

I S L A M I C HORIZONS

**60 YEARS OF SERVICE:
NAVIGATING THE WAY FORWARD**

**60TH ANNUAL ISNA
CONVENTION**

Your career is on track. Are your investments?

The **Amana Funds** and **Saturna Capital** offer a variety of account types and investment strategies to fit your investing needs.

It's easier than you think. We can help.

- *Halal* investment options
- Multiple fund strategies help you diversify
- IRA, ESA, HSA, 401(k), Rollovers
- America's longest-running, Islamically acceptable mutual fund with more than 30 years of investing success

To learn more about how the **Amana Funds** and **Saturna Capital** can help you invest according to Islamic principles, visit www.amanafunds.com



Amana Mutual Funds Trust

www.amanafunds.com

1-800-728-8762

INCOME • GROWTH • DEVELOPING WORLD • PARTICIPATION

Please consider an investment's objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. To obtain this and other important information about Amana Mutual Funds in a current prospectus or summary prospectus, please visit www.amanafunds.com or call toll free 1-800-728-8762. Please read the prospectus or summary prospectus carefully before investing.

Investing involves risk, including possible loss of principal. The Amana Funds limit the securities they purchase to those consistent with Islamic principles. This limits opportunities and may affect performance. Distributed by Saturna Brokerage Services, Inc., member FINRA / SIPC and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Saturna Capital, investment adviser to the Amana Funds.



**No matter where you are in life –
Let the Iman Fund help.**



IMAN FUND
ALLIED ASSET ADVISORS

INVESTING WITH VALUES

Are your investments Halal?



Call Mohamad Nasir for a complete review of your investment portfolio and its Shariah compliance.

Some of our products include:

- ✧ **401k Rollover**
- ✧ **IRA (Roth & Traditional)**
- ✧ **Coverdell Educational**
- ✧ **Regular Accounts**
- ✧ **Simple & Sep IRAs**

Iman Fund is currently offered on the following platforms among others.



Fidelity
INVESTMENTS

Scottrade



Vanguard

www.ImanFund.com | 877-417-6161

You should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of the fund carefully before investing. For a free copy of the fund's summary or statutory prospectus, which contains this and other information, visit our website at www.imanfund.com or call 877-417-6161. You should read the prospectus carefully before you invest.

Mutual Fund investing involves risk. Principal loss is possible.

Allied Asset Advisors is the Advisor to the Iman Fund, which is distributed by Quasar Distributors, LLC.



www.myUIF.com | (800) 916-8432

Is it time for you to Purchase or Refinance?

UIF can help with your
Islamic financing needs.

**Inquire about our
pricing specials!!**

**Let's Get Started.
Call (800) 916-8432**



Quick & Easy Pre-Approval



**Home, Masjid &
Commercial Financing**



5 Star Customer Service



**Voted #1 Six Years in a Row
by Islamic Finance News Magazine**

Voted as the #1 Islamic Financing Institution in the U.S. from 2015 through 2019,
& as the #1 Islamic Real Estate Financier (Global Award) in 2020!

This is not a commitment to lend or an offer for a rate lock agreement; a preapproval is based on a preliminary review of information provided and limited credit information. All home financing transactions and preapprovals are subject to verification of application information, satisfying all underwriting conditions and requirements, and property eligibility, including appraisal and title report. You must carry insurance on the property that secures the transaction, and flood insurance may be required. Any taxes or additional conditions imposed by the city, county or state that the subject property is located in will be the obligor's responsibility. UIF Corporation (UIF is a trademark of UIF Corporation) – Equal Housing Opportunity - NMLS 93460 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org) is a Faith Based subsidiary of University Bank (NMLS 715685), Member FDIC, that operates in various states. CA - Licensed by Dept. of Business Oversight, under the CA Finance Lenders Law License 6031396; CT - Mortgage Lender License 21151; GA - Georgia Residential Mortgage Lender License/Registration #57766; IL - Licensed under the Illinois Residential Mortgage License MB.6760599, Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation - 100 West Randolph, 9th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 - <https://www.idfpr.com>; KY - Kentucky Mortgage Company License MC386626; MD - Maryland Mortgage Lender License 17847; MA - Massachusetts Mortgage Lender License ML93460; NJ - licensed by the N.J. Department of Banking and Insurance under Residential Mortgage Lender License 0758541; NY - Licensed Mortgage Banker LMB109672 - NYS Department of Financial Services; OR - Oregon Mortgage Lending License ML-5498; WA - Consumer Loan Company License CL-93460 For a complete list of the states UIF Corporation is able to provide financing in please visit <https://www.myuif.com/about-us/license-registration> UIF Corporation - 29777 Telegraph Road, Ste. 3590, Southfield, MI 48034





Cover Story

- 7 The Genesis of the Islamic Society of North America
- 10 The Evolving Narrative of Muslim Americans at the ISNA Convention
- 12 ISNA's Victories and Vision for the Future
- 13 Convention Regulars Reminisce
- 14 The Growing Minneapolis-Saint Paul Muslim Communities
- 16 The Revival of Islamic Horizons

Islam in America

- 22 Blossoming Intentions
- 26 Bylaw Loopholes: You Could End up Losing Your Mosque
- 28 Islamic Arts in the U.S.
Connecting the Divine with Communities
- 30 Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb
- 32 Islam between Africa and America

The Muslim World

- 34 Could Israel Carry Out Another Nakba?

Human Rights

- 40 Kashmir Under Indian Occupation
- 42 Kashmir: Silenced, not Silent

Environment

- 46 Extreme Heat Waves Impact on Climate Change

**24**

Rediscovering Puerto Rico's Lost Islamic History

**44**

Centering God in Environmental Sustainability

FEATURE

- 48 Muslim Business Coaches Add Spirituality to the Bottom Line
- 50 Teaching Children Their Mother Tongue

FAMILY LIFE

- 52 Wake Up, Parents
- 53 Guidelines for Safe Social Media Use

Health & Wellness

- 54 Muslims and Mental Health
- 56 Sunnah Snacks and Supplements

Civil Rights

- 58 CAIR Calls to Drop FBI Secret Watchlist

In Memoriam

- 60 Aafreen Fathima
- 60 Ibrahim Abdul-Matin
- 61 Khawaja Rizwan Kadir

Departments

- 6 Editorial
- 18 Community Matters
- 33 New Arrivals

ISNA – The Way Forward

EVER SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1963 as an on-campus student/university student called the Muslim Student Association of the United States and Canada (MSA), along with a name change or two over the years, ISNA has reached for the skies. This vision required that it not be concerned only with its own growth, but also with helping found and nurture organizations for physicians, social scientists and engineers. In more recent times, as the demand for Islamic schools continue to increase, its annual education forums have become a must for educators of all shades.

In the words of Dr. Iqbal Unus, a long-standing ISNA member and pioneering leader, “This year, ISNA celebrates its sixty years of service since its founding as MSA in 1963. Firmly anchored in its roots, reaching into its unbridled potential, and aiming high at what is ahead, ISNA is navigating its way forward with confidence in its ability, drawing strength from its members and well-wishers and its whole-hearted belief that no success comes except from God.”

ISNA vice president Kareem Irfan said of the tasks ahead, “ISNA needs to promote its services and have tiered levels of membership across the country. It needs to chalk out a network of regions and key cities where staff members host town hall meetings to understand current challenges.” In addition, “We need to recruit highly efficient staff in our Washington D.C. office to elevate its credibility on a national level,” along with coordinating mental health programs, establishing senior homes on a national level and perhaps even expanding into Mexico, the largely ignored Spanish-speaking part of North America.

Islamic Horizons has also featured, whenever possible, reports on North American cities with large Muslim populations – Chicago, Detroit Montreal and Dallas – to record the history of Islam and Muslims on this continent. This includes articles on Islamophobia, various polls conducted among Muslims, and our community’s achievers; the election or

appointment of Muslims to local, state and federal offices; as well as the ongoing establishment of mosques and/or Islamic centers and schools.


In this huge land that seems to have little, if any, interest in its own history, we must preserve our own stories so that our future generations will know where their ancestors came from and what they accomplished. Therefore, we plead once again for the pioneers and their descendants to send us their memories. As the original pioneers are now quite old and dying off, we must stop ignoring this resource. Please contact us!

Rasheed Rabbi points out, “From its early years centered on forging a sense of community and religious identity among immigrant Muslim populations, the ISNA convention has evolved into a powerhouse addressing pressing issues like voicing against injustice, eliminating biases, and securing Muslims’ equal rights in America.”

Dr. Swetzoff explains how a new Library of Congress grant educates the American public on “Interreligious Cultural Understanding” in Africa, the Middle East and Global Diasporas. In her own words “... the collection and its name-sake raise important conversations about race, racism, and the enduring impact of slavery on the U.S. today.”

The section named in honor of Omar Ibn Said also contains works of other slaves as well. It is a research bonanza from which all of us can benefit.

With due permission, we are reprinting the opinion column of Prof. Peter Beinart, who writes about the current situation in Israel, “Another Nakba is possible. By pretending it isn’t, American officials conveniently avoid an uncomfortable but vital question: What would they do to try and stop it?”

With another election cycle on, both Democrats and Republicans are trying to outdo themselves at being Christian Zionists. Is this really what the U.S. — now apparently a gerontocracy — needs at this point in its history? 

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ISLAMIC
HORIZONS

PUBLISHER

The Islamic Society of North America
(ISNA)

PRESIDENT

Safaa Zarzour

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Basharat Saleem

EDITOR

Omer Bin Abdullah

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Kiran Ansari

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Iqbal Unus, Chair: M. Ahmadullah Siddiqi,
Saba Ali

ISLAMIC HORIZONS

is a bimonthly publication of the Islamic
Society of North America (ISNA)

P.O. Box 38

Plainfield, IN 46168-0038

Copyright ©2023

All rights reserved

Reproduction, in whole or in part,
of this material in mechanical or
electronic form without written
permission is strictly prohibited.

Islamic Horizons magazine is
available electronically on

ProQuest’s Ethnic NewsWatch, Questia.com
LexisNexis, and EBSCO Discovery Service,
and is indexed by Readers’ Guide to
Periodical Literature.

Please see your librarian for access.

The name “Islamic Horizons” is protected
through trademark registration
ISSN 8756-2367

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to
Islamic Horizons, P.O. Box 38
Plainfield, IN 46168-0038

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual, domestic – \$24

Canada – US\$30

Overseas airmail – US\$60

TO SUBSCRIBE

Contact Islamic Horizons at
<https://isna.net/SubscribeToIH.html>
On-line: <https://islamic Horizons.net>
For inquiries: membership@isna.net

ADVERTISING

For rates contact Islamic Horizons at
(703) 742-8108, E-mail horizons@isna.net,
www.isna.net

CORRESPONDENCE

Send all correspondence and/or Letters to the
Editor at: Islamic Horizons
P.O. Box 38
Plainfield, IN 46168-0038
Email: horizons@isna.net

THE GENESIS OF THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

The Pioneers' Vision and How It Has Endured From Then to Now

BY IQBAL J. UNUS

IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT know where they came from will not know where they are going. This is a truism that applies even more aptly to communities and organizations and, by extension, their leaders and members. It is important that those who take the reins of organizations today grasp the fact that their long journey began with small steps, and that their communities of thousands have grown from the dedicated service of a few.



Today ISNA is arguably the most influential of organizations and institutions that represent and serve the interests of the growing community of Muslims in the U.S. and Canada.

ISNA claims and promotes leadership and service as its guiding principles and draws from those themes for its most visible activities: an annual convention, its flagship bimonthly award-winning publication, two annual education forums, and its active engagement with governmental and religious institutions. In addition, a vibrant youth program, an inclusive orientation, and a stewardship outlook have earned ISNA a prominent place in the Muslim American community. ISNA's annual conventions and Islamic Horizons magazine are recognized as significant contributions to the maturity of the Muslim American presence in North America.

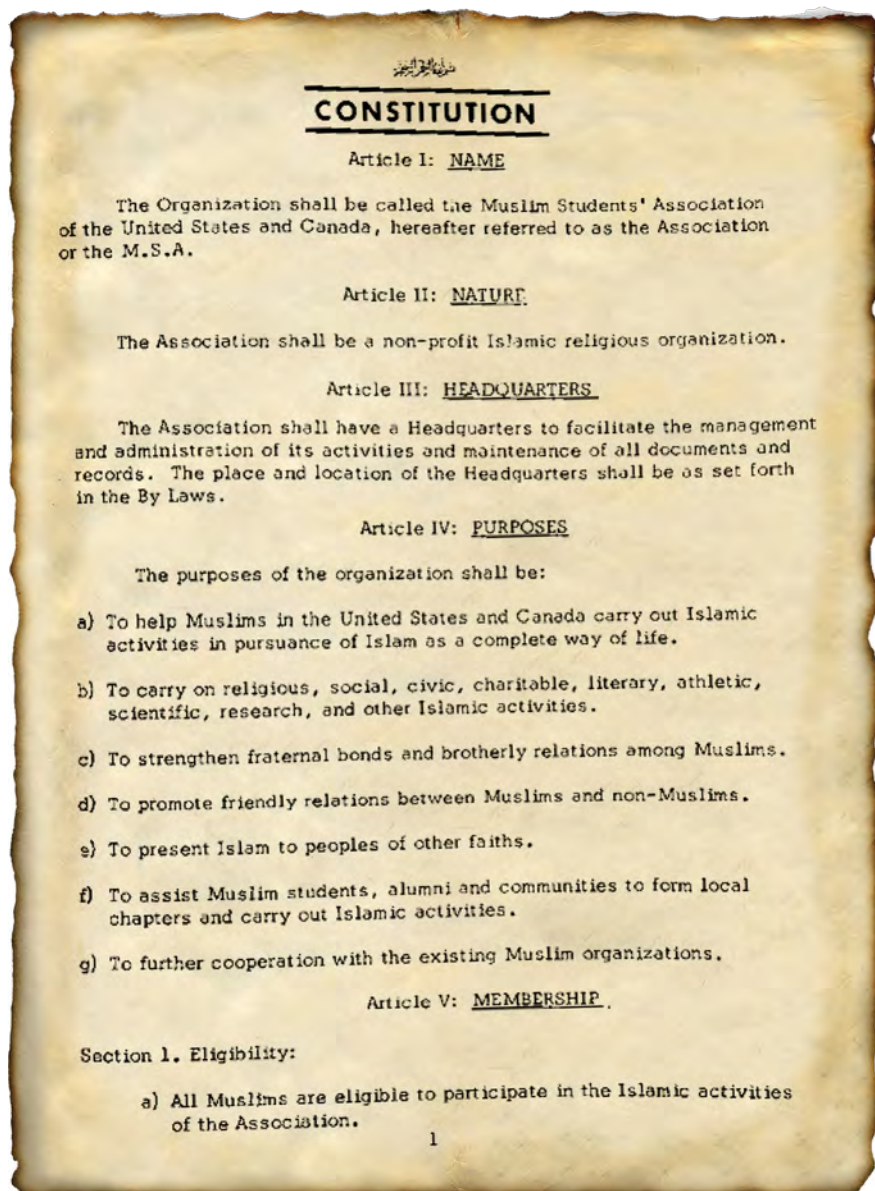
ISNA's comprehensive work in many areas of Muslim American life has enabled it to initiate and lead collaborative initiatives among Muslim organizations to advance common goals. By thoughtfully collaborating with faith-based organizations, civic-minded activist groups, and governmental entities at national levels, ISNA has secured a preeminent position as a representative voice of Muslim Americans.

How did it all begin?

In 1963 a small group of Muslim international students met on the campus of University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Enthusiastic about the opportunity to make a mark on the social discourse in a continent they had barely settled in yet and committed to Islam as their ethical and spiritual anchor, they began to chart an ambitious plan to strengthen bonds among Muslims and promote friendly relations with people of other faiths and no faiths across North America.

Their vision was to encourage and enable Muslims in the U.S. and Canada to live their lives in their new environment inspired by their Islamic ethos and to present Islam to their new compatriots. They knew they had the energy and the foresight to chart a course that would guide generations of Muslims to nurture an Islamic society in this continent.

They were still students. They decided to stake their presence where they had the space and privilege to plant the roots of their movement — on college campuses. They formed the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada, popularly known as MSA.



Their numbers on various college campuses increased rapidly during the 1960s, leading to the expansion of MSA chapters across the country. While these chapters provided Muslim college students a cultural home, MSA at the continental level offered services and representation far beyond their reach. From sending advanced students and learned scholars to help Muslim communities celebrate religious festivals to offering advice and support in navigating new cultural norms, MSA was what the Muslim community needed. It offered seminars and conferences, handouts and publications, and an affirmation of their Muslim identity where it was scarcely recognized.

MSA's second annual report in 1964 listed thirty-four community organizations that it had already established contacts

with. Over the following two decades, MSA established a sure footing in the Muslim American community at large. A college campus could not confine the unbridled energy and ambition of these international students, the best and the brightest in days of the "brain drain."

THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING VISION

The students' ambition was reflected in the 1972 Constitution of MSA, which described MSA as "a nonprofit Islamic religious organization." The organization's stated purposes included "to help Muslims in the U.S. and Canada carry out Islamic activities in pursuance of Islam as a complete way of life," and "to assist Muslim students, alumni and communities to form local chapters and carry out Islamic activities." Its membership

qualifications stated that “All Muslims are eligible to participate in the Islamic activities of the Association.”

The Constitution did give “A Muslim student” an upper hand as an “Active Member” as opposed to “Any other Muslim,” who would be an “Associate Member.” Active members had full voting rights and could seek election to offices in the Executive Committee, whereas “All Muslims” could vote for the office of Secretary for Community Affairs.

This process of MSA graduating to the predestined ISNA, with a redefined MSA as the new student-based constituent, took almost two years.

The Constitution encouraged the formation of local chapters “at University Campuses and *in the communities* to facilitate achieving the purposes of the Association.” It reinforced this definition by including in its description of Affiliation “*All Islamic Organizations* in the United States and Canada . . . that conduct regular Islamic activities” (Emphasis added).

Further reading of the MSA Constitution, presented to the General Assembly on September 2, 1972, defined an organization that was wedded to a vision, aspiration and commitment associated with the interest of all Muslims within its reach.

MSA’s annual conventions reflected this broader foresight and a community-oriented vision through their themes. For example: *Contemporary Islamic Movements* in 1970, *Islam and Muslims in North America* in 1972 and *The Future of Islam and Muslims in North America* in 1974.

Notwithstanding its student roots on a college campus, MSA unquestionably dedicated itself to all Muslims and all things Islamic. It focused on the place and participation of Muslims in American society at large. It asserted its presence and practice in both the U.S. and Canada.

Thus, ISNA was born on Jan. 1, 1963, as the MSA, with the mission to fulfill the pioneers’ vision to lead and serve Muslim Americans and American society at large.

This is a vision that ISNA honors at its 60th annual convention in Chicago this year.

PATHWAY TO ISNA

During these early MSA years, graduate students and newly appointed academics and professionals formed nascent professional organizations. These professional organizations — Islamic Medical Association (IMA), Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), and Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS; now The

North American Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies [NAAIMS]) — teamed with MSA to form a Council of Presidents for coordination and collaboration purposes.

In the Spring of 1977, MSA’s leadership gathered about fifty local community leaders for consultation at the MSA headquarters in Plainfield, Ind. Following this consensus-seeking meeting, dubbed “Closing the Ranks,” the MSA Executive Committee set up a taskforce to respond to the growth of post-college and off-campus Muslim communities. The Council of Presidents endorsed the idea.

The deliberations of this taskforce and its subcommittees resulted in a set of significant recommendations. The recommendations created the Muslim Community Association of the United States and Canada (MCA) and redefined MSA exclusively as a student organization with a membership limited to college students. The recommendations also created an umbrella organization, ISNA, to bring together the newly minted MCA and the three professional organizations with the redefined student organization, the MSA, as its constituents.

This process of MSA graduating to the predestined ISNA, with a redefined MSA as the new student-based constituent, took almost two years. A steering committee educated its members and other Muslims in North America about the concept and


implementation of the anticipated changes. Several teams of two MSA leaders each traveled to major cities and spoke to Muslims in mosques and other gathering places. They explained the rationale behind the proposed transformation and displayed the new organizational structure that would follow from those changes.

In May 1982, during a joint MSA-ISNA convention at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind., eleven past MSA presidents spoke in a special session titled “From MSA to ISNA: Twenty Years of Islamic Work in North America.”

The Steering Committee reported on the referendum results on the new draft of the ISNA constitution, and attendees elected MCA’s Executive Committee. At the following joint MSA-ISNA convention in 1983, ISNA members elected and appointed ISNA’s first Majlis ash Shura and ISNA officers. These actions, in effect, transferred MSA’s interests and assets, as well as its non-student members and off-campus to ISNA. ISNA’s Majlis ash Shura met for the first time at ISNA’s headquarters in Plainfield in July 1983.

Having fully developed from its proto existence as MSA, and following a later merger with MCA, ISNA entered the eighties amidst a backdrop of global turbulence that created waves in the U.S. Each and all these events nudged ISNA to respond to the Americans’ curiosity, concern, and distress about Muslim Americans and their organizations. ISNA responded by opening itself more to mainstream America than it had done during its MSA years. It sought to openly speak for Muslims at large and found a slowly growing acceptance of its representative role in American society.

Over the years, ISNA has endeavored to live up to its matured vision: *To be an exemplary and unifying Islamic organization in North America that contributes to the betterment of the Muslim community and society at large.*

This year, ISNA celebrates its sixty years of service since its founding as MSA in 1963. Firmly anchored in its roots, reaching into its unbridled potential, and aiming high at what is ahead, ISNA is navigating its way forward with confidence in its ability, drawing strength from its members and well-wishers and its whole-hearted belief that no success comes except from God. 

Iqbal J. Unus is former president of MSA (1975), former secretary general of ISNA, and current ISNA Board member.

THE EVOLVING NARRATIVE OF MUSLIM AMERICANS AT THE ISNA CONVENTION

BY RASHEED RABBI



AS THE SUMMER SUN GENTLY retreats beyond the horizon, an unmistakable air of anticipation permeates the atmosphere, heralding the annual ISNA convention. This mega event exerts a magnetic force that draws throngs of Muslim Americans, united in their fervent pursuit of knowledge, connection, and inspiration. The convention halls come alive, transformed into bustling hives of lectures and activities, echoing with the eager footsteps of attendees traversing the long corridors of Chicago's Donald Stephen Convention Center. Every inch of the premises seems infused with an inherent rush, guiding each person from one captivating session to the next, leaving them wanting more. With each passing year, the fervor intensifies, and the race to attend sessions surges as the program ambitiously expands, featuring an array of topics as diverse as the stars in the night sky.

To outsiders, it may seem like a familiar picture repeating itself annually — thousands of individuals hurrying from hall to hall, clutching their program catalogs like cherished treasures, their eyes alight with excitement. The inexperienced may question the utility of including so many sessions, spanning from deeply personal narratives to

issues of local importance, and even touching upon global challenges faced by Muslims.

A GRAND VISION

But beneath this seemingly repetitive surface lies a tapestry of intricate dynamics, interwoven with layers of purpose and meaning. The whirlwind of activities transforms them into participants of a movement that crosses the confines of national and ethnic borders. Within the seemingly modest organization called ISNA, a grand and audacious vision has spread its roots, blooming flickers of hope even in the most skeptical of hearts.

As the vision and hope weave together people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and ages, a vibrant mosaic of experiences and perspectives continues to emerge. Each thread flaunts its distinct character, seamlessly woven into the fabric of a united community, converging hyphenated identities and bridging the gaps of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. With every passing year, the convention has ensured a unique space of connection, discovery, exploration, and growth. Within this sacred space, fundamental human questions find answers — “Who am I?” “Where do I belong?” and “How can I be a bridge to a brighter future?”

True observers get to witness the

interplay of diverse voices and visions coming together in a symphony of harmony, each note adding to the larger narrative of the Muslim American community's journey and its generational transitions. Serving as a vantage point, this convention allows Muslims to observe and understand the evolving dynamics of individual identity and their respective communities in North America. It unfolds a comprehensive view of generational shifts, reshaping Muslim Americans' identity, priorities, and aspirations.

Cast back to 1963, ISNA members acknowledged the Eid festivals by exchanging heartfelt greetings through the simple yet meaningful Eid cards. In those early days, the Muslim American communities were significantly few and still in their infancy, forging their paths in a society largely unfamiliar with Islam. In that context, the exchange of Eid cards served as a beacon, fostering connections, celebrating religious holidays, and nurturing a sense of belonging despite their small numbers. However, it marks a time of only laying a solid foundation for future growth by building strong brotherhood and sisterhood.

Fast forward to the year 2022, when the ISNA convention celebrated approved Eid holidays in multiple states across the nation. It hosted a full session showcasing kids' captivating movies based on the life of the famous Persian spiritual leader, Jalaluddin Rumi. This powerful display embodies how American Muslims are coming of age and expanding their spiritual heritage, seeking innovative ways to pass it on to the younger generation in a manner that engages and resonates with their youthful hearts. These are just a few of the many changes of convention themes and topics that bear testimony to the generational evolution from defending to defining themselves.

From its early years, centered on forging a sense of community and religious identity among immigrant Muslim populations, the ISNA convention has evolved

into a powerhouse addressing pressing issues like protesting injustice, eliminating biases, and securing Muslims' equal rights in the U.S. Again, Muslim security is enforced not by protecting them with high walls, but by giving them all possible resources, and its convention is the plugging point of all appropriate networks to instill confidence and bargain for what they need. This transformation signifies a significant shift from mere survival to a proactive approach of shaping their narrative.

With every passing year, the convention has ensured a unique space of connection, discovery, exploration, and growth. Within this sacred space, fundamental human questions find answers — “Who am I?” “Where do I belong?” and “How can I be a bridge to a brighter future?”

