



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ISM Today

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Outreach to the Community

One of the important roles of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee is its outreach efforts to the greater community. In the past month or so, the ISM Executive Director, the ISM Outreach Chair and other employees and board members of the ISM have spoken about Islam and Muslims to over one thousand people. A significant percentage of these individuals actually visited the Islamic Center. For most, it was their first time visiting a Masjid and hearing about Islam from Muslims.

Unfortunately, according to various polls, attitudes in the United States remain very negative toward our faith. In a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in May, 2013, 42% of respondents indicated that Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence among its believers. Those who were most likely to hold such views included conservative republicans (69%), white evangelical protestants (63%), and those over 65 years old (53%).

The highest percentages of those who did NOT think that Islam was more likely to encourage violence among its believers included Liberal Democrats (71%), 18 to 29 year olds (60%) and college graduates (58%).

Although respondents to the survey held negative views, they also acknowledged that Muslims were experiencing significant discrimination. 45% of respondents indicated that Muslim Americans were experiencing "a lot" of discrimination. This compares to other groups that were said to be experiencing "a lot" of discrimination included gays and lesbians (39%); Hispanic Americans (25%) and African Americans (22%).

Muslims have a lot of work to do to change the negative attitude that people have about our faith. Education is a very important variable that can be utilized to combat the negative views. Even more important is how we conduct ourselves and interact with the community at large. For photos of some of the groups that visited the ISM and quotes from letters that we received from them, please see pages 6 and 7 of this newsletter.

Your ISM Today

Assalamu Alaikum

We have received strong support for ISM Today and we continue to hear positive feedback from our members. Nevertheless, we want greater participation from the general Muslim community. We request that you send us important news, accomplishments, and community happenings. This newsletter is distributed to the entire Muslim

community and we also distribute copies at local Muslim businesses. If you would like to advertise with us, and reach thousands of Muslims, please email us your advertisements. Information about prices is found on page 12 of this newsletter. All funds from the ads go toward covering printing and other expenses.

A committee has been formed to oversee the publication of the newsletter. If you have any suggestions, please contact us at ISMToday@ismonline.org.

Thank you again! May Allah bring you happiness, success and health always.

Br. Ayman Alamy

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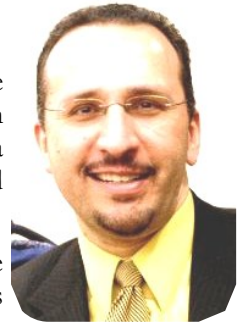
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From the Executive Director

Assalamu Alaikum Brothers & Sisters.

As many of you are aware, Islamophobia is alive and well in the United States. Polls of the general population show that, in 2013, a greater percentage of people in the United States have a negative view of Islam and Muslims than during the time period after the horrific events of 2001.



There are variety of reasons for this increasingly negative perception. The general population is regularly exposed to news stories of conflict and upheaval in parts of the Muslim world; our country continues to be involved in military operations in Muslim countries in which U.S. troops have been killed; violent extremists who falsely claim to operate under the banner of Islam continue to commit horrendous crimes, mostly targeting other Muslims; and, very significantly, there exists an industry in the United States that is committed to spreading false information about Islam and Muslims in an attempt to marginalize and disenfranchise the American Muslim community. An analysis of this "industry" has been made by various groups, including the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Center for American Progress (CAP). A 2011 CAP publication, "Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America", discusses the individuals who promote anti-Muslim hatred, the funders, the misinformation experts and the politics behind this movement.

It is my belief, based on years of outreach, that most of those who have a negative perception of Islam and Muslims are not bigots and racists. Rather, many are just uninformed. They have very little knowledge about Islam and Muslims and have formed erroneous opinions based on the misinformation that they heard or read.

The most effective way to combat the public's inaccurate information about Islam and Muslims is through outreach and education. The Islamic Society of Milwaukee has committed significant time and resources to reaching out to others. Alhamdulillah, we speak to thousands of people each year. Many visitors come to the ISM and we go to many churches, school groups (grade schools to universities), business and professional groups and others.

One of the most effective ways to convey information about Islam and Muslims is through our daily interaction with others. This is the responsibility of everyone. How we conduct ourselves in our businesses, with our neighbors, with our colleagues at work and at school may often determine how people view Islam. Some people may think that this is not fair, but whether you like it or not, we are all ambassadors of our faith.

As the year 2013 comes to a close, we continue our outreach work and we continue to try and improve the programs and services we offer all the members of our community, including adults and our youth. We thank you for your support and ask Allah (swt) to bless you and your families.

We continue to look forward to your input and suggestions. Please visit our offices, contact us at ismtoday@ismonline.org or contact me personally at omatta@ismonline.org.

Jazakum Allah Khair.

Othman Atta

Community Events

Monthly Family Talk Show

Special guest, Dr. Amjad Qourshah, hosted our monthly family talk show for the month of November. Dr. Amjad Qourshah is a professor at the Islamic University of Jordan and a visiting scholar at Al-Huda University. The session was titled, "Are You a Proud Muslim." The gym was full of attendees from our community and the program was enjoyed by many. We look forward to our next family talk show, inshallah.



Annual Hujjaj Program

Our annual Hujjaj Welcome Back Program took place on November 9th. It was the first pilgrimage for many hujjaj, while several hujjaj had made the journey previously. The hujjaj shared their positive experiences from their spiritual journey and provided advice to those community members who have not yet performed hajj. We pray that Allah SWT will accept their hajj and prayers.



