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Interest: Socio-Economic Injustice

by Muhammad Basil Ahmad

Riba or interest is defined in the Qur'an and Sunnah as an increase or addition. It indicates any increase or advantage obtained by a lender as a condition of a loan. In a commodity exchange, it is described as any inequality in the quantity of time or delivery. Riba includes both modern-day interest and usury. Islam prohibits us from carrying out any transaction based on Riba.

This same prohibition was also ordered upon the Jews, as mentioned in the Qur'an: "That they took Riba, though they were forbidden; and that they devoured

men's wealth wrongfully; we have prepared for those among them who reject Faith a grievous chastisement" (4:161). Interest is an injustice in society. Even Aristotle recognized this, as his social arguments against "the evil of money generating extra money without sweat" indicate. Early Christian teachings had also forbidden charging interest on loans of money and the result was that generally only Jewish merchants became bankers and moneylenders.

Part of the problem is that most people don't know where money really comes from. The

government only prints a tiny fraction of it and the banks manufacture the rest (over 90% of it). Most new money is actually deposit money, which banks create when they make loans. For example, if you wanted to borrow \$100,000 to build a new house, the bank would create it with a few keystrokes and the money is deposited to your account. The bank will demand its "money" plus the interest back whether the house is sold at a profit or a loss. In this way, the bank can never lose.

Some historians say that this tradition goes back more than 300

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Life on Other Planets

The existence of life on other planets has always intrigued and fascinated mankind.

by Roshan Jahangeer
Gr. 11, Weston C.I.

The existence of life on other planets -- no, this is not another X-Files re-run where little green men fly across the page in space-ships. This is an actual fact that is stated in the Holy Qur'an. Even before man had succeeded in "...boldly (going) where no one had gone before" (into outer space), the existence of life on other planets has always intrigued and fascinated mankind. Although it has yet to be proven scientifically, there is evidence in the Qur'an stating that one day the people of this world will indeed meet those of another, if Allah so wills. This should not seem so bewildering to a Muslim because Allah is the Lord of the **Worlds**, and surely we can not expect life to be confined only to our little planet in such a vast universe:

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the Earth, and the living creatures that He has scattered through them: and He has power to gather them together when He wills" (42:29).

This passage from the Qur'an reveals that Allah has indeed scat-

tered living creatures throughout the heavens and the Earth, and that He alone has the power to bring them together if He so wills. This is why Allah encourages men and also Jinns to go out of the Earth's orbit in Surah Ar-Rahman (55:33), which says that if they can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the Earth then they should, but not without Allah's authority. As we can see from this Surah, space travel is yet another mercy from Allah to us because it is not without His authority that man has been able to pass beyond the Earth's atmosphere, where perhaps one day a meeting of such sort between man

and other life-forms will indeed take place. The Qur'an says that the other beings also obey Allah by praying and prostrating to Him. This is mentioned in Surah Al-R'ad: "Whatever beings there are in the heavens and the Earth do prostrate themselves to Allah, with good-will or in spite of themselves" (13:15).

This passage reveals that Allah in His infinite mercy, has also revealed to them the Truth, and they all bow down before him as we do, all Muslims united as one, praying to the one and only Lord of the Worlds, Allah. We should remember that we are not alone in this world or in this universe.

The Role of The Mosque

The battle against the enemy plaguing our youth is not lost by any means. Instead, it is just beginning.

by Hanif Nori
2nd yr., U of T

The Mosque has played a great role in my life and I am sure proper guidance from a Masjid can play a very significant and important role in other young people's lives, especially during the

time and society that we live in today.

In order to understand the role that the Masjid has played and continues to play in my life so far, and the role that it can play in the lives of all Muslim youths, we must first look to the larger

by Abubakar Nurain Kassim

Women have been victimized in the Western world particularly in the media through advertisements. Before dealing with the issue in detail, it should be understood clearly that media is one of the most influential tools in society which plays an important role in controlling, programming and brainwashing people's minds. It has the ability to lead people either into destruction or into a good way of life. And it can make reality unreal and vice versa. The problem is that the majority of people are completely unaware of the reality of the media's impact on society. Some people might even deny this point. However it should be kept in mind that denial of reality doesn't make it unreal.

In a video-taped lecture at Harvard University in the United

States entitled Still Killing Us

Softly, Dr. Jean Kilbourne illustrated in details on how the advertising industry which is the economic life-blood of the mass media, has victimized the bodies of women. The advertising industry has been using women's bodies as their seductive method to catch the "fish" and promote their product to consumers. In almost all their ads on television, in newspapers, and in magazines, they send destructive messages and wrong images into people's minds about women. Such images suggest that women are nothing but objects which are made to be used whenever needed; that they are creatures whose only purpose in life is to be sexually appealing to men; who are desirable when they are young and can be completely ignored when they are either old, overweight or un-attractive. The advertisers send messages to women by telling them

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An exciting position is now open at **The Ambition** for an
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References are required.

Please note that it is a volunteer position.

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Editorial

In the quest of Freedom

So women in Ontario can go topless in public without any restriction! They achieved the freedom and equality they were craving for! They need to be congratulated because they finally got the freedom that their sisters in some parts of Africa and South America have always had! The only difference is that those were called "uncivilized" by the Westerners and these are the "Champions of Women's Rights." What a difference the place of birth can make!

Civilization is taking a U-turn and going back to pre-historic conditions. Not that a bikini was concealing or anything but still there was a wee-bit left to imagination. Now that the top is bare, what will they think of next?

If we think a bit, this bare-chestedness is the logical outcome of the ever increasing nudity in the Western culture. Once the divine values were discarded and the secular ideas took over, the human race was labeled as mere social animals. Morality and modesty became a thing of past. Long skirts shrunk to mini and extra-mini, full-sleeved blouses reduced to tank-tops and finally to two pieces of garments that were not garments at all. And this was all done in the name of gender equality. "A woman can do what a man can do" was the slogan behind all this.

We all know that similarity is not the same as equality.

Today, when we are standing at the turn of the millennium, women are still the major victims of physical abuse, rape, poverty, malnutrition, lack of education, and male domination. They are over-worked and underpaid. Can taking off our clothes fix these problems? Can it give us all the protection and safety indoors and outdoors? Can nudity bring us any respect? Can it wipe out our poverty and make us any more worthy than a showpiece? Can it rid us of male domination? The answer is NO.

Let us make our understanding of equality straight. Equality means equal respect for both genders, the right to be safe at home and not to be harassed outside, not to be submissive to anybody other than our Creator, being equally accountable and rewarded for our deeds, the right to have education and property, the right to be maintained by our male relatives (and not feel guilty about it) so that we are not over-worked, the right to be able to earn our own income if we wish, the right to be taken into marriage with responsibility and not be used by the other gender, the right to be respected for our intelligence and not for our looks, the right to not be targets of lustful eyes, and so on. Does nudity give us any of these rights? The answer is NO.

Nudity sends a message to the observer: That you can look at me and enjoy my physical beauty that I am for public display a showpiece, a thing; that I need attention. As if. It does not carry the message of human dignity. It brings the person down to the level of animals who do not have any sense of modesty. And when man becomes animal, women cry. Leave your doors wide open and when a prowler breaks in, call yourself a victim!

