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*Double Interview:*  
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a New Canadian**

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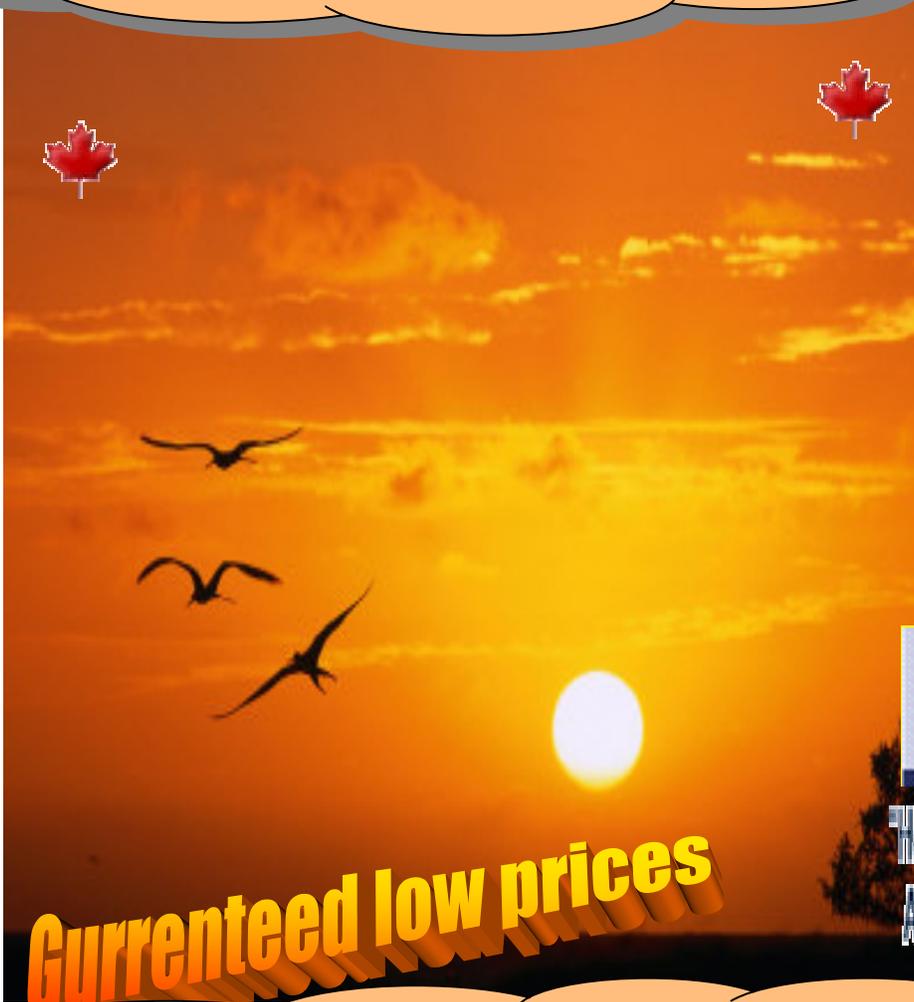
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## Feedback

The Manitoba Muslim would like to hear from its readers! If you have any comments, suggestions or if you'd like to advertise in this newsletter please contact us at:

[editorialboard@miaonline.org](mailto:editorialboard@miaonline.org)

## Friday Prayer Locations

MIA Grand Mosque  
2445 Waverley St.  
256-1347

MIA St. Vital Mosque  
247 Hazelwood Ave.  
254-3979

Winnipeg Central Mosque  
715 Ellice Ave.  
783-6797

University of Manitoba  
Education Building, main floor

Health Science Center  
820 Sherbrook St.  
Room 215

Pakistani Association Center  
348 Ross Avenue

## Manitoba Muslim Volume 11 - ISSUE 3, July 2010



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## Editorial Board

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Opinions and views expressed in this newsletter are the sole responsibility of their authors.

# Editorial

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Over the last couple of months our community was buzzing with various educational, dawa, and social activities. The MSA conference held in February brought together about 200 people. The Al-Maghrib Institute held two seminars, each two weekends long, and was attended by around 150 students. Similarly, a successful café was organized by a group of sisters to educate the larger public on the dress of Muslim women. As well, educational seminars on domestic violence, Canadian laws and other topics were conducted. In June, the first thirteen graduates of the Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute (CMLI) graduated from the first phase of the course. The Canadian Islamic Chamber of Commerce (CICC) held a dinner successfully for the second time on June 19th. Preparations are underway for holding the second youth camp – Camp Awakening – at the beginning of July and a one of its kind conference in September is being organized by a group of youth. Other regular programs such as Quran classes are held in WCM, Ross, Waverley mosques; the monthly youth halaqa, outreach activities and many other programs continue. Certainly this is a healthy sign of our community's resilience and activism.

Unfortunately, all these praiseworthy activities were overshadowed by the leadership crisis in MIA. This crisis certainly preoccupied many people in the community and diverted many of its resources. However, it would be a mistake to look at the community as a whole through the lenses of the leadership crisis in MIA. The community through its grassroots resilience remains engaged, active, and forward looking; the leadership crisis is an anomaly that shouldn't over shadow the many good initiatives and great accomplishments. Leadership is not about titles but rather it is about serving people, uniting them, bringing

forth the best in them, leading by example, listening to the needs of the people, welcoming critical view and being in tune with the grassroots. It is time that the official leadership of MIA understands that the community at its grassroots level will not wait for them until they sort out their petty infighting. The community is moving forward and will continue to move forward. There is already a gap between the leadership and the community. The choice they have is clear: either shape up and catch up to the community or be irrelevant. Carrying titles of leadership with no substance of leadership is delusional and detrimental.

We understand there is a new executive team in MIA. The community had enough of the old ineptitudes that plagued MIA for years. The community wants to see a new breed of leaders with vision, competency, humbleness, integrity and foresight. Leaders who don't demand recognition because of their official titles, but they earn it through the examples they set and their involvement with their community members. We hope and pray, the new team will live up to the expectations.

## Community News

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### Births:

Br. Mubarak Badru and Sr. Sawda were blessed with their first baby girl named Nawal.

Br. El-Mahdi Ibrahim and Sr. Nawara were blessed with a baby boy named Mohamed.

Br. Mohamed Khan and Sr. Hameeda were blessed with a baby girl named Mariam.

## Words of Revelation

### Qur'aan

#### On patience and perseverance:

"O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer, for God is with those who patiently persevere." (2:153)

### Hadith

"How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him" Reported by Imam Muslim.

Br. Mohamed Abdo El-Tasee and Sr. Lina were blessed with their first twin boys named Ali and Abdu.

## Condolences:

Br. Ozgun Kiamil Pasha passed away in Winnipeg. He is survived by his wife and 3 daughters. Br. Ozgun moved to Winnipeg from Turkey in 1970.

Br. Ali Omar Iidow passed away on June 10 in Winnipeg. Br. Ali came to Winnipeg from Somalia in 1996. He is the father Br. Ahmed Omar as well as 16 other children, some of whom live in Winnipeg while others reside elsewhere.

Br. Mushtaq Kadri passed away on June 11 in Winnipeg.

# Local Events

## The Al-Maghrib Institute Seminar in Winnipeg:

The Al-Maghrib first 2-weekend seminar, titled: *A Heart Serene* was held at the University of Manitoba on March 20 & 21 and March 27 & 28. Sheikh Riad Ouarzazi from Toronto was the main instructor. The second seminar was held on June 5 & 6 as well as June 12 & 13. The topic was tafseer of Surah Al-Kahf (the Cave). The instructor for the second seminar was Sheikh Ahsan Hanif, a graduate from Medina Islamic University and an Imam residing in Birmingham, England.

## Introduction to Canadian Law Seminar:

A series of lectures on Canadian Law were held on May

2, May 9 and May 16 at the Winnipeg Central Mosque. The purpose of the event was to educate the Muslim community in the law of the country. Various law experts led the seminars. The event was organized by ISSA.

## Public Teach-in Café on Muslim Women's Dress:

A Public Teach-in Café event was held at the Millennium Library, Carol Shields Auditorium, on May 6. The purpose of the event was to inform the general public on "what Muslim women wear and why?". A number of sisters spoke at the event. The event was a joint effort by various local Muslim organizations including the sponsor Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA) and host Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI), Winnipeg Central Mosque (WCM), Alhijra Islamic School, Zubaidah Tallab Foundation, Yaseen Centre of Manitoba, Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) and Manitoba Muslim Seniors Association.

## The Abyssinian Islamic Study Group Conference:

The Abyssinian Islamic Study Group organized its first annual conference this year on May 1 at the University of Winnipeg. Br. Mahammud Suadik from Toronto, chairman of the Bader Ethiopian Muslims organization was the guest speaker. His speech was on the need of Muslim community developments. Other speakers in the conference included, Sheikh Ismael Mukhtar, Br. Badri Abdellah, Br. Mahmoud Abdellah and Br. Faisal Abdellah whose speeches addressed a variety of topics such as family, youth and individual responsibility towards community. The speeches in the conference were delivered in different language such as Amharic, Afan, Oromo, English and Arabic. *(Photo below)*

*continued on page 3*



## Rally in support of Gaza:

The Peace Alliance Winnipeg, Independent Jewish Voices and CanPalNet, along with some members of the Muslim community held a demonstration on June 4 to show solidarity with the people of Gaza and to express sorrow at the killing of peaceful activists by the Israeli government. The event was organized on short notice and was held close to the Legislative Building.

## Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA) bi-elections:

The bi-election of the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA) was held on June 6 at the Waverley Mosque at 10:30 a.m. A new full slate executive council was elected (*see full report inside*).

## Leadership Institute (CMLI) 1st year celebration:

The CMLI held a meeting to celebrate the completion of first year of the Canadian Muslim Leadership training. Thirteen members have been through this intensive training program that included workshops, seminars, discussion groups, meeting leaders of others communities as well as leaders from within our Muslim community. The program included short speeches by the participant students, organizers and sponsors. As well, the facilitators, teachers, supporters, multi-cultural communities and volunteers were recognized. Present in the meeting were various government officials and other dignitaries.

## Al-Noor year-end celebrations:

The Al-Noor weekend school held its end of year celebration on June 12th. Al-Noor is the oldest Islamic weekend school. It has about 110 students and is held every Saturday in Churchill High School.

