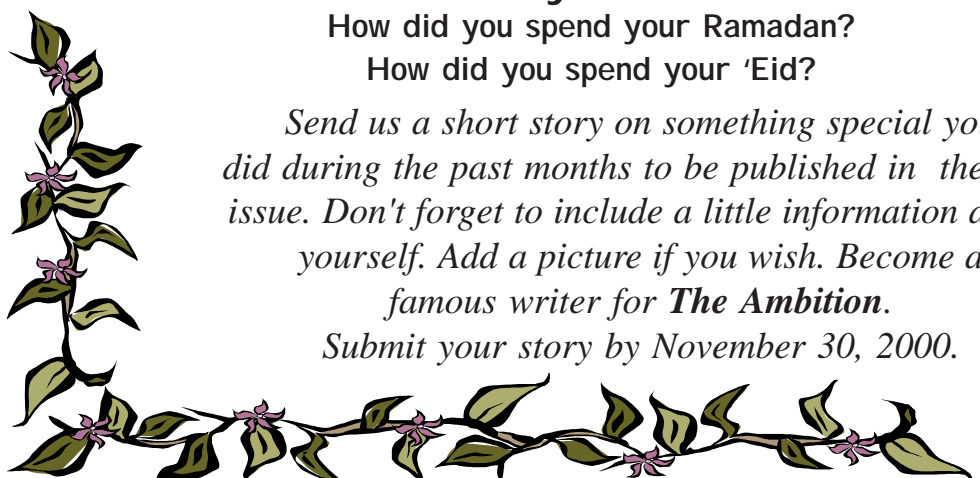
The Prophet (pbuh) knew that the Disbelievers would not stay quiet for long and knew he had to adopt measures for self-defence. Not only did he have to think of himself and the *Muhajirun* (Muslim emigrants from Makkah), but the Prophet (pbuh) also had to protect the people of Madinah who had given shelter to the Muslims.

Hey Kids!

How did you spend your Ramadan?
How did you spend your 'Eid?

Send us a short story on something special you did during the past months to be published in the next issue. Don't forget to include a little information about yourself. Add a picture if you wish. Become a famous writer for *The Ambition*.

Submit your story by November 30, 2000.



Seminar on Anti-Islam in the Canadian Media

Activism is not just a one-time thing . . . you have to go back again and again . . . until things are changed

by Yahya Abdul Rahman

On Saturday, September 23, 2000, the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) presented a seminar in Montreal entitled *Anti-Islam in the Canadian Media*. The main speaker was CIC President Dr. Mohamed Elmasry and the purpose of the workshop was to educate Muslims on how to deal effectively with the media in order to ensure more accurate and unbiased coverage of issues related to Islam and Muslims. Mrs. Wahida Valiante, CIC Vice-President, could not participate, as she was attending an Islamic conference in Indonesia.

Dr. Elmasry began his presentation with several verses from scripture that talk about "Al-Amr-be-Ma'roof-wa-Nahee-Anil-Munkar," that is, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong (Qur'an 3:104, 3:110, 22:41-42). Reminding the audience that "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong" is an obligation on Muslims, he stated that this duty could be translated today as referring to political and

social activism. Thus, it is incumbent on all Muslims to be informed and act in order to fulfil this Qur'anic injunction.

"It is not enough just to observe the Islamic rituals, such as prayer and fasting," stated Dr. Elmasry, "but Muslims must also be active." He added that this duty is not gender biased; both men and women are duty bound to serve the cause of Islam. Citing another Qur'anic verse, he said: "*The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: They enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: They observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey God and His Messenger. On them will God pour His Mercy: For God is Exalted in Power, Wise.*"

For the remainder of the seminar, Dr. Elmasry guided nearly fifty seminar participants through a carefully laid out plan of action on how to build a dialogue, not only with media professionals, but also with decision-makers in general, such as politicians and government officials. This included find-

ing out who the real decision makers are and how to arrange a meeting to present your case in a professional and effective manner.

Dr. Elmasry also showed those present how to detect bias in media reporting, and how to measure success in the field of activism. He reminded the audience that activism is not just a one-time thing — that you state your case and leave it at that — but activism means you have to go back again and again, if necessary, until things are changed. This can take many months or years to accomplish.

Dr. Elmasry talked about CIC's *Anti-Islam in the Media* study which is an ongoing survey of Canada's top newspapers. Through content analysis, it measures the level of anti-Islam, ranking each newspaper according to their anti-Islamic attitude from

worst to best. The findings are then made public and distributed to many editors, politicians, government departments, embassies, etc. Some of the newspapers, including *The Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail*, have made concerted efforts to correct the offensive language used when reporting on Islam and Muslims.