The constitution of Canada does not have provisions for morality. Anything goes, as long as it does not hurt anybody. Does that mean that consenting adults should get the right to conjugate on streets? In the parks? In front of everybody? I don't think so. It does not hurt anybody but it is indecent. Well, so is baring your private parts. A woman's body is her private parts. Nobody has a right to look at her body.

Remember that this law (to bare your chest) has been passed only due to one person and less than a handful of women are taking advantage of it. What about the people who are against it? Obviously the democracy of Canada has failed them. But we have God's Commandment for men and it clearly says in the Qur'an: "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And God is well acquainted with all that they do" (24:30). Muslim men have to fight this immorality with strong faith. They would have to remember Allah at all times and keep their gazedown! It will save them from committing "the adultery with their eyes and mind" and from the Hell fire in the hereafter.

In the mean time, I am asking the people of high morals in every religion and creed: What are you going to do about it? Are you going to do anything at all?

Asma Warsi

Letters to The Editor

No place for hate in Canada

Recently a man operating under the name *The Christian Standard* distributed an 8-page pamphlet calling all Muslims "terrorists." Referring to the Muslims of Toronto, the pamphlet says: "Muslims living in the city are like raging wolves in sheep's clothing, inside they are full of hate, violence and murder, but outside they say peace."

Obviously, the hate this man feels towards Muslims is overflowing to the point of posing a danger to the safety of peace-loving Muslim citizens in Canada. When a message demonizes Muslims like that, it is an indirect encouragement for others to attack and hurt Muslims. This is why it is a crime in Canada to circulate such messages.

Canadians will not accept the hate messages. Canadian

Christians in particular will be angry to see that the name of Christ is used to preach a message of hate. Such a message is contrary to the Christian Gospel of love. Therefore Canadians in general and Christians in particular should oppose any such hate messages.

Religion gets a bad name when people pursue their own agendas in the name of religion. Readers should recognize that there is a difference between what a religion teaches and what is practised by the claimed followers of that religion. The spreading of hate by *The Christian Standard* is not a reflection of Christianity but a perversion of it. The perpetrator allowed a venting of his own hate and tagged along the Gospel message to make his message sound acceptable to

Spousal abuse is not excusable

I am writing to make some comments on an article entitled "The Scenario" in the May-June edition of *The Ambition*. The article described a presumable typical story of a Muslim man who beat his wife and son "because he was under more pressure than he could bear," and the legal and emotional repercussions he suffers.

Although this was a "scenario," its description reveals some fundamental problems in the understanding of spousal abuse.

First of all, let us be clear about the issue of anger control. I believe that no one is responsible for how a person expresses anger or relieves stress, but the individual himself or herself. That is, anger and feeling "stressed" are one's own feelings and perceptions, and how these emotions are dealt with is solely the responsibility and choice of the owner.

In this situation, the husband Ahmad was obviously feeling burdened and anxious, but when he became angry (rightly or wrongly), he made a conscious decision to hit his wife and his 10-year-old son to "exhaustion." Apart from the mentally ill or challenged, no matter how angry we become, we do retain this capacity to choose a way of action.

For example, why does this man in *The Scenario* not "lose

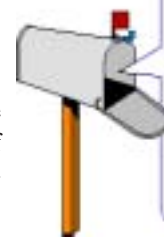
control" in his boss's office (who seems to be the major source of his stress anyway)? He would probably never think of striking his boss, because he is aware of: the superior status of his employer, the consequences of such an action (job loss, criminal charges, etc.), the lack of social acceptability of violence in the workplace, and so on.

The root cause for this scenario repeating itself over and over again worldwide, I believe, is that the perceived position of the woman in the family and society is as being inferior, and, the lack of a firm societal and unanimous position against spousal abuse.

If a man, Muslim or not, has no doubt about the equal status as human beings of women and men, and that it is simply not permissible to abuse women (or men), then regardless of how angry he becomes, it would likely not be an option, in his mind, to abuse his spouse.

It is also important to state that the perspective of the wife and son were completely ignored in the article. While Ahmad worries about his job (among other things), his wife and son are very likely to suffer pain and severe emotional stress in an emergency department. And is not the complete injustice of their situation,

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

the Canadian ear.

It is wrong to demonize and dehumanize a group of people. When you present any group of people as garbage you set them up as easy targets for sick minds to want to dispose of those innocent people. This is why hate crime is such a serious matter. Teach one group of people to hate another, and the one group will look for ways to dispose of the other.

We have already seen this happening in various parts of the world. Not too long ago in Hebron a man went into a mosque and shot sixty persons who were still engaged in prayer. Why? Because of hate.

In Bosnia one group decided to wipe out another. They called it ethnic cleansing. Why? Because of hate. They called themselves Christians, but we cannot blame this on Christianity.

The hate has to stop. But someone wants to bring the hate here to Canada. And he wants to do it in the name of Christ. This has to stop.

Canada is a multicultural society. There is enough room here for both Christians and Muslims to live in harmony.

Christians recognize that Muslims have much respect for Jesus. The Qur'an tells Muslims to believe in Jesus as Christ, a messenger of God, a spirit from God, and His Word which He cast into Mary.

The Second Vatican Council in its Dogmatic Constitution on World Religions issued a statement to recognize that Muslims worship the one true God, and that they pay careful attention to please God by observing his laws and commandments.

If you come across any hate messages, whether it be against the Muslims or any other people, please report it immediately to your local police. Call Bell Canada if the telephone is used. Call Canada Post if the hate message is sent by mail. Help to spread a positive message about Islam. If you are concerned, please contact *Canadians Against Racism Everywhere* (C.A.R.E.) at (416) 536-8433 for your support.

Shabir Ally,
Toronto

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The Ambition

6452 Finch Ave. West
Unit #148

Toronto, Ontario M9V 1T4

Tel. & Fax : (416) 740-1491

Fax : (416) 740-2499

(11 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

E-Mail: raptor@globalserve.net

Editors

Asma Warsi

Muhammad Basil Ahmad

Department Editors

Shazeela Ali

Tufail Ali

Mehran Banaei

Aneesa Lakhi

This Journal is dedicated to:

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

Committee Members

Amina Bhimla

Munawar Merchant

Ahmad Mian

Abdullah Sabree

Muhammad Saleem Shaikh

Sister Wilma

Publisher

Asma Warsi

From The Qur'an

As for those who sell the faith they owe to Allah and their own solemn plighted word for a small price, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter: Nor will Allah (deign to) speak to them or look at them on the Day of Judgement, nor will He cleanse them (of sin): They shall have a grievous Chastisement.

(Qur'an 3:77)

Such a person as described above is the treacherous eater of Riba

From The Hadith

Narrated Abu Huraira: "The Prophet said, 'Avoid the seven major destructive sins.' The people asked, 'O Allah's Prophet! What are they?' He said, 'To join partners in worship with Allah; to practice sorcery; to kill the life which Allah has forbidden except for a just cause; to eat up Riba, to eat up the property of an orphan; to give one's back to the enemy in fleeing from the battle-field at the time of fighting and to accuse chaste women who never even think of anything touching their chastity and are good believers.'"