The Al-Hijrah full time school held its year-end celebration on June 25th. The Al-Hijrah school has about 200 students and it runs from kindergarten to grade nine. Thirteen students graduated from Al-Hijrah this year and moved to grade 10 at public schools.

## CICC Muslim Business Dinner:

The second annual Canadian Islamic Chamber of Commerce (CICC) Muslim Business Award Gala was held at the Fort Garry hotel on Saturday June 19. The event was attended by representatives of provincial government and city of Winnipeg as well as representatives of the two main opposition parties. Also present were leaders

of some faith groups, President of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, many other notables and members of the Muslim community at large. The program included speeches by official representatives, local chair of CCIC-Winnipeg, as well as Sheikh Hamid Salimi, keynote speaker from Toronto. Four awards were presented, two for individuals from out of town: Dr. Mohamed El-Masry (Waterloo), a professor and a highly acclaimed Engineer, Mohamed El-Sharief (Ottawa), founder of Al-Maghrib Award; two for locals: Ismael Mukhtar, Community Service Award and Wajih Zeid, Successful Businessman Award.

## Second Somali Study Group Annual Convention:

The second annual convention of the Somali Study Group was held on Sunday June 20 at Hugh John Macdonald School on Bannatyne Ave. The convention was a whole day event and included sports activities, lectures and workshops. The lectures were conducted in English as well as Somali languages. Two outside speakers: Sh. Mohamed Dirir (from Hargeisa, Somali land), Sh. Said Rageah (Abu Hureyra Centre, Toronto) and two local speakers: Sh. Mohamed Nour (Winnipeg) and Sh. Ismael Mukhtar (Winnipeg) conducted all the lecture sessions. The event was well attended.

## Full day Seminar on Leadership:

A full day seminar on "The Leadership Attitude" was held on June 20 at the University of Manitoba. This seminar is a national seminar held across various cities in Canada. The seminar was conducted by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Shareef, founder of Al-Maghrib Institute.

## DVD Presentation on Domestic Violence:

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Winnipeg, organized an event at the Canadian Mennonite University to show a DVD program titled: *Garments for One Another*. The purpose of the event was to create greater awareness of domestic violence. The DVD was also shown in the Winnipeg Central Mosque (WCM).

## Change of addresses:

The Islamic Social Services Association Inc.-Canada (ISSA) moved to a new location as of April 2010. The new address is: 201-72 Princess Street.

Also, the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI) is now located at the Winnipeg Central Mosque, 715 Ellice Ave.

# Announcements

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## Ramadan and Eid:

Ramadan is expected to begin around August 11 and Eid Ul-Fitr is expected to occur around September 9. Details will be announced through the Manitoba Muslim E-newsletter, MIA website (<http://www.miaonline.org>) or WCM website (<http://www.winnipegmosque.org>).

## Western Canada Islamic Convention:

The first Western Islamic Convention will be held in Winnipeg on September 17 to 19 of this year. This convention is organized by a group of young Winnipeggers and is one of a kind. Various speakers are expected to attend, details will follow.

## Be connected and informed:

Do you receive the bi-weekly Manitoba Muslim E-newsletter? If you don't, please send us your e-mail at: [editorialboard@miaonline.org](mailto:editorialboard@miaonline.org). The E-newsletter is a community announcement e-bulletin. It is intended to keep all community members informed of all the events, conferences and important gathering occurring within the community. It is an important way to keep connected to the local Muslim community.



# Letter to the Editor:

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## Biased Election Report

I was pleased to read the last issue of Manitoba Muslim, March 2010 issue. However I was disappointed when I read the MIA election report. I was expecting a neutral point of view from the staff and Editorial Board of Manitoba Muslim. I was not happy to read the one sided point of view especially on page 24, narrating the position of treasurer. There are eight lines in the praise and qualification of one candidate Mr. Jameel Khan and totally ignoring the other candidate. I want to put on record that I am equally qualified and have a Master's degree from the University of Punjab with distinction and a Master of Information Science degree from Rockefeller's School of Information Science and Policy, University at Albany, New York, USA. I have worked for the Government of Pakistan in a senior position, worked for the City of New York, various public and private sector organizations and am presently working for a multinational non-for-profit organization. I am a very humble person but I want to state from 'Figure 1' that I have secured the most votes 189 (57 %) than any other candidate. The community put their trust in me and elected me for the position of Treasurer. I am writing this letter just to let you know that such reports should be neutral. I am one of the Executive members who fought for the independent and neutral Editorial Board of Manitoba Muslim in the executive council meeting. Thus keep this publication neutral in stating facts and giving an unbiased point of view. Jazak Allah khair

Sarfraz Chishti, Ex- Treasurer MIA

## Editor's note:

*Br. Sarfraz, it wasn't our intention to question your suitability for an executive position neither to comment on your credentials. It was a simple statement of fact that given the nature of the position (treasurer), a candidate with a solid accounting and financial knowledge would be the best fit. Br. Jameel Khan is an accredited professional accountant with extensive knowledge and expertise in Canadian accounting, taxation, auditing regulations. MIA is a growing organization; a voluntary treasurer with such a background would be great a resource it can't easily afford.*

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# Community Profile

## Proud to be Muslims and Canadians! Profiles of a new Muslim and a new Canadian

Interviewed By: Br. Ryan Ramchandar \*



### Trevor MacFarlane New Muslim, born in Canada

**Q: Please tell us a bit about yourself (where you were born, your work/ education).**

A: My name is Trevor MacFarlane. I was born here in Winnipeg, Manitoba, however, growing up my family and I moved around often. I've lived in many different cities with my family from Menifee, California to Calgary, Alberta, from Kelowna, BC to Playa Del Carmen Mexico, relocating because of sports. Alhumduallah, it has given me such a broader understanding of the world and people, and has exposed me to many experiences and opportunities that I never would have had otherwise.

I now work as a Property Investor/Manager for a company called Wafa Ltd here in the city. I have been working alongside the owner, Mr. Louay Alghoul, who's been a fantastic coach and mentor. I am also studying Nutrition and soon Business, at the University of Manitoba. The world of athletics and nutrition has always been woven in my lifestyle so mixing business with them both should inshaallah make for an exciting future.

**Q: How long have you been Muslim?**

A: I have been a Muslim for two years now, Alhumduallah.

**Q: Where did you learn about Islam and how did you become Muslim?**

A: Growing up I was raised in a Christian home. We went to church every Sunday and sometimes more if there was a youth group or other function going on at the time. I always felt I had a strong connection with God since I was a young child. As I grew up I began to have questions regarding my faith; questions that put the foundations of the faith itself into doubt in my mind. I was 18 years old when my serious quest for truth and knowledge took off. After 3 years of dissecting the



bible, finding the truths behind the geopolitical agendas in history regarding scripture changes, omissions, etc and learning the history of Pauline Christianity and also the other original Christian sects of Christianity, I "stumbled" upon Islam along the road. From the very first time I sat down with a Quran, I knew I found God's faith to mankind. It was like a treasure chest that was once kept hidden from me for so long now fell in my lap. Almost 2 billion people on the planet had already found it before me!

**Q: Does being a Muslim change your perspective on being Canadian?**

A: Not at all. I still feel as Canadian as any other person living here. Islam hasn't changed my identity as a Canadian, but rather has changed my identity as a person. I still cheer on the Bombers with 30,000 other fans each game. I still visit the Forks every Canada Day (although I haven't painted my body red and white for a few years now). What has changed is my outlook on things like lifestyle choices, family, friendship, and true brotherhood. Not to say that I didn't have those previously, but the way Islam guides you so you can excel in those and every other area of your life, is like no other.

**Q: How easy or difficult is it to practice your faith in Canada? What are some challenges?**

A: Islam to most Canadians is still a foreign thing. The sights of women walking around fully clothed from head to toe, still give many the impression of oppression, rather than modesty and respect. I believe the biggest issue with non-Muslim Canadians is the lack of education regarding our faith. I am however very optimistic that this will change rapidly over these next few decades, as Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world.

For me, I've found Islam to be fairly easy to practice and grow into. Right from the beginning I had a good group of Muslim brothers who I surrounded myself with and who helped me progress in my deen.

**Q: What things make you feel proud to be a Canadian Muslim?**

*continued on page 7*

A: I feel proud being a Canadian Muslim when I look around my mosque at Juma and meet and see people from every corner of the globe. As Canadian Muslims, we are very diverse but one thing that holds us together is the love and faith in one God.

**Q: Do you consider being Canadian an important part of your identity? If so, how?**

A: Of course I feel being Canadian is important to my identity. Part of my make-up as a person has been shaped by the nation I live in.

**Q: Tell us one thing you want people to know about the Muslim experience in Canada.**

A: The Muslim experience in Canada is one that is as rich as it is diverse. The sense of brotherhood and love is like no other I've ever seen or experienced in my life, Alhumduallah. It is also one that builds you a strong sense of morality, discipline, and peace. I love calling myself, and being known as a Canadian Muslim man. I wear my badge with pride. I would strongly encourage Canadian and non-Canadian people alike to investigate Islam for themselves with open hearts so they too may find peace and purpose.

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**Mohammad Ullah**  
 New Canadian Citizen, born in Bangladesh



**Q: Please tell us a bit about yourself (where you were born, your work/education).**

A: I was born in Bangladesh. My father was a government serviceman who worked for the Ministry of Foreign affairs (he retired around 5 years ago) in Bangladesh. My mother is housewife. I have an older brother and two younger sisters. We travelled a lot as a family. We lived in Bangladesh during my early childhood where I studied until grade 3. My father's work took us to Beijing, China in 1985, where I spent 5 years. I also had the opportunity to live in Tehran, Iran from 1992 to 1997. After that I lived with my brother in Orlando, Florida and it was by chance that I came to Winnipeg to study after having received admission to the University of Winnipeg for an undergraduate degree. I completed my Bachelor of Science in Applied Computer Science from the University of Winnipeg in 2004. I married my wife, Nusraat Masood, in 2005 and Winnipeg is now home.

I came to Winnipeg in December of 1999. I have been active in the Winnipeg Muslim community ever since my University of Winnipeg days. I was actively involved with the MSA while in University. I volunteered and participated

in various Islamic conferences and youth camps in our Winnipeg community and strive to participate whenever the opportunity arises. I managed the Manitoba Islamic Association website miaonline.org during its early years.