In the past, many lecture sessions emphasized the importance of establishing mosques and Islamic centers, creating sacred spaces for newcomers to connect with fellow Muslims, preserving their cultural and religious heritage in a foreign land. Now, the convention includes sessions to educate Muslim communities on how to combat animosity in neighborhoods and challenge unjust opposition from county offices.

THEMES OVER THE YEARS

Many such transitions become apparent as the tides of history unfold. During the mid-sixties and seventies, the ISNA conventions hosted sessions to highlight the importance of adhering to Islamic practices amidst dominant secularizing Judeo-Christian ideals. During the mid-seventies to eighties, it focused on refuting implicit blame on Islam and restoring American Muslims' image. After 9/11, the convention sessions emphasized raising American non-Muslims' awareness of Islam through interfaith collaboration and political participation. Most recently, after 2016, an increasing number of sessions are allocated in raising civil rights and political awareness of Muslim American citizens.

These changes in the convention's topics and themes transcend mere events; they personify the profound generational shift that has taken place within the Muslim

American community — a shift reverberating through language and cultural expression, radiating the demographic transformation of the Muslim American identity. While the early years saw predominantly English language sessions, the exponential growth and diversification of Muslim communities in America have given rise to sessions conducted in multiple languages, namely, Arabic, Turkish, Urdu or Hindi, honoring the needs of the younger, American-born generation.

Additionally, the inclusion of various art forms, including spoken word, poetry, and music at the convention showcases how contemporary Muslims seek to express their faith and cultural identity in creative and innovative ways. Such a rich convention outline plays as a powerful tool for engaging and connecting with young attendees, allowing them to see their values and experiences reflected in the convention's programming.

Under the presidency of Dr. Ingrid Matson, ISNA consciously sought to have women speakers for all main and parallel sessions. These changes and the expansion of topics, including discussions on social justice, human rights, environmental sustainability, and civic engagement, resonate with the heightened awareness of broader societal issues.

It's important that Muslim American communities undergo many such transitions not as a linear experience, but rather as a profound blend of past realities and present possibilities. ISNA itself has changed its strategy to ensure the maximum coverage for mirroring this generational shift comprehensively. Previously, ISNA spent their time working for religious committees and guilds, but now it lets professional experts — writers, artists, therapists, spiritual guides — be the producers while they consume

what they need to enrich themselves spiritually and holistically. This strategic change encourages Muslims to view their religion anew and realize that Islam is no longer something people inherit, but something for which they strive.

THE NEXT 60 YEARS

The claim made by ISNA's executive director, Basharat Saleem, that the convention “has ably served the community for 60 years, and we are ready to embark on our journey for the next 60” is not an exaggeration at all. The convention embodies the changing needs and interests of its attendees, reflecting the awe-inspiring growth, diversity, and dynamism of the community. Beyond merely connecting various generations, it artfully bridges the gap between the rich heritage of the past and the vibrant aspirations of the future.

As the convention continues to be redesigned, let us witness the Muslim Americans' evolution and learn our distinct individual influence and contribution. Let us find our rightful place in the broader community and understand how the Muslim identity — individually and collectively — has been reshaped by the social factors to which we have been subject from time to time in America. Such an understanding will not only enrich our appreciation for the Muslims' growth in America, but also enhance our ability to meet challenges of the time ahead. **ih**

Rasheed Rabbi is an IT professional who earned an MA in religious studies from Hartford Seminary and is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry from Boston University. He is also the founder of e-Dawah (www.edawah.net) and secretary of the Association of Muslim Scientists, Engineers & Technology Professionals. He serves as a khateeb and Friday prayer leader at the ADAMS Center and a certified Muslim chaplain at iNova Fairfax, iNova Loudoun and Virginia's Alexandria and Loudoun Adult Detention Centers.

ISNA'S VICTORIES AND VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Current Leadership Chimes In

BY ISLAMIC HORIZONS STAFF

THROUGH ITS WIDE ARRAY OF services, ISNA has undoubtedly touched hundreds of thousands of lives during its six-decade existence. From conventions that provide spiritual guidance through highly qualified scholars to high-level engagement with federal and state administrations, ISNA is looked upon as a leader in various areas.

Vice President Kareem Irfan, who has been associated with the organization since 1984, was attracted to ISNA through the convention and has since served in various high-level positions dealing with Islamic wills, strategic planning, Muslim arbitration, and interfaith coalitions. His legal expertise helped tremendously when the State Department was investigating Islamic organizations.

"ISNA has been an incubator for many organizations that started with people getting together and pooling intellectual and financial resources. Several ISNA alumni work in top levels of academia, government, and the corporate and nonprofit world," Irfan said. "I came back to ISNA when I could dedicate serious time because I strongly believe in leadership transparency. The higher up you go, the humbler you need to be. I have taken on this role as an *amanah* (trust), and that's why I refer to myself as 'Servant number 2' for the community."

Treasurer Azhar Azeez has been with ISNA for the last 22 years. He believes ISNA has been able to thrive for 60 years because of the *duas* of our community and sacrifices made by the founding fathers and mothers, along with the leaders, volunteers, and paid employees, who have served this organization.

"The beauty of ISNA is that it is not ideologically driven. It is an all-inclusive organization," Azeez said. Its leadership is elected through an electoral process. The membership or the general body is the top decision-making body. ISNA's vision right from its inception in 1963 was that the



ISNA has been able to thrive for 60 years because of the *duas* of our community and sacrifices made by the founding fathers and mothers, along with the leaders, volunteers, and paid employees, who have served this organization.

Muslim community is very diverse. Anyone who believes in the creed (*shahadah*) is a Muslim. They should not be ignored because of their sect or school of thought."

Both leaders agree that ISNA's consistent interfaith and intrafaith work is considered a benchmark in the country for various communities to emulate. ISNA is also passionate about gender equality and women empowerment. Nearly every session in a conference or convention has a female speaker or presenter as part of policy.

The Education Forums bring hundreds of full-time Islamic and weekend school teachers, principals, and administrators under one roof and provide them innovative ways and solutions to cater to the growing needs of our

community. The chaplaincy programs assist chaplains in the U.S. armed forces, hospitals, and universities. The matrimonial services benefit hundreds of couples every year to find suitable life partners. The convention bazaar brings more than 600 vendors annually to promote Muslim businesses and organizations offering important products and services.

The leadership agrees that ISNA needs to enhance its online presence and leverage the MYNA success story. Mentoring around 3,000 youth annually with Islamic values and launching well-rounded leaders for tomorrow is no small feat.

With many successes under its belt, ISNA still has a lot of important work to do.

TALL TASK AHEAD

"ISNA needs to promote its services and have tiered levels of membership across the country. It needs to chalk out a network of regions and key cities where staff members host town hall meetings to understand current challenges," Irfan said. "We need to recruit highly efficient staff in our Washington D.C. office to elevate its credibility on a national level."

ISNA also needs to coordinate mental health programs and senior homes on a national level. There needs to be more collaboration with ISNA Canada – and perhaps even foray into Mexico to become a truly North American organization.

"The core responsibility of ISNA leadership is not just raising funds — but ensuring the good use of those funds," Irfan said. "To remain relevant, ISNA needs to have a finger on the pulse of the communities it serves. It needs to remain active on the civic, government, and interfaith levels.

"I pray ISNA continues to offer these important services to the American Muslim community and provide solutions to the challenges faced by our community for the next several decades," Azeez concluded. *ib*

CONVENTION REGULARS REMINISCE

BY RABIYAH SYED

SINCE 1963, ISNA'S ANNUAL CONVENTION has been part of many Muslim calendars. Since the first convention held in Urbana, Ill., ISNA has come a long way. From university lecture halls to gigantic convention centers, and from attendees staying in dorm rooms to nice hotels, the convention has really evolved.

What has remained consistent, however, is a great speaker lineup and an opportunity to meet friends from near and far.

Hamid Khan was the vice president of MSA Canada from 1972 until the late 1980s. He was also their science and technology advisor. One of his jobs was to invite speakers to the conventions.

"We used to invite speakers from India, Pakistan, Britain, and even South Africa. The speeches were not only for students, but for families as well," Khan said.

Iman Elkadi, a former chair of MSA's women's committee, moved from Austria to the U.S. in 1967. Her husband — a cofounder the Islamic Medical Association — learned about the convention from the founders, whom they knew from Europe. When Elkadi and her family arrived in the U.S., they attended their first convention in Ohio. She figured that would be a good way to learn about being a Muslim in the U.S. and to connect with fellow Muslims in the country. She was excited to go to her first convention because there were not many Muslims in Louisiana.

"We would travel a lot so that we could meet other families who had children because for many years, we were the only Muslim family in our town. The ISNA convention was the highlight of the year for me. We lived for it because it was what we needed, what we wanted, and what we enjoyed."

Since she attended that first convention, Elkadi has attended numerous times over the years. The convention was very small at the start, so everyone got to know each other well. She got to make meaningful connections with other Muslim families, and her kids were able to play with other Muslim children. As the families she met were from all around the country, they kept in contact through phone and mail.

The sentiment was mirrored by Khan.

"Students and families came together



“The ISNA convention was the highlight of the year for me. We lived for it because it was what we needed, what we wanted, and what we enjoyed.”

and got to know each other. Muslims from around the U.S. and Canada would meet each other and make great connections,” he said.

MSA Canada worked closely with MSA in the U.S. in terms of planning conventions, starting programs for Muslim students and families, and building a large Muslim community.

WOMEN AT ISNA CONVENTIONS

With the MSA Women's Committee, Elkadi organized a girl's camp. She remembers how she worked with the women she met to bring about change. At the conventions, the women used to have separate sessions led by Elkadi and some of the other women. They would discuss the role of women in society and how they could contribute in different ways. Many of the women, including Elkadi herself, were first-generation immigrants. Some other immigrant women felt they could not contribute as they were “just” homemakers.

“We tried to get them to see that they could contribute whatever skills they had, whatever knowledge they had, even if it wasn't formal education,” Elkadi explained. “We would have sessions about parenting

and how to be a more productive member of society from an Islamic perspective. That was our primary concern: how to get women to become more active in the community.”

She would write articles for *Al-Imtihan Magazine* about the different issues that women were facing. She also helped organize an effort to make different items to sell to the Muslim community.

“I remember one year it was very hard to find long sleeved dresses to wear for *salat*, so we bought fabric and made dresses. We then sold them at the convention.”

They also created Islamic coloring books for kids and helped compile a book about Islamic parenting as well. Looking at the bazaar today with such a wide range of products, it is interesting to learn about its humble beginnings. The idea for the bazaar and selling Islamic items began with Elkadi and the women's committee several decades ago.

On a personal note, Elkadi reminisces about her experiences attending the conventions, not only as part of the women's committee, but also as a Muslim woman and mother. She remembers listening to speakers like Jamal Badawi. Her favorite talks were centered around spirituality rather than

politics. She fondly looks back on how she was able to quickly make friends with everyone at the conventions, and how close they became. She still remembers how happy she felt being able to see her friends each year at the conventions.

“What I miss now is that when I go to a convention, I don’t know anyone,” she says.

The Muslim population has grown over the years, making the conventions a lot bigger than they used to be. At the start, it was a small group. Everyone was able to talk to and meet just about everyone else, but with bigger conventions it is a little harder. Elkadi admits she does miss the way the old conventions felt, as she prefers smaller, familiar groups. She knows that having a big venue is necessary, as the Muslim community has grown.

“I have never enjoyed large crowds, but that’s just a personal thing,” Elkadi said.

“When the conventions used to be smaller, there used to be only one big Islamic speech at a time. In the evening, after the main speeches, there would be group discussions on different topics. Some people would teach things about hadiths, *fiqh*, and even topics students were majoring in, like accounting. I would talk about science and technology to engineering students,” Khan explained.

The group discussions worked well because of the smaller size. Now that the conventions are bigger, there are different sessions happening all at once throughout the day, with one big session that everyone attends at night.

“Multiple parallel sessions are nice, as they can cover a variety of topics. However, that’s a little frustrating for me, because if there are two or three in the same time slot that I would like to attend, I can’t pick one,” Elkadi said.

Even though she misses the smaller, more familiar gatherings, she knows the heart of the convention is the same. It is just on a bigger scale to accommodate the growing needs.

The ISNA convention has not only been a means to spread Islamic knowledge, but also build a sense of community and belonging. And that is exactly what it did for Elkadi and her family. *ib*

Rabiyah Syed, a Junior at Naperville Central, loves photography and is interested in pursuing a career in the medical field.

THE GROWING MINNEAPOLIS PAUL MUSLIM COMMUNITY

From very humble roots where Muslim life began, survived, and thrived

BY FERIAL ABRAHAM



Founders of Women Society (l-r) Wafaat Safy, Zehra Ansar, Ferial Abraham, Zeenath Sami, Meray Khan, Kausar Hussain ICM president 2019

AS A FOUNDING MSA MEMBER SINCE 1963, my interest has always been in its growth.

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, the mother of these communities was the University of Minnesota’s MSA chapter that met for Friday Quranic study. Prayers, discussions, and planning occurred in Room 325 at the Coffman Union. Although the group was composed of both Muslim men and women and some friends, a doctoral female student emerged as leader.

To establish their legacy, they collected donations for a future mosque. This money was later used to help fund the Islamic Center of Minnesota in 1970. They also transferred many of their social events to the ICM, including the tradition of the annual Ramadan Dinner.

In 1967, Minnesota Muslims took another step forward. That’s when a Muslim man registered with the State to be able to solemnize Muslim marriages in accordance with state laws allowing an Islamic legal ceremony. His responsibility included signing the State Marriage License and sending it to their local

courthouse for recording. The courthouse would return a copy to the married couple.

My early experiences at the University of Minnesota Minneapolis-Saint Paul Campuses were unique. At that time there were no mosques in Minnesota. Today there are 92. I met MSA members at the Prophet’s (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) birthday celebration. I was a graduate student in summer sessions — the only way I could afford graduate school.

The Friday evening Qur’an study would meet at 7:30 p.m. Our group consisted of about 10 sisters and brothers and sometimes friends. We were the only Muslims we knew on campus. I lived at Bailey Hall on the Saint Paul Campus and would ride the intercampus bus to about three blocks from Coffman Union.

It was a very warm evening in July when I walked to the intercampus bus stop after Qur’an study. When no bus arrived, I started walking in the direction the bus would travel. It was very dark, and I continued to walk from the Minneapolis Campus to the Saint Paul Campus. Years later, I clocked my walking

POLIS-SAINT UNITIES

n communities
ed.

path and it was almost four miles. These were the days when businesses closed early, there were no public phones that I could see, and really no other help. I arrived at my dormitory before midnight.

In 1968, my mother and I moved to Saint Paul. It was the days of competitive graduate schools and less money. I became a U of MN teaching assistant and completed my Master of Arts degree. In the fall, I began teaching at a local high school. At a winter graduation, Dr. Iffat Shah (from the MSA) and I received our degrees. The MSA students and friends had a graduation party for us at what they called the Muslim House, a rental home, in Saint Paul. My guests were my mother and my aunt from Dearborn, Mich.

In 1970, the MSA continued to meet at Coffman Union, having such activities as Welcome Parties for new students, celebration of the Prophet's birthday, and Friday prayers. Coffman Union is still the MSA meeting place today. There were also picnics at parks during the summer. The members truly enjoyed these events, and we would reach out to non-Muslims too.

The year 1970 was also a transition year for the community. The members were getting older and wanted to expand to a non-university organization. The MSA would continue at the University of Minnesota. The new organization became the Islamic Center of Minnesota, with articles of incorporation recorded in the office of Secretary of State (Minn.) on Dec. 2, 1970.

Donated funds were used as a down payment for a large rooming house and first floor meeting rooms near the U of Minnesota campus. It was called the Dinkytown ICM. ICM's general activities in the years to come were celebration of Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-adha, Islamic New Year, Ashura, the Prophet's birthday, Ramadan Dinner, ICM picnics, ICM Newsletter and publications, and an Islamic Sunday School for children. In 1973, the Women's Islamic Society began their activities. They had a board of directors and several officers. Rafaat Hager was appointed as the first ICM imam.

In 1975, the location of the ICM changed. The Abukhadra family, originally from Saudi Arabia, gifted a building in Columbia Heights, Minn. This building served as the headquarters for several years and provided a first-floor prayer area. It is called the Abukhadra Mosque.

In addition to the Dinkytown ICM and the Abukhadra Mosque, a new building called the Islamic Center of Minnesota in Fridley, Minn., was added in 1984 from membership contributions. In a few years, an Islamic day school was added for grades K-10 on the adjacent land and connected to the Center — the Al Amal School with academic excellence.

What followed over the next years was the purchase of land for several Islamic cemeteries and body washing rooms in some mosques. Many additional activities are available at the Fridley ICM. These include discussion groups for sisters (in a donated house next door to the Center), free medical clinic on Sundays, larger Saturday and Sunday schools for chil-

were established, but also restaurants, stores, retailers, and auto businesses. In Minnesota, Muslims can be found in many fields, including government, health, education, and law.

The Metropolitan area mosques and centers are in the cities of Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Blaine, Bloomington, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Burnsville, Columbia Heights, Fridley, Plymouth, Maple Grove, Maplewood, Eden Prairie, Woodbury, and others. The mosques and centers are on all four sides of this area, as are the Islamic cemeteries. I recently found the gravesite of a distant Muslim relative, Mike (Muhammed) Abas at the historic Oakland Cemetery in Saint Paul, who died during November 1925.

More recent activities of the ICM were a party for the ICM founders in 2019, almost 50 years after its founding. Three years ago, ICM president Zaheer Baber established and hosted Khatera, Friday ICM Noon Lecture by Imams on Zoom.


In 1967, Minnesota Muslims took another step forward. That's when a Muslim man registered with the State to be able to solemnize Muslim marriages in accordance with state laws allowing an Islamic legal ceremony.

dren, interfaith dialogue groups, and youth activities to name a few. Lunch was served on Sunday, and dinners and bazaars continued. The ICM provided vital support for its members and neighbors.

The Women's Islamic Society is a very helpful support group. Not only did its members find friends, but they also worked together on projects promoting Islam. The group provided yearly dinners mostly at the International Institute of Minnesota during the mid 1970s through the 1980s to the public by reservation only. They would feature a predominantly Muslim country, its food, its cultural presentation and entertainment. They included a bazaar that sold homemade items and cookbooks published by the ICM.

As membership increased, many families moved to other locations in the area. They saw the need for mosques and centers in their localities as many new immigrants arrived in Minnesota. The newer arrivals were from Afghanistan, Somalia, Bosnia, Somali, Burma, Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Iran, and other countries. Not only more mosques and centers

Several of our community members were educated and taught at the University of Minnesota and Minnesota state universities and colleges and have made substantial contributions to North America and around the world. We truly miss the Ghazi family, Tasneema and the late Abidullah, who established IQRA International Education Foundation in Chicago.

Fast forward to 2023, and the Muslim communities here are more different. There are more than 90 diverse mosques and centers. There are many graduate programs and affluent students. Many colleges and universities have their own MSA chapters. Fifty-six years ago in 1967, we were the core members who established many flourishing Muslim communities with Allah's help. We are immensely grateful. 

Ferial Abraham was born in North Dakota in 1939 and an only child. Her parents had immigrated to the U.S. with their parents when they were children. Her parents are listed Syrian, but later that part of Syria became Lebanon. She taught high school for 39 years, 31 of which at a large suburban Saint Paul high school. She has always been active in Islamic organizations.

THE REVIVAL OF ISLAMIC HORIZONS

A journey that started 29 Years ago

BY ISLAMIC HORIZONS STAFF

IN THE EARLY 1990S, ISNA'S LEADERSHIP asked Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed to take over the helm during challenging times. ISNA's flagship publication, Islamic Horizons, was also suffering.

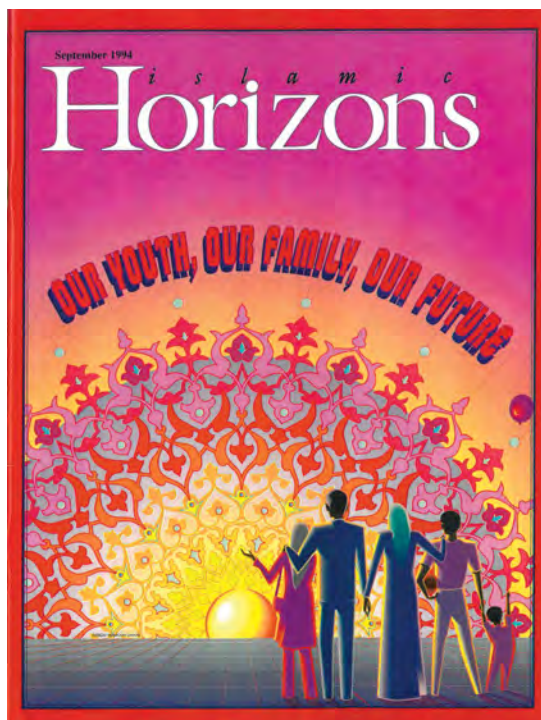
Soon after his arrival at ISNA headquarters, Dr. Syeed invited Omer Bin Abdullah to serve as the editor of the magazine. OBA — as he is known to his near and dear — was born into print media. It is said that he set aside the English alphabet book and insisted on learning it through Lahore's newspaper, The Pakistan Times. It was through this foundation that he learned to read and write voraciously. With postgraduate degrees in both journalism and advertising, he was a great choice.

At a meeting with a new printing company, he asked for a quote based on the paper quality and color of a Sears catalog he had saved from the Sunday newspaper. The printer agreed, but there was a catch: He only accepted jobs of 15,000 or more. Dr. Syeed agreed upon the number when he learned that on average, a magazine is seen by four people in a household. That would make an initial readership of 60,000.

SEPTEMBER MEANS SEPTEMBER

OBA assumed all the responsibilities associated with such an undertaking. "I was everything from the editor, writer, advertising salesperson, accountant, and author recruiter," he reminisces. "I then went around the ISNA office to collect various magazines and started calling advertisers." One of their first questions was when the next issue will be mailed out. He assured them that "September means September" and that they would find the magazine at that year's ISNA Convention.

Twenty-nine years later, Islamic Horizons magazine has always been delivered on time.



The last cover before the revival

That is no small feat with only one person in charge of the content.

Not only did Islamic Horizons lack staff, but it also needed interesting content that prospective subscribers would like to read. OBA wrote a lot of the content for the first few issues. The stories and the fresh new look were an instant success. Consistent and timely issues gave impetus to advertisers not only to return, but also to increase their ad sizes. As the ball got rolling, ISNA decided

to double the print order to 30,000, and later to 60,000 copies.

People started taking an interest in and inquiring about how to publish articles in the magazine. The quality of the articles continued to improve.

From the design perspective, Anjum Mir made a significant contribution. The masthead she designed continues to adorn the cover. When she left, it was difficult to find a Muslim designer in Plainfield, Ind. who could find appropriate graphics for the articles. When they were finally able to find one, he also came with a caveat: He would work flexible hours. That sounds commonplace today. However, it was not that convenient before high-speed internet, Zoom and Google Suite. OBA would wait for him to ring the headquarters doorbell, even if it was at 2a.m.

OBA also faced personal challenges during this time. When his health did not allow him to continue living in what was once a room of grand farmhouse, he started working remotely from his home in Northern Virginia. This way he could also be close to his wife and two children.

OBA brought on Omar Elhaddad, a gifted graphic artist and desktop publisher, and Jay Willoughby, an experienced copyeditor. Their professionalism, along with that of Gamal Abdelaziz, who eventually replaced Elhaddad, has raised the magazine's profile and encouraged more people to contribute. Over the years, scores of seasoned and

We request pioneers to contact us and relay their memories. We consider it a vital undertaking to record our history for our descendants.

A Hardworking Family Man

DESPITE BEING A WORDSMITH, OBA finds it hard to express his appreciation for the support he has received from his wife and children while rebuilding the magazine — an unstinted support that continues even today.

His dedication has not gone unnoticed.

“Coming from a line of writers, my dad would often tell me that his passion for writing ran in his blood,” said his daughter, Amal Omer. “He believes deeply in the value of Islamic Horizons sharing the positive work of the Muslim community. With his work on the magazine, he shared that he hoped the stories inspired our Ummah — especially the next generation — to remain strong and committed to practicing their faith.”

“I recall my dad frequently shuttling between Virginia and Indiana, dedicating himself to working on the magazine,” said Ali Omer, his son. “He went to great lengths, even residing in Plainfield for a few months, as he tirelessly strived to resurrect an abandoned publication and transform it into a nationally recognized and acclaimed



Editor Omer Bin Abdullah with his daughter, Amal, at an ISNA Convention

magazine. It has truly been a labor of love for him, pouring his heart and soul into it for the betterment of the Ummah.” *ib*

new writers graced the pages of this popular magazine.

“Uncle Omer’s tenacity and humor has kept the magazine afloat at a time when many other publications have closed down,” said Saba Ali, Islamic Horizons board member (and incidentally, like him a Syracuse alum). “He has given countless young writers, me included, a platform to tell our stories and our Muslim community a voice that is uniquely ours.”

THE INCLUSIVE COVERAGE

From day one, Islamic Horizons’ staff has worked hard to make the magazine more inclusive by highlighting various Muslim communities both within North America and abroad. For instance, the cover report on African American Muslims impressed the (late) Imam WD Mohammad so much that even though he had only sought three copies, he eventually asked for 5,000 more. ISNA rushed the print order and gifted it to him.

Upon seeing the issue, Louis Farrakhan also requested 500 copies by courier for distribution to the heads of delegations attending a conference being held by the Organization of African Unity.

In 2003, OBA obtained an exclusive photographer’s bird’s-eye view of the hajj from photography enthusiast Princess Reem al-Faisal, granddaughter of King Faisal. Among the many other outstanding issues, he takes personal pride in publishing the cover story “Jerusalem: A Muslim City” (Jan/Feb 2001) and the grand cover report on poet-philosopher Mohammad Iqbal (March/April 2005).