(Bukhari)

Interest: Socio-Economic Injustice

Continued from page 1

years to the English goldsmiths. The King had confiscated the gold and silver that the rich people had deposited in the Tower of London, without any compensation. These wealthy people then searched for a safer place to keep their riches and settled on the goldsmiths, who already had fire-proof boxes for their own valuables. The goldsmiths handed them receipts for their deposits and 5% interest on the understanding that they could lend the gold out to their friends at higher interest. This seemed fair enough and convenient for both parties. Now, instead of getting the gold out of the vault to pay their bills, people used the receipts from the goldsmiths. The problem arose later when the goldsmiths figured out that they could make more loans than they had gold in their vaults. Only a few people redeemed their receipts for gold at any one time. If they had all tried at once, they would have been out of luck. This was because there wasn't enough gold to back all the certificates. It was probably illegal, but the government became an accomplice and legalised the scam when it chartered the Bank of England in 1694. The Bank was allowed to lend the same money twice. Over the years the deal has become much sweeter for the banks.

Early in this century, American banks had to maintain 25% cash reserves so they could lend the same money four times. A few years ago, the cash reserves were 8%, so they could lend the same money 12 ½ times. Now, in the United States, cash reserves are 3% for current accounts and 0% for savings accounts. In Canada, cash reserves are almost 0%. Basically, the banks don't have to maintain any cash reserves at all. They were phased out by the 1991 amendments to the Bank Act. It would be rare to find 1 or 1 ½ cents in real cash for every dollar we think we have in the bank.

The only reason this system works is because we don't all ask for our money at the same time.

People use credit cards or cheques, so the banks don't have to produce cash. They simply move credit money around through computers.

No one should be given any income or any gain unless they work for it. Interest is a kind of reward without doing work. It is a self-generated, unearned income that is exploitative by its very nature. It preserves, and increases wealth and discourages effort of the wealthy. Interest has even been blamed by some officials for preventing full employment, causing international monetary crisis, and inefficiencies in the economic policies of First World countries. In Islam, this is viewed as an injustice, therefore it is prohibited. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is reported in the Musnad of Ahmad to have said to beware of injustice, for injustice will be the equivalent to darkness on the Day of Judgement.

Islam finalised the solution to this problem. It can be found in the Qur'an: "Those who devour Riba will not stand except as stands one whom the Satan by his touch hath driven to madness. That is because they say: 'Trade is like Riba,' but Allah hath permitted trade and forbidden Riba. Those who after receiving admonition from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah (to judge); but those who repeat (the offence) are companions of the Fire: they will abide therein (forever). Allah will deprive Riba of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity: For he loveth not any ungrateful sinner . . . O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and give up what remains of your demand for Riba, if ye are indeed believers. If ye do it not, take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger: But if ye repent ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is

best for you if ye only knew" (2:275-280). Another verse in the Qur'an says: "O ye who believe! Devour not Riba, doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah; that ye may (really) prosper" (3:130).

Those who participate in any interest-based transaction will not escape Allah's punishment in the Hereafter. The Prophet (pbuh) cursed the users of Riba as narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah and Jabir ibn Mas'ud: "The Prophet of Allah (pbuh) cursed the one who accepts Riba, the one who pays it, the witnesses to it, and the one who records it" (Muslim and Abu Dawud).

In today's day and age, no one is safe from the effects of Riba. Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "A time is certainly coming to mankind when only the receiver of Riba will remain, and if he does not receive it, some of its vapour will reach him" (Abu Dawud). This time has already arrived. The best we can do is to avoid Riba wherever possible. This includes avoiding certain types of investments that are based on Riba: savings and loan shares, the purchase of government securities, the purchase of savings bonds, corporate bonds, or any other kind of bonds. Savings accounts are also included in this list, however, most of us are forced to use them for paying bills and making non-cash payments. May Allah forgive us when we fall into such situations.

At present, many North American banking experts are becoming more interested in "Islamic Banking" because of the benefits and equality it creates. Because the prohibition of Riba produces a balance and uniformity in the distribution of wealth, no system based on interest can ever establish the true justice, equality, and freedom taught by the Prophet (pbuh). We have to explain to the world how the Islamic system of finance is better for the creditors as well as the consumers.

In recent years, Muslims in North America have established economic institutions that are interest-free, providing healthy savings and investments for their funds. These institutions have struggled hard not only to convince Muslims of their responsibilities, but also to educate them of the necessity to stay away from Riba. Next time you visit your local mosque, ask about the Islamic banking institutions in your community and get involved! May Allah shower his mercy and forgiveness upon us for the "dust and vapour" of Riba that we cannot completely avoid in today's capitalistic age. May Allah also guide us back to the Straight Path whenever we fall astray.

(Muhammad B. Ahmad is an OAC student at Western Technical-Commercial School. He was the president of the RCI Youth Science Academy. The Ambition welcomes him as the new co-editor.)

Spousal abuse ...

Continued from page 2

suffered at the hands of Ahmad, even worthy of mention?

Finally, at the risk of being redundant, I must clearly state that this man has done something wrong. Neither Islamic law, nor even a court of law in this country, I believe, would absolve him of his responsibility for his action, based on how angry or "stressed" he was.

He may not be a "bad man" but his was definitely a "bad" decision and action. True, I do not have the right to judge this man, but God has given us the ability and the Guidance to separate right actions from wrong ones. Let us not shirk our responsibility to act justly.

B. Akcakir Ynikomeroglu,
M.D.

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Your Questions

Answered by Shabir Ally

Q Isn't it true that Islam was spread by the sword?

A No. This is not true. However, this is a common misconception in the minds of many people.

The Qur'an declares: "There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error" (2:256). This verse shows that God has made truth and falsehood distinct from each other and people are therefore free to one or the other. No one can be forced to believe in a religion since belief is something very personal. One who follows the Quran will not try to force another person to believe. Even the Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace, could not force another person to become a Muslim. God revealed to him the following words: "And if your Lord willed, all who are in the Earth would have believed together. Would you then compel people until they become believers? It is not for any soul to believe except by the permission of Allah" (10:99-100).

This instruction from God makes it clear that anyone is mistaken who thinks that he or she can compel others to believe. If God wanted, He could make everyone believers, but rather has given them free choice. Even so, no one can believe upon being forced. It is the grace of God on a person that will result in belief. Is there a teaching more beautiful than this? How could any true follower of the Qur'an turn around and force his faith on others?

On the contrary, the Qur'an instructs its followers on how to call people to true faith as follows: "Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way" (16:125). Where does the Qur'an say to call people at the point of a sword? It does not. God instructed his Messenger (pbuh) as follows: "Say: This is my Way: I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me" (12:108).

Here again, the call is to be made with sure knowledge, with clear evidence. Putting these instructions together, a Muslim understands that he or she must present Islam with clear evidence (i.e. sure knowledge) and use wisdom and fair exhortation to reason with people to accept the evidence for faith. Where is there any mention of sword in all of this?