Professionally, I currently manage the IT needs for a leading human resources recruiting firm in Winnipeg. I am also a freelance information technology consultant and work with both for-profit and non-profit organizations to provide information technology solutions.

**Q: How long have you lived in Canada?**

A: I have lived in Canada for over 10 years now. I have only lived in Winnipeg all this time. However, I have travelled to all the major cities on the west coast, Prairie provinces and east coast. Inshallah, my goal is to visit the northern provinces in the next 1-2 years.

**Q: Having just recently received your Canadian Citizenship, how do you feel?**

A: I feel accomplished and recognized for all my hard work and contribution to Canada. My path to citizenship was not an easy one. However, I was fortunate to be sponsored for permanent residency by the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program under the Skilled Worker class. Everyone in my shoes can relate that the immigration selection and approval process in Canada is not easy and requires a lot of time and patience. I can now say that the rewards far outweigh the difficulties. I feel an equal among Canadians. I have to

*continued on page 11*



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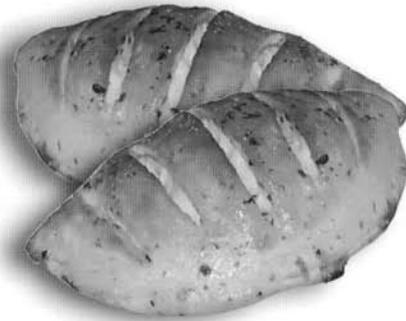
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10- Vegetarian Onion, mushroom, Mixed peppers, fresh tomatoes & Chilly	7.59	8.59	9.59
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13- Italiana Onion, Pepperoni & fresh tomatoes	8.59	9.59	10.59
14- Meat Feast Pepperoni, salami & chicken	8.59	9.59	10.59
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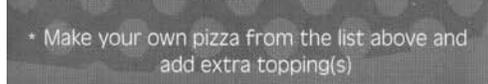
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39- Vegetable Cheese Warp	4.99
40- Chicken Cheese warp	5.99

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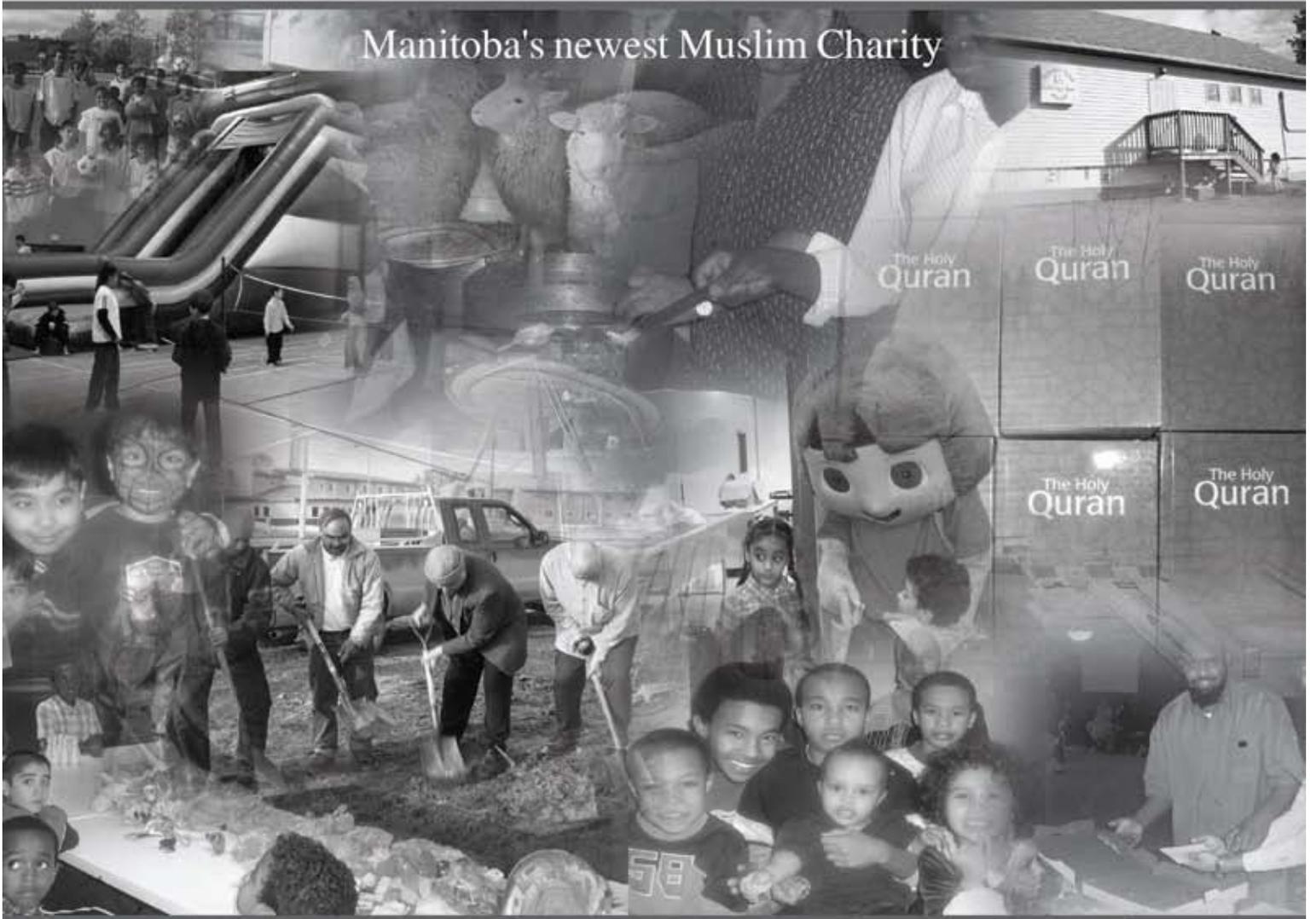


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admit, I felt like an outsider before becoming a Canadian citizen. I am also very excited that I can now vote in federal elections!

**Q: What things make you feel proud to be a Canadian Muslim?**

A: As a Canadian Muslim the freedom to practice my religion, live and work freely anywhere in Canada and exercise the right to vote is something I seriously value. In my more than 10 years here, I have noticed that if you are honest, truthful and hard-working this country will reward you.

**Q: How easy or difficult is it to practice your faith in Canada?**

A: I don't find it difficult to practice my faith in Canada. Having lived in various countries and being exposed to different cultures have given me some advantage in relating to and dealing with different situations. At work, I made it a point during my first few weeks to inform my co-workers about my faith, eating habits and most notably fasting. Currently, I am proud to be the only Muslim employee at my work. I am blessed with all the love and understanding I receive from my co-workers.

**Q: How does living as a Muslim in Canada compare to living as a Muslim in your country of origin?**

A: In my country of origin, Bangladesh, which boasts a majority Muslim population, practicing the faith and being a Muslim is never a challenge. Due to its high density population, there are mosques everywhere within walking distance. No one asks if any food is zabiha. During Ramadan restaurants are closed until iftaar time, etc.

In comparison, Muslims are a minority group in Canada. As such, extra effort needs to be made to accommodate practicing one's faith. One thing I constantly struggle with is food. Eating outside always requires extra care and asking questions people here are not used to hearing e.g. does this salad have bacon bits, is this an all beef hot dog, etc.

**Q: Does being a Canadian mean leaving behind who you were before coming to Canada? Do you think of yourself differently?**

A: In my opinion, being a Canadian certainly does not mean leaving who I am, a Muslim, a Bangladeshi and a Canadian. Canada is a mosaic where the country is built with diversity. This diversity is what makes Canada a great country and an envy of the world.

I am a Bangladeshi by birth and nothing can change this fact. I owe my birth country for what it has provided me- my birth, early education, my native language Bengali and my faith. I have no doubt about my loyalty to Canada, however, having being exposed to various cultures and societies all my life I am a mosaic just like Canada.

**Q: When people ask where you're from, what do you tell them?**

A: I tell them I am from Winnipeg. If asked where are you originally from, I tell them I was born in Bangladesh and raised in 3 different countries. Almost always, this gets them very interested in me and is a good conversation starter!

**Q: Do you consider being Canadian an important part of your identity? If so, how?**

A: Yes. Having lived in Canada for over 10 years, I have spent 1/3 of my life in this country. I have made lots of good Muslim and non-Muslim friends in this country. I have been involved in this community for so long that my roots have grown here.

**Q: Is there anything you would like to add?**

A: As a new Canadian and having lived here for a long time, I believe I have learnt a lot and adjusted to this society well without losing my identity, cultural background and faith. My advice to would-be Canadians and others pursuing opportunities to settle in Canada - be yourself and understand the society you live in, adjust in a positive way that brings benefit to the society you live in. Do not forget who you are and your origins. This country appreciates hard work, diversity and people who strive to make this country a better place. As a Canadian Muslim I feel it my duty to strive to reflect Islam and Muslims in a positive light to my fellow Canadians.

\* *Br. Ryan Ramchandrar is a member of the Manitoba Muslim Editorial board.*

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# Muslims in Canada

Compiled and edited by Dr. Don Trim\*

Most Canadian Muslims are Muslims by birth with a small number of converts to Islam from other religions. As is the case with immigrants in general, Muslim immigrants have come to Canada for a variety of reasons. These include higher education, security, employment, and family reunification. Others have come for religious and political freedom, as well as safety and security, fleeing from civil wars, persecution, and other forms of civil and ethnic strife. In the 1980s, Canada became an important place of refuge for those fleeing the Lebanese war. The 1990s saw Somali Muslims arrive in the wake of the Somali Civil war as well as Bosnian Muslims fleeing the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. There are also some immigrants coming to Canada from Iraq and other areas in the Middle East. In general, it is safe to say that almost every Muslim country in the world has sent immigrants to Canada.