Ashura Fast

On Ashura day, November 13th, many community members broke their fast at the ISM community potluck. After iftar, Sheikh Ziad explained the history and significance of the day. It is traditional for Muslims to fast the day of Ashura, as well as the day before or the day after. The Prophet PBUH indicated that this fast would expiate for the sins of the previous and upcoming year.



Why Dawah?

Dr. Sabeel Ahmad, Director of the Gain Peace Project, presented a beneficial seminar on dawah in the West. Dr. Sabeel emphasized during his lecture that Dawah is a very important aspect of Islam. He also mentioned that Islam was spread through Dawah and the Muslim ummah would not be where it is today without it.



ISM WEST - Construction Progress!

Alhamdulillah, the ISM West masjid project has been moving forward at a fast pace over the past several months. The goal of trying to complete the masjid shell ahead of the winter season has almost been achieved. The recent bout of extreme cold has slowed work down at the site in the past couple weeks, however, the goal still remains within reach, inshallah.

As you're able to see from the pictures, there has been significant progress in the construction since the summer, alhamdulillah. If you have not yet been to the site, do plan to visit with your family, as it is a very exciting time and important to share these memories with your children. Some of the key



accomplishments include completion of the foundation shell, the masonry (interior block walls), utility & sewer lines, steel framing and decking and the curbing of the parking lot. There also has been a substantial amount of brick work completed, especially on the west side of the building, as well as electrical work and framing of exterior walls.

As we near the year end, inshallah if we are able to finish the roof and close the shell of the building, this will allow the internal work to commence, such as beginning the inside framing of the walls, pouring of the floors, installing doors & windows, carpentry work, and laying in the HVAC components.

Alhamdulillah, with your generous donations and support, and Allah SWT's blessing, we have come this far. Assuming the inside construction work can move ahead at full force, pending the closing of the shell, we are on the way to opening the doors (inshallah!!) by the summer of 2014, hopefully in time for the month of Ramadan. In order to accomplish and reach this goal, we would need to have one final fundraiser early next year to finish collecting the needed funds. There will be



more communication on this event in January of next year. Allah has given us a tremendous opportunity to earn continuous reward for future generations, and in our own back yard. Let's do our utmost to seize this moment and take advantage to the best of our abilities, inshallah.

We pray to Allah and make duaa that He bless this project, we ask Him for His help to easily raise the remaining funds needed to build this House of Worship, and we ask Him to generously reward all of you who have donated to this masjid to help make this a reality, Ameen

Lateef Khan, ISM West Task Force

President's Message

Reflection on the Vision and Mission of the ISM

Assalaamu alaikum, brothers and sisters:

As we have begun the new Hijri calendar year 1435 and approach the end of the Gregorian calendar year 2013, it is customary to reflect on what we have accomplished in the past year and what we hope to accomplish, insha'Allah, in the coming year. The Islamic Society of Milwaukee as an organization also engages in this kind of reflection. One of the tools that we utilize is a planning retreat, which insha'Allah we will hold in January.



In engaging in short term and long term planning, two of the things that we look at are what we want to be and how can we get there. One way of a 21st century organization expressing what it wants to be and how it can get there is through adopting vision and mission statements. A vision statement is a short declaration in aspirational terms of what the organization seeks to be, while a mission statement looks at how to go about moving from the present toward its desired future. Both the vision and mission statements should express the values of the organization.

At previous retreats, the Islamic Society of Milwaukee has adopted the following Vision Statement:

“Our vision is to be a vibrant, exemplary American Muslim community that serves all God’s creation with mercy, justice and respect for human dignity.”

We also adopted the following Mission Statement:

“Our mission is to serve the religious, educational and social needs of our community and to promote good citizenship; to advocate for social justice; to build relations with other communities; and to assist those in need; all according to the Qur’an and Sunnah.”

I have ordered that the Islamic Society of Milwaukee’s Vision and Mission Statements be posted in the Islamic Center lobby. The Statements will be in a nice frame on printed paper, so that they can be taken as an important expression of our organization; yet, it will not be engraved or permanently attached as such statements must always be debated and subject to revision and growth.

As we enter our new year, I encourage all of you to reflect on what it is that you want the ISM to become, what our priorities should be in getting there and to make dua that we achieve our goal of performing Allah’s Will. Please feel free to e-mail me at any time with your suggestions and comments for the ISM at ahmedquereshi@hotmail.com and may Allah bless and protect you and your families and grant you a safe and prosperous new year.

Attorney Ahmed J. Quereshi

Faith Connections Event Honors Former Executive Director of ISM

On Monday, October 15th, the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee held a fundraising program at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater in Downtown Milwaukee. The event celebrated the dynamic roles that faith and values play in society. Two arts leaders were featured, including retired Milwaukee Art Museum Director, Muhammad Isa Sadlon, who is also the emeritus executive director of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. Br. Isa spoke about the influence that Islam has had on his life and his work. Also featured was former Milwaukee Rep. managing director Tonen (Sara) O’Conner, who is now resident priest emerita of the Milwaukee Zen (Buddhist) Center.