The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada says: "Islam is the fastest-growing religion worldwide" (The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada, Hurtig Publishers, Canada, 1990, Vol. 2, p. 394). What explains this phenomenon? Who is forcing anyone today to become Muslim? Muslims are not even engaged in active preaching in any noticeable degree. People are voluntarily coming into Islam because they find that Islam makes sense.

Huston Smith discusses in his book entitled *The World's Religions*, on page 256, how the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) granted freedom of religion to the Jews and Christians under Muslim rule. The Prophet (pbuh) had a document drawn up in which he stipulated that Jews and Christians shall be "protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices," and furthermore, that they shall "practice their religion as freely as the Muslims." Smith points out that Muslims regard that document as "the first charter of freedom of conscience in human history and the authoritative model for those of every subsequent Muslim state" (The World's Religions by Huston Smith, Harper Collins, 1991, p. 256).

So was Islam spread by the sword? The following short answer comes from Ira Zepp Jr., a non-Muslim, in his book entitled *A Muslim Primer*: "It is unfortunate that Islam has been stereotyped as the 'religion of the sword' or that Islam was 'spread by the sword.' The historical reality is that the expansion of Islam was usually by persuasion and not by military power. In any case, Islam can not be forced on anyone; if profession of the Shahadah (i.e. the declaration of Islam) is forced on someone, it is not true Islam" (A Muslim Primer by Ira Zepp, Jr., Wakefield Editions, US, 1992, p. 134).

(Do you have questions? Please write to Shabir Ally c/o The Ambition)

Journey to Islam

Highlighting the experiences of new Muslims

Choosing the Right Path

In search for the Truth, I was so careful not to jump into anything without having the right reason for it.

Sonja Mann is a 3rd year U of T student, majoring in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. She is 29 years old and has two children. In a discussion with Mehran Banaei, she talks about her journey to Islam.

Can you tell us a few things about your background?

My father is German and my mother is part Polish, Swedish and Italian. I was born in Canada, raised in Germany. I came back to Canada in 1983, when I was fifteen. I do not come from a religious background. Both my parents are secularist, but tolerant of eastern and western religions. My father particularly is open-minded. I was never forced to accept or reject any belief. During my childhood, I was very much influenced by my father and a wise lady related to us. My father's sense of curiosity about mysticism affected me to expand my horizon. I did not share his keen interest in world religions, but did entertain similar fundamental questions related to our existence and destiny. I learned from the wise relative that one could have a direct relationship with God and need not have an intermediary. God is within everyone's reach.

Did you ever adhere to Christianity?

Not at all. As I was growing, I sensed that I do not fit into a typical Western culture and way of life. There was nothing which I could identify with. In my mind, I always believed in One God, never had any problem with the notion of one God alone. In fact, I did have some difficulties in accepting certain Christian doctrine.

Can you explain to us how you came to know about Islam?

I got married when I was young and mothered two children. However, my marriage did not last very long. Divorce was something which I did not think could ever happen to me. The experience made me to contemplate a lot. Around this period, I started to meet some Muslims. My biology teacher in school was from Egypt. In his lectures, he spoke of Islam in a positive mode. He never preached to anyone, but from his sayings I was convinced that Islam must be the Truth with a capital "T." Everything he said stayed in my mind, I wanted to learn more and confirm a few things. When I got accepted at U of T, I got to meet more Muslims who were very nice and kind to me. I started to take some courses on Islam. My experience was very

unique since it included both academic and a first-hand social experience by being among Muslims. I was looking for the truth and really wanted to make sure that I knew what I am doing. I was so careful not to jump into anything without having the right reason for doing it. For instance, I did not want to be inconsistent in any way. Particularly, I did not want my behaviour to contradict my belief, or back off in the future from any decision I made. I went through a deep comprehension which involved thinking, analyzing, and understanding. As a result, my learning greatly accelerated, and I came to know the truthfulness of Islam with certainty. I finally decided to formally say my *Shahada*, which was at the end of September 1995.

This was not difficult. After accepting Islam there was no major change in my life, because, for instance, I never believed in dating or dressing in a provocative fashion. I have always had a moderated life style. Now, although it is difficult, I do my best to raise my children as Muslim. The younger one is very open. He thinks like me and says: "I am a Muslim."

In your studies, both at the academic and personal level, what did you find in Islam which impressed you and caused you to embrace it?

What really impressed me most is the fact that Islam makes sense, and is an all-inclusive system. Unlike most Western systems, which are compartmental-

ized, Islam is a unified system which covers every aspect of life. It has an instruction for everything which humanity has to deal with. It even provides the reason of why it has to be done this way. For example, it tells you not to drink by giving the reason first.

Coming to this realization is an easy, but a slow process, which does not happen overnight. It takes time for one to find the right way.

In your opinion, what are the barriers for one to discover Islam as it really is?

Perhaps I should say, I do find some Muslims' point of view on Western culture somewhat offensive. Some Muslims expect an instant rejection of everything. Despite the fact that one would soon come to reject certain things on philosophical grounds, on an emotional level it would take much longer, especially things which require some adjustments or involve family and close friends. There are some Muslims who think Islam and Western culture are mutually exclusive things, and nothing of the West can be compatible with Islamic principle. There are some others who can not tell the difference between Islam and their home culture. Ironically, in many cases their culture seems to be superimposed upon Islam. The net result can turn off some observers.

I also find the emphasis that some Muslims put on schools of thought and the need to adhere to one very confusing and puzzling. After all, which school of thought did the Prophet (pbuh) belong to?

All articles in *The Ambition* are well researched and checked by the editors.

Being human, we can overlook something.

If this happens, please call us and correct our mistakes.

Thank you.

Muslim Role Models

Sa'id ibn Amir al-Jumahi

by Shazeela Ali

A long time ago in the region of Tanin a young man by the name of Sa'id ibn Amir al-Jumahi was invited to witness the killing of Khubayb ibn Adiy. Khubayb was a companion of the prophet and was being killed by the tribe of the Quraish because of their loss in the Battle of Badr. Before Khubayb was to be killed, he made a request to pray two rak'a before his death.

After he finished praying he let the tribe of Quraish know that he was not praying for fear of his death but rather for his love for Allah. Khubayb also loved the Prophet (pbuh) very dearly. In fact, he loved him more than his own life for when the people of Quraish asked him if he rather they killed Muhammad (pbuh), Khubayb replied, "By God, I would not want to be safe and secure among my families while even a thorn hurts Muhammad." Sa'id was astonished at Khubayb's reply.

Long after Khubayb's death, now in Makkah, Sa'id still remembered the tragic death. He used to dream of Khubayb praying his two rak'a. Sa'id soon realized the importance of faith, beliefs, and struggling for the right cause. He also learned that you can tell how strong a person's faith is by his/her actions. Lastly, he realized that any man who is loved as much as the Prophet (pbuh) must be a messenger of Allah. Soon after realizing all this Sa'id accepted Islam. He migrated to Madinah and there he took part in the Battle of Khayber with the Prophet (pbuh). Sa'id was known for his piety and honesty.

