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Jesus Through a Muslim Lens

Many may be surprised to learn that Muslims believe in Jesus' miracles. But this shared interest goes much further.

By Michael Wolfe

Jesus of Nazareth is the most widely revered religious figure in the world. Not only is he central to Christianity, the largest religion in the world, he is also venerated throughout Islam, the world's second largest faith.

Christians may be surprised to learn that Muslims believe in the Virgin Birth and Jesus' miracles. But

this shared interest in his message goes much further.

In our scientific age, the miraculous side of Jesus' story has greatly obscured his role in the prophetic tradition. In this sense, there may be more important questions for Muslims and Christians than whether he walked on water or raised the dead.

In the Muslim view, Jesus' essential work was not to replicate magic bread or to test our credulity, but to complement the legalism of the Torah with a leavening compassion rarely expressed in the older testament. His actions and words introduce something new to monotheism: They develop the merciful spirit of God's nature. Jesus confirmed the Torah, stressing the continuity of his lineage, but he also developed the importance of compassion and self-purification as crucial links between learning the words of God's message and possessing the wisdom to carry it out.

Oddly enough, some of the recent work by New Testament scholars seems to have reached a view of Christ not all that different from Muslims'. For us and for these scholars, Jesus appears not as a lit-

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Lessons from Ramadan

by Ashraf Zaghoul

Allah, the Most Merciful, describes the month of Ramadan in Surah Al-Baqara as the month in which the Qur'an was revealed, to provide guidance for all people. As we near the end of the month, let us consider if this is the end, or is it a beginning? What is the purpose of this month? If it is taken just for fasting, then soon it will be over. If it is something more than that, then we should apply the lessons we learnt during Ramadan.

Allah gave us Ramadan as a training period to prepare us for the year ahead. During Ramadan, He trains us for 30 days and the good training we should carry with us throughout the year until the next Ramadan.

Look at the lessons we learn during the month of Ramadan. We learn that for 30 days, we can go for 12 to 16 hours without food and water. We can get up to eat at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning and pray the Fajr (morning prayer) on time, go to work, and can still do a good job. We learn to pray extra at night and read the Qur'an. We spend more time with family and with friends and we visit the sick. We also give to the poor. We develop these habits, and we should not forget them at the end of the month.

Most of us are used to eating during the day. We have three big meals and sometimes want to snack between the meals. During Ramadan, we learn that two meals are enough. The Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "The worst pot that a human being fills is his stomach and that a few mouthfuls of food should be enough for the day. If we have to eat then one third of our stomach is for food, one third for water and one third for breathing." Most of us eat and drink so much that there is no more space to breath. Ramadan teaches that we can do without filling our bellies. During the month of Ramadan, the whole family eats together, both breakfast and dinner. It teaches us to eat at fixed times and that it is good when the whole family eats together.

Normally, when I went to work in the morning, I used to look forward to the first cup of coffee. In

Ramadan, thank God, I went for 30 days without drinking any coffee and realized that there is no need for it. The fasting of Ramadan helped me get over this craving. The same thing goes for those who smoke. If they can fast for 16 hours without it, they should take this opportunity to cut down or give up smoking.

Usually, if you ask people if they pray Fajr on time, most people will give excuses, like, "I tried to but I was very tired and I could not get up." We learn in the month of Ramadan that we can get up every night for 30 days to eat and pray, and so, we should be able to get up for Fajr on time for the rest of the year. The Messenger (pbuh) said, "Two Rakaa in the middle of the night is better than any thing else on earth," so we should practice what we have learnt and get the blessings throughout the year.

We learn that we can read the full Qur'an once or more times during the month of Ramadan. A companion of the Prophet went to The Messenger (pbuh) and asked how many times should he read the whole Qur'an? He told him to read it once a month. The companion said he could do better, so the Messenger (pbuh) said to him, "read it in 20

days." He said he could do better, and could read it in 7 days. The Messenger (pbuh) said, "but not in less than 7 days." Thus, it was desired by the Prophet (pbuh) to finish the Qur'an at least once a month. When Ramadan is over, how many of us go back to reading the Qur'an and keep up this good habit? The Messenger (pbuh) tells us, "Do not let your homes be like graves. Read the Qur'an in them". All it takes is 20 minutes a day, like we did during Ramadan. There is reward in just reading the Qur'an. We should also take extra time to understand the meaning of some of the verses so they may have a lasting impression on us and help us make our lives easier and happier.

We learn to go for Isha and Tarweeh in the mosque every night, yet when Ramadan is over we stop going to the mosque. We might go on Friday or we might go once a month, but during Ramadan, we seek time out and can take the children to the mosque every night to pray. The Messenger (pbuh) said, "If people knew what the reward is for the Isha and Fajr prayers in the mosque, they would come even if they had to crawl." So let's not stop

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Adherence to Religion Solves Social Problems

In a community of true believers, there is very little immoral behaviour.

by Harun Yahya

The most distinctive characteristic of societies not bound by the principles of religion is the prevalence of degeneration and its deep penetration into all levels of society, which becomes more chronic with each passing day. Since people do not follow Qur'anic precepts and are bereft of values like the fear of God or the necessity to earn God's approval, there is nothing to hinder this degeneration. There are, of course, some traditions,

customs and social laws developed by individuals or leaders, which shape the general conduct of society. But, because these have been developed by man and are not grounded in the fear of God, their impact on society is feeble. Ultimately, they fail to restrain behaviour that is cruel, unconscientious and inhuman.



To give an example, there is no reason why one who conducts him immorally should

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Editorial

Keep up the good work!

Now that Ramadhan is over, most of us will tend to “relax”[in our religious fervor] a bit, getting very busy with our traditional celebrations of Eid.

Alhamdulillah, almost all of us have observed the holy month with the best of our “spiritual/religious ability”. I think even those who never had the pleasure of joining Jamaa’t for Isha salat might have been there at least once — on the Lailatul Qadr. Those of us who wouldn’t do five daily prayers all year round but only off and on, or sometimes, would have made an effort not to miss any, or at least felt bad if they missed some and offered “Qadha” for it when they had a chance. On similar grounds, those who are regular round the year in their salat made efforts to step up with the quality of their salat, also offering extra Nawaafil, pulling themselves to win the bounties at “Tahajjud” time (getting up in the middle of the night for voluntary prayers), reciting the Qur’an al-Hakim more often and keeping their tongues, or the least their hearts, busy in “Zikr”. There is for sure an air of religious excitement and zeal during this month even in the ones who have weakest of faith.

So most of us have consciously tried to refrain from even the minor sins, ones that we may not avoid round the year but feel uncomfortable doing in this month, like telling lies to avoid an embarrassing situation, or watching too much explicit content on media, or listening to music all the waking hours. Also if we could get the stats, there must be a major cut back in the number of backbiting and name-calling, that almost all of us get down to intentionally or unintentionally. Chances are almost all of us have tried to engage ourselves in helping someone else just for the sake of Allah and have been in a more charitable frame of mind, above and beyond the obligatory Zakat. May Allah accept all the efforts made by all of us, because He promises in his book that an act of goodness even if its as small as a grain of sand will not go without reward.

Subhan Allah! He — the Beneficent, the ever Merciful will pay multiple times for all the good deeds done in this month. He accepts our fasts and forgives our sins and lets us purify our dull, weary, materialistic souls in the blissful showers of all 30 days and nights of Ramadhan. But that’s not the end of the story...that’s not the complete purpose of this great month that is just the completion of a “refresher course”. Ramadhan is indeed a refresher course for all Muslims. Isn’t it another great blessing of Allah that He has made obligatory on all of us this period of time when we can take our slowing down, tired, weakened and dirty souls to launder them and refresh them, bring them out shiny like new, as they are originally made and intended to look like.

If any good employer in this world pays us well all year and yet gives refresher courses to advance and enhance our work skills and offers bonuses after the course, wouldn’t all of us want to be with that employer all year round, keeping a keen eye on our performance? I would.

So let’s do ourselves this favour. Let’s keep our strings pulled together and not let them go loose immediately; let’s try to stick to the habit of timely salat offered with a present heart; let’s keep the spirit of helping others all year round just the way we did in this holy month; let’s recite Qur’an every day and try to understand and incorporate its message in our lives (if we haven’t been doing that earlier) all year round; let’s always keep our hearts and hands open for charity for the purpose of propagation of Islam or to help another needy.

Let’s make a vow to ourselves that we are not going to revert to any major or minor sins, like lying, backbiting, name-calling etc. just to save face in this world. After all, we all do believe that this world will come to an end and we all will gather again in a much bigger gathering of all humans. How will we save face there when our lies and sins will be open in front of everyone? So even if we are pressed, we won’t not lie or engage in acts that are disliked by Allah. We will not let ourselves be swooped to coax and plot negatively for anyone. We’ll not let go of justice, even in the smallest every day affairs.

Let’s try to always keep in our minds that Allah is watching us right now just as we do in Ramadhan by abstaining from eating or drinking even when we have the chance to do so. After all, in this age of “living sensibly” when all of us want to make sensible decisions, earn and spend wisely, wear, educate, travel, walk and talk wisely, would it be wise to forget or give-up everything that a “Refresher Course” just equipped us with?

Aasiya Amir

Letters / Opinion

Making of An Activist Community

The first step is a paradigm shift in our minds

By Naeem Siddiqi

“Muslims are lazy”
“There is a conspiracy brother”
“We don’t have any resources”
“I am only one person”

These are some of the typical responses to the question of “Why are Muslims lacking in power?” or “Why is the Muslim community politically inactive?”. They are also some of the more pervasive myths in our community that we choose to accept, and that prevent us from reaching for higher goals.

But how do we get to a stage where our community uses its resources to empower itself politically and socially? The answer lies in two main areas. Firstly, there is a need to prioritise political and social activism within our community. Secondly, and more importantly, there needs to be a critical shift in the mindset of Muslims. Without this paradigm shift, even the easiest activist tasks will become difficult.

Lets look at some of these myths.

Canadian Muslims are not lazy. On the contrary, most Muslims are hardworking individuals who have reached success in businesses and professional disciplines. New immigrants work multiple jobs to make ends meet and create opportunities for their kids. Muslims work extremely hard when they are focused and they need to. It is therefore unlikely that our lack of influence is due to a generally lazy community.

We are also not short on resources. While it is true that the Muslim community has pockets of poverty, the number of new mosques and other Muslim projects that are going on in the GTA is a testament to the fact that the Muslim community can, and does come up with substantial financial and human resources when it needs to. Our community has, and continues to build brick and mortar institutions to support our spiritual development.

If we are to mature as an influential Canadian community, we need to redirect some of this effort towards social and political activism, advocacy and mainstream issues.

The ever-present explanation of conspiracy theories to explain all our problems stunts our community’s growth more than we think. It rots us from within. Blaming our problems on others, by definition, absolves us from self-examination. If the other person is at fault, then I don’t need to consider my own shortcomings. It has also provided an outlet for some

Muslims to express clearly racist sentiments against other groups. I often hear Muslims criticizing others for turning everything into an Al-Qaeda conspiracy – and at the same time terming this as a Jewish conspiracy in itself!

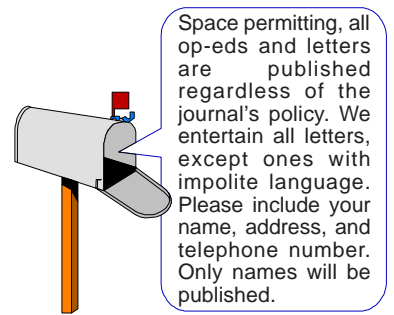
Self-reflection and improvement is a key component of being a good Muslim. It is also the only way we have to improve ourselves.

But far more important than that, before we can become a community of activists, there needs to be a shift in our mindsets. The Muslim community has too often seen itself in a victim mode, and a second-class citizen mentality has started to crystallise into our minds. This is the most significant factor that we need to address.

Consider some of the most successful anti-racism activists and freedom fighters of the last century – people like Malcolm X, Gandhi, Jinnah, Kenyatta and Martin Luther King. They undeniably lived under far more restrictive circumstances than we do. Racism and colonialism were official policies. Yet these men had one thing that led them to success – they were confident that they were first class, equal citizens of their homelands, and demanded to be treated as such. They felt “equal status” was not someone else’s to give them – it was theirs to start with.

A community that thinks it is second-class will always be treated as second class. Before we can demand better treatment and respect from others, we need to start respecting ourselves. Canadian Muslims are not second-class citizens. Despite the challenges imposed on our community since 9/11, we are still free to worship, vote, speak and live our lives without massive unreasonable intrusions. We cannot resign ourselves to ‘qismat’ (fate), and accept mistreatment as our lot in life. If we succumb to these thoughts, we have already lost the battle.

Once we free ourselves of these false notions of conspiracy theories and second-class citizenship, becoming activists will be far easier. Picking up the phone to express your thoughts to your local MP, Councillor, MPP etc. will not be a difficult task. Writing a letter or email to TV Stations, newspapers and the Prime Minister will be as natural as donating your zakat. The reason is, when you expect to be treated with respect, and have your voices heard – anything else would be unacceptable,



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and you will act accordingly.

Lastly, the notion that one person cannot make a difference must be dispelled. The freedom fighters and leaders mentioned previously started with great ideas and a lot of energy. They did not have massive offices with large budgets at their disposal – yet, their contributions to entire societies is now beyond debate. We need only look around at the social welfare and advocacy groups in Canada, and recall how they started. One person can make a difference. The phone call you make to your local MP to ask him why the Canadian government is not doing enough to protect its Muslim and Arab citizens from harassment at the US border, will carry weight if 50 other Muslims make the same call. If 20 Muslims write to the local newspaper pointing out unfair coverage, they have a better chance of being published. Yet, if everyone expects someone else to do it, nothing gets done.

[Naeem Siddiqi is the Communications Director of the Canadian-Muslim Civil Liberties Association Visit: www.cmcla.org

Another thing we can suggest to Muslims is to put their money where their mouth is. Open their wallets to the organizations that are engaged in this work. Other than CMCLA, there are CIC and CAIR-CAN that are actively involved in the political activism – Editors.]