The majority of Canadian Muslims, and not coincidentally a large proportion of the country's immigrants, live in the province of Ontario, with the largest groups settled in and around the greater Toronto area. According to the 2001 Census, there were 254,110

Muslims living in Greater Toronto. British Columbia also has a significant Muslim population. Assuming that most immigrants from the Middle East and Iran are Muslims, the two largest Muslim communities in Vancouver are Middle Eastern (>50,000) and Iranian (>30,000). Canada's national capital Ottawa hosts many Lebanese and Somali Muslims, where the Muslim community numbered approximately 40,000 in 2001. Greater Montreal's Muslim community neared 100,000 in 2001. Montreal is home to large numbers of Canadians of Moroccan, Algerian and Lebanese descent, as well as smaller Pakistani, Syrian, Iranian, Bangladeshi, and Turkish communities. These communities are not exclusively, but predominantly Muslim. In addition to Vancouver, Ottawa, and Montreal, nearly every major Canadian metropolitan area has a Muslim community, including Halifax (3,070), Windsor (10,745), Winnipeg

(4,805), Calgary (28,920), Edmonton (19,580), Vancouver (52,590), where more than a third are of Iranian descent, and Toronto (30,230). Based on 2001 statistics, the table (inset) shows the breakdown of Muslim population by province.

The Muslim community in Canada is almost as old as the nation itself. Four years after Canada's founding in 1867, the 1871 Canadian Census found 13 Muslims among the population. The first Canadian mosque was constructed in Edmonton in 1938, when there were approximately 700 Muslims in the country. This building is now part of the museum at Fort Edmonton Park. The years after World War II saw a small increase in the Muslim population. However Muslims were still a distinct minority. It was only after the removal of European immigration preferences in the late 1960s that Muslims began to arrive in significant numbers.

2001 census of Muslims in Canada	
Ontario	352,530
Québec	108,620
British Columbia	56,220
Alberta	49,040
Manitoba	5,095
Nova Scotia	3,545
Saskatchewan	2,230
New Brunswick	1,275
Prince Edward Island	195
Northwest Territories	180
Yukon	60
Nunavut	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>579,020</b>

*Note: these numbers are based on 2001 census; much has changed since that time. Manitoba's Muslims, for example, are estimated to be 15,000*

According to the Canadian Census of 1971 there were 33,000 Muslims in Canada. In the 1970s large-scale non-European immigration to Canada began. This was reflected in the growth of the Muslim community in Canada. In 1981, the Census listed 98,000 Muslims. The 1991 Census indicated 253,265 Muslims. By 2001, the Islamic community in Canada had grown to more than 579,000. Preliminary estimates for Census 2006 point to a figure of almost 800,000.

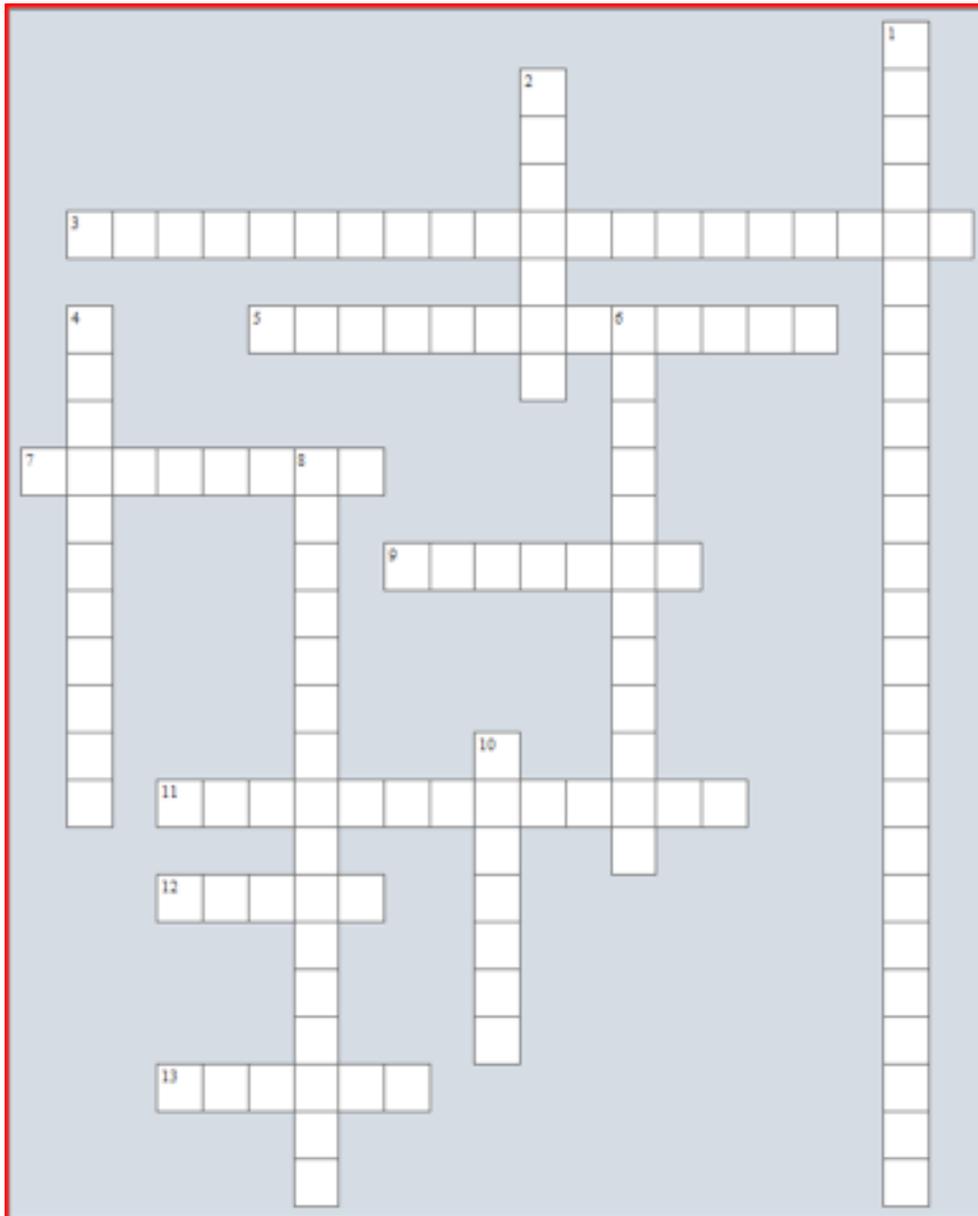
Compared to Muslims in Europe, Canadian Muslims have not faced the same set of problems. However, in recent time the same problems are surfacing with integration into mainstream society, with Canadians less willing to accommodate the Burka and other items that are seen as incompatible with the values of Canadians. The Muslim community in Canada is just

one among many ethnic, religious, racial and cultural communities that together make up Canada. At the same time, it must be noted that although Canadian Muslims may be classified as Muslims for official governmental statistical and policy-making purposes, that does not necessarily mean that all who are identified as such are practicing Muslims. In other words, they may be culturally Muslim, while at the same time leading secular lives, as the case is with many Anglophone Christians, especially of Protestant heritage who may be identified as such but have never considered themselves as Christians.

*Note: This information is gathered from Wikipedia, with some modification.*

\* Dr. Tim is a professor at the University of Manitoba and member of the Manitoba Muslim Magazine Editorial board.

## Canada's Provinces



### Across

3. This province contains only two cities
5. Canada's only official bilingual province
7. This province is located in the centre of Canada
9. Known as Canada's energy province
11. This province's provincial symbol is the Dragon's Mouth Orchid
12. Capital: Whitehorse
13. This province's area corresponds to the area of Alaska

### Down

1. This province possesses the largest lake entirely within Canada
2. The native people of this province are the Inuit
4. The slogan on the automotive license plates in this province is "Canada's Ocean Playground"
6. Home of the football team the Roughriders
8. Legendary creature Ogoopoga is rumoured to live in this province's southern lake
10. The Parliament of Canada is located here

## The National Anthem of Canada\*

O Canada!  
 Our home and native land!  
 True patriot love in all thy sons command.  
 With glowing hearts we see thee rise,  
 The True North strong and free!  
 From far and wide,  
 O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.  
 God keep our land glorious and free!  
 O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.  
 O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

*\*Proclaimed Canada's national anthem on July 1, 1980*

## Quote:

### Canada the most free country!

*"Canada is probably the most free country in the world where a man still has room to breathe, to spread out, to move forward, to move out, an open country with an open frontier. Canada has created harmony and cooperation among ethnic groups, and it must take this experience to the world because there is yet to be such an example of harmony and cooperation among ethnic groups"*

Valentyn Moroz, Ukrainian activist.

## Timeline of important events in Canadian history



**1867:** Confederation of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Québec and Ontario (4 provinces) forms the Dominion of Canada. Sir John A. Macdonald chosen as Canada's first prime minister.

**1870:** Manitoba becomes the 5th province to join Canadian confederation.

**1871:** British Columbia becomes the 6th province to join Canadian Confederation

**1873:** Prince Edward Island becomes the 7th province to join Canadian Confederation

**1904-5:** Alberta and Saskatchewan become the 8th and 9th provinces to join the Canadian Confederation.

**1914:** Canada enters First World War when Britain declares war on Germany.

**1916:** Women are granted the right to vote and hold public office.

**1917:** Income tax is introduced by the federal government as a "temporary wartime measure"

**1939:** Canada enters World War II after remaining neutral for a week.

**1944:** Saskatchewan voters elect the first socialist government in North America, led by Tommy Douglas

**1949:** Newfoundland becomes the 10th and last province to join Canadian Confederation.

**1951:** Mid-century census records Canada's population as 14 million.

**1952:** First television stations in Canada begin broadcasting in Montreal.

**1965:** The National Flag of Canada, the Maple Leaf, makes its first appearance. February 15 becomes National Flag of Canada Day.

**1969:** The federal government becomes officially bilingual.

**1976:** Parti Québécois under Rene Levesque wins Québec provincial election on separatist platform.

**1980:** "O Canada" is proclaimed Canada's national anthem, 100 years after it was first sung on June 24, 1880.

**1980:** The majority of Quebecers reject separation from Canada in a referendum vote.

**1982:** New Canadian Constitution is ratified by every province except Québec.

**1995:** A referendum on Québec independence takes place and the "no" side opposed to separation wins by a very narrow margin.