After the Prophet (pbuh) died, during the Caliphate of Umar (ra),

Sa'id was appointed as the governor of Hamas (in Syria). Not long afterwards, two trusted friends of Umar (ra) came to visit from Hamas. When Umar (ra) requested that they write down a list of the poor in Syria, he was astonished to see Sa'id's name on the list. Umar (ra) sent him a thousand dinars. Instead of keeping the money for himself, Sa'id distributed it among the Muslim poor.

When Umar (ra) decided to visit Syria, he was surprised that the people of Hamas were complaining about Sa'id. They complained that Sa'id came out quite late in the morning. To this Sa'id explained that he does not have a helper at home and has to tend to the baking and some chores before he can come out.

The second complaint was that he did not answer to any one at night. To this Sa'id explained that he leaves the day for helping people and the night is devoted to worshipping Allah.

Their third complaint was that Sa'id did not come out to them for one day every so often. Sa'id explained that he only owned the clothes he was wearing. When he washed them he could not go out until they finished drying.

The people were satisfied with his explanations, but, their final complaint was that from time to time he had blackouts in his meetings. Sa'id explained to Umar (ra) that he witnessed the killing of

Khubayb and did not do anything to help save him and he faints with the fear of God.

Umar (ra) was very pleased with Sa'id's replies. Once again he gave Sa'id a thousand dinars but as before Sa'id gave the money to widows, orphans, and the needy.

As with all the companions of the Prophet (pbuh), there are lessons to be learned from the life of Sa'id ibn al-Jumahi. As youths living in North America, peer pressure is an everyday reality. There is the pressure to "fit in" or to "belong."

Material possessions such as the clothes worn are an important aspect of a youth's life. Keeping up with today's trends could be quite expensive and most youth can not afford it. Instead of getting down because you may not have the "latest" shoes or brand name clothes, we should remember Sa'id and use him as an example. Not only did he give to the needy when he himself was in need but he never used to complain about life. He looked upon those who were less fortunate than himself and chose to be content with very little.

Another lesson to be learned from his life is that he worried a lot about being accountable for his deeds. In fact he worried to the extent of having blackouts. Like Sa'id, we should be less concerned about our looks and more about our actions and behaviour.

It Doesn't All Come By Nature

Many refer to the Qur'an
As the "Heart of Islam."
But to some non-religious,
Or to some whose faith in religion
is not strong,

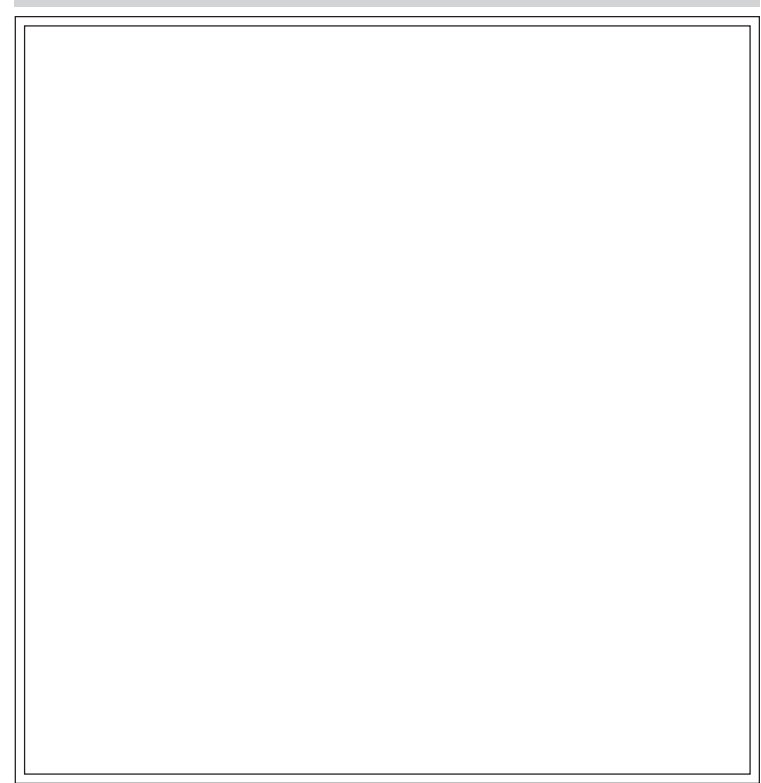
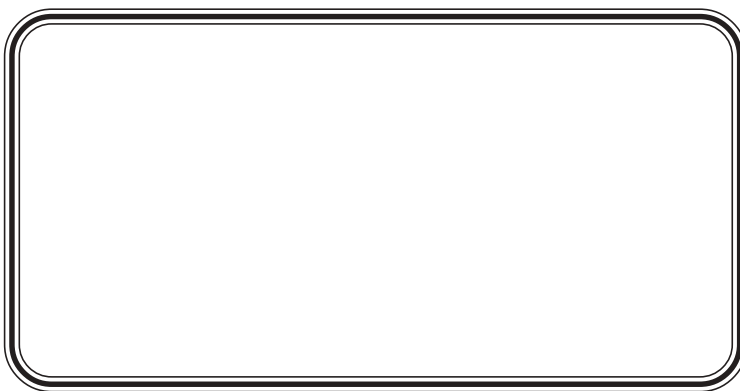
This must be shown.
If you were to look at someone,
Whose faith in religion is strong.
Don't think that "strong faith,"
To that person has
Come to them by nature!

If you are a person,
Who wants to gain that "faith,"
That beautiful feeling,
You must try!
If you are determined to gain that feeling,
You will try!

Just by praying and reading the Qur'an,
You will get closer to Allah.
It feels like you were in debt,
But at last you have paid it all off.

You get these unforgettable feelings,
Of relaxation, comfort,
And last but not least,
You will receive that powerful feeling of
Confidence in yourself and
The faith in your religion!

by Heileen Zein,
Gr. 10, Weston C.I.



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is distributed free
of cost every two
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from as far as
Kingston, Ajax
and Oshwa in the
east to Brampton,
Burlington and
Hamilton in the
west. You can
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stores.

The Role of Mosques

Continued from page 1

Throughout my years in high school, and as I have gone into university, it has become increasingly clear to me, that the society we live in is systematically engaged in an attempt to raise youth who are not concerned with religion at all. In fact, the youth of today are taught that we are at the end of history and that we are the last people. This is one of the crucial defining features of the post-modern condition which is at the root of the dangers facing the youth. By the term "end of history," society teaches the youth that liberal, capitalist democracy, and the values and morals inherent in them, are the best and most desirable ways of life for us. History, in their view, has progressed to this capitalist democracy, and

the culmination of all attempts is creating the best society. They teach the youth that all other competing views of the world, including and especially the Islamic view, are inferior, and that the society we live in today, the Western society, is the best there will ever be.

The youth are also taught that the only universal truth is that there are no universal truths, that morality is relative, and that "you can do whatever you want to, as long as it makes you happy." The youth are taught that there is no such thing as good and bad, right and wrong, good and evil, heaven or hell, virtue or vice. The youth are taught that everything is permitted, and that no one should judge the values and beliefs of any others. Above all, the youth are taught that we live in a godless

universe, therefore, life has no meaning, no value, and no purpose, and therefore, they can let life have any meaning they wish; that all ways of life are as equally desirable as any others, whether you are a person of high morals or not, because, society says there is no such thing as a universal morality. In my discussions with my friends and other youths, the constant phrase that I hear is "Who am I to judge what others do? If it makes them happy, let them do it." The time that we are living in right now expounds these views, and they are incorporated into the education system, popular culture, especially movies and music. The youth are subconsciously taught that since everything is permitted, the only thing that matters is their own self-interest, that they should do

what they can to satisfy the present desires in the here and now, and not worry about the potential "afterlife" that is to come.