NOW THAT RAMADAN IS OVER

The holy month of Ramadan is over. We fasted the month, we gave Zakat, we restrained ourselves, exercised control over our basic instincts, and finally celebrated Eid-Ul-Fitr giving alms and rubbing shoulders with our fellow Muslims. Allah had closed the gates of Hell during the last third of the month in answer to fasting by His believers.

The act of fasting holds several benefits. It teaches us patience. It is an exercise in self-control. It allows us to empathize with the less fortunate. The very act of fasting instills in Muslims a sense of brotherhood and unity as we collectively observe the restrictions of having to do without food, water and other pleasures during the fasting hours. This allows us to become better human beings.

To me, the commandment to fast was revealed by Allah to allow man to assume human traits in this life by the practice of restraint, patience, empathy for others and charity. And by this, I believe Allah meant for one’s entire life. Not just during the month of Ramadan. I wonder, how many of us share my view?

Munawwar Merchant

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This Journal is dedicated to:

Professor Syed Aley Ahmad Abdi, Former Principal, Government Education College, Multan, Pakistan

From the Qur'an

Let man reflect on the food he eats, how We pour down rainwater in abundance and cleave the soil asunder. How We bring forth grain, grapes and nutritious vegetation; olives and dates, lush gardens, fruits and fodder, as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle. (80: 24-32)

From the Hadith

Asma Narrated: The Prophet said to me, "Do not withhold your money, (for if you did so) Allah would withhold His blessings from you."

(Al-Bukhari)

by Ayub Hamid

(Second of a two part series)

Now that we have gone over the proper attitude to approach the Qur'an and to understand its message, let us talk about *the right path it guides to*. Specifically, let us review what is the correct religious paradigm or Islamic outlook taught by the Qur'an and should be **our ultimate vision for the Hereafter**. This vision is dependent on two subvisions: One, being presented on the Day of Judgment in the audience of Allah, our Master, such that He is pleased with our performance and we are praising Him profusely and happily for His grace and mercy and for easy reckoning; and two, being welcomed into Jannah (Paradise) with greetings of peace, so far away from Jahannam (Hell) that we do not even hear its sounds.

To qualify for the above, our focus for this world is two-fold: (a) Individual, and (b) collective.

(a) **Individually**, each of us should live the way Allah likes us to live; i.e., become the best a human being can be — excelling in ethics, morals, behaviour, dealings, actions, interactions, fairness, equity, care, kindness, generosity, grace and decency.

(b) **Collectively**, first, the Muslims should be organized into one body, a united Ummah, that finally should take shape of the Islamic state politically administered in the form of Khilaafah resulting into the best possible human society — a loving, caring, sharing, peaceful, just and gracious society where everyone enjoys security, dignity, respect, equality and tranquility. Second, dominate globally so that Allah's world is under Allah's rule (the Islamic world order), Islam is the dominant way of life and the matters of the whole world are dealt with

Approaching the Qur'an

Islamically, and the whole globe becomes a peaceful ideal society where everyone lives in peace, harmony and in submission to the Creator.

The Holy Qur'an (Chapter Al-Asr) indicates that to make this vision become a reality, we need to spend the time, entrusted to us in the form of our life span, in a way that it is characterized by the following features:

It must be a life of faith spent in good deeds; promoting Haqq (what is right) and developing an environment where the right behaviour is encouraged and flourished; and promoting Sabr (patience) — promoting, encouraging and nourishing steadfastness, constancy, consistency and perseverance in living by faith, practising good deeds and promoting the right behaviour. Those who do not live their life in this manner are the ultimate losers. Let's explain how we can achieve these qualities.

Faith (Iman) is not something that one superficially accepts as an idea that does not have much implication on one's life. Faith is the acceptance of the realities that shape one's behaviour and dominate and determine one's lifestyle. Faith has, in fact, three immediate implications on a person's personality and lifestyle, in the absence of which, claim to faith is essentially false.

(a) As soon as a person acquires a valid faith, the first change that occurs in his attitude is that he becomes sincere in his words and actions and his intentions become pure for Allah.

(b) From that point on, his mind should be dominated with the consciousness and presence of Allah (Dzikr) which will give him an attitude of

watching himself constantly that he does only the things Allah approves and avoids what Allah disapproves (Taqwa).

(c) He will immediately join a community of believers (Jama'ah) and he will become truthful, honest and trustworthy in his dealings.

This Dzikr, Taqwa, sincerity, trustworthiness and Jama'ah genuinely declare and witnesses (Shahaadah) of the existence of a true Iman. A claim to faith in the absence of any of these five corollaries is hypocrisy (Nifaaq).

2. Iman and Taqwa, supported by Dzikr and Jama'ah, become the foundations for the development of Islamic personality and good behaviour. Good actions are natural result of Iman and Taqwa. While the faith becomes the founda-

tion for good behaviour, the other four pillars of Islam (Salaah, Zakaah, Fasting and Hajj) provide the structure and framework on which Islamic personality is developed and closeness to Allah is attained. They also act as the practical and active form of Dzikr of Allah through which Taqwa and Iman are further nourished, strengthened and reinforced. But most importantly, they (the pillars) also provide the structure for the establishment of political, social and economic system of Islam for the community of the Believers (Jama'ah). These pillars are not established unless their collective role for the political and financial system is fully implemented in the form of a political entity or Islamic state.

The values that lead the Islamic behaviour are: practice of Justice, Grace, Charity; and avoidance of indecent, bad and transgressive attitudes. As the Holy Qur'an declares: "Verily, Allah commands `Adl (fairness, equity, justice) Ihsaan (excellence in servitude to Allah, benevolence towards people, graciousness in dealings) and giving to those close to you, while He forbids Fahshaa (lewdness, indecency, licentiousness, immorality), Munkar (bad actions, undesirable activities, generally unaccepted behaviour, not fulfilling one's obligations), and Baghy (rebellion, transgressing limits, exploiting or violating others' rights, abuse of authority or freedom). He admonishes you so that you heed the advice." (16:90)

These values (Further explained and detailed in 17:22-39) are the determinants of all Islamic injunctions and teachings and must govern the individual and collective (state's) behaviour and lead to personal and government excellence.

Hence, the good deeds are all those actions that are conducted in accordance of the teachings of the Qur'aan and Sunnah within the framework provided by the pillars of Islam and values dictated in An-Nahl (16:90.)

Promoting of Haqq (truth) represent the spirit that translates into actions in the form of *Jihaad bin-Nafs* (using one's own times, abilities and life) and *Jihaad bil Maal* (using one's money and resources for Islamic work, activism, spending in the way of Allah for the dominance of Islam which is in addition to Zakah and common charity). *Jihaad bin-Nafs* takes the form of the following actions:

* Da'wah (Propagation of Islam) and Amr bil Ma'roof (enjoining good) and Nahi 'anil Munkar (forbidding evil); Qitaal (Fighting in the way of Allah)

Da'wah and Amr bil Ma'roof (enjoining good) and Nahi 'anil Munkar includes activities such as creating Islamic atmosphere within family and social circle; ensuring that family and social life revolves around Deen; participating in and organizing Halaqaahs, group sessions and study circles; co-operating in the initiatives that are based on Taqwa and righteousness; standing up and speaking up for justice, equity and what is right; helping those whose rights are violated or compromised; non-cooperating and effectively opposing those who are unfair or violate other's rights; pressing the violators to do the right thing; media relations and related activities for developing and promoting the accurate

image of Islam and Muslims; political activism for the attainment of deserving power, influence, effectiveness and status for Islam and Muslims; and, removing obstacles in the way of Islam.

Promoting Sabr — promoting, encouraging and nourishing steadfastness, constancy, consistency and perseverance in living by faith, practising good deeds and promoting the right behaviour. Staying constantly and consistently on the abovementioned path is not easy without Sabr and the environment that promotes Sabr.

Promoting Haqq and Sabr, thus, are foundations on which Jihad is carried out that should result into personal excellence of a Muslim and the dominance of Islam and establishment of Allah's rule over the globe.

Every Muslims has a duty to adopt a lifestyle fashioned according to this path and needs to make a commitment to give this lifestyle the top most priority until personal excellence (Tazkiyah) is achieved and until Islamic state is created and Allah's rule is established over the globe (Izhaar of Deen). As we cannot be perfect, personal excellence (Tazkiyah) is a continuous process of self-improvement that has to continue throughout our life. Similarly the collective struggle also has to continue first to establish a state and then to maintain it. This is what will help attain Islamic vision for this world and also the Hereafter.

This is the Islamic way of life (Deen of Islam) which we have been commanded to establish and for which all prophets were sent. This is also the witness we are supposed to bear in front of the people of the world as the prophet witnessed it for us. The learning of this Deen from the Qur'an and Sunnah and then practising it through this framework is the Ibaadaah (worship) for which we were created.

Thus, a Muslim's mission statement is: "The mission of my life is to please Allah and earn a place in Jannah by dedicating my life and resources in a lifelong Jihad for my continuous personal improvement as well as for the domination of Islam, practising the Deen of Islam as mapped hereunder, so that individually I excel in all my dealings and affairs of life and collectively we establish and sustain an Islamic state (Khilaafah) and Islamic world order of peace and justice over the whole globe."

This is the balanced way of life Islam offers and the straight path observed by the prophets, and righteous Muslims and the correct paradigm with complete picture of Islam as a way of life.

Peace to all.
Submission to Only
One God.
That is Islam.

SAJDA (Prostration)

By Dr. Muhammad Karim Beebani,
Saudi Gazette

Sajda (Prostration) is a unique position or stance in the regular prayers, which a Muslim is supposed to offer at least five times a day. Although the basic purpose of obligatory prayers is not to provide an exercise for people yet it is being increasingly recognized that it has plenty of medical advantages for the human body.

Here it is worth mentioning that the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) has mentioned in a hadith in Ibn Maja: 'Prayer is a cure for many diseases'. The position of Sajda in which the forehead touches the ground is exclusively associated with the Muslim form of prayer. It is the climax



of a Muslim's prayer and as mentioned in a Hadith a Muslim is nearest to Allah in this position.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication' (in this state)" In a Hadith narrated by Anas bin Malik the Prophet (pbuh) advised Muslims to perform Rukuu (bowing) and Sajda (prostration) properly. Another Hadith details the advice to perform Sajda (Prostration) and bowing calmly and to get up only when the body has come to ease.

Hence the first positive effect upon a person who prostrates or does Sajda is that he comes nearest to Allah and hence in that condition he can supplicate. This is a great psychological advantage and it gives relief to the praying person, as life is full of worries and in this position he gets at least a transient refuge from the agonizing problems, and it's not just any refuge, it's the best refuge for a soul—the refuge of the Creator, the Benevolent, the Merciful!!

When a person goes to the position of Sajda (Prostration), his whole body is in active motion. This position can be considered as a mini dive as the musalli (one who offers prayer) goes to rest his forehead on the ground while his hands are placed at the sides. This brings most of the body muscles, if not all, in active motion and serves to give them some

exercise. The hands are then specifically stretched out and thence the forearm as well as arm muscles are supposed to bear the weight in the Sajda (Prostration) position. It gives good exercise to the muscles of the upper limb. The Prophet (pbuh) advised his companions not to put the forearms flatly on the ground but to keep them elevated above ground and this is better for the forearm and arm muscles.

Medically speaking, Sajda is a unique position in which brain (or head) becomes lower than the heart and hence for the first time the blood gushes towards the brain with full force whereas in all other positions (even when lying) brain is above the heart when it has to work against gravity to send blood to the brain. Hence, due to the increased blood supply the brain

receives more nourishment and it has good effect upon memory, vision, hearing, concentration, and all other cognitive

abilities during Sajda.

In the unique position of Sajda the neck muscles get best exercise. They have to bear the load when the forehead lays at the ground hence the neck muscles become stronger. One can note the tense pressure at the neck muscles in the position of Sajda specially the active motion of the neck and the facial muscles when the head is being lifted. (e.g. one inch above the ground) and it will be noticed that they are in a very active motion.

More strong muscles of the cervical vertebra will be better protected. Strength of cervical muscles is important as the head rests upon cervical vertebra supported by cervical musculature. In fact head performs rotator movements over the cervical vertebra. In any accident cervical neck examination is especially important to the physicians because of its

extraordinary importance. It is uncommon that a person who offers his prayers regularly will get the usual neck myalgias or cervical spondylosis as the neck muscles particularly become very strong due to the 34 sajdas offered daily in five prayers.

The unique position of Sajda also has positive effects upon the back muscles as while going into Sajda and getting up from it the back muscle contract actively and they become stronger. Probably it is because of this reason that a person who is regular in prayers will (rarely) get backache.

It is often observed that People who offer their prayers regularly have more will power and can cope with the difficulties of life in a much better manner. They have a calm, cool headed and calculated disposition, and they are not easily panicked or pressured. They have less incidence of headaches, psychological problems and other defects of cognitive function.

Finally, the best blessing is the peace of mind which a person derives by the accomplishment of his duty to Allah, by fulfilling an obligation.



Muhammad Ali's in Toronto – Up Close & Personal

by Uruzurum Heer

As a child living in the Western society in the 70's, I remember Muhammad Ali, as being one of the few Muslims having received the spotlight because of both his fame and success as the World Heavyweight Boxing Champion three times! Whether from the parent generation or from the younger generation, everyone knows Muhammad Ali's famous quote, "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee".

Muhammad Ali (now 60 years old) was formerly Cassius Clay Jr., before he changed his name to Muhammad Ali at the age of 21.

On Sunday, October 20th, 2002, the Toronto Argonauts paid tribute to Muhammad Ali by inviting him to their football game at the Skydome to raise money for research into Parkinson's disease. There are currently over 100,000 Canadians who are afflicted with Parkinson's disease, a degenerative brain disease. This is a disease that has affected Ali's motor skills for years now. He was diagnosed with it after he retired from boxing.

The Skydome had a gathering of almost 25,000 people who came to see the legendary hero of boxing. The United Muslims had arranged for a designated seating area as well as prayer accommodation for the Muslims who attended this event. Before the game, the team promoted a telethon, with proceeds going to the Parkinson Society of Canada and Parkinson's research at the University of Toronto.