Outreach to the Community

The ISM handles many outreach requests, and the reactions we receive are very positive. In the past few months, the ISM provided speakers for many groups, including:

- ♦ Alverno College: A group of 20 Alverno students came to the ISM for a discussion about sacred space.
- ♦ AFS International Student Exchange Program: A group of high school exchange students and their U.S. families came to the ISM for a presentation about Islam and Muslims. Out of 100 people in attendance, only five had ever visited the Islamic center.
- ♦ Catholic Memorial High School: A group of over 100 students came to the ISM for a presentation about Islam and Muslims. None of the students or faculty had ever visited the ISM.
- ♦ Concordia University: The ISM Executive Director spoke to a World Cultures class at Concordia University in Mequon about Islam and Muslims.
- ♦ West Bend High School: Several hundred students heard a lecture about Islam and Muslims and had the opportunity to ask many questions.
- ♦ Divine Savior Holy Angels High School: Over 50 students and faculty from DSHA came to the ISM for a presentation about Islam.
- ♦ Mount Mary University: Twelve students from a pre-law class at Mount Mary came to the ISM for a discussion on community and legal issues related to Muslims in the U.S.
- ♦ Marquette University: Sr. Inshirah gave a presentation to an Arab & Muslims class from Marquette University.
- ♦ George Williams College: Students from Lake Geneva came to the ISM for a presentation and discussion.
- ♦ Urban Immersion Retreat Program



Sr. Inshirah, the Outreach Chair, was a team leader in the 2013 Greater Milwaukee CROP Hunger Walk. The CROP Hunger Walk is an interfaith charity walk and food drive to raise awareness of hunger in the Milwaukee area.

Outreach to the Community

2:143 And Thus We have made you a medium (just) nation **that you may be the bearers of witness to the people** and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you;...



Over 100 students from Catholic Memorial High School spent a couple of hours at the ISM learning the basics of Islam from the ISM Executive Director.

My students...told me how much they appreciated your friendly and open manner, and are very interested in learning about this important world religion.

-Lorna Grade
Divine Savior Holy Angels High School

To the ISM Executive Director: Thank you for your wonderful presentation. The topics you touched on were perfect. You engaged every single person in your audience. We would like to plan our "second annual event" for 2014. Our event at the mosque was everything and more than what I had expected. Thank you for paying close attention to detail and making our day such a success.

-Beth Clemence
A.F.S., Chair Elect (2014)

To the ISM Executive Director: The students in our classes did some reflection after your visit with us and many, many students said they found your presentation and question and answer session highly educational and engaging. Many students said they appreciated your candor and willingness to break down stereotypes people have of the Muslim faith.

- Scott Lone
West Bend East High School



Thank you for hosting our visit. It was wonderful!

-Attorney Rachel Monaco-Wilcox
Mount Mary University

Youth from the UCC Salem Church spent a morning with Sr. Inshirah learning about Muslims in the Milwaukee area.



Outreach to the Community



The above picture was taken by a Journal Sentinel photographer who covered an Amazing Faith Dinner that was hosted by members of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. The Journal Sentinel also carried an article about this particular dinner, in their Sunday edition. The participants in the above dinner included Sr. Inshirah Farhoud, Sr. Bayan and Br. Nabil Salous, Sr. Jill Ochoa, members of several Christian denominations, a Jewish couple and others. A link to this article can be found here:

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/milwaukee-area-group-hopes-simple-meals-lead-to-religions-tolerance-b99107336z1-225670301.html>

NEEDED

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NEW Muslims**

Please contact Sr. Inshirah for more details
414.313.1595

The Amazing Faith Dinner Projects

I would like to invite our community members to participate in The Amazing Faith Dinner Projects.

The Amazing Faith Dinner Project is a program that is sponsored by the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee. This program brings people of various faiths together so that all may learn about the beliefs and faith traditions of others through exploration and dialogue.

These events take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and enable everyone involved to stand as witness for tolerance and understanding.

The format: a group of 8 - 10 people gather in one of the participants' homes over a very light meal. One of the participants is a moderator who will facilitate the discussion.

Please contact Inshirah Farhoud if you are interested in participating in one of the dinner projects.

Inshirahf@aol.com or 414-313-1595.

Duaa of the Month:

عن طارق أنه سمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، وأتاه رجل، فقال: يا رسول الله، كيف أقول حين أسأل ربي؟ قال: "قل: اللهم اغفر لي، وارحمني، وعافني، وارزقني، فإن هؤلاء تجمع لك دنياك وآخرتك"

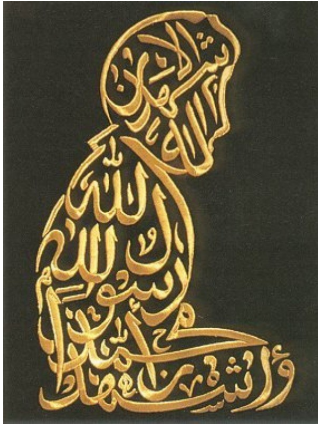
Tariq said: A man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said to him: "O Messenger of Allah! What shall I say if I want to pray to my Rubb? (Lord) " He (the Prophet (SAW)) said,:

[Transliteration]: Qul: 'Allahumma-ghfir li, warhamni, wa 'afini, warzuqni

[Translation] Say: O Allah! Forgive me, have mercy on me, protect me and provide me with sustenance.

Surely, this supplication is better for you in this life and in the Hereafter.

(Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim)



Community Duaa

As a community, we would like to keep Sr. Yasmeen Ali and her sister, Sr. Nur Ali in our dua. They were both involved in a serious car accident several weeks ago. We are praying for their full and speedy recovery, inshallah. May Allah SWT heal the both of them and grant their family patience and strength during this time.