Just sit down and talk to a youth and within no time you will see that they really don't have any serious views, or more importantly, serious convictions, about what a good life is, what is right or wrong, or what they want to do in life. It is these values and beliefs held by contemporary society, the values of "post-modernity" which is at the root of the dangers facing the youth, and which the Masjid and the Muslim community must realize and understand, so that they can react to the real needs of the youth.

This is why the Masjid is extremely important and crucial in the lives of the youth today. The Masjid taught me that there is a better way of life than what society has to offer, a better system of beliefs, and a better understanding of the nature of my relationship to the true God and the world, which has allowed me to understand the systematic dismantling of religious belief that society is attempting to accomplish within the minds of the youth.

The most important problem is that the youths themselves do not realize that they are being brainwashed to conform with society so that they can be exploited and used to society's advantage.

I know my whole discussion has given the impression that the condition of the youth is a despairing and losing battle. But, I want to make it clear to you that it is not. The battle against the enemy plaguing our youth is not lost by any means. Instead, it is just beginning. By knowing what the enemy is, we can fight back and provide the youths with what they truly desire: Guidance. The Mosques must provide the source of guidance that our youth need to have the self-confidence and knowledge to carry Islam into the world and to protect us from succumbing to the temptations that are prevalent and pervasive in this society.

Civilization." It's about time they woke up and smelled the coffee. If they left their children unprotected from this cultural onslaught by the media, they will be the losers in the end, and they will be responsible for it.

(Abubakar Kassim is a high school graduate.)

Dehumanizing ...

Continued from page 1

that the only way they are considered acceptable by men is if they are thin, beautiful, young, polished, fragrant, made-up, and carefully groomed. As a result of this, women learn from their childhood to spend their time, energy, and money to keep that image of the ideal female beauty which has been created by the advertisements. If they fail to achieve that ideal beauty, they feel shame and guilt and end up in depression. In the United States, as Ms. Kilbourne indicated, more than a million dollars are spent every hour on cosmetics. Consequently the faces of women have become like masks and it have lost their natural beauty which Allah has blessed them with. Every ad carries a destructive and very well planned message about women. Those wrong images affect people unconsciously. Most of the time just a particular part of a woman's body is focused upon in advertisements. And this is what Ms. Kilbourne referred to as "the most dehumanizing thing you can do to somebody; not that she is just a thing, but a piece of merchandise which is for sale."

The result of those wrong images has become horrible in the society. In the United States, for example, which spends more than \$100 billion in advertising each year, which is more than any other country in the world, sexual assaults have become routine. Violence against women is increasing dramatically. Women live in fear and depression, and they have lost self-confidence. The media has projected men as brutal and aggressive and women as passive

and submissive. Women are told through these destructive messages that men have a dangerous animal nature that can not be controlled. The number of suicides among women is in a constant increase. Ms. Kilbourne in her video mentioned some frightening statistics on women. At least 25% of all reported rape victims are under the age of 18 and one in four little girls and one in ten little boys is sexually molested in their childhood. Forty percent of all the women who are murdered are killed by their husbands or lovers. The FBI estimates that violence occurs in one of every three homes in which men and women live together. One-quarter of women in college have been the victim of rape or attempted rape. The United States has a greater problem of teenage pregnancy than any other industrialized country in the world.

One out of five college-aged women in the United States has serious eating disorders, of which the most common is anorexia. A national survey was conducted on fourth grade students and 80% were found to be on a diet. Eighty percent of American women think they are overweight. The greatest increase in smoking is among young girls under the age of 11 because they are heavily targeted by the mass media and they are programmed to believe that smoking is the road to freedom and a way to control their weight.

After minds being filled with those wrong images of the ideal women, children have completely lost respect to their parents especially to their mothers who have carried them in their wombs for nine months. As a result of this,

in North America, and in all of the Western world, old people are ignored and they have been thrown away in what is known as "senior's residences."

Unfortunately, since Muslims in general are in a very deep slumber, the media in the Western world has got a chance to accuse Islam as the religion which suppresses women and thus is able to divert the attention of the general public from the real problem to Islam-phobia. However, this is a completely wrong accusation upon Islam. In fact the Western media is victimizing and portraying women badly and severely. I must say that there is no, and never will be, a system on this Earth which respects, honours, reveres, and protects women and men as Islam does. This society will never be able to find the ultimate solution of its problems except in the religion of Allah.

There are many interesting books which have been written by Muslim scholars that explain in detail the role of women such as The Status of Women in Islam and Gender Equity in Islam, both written by Dr. Jamaal Badawy. There is also a very interesting video-tape called Islam: The Path of Women's Liberation by Amina Assilmi, a Christian who embraced Islam. There are many other interesting books dealing with the topic that are available at Islamic bookstores.

Unfortunately, the majority of Muslims are unaware of the true teachings of their religion. After emigrating to the Western world they are busy in coping with the Western approach to the meaning of life and are becoming influenced by the so-called "Western

Matrimonials

1. African Canadian Muslim, 37, 6.2" tall, is looking for sister Muslimah, 22-27, for marriage. Please forward info with picture to inquiry # 66.

2. Gamal Abdelfattah, came to Canada in 1967, from Stuttgart Germany. Alhamdulillah, I am practising Sunni Muslim, 37 years, 5'6", never married, Canadian citizen. High school and College graduate. I live in Etobicoke, Ont. Alhamdulillah, I have a steady job. I am continuing my education through a home study computer course. Alhamdulillah, I live a simple life style, according to the Quran and Sunnah. I am an easy person to get along with and have a good sense of humor. Looking for a Canadian, Egyptian, or European practising Sunni Muslima 25-32 years. High school education, doesn't mind working. Inquiry # 67.

3. Bangladeshi Canadian Muslim, age 41, seeks practicing Muslima age 25-30 for marriage, who will share Islamic work for Allah's pleasure. Inquiry # 68.

4. Arab Muslim from North Africa, open, hardworking, 26 years old, seeks Muslimah, Sunni, Arab preferred. 20-30 years. Please send photo, phone and details. Inquiry # 69.

Address your responses to "Matrimonials, The Ambition" and include the inquiry # on the outside of the envelope.

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Kid's Korner

The Battle of Badr

by Mir Arslan Ali Khan
Gr. 5, Plowmans Park P.S.

After the Hijra, the Prophet (pbuh) settled in Madinah and Islam started to flourish. When this happened, the unbelievers became angry and planned to invade Madinah.