*Compiled by: MM staff from various sources.*

# Ramadan

## A month of attainment and atonement

By: Ismael Mukhtar \*

Ramadan, a month unlike any other month, awaited by Muslims across the globe with great anticipation and excitement is approaching us fast. Ramadan is a month that unleashes the best among humans and provides ample opportunities for self-attainment and spiritual emancipation. In Ramadan enmities subside, fraternity reigns, tears of hope and remorse flows, kindness prevail and generosity becomes the norm. A noble call is made in Ramadan, "O seeker of goodness and virtue, come forward; O seeker of wickedness and evil, turn backward" (Reported by Tirmizi and Ibn-i-Maja).

Ramadan's name, as noted by the renowned linguist Al-Khaleel, comes from the root word of "Ramdaa" which refers to the light rain that precedes the fall season, washing off accumulated dust. Imam Alrazi, the renowned commentator of the Quran, notes that this linguistic root meaning of Ramadan fits the essence of Ramadan, a month of cleansing and purification from sins. Ramadan is blessed at every juncture of its duration, in its beginning, in the middle and in its end. In a hadith it is narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him said: "It is the month, whose beginning is mercy, its middle forgiveness and its end, emancipation from the hell fire".

The month of Ramadan is primarily known as the month of fasting, but it is also a month of the greatest event in human history, the beginning of Quranic revelation. Allah SWT says: "Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (Between right and wrong)...." 2:185. Fasting is an act of devotion with higher aims and purposes. It is neither a ritual nor a mere physical restraint. The Quran explains the purpose of fasting by stating: "Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain taqwaa." [2:183]. Attainment of "taqwa" is a life long endeavor that takes people to the ranks of the most honored and blessed. Allah SWT says: "The most honored by Allah amongst you are those best in taqwaa." [49:13]

Jurists categorize fasting into three categories: optional (tataw) fasting, obligatory (wajib) fasting, and vowed

(nazar) fasting. The fasting in Ramadan is obligatory upon all believing men and women. Fasting has a physical dimension and non-physical dimension. The physical dimension is limited to the abstention from food and drink; the non-physical includes abstention of evil thoughts and actions that follow them. The Prophet, peace be upon him says: "Perhaps a person fasting will receive nothing from his fasting except hunger and thirst", (Reported by Ibn Maajah). Imam Al-Ghazali, ranks fasting into three levels. Fasting of (awam) lay person, fasting of (kawas) elite, fasting of (kawas al-kawas) the elite of the elites. The main difference between the first level and the latter two levels, is the level of their inner engagement in fasting. The focus of fasting of awam is on physical abstention, while the latter two, with varying degrees of intensity, include mental and perceptual abstention.

Among the many acts of virtues recommended in Ramadan, three in particular are worth highlighting. The first and second are generosity and recitation of the Quran at greater frequency. In a hadith reported by Al-Bukhari, Ibn Abbass says: "The Prophet was the most generous of people, but he would be his most generous during Ramadan when he would meet with Gabriel. He would meet with him every night and recite the Qur'an. When Gabriel met him, he used to be more generous than a fast wind.". The third virtue is nightly prayers (Qiyam), particularly in the last ten days of Ramadan. It is narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him said: "Whoever prays during the nights of Ramadan with a firm belief and hoping for reward, all of his previous sins would be forgiven".

Ramadan's closing act of virtue is as beautiful as its beginning. Ramadan is concluded with an act of kindness and generosity that emanates from every household. Zakat Al-fitr has been prescribed before Eid prayer at the latest as a form of sharing and reaching out to the needy. Indeed Ramadan is a unique opportunity, but not for everyone. The blessed ones are those who come out of Ramadan, cleaner, leaner, tender and renewed.

### References:

Al-Ghazali, Ihya Ulumuddin (Arabic)  
Al-Razi, Mafateeh Ulghaib (Arabic)  
Sabiq Syed, Fiqh Usunnah (Arabic)

\* Ismael Mukhtar is the Editor-in-Chief of the Manitoba Muslim.

# Rules about Fasting

By: Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi \*

## Who must fast?

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who is an adult (i.e. has reached puberty) and is sane and who is not sick or on a journey.

Sickness could be a temporary sickness from which a person expects to be cured soon. Such a person is allowed not to fast during the days of his/her sickness, but he/she must fast later after Ramadan to complete the missed days. Those who are sick with an incurable illness and expect no better health are also allowed not to fast but, they must pay the fidyah, which is giving meals for a day for each fast missed to a needy person. One can also give money instead of meals to a needy person. Women in their menses and post-natal bleeding are not allowed to fast but they must make up the days missed after Ramadan. Pregnant women and mothers who are nursing babies and find it difficult to fast can also postpone their fasting to a later time when they are in a better condition.

Journey, according to the Shari`ah, is any journey that takes you away from your city of residence, a minimum of 48 miles or 80 kilometers. It is the same journey that allows you to shorten (qasr) your prayers. The journey must be for a good cause. It is a sin to travel in Ramadan in order to avoid fasting. A Muslim should try to change his/her plans during Ramadan to be able to fast and should not travel unless it is necessary. The traveler who misses the fasts of Ramadan must make up those missed days later after Ramadan as soon as possible.

## Fasting according to the Sunnah:

1) Take sahur (pre-dawn meal). It is Sunnah and there is a great reward and blessing in taking sahur. The best time for sahur is the last half hour before dawn or the time for Fajr prayer.

2) Take iftar (breakfast) immediately after sunset. Shari`ah considers sunset when the disk of the sun goes below the horizon and disappears completely.

3) While fasting abstain from all false talks and deeds. Do not quarrel, have disputes, indulge in arguments,

use bad words, or do anything that is forbidden. One should try to discipline oneself morally and ethically in addition to physical training and discipline. One should also not make a show of one's fasting by talking too much about it, or by showing dry lips and talking about a hungry stomach, or showing bad temper. The fasting person must be a pleasant person with good spirit and good cheer.

4) During fast one should do acts of charity and goodness to others and should increase his/her worship and reading of the Qur'an. Every Muslim should try to read the whole Qur'an at least once during the month of Ramadan.

## Things that invalidate the fast:

One must avoid doing anything that may render one's fast invalid. Things that invalidate the fast and require qada' (making up for these days) are the following:

- 1) Eating, drinking or smoking deliberately, including taking any non-nourishing items by mouth, nose or anus.
- 2) Deliberately causing oneself to vomit.
- 3) The beginning of menstrual or post-childbirth bleeding even in the last moment before sunset.
- 4) Ejaculation out of sexual excitement from kissing, hugging, etc.
- 5) Eating, drinking, smoking or having sexual intercourse after Fajr (dawn) on mistaken assumption that it is not Fajr time yet. Similarly, engaging in these acts before sunset on the mistaken assumption that it is already sunset time.

Sexual intercourse during fasting is forbidden and is a great sin. Those who engage in it must make both qada' (make up the fasts) and kaffarah (expiation by fasting for 60 days after Ramadan or to feed 60 poor people for each

*continued on page 17*

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day of fast broken in this way). According to Imam Abu Hanifah, eating and/or drinking deliberately during fasting also entail the same qada' and kaffarah.

### Things that do not invalidate fasting:

During fast, the following things are permissible:

- 1) Taking a bath or shower. If water is swallowed involuntarily it will not invalidate the fast. According to most of the jurists swimming is also allowed in fasting, but one should avoid diving, because that will cause the water to go from mouth or nose in the stomach.
- 2) Using perfumes, wearing contact lenses or using eye drops.
- 3) Taking injections or having blood test.
- 4) Using a miswak (tooth-stick) or a toothbrush (even with tooth paste) and rinsing the mouth or nostrils with water provided it is not overdone (so as to avoid swallowing water).
- 5) Eating, drinking or smoking unintentionally, i.e. one forgot that one was fasting. But one must stop as soon as one remembers and should continue one's fast.
- 6) If one sleeps during the daytime and has a wet-dream, it does not break one's fast. Also, if one has intercourse during the night and was not able to make ghusl (bathe) before dawn, he/she can begin fasting and make ghusl

later. Women whose menstruation stops during the night may begin fasting even if they have not made ghusl yet. In all these cases, bathing (ghusl) is necessary but fasting is valid even without bathing.

7) Kissing between husband and wife is allowed while fasting, but one should try to avoid it so that one may not do anything further that is forbidden during the fast.

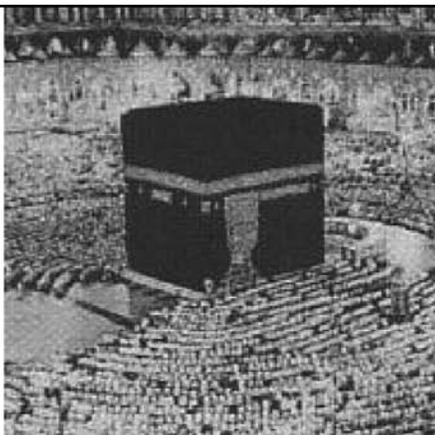
### Requirements for the validity of fasting:

There are basically two main components of fasting:

- 1) The intention (niyyah) for fasting is necessary. One should make a sincere intention to fast for the sake of Allah every day before dawn. The intention need not be in words, but must be with the sincerity of the heart and mind. Some jurists are of the opinion that the intention can be made once only for the whole month and does not have to be repeated every day. It is however, better to make the intention every day to take full benefit of fasting.
- 2) Abstaining from dawn to dusk from everything that invalidates fasting. This point has been explained in detail in the preceding sections.

*\* Dr. M. Siddiqui is a leading North American Scholar.*

*Source: Islamonline*



# Makka

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# Top 8 ways to boost your Ramadan spirit this year

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## **1. Dua {supplication}**

Ask Allah to make this the most awesome, spiritually uplifting Ramadan you've ever had. Only He can make it happen and relying on Him completely is one step to boosting our spirits.

## **2. Quiet your mind, turn off the...**

TV, internet, radio, cell phone, pager, iPod, etc. no, not all day, but for at least 10 minutes a day. Find a quiet place, close your eyes and connect with God. At first, your mind will swirl with the useless and not-so-useless info in your head. However, try forcing yourself to think of three things in these few minutes:

- Allah
- your purpose in life
- are you living your life with purpose?

Do this every day of Ramadan if you can. If that's not possible, try it at least three times a week.

## **3. Learn about great Muslims**

Even if you've read it before, read or listen to Abdul Wahid Hamid's Companions of the Prophet again this Ramadan. Read about or listen to the story of a Companion daily. Well-written and short, this is a wonderful way to see how other Muslims retained their strength of faith against incredible odds. This is a sure-fire spirituality booster.