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ النَّاسِ مُذْهِبَ الْبَاسِ إِشْفِ أَنْتَ الشَّافِي لَا شَافِيَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ شِفَاءً لَا يُغَادِرُ سَقَمًا

[Transliteration]: Al'laah hum'ma Rab'ban Naasi Muzhibal Baasi – Ishfi Anta Shaafi – Laa Shaafi il'la Anta Shifa'an Laa Yughaadiru Suqma

[Translation]: "O Allah, Lord and Sustainer of mankind, remove the difficulty and provide the cure. You are the only One who cures. There is no cure but Yours. Grant such (complete) cure that leaves no trace of illness. Ameen".

ISM Today is a publication of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit religious organization.

All articles, news, events, pictures, and other content should be submitted to

ISMToday@isonline.org

Community News

Congratulations On Your Newborn!

The ISM would like to congratulate:

- * Suhail & Jurgita Shelleh on the birth of their daughter, Amirah
- * Eman & Haitham Assad on the birth of their daughter, Yasmeen
- * Munir & Feda Atshan on the birth of their daughter, Lujayne
- * Belal AbuShaqla & Hadeel Jubeh on the birth of their daughter, Taleen



We wish them a life full of joy and
a heart full of Iman!

Congratulations on your Graduation

The Islamic Society of Milwaukee would like to congratulate the young adults who have successfully completed their undergraduate or graduate degrees in 2013. The first word of the Qur'an that was revealed was "Iqraa" meaning "read". The dedication and hard work of these students should be recognized and celebrated. We wish you the best of luck in your future career plans.



The graduates are listed in alphabetical order:

- * Noha Ahlat, UW-Milwaukee
- * Rowan Ahmad, Alverno College
- * Derrar Benckekribou, UW-Milwaukee
- * Arwa Fairaq, UW-Milwaukee
- * Abdul Aziz Javed, UW-Milwaukee
- * Duaa Kheirah, Alverno College
- * Majidah Murrar, Marquette University
- * Bisan Muna, UW-Milwaukee
- * Farrah Nazar, UW-Milwaukee
- * Marina Ocha, Alverno College
- * Rawan Sarsour, Cardinal Stritch University

Our Condolences

إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

Inna Lilahi wa Ina Ilaihi raji'oun. To Him we belong and to Him we shall return. The ISM would like to extend our condolences to the families who lost someone dear to their hearts.

- * Hajjah Magdah Hassan, mother of Dr. Marwan Aly and mother-in-law of Emaan Gabr
- * Sr. Montaha Kadadha, sister of Zayed Kadadha
- * Um Abdel Muhdi, mother of Abdel Razzaq Tbaishat and the aunt of Mohammad Tbaishat
- * Br. Liaqat Ali, father of Barkat Ali and uncle of Jafar Sadiq
- * Taha Abbas Ali, father of Atheer Abbas and Baraa Abbass
- * Br. Safdar Syed, Son of Yousuf Syed and Aziza Syed
- * Hajjah Faiqa Al-Far (Oweisi), mother of Sayyah Oweisi and mother-in-law of Ibtihaj Oweisi

Congratulations on your Engagement and Marriage

Marriage is equated with "completing half of one's faith". The ISM would like to wish our newlyweds a long, happy and healthy life together, inshallah. Congratulations to you and your families!



- * Isra Ahmad & Saed Ismail
- * Rowan Ahmad & Ali Imran
- * Areej Assad & Mohammad Assad
- * Mona Azzam & Khalid Arafah
- * Zeinab Azzam & Hani Abushawish
- * Eman Jaber & Ashraf Murfiq
- * Duaa Kheirah & Islam Bahhur
- * Gadeer Ali & Jeff Taylor

Campus Activism

UWM's MSA

Chai Chat: Discussing Social Justice- Nov 19, 2013

This event was organized specifically to be a discussion about discrimination. The MSA collaborated with the Black Student Union & Latino Student Union because African Americans, Latinos and Muslims are major groups in the United States that are currently facing discrimination on a large scale. Each organization had a speaker to discuss their own experiences, and to lead a discussion among the students, encouraging them to share their experiences and voice their opinions on this issue.

Blessings Dinner - Nov 25, 2013

The Blessings Dinner was an interfaith dinner commemorating Thanksgiving, while focusing on Islam's teachings to be thankful daily. The MSA invited Imam Ziad to share the Islamic perspective on thanksgiving with the other faith groups present. In addition, there was henna, food and an open mic where the attendees were given the opportunity to go on stage and share what they are grateful for in their lives.

Ashura Iftar - Nov 14, 2013

The MSA provided an iftar for the students who were unable to go home on the day of Ashura. It was a great way for all the Muslims students to get together and break their fast!

-Sehar Javed



Alverno's MSA

Alverno College is a women's college that allows MSA students to feel empowered and able to express themselves as young Muslimahs. This semester, Alverno MSA had one main event along with several other individual projects. Our main event, "Muslims Global Week" covered three Muslim countries and gave an insight on recent events in each country, how Muslims are being affected, and what Islam's teachings are on human rights.

MSA members have also been invited several times to speak in Alverno classes on Islam and especially on being a Muslim woman. Students and staff have gained new and positive insight on Islam and the beliefs taught by our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).



-Seema Oweisi

SJP at UWM & Marquette

In light of Birzeit University's Right 2 Education Week, the Students for Justice in Palestine at UW-Milwaukee and Marquette assembled a mock Israeli checkpoint to portray what a typical Palestinian student has to endure in order to get to school. The purpose was to raise awareness of one of the many struggles in the plight of the Palestinian people. In addition to the checkpoint set up in UWM's Student Union, the students distributed over 300 factoid sheets attached to miniature pencils with statistics of delays, abuse, and lack of raw materials. The efforts of SJP were very eye-opening to the student body as many of these struggles are overlooked or undermined. SJP hopes to further their campus activism and continue to raise awareness until the liberation of Palestine.



