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HIJRA: Its significance and importance in Islam

Each new Hijra year reminds Muslims of the sufferings, the struggle, the patience, and the victory of Islam.

By Imam Nedjad Hafizovic
Bosnian Islamic Centre

The Islamic new year will be commencing around the 14th or 15th of March, with the first day of Muharram. Surprising to many, the Muslim calendar is not named after a person's birth, or changing of seasons, or the rise or fall of any dynasty. We don't even have any celebrations for the New Year. Muslims name their calendar as Hijra Calendar.

The word Hijra signifies emigration, which in turn means evacuation, flight or mass departure. The word emigration must be distinguished from immigration which means settling, colonizing or taking refuge. You emigrate from the place you leave and immigrate to the place where you arrive and/or settle in.

The significance and importance of Hijra in Islam is rooted in the emigration of our beloved prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Makkah to Medina. The departure of the prophet from Makkah to Medina, then called Yathrib, is called Hijra. It took place on Thursday in the month of September 622 A.D. The Muslim era is named after this event, introduced by Umar Bin Khattab during his rule on the advice of Hazrat Ali.

To understand and appreciate the importance of Hijra, one must go back into the history of Islam. After receiving his first message, our prophet (peace be upon him) worked constantly against all odds in spreading the message of Islam to the people of Makkah. The idol-worshipping Quraish were considered the elites in those days. They very much resented the teaching of our prophet (pbuh) and would have gladly put an end to both his teachings and his life. For some thirteen years the Prophet (pbuh) laboured with just a handful of followers in merely preaching the oneness of Allah. He and his followers were mocked at, harassed, persecuted, brutally tortured, and faced inhuman social and economic sanctions.

Then the prophet's uncle Abu Talib died. The Quraish, which used to fear Abu Talib in his prestigious social capacity, now had less to fear

about in their persecution of the Messenger (pbuh). In the same year the Prophet (pbuh) received another severe blow from the death of his beloved and loyal wife Khadijah. He called that year "The year of sorrows"

The Quraish increased their attacks on the Prophet (pbuh) and the early believers. So he looked to somewhere other than Mecca. He visited Ta'if and spoke with the heads of the tribes there but none of their socially distinguished chiefs responded to his message. Instead, they humiliated him and stoned him until he bled from head to toe. But the Prophet (pbuh) did not give up on his mission and took advantage of every opportunity to spread Allah's message and guide the people. When people would come to visit the Ka'aba, he would invite the visitors to Islam.

Fortunately, a few among the visitors from Medina, accepted his teachings. They undertook to carry the message and the Prophet (pbuh) sent Mas'ab bin Umair with them to

teach them the laws of the religion of Allah, to educate them on the message and to teach them the Glorious Qur'an. A considerable number of the people of Medina accepted the blessed Call and embraced Islam.

The next year more people came to Mecca from Medina led by Mas'ab bin Umair and after meeting Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), embraced Islam. They invited the Prophet (pbuh) to Medina so that he could teach them better there and try to spread Islam. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) accepted this invitation and told Muslims to migrate to Medina in small numbers. When the enemies of Islam heard about this matter they decided to murder Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) before he could leave Mecca. They took men from each tribe, hence to make an alliance.

Allah, however, disclosed to Muhammad (pbuh) the intent of the Quraish and told the Prophet that he should also emigrate to Medina

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In the Name of Allah

The name of Allah existed before Islam and was used in reference to God by Arab Christians and Jews.

by David Wilmsen

The assertion by some members of the clergy that the god of Islam is not the same god as that worshipped by Christians is disturbing. Not only for the bigotry that it reflects and reinforces, but also for the plain ignorance it betrays. Ignorance of Islam is not in itself a bad thing, and a certain amount of it must be expected in non-Muslim societies. What is unexpected is that such a basic misunderstanding might arise amongst people who may be presumed to have made some formal study of the concept of deity. In order to be ordained into the ministry of most

mainstream Christian denominations a candidate must have studied the original languages of the Christian scriptures, those being Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Candidates to the clergy are not necessarily required also to know Arabic, although some do. But it should not be too much to expect of them a certain linguistic sensitivity to evident similarities between the Semitic languages.

The Semitic languages, of which Arabic has always been the largest in its number of speakers and geographical distribution, are members of a family once named Hamito-Semitic, for two of the three sons of Noah, Ham and Shem. Now known more properly as Afro-Asiatic, the family includes along with the more familiar Hebrew and Arabic some of the languages of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Chad, and Somalia; the languages of Ancient Egypt including Coptic; and the various Berber languages of North Africa. Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus Christ, is still represented as a minority language in various pockets in Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Iraq. Aramaic speakers of Iraqi descent, Christians known as Chaldeans, are present in significant numbers in the Arab community of Dearborn, Michigan, the largest Arab Community in the world outside of the Middle East.

All of the Semitic languages descended from a hypothesized original language, called for the sake of convention "proto-Semitic". This either originated in the Horn of Africa, spread across the Red Sea into

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Please treat this Islamic Journal with respect!

Our Wonderful Immune System

It is a perfect system. How foolish to think that it could have come into existence through evolutionary accidents.

By Harun Yahya

When a country is involved in war, a general mobilization is declared. Most of the natural resources and the budget are expended on military requirements. The economy is re-arranged to meet the needs of this extraordinary situation as the country is involved in an all-out war effort. Similarly, the immune system, the system that protects our bodies against disease, would also announce mass mobilization and recruiting of all of its elements to fight the enemy. Do you wonder how this happens?

If enemy members are more than the currently fighting macrophages

(immune cells) can handle, a special substance is secreted. The name of this substance is "pyrogen" and it is a kind of alarm call.

After traveling a long way, "pyrogen" reaches the brain where it stimulates the fever-increasing center of the brain. Once alerted, the brain sets off alarms in the body and the person develops a high fever. The patient with a high fever naturally feels the need to rest. Thus, the energy needed by the defence army is not spent elsewhere. The pyrogen produced by the macrophages is perfectly designed to trigger the fever-raising mechanism of the brain. Therefore, the macrophage, and the pyrogen, and the temperature-raising center of the brain, and the brain have all to be created at the same time.

As is evident, there is a perfect plan at work. Every requirement is created flawlessly for this plan to succeed; the macrophages, the pyrogen substance and other similar substances, the fever-raising center of the brain and the fever-raising

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Five Good Reasons to Advertise in The Ambition

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Editorial

Lessons from Karbala

The Muslim Ummah is under tremendous pressure around the world. Muslim lands are under attack by Western hegemony and our values are being aggressively challenged by secular Western culture. Whether Muslims are in their own countries or living in Western societies, they are under stress. Not only are we on the defensive, many are losing our trust in Islamic ideology.

The Muslim Ummah is suffering from a state of despair, uncertainty, and helplessness. It seems like there is no way out for us. However, if we look back into history, it is not the first time that we have suffered. Islamic history is full of political ups and downs. It is also full of beacons of light and pillars of strength.

When the early Muslims heard the news about the Prophet's death, they felt like the sky had fallen upon their heads. 'Umar (ra) became so emotional that he was ready to kill anybody who said that the Prophet (pbuh) was dead. Abu Bakr (ra) at this time said these historic words: "Whoever worshipped Muhammad should know that Muhammad is dead, but whoever worships Allah must know that Allah is Eternal and Living."

Muslims do not worship personalities. We are all mortal. We will receive the Angel of Death as our time comes. However, the Word of Allah will remain, and that should be our greatest consolation.

Islam suffered a major blow from within when Yazid became the ruler of the Muslim Ummah. People were so afraid of the power of Yazid that they could not dare speak against him. Imam Hussain (ra) refused to accept his corrupt rule. As the grandson of the Prophet (pbuh), he could neither be frightened nor bought into declaring his allegiance to Yazid. As a result, Imam Hussain was brutally killed at Karbala in the most merciless fashion, along with members of his family and little convoy, by Yazid's army.

Hussain gave his life, but he will always be remembered as the tower of courage and truth for those brave people who refuse to bow to oppression and tyranny. At that time, it appeared that that was the end of Islamic era, but Islam not only survived, it flourished, and Karbala became a proverb in Islamic history for the clash of truth and falsehood and the revival of Islam. The significance of Karbala, again, is that personalities do not count. It is the message that is important.

Then there were the Mongols who nearly obliterated Islamic civilization. They killed Muslims by the hundreds of thousands and brought about a pillage and plunder that was unprecedented in history, yet their children accepted the Word of Allah and became the torchbearers of Islam. Muslim rule subsequently spread over to Europe and the Far East.

The significance of this is that Allah has promised to protect His Deen and His Deen cannot be destroyed. Muslims may face mass destruction, but Islam is eternal. Allah is the best Planner and He speaks only Truth. He chooses the people best suited to carry out His commands. He has His own mysterious ways of spreading His Word. Our job is to keep trying and working hard to establish the rule of God. However, it all has to be done with peace, patience, and perseverance. Allah tells us that after each difficulty, there is ease and we must believe it. *"And behold, with every hardship comes ease. Verily, with every hardship comes ease! So when thou art freed [from distress], remain steadfast, and unto thy Sustainer turn with love."* (94:5-8)

The apparent defeat of today's Muslim Ummah in all worldly gains suggests that perhaps we are not the ones able to do such a great job. Maybe we are not sincere enough with our goals. Maybe our line of action is not straight.

We have to set our action plan in the footsteps of our great role models. On one hand we have the Prophet (pbuh), who was heavily stoned, bleeding from head to toe in the streets of Ta'if, but still patient, not even uttering a word of contempt against his enemies, but praying for them. On the other hand, we see Imam Hussain, who was hungry, thirsty, overcome by the enemy, surrounded by their swords, and still unshaken, steadfast, and holding on to the truth. We have to develop these qualities to make a difference in this world.

Muslims who die in the cause of Allah reach their desired destination and those who suffer, or are humiliated in the path of God, are comforted by Him. It appears to us that they are killed or defeated, but Allah knows better and their reward is with Him.

The Muslim Ummah has gone through many ups and downs and has always bounced back. History tells us that after each calamity the Ummah faced, Allah brought about people who could carry out His commands and re-establish His Deen.

Let us hope and promise to bounce back. Let us pray that Allah chooses us to be his servants who will carry His Message. Let us tell the whole world that Islam is the only religion of peace.

Asma Warsi

Letters / Opinion

We all worship 'The One' — Let's forget anti-Islam bias

By Rev. Frank Morgan

December and Christmas make Canadians think about Christianity, so November and Ramadan ought to make us think about Islam because there are now 650,000 Muslims in Canada, most of whom are Canadian citizens.

The media keep on using the misleading phrase "Muslim terrorists," which implies that all Muslims are potential terrorists. This is the sort of lie that breeds racism. In Ontario, we have fought against anti-Catholicism and in Canada, we still fight against anti-Semitism.

Now we must fight against anti-Islam.

If you regard every Canadian Muslim as a potential terrorist, you are right back in the McCarthy era in the United States. That was a dark age when any American might be called upon to prove to the underdeveloped senator that he or she was a real American, whatever that designation meant.

There is no reason in Kitchener why my Muslim friend Abdul Khanani should have to prove he is not a terrorist any more than I should have to. The problem is, too many of us regard the restrictive fundamentalism of the Taliban as typical of all Islam. The Taliban and the World Trade Center terrorists no more represent Islam than Gerry Falwell represents Christianity. He said that Sept. 11 was God's judgment on America for tolerating gays, lesbians, feminists, abortion rights, liberals, and activists. That may be the conviction of some circumscribed Christians, but it is not the Christianity of Jesus.

More than a billion Muslims in the world regard Mohammed as their prophet, heading a religion which once stretched from India to Spain. That same Mohammed abolished female infanticide, conferred rights on women, and established mature rules of conduct between individuals. Under his rule there was democratic dialogue, scholars tell us, with much consultation and consensus building. Later in Islam, scholars gained the right to make changes so that religion would fit into changing social conditions. One reason that the Muslim empire was so successful in places like Europe, where there were minorities, was the rule from the Qur'an: "Let there be no compulsion in religion."