The former US President Bill

Clinton, who paid tribute to Ali via a video message on a big screen, introduced Ali. The crowd was ecstatic to see Ali, as he came in a black limousine onto the field, waving as the crowd, up on its feet at halftime chanted loud and clear, "Ali, Ali, Ali".

Some of the dignitaries on hand, for this celebration, were Toronto Maple Leafs Captain Mats Sundin, Olympic wrestling Champion Daniel Igali, former CFL-NFL star Warren Moon, former world boxing Champions Evander Holyfield and Larry Holmes, former Canadian Champion George Chuvalo, Defending World Champion Lennox Lewis, figure skater Elvis Stojko and Josee Chouinard. Each one of them spoke, and then presented a gift to Muhammad Ali.

Toronto Maple Leafs hockey player Mats Sundin was the first to speak after which he presented Ali with a Maple Leafs hockey jersey. He was followed by the Olympic wrestling Champion Daniel Igali who made a very touching speech. Warren Moon, Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis spoke very eloquently, telling us how much Ali was an inspiration to them. After his speech Lewis shook hands with his idol. The crowd burst into laughter as Ali leaned over to his friend Howard Bingham and said "Don't worry, I wasn't going to hurt him." It was great to see these legends talk openly about the man who has influenced so many people from all walks of life.

Larry Holmes said one of the greatest things that happened to him

was when Muhammad Ali gave him a black eye in sparring years before they met in the ring. Holmes went on to say he showed off his black eye to all his friends and family. Toronto's



native son George Chuvalo was the final guest to speak who presented to his friend a Toronto Argonauts football jersey.

As Muhammad Ali came to the

podium to address us with his usual comical self, the chants of "Ali" once again roared through the stadium. With a glowing smile on his face he spoke about his life in the ring. He thanked everyone wishing he could come into the crowd and shake everyone's hand.

"I'm here because I was the greatest. I might make a come back," said Ali, adding, "Come back to my senses." And the crowd laughed again.

As exciting as it was to see the champ in person, and close up, while on the field and at the press conference, it was yet very sad to see him in this state, with his speech slurred and hardly audible, and his body slowed by Parkinson's disease.

This 50-minute salute ended in the raising of an Ali banner. The Banner read "Ali In Person, For The Greatest Good, Oct. 20, '02".

At a press conference later, Ali spoke to the reporters and I had the honour to be one of them.

Ali told reporters his illness was God's way of challenging him. "God

has ways of testing people and he can pull you down. And when you're down, you keep praying. It's a big test," he said. "[You have to] take your medicine all the time and don't give up. I give up sometimes, thinking I don't need this stuff (medicine) and have a hard time walking, a hard time talking."

When asked "Is Parkinson's the toughest opponent you've ever faced, Muhammad?"

He remarked with a slight smile, "The toughest battle I ever fought was my first wife."

His message to the Muslims:

"...something I have learned is, you should pray five times a day and here in America, [as] you get to watch TV, stay away from temptation—foxy women, music, hotels, pretty cars, drinking...all take your mind off praying. Pray five times a day, one day you're going to die and you're going to meet Allah and He will ask why you didn't pray. So my message to all Muslims is keep up the prayers and help people, be charitable and [for] Jumma Prayers be at the mosque. And some of the things, temptation and things make us forget about prayer."

Later, Muhammad Ali signed autographs. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to present to Muhammad Ali, a gift of the Holy Quran from myself and the people of Toronto.

This experience of having met the champ in person will be a moment I will treasure forever.

Professor in Islamic Studies Wanted

The Wilfred Laurier University is inviting applicants to fill the position of a Professor in Islamic Studies for a tenure appointment, starting July 1, 2003. The position requires applicants that specialized in Islam, preferably holding a Ph.D. in religious studies.

Interested persons are requested to contact Dr. Christopher Ross, Chair of the Search Committee; Department of Religion and Culture; Wilfred Laurier University; Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3C5; telephone 519-884-0710, ext 3679 or email cross@WLU.ca.

Plea to End Riots in Nigeria

On November 22, CAIR called for the inter-religious rioting in Nigeria to come to an end. The riots between Christians and Muslims started after a newspaper published an article about the Miss World Pageant, which was to be held in Nigeria, which insulted Islam's Prophet Muhammad. "The best way to honour the Prophet is to emulate his forbearance in the face of repeated insults and attacks. We call on all parties to resolve their differences in a peaceful manner," said CAIR Board Chairman Omar Ahmad. The riots have left more than 100 people dead.

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Pakistani Students' Association set to have Miss Canada-Pakistan Beauty Pageant in Ottawa

An open letter to Imams, Khatibs, Allamas, Moulanas, Moulvis and Heads of Islamic Centers of Canada

by Qasim Abbas

By this letter, I, an ordinary Muslim from Pakistani origin, would like to draw the attention of all of you, irrespective of your sect, place of origin or political convictions, towards proposed MISS CANADA PAKISTAN NATIONAL BEAUTY PAGEANT, to be held in Ottawa in February 2003. Please help stop it.

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to Al-Ma'aruf (i.e. all that is good which Islam orders to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (i.e. all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful." (3:104)

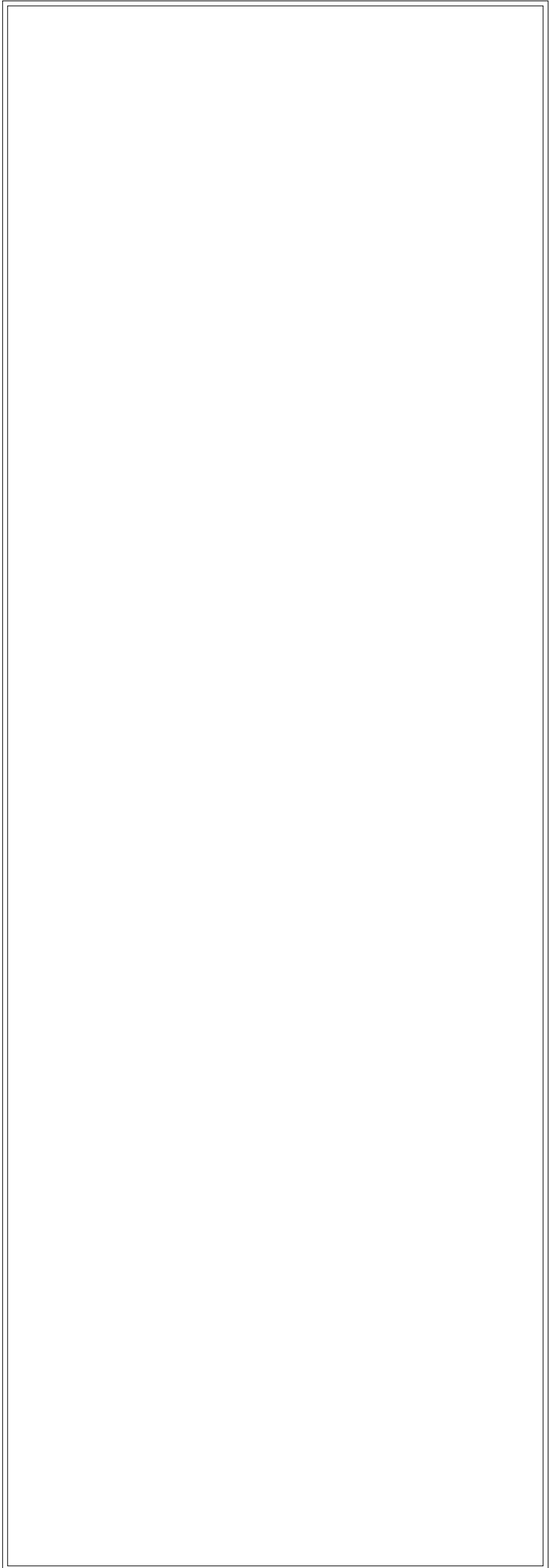
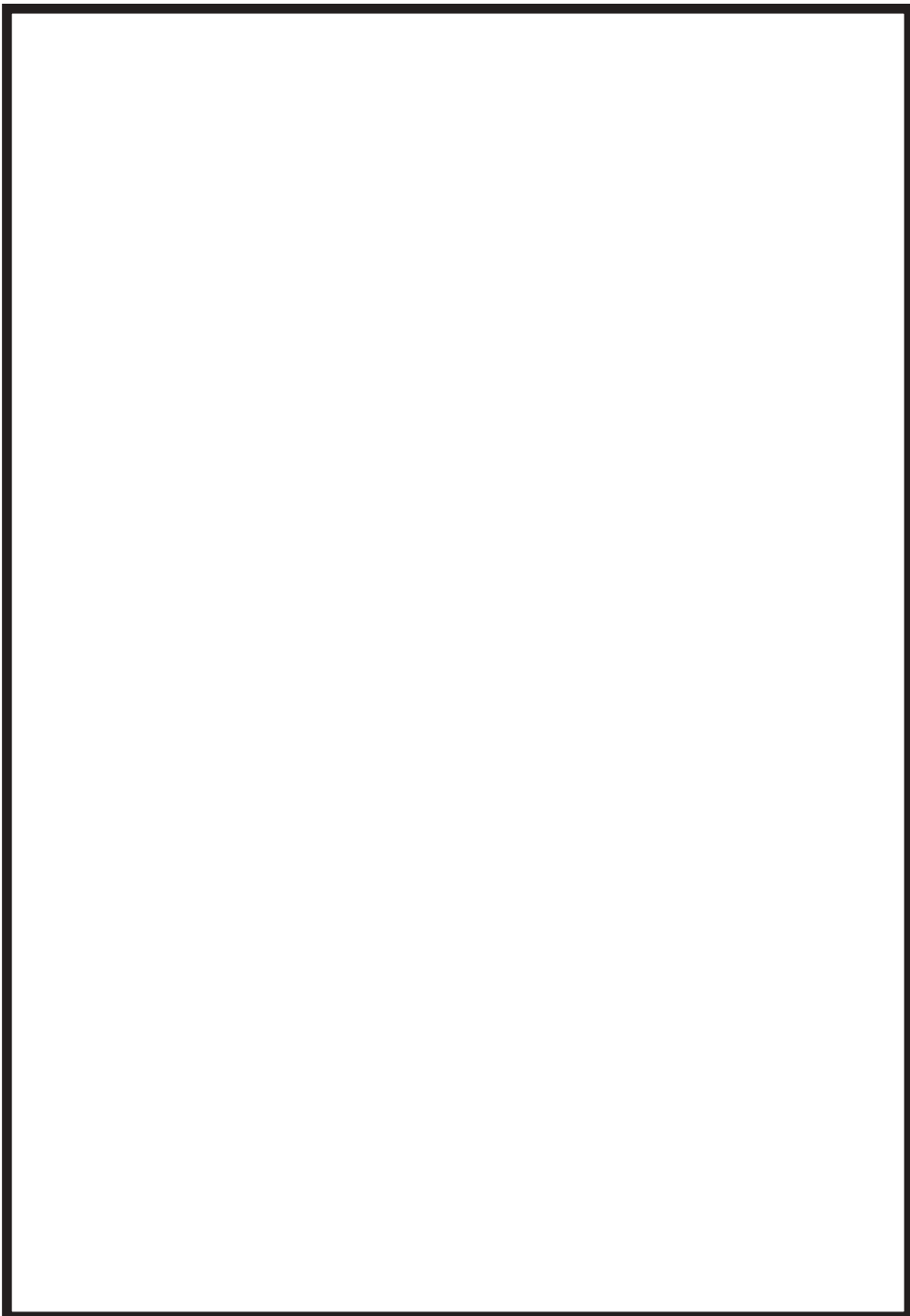
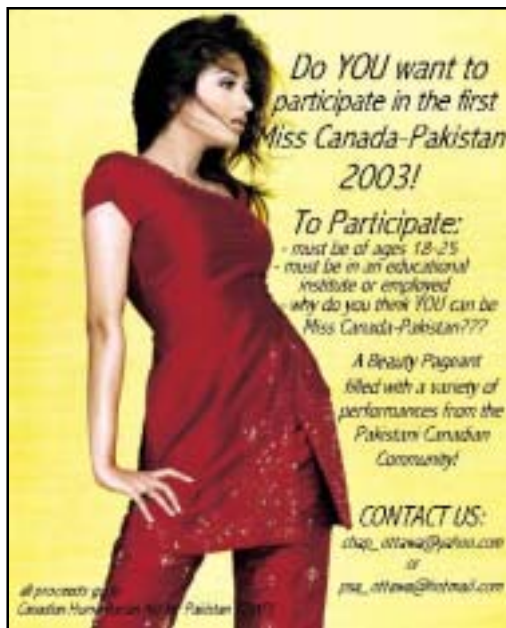
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "When you see some wrong, stop it with your hand. If you cannot do this, stop it with your tongue. And if you cannot do even this, treat it evil in your heart and this is the weakest sign of belief (Iman)." (Narrated by Bukhari.)

All of you are very familiar to watch Muslim boys or girls with Hijab, Scarf, Dupatta or Abaya, reciting Holy Qur'an in a congregation and the participants chanting slogans of SUBAHANALLAH! How all of you will feel when Muslim daugh-

ters of an Islamic nation Pakistan will walk on the stage openly, with very little clothes on them, showing their youth and open body parts to thousands of viewers and participants clapping and chanting slogans of WHAT A NATURAL BEAUTY! WHAT A FIGURE! MARVELOUS! OHBOY!

Since Islam has never allowed such type of so called beauty pageant, involving Muslim girls, and since you have got some platform to convey your message, I feel that based on the above Quranic Ayat and Hadith, it becomes the duty of all of you to raise your collective voice and show your concern on the above proposed event and teach the Muslims of Canada what is truth.

Kindly do not treat this brief message as SMALL MOUTH, BIG TALK from me. This message is from an ordinary Muslim, fulfilling the above quoted Hadith and simply a kind and humble reminding of the above Quranic Ayat and Hadith to all of you. (Below is a copy of the Fitna poster for your viewing with contacts: psa_ottawa@hotmail.com or chap_ottawa@yahoo.com)



An answer from the field

by *Fatima Najm*

Noushin Farnoud can still see the pieces of brain splattered across the window of a building in the just-bombed wreckage of her Tehran neighbourhood. She rubs her temples delicately as she recounts the smell, the smoke and the raw fear of being in an Iranian war zone.