-Jameela Asmar

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ISM TODAY

Salam School NEWS



Science Night

On Friday, November 22, 2013, the elementary school held a Mad Science Night. Over 175 parents and children attended the event and a great night was had by all. This event was arranged in conjunction with the after school Mad Science Camp. Seventy five students from grades K-5 through 5th grade attend the after school Mad Science Camp on Tuesdays. It was such a successful program that we will bring it to the middle and high school next semester, Insha'Allah.

Mid Term Exams

The second quarter of the school year is almost complete which means midterm exams at Salam High School. The following are some tips to help your children at any age develop good study habits to ensure their success.

ORGANIZATION

is the best thing that a student can do to find success.

- ♦ Keep desk, locker, backpack, & study area neat & tidy.
- ♦ Track materials as they are being given from teachers in an orderly manner so they can be referred to when the time comes to do homework or study for a test.
- ♦ Study and do your work in a quiet place and eliminate as many distractions as possible
- ♦ Write assignments in a planner. Salam School provides one for each student.
- ♦ Parents: read through the planner and ask questions as to whether or not they have completed the assignments, under no circumstance should you do the assignment for the child.
- ♦ Study and read daily, even when there is no test or homework.

- ♦ Work hard to develop independency with studies and **MAKE EDUCATION YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY!**
- ♦ Eat a healthy breakfast every day, items with whole grains, fiber and protein, not just sugary cereal.

Core Values in Islam: Service to Others

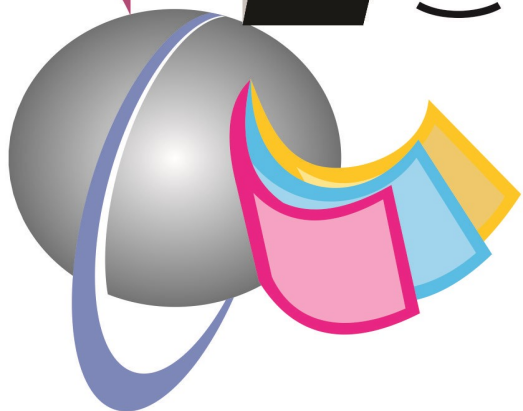
“You shall not attain righteousness until you give out of what you love (in the way of Allah). Allah knows whatever you spend. (3:92)

One major component of our character education/core values in Islam curriculum is service to others. We have ongoing collections in our schools for those less fortunate than us. Currently, we are having a food drive. In the future we will collect socks, gloves, hats, coats and other items for organizations around the city of Milwaukee. We thank all the families that contribute to these efforts.

Additionally, our high school students provide volunteer service hours to the school, the ISM and the community at large. “Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.” (Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*) Let's all work together to leave the imprint of generosity and service to others on the hearts and minds of our children.

Khawla Asmar, M. Ed.
Vice Principal,
Salam Elementary School





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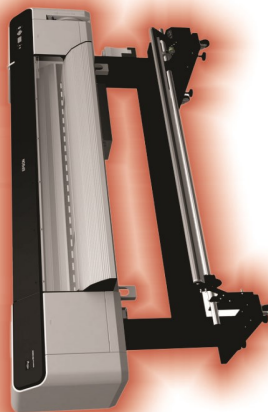
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Muharram al-Haram: The Season of Change



Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah,
ISM Religious Director

Muharram al-Haram, the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is an important month in Islamic history. Not only does it herald in the new Islamic year, it also serves as an annual reminder of some crucial Islamic events of major

historical significance and moral lessons. The Day of Ashura, the 10th of Muharram, is connected with two important historical events, the victory of Prophet Moses (PBUH) over Pharaoh and the massacre of Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) family at Karbala.

The first incident, in which a handful of unskilled and ill-prepared Israelites are made victorious against the unrelenting professional army of Pharaoh, marks the elating and miraculous elements in universal prophetic tradition. The second event, in which the innocent members of the Prophetic family are massacred without divine intervention, denotes that the way of Allah SWT is not always a bed of roses. At certain times it can be extremely grueling. Both episodes indicate that there is a constant struggle between the forces of oppression, dictatorship and tyranny and the free servants of Allah SWT. Truth is constantly pitched against the forces of darkness. Believers are required to stand up against the forces that strive to silence the truth. At times, believers will be victorious and at other times, they will be defeated. Their worldly losses, however, should not dishearten them as they are the truly victorious, both in this life and the life to come. The true success lies in attaining the pleasure of Allah SWT, and not just in worldly gains.