Close to the end of the seminar, participants were broken up into groups of five and asked to read a newspaper article that was offensive to Muslims. Members were asked to discuss the article amongst themselves. Then one person from each group presented to everyone the course of action that should be taken to correct the misinformation or bias contained in the article.

Participants were given a certificate of completion at the end of the seminar, and some volunteered to work with CIC in the future or to help monitor anti-Islam in the media and other government

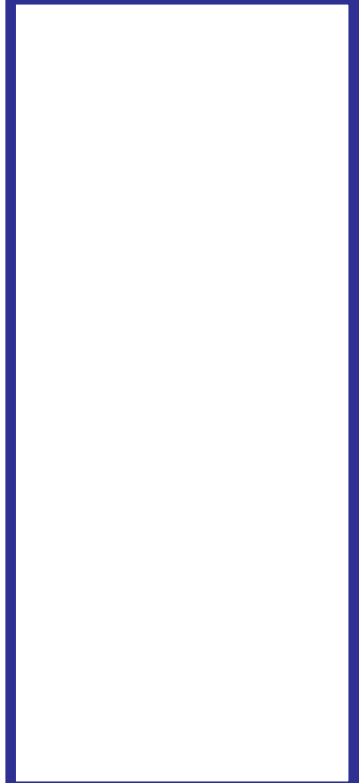
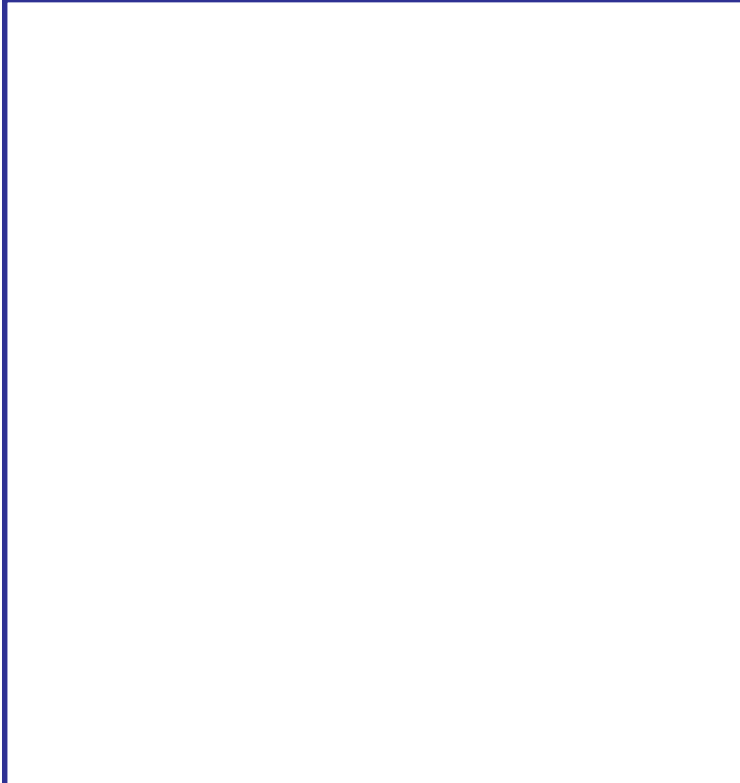
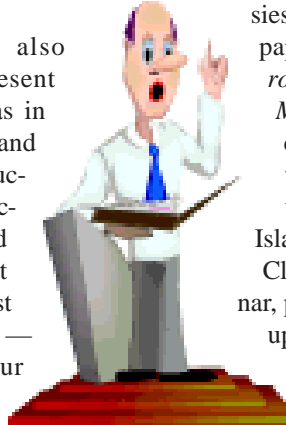
publications.

That same evening, Dr. Elmasry delivered a moving lecture entitled *The Concept of Success in Islam*. Those who heard him speak were reminded that the value of this earthly life is very little compared to what is waiting for Muslims in the hereafter. Dr. Elmasry admonished those in attendance that they should invest in eternity by working and giving for the sake of Islam as this is where real, lasting wealth and success is.

The seminar was sponsored by the Canadian Islamic Forum (CMF), the Muslim Community of Québec Mosque (MCQ), and Montréal's newly formed Media Relations Committee (MRC). Masjid Al-Ummah, another mosque in Montréal that has been hosting the ongoing monthly MRC meetings, also contributed to the event.

Please visit CIC's website at www.cicnow.com.

Yahya Abdul Rahman lives in Montréal and is editor of the online Islamic News and Information Network (www.inin.net).



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