The 23-year-old electrical engineering masters student still shudders at the memory of herself as a 10-year-old clinging to her parents' hands, staring at buildings that had been cleaved into sections with the ease of "someone slicing a cake" by the incessant bombing Tehran endured during the Iran-Iraq war.

A hospital close to her home had been bombed and her parents had set out to examine the damage. Along the way were homes of friends and Farnoud says, "I will never forget the way I could see all the levels of the building and into the living room, the building looked like a cake had been sliced."

Her parents saw blood and realized someone had been caught in the blast. They tried to shield their daughter from the sight of human carnage, but not before she saw the brain - a mushy mass of discoloured red, it looked

nothing like the illustrations she would later see in her science textbooks.

It was hardly the happy childhood parents want their kids to grow in the secure folds of.

"That was the reality of everyday life in the middle of a war," she shrugs. Elbows on the table, she hunches forward, her hands massaging the back of her neck before she straightens up.

"I have forgotten so much of this now. But I suppose one should not. Remembering helps us realize how fortunate we are to have survived."

Time and place have dissolved

around us and we are traversing the terrain of war-torn Tehran through 10-year-old eyes.

The television was on all the time, Farnoud says, 24 hours a day. Loud static followed by a deep male voice telling listeners that Iraqi planes would be flying overhead in moments. There was no "normal" programming as the TV was a means by which the state warned families across the nation that danger was near. A few seconds later, sirens would go off in the city, prompting civilians to seek shelter and brace for the bombing.

All Farnoud remembers is grabbing a little doll she had made herself and holding it close as her parents rushed to shut off lights and snatch up rations before retreating to the basement to wait for the blasts.

"We'd wait in the darkened room in complete silence," Farnoud says. "And then we'd hear the explosions, and shattering glass," and the city would be still again.

If the warning came early enough and they had time, the family and two friends would take off to a nearby village where they would seek refuge in a large, old house that belonged to the friends.

"We had a candle and a copy of the Qur'an. But we felt fortunate we were together and safe for the moment."

During those difficult times, Farnoud kept a diary that her father still has in Tehran. The first line the 10-year-old penned reads, "What is the meaning of a life like this when you don't even know if you or your family will be alive tomorrow?" Her father would read her thoughts to his friends for years to come. For Farnoud, putting pen to paper was her way of dealing with the loss in

"I tried to socialize with her, but she just lay still and silent. She was in shock, maybe, or trauma? I guess anyone would be," says Farnoud. But that, she reminds me, is the reality of war.

that time of war.

She will never forget being treated for a minor illness at a hospital that was trying to keep up with the flood of wartime casualties. She woke one day to find the nurses speaking in hushed tones about the girl who had shown up in the bed next to Farnoud overnight. She had been brought to Tehran from oil-rich Abadan in where her entire family had been annihilated by Iraqi artillery.

"I tried to socialize with her, but she just lay still and silent. She was in shock, maybe, or trauma? I guess anyone would be," says Farnoud.

But that, she reminds me, is the reality of war.

"It's why I would not wish war on the people of Iraq.

So Saddam is a terrible leader, why must the people of Iraq suffer for that?"

Dawson offers unconditional apology

The College offered MSA another session to present Islam after CAIR-CAN wrote to the College to protest Dawson's unconstitutional decision and demand that representatives of the College not infringe on the right of any student group to its religious expression.

In his letter of apology, Director of Student Services Ray Boucher stated: "I sincerely regret having to instruct the MSA students to take down their banner, and I apologize in particular to those students involved, and any other Muslims, within and outside of the College community who have been adversely affected by the decision. I wish to state

categorically that neither I nor Dawson College find the contents of the banner to be offensive or out of place in our College."

Spokesperson of Dawson MSA

Documentary on Prophet Muhammad on PBS

A public-funded documentary on the Prophet Muhammad, entitled "Mohammad: Legacy of a Prophet" is now complete and set to air on PBS, according to the co-producers, Michel Wolfe and Alexander Kronemer, both of whom are converts to Islam. The documentary should air on **December 18, 2002 between 9 pm and 11 pm**, viewers are requested to check their local program listings. After it's broadcast, the film will be available on VHS video and DVD for use in schools and the community.

Mubashir Jamal stated, "Alhamdulillah (to God be praise), we are pleased that this issue is resolved. MSA Dawson wishes to extend its thanks to CAIR-CAN for their prompt action. "Their activism did make a difference," he added."

Eid-ul-Fitr — Glad Tidings to those who observe fasting in Ramadhan

Compiled by Aasyia Amir

Narrated by Anas Ibn Malik: "Then when their festival day comes, i.e. the day when they break their fast, Allah speaks proudly of them to His angels saying, "My angels, what is the reward of a hired servant who has fully accomplished his work?" They reply, "Our Lord, his reward is that he should be paid his wage in full." He says, "My angels, My male and female servants have fulfilled what I have made obligatory for them, and then have come out raising their voices in supplication. By My

Might, Glory, Honour, High Dignity and Exalted station, I shall certainly answer them." Then He says, "Return, for I have forgiven you and changed your evil deeds into good deeds." He said that they then returned having received forgiveness." (Al Tirmidhi Hadith Qudsi)

"The Prophet (Peace be upon him) used not to leave for Eid Prayer (except) after eating some dates." (Bukhari and Ahmad) Ibn Abbaas reported: "The Prophet (Peace be upon him) prayed two Raka'ahs for the Eid prayer and did

not pray before it or after it." (Bukhari) The Prophet (pbuh) told Abu Bakar: "For every People there is a Feast and this is our Feast" (Bukhari)

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah: The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) forbade to observe fast on these two days: Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr (Sahih Muslim)

ZAKAT-UL-FITR: References from the Hadith

It is obligatory on every individual Muslim to make a donation of food to the poor on the occasion of

the completion of the month of Ramadhan. This donation is called "Zakat-ul-Fitr" It is a specific donation to be given on this specific occasion at a specific time.

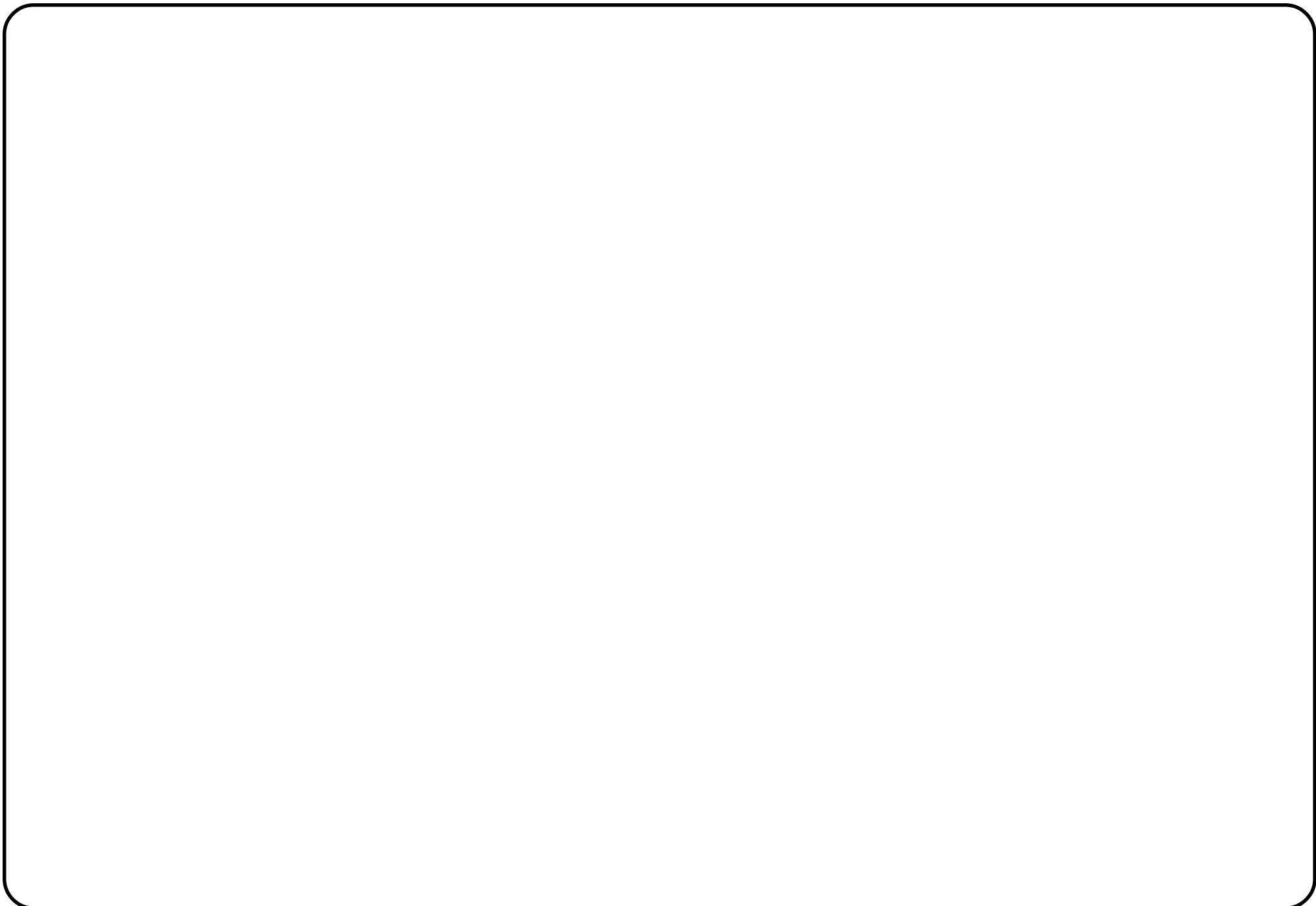
Ibn Umar reported Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) saying: "The Prophet ordered Zakat-ul-fitr to be a sa' of dates or a sa' of barley" (Al Bukhari)

"If one pays zakat ul-fitr before the salah, it is considered an accepted zakah. If he pays it after the salah, it is considered an ordinary sadaqah." (fiqh sunnah 3.89)

"The Messenger of Allah, upon whom be peace, enjoined zakat ul-fitr as a purification for the one who fasts from any indecent act or speech, and as food for the needy." (fiqh sunnah 3.90)

Words of Wisdom

Don't wait for six strong men to take your body to the mosque. We don't change Allah's message — His message changes us. The mosque is prayer-conditioned. When Allah ordains, He sustains.



Around the World

Islam in Mexico

A Struggle to remain giving Dawa according to Quran and Sunnah

Provided by Muslim Center de Mexico. Website: EveryMuslim.com

The presence of **Muslims** in Mexico is hard to trace, we know that we've had many immigrants mainly from Turkey, Lebanon and Syria, but we don't know for certain how many Muslims were among them. A study by Theresa Velcamp, from Georgetown University in 1999 showed evidence that approximately 10% of the immigrants of Syrian or Lebanese origin were Muslim. Today the Syrian Lebanese community is one of the richest in Mexico and exceeds 200,000 people. Among them is the richest man in Latin America Carlos Salim the son of Yusof Salim.

Among this wave of Arab immigrants Islam has, for the most part, been removed from their daily lives. Islam is a word that means obedience and submission to a way of life. Consequently, it wouldn't be fair to say that Islam has been present in Mexico. There's no proof that Islam was present in any way in Mexico before these waves of Arab immigration. We have however found one specific exception in a book called "Un hereje y Un Musulman" by Pascual Almazan. The book mentions a story of Yusof bin Alabaz who was one of those expelled by the Christians in Reconquista of Spain and went to Morroco where he was robbed by the Pirates so he found his way to Mexico in the 16th Century. It is reported that Yusof bin Alabaz hated the Christians who obliged his father (who accordingly was from the Family of the Prophet Muhammed) to leave Islam and become Christian. He started corresponding with the Muslim World and received a letter from a Qadi in Morroco encouraging him to be steadfast. It has been reported

that he used to try to make everyone in Veracruz, Mexico accept Islam, may Allah reward him for his efforts.

Islam today is beginning to be noticed and recognized by hundreds of thousands of Mexicans, including dozens of institutions, universities and governmental bodies. This is due to Allah's blessings and secondly to a group of organized Muslims that are working hard to raise the honour of Islam and help the

ous Muslim embassies in Mexico City seeking a gathering of Muslims. The only embassy that opened its doors was the Iranian embassy who gave him plenty of information on the Iranian revolution and Ayatollah Khomeini. Within the literature received was a compendium of lectures given at a conference held by WAMY (World Assembly of Muslim Youth) in 1988 at Mexico City. In this book he found the name of

in its embassy to pray Jumah there.

Br. Omar Weston continued to visit Muslims and started giving Dawa to non-Muslims forming a group at his home of approximately 10 brothers both converts and Immigrants. In 1990 the Pakistani Embassy allowed Mr. Weston to use the Embassy's prayer room in the evenings. The study circle around him grew and with the help of Allah and secondly of a few visiting Dawa groups they managed to start finding more Muslims. In 1992 before Br. Omar went to Study Islam in Medina Saudi Arabia, the Jumah attendance consisted of approximately 35 brothers and a few sisters.

The then Pakistani Ambassador in 1993 tried forming a trust of various Muslim embassies to present to the Mexican government an appeal for a piece of Land to build a Masjid. The Mayor of Mexico City (Camacho Solis) offered this small trust a piece of land but due to a lack of initiative and coordination they lost the opportunity.

In May 1994 Br. Omar Weston returned from Medina and Niaz Siddiqui lent him an apartment in Polanco to start daily prayers and recover the activities that had been abandoned while he was at Medina. Fajr, Maghrib and Isha prayers were established and Arabic and Islamic lessons were held after prayers. In September 1994 they were obliged to move from the apartment and they started selling a few possessions and working hard to finance a new place in Colonia del Valle, a middle class residential area in Mexico City. After nearly a year of struggling and growing, in mid 1995, all five prayers were being attended and various Mexicans converted to Islam.