The effort to keep the North American community informed continues. Islamic Horizons has highlighted Latino and Indigenous North American peoples, the Cham of Vietnam and Cambodia as well as the Rohingya of Myanmar, and other minorities of our ummah.

THE DOCUMENTATION

Islamic Horizons has also featured, whenever possible, reports on North American cities with large Muslim populations (such as Chicago, Detroit, and Dallas) to record the history of Islam and Muslims on this continent. This includes articles on Islamophobia and various polls conducted among Muslims; the election or appointment of Muslims to local, state, and federal offices; as well as the

ongoing establishment of mosques and/or Islamic centers and schools.

“We request pioneers to contact us and relay their memories. We consider it a vital undertaking to record our history for our descendants,” OBA said.

Islamic Horizons has also garnered praise from its own genre — publications by religious organizations. It has secured several awards from the century-old Religious Communicators Council — of which it is the only Muslim member. OBA considers it a crowning moment when his alma mater, Syracuse University, contacted him to let him know that they had decided to bind, shelve, and catalog Islamic Horizons, thereby making it more accessible to everyone.

“Unfortunately, our community’s support in terms of both subscribing and contributing informative articles has been negligible,” OBA said. “While 60,000 families were glad to receive the magazine for free at one point, very few of them subscribed when the complimentary issues stopped.”

THE VISION

OBA envisages Islamic Horizons as a mix of community news and Time/Newsweek sort of publication. Therefore, he has highlighted the situations in many parts of the Muslim world and presented accounts of events and other information that is not reported in the Western media. He also strives to obtain reports and first-hand accounts to highlight the challenges faced by Muslims living under occupation and as minorities.

Clearly, existing Muslim media outlets cannot improve and flourish without institutional support. Moreover, unlike mainstream media outlets, the reality of Islamophobia prevents it from garnering a great deal of advertising revenue.

A strong believer in the print media’s ability to survive, he cites the example of the retail industry that, despite having top-notch websites, keeps mailing expensive catalogs. In short, he sees hope.

“During these nearly three decades, I have faced multiple health issues, like complicated fractures and illnesses,” OBA adds. “But despite such problems, Islamic Horizons has never missed its publication date or compromised on its quality. The small staff we have at the magazine further its efforts to continue my vision. I invite our magazine readers to join us in this ongoing effort.” *ib*

INTERFAITH AMERICA ASSEMBLED A council of leaders in higher education that facilitated sessions at this year's Interfaith Leadership Summit held in Chicago from August 4-6. The Council meets quarterly with the Interfaith Leadership Institute team to advise on year-round programming for undergraduate students and educators and grow their own interfaith leadership knowledge and skills.

DR. NISA MUHAMMAD, HOWARD UNIVERSITY's Assistant Dean for Religious Life, is



responsible for programming revolving around faith, service, and justice. She organizes Muslim prayer services and answers a myriad of challenges from race to religion to

relationships. She is also the advisor to the MSA, the Nepalese Students Association, the Youth Justice Advocates, and the Chess Club. Muhammad is on the executive boards of the Association for Chaplaincy and Spiritual Life in Higher Education and the Institute for Muslim Mental Health. She is the past president of the Association of Muslim Chaplains.

DR. NAJEEBA SYEED, THE INAUGURAL El-Hibri endowed chair and executive director of Interfaith at Augsburg, has been a professor, expert practitioner and public speaker for the last two decades. She specializes in the fields of conflict resolution, interfaith studies and mediation, education, deliberative democracy, social, gender and racial equity.




In 2021 she served as chief of staff to the first Asian American woman elected to the Los Angeles City Council. She assisted her with the setup of her office, hiring, strategic planning, legislative and communications strategies.

Her teaching career includes being associate professor of Muslim and Interreligious Studies at Chicago Theological Seminary and an associate professor of Interreligious Education at Claremont School of Theology. She is recognized as a leader in peacebuilding and social justice-based research.

Under her leadership the two conflict resolution centers she led received the John Anson Ford Award for reducing violence in



ON JULY 12, 2023, MAYOR SCOTT J. Lund of the City of Fridley, Minn., issued a proclamation recognizing Al-Amal School. He congratulated the school on its successes, and gave a special certificate to Muminah Mohammed, one of the students who won a Grand Award at the 2023 International Science and Engineering Fair. 



schools and in the area of interracial gang conflict. She was named Southern California Mediation Association's "Peacemaker of the Year" in 2007.

NORA ZAKI MANTAS IS THE UNIVERSITY Chaplain, Interfaith Relationships at Dominican University. She has a MDiv. from the University of Chicago, and a BA from the University of Florida. She worked as the Muslim chaplain at Vassar and Bard colleges. Additionally, she has experience with several nonprofit organizations, including the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, Rural Women's Health Project and United Voices for America. Zaki is pursuing a second Master's in Islamic education from Bayan Graduate



School housed within Chicago Theological Seminary. She is also the founder of My-MuslimChaplain, which offers extensive chaplaincy workshops, services and other consultation.



CONNECTICUT'S WATERBURY BOARD OF Education and the Norwalk boards of education have recognized Eid al-Fitr as an official school holiday on their 2023-24 calendars.

In a 9-1 vote, the Waterbury BOE approved the addition of the Eid al-Fitr to the district's 2023-24 academic calendar. Similarly, the Norwalk BOE unanimously voted to approve the Eid holiday addition during their business planning meeting. Other Connecticut towns and cities that have added recently Eid-al-Fitr as districtwide holidays, among them New Haven, Stamford, Bridgeport, and Fairfield.

YUSEF ABDUS SALAAM, A DEFENDANT EXonerated in the infamous Central Park rape case, was elected to the central Harlem, N.Y., City Council. Salaam, 49, is a board member of the Innocence Project and founding member of Justice 4 the Wrongfully Incarcerated.



"I'm here because Harlem, you believed in me. Harlem has spoken," Salaam said during his victory speech.

Salaam and four other teens were wrongfully accused and found guilty in the notorious 1989 Central Park rape jogger case. After serving between six and 13 years in prison, but their convictions were tossed aside. Salaam is now known to many as one of the "Exonerated Five."

After his arrest at age 15, Salaam served nearly seven years behind bars before a re-examination of the case led to his conviction



ISLAMIC
RELIEF
USA



*That feeling when
you receive
Help* ♡♡♡

We are One

DONATE TODAY: IRUSA.ORG • 1-855-447-1001

3655 WHEELER AVE., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304

being tossed in 2002 after a career criminal confessed to the attack. The city ended up paying \$40.75 million to the five defendants to settle a civil rights suit in 2014.

"My hero, Malcolm X, is the father of six girls," Salaam said. "I am the father of 10 children - 7 girls and 3 boys."

In 2016, he also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from President Barack Obama.



ON JULY 17, MAYOR LEVAR STONEY HELD a roundtable where he announced City of Richmond's proclamation of July as Muslim American Heritage Month.

Stoney met with various members of the Central Virginia Muslim community to talk about their experiences as Muslim Americans. Stoney was joined by State Sen. Ghazala Hashmi (D), Ammar Ammonette of the Islamic Center of Virginia and Imam Michael of Masjid Bilal. **ib**

ACHIEVERS

SYED EQBAL HASAN'S LATEST TEXTBOOK, "Introduction to Waste Management" has



been selected for the prestigious Edward Burwell Jr. Award by the Geological Society of America. It is the nation's oldest (estab. 1888) scholarly earth science society. The award is given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to the interdisciplinary field of engineering geology. In addition to Hasan's other accomplishments, he was selected based on his commitment to integrity and promise to adhere to the ethical standards in GSA's Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct.

The award will be presented at the society's annual meeting at Pittsburg, in mid-October.

"I'm first and foremost grateful to Allah SWT for blessing me with this honor," said Hassan. "I hope my scholarly contributions and recognitions would serve as an inspi-



Abdul Khabeer swearing in with his right hand on a copy of the Quran.

ON JUNE 10, ABDUL KHABEER BECAME THE FIRST MUSLIM TO BE ELECTED TO THE OFFICE of the Irving City Council in Texas. Khabeer, who holds an MBA, is a passionate community leader and seasoned entrepreneur with global professional experience. He has been a resident of Irving for some two decades, where he resides with his wife and son.

With a career rooted in fostering growth and development, he has consistently demonstrated an unwavering dedication to the betterment of his community by serving on various nonprofit boards and homeowner associations. His entrepreneurial journey spans multiple industries, providing him with a rich, multifaceted understanding of business dynamics that are crucial for economic development and societal progress. In addition to that, he has previously served on the City of Irving zoning board of adjustments.

ration to Muslim youth to excel in their professions."

PROFESSOR HIND AL-ABADLEH, A FACULTY member in the department of chemistry and biochemistry at Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, Ont.) since 2005, was recognized with the Hoffman Little Award for excellence in research, teaching and professional endeavors.



She has established an internationally renowned research program in physical and environmental chemistry. Her scholarly work at Laurier has appeared in 59 peer-reviewed publications, two book chapters and one book, many of which attracted media attention. Al-Abadleh is a member of editorial and executive teams of high-profile journals and national and international committees and organizations in her field. She is also a leader in

the development of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines.

Al-Abadleh teaches math-intensive introductory courses in physical chemistry, a challenging sub-discipline. She plays the roles of chemistry and math teacher, as well as motivational speaker, emphasizing active learning strategies to enhance students' problem-solving skills. In her advanced courses, Al-Abadleh supports students in "connecting the dots" by having them apply concepts from previous courses to complete data interpretation and analysis.

Al-Abadleh has received numerous awards for her work, including the Fulbright Canada Research Chair at the University of California, Irvine (2019), the University Research Professor at Laurier (2021), and being named recipient of the inaugural Gilead Award for Excellence in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion by the Canadian Society for Chemistry (2022).



Nusrat Jahan Choudhury testifies at Senate confirmation hearing

THE U.S. GOT ITS FIRST MUSLIM American woman federal judge after the Senate confirmed Nusrat Choudhury on June 15. President Biden nominated the civil rights attorney to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York in January 2022, and she was confirmed to the life-tenured position with a narrow margin of 50-49 votes.

Most recently, Choudhury served as the legal director for the ACLU of Illinois. She has a track record of advancing criminal justice reform, immigrants rights and reproductive care access. Choudhury (BA, Columbia University '98, Master of Public Administration, Princeton

School of Public and International Affairs, '06, and JD, Yale Law School, '06) worked as a staff attorney for the ACLU National Security Project and Racial Justice Program. Since 2020, she has been the legal director of the ACLU of Illinois.

She helped secure the first federal court ruling striking down the U.S. government's no-fly list procedures for violating due process. She also filed litigation to challenge the NYPD's unjustified and discriminatory profiling of Muslims for surveillance, which resulted in a court-ordered settlement agreement, and to secure public records about the FBI's racial and ethnic mapping program. *ih*

THE US SENATE CONFIRMED DILAWAR Syed's nomination as deputy administrator of the Small Business Administration, making him the highest-ranking Muslim official in the US government.



also served on Obama's White House Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and chaired the White House initiative on the commission's economic growth committee. Syed was also previously affiliated with the controversial Emgage and served as an Emgage Pac board member. *ih*

CORRIGENDUM

In IH March/April 2023, p. 47-48 "A Support for Those Who Need,"

We made a mistake:

The correct paragraph reads: "One particularly successful program stemmed from a counseling program for Rohingya youth who had suffered enormously. To deal with their trauma, the youth made a play, "I am Rohingya," that became an international hit. They used art as a release. In addition, her organization's art programs have been used for therapeutic purposes."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

HUMAN BEINGS COMMIT ALL KINDS OF serious crimes, including murder, and receive — and serve — a few years to a life sentence. But sometimes they serve no time at all, depending upon who they are and if their crimes are "white-" or "blue-collar" ones.

However, compared to more than few countries, U.S. prisons are 5-star hotels: prisoners receive three meals a day and medical treatment, can keep their cells clean and have access to big screen TVs for entertainment purposes. Sometimes special meals are prepared for certain occasions. And yet problems are widespread ...

Many criminals tend to end up in prison. In order to prevent recidivism and to transform them into productive citizens after their release, prisons should be a place of education and rehabilitation. For example, people who committed violent crimes should receive counseling for anger management by trained professionals who can give them practical, instead of just theoretical, advice.

At the same time, they should be offered the chance to train themselves in one of the many IT or construction and other manual labor fields, as there is always a need for such skilled workers. In addition to being allowed to keep themselves clean, they should also be provided with an opportunity to learn about the religion of their choice.

Some people commit crimes when they are jobless, homeless and/or hopeless. Both society and the government need to address these situations seriously, instead of just paying lip-service to them.

One way to deal with such realities might be to rethink how to punish crimes and move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. Clearly, transforming unskilled ex-prisoners into productive and employed individuals, which will also reduce the recidivism rate, will require a lot of resources. Numerous lawyers do their best to prove that accused white-collar criminals are innocent; while this is sometimes actually the case, often it is not and thus the people are denied justice.

I would like to see judges and police departments, in conjunction with lawyers, formulate a better legal system, one in which the individual comes first and the punishment actually fits the crime. In the Torah, Bible and Quran, God allows an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and a life for a life — but prefers compassion. This fact should be kept in mind whenever an accused person enters the U.S. criminal justice system.

S.A. Rehman, M.D.

Blossoming Intentions

A Look at the Organic Evolvement of Nonprofits

BY TAYYABA SYED



How it started: Jannah Circle's humble beginnings in a living room

THE FIRST TIME AMINA SHAMS OF Potomac, Md., stepped through the doors of Le Nid, an orphanage that resides on the top floor of a hospital in Meknes, Morocco, she could not help but notice how quiet it was. There were rows and rows of children laying in their cribs, but most of them were not making a sound. She soon realized that these innocent babies lived with a harsh reality: Why cry if no one is going to come?

Over the next few weeks, she got to spend time with her adopted son, providing as much love and sensory stimulation as she could and watched him bloom. “My heart ached for the children that I’d be leaving behind, and I knew I had to do more,” Shams said.

In 2017, with a group of other adoptive mothers, she founded BLOOM: Better Lives of Orphans Overcoming Misfortune, the first 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the U.S. dedicated to providing mental health, development and educational support to children residing in Moroccan orphanages.

“We wanted to give back to the children we

left behind as well as maintain a connection to our children’s birth country,” said Shams. “It happened organically as we talked to other families, and we were able to do things very quickly like put wheels on the cribs, add colors and sensory play items, and get local volunteers to interact with the kids for proper development. The purpose of the main caregivers on staff was to keep the orphans alive, but not help them thrive. All these kids needed nurturing, so we decided to formalize our effort, fundraise and do things with structure. Our pilot project was to build an outdoor play garden upstairs for Le Nid. The photographer who was documenting the children’s first exposure to the play garden described their reaction like ‘birds being released from their cage.’ He then became our program volunteer. It’s these small impacts that keep us going.”

Even though BLOOM is a young volunteer-run nonprofit, the organization has been awarded the seal of transparency five years in a row, maintaining its grass-roots community-based feel. Visit www.bloom-charity.org to learn more.

FROM INTENTION TO FRUITION

In 2018, Dr. Fariha Rub moved to Chicago and searched to find a community for herself. That same year, she lost a baby in utero (named Jannah) and performed hajj. Upon returning, she founded a small *halaqa* group for Muslim women called Jannah Circle in Naperville, Ill.

“A lot of women relocate after marriage and don’t [easily] find community,” shares Rub, who is originally from St. Louis, Missouri. “My initial intent was to get women together to talk about God once a month. We would meet at home to learn from a local female scholar/teacher and enjoy a meal together. We had social and spiritual time in one gathering.” Once the pandemic hit, Jannah Circle transitioned to virtual programs, collaborating with different speakers and organizations. They quickly grew to a community of 800+ women. Rub then recruited volunteers to help her bring in-person programming back on a larger scale post-Covid.

“We needed to borrow community spaces, banquet halls, and mosques to serve at a bigger capacity,” Rub recalls. “I wanted everyone to get a piece of the pie in a non-judgmental setting and leave feeling closer to God.”

In December 2022, Jannah Circle transitioned into a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with an official team of board members and an executive leadership committee of volunteers who are actively planning and executing its many programs and events. It offers a Sunday school for kids ages 4-11, a community outreach program, supports an orphanage in India as well as local refugee families and single women’s needs, spiritual and social events for women, children and families, and virtual classes.

To gain nonprofit status, it only took Jannah Circle a short amount of time due to it having a revenue of less than \$50,000 a year. There was no paperwork or lawyer needed. Instead, they were able to apply online through a swift process.

“We hope to expand into a space that offers a sense of belonging for every member of the community from the cradle to the grave,” says Rub, who is a mother of three and a full time hospitalist by profession. “There needs to be a culture of acceptance and growth, and we want Jannah Circle to be able to provide that for people.”

For those looking to evolve into a nonprofit organization, Rub advises some things



How it's going: Jannah Circle board members today

to consider, like the amount of personal time, commitment and money that is needed to get started. However, she also advises that we should keep a check on our intentions at all times. If our intention remains pure, we can see great *barakah* (blessings), spiritual advancement, and a sense of community. It's a beautiful feeling of leaving a legacy behind that comes with this work.

"Knowing that you are part of an effort towards increasing *sadaqa jariya* (ongoing charity) even after you are gone makes it all worth it," Rub said.

Check out www.jannahcircle.com to learn more.

FRUITS OF LABOR

The process for Jannah Circle to eventually become a nonprofit from a small group was more gradual than it was for Carriers of Light (COL), a Quran-centered elementary school based in Wheaton, Ill. What originally began as a small part time memorization program for home-schooled girls in 2010 quickly became an established organization in a matter of months.

"We had one teacher and 12 students in my basement three times a week," remembers Mehreen Bawla, who founded the school with fellow mom and friend Dr. Rand Diab. "In order to pay our teacher, we had to collect funds and needed nonprofit status from the start. We established a board right away and were incorporated by the end of the first year."

According to Diab, the process to gain

nonprofit status was difficult and required a lot of paperwork. Thankfully, they had a nonprofit attorney who offered to help them pro bono. There are also multiple requirements such as having a board and by-laws. However, they did not need to have money in the bank to get started nor are federal audits required to maintain a 501(c)(3) status.


Since neither Bawla, a pharmacist, nor Diab, an ophthalmologist, were educators, they also had to figure out how to run a school efficiently and professionally. They put their trust in God and stayed determined to provide a sound environment for their girls to be able to memorize the Quran.

"We have just been the vehicles, but God is the One that has been guiding us and continuously opening doors for us," Diab says. "Anytime we wanted to give up or hit a wall, He would show us a way. COL has so strongly been focused on Quranic education, and there's lots of *barakah* (blessings) in that. Our mission has been to provide a positive atmosphere for kids to experience the Quran through love and joy and to connect with God in a beautiful way."

This was lacking in the few programs Diab and Bawla had originally visited before opening COL. They found these places to be "cold" and "uninviting" and wanted to provide a better environment for their girls. The demand quickly grew, and COL added more days, more students, more grades and more subjects. The school relocated to an office space and then eventually moved into

its own building in 2017. Since its inception, it has graduated 24 memorizers of the Quran. Now with 125 students, they have already outgrown their current space and are looking to expand yet again.

"As much as we would love to accommodate more students and families, we want to maintain COL's elements of being Quran-centered, keeping a small student-teacher ratio and not diluting what makes us special and unique," notes Diab.

Bawla adds that COL has always grown in a "careful" way and is certain it will continue to do so with God's help. To support, visit www.carriersoflight.com. 

Tayyaba Syed is a multiple award-winning author, journalist, and Islamic studies teacher. She conducts literary and faith-based presentations for all ages and is an elected member of her local school district's board of education in Illinois, where she lives with her husband and three children. Learn more at www.tayyabasayed.com.

Advertising Material

Attorney Ismail Laher

Helping Healthcare Providers Deal with Audits, Investigations & Compliance.

Our team has Attorneys who are Certified Coders, Billers, Compliance Officers & Former Federal Prosecutors.

Offering Guidance On Complex Matters, Serious Issues & Major Injuries

Liles Parker, PLLC
2121 Wisconsin Ave., NW, #200,
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 596-7863 (d)
www.lilesparker.com

Sign up for our FREE webinars and newsletters (202) 298-8750 (o)



"Mr. Laher is, ex Jones Day, Harvard & Georgetown grad"
We are available to speak at your next event

Rediscovering Puerto Rico's Lost Islamic History

Islamic Influence at Isla del Encanto

BY WENDY DÍAZ



THERE IS A NEW VACATION DESTINATION that is captivating the hearts of Muslims around the world. With miles of crystal-clear beaches, stretches of rainforest, architectural gems, and tantalizing cuisine, this place is a haven for those seeking both natural beauty and cultural immersion.

What surprises visitors even more is the unexpected Islamic influence that adorns this enchanting place. We are talking about none other than the *Isla del Encanto*, Puerto Rico. In the aftermath of the devastating Hurricanes Irma and María in 2017, Islamic relief organizations and Muslim leaders rallied together to provide aid to the affected population. Witnessing the island's breathtaking beauty and recognizing its potential as a "halal" tourist destination, Muslims began traveling to Puerto Rico for vacations and voluntourism. This emerging destination is causing a buzz within the Muslim community in the United States, and it is no surprise. Affordable prices, gorgeous views, and a rich history intertwined with Islam make it the perfect place to visit.

Travel enthusiasts may be surprised to learn that a plane ride from the U.S. to Puerto Rico is considered a domestic flight. Puerto Rico, once a Spanish colony, was annexed by the U.S. in 1898 at the end of

the Spanish-American War and has since remained its territory. Prior to Spanish colonization, Puerto Rico's indigenous inhabitants, known as the Taíno, referred to the land as *Boriken* or *Borinquen*, meaning "the land of the valiant and noble Lord." The term Boricua is used to describe a person of Puerto Rican origin. While often referred to as an island, Puerto Rico is actually an archipelago consisting of one main island and several smaller islands and islets located in the Caribbean Sea, southeast of Florida.

THE COLONIAL HISTORY OF PUERTO RICO

Spain colonized Puerto Rico in the late 15th century, leading to significant changes in its religious and cultural identity. Before colonization, the indigenous Taíno people had a complex belief system rooted in nature and a connection to the divine. The arrival of Christopher Columbus and subsequent Spanish influence transformed the island's religious landscape. His efforts were driven by the spread of Christianity and the acquisition of wealth and power at a time when the Spanish monarchs were reconquering the Iberian Peninsula from Muslim rulers. King Ferdinand II and Queen Isabela succeeded in expelling Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. Consequently, Columbus'

voyages to the New World were funded by the spoils of war gained with the defeat of the final Muslim stronghold in Granada.

The Doctrine of Discovery, issued by Pope Alexander VI in 1493 (*Inter Caetera*), authorized Spain and Portugal to colonize the Americas and its Native peoples as subjects. Only recently rescinded on March 30, 2023, it provided religious and legal justification for Spanish exploration and colonization, marking the beginning of the colonial era in the Caribbean. This religious document resulted in the forced conversion and exploitation of the native inhabitants of the newly discovered islands, including Puerto Rico's Taíno.

Spanish settlers reshaped Puerto Rico's cultural and sociopolitical landscape from the 16th to 19th centuries. They imposed their culture, language, and religious beliefs on the indigenous population. Islamic influences may have been present in the early Spanish explorations and with the arrival of crypto-Muslims (Muslims pretending to be Christians), descendants of the Moors of Spain, and enslaved Africans, many of whom were Wolof Muslims. Later migrations of North and West Africans and Middle Easterners would solidify the Muslim presence in Puerto Rico during the 19th and 20th centuries. Puerto Rico evolved into a melting pot of diverse traditions and a new Puerto Rican identity emerged over time, blending elements of Spanish, African, and indigenous heritage.

American colonialism followed Spanish rule in Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War. The American government sought to assert control over the island and introduced English language schools, American laws, and Protestant missionary work. However, Puerto Ricans largely maintained their Spanish, African, and indigenous identities. The process of colonization and the interplay of different cultures gave rise to a unique syncretism, reflected in language, music, dance, and religious practices. This new identity continues to evolve, driven by ongoing efforts to reclaim lost heritage and resist the effects of colonialism. While Catholicism remains dominant, other faiths, including Islam, are also flourishing on the island.

THE MUSLIMS OF PUERTO RICO

From the early to mid-1900s, Puerto Rico welcomed the migration of former citizens of the Ottoman Empire and Arabs, particularly



This emerging destination is causing a buzz within the Muslim community in the United States, and it is no surprise. Affordable prices, gorgeous views, and a rich history intertwined with Islam make it the perfect place to visit.

Palestinians, fleeing political turmoil and seeking business opportunities. Today, the Muslim community in Puerto Rico consists mostly of Middle Eastern and Asian immigrants and their descendants. Palestinians make up the majority, residing in large cities like San Juan, Caguas, and Ponce, where they have established Islamic centers and thriving businesses. The influence of the prominent Arab Muslim community is evident in the presence of nine mosques scattered across the island, where services are conducted in Arabic.

Alongside recent Arab immigrants, there are also Puerto Ricans with roots on the

island who are converting to Islam. Puerto Rican Muslims, both on the island and in the diaspora, have contributed to the growth of the Muslim community and formed organizations to serve the needs of Latin American Muslims. While there is no accurate measure of the Muslim population, anecdotal evidence suggests an increasing number of local converts in Puerto Rico's mosques.

A HALAL TOUR GUIDE

One Puerto Rican convert who is raising awareness about her homeland's Islamic roots through what she calls "halal" tourism

is Carolina resident Miriam Colón. Colón is a Puerto Rican Muslim who embraced Islam in 2001 while studying in New Jersey. The Covid-19 pandemic prompted her to reevaluate her priorities and move back to Puerto Rico to be closer to family.

During that time, Colón found the opportunity to pursue her passion project: becoming a tour guide and establishing Islam en/in Puerto Rico. Settling in Orocovis, she completed a tourism course and developed a successful business plan that combines community project management, outreach efforts, and halal tourism. This venture allows her to serve and educate residents and guests of Puerto Rico while fulfilling her spiritual aspirations.