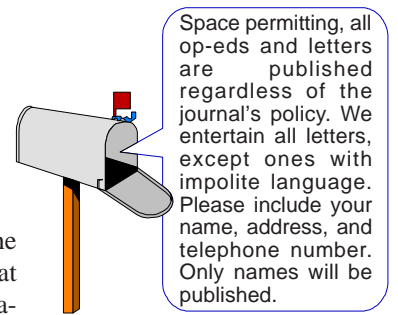
But Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, has problems. The influential people, intellectuals and business leaders, tend to keep quiet in the face of present conditions. Then power is seized by dubious politicians and, worse, by poorly trained clerics. One can well imagine what would happen in America if Pat Buchanan and Gerry Falwell were president and vice-president. But this incompetent leadership emerges when competent leaders try to lead from behind instead of being out front.

In the Toronto Star, Haroon Siddiqui refers to Muslim leaders of this ilk as ones who make "selective interpretations" from the Qur'an. One

has only to read some letters to the editor in The Record to be aware that Christians make selective interpretations of the Bible to suit their own point of view.

The Canadian Race Relations Federation reminds us that terrorists come in all colours, but happily, so do those who reject terrorism and racism.

Devout Muslims call the Deity Allah, which means "The One," because they are very strict monotheists. But Jews are also very strict monotheists, as are Christians, and we both worship "The One."



Space permitting, all op-eds and letters are published regardless of the journal's policy. We entertain all letters, except ones with impolite language. Please include your name, address, and telephone number. Only names will be published.

letters@theambition.com

This leads me to paraphrase John Oxenham's hymn this way: "Join hands then children in the faith, Whate'er your race may be; Who serves The One just as a son, Is surely kin to me."

(Frank Morgan of Kitchener is a retired United Church minister. Source: CIC bulletin)

Public relations or war of words

By Iqbal Jassat

The cover story in Newsweek's February 11th issue is titled "The Bible and the Quran". It seeks to search the scriptures for roots of conflict and seeds of reconciliation, yet trips up by ignoring a fundamental taboo in Islam, by reproducing sketches depicting the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The US-based magazine has either ignored or defied a well-recognized ban by the entire Muslim world on all paintings, drawings, illustrations, personifications or interpretations of the Prophet. Egypt, which is home to the Al-Azhar Institution, is considering banning Newsweek, while news reports have confirmed that Indonesia and Bangladesh have already done so.

This latest saga is being viewed by many Muslims as another manifestation of the hostility displayed by media institutions against Islam, especially since September 11. This perception is further fuelled by the utterances and stances adopted by the United States, Britain and others which is interpreted as extremely provocative and insensitive to Muslim beliefs.

With bombing raids in Afghanistan and Iraq still continuing and the intense military siege of Palestinian territories by Israel causing murder and mayhem in dense civilian areas, there can be no doubt that a massive anti-Islam propaganda campaign is underway. The US/Israeli axis of aggression realises that along with the military engagement, a propaganda war must be waged in order to maintain worldwide support for their war on terrorism.

The Bush administration has beefed up Voice of America by doubling its Arabic short wave programming from its current 9 hours a day to 18 hours daily. In addition to investing half a billion dollars to set up a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week satellite channel programme directed only to Muslim countries, the USA also recently set up Voice of Free Afghanistan.

According to Impact International, the British Foreign Office gave the BBC World Service 181.1 million pounds as grant-in-aid so that the Corporation could run a free news service in several world languages. This was not charity: it was foreign

policy!

This enormous battle to win the hearts and minds of Afghans as well as the world's one billion Muslims represents the flip side of the coin — a military operation as well as a propaganda war, disguised as a public relations campaign.

The difficulty confronting the US/Israeli axis, however, is that this will be no walkover. There is no hope that despite countries such as Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia enjoying political patronage of Washington, President Bush would be the darling of the Muslim world, with streets named after him in every Muslim state.

Another major furore in the race to sell the war on terrorism to the Muslim public, involves Israel and its Zionist supporters. Front-liners such as Richard Perle, head of the Defence Policy Board, Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Keith, an undersecretary of Defence, as well as front-liners in the media, Congress and the American Jewish leadership continue to advocate the expansion of the war on terrorism.

They are pushing to squeeze countries such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan and Lebanon.

Bush's attack of Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the "axis of evil" coincides precisely with the goals Israel has identified as crucial, including broadening the enemies' list to include Palestinian groups.

This display of superpower pugnacity challenges the world to allow Bush the right to bomb or invade any hapless country that by his wisdom, might be deemed uncooperative or laggard in a fight the president has starkly cast as civilization vs. barbarism.

Latest reports indicated that America's transatlantic allies are uneasy with the 'us vs. them' rhetoric. Many political pundits are suggesting that the anti-terrorist partnership Europeans built with the United States is extremely fragile. Some feel that they are hooked onto a superpower locomotive that is out of control, with an engineer who sees no reason to heed their warnings.

Iqbal Jassat is Chairman of the Media Review Network, an advocacy group based in Pretoria.

(Source: inin news bulletin)

We have a dream!

by Razi Mohiuddin

Almost two score years ago, a great American had a dream. Today we honour this great American, his dream and his ideals. Today we honour our country – a country that has embraced these ideals and persevered in achieving them. And we honour our founding fathers – who had the vision to define the principles of freedom and justice that we live by and uphold today.

Today we also honour the path we have taken since that day in 1963 when Martin Luther King, Jr. had the dream. We look up to the challenges that face us in our quest to achieve

those ideals. Today, we also look at a community that has gone through trials and tribulations – similar to the community that this great American hero talked about. Today, we look at the dreams and aspirations of the American Muslim community.

We have a dream! We have a dream that one day there will be no terrorism in the world. We dream and hope to bring to justice the likes of Osama bin Laden who kill innocent in the name of religion. We dream that September 11th was not the beginning of time when terrorism was brought to our shores – but instead the end of terrorism. And

that the lives affected will rise to honour those whose lives ended in this tragedy.

We also dream that our community has the strength to look inside and address the issues of concern. We cannot embrace a path to the palace of justice, by adopting a path of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our jihad on the high moral ground of dignity and discipline, and not let it degenerate into the killing of the innocent. We must forever enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong.

As we dream, we need to be thankful of the great progress our

nation has made towards the ideals of this great American hero, and be mindful of the road that still lies ahead. And we need to pledge not to go back on this road – as we seem to be doing – but instead continue to step forward.

We dream that an entire community or religion is not blamed for the actions of a few: That our nation upholds its principles, and does not apply them selectively, lest it be accused of making them fair-weather principles. We dream that “innocent, until proven guilty” is not just for good times, but applies equally during times of war. We dream that our system of checks and balances does not dissolve into Neo-McCarthyism.

We also dream that there will be a just peace in the world. We dream that our nation will lead in ending oppression across the globe by applying our principles equally among nations. We dream that we can distinguish between the terrorist and the freedom fighter; and the oppressor and the oppressed: The oppressed whose homes are demolished and bulldozed to give collective punishment to a community, and not because of a crime. We dream that the oppressed in Palestine, Kashmir and Chechnya get a chance to live the freedom that we take for granted.

This is no time to engage in Muslim-bashing or racial profiling; detention without due process or application of secret evidence; selective deportation or throwing out attorney-client privilege. Now is the time to rise from the darkness of prejudice to the bright path of justice. And the time to open the doors of equality, not close it to protect freedom. Now is the time to end selective application of laws, and rise to protect the values and principles that we espouse.

We say to you today, our friends and fellow human beings, that in spite of the trials and tribulations, we have a dream: A dream that is deeply rooted in the American dream [or the Canadian dream, for that matter.] And when we all dare to dream together, we will be able to realize just how similar we all are, whether we are black or white, Muslims or Jews, Christians or Hindus. We will be able to realize how we all desire our inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We will be able to join hands and praise the words of our Lord who said, “O people! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another.” Not that you may fight and suppress each other. We have a dream!

[Razi Mohiuddin is a columnist for the Independent Writers Syndicate. He is an entrepreneur and founder of numerous software companies and resides in the San Francisco Bay Area.]

Teen produces Qur'an in Braille

A 15-year-old blind student who has learnt the Quran by heart has now produced a copy of it in Braille, complete with all 30 sections, reports thstar.com

Nabil Mahathir of Taman Wira, Mergong, took a year to complete the work at the end of last year.

Speaking at his house, Nabil said he took the initiative to produce the

Quran in Braille to enable the blind to deepen their knowledge of the holy book. Apart from that, he considers his work as a pious service to Muslims.

He began writing the Quran using the Braille machine early last year by devoting an hour or two daily to the work. His copy is in five books with each containing between



five and six sections.

Nabil's father, Mahathir Yusof, 58, said he was trying to get a patent for his son's work and expressed the hope that the relevant bodies such as the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (Jakim) would be able to help expand his son's work.

“In doing so, it will benefit all blind Muslims,” said the pensioner who was previously with the Royal Customs and Excise Department.

Nabil, the fifth among eight children, was born in Medina, Saudi Arabia, while the family was on pilgrimage and lost his eyesight when he was about seven months following a fall.

Nabil enrolled in primary school at the age of four and stopped at Year Five. When he was 10, he entered an Islamic religious school at Derga near here and learnt the Quran.

Read the full story at: <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2002/3/1/nation/quranboy&sec=nation>

From the Qur'an

But [remember that an attempt at] requiting evil may, too become and evil; hence, whoever pardons [his foe] and makes peace, his reward rests with God – for, verily, He does not love evildoers. (42:40)

From the Hadith

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “Spread peace abroad, and you will remain safe.”

Bukhari's Book of Morals and Manners, Hadith 982

Be careful

*Be careful of your thoughts
For your thoughts become your word.*

Be careful of your words, For your words become your actions.

*Be careful of your actions
For your actions become your habits.*

*Be careful of your habits
For your habits become your character.*

*Be careful of your character
For your character becomes your destiny.*

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Justice and Loyalties

by Ayub Hamid

Allah is Just, deals with people justly, and loves those who establish, maintain or stand up for justice. He has created human beings also with a propensity and liking for justice.

Normally people like to be fair and equitable unless their innate tendency towards justice is overshadowed by a lot of factors; their self interest, their love of their own, their loyalties, their biases, their prejudices, their arrogance of power, their anger /hatred towards some people, and/or their desire for revenge, etc.

When an individual, a community or a state is overtaken by self interest, favouritism anger, revenge or hate against others, justice is the first victim. When that happens, the party on the receiving side of injustice reacts with similar attitude, perhaps even more strongly. Each party's effort to get back more forcefully grows into a spiraling cycle of violence and terrorism. This ends up making the peace and security of humanity the ultimate victim of injustice. That is why there can be no peace in this world without justice.

The goal of Islam being the establishment of an ideal peaceful and fair society, justice has been frequently emphasized in the Holy Qur'an. Knowing how people drift towards injustice, it advises Muslims to let justice triumph over all other emotions, feelings and attitudes. Muslims are told: "*O believers, be the enforcers/establishers of justice, giving witness for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents or your kith and kin. Whether they are rich or poor, Allah has more rights than any on them. Do not let pursuing your desires come in the way of being just.*" (4:135)

"*O believers, be the enforcers/establishers of justice, giving witness for the sake of Allah, and do not let your animosity towards any people incite you against practicing justice. Be just! That is the pious way.*" (5:8)

Keeping this commandment of Allah in mind makes it easy for Muslims to discern how they should react to or behave in the current circumstances of the world. Many people are torn between their loyalties to their country of residence and their belonging to the Muslim Ummah. Some are confused how to react. These verses clarify the matter. Muslims must speak up for justice regardless of where they live, who is the victim and who- the perpetrator.

Accordingly, for the September 11th tragedy, we must speak up against the perpetrators of that crime

against humanity, which Muslims all over the world have done unequivocally. The person(s) responsible for that crime must be brought to justice according to international laws in the international court, independent of the U.S.A. At the same time, the injustice, devastation and destruction being inflicted upon poor, helpless Afghans by the U.S.A. must also be brought to check, the world history should register the insanity of American terrorism.

Also, Muslims must not allow the Israelis to use this opportunity to annihilate Palestinians, Indians to oppress Kashmiris, or Russians to devastate Chechnya.