Formation of Muslim Center De Mexico

In September 1995 **Muslim Center De Mexico** (MCM) was registered as a non profit organization. From 1995 to September 2001, MCM managed to establish the five prayers in congregation on a daily basis, the attendance has gradually increased and lots of Mexicans are accepting Islam. The new Muslims are receiving lessons on the fundamentals of Tawheed (Oneness of God) and the

essentials of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence.) Monthly meals and weekly gatherings are held at the Center for all the Muslims. MCM has been Visiting Muslims in the capitol and other cities around the entire country, looking for Muslims and giving Dawa. Islam, for the first time in Mexican history, is having contact with the general public. Talks about Islam on many national TV programs are given and viewed by millions of Mexicans and radio programs are given. Islamic bookstands in the International Book Fairs of Mexico City and around the country are organized allowing thousands in Mexicans to learn about Islam. Conferences on Islam in prestigious universities around Mexico and even in state auditoriums are held, Islamic texts have been placed into major libraries and bookstores in the country as well as articles on Islam in some major newspapers and magazines have been published. As for expanding to other cities at the moment, MCM established Musallahs in Monterey, Guadalajara, Ciudad Obregon and Chiapas. A clear objective of MCM directives has been to send Mexican Muslims overseas to study Islam. Since its formation, it has sent 8 brothers to study Islam in Medina University, Saudi Arabia. Six of our sisters are studying a correspondence BA course on Islam.

Muslim Center De Mexico receives hundreds of emails and its web site, www.islam.com.mx, has received over 100,000 visits in a single month. MCM's web site is the most

Continued on page 14



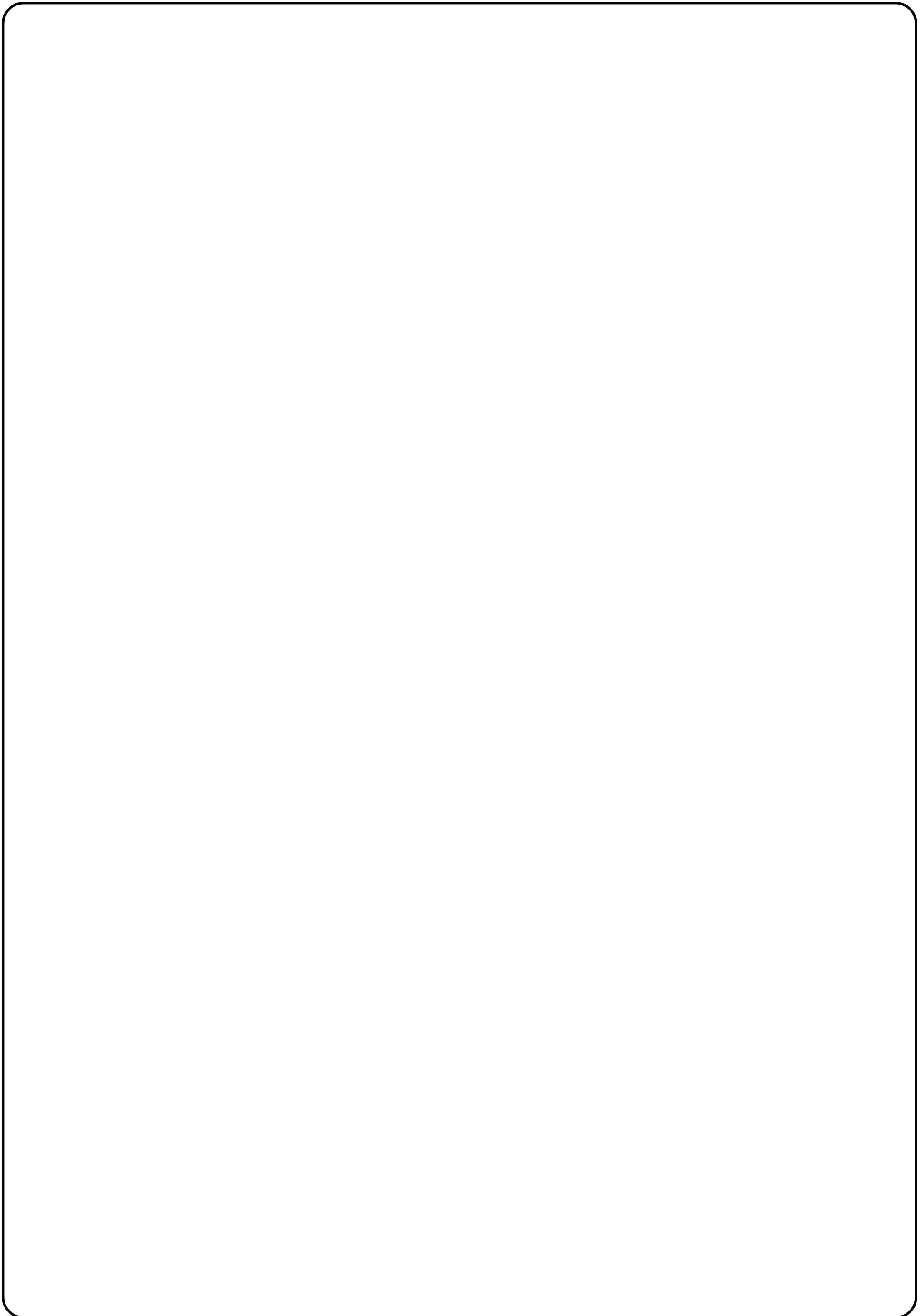
Mexican people see the True Light of Islam.

Islam in Mexico before the formation of Muslim Center De Mexico in September 1994

When Br. Mark (Omar) Weston, the founder and Director of **Muslim Center De Mexico** became Muslim in 1988 at Orlando Florida's central mosque, he returned to Mexico (where he has resided since 1973 as a British Subject). Upon his return to Mexico he was unable to find the Muslim community. He visited vari-

Yaseen Ramirez, a Mexican Sufi who had a small group of brothers who united to read about Islamic and Sufi literature. The brother and his group had no clear Aqeeda (Islamic Doctrine.) Some days they read from Shiite sources, other days from Sunni or Sufi and even from Qadiyani sources. Yaseen's group didn't pray Jumah (Friday) prayers so Br. Omar Weston was informed about a small group of diplomats that used to pray Jumah prayers at the Egyptian Club. It was a small apartment in a residential area of Mexico City rented by the Egyptian Embassy who at the same time rented it to the few Muslims for about 100 USD a month.

Every Friday a brother, Muhammed Rumi from Chile, used to open the small place and a few brothers used to arrive and sit on a couple of sofas until Muhammed Rumi gave a short lecture in Spanish, then from a group of no more than 10 brothers someone was put forward to lead the Salat. This group of brothers had been uniting for about two years before Br. Omar Weston's participation. Br. Omar who had observed Dawa programs in the US started implementing some of the skills he learnt and started visiting brothers known to be Muslim and started inviting them to Salat. The Siddique family and a Medical Student Fayyaz Ullah from Pakistan supported Omar's efforts and managed to gradually increase attendance for prayer. Not long after Br. Omar was opening up the small apartment in Polanco to pray during the week that Muhammed Rumi broke the news that the rent had practically tripled so the Pakistani Embassy offered a small room



Newsroom

Brampton MP In Personal Boycott of US Travel

The new American law that requires Iraqi, Iranian, Libyan, Sudanese and Syrian-born Canadians to be photographed and fingerprinted upon entry to the USA has prompted Liberal MP, Sarkis Assadourian to engage in a personal boycott of travel to the US.

"I don't have a choice where I was born. So why are they holding it against me? I will not travel to the U.S. unless the U.S. ambassador here assures me my dignity as a Canadian citizen," said Mr. Assadourian, who migrated to Canada from Syria over thirty years ago. Assadourian, an MP for Brampton Centre, considers the law an insult to his dignity as a Canadian and is of the view that it tarnishes the reputation of America as Canada's ally.

The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) considers nationals of the above-mentioned countries as being "an elevated national security risk."

Muslims Urged to Report Harassment Cases

The Canadian Muslim Civil Liberties Association (CMCLA) is again calling on Muslims to report cases of harassment they may have faced at Canadian border points upon travelling both to and from the US. Documented cases allow such organizations as CMCLA and CAIR-CAN to engage in dialogue with authority with credibility on the issue, allowing them to help in such cases.

Incident report forms can be downloaded from www.caircan.ca, or completed online at www.cmcla.org. You may also call CAIR-CAN at 1-866-524 0004 or contact CMCLA in confidence at 885 Progress Avenue, Suite UPH14, Toronto, Ontario M1G 3H3.

Muslim Cleric Seeks Justice

Michael Taylor, a Muslim cleric of Toronto, was among twelve persons barred from Justice Arthur Whealy's courtroom for refusing to remove their religious headgear during the trial of black activist Dudley Laws in 1993. According to a report in the *Globe and Mail*, Taylor has now asked the Federal Court of Appeal to order the Canadian Judicial Council (CJC) to reopen his 1994 complaint.

Peter Rosenthal, Mr. Taylor's lawyer, in a speech to a three-judge panel, said that the fact that the CJC rejected recommendations that Parliament remove Judge Whealy on three occasions since the complaint was made is "unreasonable." The Judge reportedly made prejudiced comments against persons of African descent as well as against Muslims. Rosenthal believes that the actions taken against the Judge after the incident were not enough.

Author Cancels US Tour Due to Racial Profiling

One of Canada's renowned authors, Rohinton Mistry, cancelled his book tour after reportedly facing humiliating racial profiling at American airports, reported *Ottawa Citizen* on November 3, 2002. "I don't find this is the random check that they talk about, not when they happen to have it at every single stop, every single airport. The random process becomes 100-per-cent certitude," said Mr. Mistry, in a public interview with CBC's Shelagh Rogers.

Mistry hails from India and was nominated this year's Man Booker Prize. He was touring the US promoting his new book titled "Family Matters."

His publicist sent a letter to bookstores informing them about his cancelled tour due to the treatment he received by US officials. An excerpt of the letter reads, "As a person of colour he was stopped repeatedly and rudely at each airport along the way — to the point where the humiliation to him and his wife (with whom he has been travelling) has become unbearable."

Dhaliwal Calls Stricter Border Checks an "insult"

Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal, said a border policy that pulls people aside based on their citizenship is an insult and leads to racial profiling. "I think that anybody who is a visible minority, that looked Middle Eastern, they wouldn't want to be humiliated based on the fact of where they came from," said Dhaliwal. "It's a backward move and it's against fundamental human rights."

Canadians should be treated as Canadians – says Bill Graham

America's move to tighten border checks has been met with great controversy in Canada. "We're asking clarifications about the specific comment of Mr. Ashcroft," Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham told reporters, "If they're travelling on Canadian passports, they should be treated as Canadians."

Despite pleas for Canadian citizens to be immune to the law, US Attorney-General John Ashcroft said that Canadian citizens born in the listed countries that have terrorism links, or share citizenship, would be pulled over only if they arouse suspicion. "No country is exempt in the war against terrorism," Ashcroft said, at a press conference at Niagara Falls, NY. Countries that fall under this category as those that sponsor terrorism include Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Pakistan.

Meanwhile, National president of the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC), Mohamed Elmasry said, "If we keep silent because it doesn't affect us, we will soon pay the price because we are compromising our Canadian values."

Executive director of the Canadian Arab Federation, Audrey Jamal told the *Toronto Star* that the law passed by the US government "sends a message that Arabs and Muslims are dangerous violent people."

CRTC offers unconditional apology

CAIR-CAN today announced that CFMT (OMNI) has offered an unconditional apology to Canadian Muslims regarding the recent comments made by televangelist Jimmy Swaggart and promised to preview Swaggart 'second by second'. The apology was offered after CAIR-CAN filed a complaint with the CRTC.

In a television program aired by CFMT television station in Toronto on November 10, televangelist Jimmy Swaggart had referred to the Prophet Muhammad as a "sex deviant" and a "pervert." In response to these comments, the Canadian office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) had filed a complaint the following day to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

Swaggart has been a long-time critic of Islam, and has attacked the religion before, in 1985 on Global TV, after which, president of Global Television David Mintz stated that the network would not permit anyone to talk against another's religion, and also enclosed a letter of apology from Swaggart promising that such incidences would "not happen again".

Canadian-born Muslim student humiliated at the border

Canadian-born Ali Asaria, a University of Waterloo Computer Engineering student, shared this experience about the reality of travel in politically tense times. CIC reported. "On my last co-op term, my job required me to travel to America. I went on two trips, once to Orlando and later to San Francisco. It was business travel and, both times, I went with about 70 other co-workers. Interestingly, I was the only person in my company who was ever 'selected for a random search' — and I was selected all four times I boarded a plane. "While others whizzed by the ticket booth and onto the plane, I had to stand back as agents sifted through every detail of my luggage and dirty underwear — in full view of everyone else on my flight. At one point, they asked me to remove my hat and belt, lift up my shirt and hands, and open

the top button of my pants. Then they told me to 'stay silent as we pat you down.'

"Getting patted down with my fly undone was uncomfortable enough, but I still wonder why they decided to do so right in front of the tunnel that leads to the plane — in plain view of my co-workers and all the other passengers. I understand that America needs to step up airport security screening, but if they are going to humiliate people, why don't they humiliate everyone equally?"

CIC vice-president, Mrs. Wahida Valiante, was saddened but not surprised at hearing of Asaria's degrading experience as a legitimate business traveller. "Once again, we Muslims are being targeted because of our religion, and humiliated through biased racial profiling," she said.

US Travel Advisory Issued to Muslims Worldwide

The Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) issued a travel advisory to Muslims worldwide on November 11, 2002, stating that they should avoid travelling to the United States. Landed immigrants, Commonwealth passport-holders and student visa-holders are especially vulnerable to delays and possible expulsion under the new National Security Entry and Exit Registration System (NSEERS) upon travel to the US.

"CIC's resources have been stretched to the limit with a flood of enquiries by concerned Muslims who are asking if it is safe to travel to the U.S.," explained CIC national president, Dr. Mohamed Elmasry. "They hear media reports of Muslims being mistreated at the Canadian-

U.S. border and at other American ports of entry."