Colón's curiosity about the Andalusian architecture in Old San Juan led her to explore the history of Islam in Puerto Rico. She said, "I read what I could find on the web, but I wanted to visit and get to know the Muslims there." She initially sought information online, but moving to Puerto Rico was a turning point. She said, "Living here has definitely played a huge role in being able to benefit the future growth potential of Islam on the island."

As a tour guide specializing in Islamic-inspired architecture and culture, Colón has led over 100 tours in Puerto Rico since June 2021. These tours have catered to both Muslims and non-Muslims, including humanitarian organizations like Islamic Relief, COSSAO, and local initiatives. Her clients have included imams who have visited Puerto Rico to vacation with family or provide services. The overall impression from those who have experienced her tours has been extremely positive. Find out more on social media @islamenpuertorico.

AN ENDURING ISLAMIC LEGACY

Miriam now serves as a guide to help others discover the hidden cultural gems of Puerto Rico. Islamic influence can be found everywhere, from the language of its people to the architectural masterpieces of the Spanish colonial period. Phrases like *ojalá*, which is derived from the Arabic "in sha'Allah" or "law sha Allah" (God willing), and words like *arroz* (rice), *azúcar* (sugar), and *barrio* (neighborhood) are part Puerto Rican Spanish echoing its Arabic heritage. In Old San Juan, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1983, buildings such as *La Casa de España*, *El Ateneo Puertorriqueño*, and Moorish style *haciendas* give the city a





unique vibe reminiscent of Southern Spain and North Africa.

Puerto Rico's cuisine reflects the flavors of the island's diverse cultural influences, including African, Mediterranean, and Spanish flavors that trace their roots to the Islamic Golden Age in the Iberian Peninsula. An example of this culinary fusion is seen in the popular dish known as *pinchos*, or Puerto Rican style kebabs.

In addition to language, architecture, and gastronomy, several other customs showcase the cultural influences in Puerto Rico. These include music and dance forms like *bomba* and *plena*, and traditional festivals that celebrate African and Spanish roots. Artistic traditions, such as *vejigante* masks, symbolizing the defeated Moors of Spain, highlight the blend of indigenous, African, and Iberian art. Furthermore, religious beliefs and superstitions demonstrate the multicultural nature of the island's society.

Descendants of Puerto Ricans who have migrated to the U.S. and other countries and embraced Islam are also returning to Puerto Rico to explore their history. Mutah Beale, a famous former rapper and member of the musical group Outlawz, is an example of this phenomenon. Beale's father was African American, and his mother was Puerto Rican. Both joined the Nation of Islam in the 1970's and later converted to Sunni Islam. Three years after Beale's birth, his parents were killed, but he and his siblings maintained their faith as Muslims. Beale has had a remarkable journey from being a rapper

alongside the late superstar Tupac Shakur in the 1990s to becoming a practicing Muslim living in Saudi Arabia.

In recent years, Beale has turned his attention to his mother's homeland, purchasing land to develop and dedicate to her legacy. In a social media post in 2022, he shared a video of his property on a hillside near El Yunque Rainforest and wrote, "Puerto Rico is my late mother's homeland. May Allah have mercy on her. May Allah make this project a success and a way to give back to the Puerto Rican people." Beale, who is now a successful restaurateur, has expressed his intention to give back to the island and its inhabitants by building an eco-resort and providing job opportunities for locals. His commitment is driven by this genuine personal connection and desire to have a positive impact on the local community.

With these ongoing projects that promote Puerto Rico's rich cultural heritage, Muslims and non-Muslims can alike benefit from everything it has to offer. What is certain is that vacationers will continue to flock to this dream destination, but will hopefully gain more than just a trip to the beach or a hike through the rainforest. Instead, they will unearth a treasure chest of Islamic history in the heart of the Caribbean. *ib*

Wendy Díaz is a Puerto Rican Muslim writer, award-winning poet, translator, and mother of six. She is the co-founder of *Hablamos Islam*, Inc. (<https://hablamosislam.org>), a non-profit organization that produces Spanish language educational resources about Islam. She is the Spanish content coordinator for the Islamic Circle of North America's *WhyIslam* Project, and has also written, illustrated, and published over a dozen children's books.

Bylaw Loopholes End up Losing

The Danger of Ambiguous

BY SADIA QURESHI

ANEWARK, N.J., MOSQUE BOARD secretly sells the building on grounds not approved by the community it was serving. The mosque was also a local *waqf* (charitable endowment) property. It seems hard to believe, but such a practice has also happened to other mosques in the U.S.

This is a consequence of the absence of comprehensive and clear bylaws — something that has given rise to avoidable conflicts, as in the case of two mosques in New Jersey and three in California.

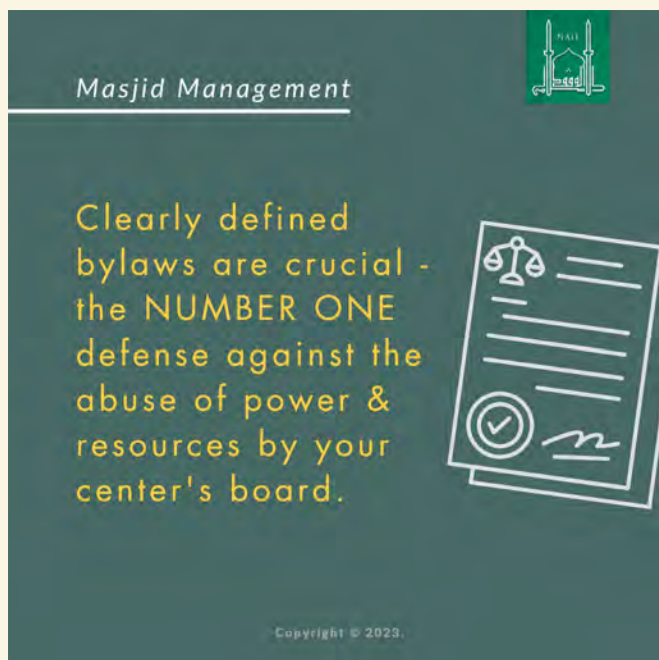
To prevent such practices, clearly defined bylaws can be the number one defense against any mosque board abusing power and resources. The board should deal with the following issues when creating or revising bylaws:

- ♦ **Closing loopholes.** If your mosque doesn't have a published list of bylaws, make it a top priority to create and distribute one. Bylaws consist of agreed-upon policies and procedures, regardless of the mosque's size or operations.

If such a publication does exist, revisit and update all the vague and inadequate provisions with the guidance of a legal expert. Close any loopholes that may inadvertently grant excessive authority to the mosque's board and ensure compliance and transparency. Include "provisions of accountability" to protect the congregation against any arbitrary actions and manipulation that could leave the general body powerless and unable to challenge the board's decisions effectively. A "general body" is composed of patrons/community members serving the mosque, whether paying their dues or not, and are registered to vote on mosque affairs. The best practice is to have only paying members, which will avoid manipulation at election time. This general body elects the Board of

Holes: You Could ing Your Mosque

us language



Without exception, every Islamic center should seek legal expertise to ensure bylaws are consistent, non-contradictory, and legally sound. A legal expert can identify gaps and weaknesses, and suggest areas for improvement with proper legal language that safeguards the interests of the mosque and the community it serves.

Directors, an election process in which the mosque's staff cannot participate.

♦ **Preserving the community's trust.** For mosques operating under a *waqf*, maintaining its Board of Trustees' (BOT) independence from its Board of Directors (BOD) is essential for trust and transparency. Unfortunately, conflicts arise when both boards are the same or overlap, thereby allowing for potential breaches of trust and abuses of power.

To maintain the *waqf*'s sanctity, establish clear lines of separation through the bylaws and prevent any collusion between these bodies. Remember: In case of a conflict, the court will not honor a local *waqf* if the boards of the *waqf* and the mosque are not separate.

♦ **Relocation and expansion guidelines.** Comprehensive bylaws should provide specific guidelines in these two cases, especially when the mosque is a *waqf* property. The new facilities must be carefully assessed in light of the community's needs and conducting the vetting processes — something that was not done in the above-mentioned Newark mosque.

♦ **Use of financial resources.** Defining the appropriate process and authority for accessing and deploying financial resources by any staff or board member is a key component of formulating effective bylaws. These provisions protect the mosque's scarce funds that belong to the people it serves from being abused to achieve egotistic goals.

♦ **Effective governance and conflict resolution provisions.** Include communication systems and conflict resolution mechanisms to establish effective governance and prevent costly legal battles between the board and the general body. Communication transparency and documentation are key to

preserving community trust and financial resources.

♦ **Legal Counsel.** Without exception, every Islamic center/ mosque should seek legal expertise to ensure that its bylaws are consistent, non-contradictory, and legally sound. A legal expert can identify gaps and weaknesses and suggest areas for improvement with proper legal language that safeguards the mosque's interests and those of the community it serves.

♦ **Removal of Board and Election Mechanisms:** Bylaws should be clear and very specific on the following: how to conduct elections, how the board can remove one of its members, how the general assembly can remove the entire board and how to govern until the next election is completed.

Well-defined bylaws are essential for effective mosque governance, or any nonprofit for that matter. Clear bylaws enhance transparency, promote community involvement and empowerment, prevent conflicts, and foster a sense of unity and purpose.

Other than the bylaws, one of the best ways to protect mosques is to make them a *waqf*. If the trustee has strict and systematic mechanisms in place to prevent abuse and manipulation, as in the case of the North American Islamic Trust, issues like those at the Newark mosque would not have arisen.

NAIT's *Waqf* is a completely free service that ensures that the *waqf* continues to benefit the community, as spelled out in the *waqf* agreement. Selling a center or a mosque entrusted to NAIT is very rare, and a lot of strict conditions must be met before it can be sold. If you would like to protect your mosque through NAIT *Waqf*, call us at 630.789.9191. [ib](#)

Reprinted with permission from the North American Islamic Trust, Inc.

Islamic Arts in the U.S. Connecting the Divine with Communities

BY ANDREA SALAMANCA



ART, PERHAPS THE MOST ABSTRACT phenomenon in the hands of human beings, is boundless, revolutionary, fluid, and seeps into the lives of individuals worldwide. Islamic art does this and much more, for it transcends religion, language, time, and place to establish a connection between humans and the Divine. Drawing from sources such as Greek, Roman, and Byzantine art, Islamic art has found its way to the U.S., where it is ubiquitous and thriving.

We start this journey in the incredibly beautiful and diverse city of Houston, Texas. A cultural hub like few others in the country, Houston is the proud home of the Islamic Arts Society (IAS), an organization whose mission is to share this rich heritage. The society highlights how the patterns and designs that Americans come across within their daily lives are often rooted in Islamic art created centuries ago, thereby focusing on commonalities rather than differences. In doing so, the IAS hopes to break down

cultural barriers and unite communities that would otherwise remain isolated.

As a student enrolled at the University of Houston's World Cultures and Literature department, I had the opportunity to work with Mrs. Shaheen Rahman (president, IAS) and experience just how passionate she and her team are about making people aware of

the society's mission and providing resources for artists and communities alike.

In an individualistic society such as the U.S., it's essential to not forgo the value of culture and tradition. I believe the IAS is working tirelessly to make sure that this does not occur. By organizing the county's largest annual Islamic arts festival, the society has created a cultural impact unlike any other. Drawing more than 6,000 visitors from different backgrounds, this celebration is only one of the many ways in which IAS impacts the community. The society also hosts events in museums, libraries, art galleries and college campuses, thereby offering the public multiple opportunities for the public to learn more about this art's rich heritage.

This rich tradition includes calligraphy, architecture, painting, ceramics, geometry, and many other forms. The tradition of Islamic arts is a way of life, a form of language, one used by artists to connect with their spirituality and share their culture. For these reasons, artists in the U.S. have prioritized it to help combat misconceptions and ignorance about Islamic culture.

Dr. Essamedin Alhadi (director, Education and Curatorial Affairs, the International Museum of Muslim Cultures) shares how difficult it has been to attract audiences, pointing to the museum's location as well as the surrounding population's

The society highlights how patterns and designs that Americans come across within their daily lives are often rooted in Islamic art created centuries ago, thereby focusing on commonalities rather than differences. In doing so, the IAS hopes to break down cultural barriers and unite communities that would otherwise remain isolated.



Paul Barchilon, Dual level pattern, original macro level pattern based on an idea in the Topkapi scroll, a Persian document from around 1500 C.E., found in Topkapi Palace.

perspective on the world of Islam as possible contributing factors. Even so, she and the museum are working hard to educate the public on the extensive world of Islamic art and how it has influenced other cultures, all while finding much value in sharing this history.

Other notable museum Islamic art collections include The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City), which holds 15,000+ objects in its Islamic arts gallery; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which notably features works of present-day Muslim artists; and the Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art – where the Freer and Sackler galleries hold some of the most important Islamic illuminated manuscripts. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, displays its own Art of the Islamic Worlds collection, which recently expanded to six permanent galleries. The expansion brought hundreds of objects spanning more than 1,000 years of Islamic culture into the heart of Houston.

To gain a better understanding of the experiences of Muslim artists in the U.S., I had the pleasure of speaking with several renowned artists, including Dr. Nihad Dukhan, an Arab-American artist who holds a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering


and is a traditionally trained calligrapher. Focusing on modern and traditional calligraphy, he hopes to bring awareness of the culture and connect with the American community. He believes that the public at large can relate to the themes often found in his work, which will help fight misconceptions about Islamic culture.

Adding on to this same idea, Ms. Elinor Holland, a distinguished calligrapher in the U.S., likes to choose Quranic phrases emphasizing social justice to spark conversations on the harmful rhetoric that has become embedded in many people's mind.

To spread the message of the Divine, these artists have spent many years pouring their hearts into the subject. While creating what they consider sacred art, they seek to honor their religion, not themselves. They view their pieces as channels through which a connection with the Divine can be achieved. Artists such as Behnaz Karjoo, an illumination artist, and Zinnur Doganata, a miniature artist, show us the beauty of connecting to a higher power and how meaningful this is for people seeking to discover Islamic culture inside the U.S.

During my conversation with Josh Berer, an Arabic calligrapher, the lack of awareness and opportunities for Islamic artists arose

several times. He advises any artists trying to develop their career here to find a community that will support their efforts and serve as a platform for their art. Paul Barchilon, a ceramic artist, retold his own struggles in this regard. He reminisced about how difficult it was to connect with an audience, revealing how out of place he felt during the early stages of his career. After many years of searching, he has connected with artists nationwide and wishes to beautify the world through the wonderful field of Islamic geometric patterns.

Sharing the true beauty of Islamic arts in the U.S. has never been more important. Fighting the ongoing negative portrayal of Muslims as well as sharing their rich heritage could open many doors for the artistic community, as well as serve as an educational opportunity for the public. In finding places like the IAS, where challenges only motivate the organization to continue its efforts and where art brings people together, the Islamic community can find a home away from home in their adopted country.. 

Andrea Salamanca is a student at the University of Houston's World Cultures and Literature department.

ISNA Monthly Sustainer – A Good Deed Done Regularly!

You can make an impact
with as little as
\$10 per month!




www.isna.net
(317) 839-8157

Convenient. Secure. Affordable.

Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb

The American Islamic Propagation Movement

BY DR. MUHAMMED ABDULLAH AL-AHARI AND SAFFET CATOVIC

MUHAMMAD ALEXANDER RUSSELL Webb was one of the earliest European ancestry converts to Islam in the United States. He also started one of the first Islamic Reading Rooms, three Islamic newspapers, and had a small bookstore and lecture series. One of my first introduction to the history of Islam in America was through the entry in "Islam Our Choice" on his life.

Webb was born on November 9, 1846, in Hudson, N.Y. In his youth he worked in some of the finer jewelry houses of New York, but quickly turned to journalism.

He excelled in his college preparatory school (Claverack College) and later purchased a weekly newspaper in Unionville, Miss. His prowess as a journalist was soon apparent, and he was offered city editorship of the St. Joseph, Mo., Daily Gazette. Over the years, he eventually edited or worked for seven newspapers in Missouri, New Jersey, and New York.

Webb married a widow, Ella G. Hotchkiss, who had a seven-year-old daughter Betsy. His family followed him when he worked for several newspapers in St. Louis. In 1887, while working for the Missouri Republican, he was appointed by President Cleveland to be Consular Representative to the Philippines at the U.S. office in Manila.

WEBB'S PATH TO ISLAM

He started his life as a Presbyterian but found it dull and restraining. As early as 1881 he started a search for his true faith by reading books from a well-stocked library of over 13,000 volumes. He started studying Buddhism and found it lacking. He then began to study Islam. He studied the writing of Sufis, Theosophists, Orientalists, and traditional *madhhab*.

In 1888, he formally declared himself Muslim.

At that time, he had yet to meet a Muslim but was put in contact with several Muslims in India by a local Parsi businessman. A newspaper publisher, Badruddin Abdulla Kur of Bombay, published several of Webb's



letters in his paper and in the Allahabad Review. A local businessman, Hajji Abdullah Arab, saw these letters and went to Manila to see Webb. This business became one of Webb's greatest supporters. However, with the fall of the Indian rupee the support did not last for long.

After the visit, Webb began plans to tour India and then return to the U.S. to propagate Islam. Webb's wife, Ella G. Webb, and their three children had also accepted Islam. Hajji Abdullah returned to India and raised funds for Webb's tour. Webb visited Rangoon, Poona, Bombay, Calcutta, Hyderabad, and Madras.

He resigned in 1892 and returned to the U.S. Webb's family settled in New York, where he established the Oriental Publishing Company. This company published his writings (including his magnum opus "Islam in America").

WEBB AS AN ISLAMIC PROPAGANDIST

"Islam in America" is Webb's best edited and comprehensive work on the concepts of Islam and *da'wa*. This brief work contains 70 pages divided into eight chapters, namely: I) Why I Became a Muslim, II) An Outline of Islamic Faith, III) The Five Pillars of Practice, IV) Islam in Its Philosophic Aspect, V) Polygamy and the Purdah, VI) Popular Errors Refuted, VII) The Muslim Defensive Wars, and VIII) The American Islamic Propaganda.

Along with this venture, he started the organ of the American Muslim Propagation Movement called "Moslem World." The first issue appeared in 1893. It lasted for seven monthly issues. He later published a three-issue newspaper named "The Voice of Islam" and a fourteen-issue run of the newspaper "The Moslem World and the Voice of Islam."

Webb was the main representative for Islam at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, where he gave two speeches — "The Influence of Islam upon Social Conditions" and "The Spirit of Islam." At the World Parliament of Religions, he was attacked by a Fundamentalist Christian minister named Cook because he dared to speak about polygamy and against the dating society of the West. However, the secretary of the World Parliament, Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, supported Webb's work in his Unitarian-Universalist magazine "Unity."

In August 2023, the Parliament of the World's Religions returns to the birthplace of the modern interfaith movement after 30 years away to celebrate 130 years of history in the city of Chicago. Parliament convenings attract participants from more than 200 diverse religious, indigenous, and secular beliefs and more than 80 nations. Registrants enjoy access to all the plenary sessions, hundreds of breakout sessions (including several on Webb), art and cultural exhibits, performances, a film festival, and countless opportunities to connect with individuals and organizations committed to justice, peace, and sustainability. This Parliament will be the most important and

largest gathering of the world's religious and spiritual leaders and practitioners uniting in a collective, courageous, and clear reply to the most dangerous crisis confronting us today — authoritarianism.

This existential, expanding, global scourge is manifesting in tyrants who commit crimes against humanity, suppress fundamental freedoms, subvert democracies, and murder the truth with lies. These bullies and despots are pursuing nationalist wars and winking at domestic terrorism. They are fostering hate and the resurgence of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, misogyny, and racism. And they are attempting to misappropriate religions to justify the unjustifiable.

This is not who we are.

Every faith has at its core, a summoning to ease the suffering of others and to contribute to a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. Today, the Parliament of the World's Religions issues its Call to Conscience to people of faith and spirit, to the people of Chicago, to all people of conscience, to stand together in defense of the dignity, freedom, and human rights of all.

For the rest of Webb's life, he was the main spokesman for Islam in America. Throughout the rest of the United States, he started study circles in several cities.

Webb took what suited his purpose even from those who attacked Islam if he felt it could be used to prove his interpretation of Islam — an Islam that could be modern and American without rejecting its essential principles and points of doctrine. Islam, for Webb, was an enlightened faith that held the possibility of solving the problems of the modern world. However, Webb sought first to give what he held to be a correct perspective of Islam for an American audience, rather than actively seek converts.


Furthermore, Webb was more of a Unitarian-Universalist-Sufi-Theosophist than a traditional *madhhab* following Muslim or Sufi. His choice of associates and texts he studied, quoted, and paraphrased strengthens this view. Webb not only used works that supported his views in his writings, but also recycled previous speeches and texts from his pen.

WEBB AFTER THE CLOSE OF HIS ISLAMIC MISSION

He is also known for writing two booklets about the Armenian and Ottoman wars from a Muslim point of view and for being

appointed the Honorary Turkish Consul in New York by Sultan Abdul Hamid II.

From 1898 to the time of his death on October 1, 1916, Webb lived in Rutherford, N.J. He died at the age of seventy and was buried in Hillside Cemetery on the outskirts of Rutherford. He was survived by his wife, a son Russell, two daughters — Mary, Nala, and an adopted daughter, Elizabeth. After Webb's death, his wife became a Unitarian. His daughter Mary remained Muslim and attended a 1943 ceremonial dinner to remember her father.

After Webb's death, his efforts were largely forgotten until the work of Umar Farouq Abdullah (for writing a biography of Webb entitled "A Muslim in Victorian America: The Life of Alexander Russell Webb") and Brent D. Singletary (reprinting Webb's Diaries and his Three Speeches in his "Yankee Muslim: The Asian Travels of Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb"). 

Dr. Muhammed Abdullah Al-Ahari is an author, educator, researcher, based in Chicago who has collected and published almost a dozen works from Webb's pen. He is preparing a two-volume edition of Webb's Moslem World.

Imam Saffet Catovic is currently director of the United Nations Operations for Justice For All (www.justiceforall.org), the only Muslim-run international human rights organization based in North America. He was the former programs manager and head of ISNA's Office for Interfaith Alliances and Governmental Relations in DC. He also serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Parliament of the World's Religions.

ISNA Monthly Sustainer —
A Good Deed Done Regularly!

**You can make an impact
with as little as
\$10 per month!**



www.isna.net • (317) 839-8157

Convenient. Secure. Affordable.

Islam between Africa and America

New Library of Congress Grant Educates the American Public on “Interreligious Cultural Understanding” in Africa, the Middle East and Global Diasporas

BY SARA SWETZOFF

GO TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS’ website and navigate to the page for the African and Middle Eastern Division (AMED). The pages’ center panel invites me to check out highlighted items “Of Special Interest.” For those able to visit in person, there is a new exhibit in the African and Middle Eastern Reading Room on “Religious and Cultural Diversity in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.” Since I’m far from Washington, I clicked on a link entitled “Story Map: Prayer Traditions in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.”

A splendid 15th century map of the Indian Ocean stretches across my home computer monitor. As I scroll down, the background images change. Text overlays expound on the diversity of human belief systems and caption the incredible array of photos, books, textiles, postcards, and other materials compiled by a team of ten Library of Congress (LOC) librarians and regional specialists. I put the story map on autoplay and sit back to watch the digital exhibit unfold before my eyes. The ambitious regional and historical scope of the collection means that indigenous African religions, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all presented.

The story map ends, but the digital collection does not — 121 selected prayer texts from the region can be accessed on the companion website, enabling students and researchers to continue their learning journey. The texts are written in African languages, Hebrew, Arabic, Armenian, Ge’ez, Georgian, Ladino, Persian, Turkish, and Turkic languages. According to the collection description online, the oldest manuscript in the collection dates to the 11th century.

The items in this digital repository have been collected over decades at the recommendation of the Library of Congress’ group of specialized academic advisors. However, the story map website and several other educational initiatives are new additions to the library’s repertoire, thanks to a generous 2022 grant from the Lilly Endowment,



Photo of Omar Ibn Said from the Yale Collection — there is a public domain image that was digitally retouched by a volunteer

Inc., a private philanthropic foundation. These initiatives include online workshops to foster understanding of Islam, as well as a planned film about the life of Omar Ibn Said — an Islamic scholar from West Africa who wrote his autobiography in Arabic while enslaved in South Carolina for much of his adult life.

According to the Lilly Foundation Inc. website, it supports “causes of religion, education, and community development.” The focus of the foundation arose from the religiosity of the founders and their corresponding dedication to fostering public goodwill. It thus makes sense that the foundation-funded LOC project is entitled

“Exploring Challenging Conversations.”

An LOC press release describes the project as seeking to “enhance public awareness of cross-regional and intercultural religious understanding in Africa, the Middle East, and their global diasporas.”

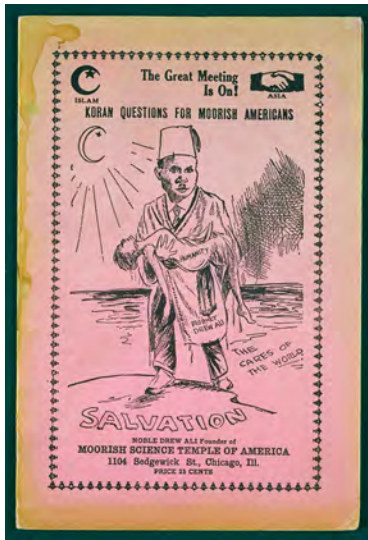
We live in an era when Islam is too often isolated from its broader regional and social contexts, as well as from the larger history and practice of human religious beliefs. Islamophobic narratives portray Islam as an exceptional problem. And sometimes we replicate that exceptionalism when we educate the public about Islam without highlighting its worldwide interfaith and intercultural connections.