The month of Muharram al-Haram reminds us of a historical paradox i.e., the miraculous as well as the non-miraculous nature of Islamic history. The history is a blend of both, miraculous and ordinary occurrences. The God who harkens to the supplications of Prophet Moses (PBUH) and chooses to save the Hebrews against the hegemonic forces of the absolute tyrant chooses not to protect Prophet Muhammad's family against the aggression of their fellow Muslims. No miracle happens at Karbala. The message is loud and clear. Allah SWT will not let the believers be destroyed by their external enemies but may not interfere between two warring Muslim factions, even if one of them is the just and exalted family of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Muslims are supposed to be far from killing each other for earthly goals. The very definition of a true believer is one who does not

harm others, whether verbal, moral, financial or physical. Inner fighting, especially for earthly gains such as power, money, authority, ego etc., is unwarranted and disastrous for the Muslim Ummah. Allah SWT wants us to love and respect each other. That might have been the lesson conveyed through the massacre at Karbala. This is the message conveyed through the authentic Ahadith of Rasulullah (SAW):

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ، قَالَ: صَلَّى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَوْمًا صَلَاةً، فَأُطَالَ فِيهَا، فَلَمَّا أَنْصَرَفَ قُلْنَا: - أَوْ قَالُوا: - يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَطَلْتَ الْيَوْمَ الصَّلَاةَ، قَالَ: «إِنِّي صَلَّيْتُ صَلَاةَ رَغْبَةٍ وَرَهْبَةٍ، سَأَلْتُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِأُمَّتِي ثَلَاثًا، فَأَعْطَانِي اثْنَيْنِ وَرَدَّ عَلَيَّ وَاحِدَةً، سَأَلْتُهُ أَنْ لَا يُسَلِّطَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَدُوًّا مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ، فَأَعْطَانِيهَا، وَسَأَلْتُهُ أَنْ لَا يُهْلِكَهُمْ غَرَقًا، فَأَعْطَانِيهَا، وَسَأَلْتُهُ أَنْ لَا يَجْعَلَ بَأْسَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ، فَرَدَّهَا عَلَيَّ»

The Prophet (SAW) requested three things from Allah SWT. He was granted two and refused the third. Allah SWT granted him that his Ummah will neither be destroyed by an external enemy nor wiped out by a natural calamity such as earthquakes or floods. Allah SWT refused to grant him security that his Ummah will not be destroyed from within. Therefore, the message of Muharram al-Haram is that Muslims must pay attention to their internal situation and must not let the devil (both human and satanic) destroy them from within. The internal challenges will always be far more significant than the external. The norm is to work hard to unite our ranks.

We must exert efforts to change our destiny and then leave the results to Allah SWT. We cannot just sit idly and wait for the heavens to do our tasks. We must learn how to fulfill our responsibilities first and then depend upon Allah SWT. We should hope for the best and prepare for the worst. The believers are always between the states of fear (*khawf*) and hope (*raja*). Too much hope with Allah SWT without accompanying actions is apathy and not *Tawakkul*. We should learn how to exert efforts, speak up our minds and be the catalyst of change in our societies. Muharram al-Haram is the season of activism, resistance, change, reformation, de-construction and construction. This Islamic egalitarian message should be carried to our annual agendas and plans for action.

See Dr. Shah's Khutbas and lectures at:
www.youtube.com/DrZulfiqarAliShah

Book Corner

How to Read the Quran

By Carl W Ernst

How to Read the **Qur'an**
A NEW GUIDE, WITH SELECT TRANSLATIONS



Carl W. Ernst

The author of "How to read the Quran" is a professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina. He conducted an academic study of the Quran by examining it as a piece of literature rather than as the sacred book for Muslims. According to the author, the academic approach, which is based on history and literature,

offers an important non-theological alternative to the unforgiving hostility and prejudice against Islam.

As part of his analysis, the author compiled the Quran according to the chronological sequence of revelation. He presented a thorough analysis of many Surahs based on the historical events at the time of revelation. For example: the author noted that it was in Surah 15 (Al-Hijr) that Allah (SWT) first addressed the prophet and the believers which the author felt was an indication of the establishment of a religious community. The author felt that this was a turning point in revelation since prior revelations seemed (according to the author) to be directed to the Prophet (PBUH) alone. Also, in this Surah, the author noted that at least forty earlier passages have been emphasized, referenced or repeated. He regarded this as a deliberate reminder of the signs Allah (SWT) rather than mechanical repetition.

Mr. Ernst discussed in detail the "ring structure" of the Quran. This type of structure has been widely used in earlier literature. It provides an insight into the relationship between the general ethical principles and particular historic situations. The author demonstrated that the middle portion of the Surah, or the inner ring, has crucial importance on the level of universal principles and ethical teachings. In contrast, the outer rings may refer to particular incidents or events. For example, in Surah 60, which has only thirteen verses,

there appears, according to the author, a high level of animosity and mistrust between the believers and unbelievers. For example, there is substantial hatred and enmity that exists between Prophet Abraham and his immediate family. In contrast, in the heart of the Surah, the master theme emerged in Ayah (Verse) 7, which raised the possibility of affection between enemies. "Maybe God will place affection between you and those among you who are your enemies; for God is the mighty one, and God is forgiving, Merciful." The author felt that following the ring structure while reading the Quran would eliminate what appeared to be different approaches of various verses in a Surah.

The author managed to distinguish the verses that were revealed during the early Meccan period from the verses that were revealed during the Medinian and later Meccan period. The early Meccan verses were very short, related to single thought, had similar rhythm, addressed the Prophet (PBUH), and used tough language regarding the heavenly punishment that would await those who chose not to believe. The Medinian verses are much longer, have a compound structure, offer a softer tone, are addressed to the Prophet and the believers, and have fewer references to hellfire or the references are more implicit. The author presents an example of the contrast between the two. Verse 30 of Surah 73 (Almuzzamil) is a Medinian verse that has been added at a later time to what is a Meccan Surah. This verse, which is almost half a page, has a much softer and gentler tone when compared to the rest of the Surah. The verse is quite complex and addressed to both, the Prophet (PBUH) and the believers. It is important to mention that the author examined the punishment stories in the early Meccan period. He argued against the view that those stories were intended to terrify. In the author's view, the Meccan Surahs were meant to repeatedly indicate that most people rejected the warnings of the Prophet, and most of them remained unbelievers. The author felt that it was unlikely that the Meccan Surahs would continue to place a great deal of emphasis on the punishment of the unbelieving people as a "scare tactic", since this approach produced minimal results. Rather, the author felt that the stories of

Book Corner (cont)

punishment unquestionably served as an encouragement and consolation to the Prophet and the believers, by dramatic portrayal of the downfall of their opponents.