Dr. Elmasry claims that it is not safe for Muslims to travel to the US, as they are "being humiliated, intimidated, and treated as criminals at American border crossings...because of their religion, appearance, dress, names, or where they were born."

Muslims in Canada who do not have Canadian passports cannot expect any help if they end up in problems at the border.

"Once again, we Muslims are being targeted because of our religion, and humiliated through biased racial profiling," said CIC vice-president, Mrs. Wahida Valiante. "Our rights and freedoms have been eroded and our own government seems willing to let this happen. It couldn't come at a worse time than during Ramadan, when so many Muslims look forward to visiting with their families. But now it is not safe to do so."

Community Bulletin

TARIC Islamic Centre
99 Beverly Hill Drive, North York

Dec. 6: Eid Salat (Tentative)
8:00, 9:30 & 10:30 AM
Juma Salat 12:30 PM
Dec. 14: Eid Dinner and 25th anniversary Celebration 7:00 PM

What is up at your mosque?
Keep us informed about dinners, Bazaars, event, and other special occasions at your organization.

Electronic Pilgrim guide

JEDDAH — A Saudi-Egyptian company, based in Jeddah, has succeeded in developing an electronic pilgrim guide, the Arab News reported. Its designers said the 40-gram, 6.5 centimeter device can be used by all pilgrims regardless of their linguistic and educational backgrounds. The device, produced by Majd Company, not only answers religious questions but also provides guidelines to pilgrims in matters related to health, religious duties and Saudi regulations. Such information will be easily accessible by simply pressing a specific button or icon. For instance, pressing a button with the symbol of a hand holding a glass will generate a pre-recorded message about what pilgrims are allowed to drink during the Haj.

The device is mass-produced with help from American, Chinese and Taiwanese companies. The scientific material used for the guides have been approved by scholars in the Kingdom and other Islamic countries.

For Rent

Malton, large 2-bedroom apartment.
Furnished, \$850 per month, includes all the utilities, cable, 1-parking, & laundry.

Separate kitchen & washroom, private entrance, near all amenities. No alcohol, no smoking, no pets.

Available December 15/02. First and last month. For info, Call: 905-673-2181

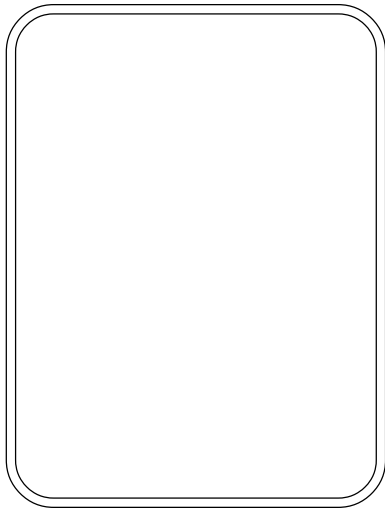
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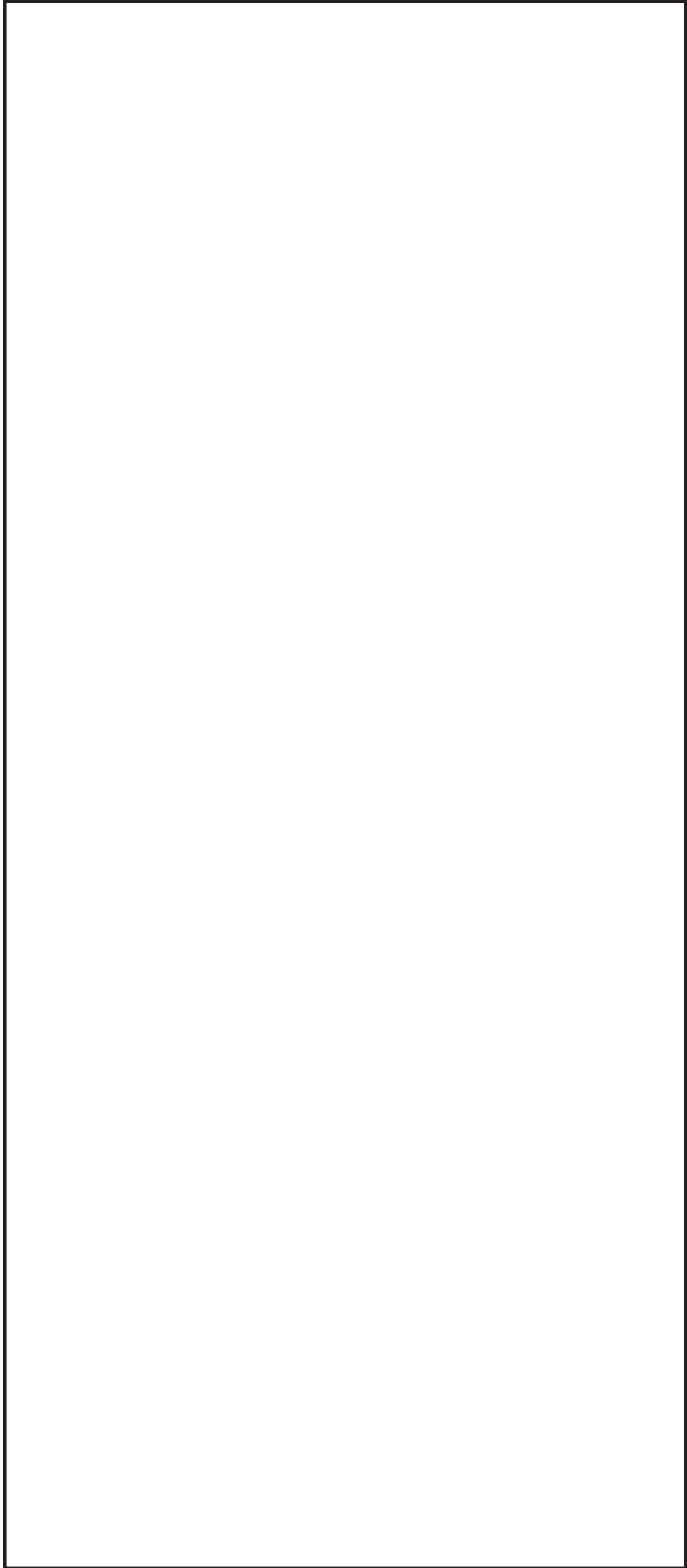
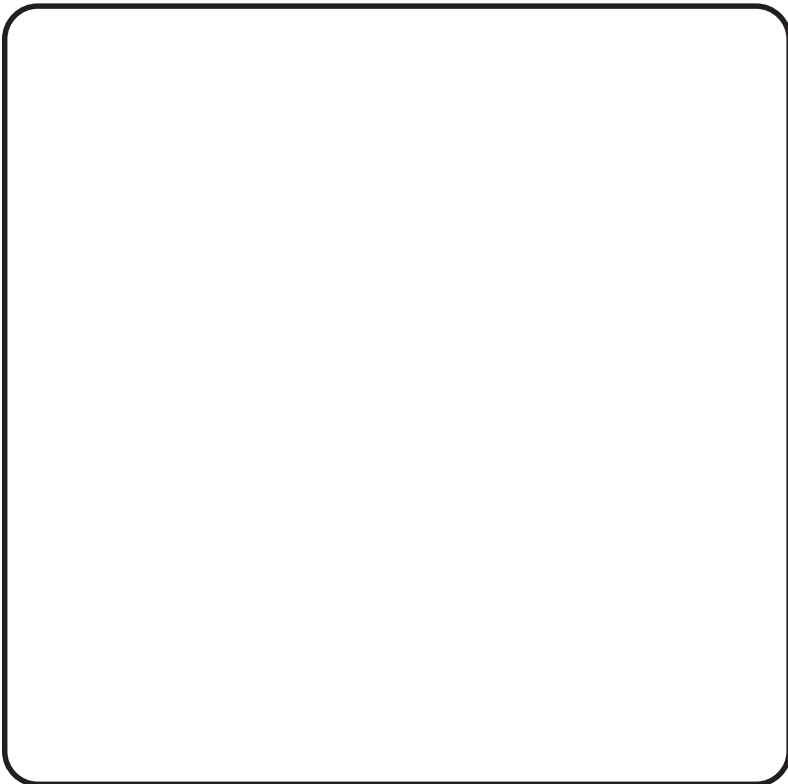
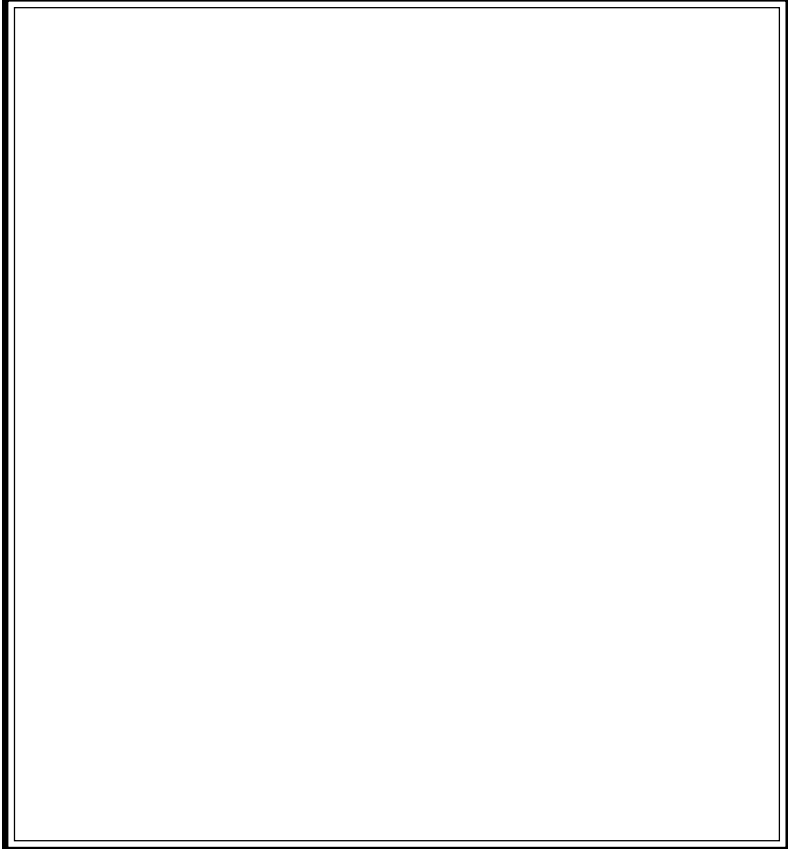
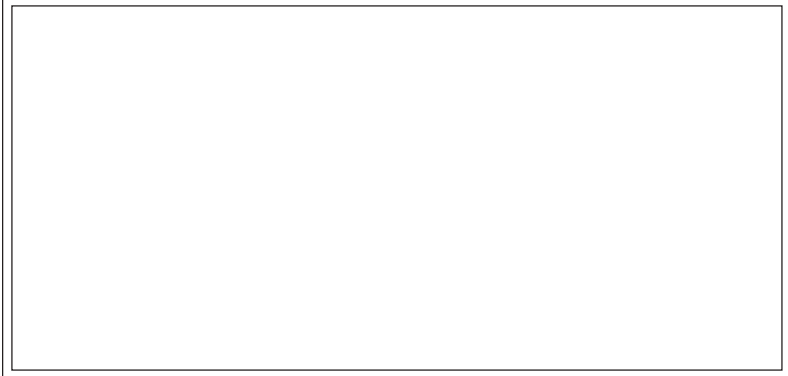
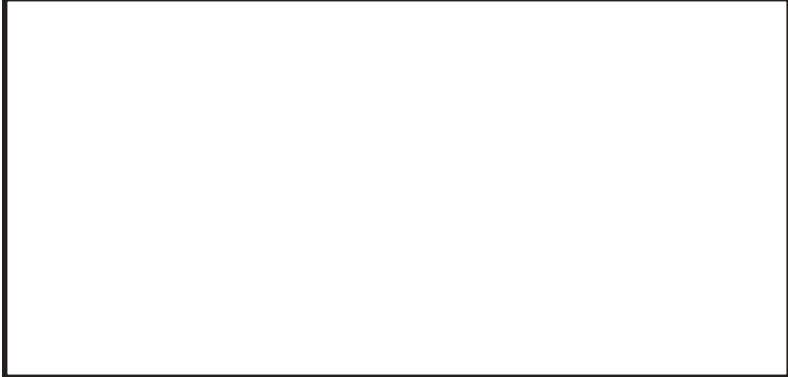
**Voice of a destitute
and paraplegic person.**

Please help J. Iqbal, a legal Canadian entrant on a
Minister's permit who became completely paraplegic in a
car accident. By the Grace of God he survived after long
hospitalization. The insurance company has exhausted all
the specified fund on his treatment.

**Now he totally depends on the community for help. He
does not have any access to the OHIP or assistance
until 2004.**

Please generously spare even a dollar for him. May God
help you, bless you and reward you in this world and in the
Hereafter. My heartfelt thanks to those who have donated.
Please make cheques payable to:

Javed Iqbal
900 Dufferin St., P.O. Box 24147
Toronto, Ont. Canada M6H 4H6
Tel: 416-516-6686



Muslims and Jews Break Fast Together

On November 20, 2002, a group of Muslim and Jewish Students of the University of Washington collectively enjoined in breaking their fast together, completing their respective devotions, and shared a meal prepared in accordance with Jewish and Islamic dietary requirements. It was a joint effort to prove that Muslims and Jews can get along together. About 100 students and other members of the campus community joined in the "Fast Food" dinner to celebrate the breaking of the daily fast by Muslims during Ramadan. The event, the first of its kind at the University, was a learning experience for both Muslims and Jews as they learned about fasting in the other religion. Similar events were held at UCLA, Columbia University and Yale.

Pentagon Plans New Computer System

In a report carried by the New York Times on November 9, 2002, it is stated that the Pentagon is in the process of creating a new computer system that will help in the search for terrorists in the US as well as other parts of the world.