It is not just the LOC that has recognized the importance of taking an expansive, multi-faith approach to contextualizing Islam in human history. In 2011, the Metropolitan Museum in New York City famously renamed its Islamic Art wing as “Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia and Later South Asia.” In recent years, various exhibits and educational initiatives have evoked the “Silk Road” and “Indian Ocean World” to reach for a more expansive, cosmopolitan discussion on Muslim heritage.

OMAR IBN SAID

The LOC has taken this approach a step further. The Lilly Foundation grant was awarded to the Middle East and African Division, yet perhaps the most visible and

What makes Omar Ibn Said’s story so remarkable — and distinct from the accounts we have of other prominent enslaved Muslims such as Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Sori and Mustafa Zemmouri — is the fact that he told it himself in writing.



From the Omar Ibn Said collection at the LOC: Photo of a pamphlet directed towards African American Muslims in the early 20th century. From LOC collection, open domain

far-reaching component of the grant will be its proposed film on the life of a man who spent most of his life enslaved in the southern U.S. Omar Ibn Said, an Islamic scholar known for continuing to read and write fluently in Arabic throughout his enslavement, was kidnapped from his West African homeland as a young man in 1807.

This effort to highlight the Omar Ibn Said story comes nearly two decades after the pivotal production of a 2006 historical drama on the life of Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Sori, a prince from West Africa who was enslaved in the U.S. for 40 years until he secured his freedom in 1838. “Prince Among Slaves” won best documentary at the American Black Film Festival in 2008. The LOC’s grant-funded workshop series dedicated to fostering understanding of Islam kicked off with a special Juneteenth screening and discussion of the film.

What makes Omar Ibn Said’s story so remarkable — and distinct from the accounts we have of other prominent enslaved Muslims such as Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Sori and Mustafa Zemmouri — is the fact that he told it himself in writing. The library’s collection of materials pertaining to early African American Islam is named for Omar Ibn Said because his hand-written Arabic autobiography, completed

in 1831, is by far its most significant and famous holding. Starting with this incredible document, a team of scholars will put together both a book and a film on Omar Ibn Said. According to the LOC, the documentary will start with the story of his upbringing and education in Futo Toro, a semidesert region in today’s northern Senegal. The film will endeavor to uplift Omar Ibn Said’s African Muslim identity and show how that shaped his later resilience in the face of enslavement, thus paving the way for his continuing legacy.

Lanisa Kitchiner, head of the African and Middle Eastern Division, spoke about Omar Ibn Said and the significance of his story in an interview with American Muslim Today: “He is very clearly establishing his identity as a Muslim man in America at a pivotal point in its history ... it challenges us to wrestle with the American story as we know it with what’s included in that story with what’s omitted from this story at the same time as it challenges us to recognize Islam as a powerful global religion with reach and impact in significance in every facet of our lives, including here in America.”

Just as the Omar Ibn Said manuscript is one of the LOC’s Africa and Middle East Division star holdings, its author is clearly the star of the grant proposal that made this expansive project on intercultural and interreligious understanding possible. Both the Omar Ibn Said Collection and the grant that it facilitated notably span the Atlantic Ocean and bind Africa and the Middle East to the Americas through Islam, thus embodying the global intersections between Islam and Pan-Africanism.

At the same time, the collection and its namesake raise important conversations about race, racism, and the enduring impact of slavery on the U.S. today. This grant is timely, as we face a critical juncture of self-reckoning in American history and together forge a just path forward. [ib](#)

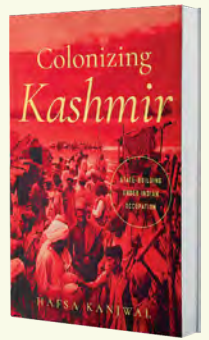
Sara Swetsoff received her PhD in African Studies from Howard University in 2022. She is a professor of political science at Eastern Connecticut State University and a faculty organizer at the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges.

Colonizing Kashmir: State-building under Indian Occupation

Hafsa Kanjwal

2023. Pp. 384 HB \$95.00 PB \$32.00 Kindle \$24.99 Stanford University Press

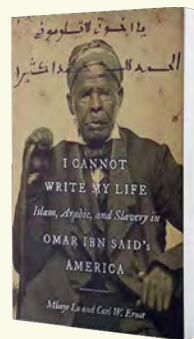
INDIA, HAILED AS THE WORLD’S LARGEST democracy, often repeats that Jammu and Kashmir — its only [and occupied] Muslim-majority state — is “an integral part of India.” The region, which is disputed between India and Pakistan, and is considered the world’s most militarized zone, has been occupied by India for over 75 years. Kanjwal shows how Kashmir was made “integral” to India through a study of the decade long rule (1953–63) of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the occupied state’s second “prime minister.” Examining a wide array of bureaucratic documents, propaganda materials, memoirs, literary sources, and oral interviews in English, Urdu, and Kashmiri, Kanjwal examines the intentions, tensions, and unintended consequences of Bakshi’s state-building policies in the context of India’s colonial occupation. She reveals how the Kashmir “government” tailored its policies to integrate Kashmir’s Muslims while also showing how these policies were marked by interreligious tension, corruption, and political repression. Challenging the binaries of colonial and postcolonial, Kanjwal historicizes India’s occupation through processes of emotional integration, development, normalization, and empowerment to highlight the new hierarchies of power and domination that emerged in the aftermath of decolonization. In doing so, she urges people to question triumphalist narratives of India’s state-formation, as well as the sovereignty claims of the modern nation-state.



I Cannot Write My Life: Islam, Arabic, and Slavery in Omar ibn Said’s America

Mbaye Lo, Carl W. Ernst

2023. Pp. 232 HB \$99.00 PB \$24.95 Kindle \$14.99 The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C.



OMAR IBN SAID (1770–1863) WAS A Muslim scholar from West Africa who spent more than fifty years enslaved in the North Carolina household of James Owen, brother of Gov. John Owen. In 1831 Omar composed a brief autobiography, the only known narrative written in Arabic by an enslaved person in North America, and he became famous for his Arabic writings. His enslavers also provided him with an Arabic Bible and claimed Omar as a convert to Christianity, prompting wonder and speculation among amateur scholars of Islam, white slave owners, and missionaries. But these self-proclaimed experts were unable or unwilling to understand Omar’s writings, and his voice was suppressed for two centuries.

Lo and Ernst offer fresh and accurate translations of Omar’s eighteen surviving writings, for the first time identifying his quotations from Islamic theological texts, correcting many distortions, and providing the fullest possible account of his life and significance. Placing Omar at the center of a broader network of the era’s literary and religious thought, Lo and Ernst restore Omar’s voice, his sophisticated engagement with Islamic and Christian theologies, his Arabic skills, and his extraordinary efforts to express himself and exert agency despite his enslavement.

This book is a useful resource for scholars and others who are interested in that era. [ib](#)



Could Israel Carry Out Another Nakba?

Expulsionist sentiment is common in Israeli society and politics. To ignore the warning signs is to abdicate responsibility.

BY PETER BEINART

WHEN OFFICIALS IN BENJAMIN Netanyahu's government explain why they're so eager to weaken Israel's Supreme Court, they often cite the limitations it places on their ability to punish Palestinians. "If I want to demolish terrorists' houses, who is in my way?" thundered Likud Knesset member Tali Gottlieb at a March 27th pro-government rally. "Who's stopping me from revoking the rights of terrorists' families?" To each question, the crowd replied: "The Supreme Court." When his turn came at the podium, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir initiated a similar call and response. "When we came to offer the law for the death penalty

for terrorists, who stood against it?" "When we submitted a bill to give soldiers immunity, who stood against it?" The crowd screamed: "The Supreme Court."

When Palestinians explain the current government's agenda, however, many describe the policies advanced by Gottlieb and Ben-Gvir as part of a larger strategy: mass expulsion. In early March, Palestinian anti-occupation activist Fadi Quran told me he felt "like we are at the cusp of another Nakba"—the term that denotes the expulsion of roughly 750,000 Palestinians at Israel's birth. Last December, when the pollster Khalil Shikaki asked Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to characterize Israel's

"long run aspiration," 65% chose "extending the borders of the state of Israel to cover all the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea and *expelling its Arab citizens*" (emphasis mine).

In mainstream American political discourse, such a prospect seems unthinkable. U.S. government officials don't acknowledge Palestinian fears of another Nakba. They more often treat Palestinians as a people that would be on route to independence if only they avoided "unhelpful" actions—like demanding international pressure on Israel—that leave them "further away from a two-state solution." But when Palestinians claim that Israel's long-term goal is not Palestinian

statehood but Palestinian expulsion, they aren't hallucinating. Expulsion is deeply rooted in Zionist history, and the sentiment pervades Israel today, including among politicians and commentators generally viewed as centrists. Israel's current defense minister, national security advisor, and agriculture minister—members of Benjamin Netanyahu's center-right Likud party—have all alluded to removing Palestinians from the country. While the pace of Palestinian expul-

the idea of transfer as the natural, efficient and even moral solution to the demographic dilemma." In 1938, David Ben-Gurion, who would become Israel's first prime minister, declared, "I support compulsory transfer." The following year his chief rival, revisionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky, *concurred* that "the Arabs must make room for the Jews in Eretz Israel. If it was possible to transfer the Baltic peoples it is also possible to move the Palestinian Arabs."

Another Nakba is possible. By pretending it isn't, American officials conveniently avoid an uncomfortable but vital question: What would they do to try and stop it?

sion has waxed and waned in the 75 years since Israel's war of independence, there is reason to worry that the radicalism of Israel's current government, combined with rising violence in the West Bank, could turn the current trickle into a flood.

Another Nakba is possible. By pretending it isn't, American officials conveniently avoid an uncomfortable but vital question: What would they do to try and stop it?

To understand how mainstream the idea of ethnically cleansing Palestinians is in contemporary Israeli society, it helps to understand how mainstream it has been in Zionist history. The Nakba of 1948 was not an accident forced upon the Zionist movement by Palestinian rejectionism and Arab invasion. It was the answer to a problem that had bedeviled political Zionists since the movement's birth: how to create a Jewish state in a territory largely populated by Arabs. As early as 1895, Theodor Herzl confided to his diary, "We shall try to spirit the penniless [native] populations across the border by procuring employment for them in the transit countries." In his influential book, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, the Israeli historian Benny Morris writes that in the 1920s and 1930s, as it became clear that Arabs would resist Jewish sovereignty and the British would sooner or later restrict Jewish immigration, "a consensus or near-consensus formed among the Zionist leaders around

When establishment American Jewish groups *blame* Arab and Palestinian leaders for having brought the Nakba on themselves by rejecting the United Nations' 1947 partition proposal, they overlook the fact that because Arabs constituted roughly two-thirds of the population of mandatory Palestine, they would have comprised roughly half of the people inside even the territory allocated for a Jewish state. Ensuring a large Jewish majority required their expulsion—a process that began months before the Arab governments declared war. It is for this reason that even Morris, who unlike some other historians does not believe the Zionist leadership formulated a specific expulsion plan, *admits* that "Ben-Gurion was a transferist. He understood that there could be no Jewish state with a large and hostile Arab minority in its midst."

This essential logic—a Jewish state should include as much territory and as few Palestinians as possible—did not end with Israel's creation in 1948. In his book *Israel's Border Wars*, Morris cites an Israeli Foreign Ministry estimate that the nascent Jewish state expelled roughly 17,000 Bedouins between 1949 and 1953, either because they were alleged to have attacked Israeli troops or because they were encroaching on land and water coveted by Jews. When Israel conquered the West Bank in 1967, it *expelled several hundred thousand* Palestinians to Jordan. As Al Quds University's Munir

Nusseibeh has *detailed*, Israel's leaders were particularly intent on removing Palestinians from areas they considered strategically or politically significant: East Jerusalem, the Latrun salient (a sliver of land south of the Israeli city of Modi'in where the West Bank protrudes into Israel proper), and the Jordan Valley, which after the war formed Israel's new border with Jordan. As Ariel Sharon, who commanded Israeli troops in 1967 before entering politics, later *acknowledged*, "For several years after the Six-Day War, assistance was given to Arabs who wished to emigrate from here."

But despite these expulsions, Israel still controlled the lives of millions of Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Israel proper. And in the half-century since, prominent Israeli and diaspora Jews have repeatedly suggested that the Jewish state would be safer and more cohesive if they could be induced to leave. Although journalists often associate such calls with right-wing extremists like Rabbi Meir Kahane, many mainstream figures have endorsed the idea as well. As early as 1968, the Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson *reportedly* advised confidants that "Israel should have told the Arabs [in the 1967 war] to leave and go across the border into Jordan." In 2004, Benny Morris, the same historian who gained fame documenting Israel's expulsions in 1948, announced that Israel might need to finish the job. "The Israeli Arabs are a time bomb," he *told* journalist Ari Shavit. "In both demographic and security terms they are liable to undermine the state. So that if Israel again finds itself in a situation of existential threat, as in 1948, it may be forced to act as it did then." Two years later, Effi Eitam, a former brigadier general who served as minister of national infrastructure and then minister of housing and construction under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, was *even more direct*: "We'll have to expel the overwhelming majority of West Bank Arabs from here and remove Israeli Arabs from the political system." In 2009, Daniel Gordis, one of Israel's most prominent English-language commentators, suggested in his book *Saving Israel* that "perhaps some accommodation could be made with the countries bordering Israel (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and eventually Palestine) to take in Israel's Arabs." That same year, the politician Avigdor Lieberman ran for the Knesset on a *platform* of stripping Israel's Palestinian citizens of their citizenship unless they pledged loyalty to a Jewish state. Lieberman, who is

now widely considered a political moderate for his opposition to Benjamin Netanyahu's judicial overhaul plans, went on to become foreign and defense minister. These pundits and politicians are not ideological outliers. Their views enjoy widespread public support. In 2017, Shikaki asked Israeli Jews whether "Israeli Arabs and Palestinians in Judea and Samaria should be expelled or transferred from Israel." Forty percent said yes. In three other polls, which asked similar questions between 2015 and 2016, expulsionist sentiment ranged between 32% and 58%.

Despite this, Israel has in recent decades carried out only smaller expulsions—nothing on the scale of 1948 or 1967. According to the Israeli human rights group HaMoked, between the start of the occupation in 1967 and the Oslo Accords in 1994, Israeli policies that prevented Palestinians who left the West Bank and Gaza Strip from returning forced roughly 9,000 Palestinians per year into permanent exile. Similar policies have continued since Oslo in East Jerusalem, where—according to the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem—Israel has revoked the residency of roughly 14,000 Palestinians since 1967.

But there are reasons to fear that these numbers could rise dramatically. Last month, Michael Barnett, a professor of international affairs and political science at George Washington University, observed that the United Nations lists a series of "risk factors" for genocide and "lesser" forms of organized violence in a given country. Among these risk factors are serious human rights violations, systematic discrimination against a vulnerable group, widespread attacks on civilians, and the motive and capacity to commit broader atrocities. "Israel ticks all the boxes," he observed.

One key risk factor, Barnett noted, is "situations of armed conflict." It is no coincidence that Israel's two largest expulsions, in 1948 and 1967, occurred during war. Whether in Israel-Palestine, the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, or northern Ethiopia today, war enables ethnic cleansing. It provides an excuse for governments to deport civilians and deny access to journalists and international observers who might document what's happening on the ground. War also radicalizes populations. As the scholars Ifat Maoz and Roy Eidelson have noted,

Israeli Jewish support for expulsion spiked during the First Intifada of the late 1980s, declined after it ended, then rose again with the Second Intifada in the early 2000s.

The chances of a third intifada look greater today than they have in almost two decades. According to the United Nations, Israel killed more Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 2022 than in any year since 2006, when the Second Intifada was winding down. This year, the number of Palestinian fatalities is on course to be even higher. After visiting Israel in February, CIA Director William Burns warned that another intifada could break out soon.

Israel has responded brutally to uprisings before. But no Israeli government in recent decades has included so many top officials who have publicly flirted with the idea of mass expulsion. For Bezael Smotrich, Israel's finance minister, who oversees civilian administration in the West Bank, Palestinian

colleagues in the Knesset that they were "here by mistake—because Ben-Gurion didn't finish the job and throw you out in 1948."

It's not hard to imagine Smotrich interpreting another Palestinian uprising as evidence that thousands if not millions of Palestinians actively retain "national aspirations," and must therefore be offered assistance in leaving the country. As opposition leader Benny Gantz acknowledged in February, "Smotrich wants to cause another Palestinian Nakba—for him, escalation is a desirable thing." It would presumably also be desirable for Ben-Gvir, who last year proposed creating a ministry to "promote immigration" among Palestinians "who want to eliminate the Jewish state." And like Smotrich, Ben-Gvir does not restrict this vision to Palestinians in the West Bank. During the 2022 campaign, his campaign erected billboards that read "May our enemies be banished" below photos of Knesset members from Palestinian parties.

It would be comforting to believe that Smotrich and Ben-Gvir are anomalies whose views enjoy little currency in a government led by members of Benjamin Netanyahu's ostensibly more moderate Likud Party. But several of the government's top Likud ministers have signaled their openness to mass expulsion as well. Avi Dichter, Israel's current Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, is a pillar of the

Israeli security establishment. Over the past two decades he has led the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, served as public security minister under centrist prime minister Ehud Olmert and completed a fellowship at Washington's prestigious Brookings Institution. In 2007, in response to news that Palestinian citizens were boycotting Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations, he warned that, "Whoever cries of the Nakba year after year, shouldn't be surprised if they actually have a Nakba eventually."

Among Dichter's Likud colleagues is Tzachi Hanegbi, *Israel's National Security Advisor*. Like Dichter, Hanegbi has worked not only in right-wing coalitions but relatively centrist ones like Sharon's, which dismantled Israeli settlements in Gaza. Unlike Smotrich, who Biden administration officials have refused to meet, Hanegbi is considered a respectable interlocutor in Washington; he met Secretary of State



emigration is essential to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2017 he laid out what he called a "decisive plan" in which West Bank Palestinians would be offered a choice. Those who agreed to "forgo their national aspirations"—in other words, abandon the demand for either a Palestinian state or citizenship in Israel—would be permitted to stay in the West Bank as stateless non-citizens. Those who maintained such demands would "receive aid to emigrate."

Although the plan covers only Palestinians in the West Bank, Smotrich has repeatedly suggested that Palestinian citizens of Israel who challenge Jewish supremacy should meet a similar fate. In April 2021, in a tweet addressed to Palestinian Knesset Member Ahmad Tibi, Smotrich declared that "a true Muslim must know that the Land of Israel belongs to the People of Israel, and over time Arabs like you who do not recognize this will not stay here." That fall he told his Palestinian



Orphan Sponsorships

\$45 A Month
or
\$1.50 A Day

You can sponsor an orphan child and pave a path for them to live with contentment and strive toward success.

Antony Blinken last month. But Hanegbi has threatened mass expulsion as well. “This is how a ‘Nakba’ begins. Just like this. Remember ’48. Remember ’67,” he wrote on Facebook after Palestinians murdered three Israeli civilians in the West Bank in 2017. “When you want to stop it all it will already be gone. It will already be after the third ‘Nakba.’” Then there’s Yoav Gallant, who Benjamin Netanyahu recently fired then reinstated as defense minister. “Seventy-four years ago your leaders within the state of Israel dragged you into a war that resulted in a mass exodus from Israel,” he lectured Palestinians in a speech last year. He then warned that if they “cross the red line . . . the price will be high.”

It’s impossible to know how mass expulsion might occur. But one clue lies in the

the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, and Ofek concluded that land registration “is expected to dispossess Palestinians of property rights on a colossal scale.”

Once stripped of their property rights, many Palestinians would become like the villagers of *Masafer Yatta* and *Khan al-Ahmar*, who have been declared illegal squatters, their homes slated for demolition. When I asked the Israeli human rights lawyer Michael Sfard how he thought such a process might play out, he suggested that Smotrich and his allies hope to impose enough pressure on Palestinians to convince many of them to leave. “The idea is to put in place coercive measures that would drive people out of the country,” he explained.

How would Israel react if Palestinians instead mounted large-scale resistance?

support. Presidents of both parties refuse to enforce laws barring US aid from being used to violate human rights, and relentlessly obstruct efforts to investigate and condemn Israeli abuses in international forums.

Nothing in Joe Biden’s record suggests he will change this. As a presidential candidate, he *called* imposing human rights conditions on aid to Israel “absolutely outrageous.” As recently as March 20th, just weeks after the pogrom against Palestinians in the West Bank town of Huwara, his spokesperson *answered* a question about conditioning aid by reiterating the administration’s “ironclad support for Israel’s security.” (Buttressing Biden’s stance are establishment American Jewish organizations like the Jewish Federations of North America, which recently *called* its support for Israel “unconditional and eternal.”) Given America’s record over the last 30 years, there’s little reason to believe there is anything Israel could do to Palestinians that would lead establishment Democrats, let alone Republicans, to oppose US aid to Israel, endorse resolutions against it at the United Nations, or support prosecuting its officials at the International Criminal Court.

In July 2015, several weeks after Donald Trump announced that he was running for president, then-Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison *warned* that Trump might win. “Anybody from the Democratic side of the fence who is terrified of the possibility of President Trump,” Ellison declared on ABC’s Sunday talk show, *This Week*, “better vote, better get active, better get involved, because this man has got some momentum.” The other panelists burst out laughing. “I know you don’t believe that,” chided host George Stephanopoulos. But Ellison—the show’s only Black guest—wasn’t joking. “Stranger things have happened,” he insisted.

When Ellison warned his fellow panelists that Americans who wanted to stop Trump needed to “get active,” he was drawing a connection between political imagination and political responsibility. Assuming that another Nakba is impossible allows U.S. officials to avoid asking themselves what they would do to try to prevent it. Which is convenient, because the answer to that question, based on current evidence, is: Not much at all. *ib*

Peter Beinart is a professor of journalism and political science at the Newmark School of Journalism at the City University of New York. He’s also editor-at-large of *Jewish Currents* and author of the Beinart Notebook on Substack. This article was originally published in *Jewish Currents* and is being republished here with permission.



coalition agreements that lay out the current government’s agenda. The agreements call on the government to launch a process of land registration in the West Bank. While that sounds technical, its potential ramifications are immense. Because many West Bank Palestinians possess documents from the Jordanian, British Mandate, or even Ottoman eras — which do not meet Israel’s legal criteria — and because they lack access to the databases that could confirm their ownership, a land registration process would likely result in Israel declaring that many Palestinians do not own the land on which they live. Their land would then become the property of the Israeli state, which could dole it out to settlers. In a *joint analysis* of the coalition agreements, the progressive Israeli NGOs Yesh Din, Breaking the Silence,

Would it back down or resort to more coercive measures? It’s impossible to know. But there is one final factor that makes mass expulsion more likely: The Israeli government’s belief that it can get away with it. In 2001, Netanyahu *boasted*, in a secretly recorded conversation, that “America is a thing you can move very easily.” Nothing in subsequent decades has given him reason to reconsider. As prime minister, he has *vowed* never to remove another settlement, awarded top ministries to crude racists like Smotrich and Ben-Gvir, and overseen what former US ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer recently *called* “a pattern of Israel reneging on commitments to the United States,” which he deemed “extraordinary.” Despite all this, America continues to provide Israel essentially unconditional financial and diplomatic



Care for Kids with Cancer in Gaza

Give a child a fighting chance!

For \$130/child/month you can:



Ensure critical care



Provide treatment and meals



Bridge the gap between healthcare and patients



Save a life at www.zakat.org

Kashmir Under Indian Occupation

The role and responsibility of the global Kashmiri diaspora

BY GHULAM NABI FAI

THE CRISIS IN KASHMIR — AND THE United Nations' ineffectual response — represents an example of the failure of the UN to respond effectively to massive and persistent violations of human rights. Kashmir also represents a failure of the UN to use its mandate to seek an equitable peace and justice. The UN always tries to examine how it can more effectively prevent human rights violations. It instructive to examine the experience of Kashmir and seek lessons for increasing the UN's effectiveness.

In 1990, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the massive expansion of freedoms around the world, Kashmiris began to seek their right to self-determination, as promised by the UN resolutions (Res. 47 adopted by the 286th UN Security Council meeting, April 12, 1948). In an effort to suppress this growing sentiment among the Kashmiris, the Government of India began committing massive abuses of human rights.

These abuses, which continue today, include the systematic use of rape; the arbitrary arrest, torture, summary execution of Kashmiri civilians; firing into unarmed peaceful demonstrators; and the burning of entire villages and communities by Indian troops. Since 1990, the Indian occupation forces in Kashmir have killed more than 100,000 people, while thousands more have been maimed or wounded. Many of

the victims are women and young children. Over 10,000 women have been raped by Indian occupation forces. And according to a report published by "The International Peoples Tribunal on Human Rights and

reported "The Tribune" (of Pakistan) Feb. 4, 2022. Today, India is the worst example of settler colonization. It is reported that the Government of India has earmarked 20,3005 acres of land in Jammu & Kashmir for land

grab. Besides, the Indian army is engaged in confiscating local homes and evacuating the locals from their business establishments, in particular from the hotels which have been built in the most scenic areas in the Valley, like Gulmarg — famous for its skiing scenes in Asia. Shinzani Jain wrote that in early 2018, former chief minister of the occupied state, Mehbooba Mufti informed the legislative assembly 6,389.5 acres of state land in Jammu and 47,477 acres of land in Kashmir was under the army's unauthorized occupation (Feb. 15, 2023, under "Land to the Tiller" to land to the highest bidder: Land grabs in Jammu and Kashmir," <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/>).

All these actions are perpetrated by India

with one singular purpose to prevent the implementation of the UN resolutions. And yet, the UN has been unable to respond effectively to this political and humanitarian crisis.

The solution to the crisis in Kashmir lies in dialogue between all parties concerned — the governments of India, Pakistan and the genuine leadership of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. But India has chosen destruction over dialogue, jailing political prisoners, like Yasin Malik, Shabir Ahmed Shah, Masarat



Justice in Indian Administered Kashmir," 8,000 to 10,000 people have "disappeared" in Kashmir. Their wives are known as "half-widows" because they do not know whether their husbands are dead or alive.