We must speak out against injustice regardless of what it is called and regardless of who practices it. That is what our Islamic obligation is in this world.

The Three Questions

There was a young man who went overseas to study for quite a long time. When he returned, he asked his parents to find him a religious scholar or any expert who could answer his three questions. Finally, his parents were able to find a Muslim scholar.

Young Man (YM): Who are you? Can you answer my questions?

Muslim Scholar (MS): I am one of Allah's slaves and Insha-Allah (God willing), I will be able to answer your questions.

YM: Are you sure? A lot of professors and experts were not able to answer my questions.

MS: I will try my best, with the help of Allah.

YM: I have three questions:

1. Does God exist? If so, show me His Shape.

2. What is *takdir* (fate)?

3. If Shaytan (Satan) was created from fire, why will he be thrown into Hell that is also created from fire. It certainly will not hurt him at all, since Shaytan and Hell were created from fire. Did God not think of it this way?

Suddenly, the Muslim scholar slapped the young man's face very hard.

YM (feeling pain): Why did you get angry at me?

MS: I am not angry. The slap is my answer to your three questions.

YM: I really don't understand.
MS: How do you feel after I slapped you?

YM: Of course, I felt the pain.

MS: So do you believe that pain exists?

YM: Yes.

MS: Show me the shape of the pain!

YM: I cannot.

MS: That is my first answer. All of us feel God's existence without being able to see His Shape. Last night, did you dream that you will be slapped by me?

YM: No.

MS: Did you ever think that you will get a slap from me, today?

YM: No.

MS: That is *takdir* (fate). My hand that I used to slap you, what is it created from?

YM: It is created from flesh.

MS: How about your face, what is it created from?

YM: Flesh.

MS: How do you feel after I slapped you?

YM: In pain.

MS: Even though Shaytan and also Hell were created from fire, if Allah wants, Insha-Allah, the Hell-Fire will become a very painful place for Shaytan.

Helpful Hints

By Sister Shireen Patel

Q: I feel like my Iman is going down, and like I'm a very bad Muslim. Any suggestions how I can get my faith back?

A: In life, be it the spiritual aspect of life or the everyday part of life we all have our ups and downs. For some there is a known factor as to why our behavior changes, and for others it's just something that happens ever so often. The fact that you are aware of yourself being in such a state, shows that in fact you are not a "bad Muslim", Insha'Allah. It proves you are conscious of your spiritual state and that you aren't willing to just accept it. Due to there being a reason for this change first it is for you to try and figure out what that reason is, if you don't already know. Go to the root of the problem. If, after racking your brain you still can't think of what triggered this change then go straight to supplication (dua). Nothing will happen without the will of the Almighty, so supplicate to Our Creator to give you strength and make you stronger in your Imaan. Also, read some stories about the Prophet (peace and blessing upon him) and his companions and read the Qur'an. Remember death – the reality of life. Death is always a good reminder of how short our life is, and that it will be taken at any time without a warning. We need to be prepared for this day that will come sooner than we think. It is a time we will be alone, and our good deeds will be our only companions. Life is merely a test so strive to pass it because failing will bring divesting consequences. May the Almighty bring you closer to Him, give you strength and guidance. Ameen.

Q: A few relatives are saying bad things about my family, and me, which isn't true! What can I do about it?

A: Unfortunately, in this day and age many have neglected a great aspect of our faith, which is being good to kith and kin. But just because the rest of the world jumps off a cliff, it doesn't mean we should too, right? Saying that, you must remember not to stoop to their level, do not "take revenge" by doing what they do to you. You could try talking to them, but depending on the type of people sometimes that will make things worse off. If they are just misinformed or there is some sort of communication error in all of this then it is best to talk to them and correct it. If they are just bored, and take a liking to speaking bad about others you may want to warn them about their duty to be good to kith and kin, or not to speak bad about others. However, that also can be quite negative and be twisted into something it isn't. Use your best judgment, sometimes you're better off just not saying anything as the more you say the more they have to talk about. Although it is difficult to not feel anger towards them, or hurt by what they are doing, still try and be good to them and forgive them for what they do. May the Almighty let them see their error and cause harmony between families. Ameen.

Q: My girlfriend broke up with me and I feel like my life is over, I'd rather be dead than without her.

A: Before anything, I have to ask why you have a girlfriend in the first place? It can lead to a lot of *Fitnah*, and temptations between the couple. Not only can it lead to fornication but also heartache such as what you're suffering from. This heartache is apparently not healthy for a person. However, the question at hand poses a difficult solution because it is very emotionally charged. Take a few minutes to realistically reflect and see why you two broke up. Apparently your relationship wasn't as rosy as you might have thought. You don't live life for other people. You live life for yourself and for your Creator. If a person you love dearly leaves you, then you should take it as a test. We will be tested in many different ways, shapes and forms. Losing a loved one in any sense is probably one of the most difficult things to deal with. But, as they say, there are a lot of fish in the sea, so just look at this as a way of saying she isn't right for you. There's that saying, "If you let he/she go, and she returns to you he/she is yours, if he/she doesn't they weren't yours to begin with". Love can be very complex, and very deceiving, so don't allow yourself to be lost in fantasy. A wise man is a man who loves the one he marries, because the truest form of 'love' develops when you have to go through thick and thin together and that only happens with marriage. May you find peace in your heart, and move on with life so you do not regret the time wasted on something that isn't really there. Ameen

Around the World

Hispanic Muslims: New Minority Makes Itself Known

Since September 11th the mass media has reported time and time again about Americans accepting Islam. There was never any ignorance of the fact that Islam was, and is, the fastest growing religion in the West. But in the past few months it is recognized as a full-fledged phenomenon that every American must understand. A recent article in the New York Times highlighted the growing population of Hispanic Muslims in Southern California.

Many of them only speak Spanish and they attend weekly sessions on Islam enthusiastically. Marta Galedary, who converted after migrating here from Mexico two decades ago, has helped lead them. She finds that the group, which can include 20 to 50 people in any given week, is intensely interested and a little nervous. "Something in these Latino meetings that we keep telling people," Ms. Galedary said, "is that you don't leave your culture because you convert to Islam. You have to continue to be proud of whatever part of Latin America you are from..."

They come to the Islamic Centre from all over the Spanish-speaking world and are relieved to find that they are not alone. In recent years, Latino Muslim groups have formed in most large cities in the United States, stretching from New York to Los Angeles. Though exact figures are hard to come by the American Muslim Council estimates that 25,000 Hispanics in the United States are Muslims but several Latino Muslim organizations say the number is closer to 40,000, with the largest Hispanic Muslim communities in New York City, Southern California and Chicago. Indeed, Spanish-speaking immigrants, the nation's fastest-growing minority, are converting to Islam to such an extent that a national organization, the Latino American Dawah Organization, founded in 1997 by a handful of converts in New York, now claims thousands of members in 10 states.

Why Islam, a religion cloaked in mystery in Latin America – as it was in this country before Sept. 11 – is attracting so many Latino converts has several answers. For many women who attend the Islamic Center of Southern California here, the path is a relationship with a Muslim man. Many others say they chose Islam because they preferred a religion without the trappings of a vast hierarchy or the complicated dogma that they saw in the Catholic Church. For Nicole Ballivian, 27, an aspiring film producer from Falls Church, Va., whose mother is Bolivian and father Armenian, Islam was a natural progression from Catholicism.

"I loved religion," said Ms. Ballivian, who converted to Islam eight years ago in Virginia and now practices in Los Angeles. "I was very religious in Catholic high school. I told myself that I would study philosophy and religion. I remember getting in trouble in Catholic school for debating things like the concept of original sin at a really young age.

When I actually studied Islam, it made it all simple."

Ms. Ballivian, who has been working on a documentary on Latino Muslims, sees two distinct groups of converts. One is composed of new immigrants, poor and usually with little education, who come to Islam out of an emotional connection. The second, she said, is made up of young, usually first-generation, middle-class, college-educated Americans of Hispanic descent who make a deliberate, well-researched conversion.

"We actually have a lot of women who convert because they're married to a Muslim," said Ms. Ballivian, who married a Palestinian Muslim two years ago.

Latino Muslims - before and after Sept. 11 - said peers who ask how they could trade in their culture for another have confronted them. "I've been asked why I adopted an Arab culture," Ms. Ballivian said. "That's just a lack of knowledge about Islam."

Is the Middle East the only source of terrorism?

by Zafar Siddiqui

When the "War against terrorism" started, George Bush declared this was a war against terrorism and not a war against Islam. Yet prosecution of the war seems to target only countries with predominantly Muslim constituencies.

After the fall of the Taliban and Al Qaida, US media outlets continue to speculate, without any support, about the next target – will it be Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Iran or the Philippines? Even respectable media outlets fall prey to this hyperbole by holding website polls with outrageous lists of options, none of which included the standard choice of 'none'! The United States and the media proceed under the assumption that Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, and the Philippines are the sole territories from which terrorism arises.

While many US media outlets lead the world to believe that such countries exclusively harbour and effect terrorism, US State Department statistics prove otherwise. With respect to worldwide terrorist acts (i.e. terrorism not solely directed at the US), US Department of State's statistics reveals, contrary to popular belief, a totally different picture from that portrayed by a war clamouring media. Although these statistics do not include the numbers for 2001 and the terrible 9/11 terrorist attacks, they are still very much relevant given the repetitive pattern of the terrorist attacks around the world.

For example, over a five-year period from 1995-2000, 2129 terrorist attacks took place in the world. Latin America claims the largest incident rate of terrorist incidents attacks with 729 (34%); Western Europe, the darling of the "civilized world," follows with 608 (29%) terrorist attacks; Asia comes a distant third with 267 (13%)

Andrew Verity, the personal finance reporter for BBC, reported the moves by the Treasury and the Bank of England to encourage Islamic mortgages, investments and current accounts in Britain.

While the number of well-to-do British Muslims is growing, many are avoiding buying homes. That is because it is against Islamic law to borrow or lend at a rate of interest. Now it has emerged that at least three leading banks are preparing to launch special home loans that get round the problem by avoiding charging interest. But they need the Treasury to change the rules to make their plans viable.

Under Islamic law - Sharia - you cannot lend or borrow at a rate of interest. To buy a dream house, either you break the law, or you do not get a mortgage. Under the strict law of Islam, you should not be giving interest and you should not be receiving interest and living in the Western society, it becomes extremely, extremely difficult to avoid.

Market research from Datamonitor shows the number of wealthy British Muslims is growing.

Led by HSBC, British banks are now trying to devise mortgages for them that avoid charging interest.

Aftab Siddiqui is the British head of iHilal, a Dubai-based finance house that helps banks market home loans that comply with the Sharia.

"The problem is that they have got the resources available to get a conventional mortgage, but they would not do that because that does not comply with their religious beliefs or Islamic lifestyle," says aftab Siddiqui. This is an issue of concern and many Muslims are still living in a rented property.

With Islamic mortgages, the bank might buy a 90% share of the home while the homebuyer buys 10%. The homebuyer borrows nothing, but pays a rent instead, only some of which will go straight to the bank. The rest goes towards gradually buying the bank out of its share of the property.

These home loans do comply with the Sharia, said the Islamic scholar, Dr Zaki Badawi of the Mus-

lim college in Ealing, west London.

"You may say; 'but that's very much like the other companies', [but] there is one difference which is very important," he said.

"Supposing he failed to pay and we're going to sell the house. If I am a bank, a Muslim bank, lending to a Muslim, sharing with him, I am not going to sell the house in the way that it is sold now, by putting it in an auction and selling it at the easiest and the fastest price."

The question these new financial services will raise is whether or not ordinary Muslims will be interested.

For now, Islamic mortgages are only for the wealthy. Because the bank takes ownership of the property before the homebuyer does, two sets of stamp duty are paid.

On his own initiative, the Bank of England governor, Sir Edward George, has met Islamic bankers and the Treasury has set up a working party to look at whether that can be changed. The hope is that by next year, affordable Islamic mortgages will be a reality.



ment's statistics, will the United States bring the war to non-Muslim countries? Only when the United States has the courage to remove religious qualifiers from this war against terror targets, and pursue terrorism committed by our foes and our allies alike, will the United States be

able to convince much of the Muslim world that this war is not against Islam and Muslims.