The system, known as Total Information Awareness, will allow in-

US Forms Iraqi Opposition Army

In an article published by the Christian Science Monitor, it is reported that the US is quietly recruiting a 5000-member force inside northern Iraq to help overthrow Saddam Hussein by promising them \$3000 and a trip to the United States of America. However, Iraqi opposition leaders claim that the US is building a military force for the controversial Iraqi National Congress (INC), one of the six opposition groups that Washington is encouraging to devise a plan to rule Iraq after Hussein. "The US should enter into partnership with the real freedom fighters of Iraq, the people with a real constituency," says Barham Salih, the Prime Minister of one of two main armed Kurdish groups that control northern Iraq, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. "Mercenaries will not do the job..."

telligence analysts and law enforcement officials to gain instant access to information from Internet mail and calling records to credit cards, banking transactions and travel documents, without a search warrant.

To carry out such a system, new legislation must be passed, some of which have been proposed by the Bush administration in the Homeland Security Act that is now before Congress. The legislation will update the Privacy Act of 1974, intended to limit what government agencies could do with private information.

Muslim Visitors to be Fingerprinted and Photographed

According to the Washington Post, an announcement issued by the US Justice Department on November 6, 2002, states that students, workers and other men from five Muslim countries who are temporarily residing in the US are required to be fingerprinted and photographed, as part of a new program to register visitors from countries linked to terrorism. The registration program started almost two months ago at airports, in an attempt to gather detailed information about the arriving citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria.

The program is to be expanded to include male citizens of the above-mentioned countries who entered the US before September 11, 2002 and plan to stay at least until mid-December. Under the plan, those who fail to register could face deportation.

The new measure takes effect November 15, 2002 and covers men age 16 and above, who must register with a US immigration officer by December 16, 2002 and must present travel documents and proof of residence. They are required to check in with authorities once per year.

New Muslim Organization for Australia

After the devastating bombings in Bali, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, is set to establish a national civil rights

and media advocacy group that will help promote a better understanding of the country's Muslim community. It will be modelled on the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which gives an Islamic view on issues related to the American public. The main reason for the decision taken to create this group comes after growing concerns about the reporting of Muslim issues in the media in Australia. The group is expected to be fully established by early next year, with its base in Sydney and an office in Melbourne.

Islamic Party Wins Turkish Elections

A party with Islamic roots has emerged the winner in elections held in Turkey on November 3, 2002. The Justice and Development Party won a parliamentary majority and thus created history in the country as being the first party in 15 years to win sole governance. The party vowed to maintain the nation's pro-Western stance, in order to soothe the concerns of some that the country would undergo a radical shift towards Islam.

At a celebration at party headquarters, leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: "We will not spend our time dizzy with victory. We will build a Turkey where common sense prevails." A party official called on supporters not to shout religious slogans such as "Allah is Great!"

With 99.9 percent of ballot boxes counted, Erdogan's party had 34 percent support, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported. The center-left Republican People's Party had 19 percent.

Palestinian Town Taken by Israel

After three weeks of Israeli occupation of Jenin, tanks have knocked down electricity poles, palm trees that lined the streets, and there is a military curfew restricting thousands of residents to their homes.

During the two years of fighting, Israeli troops have repeatedly entered Jenin, a stronghold of militias linked to Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement. In a military offensive in April, the deadliest battle took place next to the Jenin camp, killing 52 Palestinians and 23 Israeli soldiers.

A London-based human rights group, Amnesty International have made claims that Israeli forces committed war crimes in Jenin and Nablus during the April offensive.

According to Jenin Mayor Walid Abu Mowais, the Israeli presence is an administrative

nightmare. "If they destroyed 70 percent of Jenin's infrastructure in April, they finished the rest this time," said Abu Mowais. Since mid-October, Jenin has been without running water, and the governor said that Israel has kept a repair team from coming from Ramallah to repair the pump in the main well.

The headscarf: Turkey, 'no' Sweden, 'maybe'

Even though most of Turkey's population is Muslim, the country enforces a strict ban on Islamic-style headscarves in public offices and universities. That is why there was an uproar in the media when the wife of Turkey's newest speaker of parliament attended an official ceremony with her husband, Bulnet Arinc, wearing a headscarf.

Newspapers in Ankara were emblazoned with the headline 'The Headscarf at the Pinnacle of the State'. In response, Arinc stated, "I do not believe that my wife's clothes were against the law or protocol rules."

In the meantime, Chief Executive

Islamist Parties Gain Support

Many Islamic parties have been slowly gaining supporters over years, as secular parties failed to solve socio-economic problems in the US, according to a report by the New York Times. The sharp increase in votes in recent elections in Pakistan, Bahrain, Morocco and Turkey is an indication that voters want to show pride in their faith to the outside world. "The population in Turkey, the population in Pakistan or the population in

Morocco did not vote for Islamic parties just because they believe they have the capacity to solve social and economic problems," said Muhammad Darif, a professor of political science at the Hassan II University law school at Mohammedia, Morocco, "Arab and Muslim populations think the war against terrorism is nothing but a war against Islam, the culture of Islam, the Arab culture," Professor Darif added. "The Islamist parties have been able to exploit this."

Intifada Persists After Israel's Occupation

During the past two years of intifada, the Palestinian society has suffered greatly. Over 1,800 people were killed by the Israeli military, more than 40,000 injured; thousands of homes were lost due to army demolitions; unemployment rate of at least 50%, over half the population lives below the poverty line; curfews that confine more than 500,000 people have persisted over the past three months; and there have been internal restrictions that bar normal transit between Palestinian areas not too far away.

Despite the suffering endured, it seems that residents living under these conditions are prepared to continue doing so.

Recently, Arab and Palestinian media houses have addressed the issue of the "achievements" of intifada fighting, but according to Dr. Jamil Hilel, a Ramallah-based sociologist, the issue should be about the reasons why intifada fighting started and continued. He claims that Palestinians do not see the suffering they endured as a result of intifada but rather as a consequence of Israeli occupation. According to him, this is why the Palestinians are not demanding an end to the intifada, since they do not believe that there is any practical political alternative.

of Sweden's state television station, the SVT, stated that they are considering the option to allow women broadcasters to wear their Islamic headscarves, in compliance with Swedish laws on discrimination. The law protects a woman's right to wear a headscarf at work, unless it would threaten safety.

"Our rules do not allow presenters to wear clothes or jewellery which could distract attention from the message of the programme," SVT Chief Executive Christina Jutterstrom told Swedish public service radio. "But if we are breaking a law, of course we will change them."

Islam in Mexico

Continued from page 10

informative site (in accordance to Quran and Sunnah) in Spanish on the World Wide Web. Among the main objectives of MCM is to produce beneficial and sound knowledge in Spanish. MCM has translated dozens of books and over one hundred articles on Islamic topics. MCM has managed to publish some of its books. It needs financial support to publish more material.

Miraculously MCM has managed to do all its activities including running a full scale Islamic Center in Mexico city and supporting brothers around the entire country, with less than 30,000 USD a year. The Islamic Center in Mexico has a rent bill of 15,000 USD a year, plus four brothers and one sister working full time, most of them with salaries below 200 USD a month. It has a huge billboard on one of the busiest avenues in Mexico City where the Islamic Center is also located. It is a huge picture of people praying and it reads Prayer is for Allah, with our website address. The owner of the property who sympathizes with us only charges us 50 USD a month. During Ramadan MCM has always given programs including every day Iftars and lessons on Islam to which brothers from other areas of Mexico are invited.

MCM needs to stay firm giving Dawa. We are a well known organization nation wide, Omar Weston is known for his TV programs and his long beard. People in the public stores and restaurants come up to him to ask about Islam. The sisters that do things in group are also known among many. Mexico is a country of 100 million people and we need to inform them about Islam. We are sowing the seeds for Islam in Mexico but we need your participation in this huge project. Mexico as the leading country in Latin America can easily become the key to introduce Islam in that last frontier for Islam: Latin America. We are a very poor community and can't handle with the expenses that this great project entails.

Muslim Center De Mexico during the past years has gradually purchased a reasonable sized land in a beautiful lakefront area of Mexico, 80 KM from Mexico City and 30 KM from the Cuernavaca which is a big and well known city in Mexico. The purpose of this project is to have a permanent center to teach the rapidly growing Mexican Muslim population. We also need to start introducing Islam in the rural areas of Mexico, the site for Dar as Salaam is surrounded by dozens of villages that have very clean-hearted people, already showing an inclination to Islam. These are the people we can't reach through media, universities or internet, but they have proven to be the most receptive.

Dawa in Mexico has been a unique experience of mainly a community of Mexican Muslims committed in practicing the great favour they received from Allah and sharing this blessing with others. A common scenario in this Dawa is to see a member of a large family accept Islam and gradually see how other members of the same family come to the fold of

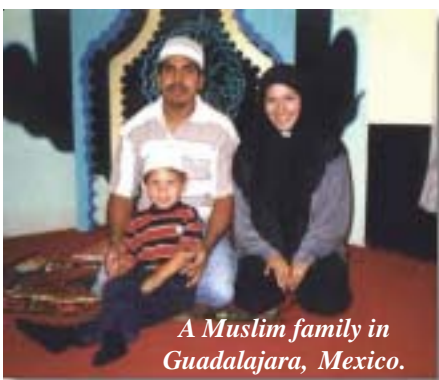
Islam. Before the opening of the center, Islam was nearly unknown to the public, today it's a different story. However there's a lot more work to do. Today we have 100's of Mexican Muslims and 100's of thousands of Mexicans of a more genuine picture of Islam than before.

Muslim Center De Mexico in other parts of Mexico

Monterrey, Nuevo Leon.

Strangely enough **Muslim Center De Mexico's** activities in the second largest city in Mexico were due to a business opportunity that a Mexican hamburger factory (Trosi de Carnes SA de CV) had in 1995 when McDonalds Restaurants were opened in the Middle East. Trosi de Carne was offered the production of hamburgers for all McDonalds restaurants in the Middle East and North Africa due to the Crazy cow disease in Europe. MCM was asked to certify that the imported Halal meat from USA was processed in clean machines without having been mixed with non-Islamic slaughtering. Omar Weston was flown from Mexico City to Monterrey three days a week to overview the hamburger production. With the financial aid received by Trosi de Carnes and some brothers in Texas Omar Weston rented a house to use it as a branch of the MCM.

MCM managed to establish a Jumah prayer with about ten participants, however this didn't last long



A Muslim family in Guadalajara, Mexico.

because the hamburger production was transferred once again to Europe so MCM could no longer assist the brothers to keep the house open.

Torreon, Coahuila

While visiting Monterey so frequently Omar Weston started contacting a small Muslim community in Torreon. This community is formed by Syrian Immigrants that migrated in the twenties and thirties. A decade ago Mr. Sirhan Elias built a beautiful small Masjid in honour of his daughter that died. Mr. Hasan Chamut is the Imam there and they have a Jumah attendance of 10 to 20 people.

Guadalajara, Jalisco.

Guadalajara is the third biggest city in Mexico, the story of Islam started when Abu Bakr (one of the fortunate new Muslims that studied in Medina) visited a book fair at Guadalajara. He found two Muslims, Omar and Khaled, of Mexican origin. However Omar was of Algerian origin. He narrates that his grandfather came to Mexico decades ago with his son and his son fell in love with Omar's mother, business wasn't good so the grandfather returned

Jesus through a Muslim Lens

Continued from page 1

eral son of God in human form, but as an inspired human being, a teacher of wisdom with a talent for love drawn from an unbroken relationship to God. Both versions present him as a man who spoke to common people in universal terms.

Two events in the life of the prophet Muhammad may help explain why Muslims revere the Christian Jesus.

The first event involves an elder resident of Mecca named Waraqa bin Nawfal. This man was an early Arab Christian and an uncle of Muhammad's wife, Khadija. We know he could read Hebrew, that he was mystical by nature, and that he attended Khadija and Muhammad's wedding in about 595 C.E. Fifteen years later, a worried Khadija sought Waraqa out and brought her husband to him.

At the time, Muhammad was a 40-year-old respected family man. He attended this "family therapy" session in a rare state of agitation. He was frightened. He had been meditating one evening in a cave on the outskirts of town. There, while half asleep, he had experienced something so disturbing that he feared he was possessed. A voice had spoken to him.

Waraqa listened to his story,

leaving his son married to Omar's mother, when Omar was six his father passed away. He remembered that his father used to pray and it lead him to seek Islam.

Br. Omar Weston later visited them. They had a house with barely a roof on it and a little Musallah, with a Mirhab. They were calling the Adhan in Spanish and reading Al Fatiha in Spanish, which they had learned from an Encyclopaedia. Br. Omar took one of them (Khalid) back to Mexico with him and taught him ten Surahs of the Quran, how to read Quran in Arabic, and the basics of Tawheed and Fiqh.

Later we discovered that a group of Medical Students was studying in Guadalajara so we asked them to rent a house in the area where these new Muslims were. They followed suit and joined efforts to improve the condition of Islam there. On our last visit Br. Omar gave a Khutba on Friday to over 35 Muslims. This Mosque and Islamic Center is a branch of **Muslim Center De Mexico** in Guadalajara.

San Cristobal de las Casa, Chiapas

Ahmed and Munir Abdul Basir both previous students of Br. Omar took a brother from Spain by the name of Nafia who insisted he wanted to start Dawa in Chiapas. **Muslim Center De Mexico** hosted some scholars from Medina who offered Br. Ahmed a scholarship to Medina to help him increase his knowledge of Arabic.

Muslim Center De Mexico has contacts in over twenty major cities in Mexico. We have tried establishing Musallah's in Ciudad Obregon, Sonora. MCM Studied the possibility of helping a Priest who became Muslim by renting a house near him, but in both cases our economical resources don't allow us to extend our support.

which Muslims will recognize as a description of Muhammad's first encounter with the angel Gabriel. When it was finished, Waraqa assured him he was not possessed.

"What you have heard is the voice of the same spiritual messenger God sent to Moses. I wish I could be a young man when you become a prophet! I would like to be alive when your own people expel you."

"Will they expel me?" Muhammad asked.

"Yes," the old man said. "No one has ever brought his people the news you bring without meeting hostility. If I live to see the day, I will support you."