The author also shed some light on the commonality between Islam, Christianity and Judaism since all are descended from Prophet Ibrahim, and are all monotheistic faiths. The author presented many narratives where the Qur'an seems to assume that the audience is familiar with the previous revelations, especially the Torah and the Bible. The author also noted that the Qur'an, in addition to addressing Muslims and believers directly, also made direct commentary toward the People of the Scripture.

The author argued that the re-interpretation and reframing of previous revelation has always been the hallmark of prophecy. For example: the Hebrew Bible was adopted as the word of God. Following the prophecy of Isa (PBUH), the Hebrew Bible was relegated to a secondary position and it has been renamed the "Old Testament" by Christians. It is well known that numerous Hebrew biblical texts received a new interpretation according to Christian theology. Following the same analogy, the author felt that Muslim Scholars have gone one step further by viewing the message of Islam as the most recent interpretation of all previous revelations.

Summary by Nabil Salous

Join the ISM Book Club

Meet every Friday - 7:00pm-9:00pm
Art Room (ISM—Lower Level)

Current Book:

How to Read the Quran

By; Carl W Ernst

Journey to Islam

Alhamdulillah many brothers and sisters have accepted Islam in the past few months. May Allah continue to guide them and strengthen their iman! Below are two letters received from recent reverts sharing their experiences. Welcome!

Assalamu Alaykum

Faith was a journey for me. It always felt like this never-ending quest where I was on six damp dark paths to nowhere and all were headed in the same direction. Countless hours, at least that is what it felt like, lost and blind, studying, observing, retaining and receiving information. Just when it felt so dark and cold, with no light at the end of the path, Allah Graciously guided me to study Islam. Through Allah, so great so merciful, so forgiving, I found the one true path. No longer that shabby and muddy road; there is a beautifully paved open way with the Quran and the Prophet PBUH as my guides. Life has never been so exhilarating nor has it made more sense. Many changes are happening at a rapid pace now, but I embraced the new better me, a Muslimah with eyes wide open, an open heart, mind and soul. Reciting the Shahada on August 2nd was the happiest day of my life. A new me was born, like a baby, everything in me was shaking and tears of joy kept streaming down my face. Allahu Akbar, everyone was as kind to me as my new brothers and sisters in faith. All walking the same road...that same road together with Allah, the most Great in our lives!

Thank you,

Shelby Lynn

"The truth shall set you free!" No greater words have been spoken. After generations of Christianity, I was called, challenged and enlightened by Islam--SubhanAllah! Free from bondage, guilt, idol worship, paganism and false teachings; I haven't felt this liberated since child birth. I was challenged by my Saudi friend, Mansour, to use common sense and after 3 weeks of study, introspection and reflection, I happily and humbly took shahadah on July 26th during the month of Ramadan. Life has been bountiful ever since. The brothers and sisters at ISM are a shiny example and embodiment of Islam at its purest, and I feel more at home than around my own natural family members.

Islam appeals to my sense of reason and now I know that Islam is the only truth and that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought the truthful message and inspired word from Allah. I look forward to communing and working beside the brothers and sisters at ISM to spread the truth and embody the message of Islam (Inshallah). I am inspired and rejuvenated deep in my soul to help ISM and the Muslim community as a whole to spread the truth and challenge others to enlightenment. If my work and abilities can be utilized fi sabilillah for the greater humanitarian good, then my life will not have been lived in vain.

Alhamdullilah, subhanallah, astaeenu billah, fi aman illah, aslamtu nafsi lillah, la illaha illa Allah.

-Michael Walker

Remembering a Leader

On December 5, 2013, the world lost an important leader and a symbol of the fight against racism and colonialism. Nelson Mandela, who fought against apartheid and who was imprisoned by the forces of hatred for over two decades, was also a leader in forging peace and reconciliation.

The leaders of many of the world's nations attended Nelson Mandela's funeral service and many spoke about the important role he played. Ironically, some of the world leaders who attended the services represented countries that demonized the fight against apartheid and were allied with the white Afrikaner government. The United States government had labeled the Africa National Congress (ANC), the main organization fighting apartheid, a terrorist organization and Nelson Mandela was regarded as a terrorist. Israeli leaders, who have their own apartheid system in place in occupied Palestine, hypocritically eulogized Nelson Mandela even though some of their existing leaders had extremely close ties with the racist Afrikaner regime and supplied the apartheid regime with weapons that were used against the black South Africans. The Israeli and the apartheid government also worked together in developing nuclear, chemical and biological capabilities.

Nelson Mandela and other well known South African leaders such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu recognized the Palestinian fight for independence and compared it to their own struggle for independence. The following are excerpts from a speech that Mr. Mandela made at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies on July 11, 1997. The full speech can be found here: www.anc.org.za/nelson/show.php?id=3135

Renewal and Renaissance - Towards a New World Order

In this month of July, exactly five hundred years ago, a navigator by the name of Vasco da Gama set out from Europe on a mission "in search of Christians and spices"...