[Editorial Note: Although this commentary is about the U.S., the scenario in Canada is not different. Noting that Canada has never been a target of terrorist attacks in the past, thanks to her foreign policy of peacekeeping, the incidences of harassment to Muslim families point to a shift towards American influence.]

Zafar Siddiqui is Executive Director of the Islamic Resource Group in Fridley, Minnesota.

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

The Middle East: A Media War?

by Hussein Hamdani

"In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."

(Sir Winston Churchill)

This article will tackle the complex issues surrounding the media portrayal of the current Middle East conflict, between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In doing so, the writer will answer six essential questions. The first question is, is there really a Middle East media war? If the answer is in the affirmative, than who are the combatants, what are they fighting for and who are the victims? Secondly, what is the picture that is being painted by the media of the conflict? Thirdly, What is the result or consequence of the media portrayal? Fourthly, are there any examples of how the media coverage can misrepresent, obscure and miss important aspects of the conflict? Fourthly, according to some journalists, what is their explanation as to why the media coverage is tilted and biased? Lastly, what can we as Canadian citizens do about the media war?

Is there a war going on?

The simple answer is yes, there is a war going on. But this war is not over land or booty, but for the hearts and minds of the global community. The war is over public relations and public perceptions. Both the Palestinians and the Israelis want the world to see them as the victims of aggression and violence. They want the court of public opinion to find the other liable and guilty of violating basic human rights. The goal is to have the world community put pressure on the aggressor to compromise its position and to concede to the victim's demands.

What picture is being painted?

For the Palestinians, the portrayal is quite unflattering. As Canadians, we rarely hear about the Middle East, until a major incident takes place, for example, a bomb at a pizzeria or Israeli soldiers killing dozens of protesting youth. Once this sensational occurrence takes place, the cameras roll to capture disheveled young Palestinian boys throwing stones, or distraught Israelis picking up body parts off the street. However, what

we rarely see is the ordinary, daily lives of the Israelis and Palestinians. As a result the picture that is painted is one of continuous violence, disheveled Palestinian youth, Palestinian suicide bombers and Israeli citizens in general, and mothers in particular, in mourning.

What is the result of the Portrayal?

The result is that the world is being duped into believing in an inaccurate description of the Middle East. Many people are under the mistaken impression and grand myth that on the whole, the Israelis are the victims of violence, aggression and terror. This is because the only time most Canadians see or hear about this conflict is after a major terrorist attack against Israeli citizens. What rarely gets showcased is the small-scale and psychological war the Israelis conduct against the Palestinians on a daily basis. One must remember, that it is the Palestinian people who are living under illegal military occupation, and that in the last year and a half, of the 1,177 people killed in this conflict, approximately 900 of them have been Palestinians. It is crystal clear that the Palestinians are the true victims of violence, state-sponsored terrorism and aggression... that is the reality, even though it is politically incorrect to say it in this day and age.

When the few journalists who spend time in the region write, their reports are often damning of Israel. One recent example is Chris Hedges article found in the October edition of Harper's Magazine, titled "Seven Days in a Palestinian Refugee Camp". Hedges only spent seven days, but in that short time he narrates, "...there are no sounds of gunfire. The [Israeli] soldiers shoot with silencers. The bullets from the M-16 rifles tumble end over end through the children's slight bodies. Later, in the hospital, I will see the destruction: the stomachs ripped out, the gaping holes in limbs and torsos. Yesterday, at this spot the Israelis shot eight young men, six of whom were under the age of eighteen. One was twelve. This afternoon they kill an eleven-year-old boy, Ali Murad, and seriously wound four more, three

of whom are under eighteen. I have seen children shot in El Salvador, Algeria, Guatemala, Sarajevo, but I have never before watched Soldiers entice children like mice into a trap and murder them for sport."

Are there any examples of how media coverage can misrepresent, obscure and miss important aspects of the current conflict?

Although there are issues of note in almost all items in the commercial media, this part of the article will highlight some of the problems with semantics and terminology.

A non-existent "lull", "quiet", or "calm" – the blatant semantic clues of journalists admitting they fail to consider Israeli violence against Palestinians noteworthy.

In a recent article for The Electronic Intifada, Ali Abunimah and Nigel Parry wrote that in the last two weeks of December 2001 and the first week of January 2002, many members of the media were repeating as a mantra that there has been a "relative calm" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The American National Public Radio (NPR)'s correspondent Linda Gradstein told Bob Edwards on January 3 that: "You know, there's been actually three weeks of relative quiet. Only one Israeli has been killed in those three weeks, as opposed to 44 Israelis who were killed when Zinni was here last time in November and early December."

In fact, since December 13, 2001, until January 6, 2002, at least 28 Palestinians, most of them unarmed civilians and 11 of them children, have been killed by the Israeli occupation (more than one killed per day). Abunimah and Parry conclude their article by stating that the fact that NPR and other media organizations consistently and deliberately ignore these dozens of Palestinians brutally killed by Israel demonstrates in the clearest possible terms that only Israeli lives are valued and only the concern and security of Israel are

taken seriously. A cold, hard look at the situation "forces any reasonable commentator to conclude that the relentless Israeli violence has not stopped taking Palestinian lives and limbs for a single day."²

Palestinians are "terrorists," Israelis are "vigilantes"

Nigel Parry in an article found in The Electronic Intifada, states after examining recently article from the *New York Times*, it is clear that where it comes to Palestinians, armed groups that attack civilians are



termed "militant" groups and the adjective "terrorist" is regularly used to modify uses of the noun "attack". However, when it comes to armed Jewish groups attacking civilians, the rules change slightly, and attacks are never described as "terrorists." The term "terrorist" is applied by the *New York Times* only to Palestinians in the conflict. When reporting the July 19, 2001, Jewish settler shooting of three Palestinians, including a three-month-old baby, not only do we not see the attack described as "terrorism" by the *New York Times*, but the perpetrators are described as "vigilantes:"

"For days, Israelis have been holding their collective breath waiting for a reprisal attack after a drive-by shooting, presumably the work of Jewish *vigilantes*, that killed three Palestinians, including a 3-month-old boy."³

As far away from "terrorist" as white is from black, the word "vigilante" has an implicit justification. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines vigilante as: *A member of a volunteer committee organized to suppress and punish crime summarily (as when the processes of law appear inadequate); Broadly: a self-appointed doer of justice.*

Although the use of the adjective "vigilante" is unlikely to be intended by any journalist to imply the killing of three Palestinians – including a baby – on their way to a wedding party as an act of 'justice,' their inappropriate use of the word does make it obvious that many journalists shy away from applying the adjective "terrorists" to Israelis but do not apply the same restraint when writing about Palestinians.

Palestinians "attack," Israel "retaliates".

The journalist Norman Solomon searched the Nexis database of U.S. media coverage during the first 100 days of 2001. He found several dozen stories using the phrase "Israeli retaliation" or "Israel retaliated." During the same period, he reported that he could only find one article that used the phrase "Palestinian retaliation" or "Palestinians retaliated."⁴ Both sides of the conflict, of course, describe their violence as retaliatory. But only one side routinely benefits from having its violent moves depicted that way by major North American media. The huge disparity in the media frame is a measure of overall slant of news coverage.

The Illusion of Balance

Seth Ackerman, a journalist with the not-for-profit media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), did a comprehensive study of NPR's reporting of the Middle East conflict.⁵ She said that FAIR commenced the study because both Pro-Palestinian and Pro-Israeli groups claimed that NPR was biased in its reporting. To examine these competing claims, FAIR studied NPR's coverage of Israeli-Palestinian violence, examining how often NPR reported fatal attacks on Israelis and Palestinians. The study looked at all NPR News coverage in the first 6 months

Continued on page 9

A Media War

Continued from page 8 of 2001.

During the 6-month period studied, NPR reported the deaths of 62 Israelis and 51 Palestinians. While on the surface that may not appear to be hugely lopsided, during the same time period 77 Israelis and 148 Palestinians were killed in the conflict. That means there was an 81% likelihood that an Israeli death would be reported on NPR, but only a 34% likelihood that a Palestinian death would be.

Of the 30 Palestinians civilians under the age of 18 that were killed, 6 were reported on NPR – only 20%. By contrast, the network reported on 17 of 19 Israeli minors who were killed, or 89%. While 61% of the young people killed in the region during the period studied were Palestinian, only 26% of those reported by NPR were. Ackerman concludes, “apparently being a minor makes your death more newsworthy to NPR if you are Israeli, but less newsworthy if you are Palestinian.”

These numbers suggest that NPR may attempt to pair reports of Israeli and Palestinian casualties in an effort to appear balanced. According to the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, approximately 80% of all casualties are Palestinians, a ratio of about 4 to 1. Given that disparity, Ackerman writes, “the fact that NPR has reported the same numbers of Israelis as Palestinians [or even more Israelis deaths than Palestinians] would seem to reflect fear of appearing anti-Israel more than it reflects reality.”

Why is the media so one-sided?

According to journalists Normon Solomon and Robert Fisk, there are two reasons why the media in general and journalists in particular are undeniably pro-Israeli: One, fear of getting fired, missing a promotion or having your column yanked; and secondly, a concerted smear campaign labeling journalists critical of Israel as “anti-semites” or “self-hating Jews.”

The noted journalist Robert Fisk sounds off about the abuse he has had for daring to criticize Israel in the western press. In a column for the English daily, *The Independent*, in December 2000, he wrote, “I am being vilified for telling the truth about Palestinians. The abuse being directed at anyone who dares to criticize Israel is reaching McCarthyite proportions.” His column describes the abuse that he and others go through on a daily basis, from pro-Israel lobby groups who pressure various newspapers to censure articles and pieces critical of Israel. He wrote that Noam Chomsky, himself Jewish is one of the most profound philosophers of our age, but his scathing reviews of the Israeli occupation and America’s blind, unquestioning support for Israel now earn him ever more ruthless abuse. In the U.S., Chomsky wrote, that a whole population is kept in ignorance of the facts because “the economic and military programmes of Israel rely crucially on US support, which is domestically unpopular and would be far more so if its purposes were known.” Fisk continues, “ignorance of the Middle East is now so firmly adhered to in the US that only a few

tiny newspapers report anything other than Israel’s point of view.” But the attempt to force the media to obey Israel’s rules is now international. Fisk writes, “We must say that Israel is under siege by Palestinians (rather than occupying Palestinian land), that Palestinians are responsible for the violence (even though Palestinians are the principal victims), that Arafat turned down a good deal at Camp David (though he was offered just over 60% of his land, not 94%) and that Palestinians indulge in child sacrifice (rather than question why the Israeli troops have shot so many Palestinian children).”

In Canada, CanWest Global owned by Israel Asper, controls over 27 daily newspapers. According to a recent article Peter Desbarats in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper, journalists and reporters at CanWest have been threatened with termination of employment if they disagree with the Asper family’s fiscal and political opinions.⁷ And if they persist in disagreeing with the Aspers’ positions, David Asper says, they should either find work elsewhere or “put their money where their mouth is and start their own newspapers.” In other words, tow our line, or you’re fired... so much for journalistic freedom and integrity!

Desbarats describes what happened to Mr. Douglas Cuthand of Saskatchewan. Cuthand, a native Canadian journalist was constructively dismissed after his column comparing native Canadians and Palestinians, scheduled to run last December 28, 2001, was dropped. In his column, Cuthand admitted that “over the years I have maintained a sympathetic point of view toward Palestinians – I see them as the Indians of the Middle East.” That line was enough to have this 10-year journalist pressured out of job.

Smear Campaign against anyone critical of Israel

In Normon Solomon’s acclaimed book, *The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media*, and in various articles, he explains that to help maintain pressure for a favourable media tilt, supporters of Israel have a not-so-secret weapon, brandished most effectively as a pre-emptive threat – the charge of anti-Semitism; “any Americans who speak out against Israel’s extreme disregard for human rights are liable to be in the line of fire.”

He states that instead of trying to refute critiques of Israeli policies, it is much easier to equate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism – “a time-worn way of preventing or short-circuiting real debate on the merits of the issues. It is absurd and dangerous to claim that bigotry is at the root of calls for adherence to basic standards of human rights. But the ongoing threat of the “anti-Semitic” label helps to prevent the US media coverage from getting out of hand.”