Christians will recognize in Waraqa's remarks an aphorism associated with Jesus: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country." But that a Christian should first have verified Muhammad's role as a prophet may come as a surprise.

The second important event concerning Islam and Christianity dates from 616, a few years after Muhammad began to preach publicly. This first attempt to reinstate the Abrahamic tradition in Mecca met (as Waraqa had warned) with violent opposition.

Perhaps the Meccans resented Muhammad's special claim. Perhaps his message of a single, invisible, ever-present God threatened the economy of their city. A month's ride south from the centres of power in Syria and Persia, poor remote Mecca depended on long-distance trade and on seasonal pilgrims who came there each year to honour hundreds of pagan idols, paying a tax to do so.

At any rate, Muhammad's disruptive suggestion that "God was One" and could be found anywhere did not sit well with the businessmen of Mecca.

Many new Muslims were being tortured. Their livelihoods were threatened, their families persecuted. As matters grew worse, in 616 Muhammad sent a small band of followers across the Red Sea to seek shelter in the Christian kingdom of Axum. There, he told them, they would find a just ruler, the Negus, who could protect them. The Muslims found the Negus in his palace, somewhere in the borderland between modern Ethiopia and Eritrea.

And protect them he did, after one Muslim recited to him some lines on the Virgin Mary from the Qur'an. The Negus wept at what he heard. Between Christians and Muslims, he said, he could not make out more difference than the thickness of a twig.

These two stories underscore the support Christians gave Muhammad in times of trial. The Qur'an distills the meaning from the drama: "Those who feel the most affection

For us (who put our faith in the Qur'an), are those that say, "We are Christians," for priests and monks live among them who are not arrogant. When they listen to what We have shown Muhammad, their eyes brim over with tears at the truth they find there..."

Even today, when a Muslim mentions Jesus' name, you will hear it followed by the phrase 'peace and blessings be upon him,' because Muslims still revere him as a prophet.

"We believe in God and in what has been sent down to us, and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their offspring, and what was given to Moses and to Jesus and all the other prophets of the Lord. We make no distinction among them."

As these lines from the Qur'an make clear, Muslims regard Jesus as one of the world's great teachers. He and his mentor John the Baptist stand in a lineage stretching back to the founder of ethical monotheism. Moreover, among Muslims, Jesus is a special type of prophet, a messenger empowered to communicate divinity not only in words but by miracles as well.

Muslims, it must be said, part company with some Christians over the portrait of Jesus developed in the fourth and fifth centuries. Certain fictions, Muslims think, were added then. Three of these come in for special mention: First, Muslims consider monastic asceticism a latter-day innovation, not an original part of Jesus' way. Second, the New Testament suffers from deletions and embellishments added after Jesus' death by men who did not know him. Third, the description of Jesus as God's son is considered, by Muslims, a later, blasphemous suggestion.

Muslims venerate Jesus as a divinely inspired human but never, ever as 'the son of God.' In the same vein, we treat the concept of the Trinity as a late footnote to Jesus' teachings, an unnecessary "mystery" introduced by the North African theologian Tertullian two centuries after Jesus' death. Nor do Muslims view his death as an act of atonement for mankind's sins. Rather, along with the early Christian theologian Pelagius, Islam rejects the doctrine of original sin, a notion argued into church doctrine by St. Augustine around the year 400.

It might almost be said that Islam holds a view of Jesus similar to some of the early apostolic versions condemned by the fourth-century Byzantine Church. Once Constantine installed Christianity as the Roman Empire's state religion, a rage for orthodoxy followed. The Councils of Nicaea (325), Tyre (335), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451) were official, often brutal attempts to stamp out heterodox views of Jesus held by 'heretical' theologians.

Rulings by these councils led to the persecution and deaths of tens of thousands of early Christians at the hands of more "orthodox" Christians who condemned them. Most disputes centred on divergent interpretations of the Trinity. For this reason, historians of religion sometimes see in these bloody divisions one of the root causes for early Islam's firmly unitarian outlook.

Then and now, no more dangerous religious mistake exists for a Muslim than dividing the Oneness of God by twos or threes.

Despite these important differences, however, the Qur'an repeatedly counsels Muslims not to dispute with other monotheists over matters of doctrine. People, it says, believe differently for good reasons. In fact, that is a part of Allah's will.

Adherence to Religion Solves Problems

Continued from page 1

not indulge in more immorality. Think of an employer. If he does not have faith in God and feels no fear of Him, he has already decided to act unconscionably and hence becomes a person ready to take any opportunity to put this decision into action. The reason for this is that, not obeying the commandments of the Creator or appreciating the favours granted by Him are already the most serious examples of unconscientious behaviour. Therefore, from his own personal standpoint, there is no reason why this employer should not mistreat his employees at the workplace, offend them, or try to make them work the maximum time for the minimum wage. Within his own understanding of conscience, these are reasonable attitudes for him to take. Towards his partners, he takes the same improper attitude; he cheats them or resorts to illegal ways to quickly amass a fortune, and there is nothing to restrain him from doing so.

As stated earlier, when divine criteria, moral understanding will differ greatly from one person to another. An immoral attitude rejected by one, may well be perfectly normal for someone else. Hence, wherever religious values have no influence, people, societies, ages, regions, cities, and countries set their own moral values, which are different from one another. In the absence of a unified perspective regarding moral values, society becomes the setting for numerous disputes and conflicts over what is right and what is not right. Every new generation becomes more degenerate than the previous one.

Moral degeneration corrupts societies at an ever-increasing rate every year. Societies rapidly become corrupt when there is incomplete faith in God. In this way, the society embraces a form of conduct that was perceived to be extreme [or objectionable] one year, but is favoured the following year. This progressive decline surely brings ruin to society and immorality, a consequence of disbelief, spreads with each passing day. What is interesting is that, immorality is presented as "modernity" and becomes the greatest topic of indoctrination in societies. A way of thinking that is summed up in the motto: "The man of the 21st century should be free and unrestrained" is instilled into unsuspecting minds by disbelieving ideologists.

Whole generations are introduced to immorality at very early ages. Indeed, there is a considerable increase in the number of children who commit murder in America and Europe. From the Far East comes the grievous news of children being exposed to every sort of sexual abuse for commercial purposes. During the 80's, sexual perversion was a subject people were too embarrassed even to talk about. Today, however, people are apt to perceive such relations as a part of the modern way of living and even feel sympathy for those having perverted relations. Those opposing them, on the other hand, are accused of not being modern. This critical attitude of people living

in disbelieving societies is deplored in the Qur'an: "Those who love to see immorality being spread (or publicized) among those who believe will have a painful punishment both in this world and the hereafter. God knows and you do not know." (an-Nur: 19)

On the contrary, it is unlikely that moral degeneration should exist in a society where the morality of religion prevails. After all, with their deep fear of God, individuals avoid immorality. To this end, it suffices to comply with the commandments of the Qur'an. For instance, in the following verse, the moral criterion set by God is clear: "God commands justice and doing good and giving to relatives. And He forbids indecency and doing wrong and tyranny. He warns you so that hopefully you will pay heed." (an-Nahl: 90)

Believers who acknowledge these commandments of the Qur'an pay meticulous attention to observing the limits set by God. Thus in a community of true believers, there is very little immoral behaviour.

If exceptional cases arise and some individuals do wrong, this will again not become a problem in society since true believers will not allow this immorality. Furthermore, contrary to the state of affairs in ignorant societies, it is unlikely that this immorality would be encouraged or become widespread in society as a whole. That is because one of the main duties of believers is to "command what is right and forbid what is wrong," as is stated in the following verse: "True believers, both men and women, are friends to one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and attend to their prayers and pay alms, and obey God and His Messenger. They are the people on whom God will have mercy. God is Almighty, All-Wise." (at-Tawba: 71)

Hence, a society where Qur'anic values are observed is also a morally elite community, because, there, "...believers compete in doing the good." (Surah Al 'Imran: 114) Another virtue of believers is alluded to in the following verses: "Who could say anything better than one who summons men to the service of God and acts rightly and says, 'I am one of the Muslims'?" (Fussilat: 33) Also, "Those who listen well to My precepts and follow what is best in them, are the ones whom God has guided. They are people endowed with intelligence." (az-Zumar: 18)

God spells out the attributes of a community whose members live by the principles of religion: "You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind. You enjoin the right, forbid the wrong and believe in God..." (Al 'Imran: 110)

In one of his sayings, our Prophet also stated that "a believer is a mirror to another believer," (Abu Dawud) and invited believers to set an example to each other by evincing good character, saying, "The believers whose faith is most perfect are those who have the best character." (Abu Dawud)

It is obvious that such a society is morally superior to a disbelieving

Continued from page 1

going to the mosque and keep going all the time, for the mosques are open all-year-round.

During the month of Ramadan we also invite people over and get together to have Iftar. Calendars are full because everyone goes to families and friends during the month of Ramadan. Yet outside of Ramadan, we do not get together as much any more. Our calendar is empty. Ramadan teaches us to get together. It teaches us to socialize and we should carry this habit and get together. Our calendars should be busy every week and we should be sitting together, learning about each other.

At the end of the month of Ramadan, we are obligated to give Zakat Al-fitr — charity to the poor. By going hungry and thirsty during Ramadan, we are reminded of all of the poor people in the community and in the world that need food and do not have it. We go hungry by

choice and know that at sunset, we will be able to eat and will have the food of our choice. There are people who go hungry all the time. There is no "sunset" for them. Ramadan teaches us to empathize with the poor and to give and share. How many of us carry on giving the charity for the sake of Allah after the month of Ramadan?

We follow the footsteps of the Western society in almost everything and call it as being modern and civilized. However, when it comes to learning good lessons, we do not always follow. The non-Muslim community is always looking forward to the next event: first it's candies for Halloween, then decorations for Christmas, then cupid for Valentine's day, then the bunny for the Easter, and so on. They are always getting ready for the next big event. When Ramadan is over, how many of us are getting ready for the next big event

in Islam, which is Hajj. How many of us are thinking that Hajj is two months away and we should plan for it. Why don't we take the good things this community has to offer and apply it to our benefit? Hajj to the house of Allah is obligatory for those who are able and capable. We have to make the intention to go and we will find that Allah will make it easy for us. We must plan to go, because no one knows if he is going to be around the next year!

We have to remember the lessons of Ramadan. Take this opportunity to carry on the good habits and lessons learnt during Ramadan for the rest of the year. We have a refresher in the month of Ramadan every year to remind us that we can pray, read the Qur'an, get together, control our urges, go to the mosque, give to the poor and still go to work and do a good job.

[Ashraf Zaghoul is a frequent Khateeb at TARIC mosque.]

Race To The Kabah: Muslim Mom invents game to combine fun, faith

WOODBURY, Minn. - "Oh, man!" The Ahmed family of Woodbury is hunkered down over a board game on the plush rug. After the usual confusion over whose turn it is, 8-year-old Sabrina rolls the die. Her marker lands on the same square as her dad, Kaleel, and she must go back several squares to the safe haven of the mosque. Hence the lamentation.

Her sister, Shameem, 5, has luck on her side. "I'm winning!" she squeals, advancing to the "Allah guides you to the special path" square.

Like Sorry or Candyland, the game relies on random chance to move players forward or send them back as they seek their ultimate goal. Like quiz games, it tests their knowledge. But the final destination isn't King Kandy's Kastle but the kabah, the sacred building at the center of the mosque in Mecca, Islam's holy city; the knowledge isn't pop-culture factoids but the meanings of the 99 names of Allah.

The idea behind Race to the Kabah, says Thasneem Ahmed, the game's inventor and mother to Sabrina and Shameem, is to combine family togetherness with a spiritual element.

Ahmed began marketing the game about a year and a half ago out of her home; since then, 12 vendors have picked it up for distribution. The University of St. Thomas has bought several sets, and the game was listed on Beliefnet, a religious/spiritual Web site, as one of the top religious educational games.

You can buy the game at: SoundVision, (708) 430-1255 <http://www.soundvision.com/>

society. [Harun Yahya is a well-known author whose published books on political, faith-related and scientific issues interest Muslims and non-Muslims alike. His work has been translated into many languages. Please visit: www.harunyahya.com/

ANSAAR HOUSE

A shelter for the homeless, provided by The Muslim Community of Toronto.

In and around Toronto, homelessness has grown at an alarming rate over the past few years — hundreds of people, from every cultural, ethnic and religious group, sleep on streets, under bridges and in parks and alleyways every night and the Muslim Community is not immune to this problem.

The Ansaar Foundation (based in Toronto) has taken on the responsibility, on behalf of the Muslim Community, to address this critical need. The shelter is open to people of all faiths and backgrounds.

Your generous help is needed to show our fellow Canadians that the Islamic principle of brotherhood and care for the needy is alive, in **all** of us!

Along with the shelter, they also provide other services such as counselling, correctional / rehabilitation, and referral service.

You can get more info about The Ansaar Foundation by visiting their Website:

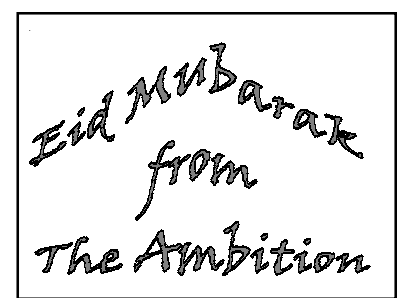
<http://ansaar.bizhosting.com/> or visit them in person at: 2872 Ellesmere Road, Toronto, Ontario, M1E 4B8. Fax: 416 282 2642

NDP helps end Muskoka Teachers' strike fairly

QUEEN'S PARK — New Democrats have negotiated a deal that will hurry Catholic elementary teachers back to work in Simcoe-Muskoka with the assurance of a fair negotiating process and a mediator-arbitrator agreeable to both sides to resolve outstanding issues.

NDP Leader Howard Hampton said the NDP's refusal to support back-to-work legislation yesterday paved the way for an agreement that ensures inexperienced government appointees won't be used in the bargaining process.

Instead, the Conservatives will choose from a list of three names acceptable to both the government and the Ontario Elementary Catholic Teachers Association.



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