## **4. Connect to the Quran**

The Quran is God's way of talking to us. It's one of the most important keys to spiritual upliftment. This Ramadan, connect to the Quran in a new way. If you already read Quran regularly, perhaps you can choose a new theme to focus on or select a Surah you haven't read in a while. If you don't read Quran

regularly, maybe you can read just two minutes of Quran a day, reading only from the first page you encounter when you open up the Book. In addition, try to keep a Quranic journal to record your reflections, questions, thoughts, etc. about what you've read.

## **5. Take care of others**

Whether it's someone who's away from their family, a person who's having problems with a spouse or their kids or a fellow student struggling with their grades, make an extra effort this Ramadan to help others. The spiritual boost you get in return is well worth it.

## **6. Feed the hungry**

While your stomach shrieks in protest, give that panhandler some change, volunteer at a soup kitchen, get involved with your local food pantry or make a couple of bag lunches to give to the hungry you meet on your way to school or work.

## **7. Give up one lifelong bad habit**

Ask yourself what some of your defining traits are. Then decide which is the worst of them. Is it a hot temper? Apathy? Laziness? Impatience? Whatever it is, use this Ramadan to put an end to it. Practice the opposite of your bad habit every day until the end of the month. By then Insha Allah, you'll look back and be amazed at what a change you've made for the better.

## **8. Use those Nights of Power**

The last ten nights or Ramadan aren't called the Nights of Power for nothing. Use these precious times for deep, heartfelt Dua (supplication), self-analysis, reflection and serious thought.

*Source: Sound Vision*

# Domestic Violence is Haraam

By: Shahina Siddiqui\*

I am yet again dealing with another case of domestic violence within the Muslim community and wondering when will we take our families and their needs seriously. When will we start supporting organizations like ISSA so that it can reach more families and help preserve our community.

First it is important to assess how much do we actually understand about this social ill, this disease of the nafs. Do we actually understand the sheer abhorrence with which Islam looks at wife abuse? Do we know the impact it is having on our families and our youth and our viability as a healthy community?

By neglecting to address this disease that is becoming more and more apparent in our community, we are becoming complicit in an injustice that each and every one of us will have to answer for, to the Merciful Creator.

Due to our inaction we are allowing our mothers, daughters and sisters to be used and abused, harassed, beaten, maimed and killed. Do we think that their pleas and cries are not reaching the heavens?

Have we forgotten that during 38 years of married life of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), we do not find even a single incidence of abuse or mistreatment of his wives and daughters? In fact Prophet Muhammed instructed us, "I recommend that you treat women with goodness. The best of you are those who treat their wives the best." (Sahih). In another hadith he stated, "The best among the faithful is the one whose character (akhlaq) is the best, and the best among you is one who is best towards his wife." (Tirmidhi).

By ignoring to tackle the issue of ill treatment of women, we are complicit and responsible and in violations of the sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h).

Many verses in the Quran specifically warn Muslim men about their duty to women and of the purpose of marriage. "Among His signs is that Allah created spouses for you from among yourselves so that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and Allah has planted love and mercy between you. In this are signs for people who reflect" (30:21).

"O humankind be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate... Be careful of your duty to Allah in whom you claim your mutual rights" (4:1).

"In accordance with justice, the rights of a wife with regards to her husband are similar to the rights of her husband with regards to her". (2:228).

"O ye who believe ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will nor should ye treat them with harshness... If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good" (4:19). Men are protectors and maintainers of women .... " (4:546)

Some Muslim perpetrators and critics of Islam, wrongly based on faulty translations, take the Quranic verse 4:34 to prove that Islam allows men to abuse their wives: "As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct admonish them, (first), next refuse to share their bed, and last chastise (wadribuhunna), but if they return to obedience seek not against them means of grief for Allah is most High Great above all" (4:34).

This falsehood of associating this verse to condoning wife abuse is a blatant lie that the Quran warns us against, "Behold how they invent a lie against Allah but that by itself is a manifest error" (4:50).

The Quran also warns against applying means of grief against the wife. Furthermore, the obedience the wives owe their husbands (within reason) under Shariah is conditional to the husband's obedience to Allah and His Prophet Muhammad.

Obviously a shariah-violating, non-practicing, abusive, violent man is not in obedience to Allah and therefore has no right to demand or expect obedience from his wife.

If issues are not resolved through this last stage of resolution then divorce is imminent. Verse 4:34 is not a verse that gives blanket or in fact any approval or condones any action that can be used as a justification for wife abuse. If it did, it would be abrogating all the other verses that call for peaceful, equitable and loving relationships between husband and wife and this would be against the rules of exegesis of the Quran.

Verse 4:34 is not about wife abuse or domestic violence at all. In fact the Quran states, "If a wife fears cruelty or desertion or ill-treatment on her husband's part there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves..." (4:128).

Furthermore, classical scholars of Shariah also stipulated that the above steps towards conflict resolution leading to reconciliation can only be implemented if the wife is totally in the wrong and the husband is innocent of any wrongdoing

or contributing in any way to the conflict and only after both have decided that divorce is not an option.

This practice of the Prophet sustains the linguistic interpretation/translation of the Arabic word 'dribah' in the verse 4:34 and is being considered by scholars as as valid as to 'walk away'. A husband should walk away from a situation that angers him – partly to cool down and partly to show his disapproval. Even if this interpretation is not based on ijma or consensus, the sunnah makes it clear that wife-beating and abuse of any kind are not acceptable since these cruel acts violate the Islamic spirit of justice and compassion and do not promote peace at home.

The overwhelming number of verses of the Quran dealing with marriage and husband-wife relations, encourage peace and tranquility as the goal and purpose of domestic life and mercy and love as the governing principles.

The logical conclusion is obvious - domestic abuse does not promote or nurture peace at home and therefore cannot be tolerated within the Muslim community.

The community needs to understand that domestic violence accounts for 50% of murdered women in Canada based on statistics from the Canadian Mental Health Association. There is no general character composite of a man who is violent towards women, since they come from all socioeconomic classes, religious and ethnic groups.

We often mistakenly blame women for staying in abusive relationships and therefore refuse to believe them when they do come forward and speak up.

What we seem to forget is that these women are afraid. They fear for their lives and that of their children since an abuser often threatens in order to control his victims. They are also usually financially dependent because even if they are earning, he controls the money.

In North America many immigrant women do not have an extended family or a support mechanism to help them to move out of an abusive relationship.

Some Muslim women, due to their poor understanding of Islam or anti-women norms, come to believe that this is their fate and that they must accept it in order to gain paradise. This is further enforced by well-meaning but misguided community leaders who tell these women to go home, be better wives and have patience (sabr).

Abused Muslim women also fear community reaction and rejection because many a times their husbands are well-respected and well-known members of the community. They are kind and well behaved in public and therefore people find it hard to believe that they become monsters behind closed doors.

As a community we need to deal with this social ill not only by treating it but also by taking preventive measures:

- To prevent we must develop "How To" kits for Muslim couples based on the Quran and sunnah on all aspects of Marriage - husband and wife relationships, stress management, parent & child relationship, roles of in-laws, extended families, pre-marriage preparation and counseling for both men and women.
- We must expel any practice that is against the spirit and teaching of Islam. We must identify behaviors that are not acceptable as well as apply social consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- To help break the cycle we must implement educational programs in Islamic schools that promote and teach healthy family values.
- We must have zero-tolerance for domestic abuse. We must provide children coming from abusive homes with positive role models and treat them with mercy and compassion.
- Parenting, stress management, anger management and communication classes must become regular part of Islamic school curriculums and Community Awareness Programs.
- We must start acknowledging at a leadership level that abuse is a problem in Muslim communities and that we need to address it.
- Myth and fears can only be put to rest through education. Workshops on peaceful homes and functional marriages must become regular features of Islamic centers.
- Treatment must be two-fold. Both victim and abuser must be helped. During this period, victims must have access to Muslim shelters and must receive assurances from the community through financial, emotional and spiritual support.

Islamic Social Services Association of Canada and USA, along with other initiatives in North America, have been doing pioneer work in prevention and education about domestic abuse. ISSA needs the community's assistance to help break this cycle of violence from plaguing our future generations as well as helping to restore peace and security to the victims of abuse and their children.

ISSA needs assistance in continuing the education of Imams in assessing and dealing with cases of domestic abuse effectively, fairly and legally.

Imams and community leaders are usually the first responders in cases of domestic abuse and if they are not trained or informed in the pathology of this social ill, they may inadvertently become complicit in this injustice.

ISSA needs your help to employ social workers, establish shelters and provide counseling. These services need to run professionally and within the Canadian legal framework

while maintaining the spirit of Islamic principles of justice, compassion and fair play.

Lest we forget in the last sermon, Prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h.) instructed his followers for all times to make sure that the rights of women are maintained and secured because these rights are sacred.

No cultural practice, no tribal custom, no ignorant tradition, no matter how entrenched, can be allowed to take precedence over the teachings of the Quran and sunnah.

Sexism, racism and ageism are vices that we must purge from our midst if we are to be true followers of Islam and to benefit from its blessings.

*\* Sr. Shahina Siddiqui is the President of Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA) of Canada and author of 'Helping Victims of Domestic Abuse - A guide for Imams and Community Leaders.'*

# MIA as a Community Organization:

## From Membership to Ownership

By: Dr. Idris Elbakri\*

The Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA) was established over 40 years ago to serve the interests and represent Muslims of Manitoba.

The pioneers who established the association had the foresight to structure it as a membership-based organization. Membership is a right to every Muslim in Manitoba who adheres to the values and constitution of the organization and chooses to join and pay the membership fee. The membership of MIA holds the ultimate authority over the affairs of the organization. It delegates through elections the management of the affairs to an executive council consisting of seven people.

In the recent past, most of us have come to think of membership as merely a means to vote in the MIA elections. Holding elected office in MIA, especially the position of President, became a much sought after goal. We have seen aggressive membership drives, often spearheaded by

potential candidates who sometimes even subsidize the fees. There is nothing illegal in that, but whether it is ethical and inline with the spirit that the community upholds is a different story. Is that what membership is all about?