Whatever the case may be, there is no doubt that journalists generally understand critical words about Israel to be hazardous to careers. “Rarely since the Second World War has a people been so vilified as the Palestinians,” comments Fisk. “And rarely has a people been so frequently excused and placated as the Israelis.”

Fisk is asking his colleagues to

America’s First Muslimah Judge

Zakia Mahasa, Master Chancery in the Family Division of the Baltimore City Circuit Court by Nadirah Z. Sabir, *Azizah* magazine.

Zakia Mahasa, the first Muslim woman ever to be appointed to a judgeship in the American courts, never apologizes for who she is; instead, she gains respect and accumulates success after success by focusing on being outstanding at whatever she does.

A powerful presence in the courtroom and a dynamic woman who knows her own mind, Zakia has possessed this drive to achieve and strong sense of direction since her earliest years. “When I was about four years old,” she smiles, “I was reading the newspaper. There’s a game, *Wishing Well*. ‘You’d count the letters in a name – mine spelled out, One day, you’ll be a lawyer or doctor.’ So I thought, I have to do really well in kindergarten so I can get into a really good first grade!”

Since then Zakia’s fortunes have multiplied with the power of that kind of determination and focus and on her belief in God. She asserts pas-

sionately that what gives her the aplomb to pursue her interests and to be herself is her Islamic faith.

“You really have to have a certainty and surety and confidence about yourself,” as a Muslim, Zakia advises. “It carries me through everything I do. My way of life [as a Muslim] is superior to anything out there. I believe God wanted me in this position.”



Zakia’s study of Islam began while she was an undergraduate at the University of Maryland, where she was majoring in business management. She declared her shahadah [profession of faith] a year later.

“It was initially difficult for my mother,” Zakia recalls. “I had a cousin who had a bad experience with the Nation of Islam.” But Zakia knew her path and stuck to it, and by the time Ramadan came, only two weeks after her conversion, Zakia says her mother “had my meals ready at the end of the day!”

Zakia’s father had more pragmatic concerns over his daughter’s conversion to Islam. Since Zakia was headed toward law school at that time, he wondered whether there would be any place for a Muslim in the circles of American law. Zakia herself was not at all worried. She explains, “Islam really does free you of all that. If God wants it for you, nobody can take it away. I felt that as

long as I looked professional and really knew what I was doing,” success would follow.

Zakia’s father asserted that appearances are important in the legal profession, but Zakia would not compromise her faith. “When I first became Muslim, from the very beginning I was covered,” she says. “At work I knew it was important to look professional. I dress well. I wear suits, skirts, dresses, blazers. They’re longer, looser. I don’t wear over-garments to work, but it’s evident I’m being modest. My hair is always covered, but pulled back and out of the way. I did my research and I am convinced that I am properly covered; you can dress many ways and still be properly covered.”

Much of her success Zakia attributes directly to this refusal to betray herself or her Islamic principles in order to be accepted by or blend in with others. Of her iman [faith], she says firmly, “I don’t wear it on my sleeve. But I don’t hide it. It’s who I am.” If you stand for what you are, even if it is different from the mainstream, Zakia believes, others will respect you. “My being a Muslim doesn’t mean I’m standoffish or reclusive. I’m very approachable,” she says.

Above all, she advises, in order to earn the respect of others, “You have to be good,” at what you do.

Zakia excels at what she does. As Master Chancery in the family division of the Baltimore City Circuit Court, she presides over domestic

search their consciences: “Our gutlessness, our refusal to tell the truth, our fear of being slandered as ‘anti-Semites’ – the most loathsome of libels against any journalist means that we are aiding and abetting terrible deeds in the Middle East.”

Solomon concludes his article by stating that anti-Semitism is a reality in the world. Like all forms of religious and racial bigotry, it should be unequivocally opposed. “The effectiveness of such opposition is undermined by those who cry wolf, using charges of anti-Semitism as a weapon in a propaganda arsenal to defend Israel’s indefensible crimes against the Palestinian people.”

What can we do about it?

The answer is simple: learn the truth. How? It is important for people to realize that every reporter has a bias of some sort. The more varied and objective the source of information, the better off you will be. Searchers for truth should research independent media sources and should critically analyze everything that they hear and read. Do not let those who have a hidden agenda, or in some case, not so hidden, dupe you.

Some examples of independent or alternative media sources covering the Middle East are:

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting : www.fair.org, The Electronic Intifada: www.electronicintifada.net - has many excellent links, and www.freespeech.org

Also look for articles by Robert Fisk, *The Independent*, articles by Noam Chomsky, Israel’s Independent media Center: www.indymedia.org.il and Articles by Israeli journalist Amira Hoss in *Ha’aretz*

[References given in this article can be verified from the writer]

To all the rocks in your life...

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When class began, without uttering a word he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and started filling it with rocks. The rocks were about 2" in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full? They all agreed that it was. Then, the professor picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. As the students laughed, they again agreed that the jar was full.

The professor finally picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up all the void.

“Now,” said the professor, “I want you to recognize that this is your life!” “The rocks are the important things. - Your family, your partner, your health, and your children. Anything that is so important to you that if it were lost, you would be nearly destroyed.”

“The pebbles are all the other things that matter. - Your job, your house, your car.” The sand is everything else. - The small stuff. The things that have to be done.”

“If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your energy and time on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out dancing.”

There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal.”

“Take care of the rocks first - the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”

cases, hearing anywhere from nine to thirty of them a day. These cases tend to be emotional and complicated, involving abused, neglected and delinquent children. Zakia unabashedly brings a healthy Islamic outlook to her work, believing that often the best way to propagate Islam is by example.

[Source: Islamic Information & News Network]

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Newsroom

Attorney General urged to shut down racist website

QUEEN'S PARK - NDP Leader Howard Hampton has slammed Ontario's Attorney General for being slow to act on shutting down a hate website that encourages people to attack Sikhs, Muslims and other minorities.

"The Attorney General received a complaint about this website in September 2001 when it had Anti-Semitic material on it," said Hampton. "The person who runs the website is a known white supremacist. Why hasn't the Attorney General's Office shut the website down or arrested this individual for hate crimes?"

The website is the subject of a joint complaint from the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Ontario Sikhdharm of Ontario and the Islamic Council of Imams - Canada to the Toronto Police and OPP hate crime units. It shows a Sikh and a Muslim with the text: "This is a Sikh. This is a Muslim. Please beat accordingly." filed a joint complaint yesterday

"Again we see a clear example of why the Conservative government must reinstate the Anti-Racism Secretariat," Hampton said. "There have been physical and verbal attacks against Muslims, Sikhs, Arabs and Arab looking people that have escalated since September 11. Policies need to be put in place to deal with the rise of racism."

The NDP's Anti-Racism Secretariat dedicated resources and investigative tools to eradicating racism until the Conservatives disbanded it in 1995. Hampton applauded the Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities for working together to stop the website.

Muslim Leaders Meet With FBI Director

(WASHINGTON, D.C., FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III met today with representatives of several national Muslim and Arab-American groups to discuss issues of concern to their communities.

Topics of discussion at the meeting included the progress of the post September 11 investigation, the status and treatment of Muslims and Arabs detained following the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the many incidents of backlash against Muslims and those who appeared to be "Middle Eastern," and the civil liberties implications of using ethnic and religious profiling as a tool of law enforcement.

Meeting participants also discussed Attorney General John Ashcroft's published remarks that "Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him."

Awad presented Mueller with a summary of anti-Muslim incidents reported to his group since September 11. CAIR received more than 1700

RCMP 'Violation' leaves Muslim family terrified

The RCMP's raid at an Ottawa home has renewed criticism of the government's new anti-terrorism law. Shortly after 7 a.m. on Tuesday, more than a dozen plain-clothes officers arrived with a warrant at the home of a Muslim couple to search their residence and cars, reports The Ottawa Citizen.

The couple was not charged, but the encounter has shaken the Muslim community. "There is a lot of fear in the community," said Mohamed Elmasry, president of the Islamic Congress. He says searches of Islamic homes have become common since the law went into effect on Dec. 18.

Strong public support for anti-terrorism campaigns is making it difficult for individuals to protest violations of their rights, according to Faisal Joseph, legal counsel of the Islamic Congress.

"If they come out publicly their names will be in the paper," Mr. Joseph said. "You try functioning in your neighborhood as a known terrorism suspect." Mr. Joseph represents several people who have been investigated under the law, and says the limits of new legislation are being grossly exceeded.

"I have personally attended interrogations and am absolutely aghast at the types of questions being asked," he said. "I'm not blaming

Reporters asked to handle 'Islamic' jargon with care

BOSTON - An organization of religion news reporters yesterday suggested that reporters avoid the term "Islamic terrorist" or similar labels as Muslims and their beliefs receive greater scrutiny.

The Religion Newswriters Association said it was "troubled" by the frequent use of the term in the days after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

The resolution, adopted by a majority vote at the group's annual meeting, also rejected "similar

such reports, including a number of possibly bias-related murders. CAIR Governmental Affairs Director Jason Erb also attended today's meeting.

Groups represented at the meeting included CAIR, American Muslim Council, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Islamic Institute, Arab American Institute, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, along with a Sikh advocacy organization. Awad presented Mueller with a summary of anti-Muslim incidents reported to his group since September 11. CAIR received more than 1700 such reports, including a number of possibly bias-related murders. CAIR Governmental Affairs Director Jason Erb also attended today's meeting.

Groups represented at the meeting included CAIR, American Muslim Council, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Islamic Institute, Arab American Institute, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, along with a Sikh advocacy organization.

Canadian Muslims call for investigation of "Coercive" questioning

(OTTAWA, CANADA) - The Canadian office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) and the Canadian Muslim Civil Liberties Association (CMCLA) have called for an investigation into the recent police questioning of a Muslim Ottawa resident.

The resident, an immigrant who speaks little English, has alleged that two police officers entered her apartment forcibly without a warrant, searched her apartment, denied her requests to call her husband to help with the translation, and asked whether her husband 'wore a beard.'

In a letter filing a formal complaint to the police department, CAIR-CAN Executive Director Riad Saloojee wrote:

"As Canadian Muslims we have a duty to stand for justice and help our police ensure public safety. We also, however, have rights as Canadian citizens to be accorded the full benefit of the law and not to be stigmatized or scapegoated because of ethnicity or faith."

these guys, they're new to the whole thing as well," said Mr. Joseph. "But they're asking people if they're Islamic fundamentalists and I don't even know what that means."

The Islamic Congress is publishing a book this spring, which will inform people of their rights under the anti-terrorism law.

phrases that associate an entire religion with the action of a few."

The statement will be sent to the 240 members of the RNA and other news organizations. It will be released today by the Associated Press.

"Terrorist acts are committed by individuals and groups for reasons that often involve a complex mix of cultural, religious, nationalist, economic and psychological motives," the resolution said.

Hence, reporting in the wake of the attacks should "avoid stereotypes [and] be aware of the complexity of religious traditions and to use care in attempting to describe the motives of terrorists," the resolution said...

...American Muslims and the U.S. media should use the term God instead of Allah, she said, and the "hijab" that Muslim women wear over their head should be called a scarf...

Source: <http://www.washtimes.com/national/20010924-28582028.htm>

U.S. Weighs Chip Implant

WASHINGTON (AP) - A Florida technology company is poised to ask the government for permission to market a first-ever computer ID chip that could be embedded beneath a person's skin.

For airports and other high security facilities, the benefits could be a closer-to-foolproof security system. But privacy advocates warn the chip could lead to encroachments on civil liberties.

The implant technology is an-

"The allegations raised by the complainant are very serious. If true, the tactics used were shocking, coercive and unnecessary. Such actions undermine the trust that exists between the Ottawa police and the Muslim community and scars those who have chosen to make Canada their adopted home because of its proud tradition of fundamental freedoms and liberties."

As national security has gained critical importance after September 11th, Canadian Muslims have seemingly been targeted by law enforcement officers as reflected in the number of complaints filed with CAIR-CAN.