The first important battle took place in the second year of the Hijra. In the Battle of Badr the Muslims and the Quraish fought. The battle took place about eighty miles from Madinah near the well of Badr. There were only 313 Mujahideen in the Muslim army while there were more than

1,000 men in the Quraish army. The Quraish army was well armed while the Muslim soldiers were poorly equipped. Muslims fought so bravely that with the help of Allah, the Quraish had no way but to flee, leaving a lot of dead bodies in the battlefield. They also left several prisoners of war in the hands of the Muslim army. The Quraish chief, Abu Jahl, one of the greatest enemies of Islam was also among those killed in the Battle of Badr.

This was the first battle in Islamic history. Muslims deserved the marvelous victory that they got.

A wish for Halal Food!

by Zarreen Warsi
Gr. 6, Elmbank M.S.

Like many other kids, I love eating out.

As I walked into the kitchen the other day, I saw a coupon for a McDonald's sandwich. Hmm, I thought, I could really go for a sandwich right now. I tore off the coupon from the flyer and showed it to my mom but all she did was shake her head.

"What?" I asked.

"It's not Halal," she replied. "It has meat in it and they don't use Halal meat. You can't eat it."

I took a closer look at the coupon. My mom was right. As usual, the special was for everything but a fish fillet. Which means it was not offered to Muslims. The flyer had Big Macs, Quarter Pounders, chicken sandwiches and other meat sandwiches but nothing for Muslims.

When Muslims eat out they usually eat fish and sea food because the meat used in restaurants is not Halal and not permitted for them. Whenever I see coupons for fast food restaurants, such as McDonald's,

Wendy's, Harvey's, etc., they usually have sales for the general public but nothing that practising Muslims can eat.

Why is this? That is a question that always enters my mind. If restaurants made sales for Halal food also, then they would get more business and Muslims would benefit from the sales, and both would be happy.

I think restaurants should really consider having Halal food for Muslims so that I can also have some choices other than fish and fries. I am getting tired of that!



About the Prophet

by Zafar Warsi
Gr. 10, W.H.C.I.

Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) preaching of Islam increased. He would go to gatherings and to the Ka'bah to educate more people about Islam. When Rasulullah (pbuh) would recite verses from the Holy Qur'an, people would listen and realize that these words were not used by human beings. These words were the words of Allah, the Creator and the Lord of the universe. The number of Muslims increased rapidly.

Although many people started to appreciate and accept the Prophet (pbuh), the Quraish were still having a problem with him and his followers. The Quraish would mock them and use bad language towards them. They threw garbage at them. They even hurt and tortured some of them by making them lie on desert sand on a hot day or by making them lie on burning charcoal. A few were even tortured to death.

Despite all the beatings and torture, Muslims kept their Iman (Faith). They knew the Truth and they believed that Allah would protect them. The Muslims be-

THE MUSLIMS' HIJRA TO ABYSSINIA

lieved in Allah's promise of Heaven for those who are steadfast and patient. The Kuffar tried their best to frighten Muslims, but the Muslims held their ground.

By this time, Rasulullah (pbuh) advised the Muslims to leave Makkah. He told them to make Hijra to Africa. Hijra is another word for migration.

"To those who make Hijra for Allah after they are persecuted, We will secure them well in this world. And the reward of the Hereafter is much greater- if they only knew" (Qur'an 16:41).

They migrated to Abyssinia. The king of Abyssinia was a good Christian. The Prophet (pbuh) hoped that he would help the Muslims.

Slowly and secretly, Muslims started to sneak away. Eventually the Quraish learned of the Muslims' plan. They followed the Muslims to Abyssinia and complained to the Abyssinian king. "These are our people," they notified him. "They have left their religion and their country. We want them back. We request you to hand the Muslims over to us."

The king called Ja'far (ra), the leader of the Muslims. He asked him about

Islam and why the Quraish were here to take them back to Makkah. Ja'far (ra) declared: "O king, we used to believe in gods made of stone and wood. We told lies and killed each other. Then Allah sent His prophet to us. He taught us nothing but good. We became Muslims. Now The Quraish want us back so they can continue to harass us."

The king carefully listened to what Ja'far (ra) had to say. After hearing these words, he asked Ja'far (ra) to recite a few verses from the Holy Qur'an. Ja'far (ra) recited the opening verses of Surah Maryam. When the king heard the verses, he said: "These words are from the same source as the words of our Lord Jesus.

"Go home," he told the Quraish. "These Muslims are welcome to live peacefully in my kingdom."

The king became the Muslims' friend when he learned that they were God-fearing and pious. The Muslims started to teach the king about Islam as well. Slowly, he started believing in the truth of Islam and soon he himself became a Muslim.

What are my Duties?

ing: "There are six very simple responsibilities of brotherhood for all Muslims to follow, and those are:

1. When you meet a fellow Muslim you should say Salaam Alaikum.
2. When a Muslim invites you, you should accept his invitation
3. When a Muslim advises you, you should

also advise him

4. When a Muslim sneezes and says "Alhamdu-lillah," you should reply with "Yarahmak-ullah."

5. When a Muslim is sick you should visit him

6. When a Muslim passes away you should accompany his dead body to the cemetery."

(Muslim)

Submitted by Sr. F. Jabaney

Abu Huraira (ra) related the Prophet (pbuh) as say-

Childrens' Writing Contest

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First 3 selections receive a prize from
The Ambition

Deadline: July 20th, 1997

Include your name, telephone, and address.

Write your grade and your school's name.

Your picture is also welcome.

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

Community in Action

International Da`wah Symposium Held In Toronto

by M. Abdur Rashid Taylor

On Saturday, April 12, 1997, a symposium was held at Toronto's TARIC Centre. It is situated at the intersection of Canada's two busiest highways (Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 400) and is visible to thousands of motorists daily. For the third consecutive year, the ideas of Islamic Da`wah were presented to Muslims and invited guests.

The all-day symposium featured many of the most active Da`wah workers in Toronto and the two main speakers were Khalifa Yahya Abdul Kareem of Jacksonville, Florida, and Imam Ahmad Kutty of Toronto.

The opening presentation followed a recitation of Holy Quran by Qari Abdul Majid. I presented a seminar on *Da`wah in Hospitals and Other Institutions* complete with role plays of scenarios of what a Muslim visitor might encounter on visiting hospital patients grappling with illness and the dying patients. A nationally broadcast video looking at the role

of an Institutional Chaplain was also part of the seminar. I am a Mental Health and Hospital Chaplain in the Toronto area.

Islam is growing rapidly in so many parts of North America today, and part of that growth is in prisons. Ibrahim Downey, a Da`wah worker in Toronto-area prisons, made a presentation about his work. He highlighted the challenges that imprisoned Muslims are facing, including needs for adequate Halal diets, rights of freedom of choice, and the practice of religion, etc. He also spoke of the increasing incidences of drug abuse and violence among young Muslims.

Sister Najibah Abdul Haqq gave a commanding speech on current ladies' issues. Part of the presentation included youth speakers. Two young men, Raihan Zaidi and Hassan Adams, and a young lady, Malaika Adams, also spoke.

Imam Ahmad Kutty presented the Islamic approach to societal problems, citing the need for

Muslims to indicate Islamic culture and practice in their everyday lives, particularly among our children.