After the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A of Indian constitution on Aug. 5, 2019, India enacted the Domicile Law on April 1, 2020 to change Kashmir's demography. More than 3.4 million fake domicile certificates have been issued to non-Kashmiris to allow them to reside in the occupied state,

Aalam, Aasia Andrabi and human rights activists, like Khurram Parvez, journalists like Irfan Mehraj, Asif Sultan, Sajad Gul, and Fahad Shah, and implementing a brutal campaign of terror against the civilians in Kashmir.

How long will the world watch in silence as India carries out the genocide of Kashmiris? This is a question the Kashmiris are asking today.


At this guardedly propitious time, the

Kashmir's diaspora leadership circle. All should accept unreluctantly personal sacrifices necessitated by the urgency of the Kashmir issue. As Dr. Gregory Stanton, chairman, Genocide Watch has warned, "Kashmir is at the brink of genocide" (February 2021). Emulation by the Kashmiri people will follow and generate the dynamics indispensable for the inevitably arduous struggle for self-determination. The time has come that all Kashmiri diaspora orga-

The diaspora leadership not only has to maintain its narrative, but the narrative should be equally coherent. We do not need to invent it. It is already there with international sanctity. Here is a prime example of the international recognition of Kashmiri narrative.

When India felt that the Kashmiris will never vote to accede to India, its delegate, V. P Krishna Menon delivered speech of record length on Jan. 23-24 1957 at the Security Council where he said, "In any case, the changed conditions since then had made the agreement obsolete, and the merger of Kashmir with India could not be revoked." The response to this fabricated narrative came from a person no less important than Professor Joseph Korb, former chairman, UN Commission for India, and Pakistan (UNCIP), who wrote in "The New Leader" on March 4, 1957, entitled, "Nehru, The UN and Kashmir," "This new Indian stand raises issues which far transcend the problem of Kashmir. For if a nation which has accepted a United Nations commitment can blithely assert that 'circumstances have changed' and the commitment is no longer binding, then the effectiveness of the United Nations has been dealt a staggering blow."

Korb added, "More is at stake in Kashmir than the fate of a remote Asian province. On the UN's handling of this question may depend much of its future moral and political authority." He also wrote in "Danger in Kashmir" (Princeton University Press, 1954) "The people of Kashmir have made it unmistakably known that they insist on being heard. Whatever may be their wishes about their future, they must be ascertained directly or through their legitimate, popular representatives." He added, "If it (solution of Kashmir) is not achieved, India and Pakistan, indeed the whole free world may reap the harvest of shortsightedness and indecision of unpredictable dimensions". Professor Korb was the father of Dr. Madeleine Albright and a teacher of Dr. Condoleezza Rice at Colorado University, both former secretaries of state.

Let us take a leaf from Korb's vision and move forward unitedly to try to achieve our ultimate objective: the unfettered right to self-determination for the people of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. 

Dr. Fai is the secretary general, World Kashmir Awareness Forum and chairman, World Forum for Peace and Justice. Find out more at www.kashmirawareness.org

The diaspora's responsibilities are manifold. First is to teach and practice the adage that if we do not hang together, we will all hang separately. The diaspora leadership must subordinate individual quests for political power, prominence, and other gain to the common good for all Kashmiris.

role of global Kashmiri diaspora leadership is pivotal, and its responsibilities are correspondingly great, particularly when leaders like Syed Ali Geelani (d. 2021) and Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai (d. 2021) are no more with us and rest of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leadership is incarcerated. It is a historical fact that diaspora in other international conflicts have proved essential to political change and direction, like the South African diaspora became instrumental in toppling the scourge of apartheid. An amorphous collection of people, no matter how well intended, have never achieved anything politically significant. The leadership of the global Kashmiri diaspora cannot blithely assume that progress towards achieving self-determination will come spontaneously from the people without their advice, guidance, example and encouragement. The diaspora leadership cannot be summer soldiers or sunshine patriots. History will hold them accountable for success or God forbid of any failure.

The diaspora's responsibilities are manifold. First is to teach and practice the adage that if we do not hang together, we will all hang separately. The diaspora leadership must subordinate individual quests for political power, prominence, and other gain to the common good for all Kashmiris.

In addition, what matters is not who obtain public credit, but that success is achieved. Petty jealousy has no place among

nizations, councils, associations, forums, coalitions, missions, movements, foundations, etc. must pursue a single agenda item: unfettered right of self-determination of the people of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. If need arises, we can gladly agree to disagree.

The North Star for diaspora leadership must be feasible, not the utopian. The world is unsentimental. On the international stage, might is customarily more powerful than right. National interests ordinarily trump intellectual consistency, international law, democratic rights and professed universal standards of justice. But there are exceptions, such as East Timor, Namibia, and South Sudan. Moral suasion occasionally exhibits teeth. The diaspora must be skillful in orchestrating the complex array of cynical and high-minded motives of nations to achieve a symphony playing the lofty theme of self-determination for Kashmiris. Such orchestration will be more an art than a science and will require sleepless labors and lucubration to succeed. It is not a task for the indolent or dull.

The diaspora must neither stumble nor waver in the task of attaining self-determination for millions groaning under repression and grim privation.

In approaching a Kashmir resolution, the sole non-negotiable issue should be respecting the consensus of the people of all five regions of the state of Jammu & Kashmir with whom sovereignty resides.

Kashmir: Silenced, not Silent

'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.'

Ludwig Wittgenstein

BY TARIQ AHMED

SCHOLARS OF POLITICAL RESISTANCE have contended that settler-colonial hegemony requires silencing the colonized and continuous but-tressing through displaying and enacting power through political and militaristic means and ceremonial symbolization.

What has been playing out in Kashmir in recent years is a case study for this assertion.

In his widely acclaimed "Domination and Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts" (1990), James C. Scott observes: "The powerful have a vital interest in keeping up appearances appropriate to their form of domination. Subordinates, for their part, ordinarily have good reasons to help sustain those appearances or, at least, not openly to contradict them."

MATRIX OF CONTROL

India has dominated the political discourse through military control: extrajudicial killings, disappearances, incarceration of human rights advocates and journalists and communication blackouts etc. They have relied on the lawless colonial law — Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which has been used both as a sword against resistance activities and a shield for the military's impunity. And, all the while, advancing its settler-colonial project through demographic changes aimed at changing Kashmir's Muslim-majority character. This demographic engineering is designed to impact the UN-mandated vote of self-determination — long overdue.

The matrix of control has also included collective punishment of the population using a wide range of tools of the repressive regime, such as subtle and harsh indignities and defilements— including torture, mass frisking, cumbersome vehicle searches, using pellet guns for mass-blinding protesters, or chasing them towards fast

flowing rivers — resulting in their death by drowning.

To camouflage the reality of Kashmir and Kashmiris, the Indian government promotes a false image of "normalcy" couched as development. The state periodically arranges curated visits by far-right European politi-



cians and others sympathetic to its narrative while caging the locals.

Public displays of grandeur, such as holding international conferences in the disputed territory, pock-marking the scenic landscape with Indian flags, holding musical concerts and other social festivals showcasing and eulogizing India's progress under the façade of "development" have become a staple of their propaganda tactics.

CLAWS OF BIOPower AND NECROPOLITICAL SYSTEMS OF CONTROL

To manufacture consent, the state has used administrative, legislative, judicial, Machiavellian political and military power to intrude into the common person's life. Kashmiri bodies have been deprived of life and maimed, using the claws of bio-power and necropolitical systems of subjugation.

These necropunitive techniques not only cause but also tolerate a certain threshold of death, as necessary. Having caged the population in the largest open-air prison on earth — Kashmir —, the state has imprisoned thousands in the far-flung dingy jails

in India. These incarcerative sentences are also served vicariously by the relatives and others deemed to be associated with political activists.

While maintaining a semblance of normality in their living conditions, militarized as they are, Kashmiris harbor lingering memories of the injustices perpetrated by the state. While overt public resistance is in suspended animation, the hidden resistance is well and alive. It percolates through the psyche of every living generation of Kashmiris in the region and elsewhere.

Peoples' political disguise, where they insinuate their resistance, cannot be mistaken for consent. The luxury of moving "freely" and maintaining a semblance of life's routine amid a network of police and military surveillance is contingent upon the population giving into this daunting matrix. This absent presence of resistance—a presence that is strategically incognito, unspoken, and covert — while strikingly proscribed and repressed by the state — is best described through the cliché "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."

GOVERNMENTALIZATION OF LIFE

A common hallmark of settler-colonial occupation is the governmentalization of people's lives.

Anyone seeking government jobs, or a passport, for example, must undergo police verification of non-involvement in purported anti-state activities. The structural violence of unemployment and police scrutiny has sought to demobilize collective resistance and erode nationalist solidarity among the desperate masses.

The state, being the primary source of economic activity, employment, welfare, or security against routine crime, and the captive population's dependence on the state for these civic and material needs, is used as an inducement to remain peaceful and silent.

CONSTITUTIVE SILENCE

This haplessness has inevitably led to silence on the streets of Kashmir while the memories of multiple massacres linger in people's collective memory. This is then the sulking of a powerless and disenfranchised people

whose hands have been tied. Kashmiris are not silent by choice; they have been silenced through various technologies of repression.

Some compelling ethnographic surveys in Kashmir have demonstrated that counter-hegemonic and counter-mapping narratives are operationalized at the deepest levels of Kashmiri society. This is particularly true among the youth: millennials and Generation Z.

Conversations about the repression are a staple of dinner-time conversations, daytime chats in the tea shops and buses, social gatherings and weddings, hushed-up voices in schools and universities, and various social media platforms. The truth of Kashmiri subjugation, and resistance is expressed only in a whisper. They represent the resistance narratives through art forms, fiction, poetry, and resistance literature.

Diasporic Kashmiris are working with allies in the social and political justice spaces to highlight the plight of their kith and kin in Kashmir. Kashmiri-origin scholars and their partners from diverse fields actively contribute to knowledge creation about Kashmir's political struggles and India's settler-colonial enterprise in the territory.

ROUTINIZING THE OCCUPATION THROUGH DEMOGRAPHIC RE-ENGINEERING

While the insidious plan of demographic change was first introduced in 1947 in the Jammu region, resulting in the ethnic cleansing and displacement of estimated half a million Muslims, the current target is once again the Muslim enclaves in the Hindu-majority Jammu region; Doda, Rajouri, and Poonch. Having granted the domicile to non-Kashmiris, and changing the land laws of Kashmir, the project of demographic change is well underway.

Thousands of Hindu refugees from the neighboring countries have been settled in the Jammu region to dilute its Muslim-majority character. Yet, most of the settlers are of Indian origin and predominantly of Hindu heritage. By opening the floodgates of settlers from India to own land in Kashmir, the state aims to undo indigenous land ownership. The sole beneficiary of this gerrymandering will be Prime Minister Modi's right-wing ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is reelected in 2024.

The occupier state has devised legal and legislative tools to appropriate native

land and created a litany of brutal legal and administratively punitive measures for those who resist. The Economist recently quoted the region's pro-India politician, the former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, as saying: "Everything is about snatching land, jobs and resources from locals here and giving them away to wealthy corporate allies of the present dispensation [Modi's nationalist party BJP]."

To camouflage the reality of Kashmir and Kashmiris, the Indian government promotes a false image of "normalcy" couched as development. The state periodically arranges curated visits by far-right European politicians and others sympathetic to its narrative while caging the locals.

THE FAILURE TO ERASE THE KASHMIRI NATION

It is axiomatic that repression has not secured Kashmir for India. Every attempt at erasure has failed to integrate Kashmir with the Indian Union. Kashmiris have always viewed the Indian occupation of their territories as an existential threat and likened it to the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

India's callous disregard for the sentiments of the people is visible, but the state lacks confidence. It does not trust Kashmiris with freedoms afforded to Indian citizens, for example, living in Mumbai or New Delhi.

Pakistan's irredentist interest in Kashmir is merely part of a more significant problem confronting India: Kashmiris' rejection of their forced occupation. As is clear from the recent revelations by Kashmir's former governor, Pakistan serves as a political punching bag for weaponizing the Indian public.

THICK ON PROPAGANDA

The state has sought to impart a sense of false consciousness among Kashmiris and global audiences by systematically reframing the root causes of the conflict. They have used the classic settler colonial labels of development, peace, and progress, expecting Kashmiris to be blind to their oppression; for global audiences, they invoke the specter of terrorism. Since the latter has brought diminished returns, they have weaponized trade to buy international silence on the issue.

A recent report in The Economist

dismisses the claims of normalcy in Kashmir as untrue. The state has used the development myth even as the unemployment in the Kashmir region stands at 24%, three times higher than the national figures.

THE INTERNATIONAL SILENCE

India has used, to its advantage, the archaic Westphalian "sovereignty" — immutability of international borders — which callously


disregards the aspirations of the people held captive within those borders and failed to acknowledge the exceptional nature of internationally recognized disputes such as Kashmir.

The Western governments' duplicitous politicking, motivated by geostrategic and trade interests, is illustrated when China's territorial claims in Tibet are touted as an "occupation," and the annexation by India and Israel of the territories they occupy is not.

The U.S. has demonstrated that it will look the other way while Modi unrolls the juggernaut of rabid Hindu nationalism bent upon brutalizing and erasing Kashmir and depriving the minorities in India of their human rights; the U.S. is only too willing to sacrifice the principles of human rights at the altar of the Great Game to contain China.

END PIECE

All unwanted territorial occupations, including Kashmir's, must end. Kashmiris can be held to ransom or kept silent only for so long. The Diplomat (Aug. 4, 2020) has termed this silence "dangerous" and warned, "Sooner or later, it will burst out in a disaster."

The writing has been on the wall for a while. As a settler-colonial power, India may have been able to force submission, but it has garnered no loyalty in Kashmir. It never will. 

Tariq Ahmed is a Kashmiri-origin freelance writer.

Centering God in Environmental Sustainability

How Muslim Organizations are Making Real Change

BY DALIA RAKHA



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY and its execution have been greatly debated across the globe. From discussions on waste management and restoration techniques to health concerns and global disasters, the sustainability movement has attempted to define the ideal relationship between humans and the natural world. Yet these definitions have only gone as far as physical manifestations, detailing the how but not the why. More than 1,400 years ago, Islam filled the gaps through the revelation of a single verse.

“And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that

He may try you through what He has given you” (Quran 6:165).

The God-given responsibility of being His vicegerents on Earth and emulating His Divine traits of mercy, justice, and wisdom is at the core of how Muslims look at their relationship with the natural world. Islam offers a unique perspective on how and why taking care of this planet is important not only for one’s physical well-being, but also to the well-being of the soul and to fulfilling the fundamental purpose of life. Deeply spiritual, God-centric, and ethically founded, the Islamic worldview on environmental sustainability is a rich tradition being actualized through various

methods by Islamic organizations across North America.

ZAYTUNA MODELING VICEGERENCY

In the U.S., Zaytuna College is on the front lines of a movement towards self-sustainable agriculture and reconnecting with the natural world. As the first accredited Muslim American college, Zaytuna has used the Islamic lens to not only inform its academic curriculum, but also its experiential learning initiatives through the Zaytuna College Center for Ethical Living and Learning (ZCELL).

“ZCELL is a place to model methods of actualizing Muslims’ vicegerency on Earth,”

said Rhamis Kent, a scholar-in-residence and instructor for Zaytuna's Permaculture Design Certificate Course. "As a modern human society, we have accepted unexamined lives where we no longer take responsibility for our existence. We have outsourced everything that makes our lives possible to someone else, merely consuming what is grown and produced by others and never truly connecting to its origin."

Kent is also the co-founder of the IGE-

of Toronto and a current PhD candidate in Applied Ecopsychology.

Through conversations with Indigenous peoples, Hossain has come to learn that the centralization of God in the way Muslims see the world is what often allows both communities to relate to and connect with each other. She has had opportunities to engage in dialogue with and to learn from Indigenous communities across Canada to understand how this Creator-centric

Since a Muslim's understanding of justice and success are not limited to worldly outcomes, it is profoundly hopeful. Muslims believe even the smallest of acts do not go unnoticed by God. It is this hope that distinguishes Islam's understanding of the world, and is one of the most beautiful gifts Muslims can bring to the sustainability movement.

PEARL (Islamic Gift Economy — Program for Ethical Appropriate and Regenerative Livelihoods). He believes one of the most important ways of connecting to the Earth, to ourselves, and to God is through the cultivation of land. Kent shared that in the Islamic tradition, what we eat is often tied to our spiritual state. As modernity has deprived us from connecting with the Earth and fulfilling our responsibility to it, he believes that this has also resulted in a disconnection with each other, for the deepest bonds come from struggle and self-sufficiency as a community. His work aims to empower Muslims to retake this essential responsibility, knowing it not only reconnects humans with each other and all of creation, but most importantly with the Creator.

MUSLIMS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

The Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) is a charitable grassroots organization aimed at helping Muslims revitalize their faith to better serve society. It promotes local community building and education through various programs, all within Islamic ethical frameworks. One of MAC's directors, Memona Hossain, focuses on community-based learning initiatives to help Muslims reconnect with nature through the lens of Islam. She is also a lecturer at the University

worldview fundamentally changes conversations on environmental sustainability, as well as in the ways justice is addressed and perceived.

While secular worldviews often face these issues with a sense of despair, Hossain noted that because a Muslim's understanding of justice and success are not limited to worldly outcomes, it is profoundly hopeful. Muslims believe even the smallest of acts do not go unnoticed by God. It is this hope that distinguishes Islam's understanding of the world and, according to Hossain, is one of the most beautiful gifts Muslims can bring to the sustainability movement.

ENVIRONMENT IN THE QURAN

In both of these examples, it is clear that the most essential part of the Islamic environmental worldview is its connection to God. Throughout the Quran, God mentions the miracles of creation as proofs and reminders of His existence, signs of His perfection and mercy, and expressions of His love and generosity. Verses that describe the life-giving properties of rain (16:65), the marvel of milk (16:66), and the healing of honey (16:69) are all examples. This creates a much deeper relationship with the land, a profoundly spiritual bond. God revealed that humans are made from clay (15:26) and water (21:30), a reminder that human beings and Earth are

intimately related. Thus, in understanding the natural world, humanity is better able to understand and connect with ourselves.

Kent emphasized that when Muslims emulate the life of Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), they are actually "modeling a behavioral pattern that permits us to benefit everyone and everything." The way Muslims treat all of creation is based upon this lens. This seemingly small shift in worldview fundamentally alters everything. Instead of looking only at preventing harm, Muslims are asked to heal, to mend and, most importantly, to improve conditions. Muslims have been given a rich and deeply rooted tradition in building and maintaining relationships with Earth and all that is in and on it.

The world is in desperate need of alternative methods to connect with each other and all of creation. Islam provides a beautiful example centered around God and His attributes, rooted in ethics and sustained with soul. It is a gift too precious not to be shared. **ib**

Dalia Rakha holds an MS in environmental engineering from UC Davis, is a graduate of Tayseer Seminary, and is pursuing a career in water quality and health within a spiritual framework.

**ISNA Monthly Sustainer –
A Good Deed Done Regularly!**

**You can make an impact
with as little as
\$10 per month!**



ISNA
www.isna.net
(317) 839-8157

Convenient. Secure. Affordable.



Extreme Heat Waves Impact on Climate Change

BY ISNA GREEN INITIATIVE TEAM

IN ABOUT MID-JULY, THE MAJOR NEWS WAS NOT ABOUT THE war in Ukraine or local politics. Rather, the headlines read, “History-making heat set to spread after weekend of triple-digit temperatures,” and “Heatwaves hit new heights across West and South.”

More than 100 million people, around a third of Americans, were under extreme heat advisories. The Southwest Heat Dome broke all-time records, which is also delaying the Southwest monsoon from getting going by blocking most moisture from pushing into the region from Mexico or the nearby eastern Pacific waters. The National Weather Service warned that a “searing heat wave was set to engulf much of the West Coast, the Great Basin, and the Southwest.” Canadian wildfires also affected the air quality in 11 states affecting nearly 60 million Americans.

Heat waves are not only impacting the U.S., but other parts of the world too. According to the European Space Agency “Temperatures were sizzling across Europe amid an intense and prolonged period of heat. Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and Poland are all facing major heat waves, with air temperatures expected to climb to 118F on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia with potentially the hottest temperatures ever recorded in Europe.”

According to an Asian Development Bank blog, South Asia experienced its highest temperatures in the last 122 years, leading to at least 90 heat-related deaths in Pakistan and India. The People’s

Republic of China suffered three consecutive heat waves, breaking long-standing records, with temperatures exceeding 107F.

The World Meteorological Organization said that such temperatures are highest since instrumental measures of air temperatures began in the 1850s. On top of these record-breaking temperatures, a growing El Niño event in the Pacific began to make its presence felt across the globe. El Niño is a periodic climatic event that occurs when the circulation of the equatorial Pacific Ocean shifts and its temperature rises, causing knock-on heat impacts around the world.

“We should not be surprised... This is all a stark reminder of what we’ve known for a long time,” said Prof. Richard Betts, climate scientist at the Met Office and University of Exeter, told the BBC. “We will see ever-more extremes until we stop building up more greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere.” Increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and an unusual band of strong winds that have hovered over the Atlantic have already triggered heatwaves.

As the world continues to use more fossil fuels and produce excess greenhouse gasses, there is a continued possibility of climate anomalies as there were in June 2023 shown in the map by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

CONSEQUENCES OF EXTREME HEAT WAVES

Climate change caused by greenhouse gasses from burning fossil fuels will make heat waves longer, more intense, and more frequent.

These heat waves are serious threats to health, agriculture, energy, and infrastructure, especially for the vulnerable population of poor countries. Such heat waves also set off other natural disasters such as drought, bushfires, and forest fires, which consequently damage crops and livestock. This can lead to insufficient supply, price hikes and even food insecurity. During a heat wave, energy consumption often skyrockets to cool down the temperature. Air conditioning is constantly used where accessible, leading to power shortages in many places. Increased greenhouse gas emissions cause severe climate change impacts in the long term, triggering more heat waves.

MAJOR CAUSES OF EXTREME HEAT WAVES

Most of the greenhouse gasses resulting from human activities include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gasses. Burning fossil fuels is the main culprit of increasing greenhouse gasses. Burning coal and oil produces carbon dioxide by combining oxygen in the air with carbon. Clearing land for agriculture, industry, and other human activities contributes carbon dioxide to a lesser extent than fossil fuels. Human activities often occur in a manner that multiplies negative effects on the atmosphere. The resources used by the larger population often involve burning fossil fuels, while more land may be cleared for agriculture. Carbon sinks, such as forested areas, decline as burning fossil fuels increase. Unless the major users of fossil fuels like the U.S, China, and India change to use renewable energy, the amount of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere will continue to increase.

NEED TO MANAGE EXTREME HEAT WAVES

The ongoing heat waves around the world need to be managed sooner than later to save lives. Particular attention must be paid to communities that cannot rely on safe and affordable water or air conditioning to cool down. The underlying long-term causes also need to be addressed. If not, the heat waves of the future could be far more intense and disruptive than what we are experiencing today. Governments must invest in better urban planning and infrastructure to adapt to heat waves and reduce the urban heat island effect. This includes transitioning from conventional to cooling material for roofs and pavements that absorb less solar energy and reflect more sunlight and expand green spaces and green corridors.


OUR ROLE AS MUSLIMS IN REDUCING THE PRODUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GASSES

God has repeatedly reminded us to take care of the earth as designated caretakers.

“Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of people’s own hands have wrought. So that they may taste something of what they have done; So that hopefully they will turn back” (30:41).

Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “The world is sweet and green with vegetation and verily God has made you stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourself (Sahih Muslim).

The Islamic Declaration on Climate Change (Istanbul, August 2015) asks peoples of all nations and their leaders to work to phase out greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to stabilize their concentration in the atmosphere and commit to adopting renewable energy sources. It also calls upon all Muslims to tackle the habits, mindset, and root causes of climate change, environmental degradation, and loss of biodiversity in their sphere of influence. The severe heat wave enforces upon all of us the necessity to do our share.

ISNA Green Initiative is your voice for protecting the climate. Contact your representatives in the city, state, and federal governments to take actions necessary to mitigate the effect of climate change and adopt an environmentally friendly way of life. 

ISNA Green Initiative Team: Huda Alkaff, Saffet Catovic, Nana Firman, Uzma Mirza, S. Masroor Shah (Chair)

ISNA, FOR THE COMMON GOOD



The world we live in is constantly evolving and ISNA is committed to being a positive driver of change. ISNA has long recognized the importance of engaging with other faith communities as a fundamental part of its mission, and therefore, we continuously host and participate in interfaith events, meetings and webinars to educate our friends, partners, officials and activists about Islam.

These interreligious initiatives have helped break down barriers of misunderstanding, formed genuine partnerships of faith and ethics, and established a platform to advocate for social justice issues for the common good.

We aim to work together to fight Islamophobia and share knowledge about the true teachings and understanding of our religion in all sectors.

The gift of education has a ripple effect—it creates change locally, nationally and globally.

Ignorance is our enemy, and **with your support we can make a difference.**

Please donate to ISNA today.



P.O. Box 808 • Plainfield, IN 46168

(317) 839-8157 • www.isna.net

 ISNAHQ •  @ISNAHQ

Muslim Business Coaches Add Spirituality to the Bottom Line

How Small Businesses Can Benefit From Muslim Mentors

BY SANAA ASIF

WHILE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC robbed many of a sense of normalcy, there was a silver lining for some. Job losses and no social life enabled people to explore creative interests and try novel business ventures. Just like someone on a fitness journey may reach out to a personal trainer, new entrepreneurs began seeking advice from business coaches to help navigate their transition to business owners.

Bushra Murad from Canton, Mich., is the owner of Barakah Boutique, an Islamic lifestyle business of high-quality products curated from different Muslim creatives. She started her business in 2020, just a few months after she had joined a Muslim entrepreneurship group. “That group was how I started learning from different Muslim businesses,” Murad said. “It gave me the confidence to take the leap of faith.”