While many visits have been conducted in good spirit, some reports indicate that security forces have used questionable tactics. For example, individuals were visited at their places of employment, and, in one case, a Canadian Muslim was informed that he should come in for questioning to 'clear his name' but not bring his lawyer.

National Geographic publishes Pakistan's map incorrectly

Who doesn't love National Geographic? It's a beautiful magazine, full of unique articles and exceptional photographs. However, in the current issue (February, 2002) in a series of articles called 'Central Asia: The "Stans" Unveiled,' there is an objectionable map of Pakistan and Kashmir (p.118-9).

The article on Pakistan as a whole is negative, but the worst aspect of the magazine's Pakistan profile is its map. National Geographic uses the Indian version of the map when describing Pakistan and does not show Kashmir as disputed territory. It shows Indian occupied Kashmir as a part of India, thereby reinforcing India's claim that Kashmir is its 'legitimate state.'

Hate crime policies needed — NDP

QUEEN'S PARK - A police report revealing that hate crimes are way up post September 11 has NDP Leader Howard Hampton calling for implementation of the NDP's action policy on hate crimes.

"Racist incidents occur all too often in this province and action is required to stamp out this sort of crime once and for all. The backlash we've seen since September shows that the government needs to com-

other case of science fiction evolving into fact. Those who have long advanced the idea of implant chips say it could someday mean no more easy-to-counterfeit ID cards nor dozing security guards.

Other uses of the technology from an added device that would allow satellite tracking of an individual's every movement to the storage of sensitive data like medical records, are already attracting interest across the globe for tasks like foiling kidnappings

FBI Closes in on Anthrax Terrorist:

Prime Suspect is a Zionist
by Hector Carreon

Los Angeles, Alta California - 2/26/2002 - (ACN) Jewish microbiologist Dr. Philip M. Zack may be behind the deadly anthrax contaminated letters that were mailed to NBC's Tom Brokaw, Senator Tom Daschle and others, according to FBI sources. In a rapidly unravelling investigation by the FBI, it appears that the "Arab-hating-Jew" was behind a vile conspiracy to frame a colleague who was born in Egypt and who worked, along with Dr. Zack, at the U.S. Army's Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, Md.

La Voz de Aztlan has maintained from the beginning that the anthrax-laced letters seemed contrived and were purposely written to make them appear that they were coming from someone in the Islamic World. New information just released by the FBI confirms our suspicions. On October 9, 2001 we published "Anthrax Terrorists may be Zionists" in which we outlined the reasons for our suspicions and in addition reported on a letter we received with a yellowish powder. On October 24, 2001 we published an editorial "Anthrax Letter Messages Seem Contrived" in which we commented on our theory concerning the origin of the letters. We also published pictures of the three actual letters and envelopes. We have now compared the handwriting on these letters to the one we received and it looks suspiciously the same. We are not handwriting experts and have made the decision to publish the envelope and letter we received so that our readership can see for themselves. Our local police department never came to pick up the envelope and letter and we still have them in a double zip-lock plastic bag. The letter and envelope addressed to La Voz de Aztlan are published at <http://www.aztlan.net/letterbiochem.htm>

To view the full article, please go to: <http://www.aztlan.net/zack.htm>.

municate that perpetrators of racism will be prosecuted to the full extent of our human rights laws, that we have zero tolerance for racist words and deeds," said Hampton.

The report said the greatest increase in hate crime activity took place in September and October, immediately following the terrorist attacks in the United States.

"We need to recognize that there are people in society who were motivated by September 11 to commit and justify hate crimes. Those people will continue to use incidents like these to their advantage unless we institute a meaningful plan for fighting racism."

Since September 11 the NDP has been helping victims come forward to tell their stories and seek redress. Hampton and Justice Critic Peter Kormos have also demanded that the Conservatives establish a hotline, dedicate more OPP officers to investigate hate crime complaints and reinstate the Anti-Racism Secretariat.

Yusuf Ali translation of Quran banned from public schools as "anti-Semitic"

Los Angeles city school officials have pulled nearly 300 translations of the Koran from school libraries after learning that commentary in the books was derogatory toward Jews.

Copies of "The Meaning of the Holy Quran" were donated in December to the Los Angeles Unified School District by a local Muslim foundation, said Jim Konantz, director of information technology for the district.

Konantz said the books, offered as a goodwill gesture in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, were distributed to the schools last week without the usual content review. The reasons for skipping the review were unclear, but the donor was known as a supportive community member. On Monday, Konantz received a complaint from a history teacher who concluded some of the book's footnotes were anti-Semitic. After reviewing the book, Konantz instructed principals to secure all copies in their offices until the district determines what to do with them.

"It's not an issue of whether the Koran should be available in the library," Konantz said. "It's like any other research volume. But these interpretations are certainly in question."

One of the footnotes, for instance, said, "The Jews in their arrogance claimed that all wisdom and all knowledge of Allah was enclosed in their hearts. But there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in their philosophy. Their claim was not only arrogance but blasphemy."

Konantz said he is convening a committee to review the books. He said the panel will include history teachers, representatives from the Jewish community, and the donor, the Omar Ibn Khattab Foundation.

The decision is a thorny one because the Supreme Court has ruled that motive is critical in determining whether it is constitutional to remove a book from a school library.

USC constitutional law professor Erwin Chemerinsky said it would be discriminatory for L.A. Unified to stock books "written by Jews or Christians that express criticisms of other religions," but exclude books containing criticisms by Muslims.

Dafer Dakhil, director of the Omar Ibn Khattab Foundation, which donated the books, could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Konantz said Dakhil met with him Tuesday and offered examples of passages in the Bible that Dakhil said were derogatory toward Muslims.

Konantz, however, said Dakhil appeared to be unaware of the passages in "The Meaning of the Holy Quran" that had caused the complaint. A frequent speaker at Board of Education meetings, Dakhil has also volunteered with parent groups and has arranged for the district to use his mosque near USC for teacher-training sessions.

"In the spirit of Dafer, he was trying to increase tolerance and understanding," board member David Tokofsky said. "That's the person I know. It doesn't jibe that there would be such intolerant language."

Khaled Abou El Fadl, a UCLA

Islamic law professor, said the book, a 1934 translation of the Koran, reflects the stereotypical images prevalent at the time—not only about Jews but also women.

Despite the problems, he said the translation is widely disseminated in the United States because Saudi-affiliated institutions make them available for free or at a nominal cost. Abou El Fadl said he believed use of the work was inappropriate for public schools because of its biases. Or, if used, an explanation of the historical context should be included, he said.

Source LA TIMES Feb 7, 2002 - <http://www.latimes.com/> Doug Smith, Henry Weinstein and Teresa Watanabe, Times Staff Writers

Indian Army Kills 4677 Kashmiri People During Year 2001

In Indian held Kashmir, Indian army killed 4677 Kashmiri people during the year 2001 from January 1 to December 31 while 682 fell victim to extra judicial murders by the Indian forces in fake encounters and custodial killings.

According to the statistics compiled by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, 519 women were raped or molested during the preceding year while 2395 children orphaned and 871 women widowed.

6058 civilians were illegally arrested by the Indian police and forces personnel and 8002 tortured and injured during the year. The number of Kashmiri citizens including prominent leaders and freedom movement activists under detention at present in various jails across held Kashmir and India stands at 5605. They had been arrested on fake charges and are being held under imprisonment for indefinite periods without trials.

During their ravage and plundering the Indian troops destroyed or damaged 1988 structures of various kinds including residential houses, schools and mosques.

The statistical data compiled by KMS Research Section also reveals that 374 Kashmiris were killed by the Indian army in held Kashmir during the month of December 2001 alone. The figure includes 265 men, 13 women, one child and 95 citizen mostly youth murdered in custody. 688 common citizens were tortured or critically injured, 579 arrested and 170 houses and shops arsoned during the preceding month of December 2001. During the month, 13 persons were kidnapped and their whereabouts are still unknown. 54 women were molested or gang raped and 123 children orphaned in the

<http://atabank/RAbuses/>

Hizbollah Rejects Saudi Peace Plan, Backs Uprising

http://www.reuters.com/news_article.jhtml;jsessionid=HCZ3JUKAAMOP2CRBAELCFEYKKEARKIWD?type=worldnews&StoryID=647751

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Lebanon's Hizbollah guerrilla group rejected on Thursday a new Middle East peace initiative by Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah, saying the Palestinians were capable of defeating Israel through armed struggle alone. "The choice of jihad is capable of winning a big victory in Palestine," said a faxed statement from the Shi'ite Muslim group. "Even if we want to discuss the territories occupied in 1967, it is possible to regain them without paying a heavy political price

U.S. May Help Train Military in Republic of Georgia

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon is considering sending 100 to 200 U.S. soldiers to the former Soviet republic of Georgia to help train its military for anti-terrorism operations, defense officials said Tuesday.

Russian and American officials say fighters aligned with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network are holed up in a mountain gorge in Georgia near the border with Russia's breakaway Chechnya region.

No combat role is expected for any U.S. forces sent to Georgia, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Sending U.S. troops to Georgia would mark the second large-scale training operation undertaken by the Pentagon in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks. The United States has sent 160 special forces troops to the Philippines to train soldiers there to go after another insurgent group with alleged al-Qaida ties.

Russia has been fighting largely Muslim rebels in Chechnya for years in a conflict Washington had criticized as including human rights violations such as the killing of civilians. Since Sept. 11, Russia has portrayed Chechnya as another battleground in the international war against terrorism, and U.S. criticism of Russian actions there has all but disappeared.

Russian officials have called for joint military operations with Georgia against the fighters in Georgia's Panjgorge and

like normalization with the enemy," said the statement, which did not refer directly to Abdullah's initiative.

Abdullah's proposal, which he floated in a New York Times article in mid-February, calls for Israel to withdraw from all the land it occupied in the 1967 Middle East war in return for the Arab world's recognition of Israel.

Syrian and Iranian-backed Hizbollah waged a war of attrition that helped end Israel's 22-year occupation of south Lebanon in May 2000 and which Israel believes has inspired the Palestinians in their uprising against Israeli occupation.

Note: Hamas also rejected the proposed deal. see:

<http://www.bday.co.za/bday/content/direct/1,3523,1034256-6098-0,00.html>

that this situation was best dealt with through cooperation with the United States and Georgia."

The United States joined in Russia's complaints about the gorge earlier this month, when the U.S. charge d'affaires in Georgia, Philip Remler, said in a newspaper interview that several dozen terrorists from Afghanistan are operating in the region.

Russian officials have even suggested that bin Laden himself could be hiding in the Pankisi Gorge, a claim that Shevardnadze and other Georgian officials have ridiculed.

Georgian State Security Minister Valery Khaburdzaniya is scheduled to travel to Washington and London in March to ask for help in fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and other crime.

Source: [inin.net](http://www.inin.net)

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/international/AP-US-Military-Georgia.html>

Michigan columnist says "Islam sucks"

I'm not very fond of religion. The practice is merely normative statements without credible positive statements to support them and is largely determined by socialization. This is why many people just adopt the religion in which they were raised.

This is also why you don't find many white people attending a mosque or why people raised in Orthodox Judaism don't embrace Christ. These cultural differences are nothing more than subtleties in the cesspool of religion.

Some religions suck more than others, though, and one of them is Islam. It's not Muslims that I dislike - I just dislike their faith...

Islam also presents a danger to the welfare of many due to its influence in Middle Eastern and North African governments. Islam subjugates hundreds of millions of women, sexual minorities and other religions where it's the law of the land. The over-emphasis on treating people's faiths equally is the reason most vocal

Islam growing fast in the US

Every day, when the sun rises, the call to prayer is heard in mosques all across America.

Islam is the world's second-largest religion — second only to Christianity. And now, because of immigration and conversion, it's one of America's fastest-growing faiths. Muslims here come from all over the world: Africa, Asia, the Middle East, but mostly from the USA...

"This is our Muslim moment in this country," said Omar Ahmad, co-founder of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR).

CAIR joined other Muslim-American groups in condemning the September attacks as not only an affront to America, but an affront to Islam, as well.