The featured speaker was Khalifa Yahya Abdul Kareem. He delivered a spirited speech citing Islam as a holistic solution to man's problems and the need for Muslims to get back to the Qur'an and Sunnah as solutions to their problems. Khalifa Yahya's speech moved the audience of about three hundred people. One man was so much impressed and motivated by his speech and the entire day's events that he exclaimed that it was only "today that I saw real Muslims" and that it was "you Muslims of North America that should lead the Ummah."

All in all, it was a very successful day that brought Muslims practical ways of doing Da`wah in many areas and an update of work that is being done in such a vital area. The event was co-ordinated by Abdullah Sabree, the Da`wah co-ordinator of TARIC Centre and by local Muslims.

Myths about Islam

Clearing the Misconceptions

by Seema Khan

An educational conference was held on May 3rd, 1997, at Pine Ridge Secondary School in Pickering. The purpose of this conference was to educate people about the very common misconceptions about Islam created in North American society. The Islamic Youth Community Center, working under the supervision of Mr. Ikram Makki in coordination with the Durham Board of Education, represented by Mr. Gary Ranalli, definitely needs to be commended for its sincere effort and hard work in organizing this event.

The successful conference pointed out some of the very important misconceptions widely spread by uneducated Muslims and deliberate propaganda of non-Muslims to harm the continuously growing Muslim population in this continent.

The conference, presented by the Muslim youth, discussed these three topics in detail: The media's portrayal of Islam, Jihad (the Holy War), and last but not the least

important, the perception of veiled women in Islam.

Rizwan Mohammed successfully demonstrated by an in-depth presentation as to how the media has a strong control over our minds and how we accept wrong ideas without questioning ourselves or educating ourselves. This eventually leads to misjudgements about anything we are presented with by the media.

The topic of Jihad was well presented by Zainab Adams. She explained very clearly the meaning of Jihad as being a struggle and not a "holy war." Zainab's presentation ended with a thorough meaning of Jihad according to Islam, i.e., the struggle Muslims have to make on a daily basis.

Lastly, the perception of veiled women was presented by Sister Mariam Ali. The status of women, as being second-class citizens in Canada until the beginning of this century was clearly identified by her. In comparison, Islam has given a respected status to women from the beginning,

especially in the role of a mother. The facts given by her clearly indicate the advantages of being a veiled woman. Some of the advantages pointed out were, more respect and security, because no wrong messages are sent towards anyone. Sister Mariam ended her presentation by stating that veiled women are taken much more seriously and how the Hijab elevates the status of women.

This interesting event was an all-day educational conference for Muslims and non-Muslims alike due to the panel discussion held at the end of the conference. Many questions about Islam were asked by the keen audience which were thoroughly discussed and answered.

Definitely, this conference was a step towards educating North Americans about the beauty of Islam. May Allah bless all the organizers of this event and provide us with such resources, mutual understanding, and many more opportunities for educating our society about Islam.

Success Stories Around Us

by Aneesa Lakhi

U of T

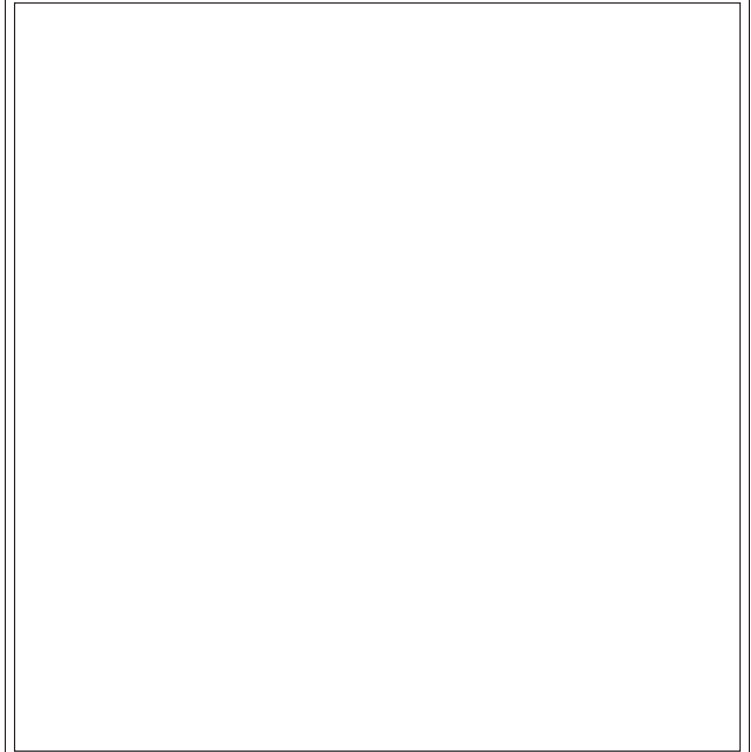
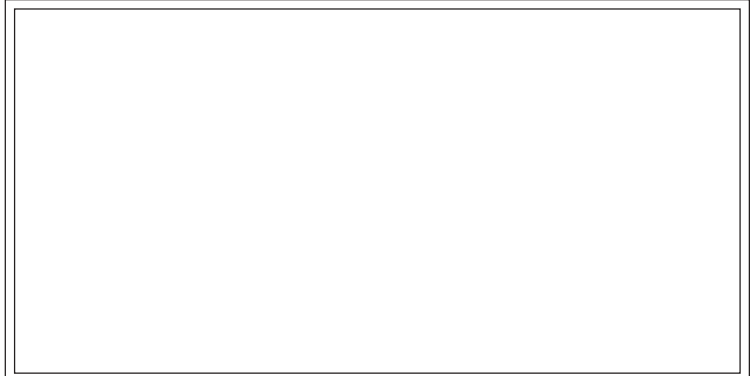
We, at The Ambition, want to provide a space in which to take note of and pride in the accomplishments, ambitions, and efforts of Muslim women. This section of the paper will be aimed at not only making the community at large aware of these women, their ideas and actions, but will also attempt to provide role-models for younger readers and the challenges which face them will be addressed.

Essentially we would like to be able to interview women who have achieved success in their professional and/or personal lives while maintaining their religious identity; women who want to speak out about a particular issue, concern, or cause; and women who are working to help other Muslims in whatever ways they see fit. The subject for each interview should simply be a woman who has made a difference for the better in the Islamic community, or is attempting to do so.

This segment needs input from our readers in order to be successful. The subjects for the interviews will be chosen based on nominations received from readers. If you, or someone you know, fits our description of potential subjects, if there is an issue concerning women which you would like to discuss, if there is a Muslim woman you particularly admire, please let us know. Once you have a potential subject in mind, we need you to submit the name and telephone number of that person, a short introduction to this person and your reasons for nominating her. With your help we will, Insh-Allah, be able to look within our own community to see what possibilities do exist. I thank you in advance for your assistance.

(Aneesa Lakhi is a fourth year student at the U of T. She is majoring in English and History.)

Editor's Note: Aneesa is only committed to work with sisters. We would like to do the same for Muslim men if we can get a person interested in doing the interviews and working with brothers. If you are interested, please let us know.



The Ambition welcomes new writers

We invite writers, interviewers, community news reporters, story writers for children, etc., etc.

Call Asma Warsi at (416) 740-1491

Include your full name, address, telephone number, and your age. You can also send us your picture and a little introduction about yourself if you wish.