His long and dangerous journey outflanking Islamic control of trade with the East, would take him round a continent of Africa that represented not much more to him than an obstacle between Europe and Asia...

For those who could not match the military, economic and social power of Europe during this period of expansion, the consequences were adverse, and often disastrous. That included the Islamic world, in particular that part of it which was African and that part which enjoyed thriving and productive relations with Africa. The Nineteenth Century colonisation of the African Continent was in many respects the culmination of the Renaissance-initiated expansion of European dominion over the planet. The effects on the colonised continent are too well known to need repetition.

...Africa, more than any other continent, has had to contend with the consequences of conquest in a denial of its own role in history, including the denial that its people had the capacity to bring about change and progress.

...Today Islam and Christianity represent major religions in Africa, with Islam in fact the majority religion on the continent.

...Islam has become part of Africa in a process as complex as the history of the continent itself. In some areas it was through military conquest; in many others - including parts of Southern Africa - along the arteries of trade; and also - as in South Africa - through the actions of colonial powers circumventing the refusal of the colonised to submit to wage-labour. I may add that Robben Island's first political prisoner, and one of the founding fathers of Islam in South Africa, was one of several exiled leaders of resistance to colonial rule in South-East Asia.

...If I may, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to those South African Muslims who died while in detention because of their resistance to apartheid; Babla Saloojee; Imam Haroun; Ahmed Timol; and Dr Hussein Hafferjee. They represent the involvement of the Muslim community in the struggle for justice and freedom, as does the presence of Muslims as Cabinet Ministers and in the highest office of our judiciary, in the new democratic political dispensation of our country.

Though there have been times in history of our continent when religion has inflamed tension and conflict, rather than eased it, there has generally been a notable degree of religious tolerance.

When the Prophet Muhammad sent his oppressed followers to the African Christian King Negus of Abyssinia for safety, and they received his protection, was that not an example of tolerance and co-operation to be emulated today? Is that not a profound pointer to the role that religion can play, and the spiritual leadership it can provide, in bringing about the social renewal on our continent and in the world?

If I may conclude with one more reference to the experience of our own country during the struggle against apartheid. The strength of inter-religious solidarity in action against apartheid, rather than mere harmony or co-existence, was critical in bringing that evil system to an end. This approach, rather than verbally competing claims, enabled each tradition to bring its best forward and place it at the service of all. I am confident that the religions of our continent will walk a similar path in the reconstruction and renewal of our continent. And in that way we shall play our full role in the creation of the new world order.

Green Tip of the Month

Stop Plastic Pollution. Drop the Plastic Bag and Bottle!

Plastic bags are ubiquitous. Each year the world goes through some 500 Billion plastic bags. It is estimated that about 100 Billion are used and discarded in the US alone, at the cost of 12 million barrels of oil.

Only about 2% of these bags are recycled. Most have a **very** short lifetime with a consumer — they are used for the few minutes it takes to get from the store to home and then they're thrown away. Plastic shopping bags can last up to a thousand years in a landfill. In the environment, they break down into tiny, toxic particles that become part of the soil and water. They contribute to the plastic debris in the ocean that kill an estimated 1 million sea creatures each year.

Eliminating the use of disposable plastic bags is about more than just the environment, it is about health, sustainability, economics and ultimately, the quality of our life.

Reduce and Reuse, Repurpose, THEN Recycle

Reduce your plastic footprint. Consider the lifecycle of every plastic product you purchase. Choose products with the least packaging, look for products and packaging made from renewable and biodegradable resources, avoid plastic packaging and containers. Choose products that have the least amount of disposable parts. Choose glass, stainless steel and recycled/biodegradable paper over plastic.

Use a stainless steel water bottle rather than drinking water out of disposable plastic bottles. Reuse your own ceramic or stainless steel mug and food containers. Use biodegradable paper cups instead of plastic cups for cold drinks.

Always bring and carry your own reusable bags whenever you shop, not just for the supermarket. By bringing and carrying your own reusable bag, you alone can reduce between 400 and 600 plastic bags per year.

Please consider a one-time plastic use as a serious waste that must first and foremost be prevented and reduced, then reused, repurposed and recycled. "...Eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters" (The Qur'an, 7:31)

The [Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin](http://IslamicEnvironmentalGroup.org/), a volunteer group formed in 2005, intends to educate its members, the Muslim community and the general public about the Islamic environmental teachings, to apply these teachings in daily life and to form coalitions with others working toward a just, peaceful and sustainable future.



<http://IslamicEnvironmentalGroup.org/>
<https://twitter.com/wigreenmuslims>
 Contact: interfaith.earth@yahoo.com

ISM TODAY



Muslim Community & Health Center (MCHC) provides free health care services for the un-insured and underinsured.

MCHC's guiding principles are based on the Islamic values of compassion, kindness, peace and diversity.

The clinic is open on the following days:

Saturday: 1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
 Patient check in: 1:30 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday: 5:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
 Patient check in: 5:30 p.m.-6:15 p.m.

Our clinic is located at:

815 West Layton Ave
 Milwaukee, WI 53221
 414.939.4411
info@mchcwi.org

***Disclaimer: We reserve the right to limit number of patients seen on any given day.

The Muslim Public Affairs Council has recently released a paper titled **“Declaration Against Extremism”**

The Islamic Society of Milwaukee has signed on to a number of statements condemning terrorism and extremism. The ISM endorses this document as well. If you would like to see the entire document, go here:

<http://www.mpac.org/assets/docs/2013/MPAC-Declaration-Against-Extremism.pdf>

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