"We have to make our position loud and clear," Ahmad said. "We are against terrorism. This is absolute mass murder, what happened on September 11th. "In the weeks following those horrible attacks, Muslims reported an escalation in hate crimes against them..."

Muslims in this country recognized that they are not in the traditional portrait of America. They are different by their way of dress, and their dietary restrictions that prohibit consuming pork and alcohol. But Faheem Shuaibe, the Iman of a mosque in Oakland, says their differences do not keep Muslims from being true Americans.

"It may not be Ronald Reagan's America, or George Bush's America. We're talking about the America that is original," he said. "We hold these truths to be self-evident — that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights.' That's what we believe in Islam. We can find that almost literally in the Koran."

CAIR is concerned that those civil rights for Muslims are now being threatened by new federal policies designed to strengthen homeland security...

Ahmad and Helal Omeira, CAIR's Northern California Executive Director, are trying to organize the estimated 200,000 Muslims in the Bay Area through a voter-registration drive, so they can speak with a much louder voice.

"I think this incident is a wake-up call for Muslims," Ahmad said. "They live in America, and have to act like Americans. They have to participate in the affairs of the society at large, because they are citizens of this country."

Citizens, Omeira says, who are guided by their Muslim beliefs, but still respect the beliefs of others...

Source: http://beta.kpix.com/news/local/2002/02/11/Islam_Growing_Fast_in_U%2ES%2E.html

more productive values...

Did you know that in Islam, reading the holy books of other religions is a serious sin?...

<http://www.southend.wayne.edu/days/feb2002/2262002/oped/islam/islam.html>

[We wish the elite columnist had read the *Qur'an* first and gave his verdict after!!— Editors]

No E-mail address? You don't exist!!

An unemployed man goes to apply for a job with Microsoft as a janitor.

The manager there arranges for him to take an aptitude test (Section: Floors, sweeping and cleaning). After the test, the manager says, "You will be employed at minimum wage, \$5.15 an hour. Let me have your e-mail address, so that I can send you a form to complete and tell you where to report for work on your first day.

Taken aback, the man protests that he has neither a computer nor an e-mail address. To this the MS manager replies, "Well, then, that means that you virtually don't exist and can therefore hardly expect to be employed."

Stunned, the man leaves. Not knowing where to turn and having only \$10 in his wallet, he decides to buy a 25 lb. flat of tomatoes at the supermarket. Within less than 2 hours, he sells all the tomatoes individually at 100% profit. Repeating the process several times more that day, he ends up with almost \$100 before going to sleep that night. And thus it dawns on him that he could quite easily make a living selling tomatoes. Getting up early every day and going to bed late, he multiplies his profits quickly. After a short time he acquires a cart to transport several dozen boxes of tomatoes, only to have to trade it in again so that he can buy a pick-up truck to support his expanding business.

By the end of the second year, he is the owner of a fleet of pick-up trucks and manages a staff of a hundred former unemployed people, all selling tomatoes.

Planning for the future of his wife and children, he decides to buy some life insurance. Consulting with an insurance adviser, he picks an insurance plan. At the end of the telephone conversation, the adviser asks him for his e-mail address in order to send the final documents electronically. When the man replies that he has no e-mail, the adviser is stunned. "What, you don't have e-mail? How on earth have you managed to amass such wealth without the Internet, e-mail and e-commerce? Just imagine where you

would be now, if you had been

connected to the Internet from the very start!"

After a moment of thought, the tomato millionaire replied, "Why, of course! I would be a floor cleaner at Microsoft!"

Moral of this story:

1. The Internet, e-mail and e-commerce do not need to rule your life.
2. If you don't have e-mail, but work hard, you can still become a millionaire.
3. Seeing that you got this story via e-mail, you're probably closer to becoming a janitor than you are to becoming a millionaire.
4. If you do have a computer and e-mail, you have already been taken to the cleaners by Microsoft.

The Deaf Muslim International

has updated the website with many additions such as the newly set up Deaf Charity Fund for Deaf Muslims, Deaf Muslim articles, and News about Deaf Muslims in the Arab/Islamic World.

<http://www.angelfire.com/mo3/deafmuslims>

Please alert other Muslims that they are welcome to request of financial donations from the Deaf Muslim International for the Deaf Charity Drive. If there are any poor deaf schools in Muslim countries, they should ask the DMI for help.

New & Interesting at MCCC

Reported by Munawar Merchant

The Hifz Program started at the beginning of February at the Muslim Community Centre of Canada (MCCC) in Mississauga. The program will provide complete memorization with Tajweed. The instructions are provided by Hafiz Faizan-ul Haq, the Imam of the centre. The centre is located at 3355 Collegeway at the intersection of Ridgeway Blvd.

For more information you can contact Hafiz Haq at (905) 569-6222, Hafiz Nazir Motala at (416) 264-0917, or Brother Nazir Khan at (905) 828-5978

Also at the MCCC, Peer Tutoring will commence on March 2002. Students will get assistance in English, Math, French and Science

The classes are to be held every Saturday between 11-1pm. For more information you can contact Br,Riad or Sr. Ariffa at (905) 820-3463 or the MCCC at (905) 569-6222.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS AN AIRLINE PASSENGER

As an airline passenger, you are entitled to courteous, respectful and non-stigmatizing treatment by airline and security personnel. You have the right to complain about treatment that you believe is discriminatory. If you believe you have been treated in a discriminatory manner, immediately:

- 1) Ask to speak to a supervisor.
- 2) Ask if you have been singled out because of your looks, dress, race, ethnicity, faith, or national origin.
- 3) Ask for the names and ID num-

bers of all persons involved in the incident.

4) Ask witnesses to give you their names and contact information.

5) Write down a statement of facts immediately after the incident. Be sure to include the flight number, the flight date, and the name of the airline.

6) Contact CAIR to file a report. If you are leaving the country,

Voice of a destitute and paraplegic person.

Please help J. Iqbal, a legal Canadian entrant on a **Minister's permit** who became 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.

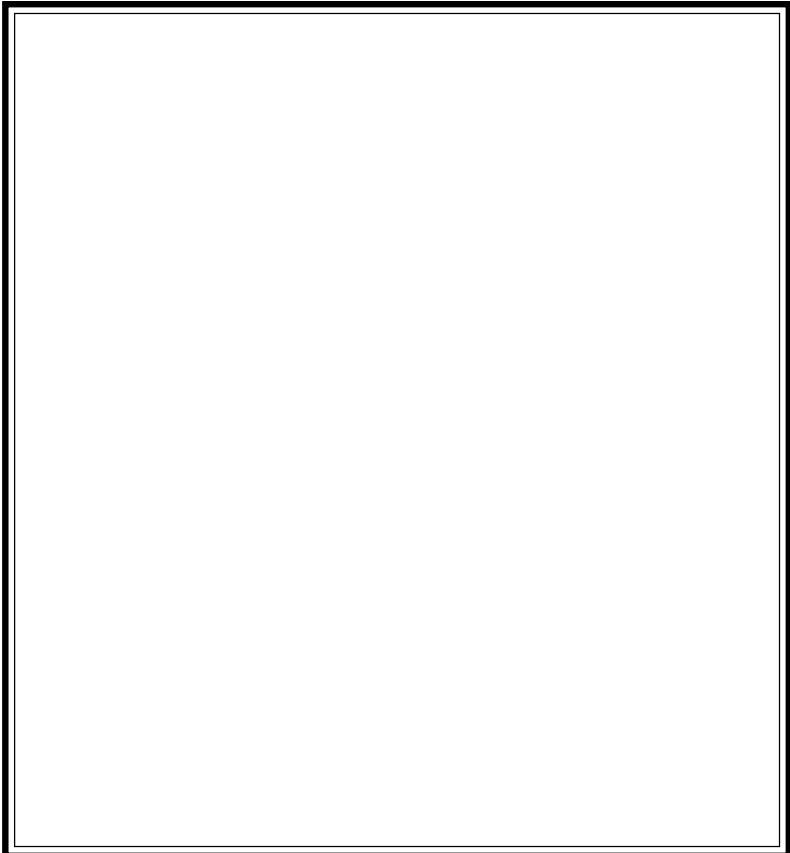
Now he totally depends on the community for help. He does not have any access to the OHIP or assistance until 2003.

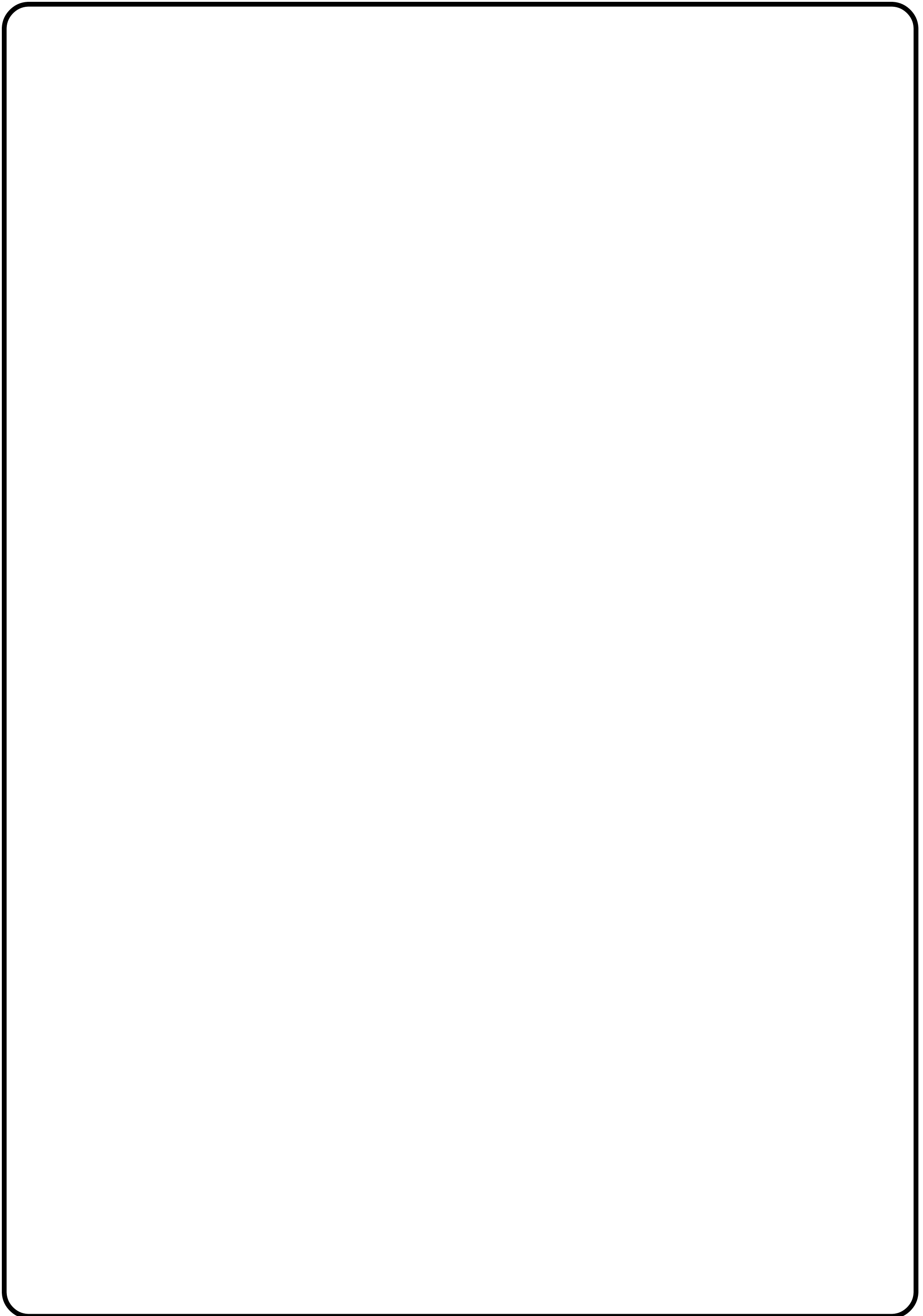
Please generously spare even a dollar for him. May God help you, bless you and reward you in this world and in the Hereafter.