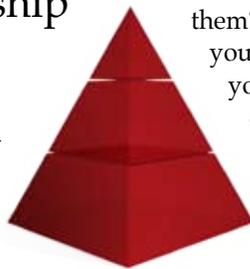
I call on all Muslims in our community to become members of MIA, but don't think about membership in the very narrow scope of elections and power, but rather, as a way for all of us to assert the values of community service, participation, and brotherhood. Let your membership be a practical way in which you implement the Prophet's Hadith where he said, "who is not concerned about the affairs of the Muslims is not one of them". In short, we need to move from membership to ownership. You will achieve a sense of ownership when you feel that you have a personal (but not selfish) stake in this organization and in the affairs of the community. When you feel the communal pain, and celebrate the communal achievement. When you look around in your masjid and you think to yourself, I am working to make this a better place. When you help foster a feeling of safety and ease for all members of the community in their places of worship and gathering.

Over 90% of the affairs of MIA are managed through volunteers. While there is a tremendous need to professionalize the management of the organization, promoting a strong volunteerism ethic must remain a core value for our community. Have you ever asked yourself: who pays the bills, who checks the mail, who updates the website, who puts tape on the floor for Eid prayer, who sets up the audio system, who cuts the grass, who manages the weekend school and who distributes charity? All of these activities are carried out by volunteers. Are you one of them? If you are, you do not need to be thanked because you do it for a higher purpose. If you're not, maybe you should consider giving a bit of yourself for your community.

The MIA executive council is establishing a number of committees including office administration, green space, properties management, event organization, community programs, fundraising and takaful. The functions of these committees are the bare-minimum that is needed to operate the organization and meet a minimum of the community's needs and expectations. Details about these committees and their executive liaisons are posted on the MIA website. Volunteering to staff these committees is a great way to contribute to the well being of our community and to have a direct say in the affairs of the MIA.

Let's go from passive observers to committed members, and from committed members to active owners.

*\* Idris Elbakri is the President of the Manitoba Islamic Association executive council. He can be reached at [president@miaonline.org](mailto:president@miaonline.org).*



# Book Review:

## *A Long Way Gone*, by Ishmael Beah

Reviewed by: Shahzad Musaddiq\*

The UN estimates that there are nearly 300,000 child soldiers in the world today. Ishmael Beah was one of them. *A Long Way Gone* is Beah's memoir and I thankfully came across it by coincidence.

I was sitting at home one night watching a news show and Beah was on the program discussing his life and talking about the book. His discussion piqued my interest and I wanted to pick up a copy. A few weeks went by and to my surprise I found out that Beah had come to Winnipeg to promote the book. While I did not get a chance to meet the author I managed to pick up a copy and I am grateful to have had the chance to read it.

*A Long Way Gone* is a deeply emotional and powerful memoir of Beah's life before, during, and after the conflict. Beah describes in painful detail the turmoil that took place in Sierra Leone through his eyes. Describing how he went from peaceful daily life, to abandoning his home, being enlisted as a child soldier and finally his rehabilitation. Beah's story is presented through his perspective and thus as a reader you can't help but feel the pain, fear and anger that he shares recalling his past. The memoir is at times described with great detail and is certainly not for children, but this detail is needed to describe the harshness of his life as a soldier. It is this intense and powerful description that made the book resonate with me.

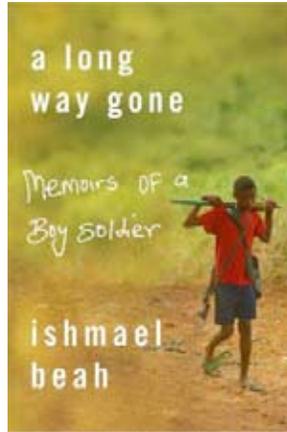
Before reading this book my knowledge of the conflict in Sierra Leone was limited. However, after reading the memoir I feel as though I have been given a very tiny glimpse of what the war was like through the eyes of a victim, soldier and a refugee. Being in a child's voice makes the book an easy read, but as a narrator Beah adds in his reflections, describing his thoughts now that he is looking back as an adult.

The memoir begins by describing how Beah (12 years old at the time) and his family lived in their village of Mogbwemo. When the war reached Beah's home he was forced to flee, leaving his family behind. Along with a few other young boys he traveled from city to city trying to survive and avoid the ever-spreading conflict. Unfortunately the group

could not hold together for too long as they eventually split up and Beah with a few of his new friends were captured, recruited and brainwashed into serving the government army. The boys were drugged and told that they would be rewarded if they were "good soldiers", and threatened with death if they did not cooperate. He fought with the army and survived for three years, until at the age of sixteen, he was finally given a chance to leave the conflict and be put into a Unicef rehabilitation program.

Upon his rehabilitation Beah was able to study in the United States and has since been involved with a multitude of Human Rights projects, even speaking in front of the United Nations. Overall, Beah's memoir serves as a reminder of all of the injustices that still exist in the world today and how he was one of the lucky few that were able to escape. Thus, I hope his memoir will serve as an inspiration for us so that we do not look away blindly from the horrors being committed around the world. At the very least we should fulfill our duty to become aware, remain active, and make sure that the cries of our brothers and sisters are not left unheard.

\* *Shahzad Musaddiq is a university student and an active youth volunteer.*



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# Reports

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## Public Teach-in Café: What is Hijab? and Why Niqab?

By Nadia Kidwai \*

On Thursday May 6th, 2010, the Islamic Social Services Association in partnership with Face2Face, Canadian Muslim Women's Institute, Winnipeg Central Mosque, AlHijrah Islamic School, Zubaidah Tallab Foundation, Muslim Association of Canada, Canadian Council of American Islamic Relations and the Manitoba Muslim Seniors Association organized a public forum on the Niqab and Hijab. The event was held at the Millennium Library in downtown Winnipeg. The Carol Shields Auditorium, fully packed to its maximum capacity of 150, with people standing in the aisles, was also filled with media and journalists from CBC Television and Radio, Radio Canada and the Winnipeg Free Press. The words 'hot topic' seemed an adequate way to describe the reason for such an overwhelming attendance from the public.

The audience was a mixture of Muslim and non-Muslim, men and women, young and old, hijabi and non-hijabi, niqab supporters and the 'not-so-sure-about-this-whole-thing-but-I'm-here-to-find-out-more' proponents. It was a snapshot of the diverse Canadian demographic, all in one room, to discuss one topic, the Niqab and Hijab.

Following the tabling of Bill 94 by the Government of Québec, which seeks to forbid the provision of provincial public services to any woman wearing the niqab, Canada at the political and civil level has been engaged in heated debates about the controversial proposed legislation. Though the law would only impact the province of Québec, the ramifications of such a measure have been felt across the country and the questions 'What next?' and 'Could it happen here?' have crossed the minds of many.

Shahina Siddiqui, President of the Islamic Social Services Association started the evening off by giving a background to the concept and definitions of the much used but often confused terms 'hijab', 'niqab', 'burqa', 'jilbab' and so on. She also gave a brief overview of Bill 94 and the threat it posed to legal freedoms and rights, which all Canadians regardless of their religion are afforded under the Charter for Rights and Liberties.

The keynote presentations of the evening came in the way of five young women, some who wore the hijab and some who did not. They shared with the audience an honest account of their journeys and their challenged relationship with the hijab.

They all candidly examined the challenges, prejudices, discrimination, stereotyping and even personal vanity as hurdles they faced and that they had come to accept.

What resonated most from each of their stories was their unwavering strength and commitment to wearing and wanting to wear the hijab. The affirmation they felt in their faith and in their submission to God by donning such a seemingly banal piece of cloth upon their hair each day. These were all young, strong women who were proud of their identity and cared enough about the future of their country that the unimaginable events occurring in Québec compelled them to step up and speak.

The real value of the event came from the unique Face2Face conversation 'cafes' that were organized following the presentations. The audience was divided up in to smaller groups to embark on deeper dialogue and discussion on the topics and themes touched upon during the presentations. It was a chance for questions to be answered and ideas to be shared in a respectful and meaningful way. By the end of the night, and as articulated on their evaluation forms, participants left feeling as if they had learned something. Whether they agreed with the legislation or not, whether they agreed with the niqab or not, something special had been accomplished that night- understanding, mutual respect and a coming together of Manitobans from different cultures, faiths and value systems in support of Canadian Muslim women and their right to choose.

The media coverage both before and after was extensive with both CBC Radio and TV, locally and nationally. Islamic Social Services is organizing another such forum in Calgary on June 18th.

May Allah reward the organizers, speakers and volunteers of the evening. In these difficult times, may the Merciful Creator give us all the courage to step up and speak up for our cherished Canadian value of equal rights for all Canadians.

*\* Sr. Nadia Kidwai is a community volunteer and one of the organizers of "Public Teach-in Café".*

## Manitoba Islamic Association bi-elections:

By: MM staff.

The bi-election of the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA) was held on June 06, 2010 at the Waverley mosque at 10:30 am. This bi-election was called due to executive vacancies resulting from the early February 2010 resignation/dissolution announcement by five of the seven members of MIA Executive Council. The meeting was unusually tense and two police officers were present. The MIA has been going through a challenging period in its history since the attempted termination of the Imam, the executive resignations and the resulting uncertainties. The meeting began with a major disruption and stand-off on issues of membership, who should chair the meeting and how the meeting should be conducted. Intervention by police and some elders helped in bringing some quiet, but the stand-off continued despite efforts to find a middle ground. An hour later, the ex-President, Br. Naseer Warriach and the ex-1st Vice President, Br. Akram Rana, left the meeting followed by some members. The meeting continued under the chairmanship of Br. Naeemuddin, the Senior Trustee, who was selected by the General body to chair the meeting. Following a motion confirming the dissolution of previous MIA Executive Council, a Steering Committee made up of three members was selected. The elections were conducted for the full slate of executives; the following seven individuals were elected for the remaining Executive Council term:

- Dr. Idris Elbakri, President.
- Br. Aziz Sibaii, 1st Vice President
- Br. Ahmed Durrani, 2nd Vice President
- Br. Salman Qureshi, Secretary
- Dr. Afzal Shahin, Treasurer
- Br. Saeed Dar, Member
- Sr. Joumana Mustapha, Member

Following his election, the new President in his short address outlined his future priorities, introduced his team, re-iterated his confidence in the current Imam and promised that he and his team would listen to all members' concerns, issues and grievances. The meeting was adjourned at around 1:00 pm.