Asma Iqbal, from Northern Virginia, had just started her Islamic gift wrap business when she was intrigued by a free business workshop she saw online. “I signed up and was blown away by the content and community that came with it,” Iqbal said. Her venture, Mubarak Paper Co. focuses on high-quality Islamic kid-centered gift-wrapping products and specialty items like Eid ribbons and stickers. Soon after taking the workshop, she joined a one-year Islamic business coaching group.

ISLAM AND BUSINESS ADVICE

Both entrepreneurs observed that their business coaches helped in jump-starting and rapidly growing their businesses. However, what stood out most was how their coaches integrated Islamic values into their guidance. “It’s very beneficial to have a Muslim coach because they’ll keep you in check in terms of what your intention is or what is the end goal of your business,” Murad said. Often, Muslim coaches meld strategies they’ve learned from non-Muslim coach mentors with Islamic values to bring holistic advice to Muslim clients. Murad often has exclusive



Entrepreneur, Asma Iqbal from Northern Virginia



Muslim Business Coach Hafsa Taher from Toronto

sales in her boutique where all proceeds go towards Muslims in crisis.

Hafsa Taher, from Toronto, Ont., used to run a business before she became a sought-after business coach for Muslim women. She urges her clients to merge Islam and business to become stronger

believers. She highlights the fact that Muslims should strive to live with the end goal of earning a place in paradise. “What if your business is one of the ways you get to jannah?” Taher asks. “It could be making someone’s life easier, or making one person smile. These all could be ways of earning good deeds.”

Some entrepreneurs argue that having a Muslim business coach isn’t necessary, as many coaches from other faiths also cherish values like spending time with your family and practicing good ethics. However, having a Muslim business coach can bring more to the table. For instance, Taher shares “Business *duas* you can make on the Day of Arafah” on her social media. Some of her most popular posts are “Islamic Affirmations for Muslim Entrepreneurs” and how you can “Post Less, Sell More” so you can spend more time with the people you love.

TIE YOUR CAMEL, BUT DON’T STRANGLE IT

An important Islamic value often discussed in the business world is *rizq*. Loosely translated as provision, *rizq* can be defined as anything that benefits or brings goodness. Taher reminds her clients that God is the source of all *rizq* — not products, sales, or clients. She believes it is necessary for businesses to bring the hustle into working toward their goals, instead of sitting back and waiting for God to provide for them. However, she believes in working smarter, not harder.

Her popular analogy is “Tie your camel, but don’t strangle it.” What is strangling a camel? Taher says that means hustling so hard that you can’t even breathe. Hustling like you provide for yourself. You make the plants grow, but God is *Ar-Razzaq* (The Ultimate Provider.)

WHO IS A GOOD BUSINESS COACH?

A good business coach not only helps to grow a business, but also helps to equip a business owner with the tools he/she needs to be successful. Just like a personal trainer can’t actually do the push ups for you, but he/she can show you good form. A trainer can suggest the best times to work out, and what to eat before or after.

“A good business coach will equip you with the skills, tools, and habits for you to become independent,” Taher said. “A good coach will make sure you can think independently and you’re trusting your own instincts to move forward in your venture.”



Bushra Murad at her boutique in Michigan

“A good business coach will equip you with the skills, tools, and habits for you to become independent,” Taher said. **“A good coach will make sure you can think independently and you’re trusting your own instincts to move forward in your venture.”**

FINDING A GOOD BUSINESS COACH

For someone just starting in their business, it can be difficult to choose which business coach will suit their needs and fit their budget.

“I think it is important to look at the coaches themselves,” Murad suggests. “Check out their qualifications, experience, and the type of industries they have worked in, because that will help you to

decide if they would be a good fit for your business.” For example, if your business is product-based, a business coach specializing in selling products would be more beneficial than a coach specializing in providing services.

“Shop around,” said Iqbal. “Many coaches offer free introductory workshops or go live on social media. That’s a cost effective way to see if their values align with yours. Make a list of what you hope to gain from a coach.” The most important thing when finding a business coach is making sure that they are able to help the business where it needs it most, such as email marketing or product pricing.

SHORT TERM OR LONGER

Depending on your business needs and size, your relationship with a business coach can be for a few months or even a few years. After a few months of having a business coach, Iqbal realized it was more beneficial for her to join a group of like-minded small business owners she trusted. She preferred to openly discuss anything business-related with a group of entrepreneurs.

Murad, on the other hand, thinks a business coach is a valuable investment. Accountability is one of the biggest advantages. “A good coach will bring a new and fresh perspective which can help you with growth,” she said. “But of course you have to be ready to follow their suggestions and do the heavy lifting.” *ib*

Sanaa Asif is a student at Hinsdale Central High School. She is an avid reader and loves to write and learn about other people’s stories.



THE ISLAMIC SEMINARY OF AMERICA

Religiously Rooted | Contextually Relevant | Intellectually Rigorous

TISA is the leading US-based graduate institution for training & educating Muslim-American leaders to better serve our families, institutions, and communities.

Merit Based | **SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE** | Need Based
Choose from One of Our Graduate Programs



Rolling Admissions
APPLY TODAY!
info@islamicseminary.us

MA in Islamic Studies | Master of Divinity Degree | Joint MDiv - Interreligious Chaplaincy | Graduate Certificate



www.islamicseminary.us



(214) 484 - 1309



811 S. Central Expy. Suite 350, Richardson, TX 75080

Teaching Children Their Mother Tongue

Build Vocabulary and Boost Confidence

BY KIRAN ANSARI



▲ Masooma Aftab with her Kids Bolo product line

“IF WE DON’T SPEAK TO OUR CHILDREN in Urdu, the language can die with us.” This realization hit hard for Nadia Siddiqui from San Jose, Calif. Twenty years ago, there were not many online resources. With no extended family nearby, she was worried that her children – and grandchildren – would not know how to speak their mother tongue if she didn’t put in the effort.

It helped that her husband was also an immigrant from Pakistan. They made it a point to converse in Urdu only and focused on it more than English when their children were young.

“The kids will automatically pick up English from TV and school,” Siddiqui said. “That’s the factory default setting for our North American kids. If we value our mother tongue, then we must put in the time to preserve it.”

Mirela Uddin from Algonquin, Ill., made it a point to speak to her children in Bosnian only. She subscribed to a Bosnian language TV channel at home and had the kids Skype with their grandparents regularly. She also spent a couple of months every summer in Bosnia so the children could soak in the language and culture. She believes the

South Asians carry a lot of colonial baggage in our disdain for Urdu and consider English superior. Children are smart and can pick how their parents feel about the language.

Bosnian weekend school and weekly talk in Bosnian at the mosque also helped reinforce the language.

“80-90% of my conversations with my kids are in Bosnian,” Uddin says. “Since my husband is not from Bosnia, and we didn’t have many Bosnian friends here I knew I had to put in the work.”

Today, her older kids can carry on a conversation in Bosnian. They can order food

and converse with the locals. Her daughter even has some Bosnian songs in her playlist. Uddin feels that learning an additional language at a young age can increase their affinity to learn new languages. Her college-aged daughter is also fluent in Spanish.

Siddiqui also took her children to Pakistan regularly. Even though their cousins in Pakistan were encouraged to speak in English, hanging out with extended family and domestic help made a big difference. She started with teaching her children the names of objects in Urdu. Later came stories and the famous “Urdu game” on long car rides and waiting at the doctor’s office. Siddiqui used to say “tree” or “red,” and the kids would compete to see who could translate in Urdu the fastest. What ensued was a lot of learning – and laughter. After all, *keenoo* (orange) and *konee* (elbow) do sound alike.

ENTER YOUTUBE AND CO.

While Siddiqui didn’t have many resources, parents today can supplement their efforts with online help. Tamania Jaffri in Calgary, Canada, has been working tirelessly for the last eight years to preserve the language with her blog, urdumom.com. She loves sharing ideas with families to pass on language and culture to the next generation. Viewers saw her kids grow up on her weekly Urdu story time on Facebook. Recently, she started a YouTube channel called Urdu preschool with familiar rhymes for the littlest ones.

“The response has been amazing,” Jaffri said. “I have years of material based on my experience, and I love taking names of children during the video. Families write to me about how their kids would love to hear their name called out on TV.”

Oregon mother Rinad Qutub wanted her children to have educational screen time that helped them learn Arabic. She collaborated with Abrar Shahin from New Jersey and came up with the idea of Kalam Kids after noticing their children responding well to video content. Kalam means “words” or “speech” in Arabic. They wanted kids in multilingual households to have access to conversational Arabic.



Urdu Preschool



Kalam Kids

“The response for our YouTube channel has been overwhelmingly positive,” Qutub said. “Nothing makes us happier than seeing little ones smiling and engaging with our videos.”

Like other languages, there are many dialects in Arabic. “It’s tough to cater to all dialects because even between the two of us, we say words differently,” Shaheen added. “When choosing which words to use, we refer to traditional Arabic.”

PARENTS – THE BEST (AND FREE) RESOURCE

Jaffri believes that the best tool for passing on language is the parent, because children model themselves after them. So, parents who actively speak the language with their children and sing/play/read in the language is the best resource. Her videos give parents ideas and remind them of poems and stories in Urdu they might have forgotten.

“The most important thing parents can do is to love and respect Urdu,” Jaffri said. “We carry a lot of colonial baggage in our disdain for Urdu and consider English superior. Children are smart and can pick up how their parents feel about the language.”

The Kalam Kids ladies agree that a multimodal approach yields the best results. They encourage parents and caregivers to watch and repeat the videos along with their little ones to promote an active learning environment. They stress the importance of including learning a language in the daily routines.

MULTILINGUAL HOUSEHOLDS

Children can learn another language even if their parents don’t speak it. The key is that they continue to practice the concepts with someone who can. Today, thanks to Kids Bolo, that can also be online.

In addition to leveled Urdu-English books



Mirela Uddin's children enjoying their summers in Bosnia

and an innovative Urdu talking pen, the Kids Bolo online Urdu conversational classes have become very popular. They have around 200 kids from the U.S., Canada, U.K, and other countries outside Pakistan enrolled in their monthly subscription model.

“As parents whose children were born in the West, we felt our choice of relevant resources was limited,” said Masooma Aftab from Toronto. “So, my husband Hamid and I leveraged each other’s professional degrees (Finance/Start Up and Early Childhood/Youth Work) and created those resources ourselves.”

In 2020, they launched as “English For Kids” and sold thousands of books. They used that feedback to rebuild the products from scratch and relaunched as Kids Bolo. Their Urdu taking pen has been very popular as it allows kids to read books in Urdu on their own.

“Bilingualism has many cognitive and social benefits,” Aftab said. “Learning your heritage language not only connects you to a larger community, but also helps preserve the culture – its mannerisms, dialogue, nuances. To preserve it, you must practice

it out loud and increase exposure like being around people where you hear it consistently.

“This exposure doesn’t need to come from parents. However, it is extremely helpful if the home environment is supportive of language acquisition and participates in the ‘back and forth’ dialogue,” Aftab said. “Dialogue with other children that are at the same learning level does wonders for learning. In many cases, I have seen both the child and parent hone their Urdu language skills together – which is phenomenal as it enhances bonding between generations.”

HARD WORK PAYS OFF

It can feel daunting to introduce a new language. However, it is possible — and rewarding. You could play regular games like Go Fish or Charades, but in the other language. You could also stick flash cards around the house for kids to remember what a clock or table is called in their mother tongue.

A new language can be fun as long as it doesn’t feel like a chore or homework. “Kids learn best and fastest when they are having fun,” said Qutub. “We find that singing songs and implementing language into games and activities is most beneficial. Just be silly and have fun.”

Parents do have to put in extra effort at first. Later, they can enjoy seeing their vocabulary increase and how the children gain more confidence in a beloved language. They don’t have to become poets or scholars in the second language. But if a language can bring them closer to grandparents and their heritage, it is worth the effort for future generations as well. It does not have to be perfect. However, with practice and love, it can be well worth it. **ib**

Kiran Ansari is the Assistant Editor of Islamic Horizons. Even though her three kids are at different levels of Urdu fluency, she is grateful that they keep trying.

Wake Up, Parents

Social Media's Dangerous Hold on Muslim Youth

BY SUNDUS ABRAR



DOVE'S VIRAL COMMERCIAL, "COST OF BEAUTY" PORTRAYS the swift and detrimental impact of social media use on a young girl. Based on a true story, Mary receives a smartphone on her 13th birthday and after, intensive interaction with social media, develops a debilitating eating disorder. The message of the commercial — advocating for kids' online safety — resonated with many concerned adults. Guarding impressionable young minds from the compelling nature of social media is a clear concern. In one scene, Mary's mother attempts to physically grab the smartphone to disengage her from constantly scrolling. Undeterred, Mary pulls away and continues using her phone.

Unfortunately, Mary is the norm today.

Tween and teens everywhere are resisting the attempts of parents and educators to limit social media use. Amal Naeem, a seventh grade teacher in Mississauga, Canada, regularly faces this issue with her students. The Islamic school she teaches at doesn't allow smartphones and has a firewall on the school network to prevent access to non-educational content. Despite this policy, limiting social media among students remains challenging.

KIDS GET SMART WITH SMARTPHONES

"They find ways to log onto Instagram on their Chromebooks, and with one click they can quickly close the tab" said Naeem. "Some children bring smartphones to school because their parents want to ensure that they can maintain contact. These students use their phones during recess to get onto social media sites."

Aside from being a distraction with school work, the concern around social media use in a school environment is the problematic content with which the children are engaging. In 2019, Naeem was teaching fifth grade when TikTok was gaining traction among young users. She recounts an instance where she saw a group of her students performing a TikTok trend with provocative undertones at school.

"I told them this is inappropriate," said Naeem. The 10-year olds were just surprised that their teacher was aware of the trend. A trend on social media can be a short dance, skit, lip syncing video that users re-enact and share. Discussions and interactions around these trends provide opportunities for tweens and teens to socialize with each other and form peer groups. These can be positive outcomes from the children's perspective, but children are not mindful of long-term consequences. The sub-culture perpetuated by social media use is multilayered. Naeem's students were only mimicking the dance moves of a trend that, without the context of the problematic trend, may not be of any concern. However, the overall inappropriate messaging has the potential to influence these young users to mirror more aspects of the behaviors they are observing. "Parents assume that their children are innocent. They underestimate how much children can understand," she added.

Therapist Nikhat Raffif of Naperville Ill., recognizes the draw of social media for her teen and young adult clients. "It can be a safe space, especially for introverted individuals, to find like-minded people," she said. The pseudo anonymity on social media

is reassuring for those who may feel shy in social settings. Online they have space to form their responses and process their emotions.

Raffiq does see clients struggling in limiting their social media consumption. “They feel guilty for spending so much time online,” she said. This lack of balance is aggravating, and she sees her clients struggling with feelings of guilt and anxiety. She encourages starting by imposing boundaries on social media use and encourages families to communicate about what they see online. “Young people often attach too much meaning to what they see online,” she said. Communication among family members is important as it helps break down unattainable expectations and standards set by social media.

Most things about social media do not align with our Islamic values. The majority of content perpetuates showing off what you are wearing, eating, or where you are vacationing. It waters down our values of modesty and humility.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ISLAM

Social media is commonly being accessed on smartphones and tablets. The privacy afforded by these personal devices requires that communication around social media requires an intentional effort. Shahnaila Ahmed, a Southern California-based Muslim parent coach, encourages this consistently on her Instagram account, @BraveMuslimParents. At the ages of 12 through 18 it is natural for children to seek autonomy and rebel against parental standards. “This makes sense, as they are at the stage when they want to connect to their *fitra*. But they need space to do that,” says Ahmed. Social media can be hindering spiritual development in children if they turn to it to seek acceptance and validation. “Most things about social media do not align with our Islamic values. The majority of content perpetuates showing off what you are wearing, eating, or where you are vacationing. It waters down our values of modesty and humility,” says Naeem.

Ahmad and Naeem both advise delaying and then limiting access to social media platforms for children. As a parent to a tween and teenager herself, Ahmad does recognize that social media is not entirely avoidable. She advises parents to not give children smartphones, and instead allow them to use parent devices with supervision. She also encourages parents to educate themselves about the platforms their children are accessing.

“Just like you teach your child to look both ways before crossing the road during heavy traffic, we need to be teaching our kids how to behave online on social media,” says Ahmad. Some schools cover online safety guidelines, but in Naeem’s experience these exercises are not resonating with the students. “Children are not capable of understanding the long-term impact of decisions that they make,” says Naeem. One such instance is when her husband — vice principal at a different Islamic school — encountered students sharing



Guidelines for Safe Social Media Use



- ♦ To limit social media, children need to be provided with other opportunities for connection with peers. Kids that play sports and are busy outside of school hours are often better adjusted.
- ♦ Minimizing screen time and social media use in tweens and teens is more effective with parent engagement. Encourage children to utilize social media and online content as tools to seek activities they can enjoy. If your child wants to bake, they can look for a recipe online and print it out.
- ♦ Try to interact with families who share your approach of minimizing social media. Meet up regularly. This way the kids don’t feel like they are the only ones without unlimited access to devices.
- ♦ Instead of giving kids smartphones, use phones that have limited features of calling and texting. Introduce social media slowly through a multi-tiered approach. The first tier is the child sharing a parent’s device and interacting with peers through a parent’s account. Of course, parents need to educate themselves on these apps too. Some apps have features like disappearing messages, and kids can get sneaky really fast.
- ♦ Social media has a long lasting footprint. It’s everywhere and you can’t avoid it. Become smart about how to use it. Remind your kids to not engage with people they don’t know.
- ♦ Parents should avoid aimlessly using smartphones and be present and engaged with those around them. If you need to send an urgent email during a board game or movie night, say it out loud so the kids know why you are on the phone during that time. Implement weekly family meetings and be intentional about communicating without distractions.
- ♦ It is imperative for children to know how to respond to unwelcome/inappropriate interactions online. Regular communication within the family ensures children feel safe and trusted to share difficult things.
- ♦ Remind your children that what they see posted online is a very small — and filtered — part of the other person’s life.
- ♦ Parents should try to agree with each other over their children’s access to smartphones and social media. Move away from just thinking about the kids. Try to establish shared family goals, so it’s not us vs. them. **ib**

Excerpted quotes from the experts interviewed in the main story.

passwords with each other. “It’s so easy to manipulate children at this age as they are still developing their personality, and they don’t realize how their actions now can come back to haunt them.”

TEACHING KIDS ABOUT LEGAL HEALTH

Arshia Ali-Khan, CEO of Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA), is especially concerned about the vulnerable position of Muslim youth and their online activities. MLFA is a nonprofit organization that advocates against unjust legalized prosecution of Muslims in the U.S. Following the 9/11 attacks and the passing of the Patriot Act, Muslims communities have been subject to surveillance. “The government needs to find terrorists to justify the budget of billions of dollars that sit in the national security budget targeted to find terrorists,” says Ali-Khan. Muslim women, youth and converts have become targets of FBI’s predatory and grooming behaviors. Even social media interactions can be monitored. In various cases, vulnerable Muslims have been misguided and entrapped by FBI informants.

These interactions between targets and FBI informants can and do occur online on social media platforms. Georgina Giampetro converted to Islam and posted alarming statements online in response to the war in Syria. Giampetro later went on to retract her misguided support for terror groups in Syria. Yet she continued to be observed by multiple FBI informants who interacted and entrapped her in a terrorism case through in-person and online interactions. Giampetro was initially facing a sentence of 10 years. She is now serving a significantly reduced sentence of five and half years.

Ali-Khan urges the Muslim community to recognize that its members are vulnerable and can be unjustly targeted for their interactions online. “The constitution protects us in our freedom of speech, but that is not the same liberty that Muslims have. Muslims are being targeted and entrapped into terrorism cases,” says Khan. Muslims also face enhanced sentencing. MLFA advocates for fairer trials and challenges the unfair prosecution of Muslims.

“We need to be teaching children about their legal health,” Khan says. The unjust surveillance and prosecution of Muslims is a current and ongoing issue, but Muslim communities have stopped addressing it with the persistence it demands. [ib](#)

Sundus Abrar is a parent of two, residing in Chicago.

Muslims and Mental Health

Meditation or Medication?

BY YERUSALEM WORK



MUSLIMS BELIEVE THAT GOD TESTS whom He loves. We remind ourselves of this when we get a biopsy report or radiology results. However, what happens when someone is diagnosed with a mental health condition? Do we process it in the same way or brush it aside?

Even though Muslims believe that God provides the cure to any disease, they are also taught to “tie your camel *and* trust God.” Even if someone considers their relationship with Allah as more important than a patient and provider, the latter should not be ignored either. Muslims do not have to choose either medical or spiritual healing. They can get the best of both.

MINDFULNESS

For effective healing, one must get to the root of the clinical condition. Muslims believe they are created to worship God. Prayers bring them closer to the Creator. We are dependent on Him, whereas He is free of need. It is through His power that we find a cure or a way to manage our symptoms, and it is through His power that medications are effective.

Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) recommended the benefits of practicing small but consistent good deeds. Taking medication regularly and on time is a sign of discipline. Avoiding anything that may harm us, like drugs or alcohol, is an important step in the right direction too. People with mental health conditions may find solace in committing to routine

exercise and peace in jotting down thoughts in a gratitude journal.

They can work toward longevity through incorporating excellent nutrition on a daily basis. If Muslims truly follow the sunnah and fill one-third of their stomach with good food, one-third with water, and one-third with air, they can prevent many illnesses. Rest is valuable too. The Muslim way of life includes structure and time management through the prescribed five daily prayers. It offers guidance in terms of when to pray and how to physically and spiritually cleanse ourselves each day. Islam helps us stay afloat in an ocean of nonstop activity.

MEDITATION

“Verily, in the remembrance of God, hearts find rest.” (13:28)

Meditation should lead us closer to God, Who is in control of it all. Treatment that focuses on physical symptoms and not spiritual sources to cure genuine problems is incomplete. Behavior does not solely depend on signals from neurotransmitters. Muslims trust science, but believe that science *alone* is not enough. To reach the summit of knowledge, we need faith too. We need an awakening. Islam is an enlightenment. It is the highest height. So, when in our lowest lows, we ought to reach for the rope of God: the Quran. We must hold onto the pearls of wisdom and hope in the Quran and the Hadith. God revealed verses about our soul’s meditation and our mind’s thoughtfulness (*tafakkur*) for those who reflect on the design of creation.

They are those who remember God while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth and pray, "Our Lord! You have not created all of this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire" (3:191).

When battling depression, mania, anxiety, psychosis, or another psychological disorder, be sure to seek professional help. But as Muslims, also remember to arm yourself with revelation and meditation. You can meditate on a verse from the Quran, repeat phrases for the purpose of *dhikr* (remembrance), or hold onto an image that invites peace, for example, a sunset. As a practicing Muslim, one should never feel alone.

MEDICATION

"Mental health issues cannot be ignored and the stigma of seeking professional help, which exists in our community, should be addressed by its leaders," said Imam Naeem Baig of Dar Al Hijrah in Falls Church, Va. The community needs more of such top-down thinking, beginning with leadership and moving toward the general population. If people go to see a medical professional for a broken leg or high blood pressure, they should not hesitate to be seen for mental issues too.

Aneesa Abdus Salaam is one of the mentors in The Shahadah Sisterhood Group based in Washington, D.C. "Prayer is the key, however Allah has blessed medical doctors with the knowledge of how to diagnose diseases and manage symptoms," she said. "Yes, Allah is the One who Heals. But being under professional medical care is also wise for a Muslim."

This shows that mental health needs to be addressed in the Muslim community properly and consistently. One *khutbah* in a blue moon is not enough. The African proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" is apt for this situation. No one should struggle with mental illness alone.

However, the Muslim community is not a monolith. Through interviews with Muslim brothers and sisters, we can see different approaches to overcoming challenges with mental illness.

"Taking medicine is a big drama," said Hammad*. "Instead of relying on doctors and medicine, rely on faith and education. You have to be strong enough to trust yourself and your strengths. If you have belief in your heart, you will not experience depression. If you have faith, you will not contemplate suicide." He also believes that men are less likely to see a therapist, and that is why they should be equipped with tools from our faith. Hammad* is not alone. There are some other Muslims who feel the same way.

MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

Mosques and Islamic centers need to invest time and funding to have meaningful conversations about the journey toward mental health. From symptoms to outcomes, from hospitalization to housing, there is still a long way to go. Some may crawl. Some may walk. Some may cry. Some may sulk. The goal is to heal together. Muslims are commanded to rejoice, to be thankful for His bounty, and to smile. Ask yourself where you find joy. If you find it in the pages of the Quran and the words of the Prophet, you will be trying your best to work on God's promise.

"Thoughts turn into feelings and subsequently lead to actions," said Asumini Kasule, a youth and parenting coach in Maryland. "It is important not to ruminate over every thought that comes to your mind. Let them pass like clouds. If you focus on thoughts of fear, for instance, you can give rise to anxiety. The cognitive process begins with

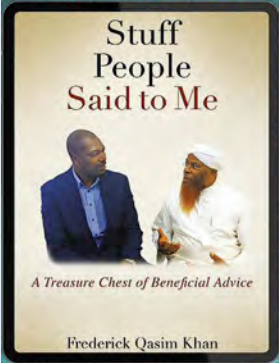
our unconscious mind, which records our thoughts in the moment. The simple truth is you can often help manage anxiety by changing your thought pattern."

Asumini hopes many more people of faith will step up to study psychology and serve in ways that benefit wide, diverse audiences. Mental health professionals can help steer us in the right direction if we're honest about our goals. Do not be ashamed to ask for the help you deserve. Be proactive with taking care of mental health. Reach out to a professional if needed.