Please make cheque payable to:

Javed Iqbal
900 Dufferin St., P.O. Box 24147
Toronto, Ont. Canada M6H 4H6

You may send it **directly** to his bank account no 3140340, transit no. 16042-004, TD Bank, 948 S. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, Ont. M6C 1C8





In the Name of Allah

Continued from page 1

South Arabia, whence it radiated into the entire Arabian Peninsula and the Fertile Crescent, or the opposite, originating in Mesopotamia and moving southward. It is proposed that classical Arabic, of which the Quran exhibits the most exquisite ideal, and which is still in use today in a somewhat simplified register in most formal Arabic writing, is the closest approximation as can be gained from proto-Semitic. All the languages that descend from proto-languages are considered to be sister languages, with varying degrees of similarity between them. Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic are sister languages in the same way that most of the languages of Europe are (as are their more distant cousins Persian and Pashto); their degree of relatedness is roughly analogous to the Romance languages.

The Hebrew scriptures refer to God as such by two words. The first to appear, in the book of Genesis, in the well-known rhythmic phrase, whose translation in the English Bible preserves a great deal of the majesty of the source language, is the very generalized Semitic word for the divinity in its local form: "Elohim". This word is constructed of two parts: the root for divinity /eloh/ and the plural suffix /-im/. The plural ending here does not mean that the ancient Hebrews conceived of God as multiple. Instead it serves as a purely grammatical device, an augmentative, for emphasizing that God is great. The similarity between the generic Semitic term for god /el/, the Hebrew variant /eloh-/, and the Arabic /allaah/ betrays their common origin.

The name of Allah existed in the Arabian Peninsula before the advent of Islam and was used in reference to God by Arab Christians and Jews. It remains in use today in Arabic translations of the Bible along with the word for "Lord", in Arabic /rabb/ (cognate with rabbi). Arab Muslims, Christians, and Jews continue to use both in reference to God.

An operating principle in translation is to transfer concepts from one culture to another by means of the closest equivalent in the target language to its original meaning in the

Hijra: It's Significance in Islam

Continued from page 1

as verified by the revelation in the Holy Quran: "And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they may confine you or slay you or drive you away; and they devised plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best of planners" (8:30)

The Prophet (pbuh) first revealed this message to his cousin Ali (ra) who agreed to sacrifice his life if need be, in order to help the Prophet in leaving for Medina in the cover of darkness, thus frustrating the Quraish's plan of assassination. With Abu Bakr (ra), Muhammad (pbuh) left Mecca after reciting verse 9 of Surah Yasin "And we have set a bar before them and a bar behind them, and (thus) have covered them so that they see not", and hid in the Cave of Thoor. His enemies, however, set out looking for him to carry out their plan, but were interestingly misguided. As they reached the cave, Allah told a spider to form a web on the mouth of the cave and a pigeon to lay eggs at the mouth of the cave, thus confusing his enemies and protecting the Messenger (pbuh). The Prophet (pbuh) ultimately reached Medina safely.

Medina entered a new era of its history with the arrival of Muhammad (pbuh). There he erected the pillars of the realm of the Qur'an, and fortified it so as to be the lighthouse radiating the beacon of truth to all horizons, thus dispersing the darkness

source text when such an equivalent exists. It might well be argued that the Arabic translations of the Bible are "truer" than those into English or other languages since two of the source languages are sisters to the target language. Many of the source concepts find direct resonance in the target culture. In the Bible and the Quran God is one, as is indicated by the unity of His name.

He is the same God.

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of the Age of Ignorance (Jahiliyah).

Whereas before the Hijra, Islam existed as a collection of a few faithfuls – barely surviving the intense persecution – with the move to Medina Islam transformed into a statehood, providing much means of protection and might. This placed before the Muslims wider and more important tasks such as strengthening the state and guarding it; building a society and consolidating it; repelling the enemy; and spreading the message of Islam and its unique way of life.

It suffices to know that within the ten years that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) spent in Medina, the newborn state of Islam was attacked by dozens of military operations in which the Muslims made numerous sacrifices and faced all kind of difficulties. But, at last, the existence of Arab ignorance was overcome, and the state of Islam prevailed over the whole Arab peninsula.

Thus, each new Hijra year reminds Muslims of the sufferings, the adversities, the struggle, the hardships, the patience, and finally, the victory of Islam.

Given the lesson in emigration from the annals of the inception of Islam, the question arises as to when a Muslim is permitted to emigrate under Islam?

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) moved from Mecca to Medina at Allah (SWT)'s beckoning. He did it in the service of Allah (SWT). Surely then, it would be perfectly correct for a Muslim to emigrate in order to escape persecution and perhaps torture and death on account of being a Muslim. But should a Muslim emigrate from his country for materialistic reasons or for marriage purposes?

To the vast majority of us, the Muslims in Canada, this is an interesting and all-important question. Is our emigration to Canada from our places of birth an Islamic Hijra? When faced with this question we try to draw parallels from early Islam and go to the greatest length to make our immigration to Canada an act of Islam. The following Hadith from Bukhari, addresses the quandary most succinctly:

On the authority of Umar bin Al Khattab (RA) who said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying: 'The rewards of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what

Our Wonderful Immune System

Continued from page 1

mechanisms of the body...

In the absence of even one of these, the system would simply not work. Therefore, it can by no means be claimed that such a system could have originated step by step through evolution.

Who, then, has made this plan?

Who knows that the body's fe-

he intended. So whosoever emigrated for the sake of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (pbuh) his emigration was for Allah and whosoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration was for what he emigrated for."

What this Hadith implies is a general principle that one is rewarded for his deeds according to his real intentions and not according to his actual deeds that might be good as such, but motivated by ill intentions.

It also implies that to get the full benefit of emigration, a Muslim must strive to spread the Word of Allah in any place that he or she migrates to. The worldly benefit of this conscious effort will be peace and harmony among the Muslims and the receiving people, and a better reward will be awaiting in the Hereafter.

The story of early days of Islam and the plight of Muslims has a lot of lessons for today's Muslim Ummah. It tells us that we must face all the hardship that comes to us with steadfastness. We should make our migration to any country (or our stay there, for that reason) the most beneficial to us by devoting ourselves to promoting the understanding of Islam to others by our behaviour and actions. We must not be disheartened by the ridicule from the ignorant people. We should always be polite and humble and establish a culture around us that is of peace, truthfulness, and mu-

ver must rise, and that only that way the energy needed by the defence army will not be spent elsewhere? Is it the macrophages? Macrophages are merely tiny cells invisible to the naked eye. They do not have the capacity to think. They are living organisms that only obey an established superior order; they merely carry out their duties.

Is it the brain? Definitely not. Nor does the brain possess any power to create or produce something. Just as in all other systems, in this system, too, it is in a position not to give orders, but to obey orders and submit to them.

Is it man? Certainly not. This system protects man from certain death, although he is not even aware that such a perfect system is at work in his own body. Even if man were ever ordered to develop an army in his own body to fight the enemy and cause his fever to rise, and provide this army to work round the clock in his entire body, he would simply have no idea what to do.

Today, mankind is not even able to understand the details of the present order in the immune system, despite all the technology at its disposal — much less imitate it.

It is an obvious fact that man was created with all of his features in place. Willingly or unwillingly, he submits to his Creator and the systems He has established. Just as everything else does...

"...No, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him. Everything is obedient to Him." (2: 116)

tual respect. We must have faith in Allah and His Mercy, bestowed upon those who are steadfast.

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Kidz Korner

LAMENT OF THE QUR'AN

As an ornament do they adorn me,
Yet they keep me and sometimes kiss me.
In their celebrations they recite me.
In disputes they swear by me.
On shelves do they securely keep me
Till another celebration or dispute, when they need me.



Yes, they read and memorize me,
Yet only an ornament am I.
My message lies neglected, my treasure untouched,
The field lies bare, where blossomed once true glory.
Wrong is the treatment that I receive
So much to give have I, but none is there to perceive.

by Mahir-ul-Qadri

Our mission #1

Let's work together
For peace of the world,
Let's unite forever,
Hair straight or curled,
our mission #1,
Is to save our fun,
of playing freely outside,
Not to run or hide,
And have our minds cleared,
Of all our unpeaceful thoughts,
Destruction is feared,
So let's undo the knots,
Let's work together as one peaceful world,
Let's unite forever,
Hair straight or curled.



Safiyya Ali, 13

DEATH OF A ROSE

She whined and weakened as death
approached her.
He came stealthily, without a sound
And captured the child's sickly soul.
No more could she cry or whimper, as for
death there is no cure.

This is the story of a young brave
Who once was a rose soon to be blossomed.
But death overtook this innocent creature
And sent her away to her earthly grave.

But is it not for all, that soon we will leave
The golden treasures that we so dearly
cherish?
And move on to the unknown world before us
That may be filled with sorrows and grief?

He will also come knocking on our door
one day
Requesting our co-operation to meet destiny.
Our worldly treasures will be of no use to us,
Neither help nor comfort will they pay.

Perhaps this story is a lesson for us to
take heed,
As people have entered and left this world.
Some have succeeded and others have failed.
But in the end it all depended upon their deed.

By Marium F. Ahmad,
OAC, Western-Tech. Comm. School

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

Year Two of Hijra: Change of Qibla

The Adhan was introduced near the end of the first year of hijra so that Muslims could gather together at one set time to offer their daily prayers in congregation. Prior to this people would pray alone or in small groups at any given time.

Because of the additional blessings of praying in a large gathering, and to regulate the 5 daily prayers, Bilal was appointed to give the Adhan to call all Muslims to prayer at given times.

One of the important aspects of prayer was to face a focal point, or a qibla, when praying. When the Prophet Muhammad (S) was in Makkah he offered his prayers facing "Muqam Ibrahim" in Jerusalem to revive the faith of Prophet Abraham. He faced this direction for two reasons. First of all, although it was more desirable to face the Kabah, the non-believers

also used the Kabah as their Qibla when praying and therefore he did not want to use it as a focal point. Secondly, although the Jews were not Muslims, they were People of the Book and he preferred this practice as opposed to the non-believers who worshipped idols. So, he offered his prayers facing "Muqam Ibrahim", the site of Prophet Abraham, which faced Jerusalem.

With Islam so widely spread in Madinah, it was revealed to the Prophet (S) that the direction should be changed and that Muslims should face only the Kabah when offering their salat: "Turn thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are turn faces towards it" (Quran 2:8).

The change in Qibla angered the Jews. They believed that they were more superior and that any prayers should always be made facing Jerusalem. Because the Muslims were no

longer facing Jerusalem, the Jews began making false accusations about the Prophet (pbuh); the accusations were so strong that some weak Muslims began to question the validity of the change.

This prompted Allah to reveal some more verses from the Quran. These verses declared the following:

1) to worship Allah in any direction is as good as the other but a specified direction was necessary to distinguish the believers from the non-believers

2) by changing the direction of the Qibla, Jews who pretended to be Muslims would not join them in prayer, since the Jews believed that prayer should only be made facing Jerusalem

3) it's not the Qibla that is important but the prayer and intention of the person performing the prayer that is important.

ISLAM



By: Hawo Mursal, Canada

I would never trade anything for my belief. If it is the moon or the sun I would never trade anything for my belief.

Islam gives me everything, a freedom and complete way of life. Also that what I need the most of all.

My religion of Islam stands for many things, but I would love to share what Islam stands for, here for five letters that Islam stands for Intelligent, Sensible, Leadership, Affection, and Manner. If you put all those letters together it will form the word of ISLAM!

You see how beautiful it is.

I am a believer
Islam doesn't stand any bad names but Islam stands for, justice, freedom for the human right and also it stand for the complete way of life.

I am a believer.

As many of us want to escape from the reality of life.

But Islam shows us the purpose of life. You see how wonderful it is.

I stand for the freedom that Islam gives to me.

I stand for the justice of the human right. As well as I stand for the challenges of life. Islam shows me that reality of life. You see that I wouldn't even trade my wonderful religion of Islam for any thing.

My hopes, dreams, future, love and my life all those things cared in Islam. So how can I ever change or trade my beautiful religion of Islam for anything that is in this world.

I am a believer
Islam is a faith but not what others think of Islam

I would never trade my beautiful religion of Islam
I am proud of my religion.

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