She urges Muslims to remind themselves that only God is in control of the future. "Rely on trusted professionals, and praise God for His wisdom in sending them your way." *ih*


Yerusalem Work has a heart for interfaith dialogue. She is an award-winning essayist and bestselling author of poetry and short stories available on Amazon. She earned a Master's degree in library science and a bachelor's degree in film studies. As an Ethiopian-American artist, educator, and librarian, she wishes everyone compassion and endless inspiration.

**Now Available! Amazon and
Outskirtspress.com/stuffpeoplesaidtome**



Stuff People Said to Me

A Treasure Chest of Beneficial Advice
By Frederick Qasim Khan



AUTHOR

All proceeds benefit the Masjid At-Tawhid Da'wah and
Community Service Mission!

To request your copy to be autographed by the author, visit or call:
www.TawhidHouston.com | 832.831.4464

Sunnah Snacks and Supplements

Prophetic Medicine in Modern Times

BY HAMZA MOHAMMED



MANY MUSLIMS GROW UP HEARING and seeing sunnah foods around them. From grandpa breaking his fast with dates, to grandma sprinkling black seeds (*nigella sativa*) in her famous potato curry, and mom giving a spoonful of honey to relieve a cough.

However, it is interesting to study whether these sunnah foods continue to be in one's pantry after parents and grandparents are no longer around. Do college students and then young parents rush to the nearest pharmacy when they have a bad cough, or do they reach for the jar of honey?

QUICK AND EASY SNACK BARS

If there's one thing that everyone is nowadays, it is busy. From professionals to

parents, students to service professionals, everyone is stretched for time. That could be one of the main reasons why some companies have introduced sunnah foods in more accessible forms.

Cure Your World is a Muslim-owned-and-operated company that produces a unique snack, the Cure Bars, as well as black seed products and supplements. Founder Zobaida Falah fell victim to junk food as a student. When she became a teacher, she witnessed this trend continuing with her students who were also consuming junk food throughout the school day. Falah created Cure Bars in an effort to provide an alternative to unhealthy, readily available snacks. She was inspired by her grandmother, whom she watched prepare a mix

of nuts, seeds, and honey each morning as a child. Zobaida's grandmother called it her "secret cure for everything", and believed it to have medicinal values and that it protected her from illness.

Manufactured in Washington and Ohio, Cure Bars, which increased in popularity after being featured in an AJ+ viral video, come in three flavors: Peanut Butter, Roasted Almonds and Honey, and Coconut Cashew. In addition to black seed and honey, the bars also contain healthy ingredients, such as oats, sesame seeds, and chia seeds and are a great source of magnesium and zinc. CURE also sells black seed products and supplements, including black seed oil, black seed oil capsules, and turmeric and black seed powder capsules.

"The benefits of black seed are extraordinary," said Noor Salem, author of *Sunnah Superfoods: Miraculous Remedies & Recipes* that will change your life forever. "They've been found to contain benefits for preventing cognitive decline, obesity, bloating, arthritis, inflammation, and blood sugar dysregulation to name a few. Honey has incredible healing benefits that researchers continue to uncover. Some include suppressing cough, balancing blood sugar (which many find surprising), and healing the intestinal lining. Both this book and her "Sunnah Superfoods for Kids" are available on Amazon.

"There is healing in black seed for all diseases except death." [Sahih al-Bukhari 5688, Book 76, Hadith 11].

YUMMY GUMMIES

In 2021, Aresh Saqib launched Sukoon Nutrition, a Muslim-owned-and-operated that makes halal gummies using foods such as black seed, honey, and elderberry. He got the idea after seeing his father, a medical doctor, eat black seed and honey together every day for 20 years. It always blew his mind how his father almost never got sick, even while working 12 hour shifts at the hospital.

Their biggest surprise has been how customers have reacted to the gummies. "We



Aresh Saqib got the idea for halal gummies after seeing his father, a medical doctor, eat black seed and honey together every day for 20 years. It always blew his mind how his father almost never got sick, even while working 12 hour shifts at the hospital.

never thought it would get as big as it has," Saqib said. "Alhumdulillah the gummies have helped hundreds of people with ailments such as joint pain, hair loss, blood sugar levels, immunity and more. Some have even told us they were in pain for years until they tried our gummies."

"I love Sukoon gummies," said 9-year old Soha Rasul. "My mom said many of the gummy vitamins at the store are not halal,

so I was so excited to try these. They taste just like candy, but are good for you. I wish I could have more every day."

Sakoon Nutrition contributes a portion of each of their sale to charity. Located in Laguna Beach, Calif., their five different types of gummies are sold across the world, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and in the U.S.

However, like many companies, they

have had their share of challenges. "One of the biggest challenges has been growth," said Saqib. "After the Tik Tok honey moon phase died out, which was when everyone was getting 10,000 views a video, they had to pivot to paid social media advertising. Growth has been slow but steady," he added.

PURE HONEY

Founded in 1995, two brothers in Kuwait shared their pure honey to friends and neighbors. Today, Mujeza Honey, based in Tampa, Fla., is one of the world's leading companies in honey production. They produce different types and flavors of honey including turmeric, cinnamon, ginger, and black seed.

"One of the biggest struggles was making sure people know that we sell natural, authentic honey," said Omar, one of the founders. "Many companies use sugars and syrups rather than real honey. We were also surprised how online sales through our website and Amazon have helped the business grow. We got far more customers than we could have at a retail store."

Mujeza Honey has received many international certifications. They sell more than 15 different types and flavors of honey, and their products can be purchased at more than 500 retailers in 20 countries as well as on their website.

WORTH A SHOT

Dua Aldasouqi, a registered dietitian nutritionist in Champaign, Ill., agreed that black seed is used in many types of disease management. One of the most common ways of it being consumed today is through black seed oil. Research has shown good results of black seed treating diabetes and types of heart diseases. She said that honey has been used medicinally in many civilizations in the past. It has antibacterial properties, and can also be used to treat some colds and skin conditions.

With thousands of reviews on Amazon, many people are also trying out paraben-free black seed toothpastes and hair growth oil.

"While it is hard to accurately judge the intentions of companies making these products," said Aldasouqi. "I believe if it brings youth closer to sunnah foods, it is a great initiative." *ib*

Hamza Mohammed, attends Farragut High School in Tennessee. He is an avid reader and enjoys writing in his free time.

CAIR Calls to Drop FBI Secret Watchlist

Biased List Has No Place in a Democratic Society

BY JUSTIN SADOWSKY AND GADEIR ABBAS



New Jersey mayor, Mohamed Khairullah, believes he is on a secret watch list targeting Muslims.

ON MAY 1, 2023, THE U.S. SECRET Service barred Mayor Mohamed Khairullah, an elected official of Prospect Park, N.J., from entering the White House for an Eid celebration. This was despite the invitation he had received from the president. Khairullah was treated this way because the FBI had assigned him a secret status years ago without any notice or explanation.

The names of many thousands of innocent Muslims over the last two decades have also been put on this list. As a result, they are banned from flying, pressured to spy on the community, treated as criminals while traveling, and forced to endure countless other indignities.

All of this injustice comes from a secret list known variously as the Terrorist Watchlist, the Terrorism Screening Database or, as the

FBI recently rebranded it, the Terrorism Screening Dataset. The equally famous No-Fly List is actually a designation given to some people on the watchlist, singling them out for the additional punishment of being unable to fly.

CAIR reviewed a leaked copy of the watchlist from 2019 and found Mayor Khairullah's name on it. Unfortunately, this incident is not an isolated case, and the evidence is no longer anecdotal.

Our July report, "Twenty Years Too Many: A Call to Stop the FBI's Secret Watchlist" (<https://communityresourcehub.org>) studied more than 1.5 million entries on a 2019 version of the FBI's list. This was provided to us by a Swiss hacker who found them online after a regional air carrier accidentally posted them to the public internet. One scroll through it reveals a list almost

completely composed of Muslim names. In fact, more than 350,000 entries alone include some transliteration of Mohamed or Ali or Mahmoud, and the top 50 most frequently occurring names are all Muslim ones. Of the watchlist entries we've reviewed, we estimate that it includes more than 1.47 million Muslims — over 98% of the total.

SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN OR WORSE

The Muslim community has long been aware that the FBI's list is nothing more than a list of innocent Muslims — an assertion now proved by CAIR's recent study. The consequences of being on this list are borne almost exclusively by Muslims. Even non-Muslims who openly espouse political violence generally do not find themselves targeted in this manner.

A person's watchlist status is life-defining. Made without notice by a government

official whose name will never be known, this is the FBI's way of formally branding a person a "KST" — a "known or suspected terrorist." Government agencies use this designation to harass and humiliate travelers in many ways: outright forbidding them to fly, denying them licenses and permits, refusing to hire people or firing employees, delaying or denying visas and applications for U.S. citizenship and subjecting them to dangerous and invasive law enforcement actions. As one federal judge put it, a person's watchlist status "transforms a person into a second-class citizen, or worse."

The FBI's list has acquired a global reach, as the bureau disseminates it throughout the federal government to airlines, every police department in the country, hundreds of private companies and to an always-growing roster of foreign countries — asking each to act against the listed people they encounter.

A person's watchlist status is life-defining. Made without notice by a government official whose name will never be known, this is the FBI's way of formally branding a person a "KST" — a "known or suspected terrorist."

A LIST THAT FOLLOWS YOU EVERYWHERE

This list not only ruins the lives of people who are on it, but also follows them wherever they go. With the list, an FBI official in the D.C. suburbs can assign American citizens a status that will, for example, instantaneously interfere with their ability to get a visa to India, prevent them from boarding any plane that traverses US airspace, deny their spouse the immigration benefit needed to get married and live together in this country, as well as cause people to be handcuffed at gunpoint during a traffic stop. In short, it's a substantial power without precedent in American history.

Congress did not give the FBI this authority. Nor does its watchlist derive from any law. Even the presidential executive order that supposedly gave rise to this list did not put the FBI in charge. Instead, an agreement among several agencies put it, along with all the authorities having a list, in the bureau's hands.

Despite calls from Khairullah and several members of the New Jersey congressional delegation, including New Jersey's Senators Cory Booker (D) and Bob Menendez (D) and Rep. Bill Pascrell (D) to provide a


"detailed explanation of what occurred and why," to "provide Mayor Khairullah with the substantive reasons he was denied admission," and a "review of Mayor Khairullah's status" on the FBI's list, the agency has been silent, claiming a need for secrecy to avoid explaining what happened and why. But beyond this high-profile event, other people on the watchlist are denied access to military bases, some public buildings and other government-secured areas.

But neither the FBI nor any other government agency should have a secret list. They've abused the one they have now, and there's no such thing as a good, lawful kind of secret government list made available to hundreds of thousands of government actors. It's time to bring this practice to a close.

That is why Rep. Katie Porter's (D-Calif.) congressional letter of June this year to President Biden has expressed "deep con-

cern with disparity in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's terrorism watchlists" and called on the administration to "take all necessary steps to prevent the watchlist from being managed or applied in a way that disproportionately harms Muslims." Congresswoman Porter has followed up by introducing an amendment that would require the administration to provide Congress answers on how its watch listing system is consistent with constitutional rights.

For 20 years, the FBI's secret list has brought hardship and fear to the Muslim community. But the FBI's next million targets won't be Muslim. With the War on Terror fog lifting, the FBI's secret list will one day find a new target — our fellow Americans. This report is meant as a warning to them.

We are raising the alarm. This can and will happen to all of us, from every community, even those beyond the Muslims currently on the FBI's list. We call on all Americans to join our demand that the FBI stop sharing its secret list as a first step to responsibly disposing of it. 

Justin Sadowsky is a trial attorney. Gadeir Abbas is an attorney with CAIR.



MONTHLY SUSTAINER —
A Good Deed Done Regularly!

You can make an
impact with as little as

\$10
per month!

*Your donation can help ISNA
continue to offer:*

- ★ The finest Muslim youth programs in the U.S.
- ★ State of the art leadership training programs
- ★ Top-quality Islamic conferences and events
- ★ Opportunities to build bridges of understanding through community alliances and interfaith awareness programs



Sign Up Today!
www.isna.net

Aafreen Fathima

1989-2022

AAFREEN FATHIMA (AFREEN Mohammed) returned to her Creator at a tender age of only 33. She valiantly battled stomach cancer in Seattle. A beacon of beauty and youth, Aafreen emitted sparks of hope wherever her footsteps fell. Her life is a testament to a life lived with purpose, an embodiment of love and service that will continue to inspire and uplift generations to come.

“Verily, with hardship, there is relief.” (94:5)

Born in Hyderabad, India, she blossomed amidst the vibrant tapestry of life in both India and the United States. She studied at the Downers Grove Highschool and Hoffman Estates Highschool in Illinois and at the Osmania University in Hyderabad. She was the daughter of Mohammad Shafiuddin and Mahjabeen Iffath, a loving wife to Dervesh Poddar, a cherished sister to Zubair Ali Mohammed and Omair Mohammed, and a beloved sister-in-law to Soofia Ahmed and Rabie Fatima.

“And whosoever believes in Allah, He guides his/her heart.” (64:11)

Aafreen’s life was an exquisite medley of diverse vocations. She was a devoted teacher who also worked in media, communications, healthcare, and consulting in the U.S., U.A.E, and India. Yet, her heart brimmed with compassion, and she committed herself to selfless service, lending her time and energy volunteering with numerous nonprofit organizations. Among these, ISNA held a special place in her heart, and she often volunteered and attended its annual convention, drawn by the spiritual environment.

“And spend of that with which We have provided you before death comes to one of you.” (63:10)

Radiating warmth and kindness, Aafreen possessed a rare gift — she could make anyone feel at home. In her presence, peace nestled within every heart, for she carried an unwavering faith and an ardent love for Allah, which she shared generously with all who crossed her path. Even in her final moments, as her journey neared its end,



she sought to bring comfort to others in her characteristically uplifting manner. Within her departure lies a profound joy — a joy discovered in the knowledge that Aafreen embarked on an eternal journey to paradise. She ascended as a *shaheedah*, graced with a truly beautiful ending as chosen by her Lord.

While many tread with uncertainty along life’s path, unsure if they will ever reach the finish line, Aafreen sprinted with unwavering determination. She completed the race in record time, hopefully achieving the highest rank. Devoted to a life of service, this desire bloomed within her from her earliest days. She dedicated vast amounts of time to ensure the well-being of friends and family, and tirelessly sought to support those in need around her.

“The best among you are those who bring the greatest benefits to many others” (Sunan Ibn Majah).

To honor her profound commitment to caring, her husband and family, as an everlasting act of charity (*sadaqah jariyah*), launched the Aafreen Fathima Initiative. This enduring global program aligns with her deepest philanthropic passions, such as the construction of orphanages, assistance for vulnerable victims of natural disasters, and the development of Islamic schools and mosques in an environmentally friendly and energy-efficient manner.

“The most beloved of people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to people” (Sunan Ibn Majah).

May the mercy of Allah be upon Aafreen as she traverses the ethereal realms, forever cherished and forever missed. Aameen.

“And indeed, Allah is with the patient” (2:153). *ib*

Ibrahim Abdul-Matin

1977-2023

BY NANA FIRMAN



Ibrahim Abdul-Matin with his book

IFIRST MET IBRAHIM IN NEW YORK CITY. BACK then, I didn’t even know that I was going to move to the U.S. in the future. I still remember what he said when I was getting married. “You know that it’s a double whammy to be Black and Muslim, right?” Perhaps he was referring to my husband, Jamal. Back then I didn’t know what it meant, but I am forever grateful for his words.

Ibrahim and I attended and spoke at many environment and climate gatherings organized by Muslims, multi-faith, or conventional non-religious groups. We collaborated at the local, national, as well as international levels. In 2012, we were invited to the World Islamic Economic Forum in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. I remember he texted me, “What should we wear to dinner with the Sultan?” I replied “Batik!” Apparently, he loved the batik shirt that I had given him, and even wore it in his TV interview. I promised that I would get more batik shirts for him when I visited my family in Jakarta.

The funniest moment we had was when we were invited to speak at the 2019 Zero Waste International Summit in Istanbul, Türkiye. Ibrahim insisted that we could go in the same car. However, the organizer was firm that we had to ride in our assigned cars. Little that we knew, it was for security reasons. We were the guests of First Lady Emine Erdoğan, so each of us got our own guard. We laughed every time we thought about that trip.

Ibrahim and his wife, Fatima, along with their sons, Ismael and Yousuf, also participated in the 2014 Climate March in New York City. He agreed to be the keynote speaker when I told him that I was



▲ The author and her husband with the late Ibrahim Abdul-Matin and his wife

going to launch a Global Muslim Climate Network back in 2016. He even brought his amazing mother to that event.

Last year, he was diagnosed with a rare cancer. I cried the whole day when I found out. *Alhamdu lillah*, the treatment worked well. So, in October 2022, Ibrahim and I were able to share our journeys at the Green Festival in Kocaeli, Türkiye. He looked healthy and even extended his stay to visit some friends in Istanbul afterward.

In early June, my husband and I visited him and the family in their house near Pasadena, Calif. Fatima served us a delicious dinner. We ate and prayed together. We talked about so many things from the bear coming to their backyard to the green movement and world politics. Then my husband said, “You guys should come to our house before you leave for New York. I’ll cook, you’ll see!” We were so looking forward to their visit and I kept reminding myself to get halal marshmallows for their three boys so we could make smores in our firepit. Perhaps we could discuss *GreenDeen*, the book he wrote in 2010 that has inspired so many Muslims around the globe, including the Muslim youth in Indonesia. Every time I brought up the need for a sequel to his book, he kept telling me, “You’ll do it!” but I didn’t take it seriously. Instead, I was exploring any possibility to invite him to Indonesia this year.

On June 21, I was shocked and speechless when I found out that Ibrahim left this world. *Innalillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’uun*. As much as we love Ibrahim, Allah loves him more. Farewell, dear brother, and comrade. May Allah grant you among the highest levels of jannah. Ibrahim’s legacy won’t end here. I and many Muslims will continue the *GreenDeen* journey and shape our strategies for a faithfully sustainable world, *inshaAllah*. **ib**

Nana Firman has about two decades of experience working with advocacy and raising awareness about environmental degradation and climate crisis, advocating urban sustainability for a better future, and developing green economy concepts and strategies. She is a native Indonesian and resides in Southern California.

Khawaja Rizwan Kadir

1964-2023

Passionate about Education, Business, and Kashmir



RIZWAN’S SAD DEPARTURE AT A YOUNG age is truly painful. It reminds us of the uncertainty of our own lives. Death is so unpredictable and yet so inevitable. Rizwan was a very articulate and reflective person who spoke eloquently on behalf of our community. With his immaculate academic credentials there were very few who could match his level of scholarship and talent.

His passion for community service is reflected in a multiplicity of ways. Education and business were his essential playgrounds. He helped develop programs for Muslim schools at a national level when we were still tinkering with the issues of weekend schools. He saw where we needed to go. More recently he was appointed to serve as the chair of MCC’s full time Islamic school board, in Morton Grove, Ill.

He was equally passionate about his native Kashmir. He founded the Pakistan Business Club at the University of Chicago, which remained close to his heart. He was active in the early years of Community Builders, Sabeel Pantry, MCC, and was a powerful spokesperson for the Muslim community at interfaith gatherings and community forums.

He was a man with strong convictions, and as often happens with such individuals, they are sometimes met with strong reactions. He had his share of detractors too. That comes with the territory of being outspoken, as he certainly was. He was never afraid to speak his mind and say it as he saw things to be.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

In June 2010, he was interviewed by the Glenview Patch. This is what he had to say:

On being Spiritual: “Every now and then,

I find myself able to go to the mosque in Morton Grove for the morning prayer service. It’s held before dawn. So, driving to it, while most of the neighborhood is asleep, is a calming experience by itself. The quiet streets at 4:30am; the prevailing silence just before the birds start chirping (as if they are singing God’s praises as well); driving to the house of worship being an act of worship itself; remembering and thanking God’s bounties that we all are blessed with — all these elements make it a great spiritually uplifting experience.”

On being American: “American Muslims are the proverbial new kids on the block. Most Patch readers didn’t grow up with us, but their kids are growing with ours in local schools and neighborhood parks. Unfortunately, most Americans first learned about Muslims and Islam during tumultuous times in our nation’s history. While these events are not reflective of the wider Muslim communities, they didn’t create a positive and realistic image of Muslims either. Events such as the Iranian hostage crisis (1979), the first World Trade center bombing (1993), the USS Cole bombing (2000), and, of course, the 9/11 tragedy. That history poses a challenge for us Muslims to constantly overcome the negative stereotyping, especially as we are cultivating an American Muslim identity. I wish more people in the community knew that the American Muslims, not much unlike the rest of the Americans, are not monolithic in any sense. We are of varying ethnic backgrounds (including blacks, who have been here for centuries, and converts. We come from a myriad of political and social backgrounds, and we are your neighbors, your employees, your bosses, clients, classmates, and fellow citizens.”

Rizwan’s short life exemplified that beautiful tradition of being problem solvers, not documenters of despair. He was genuinely admired by the youth in the community to whom he was a sincere friend and advisor. Though Rizwan has departed, his legacy will live on. May Allah grant him a place in jannah.

His family mourns the loss of the only brother to six sisters. He is survived by a son, Yousuf, and daughter, Sana. **ib**

(Contributed by Dr. Azher Quader and Abrar Quader, JD).



IMRC

INDIAN MUSLIM RELIEF & CHARITIES

REAL NEEDS REAL SOLUTIONS

**Serving India's Muslims
and minorities since 1981**

- Food & Shelter
- Education
- Emergency Relief
- Healthcare
- Legal Aid

**Together we are
impactful.**

GIVE TODAY

WWW.IMRCUSA.ORG

IIIT LATEST PUBLICATION

JUSTICE IN ISLAM – NEW ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

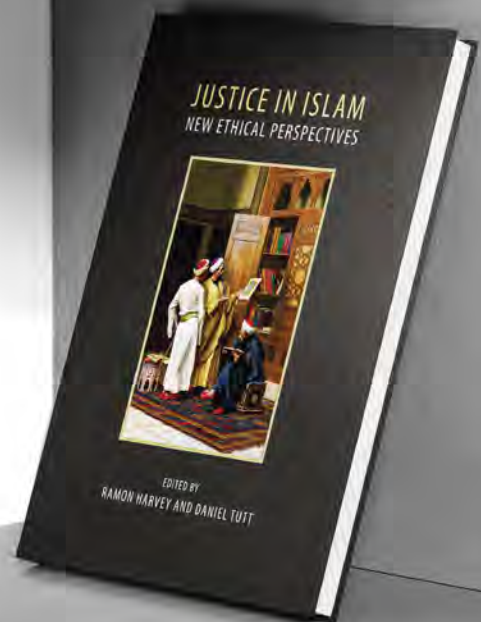
From its roots in the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to its branches in contemporary political and social movements, Islam has always been concerned with the question of social justice. The promise of a just order on earth has motivated both the reflections of the community of scholars and the actions of Muslims who have striven to realize it within their societies. This concise volume focuses on some of the ways that the theme of justice is explored in emerging currents of Islamic thought. Chapters discuss new theological and ethical proposals in the light of contemporary philosophical developments; ideas of gender justice that provoke a reformist challenge to the received tradition; and regional contexts, such as Turkey, Iran and Japan. The contributions to this collection raise the prospect that if justice can be imagined more perfectly as an Islamic ideal, perhaps it can be brought into reality.



IIIT SITE



IIIT APP



Paperback : ISBN: 978-1-64205-657-0 **coming soon**
Hardback : ISBN 978-1-64205-656-3 **coming soon**
eBook PDF : ISBN: 978-1-64205-658-7 **open access**
Size/pages/year : (6x9) / 153 p. / 2023

EDITORS

RAMON HARVEY

(Aziz Foundation Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Cambridge Muslim College)

works in the fields of Qur'anic studies, theology, and ethics, both as an intellectual historian and theologian. He is the author of *The Qur'an and the Just Society* (2018) and *Transcendent God, Rational World: A Maturidi Theology* (2021), which are published by Edinburgh University Press. He is also the editor of the monograph series *Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Scripture and Theology*. He earned his doctorate from SOAS, University of London.

DANIEL TUTT

(Lecturer in Philosophy, George Washington University)

works on continental philosophy, contemporary social and political movements, Islamic thought and psychoanalysis. He is the author of *Psychoanalysis and the Politics of the Family: The Crisis of Initiation* which has been published in the Palgrave Lacan Series. His writing has been published in *Philosophy Now*, *The Islamic Monthly* and *Crisis and Critique*, among other publications. He teaches philosophy at George Washington University, Marymount University and has taught inmates through the Georgetown University Prisons and Justice Initiative.

OPEN ACCESS ON: IIIT WEBSITE - IIIT APP - KINDLE - GOOGLE READ AND PLAY

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
P.O. Box 38 • Plainfield, IN 46168-0038

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #15
KENT, OH



Your values mean everything to you, and now you can invest freely without compromising what's important. SP Funds is dedicated to providing you with socially responsible, ethical, non-levered ETFs.



North America's Largest Family of Sharia-compliant ETFs.

SP Funds S&P 500 Sharia Industry Exclusions (SPUS)

SP Funds Dow Jones Global Sukuk (SPKS)

SP Funds S&P Global REIT Sharia (SPRE)

www.sp-funds.com | 425-409-9500

Before investing you should carefully consider the Fund's investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. This and other information is in the prospectus. A prospectus may be obtained by visiting www.sp-funds.com/spsk-spus-prospectus. Please read the prospectus carefully before you invest.

As with all ETFs, Fund shares may be bought and sold in the secondary market at market prices. The market price normally should approximate the Fund's net asset value per share (NAV), but the market price sometimes may be higher or lower than the NAV. The Fund is new with a limited operating history.

Islamic religious law commonly known as Sharia has certain restrictions regarding finance and commercial activities permitted for Muslims, including interest restrictions and prohibited industries, which reduces the size of the overall universe in which the Fund can invest. The strategy to reduce the investable universe may limit investment opportunities and adversely affect the Fund's performance, especially in comparison to a more diversified fund. The Funds are distributed by Foreside Fund Services, LLC.