## Observations:

This bi-election came after an intense period of campaigning, debates and discussions. Community members who were unhappy with the measures taken by the ex-President were vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction. What they considered violations of the MIA constitution as well as the ex-President's alleged false accusations of many members of the community were on the top of their grievances. An ad-hoc website page (savemia.info) was used as a forum to voice their concerns as well as a town hall meeting and distribution of fliers across the four main mosques in the city.

This bi-election was probably one of the most intense election meetings in the history of the association. MIA General body meetings have an established pattern of sequence such as beginning with recitations of Quran, approval of minutes of the last general body etc; this meeting, however, had none of that. Instead of Quranic recitations, it begun with a sudden explosion of shouting, screaming and banging. There was an unmistakable passion among all participants. However, that passion at times was turning to be ugly. The behavior of some members was certainly far from Islamic and utterly shameful. This kind of behavior shouldn't be tolerated, condoned or allowed again. Measures should be taken to ensure this kind of hooliganism will not happen again.

The meeting itself was relatively well attended. It included many elders and familiar faces in the community; as well as, many unfamiliar faces. The youth as well as sisters' active participation was unusually high. The newly elected executive team has many daunting challenges ahead; they have inherited a difficult legacy and they need a lot of goodwill to be able to complete their mandate. The new executive team is probably unique. It has a good number of young professionals with a long history of involvement with the youth. In describing his team, the new President noted the following: "I feel that we have a very strong executive with a lot of potential. Our executive brings the wisdom of age with the energy of youth, the compassion of a mother, the problem-solving of engineers, the struggles of immigrants, the perspective of the convert, and a long history of activism and commitment".

Once the dust settles, MIA needs to do a soul search and an honest assessment to identify the root causes of the current impasse. Measures need to be taken to ensure MIA will be spared from another mayhem and its affairs are conducted in the highest standard of Islamic ethics and professionalism.

## Profiles of members of the newly elected MIA Executive Council:

### Idris Elbakri, President

Idris Elbakri hails from the blessed city of Jerusalem, where he was born and spent his early years. After high school, he moved to the U.S. in pursuit of higher education. He finally obtained a Ph.D in Electrical Engineering from the University of Michigan. In 2005, he moved with his wife to Winnipeg. He has 2 daughters and a son.



As a student, he was active in the MSA and served as the President of the MSA chapter at the University of Michigan, one of the largest MSA chapters in the US. While in Ann Arbor, he also served as the Vice President of the Islamic Center of Ann Arbor and was the founding director of the Youth Mentoring Network (YMN). Since 2003, he has been the Chair of the Board of Directors of COMPASS, a leadership and management training program for MSA National. Since moving to Winnipeg, Idris has been a regular khateeb at the Winnipeg Central Mosque and was the Vice Chair and then Chair of the Board of Directors of Children's House, a non-profit Montessori school in Winnipeg's downtown. Idris has a passion for reading and likes to bike and camp.

While he has his own ideas for what MIA is and should be, he believes vision for an organization like MIA has to come out of broad community consultations and consensus building. The immediate tasks confronting the MIA executives is to regain community trust, competently operate the organization and mobilize the community around MIA activities and programs.

### Aziz Sibaii, 1st Vice President

Aziz Sibaii was born in Syria and grew up in Saudi Arabia, where he memorized the whole Quran at a young age. He arrived in Winnipeg in 2001. He has a degree in Computer Science from the University of Manitoba. Currently he works as a Programmer with the Government of Manitoba. He is married to Sr.



Deema and has two young daughters. Aziz has a wide ranging involvement in the community. He was MSA U of M President, as well as being actively involved in youth work through MYC, Camp Awakening. He also held executive roles in WCM and IIIM. Aziz has been instrumental in website designs and creating data bases for various local and international Islamic organizations. He enjoys travelling and reading history.

### Ahmed Durrani, 2nd Vice President

Ahmed Durrani is a native Winnipegger and loving husband and father of two young children. He has a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from the University of Winnipeg and currently works as a financial analyst. He has been involved in the local community since a young age. Ahmed organized youth summer camps and halaqas through the Muslim Youth Council and helped publish The Pillar, a local Muslim youth newsletter. Ahmed belonged to the MSA at the University of Winnipeg and was also active at the national level through organizing the annual Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) conference. He is a member of the Muslim Association of Canada and volunteers at Camp Awakening. Ahmed also serves as a board member on the West Broadway Development Corporation, a non-profit organization that is committed to environmentally sustainable social and economic development in the West Broadway neighborhood.



Ahmed enjoys boxing, camping, and working in his garage. As a newly elected member of the MIA Executive, Ahmed hopes to work on developing ways to stabilize fundraising. He wants to see a more active membership from the community in MIA committees, and he wants to see the Masjid land used for gardening and urban agriculture.

### Salman Qureshi, Secretary

Salman Qureshi was born in Karachi, Pakistan and arrived in Winnipeg in 1989. Salman completed his high school studies in West Kildonan Collegiate and earned his Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering (BSME) degree as well as Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Manitoba.



Currently he works as Vice President for a medical device company. He is married to Sr. Sarwat and is a father of a daughter (Khadija) and two sons (Yahya and Sehel).

Salman has been involved in various MIA committees; he has served as a MIA Trustee and was part of Camp Awakening organization committee and Youth Awakening organization committee. He was also involved in organizing various programs such as Islamic History Series and others.

Salman's Mission for MIA are as follows:

- Establish a member centric council as opposed to the historic title centric one.
- Engage the community, especially the youth, by establishing committees, programs and forums.
- Strengthen the organization by creating necessary infrastructure, policies and procedures.
- Establish revenue generating programs to reduce reliance on donations.
- Create synergy amongst various Muslim organizations in Winnipeg.

**Afzal Shahin, Treasurer**

Afzal Shahin was born in Pakistan, he arrived in Winnipeg in 1998. He has a Ph.D. in Agricultural Engineering. Currently he works as a Research Scientist at the Canadian Grain Commission. Afzal's family is made up of his wife Sr. Shafqat and 8 children (5 boys and 3 daughters). Afzal was previously involved in community work in Ithaca, New York and Athens, Georgia.



**Sr. Joumana (Jannah) Mustapha, Member**

Joumana (Jannah) Mustapha was born and raised in Italy. She arrived in Winnipeg in the early 80's as a young child. She has a Bachelors of Science degree. She is currently a medical student and works as research assistant specializing in Multiple Sclerosis. She has three boys, two of whom are in high school. As an elected member of the MIA she brings a copious number of volunteer experience with her such as Director and Counselor of Manitoba Muslim

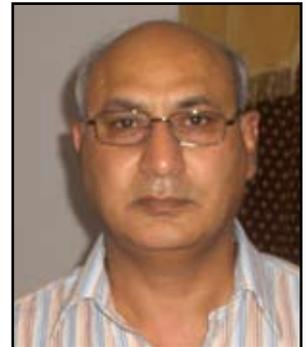


Youth Camps, program development and presenter for MAYA (Muslim Arab Youth Association), convert halaqas, various youth groups, MSA (U of M and U of W), MAC soccer, and development of the Islamic school and the Peace Medical Clinic to name a few.

As an executive member, she hopes to bring back the vibrant and energetic spirit that Winnipeg Muslims once had.

**Saeed Ahmad Dar, Member**

Saeed Ahmad Dar was born in Lahore, Pakistan. He arrived in Winnipeg in 1998. He has a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Pakistan and is currently working as an Inspector (Quality) in a local Manufacturing Company. He is married with two children.



Saeed wants see the MIA as a platform, with deep roots in the community, bringing all Muslims together, giving them a sense a pride for being members of MIA and provide them with the opportunity to take part in community activities.

*Note: Manitoba Muslim (MM) magazine has a tradition of publishing the profiles of newly elected MIA executives. We couldn't publish the profiles of the ex-executive council because the information requested by MM wasn't submitted by the Secretary and also because the executive council was shortly disintegrated before MM went to publishing. These profiles were provided to MM by the MIA executive council.*

*continued on page 27*

**Advertisement Rates**

Ad Placement	Yearly Commitment	Ad-hoc Ads
Back Cover	\$400	\$450
Back - 2nd Last Page	\$200	\$250
Back - 3rd Last Page	\$200	\$250
After Cover - 1st Page	\$200	\$250
After Cover - 2nd Page	\$200	\$250
Inside Full Page	\$150	\$200
Inside 1/2 Page	\$75	\$100
Inside 1/4 Page	\$50	\$75

## Message of welcome:

The following Muslim Organizations in Manitoba are pleased to welcome the New Executive Council of the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA) 2010-2012.

### Executive Council:

- Idris Elbakri, President
- Aziz Sibaii, 1st Vice President
- Ahmed Duranni, 2nd Vice President
- Afzal Shahin, Treasurer
- Salman Qureshi, Secretary
- Saeed Dar, Member
- Janna Moustapha, Member

### Organizations:

- Islamic Social Services Association Inc.
- Manitoba Muslim Seniors Association Inc.
- Winnipeg Central Mosque
- Canadian Muslim Women's Institute

## Interview: Sheikh Ahsan Hanif

Interviewer: Br. Osaed Khan\*

*Sheikh Ahsan Hanif came to Winnipeg for the double weekend Al-Maghrib Institute course on Surah Al-Kahf. Following is a short interview conducted with him during his visit to Winnipeg.*

**Q: What is your background, in terms of growing up in the UK, education and being a Muslim in England?**

A: I was born and raised in Birmingham, central England. My childhood was similar to that of most Muslims. I went to state school up until 16. However at the same time I also went to evening Islamic school where my primary focus was memorizing the Qur'an, which Alhamdulillah, I completed by the age of 13. I remember at that time that my schedule was to wake up an hour before school to memorize my daily portion of the Qur'an. I then went to school from 8.30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. I would then go to evening Islamic school from 4:40 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. I would then come home, eat and then go for an hour of private tajweed tuition. With the grace of Allah and the commitment and efforts of my parents, I was able to accomplish my goals. My parents would spend many hours testing and re-testing me. It was this initial spark of enthusiasm that made me determined to study at the University of Madinah, where I went at age 17.



**Q: What are some issues and challenges that Muslims are going through in the UK? (or specifically in your community?)**

A: In my humble opinion, the challenges Muslims are facing in the UK are not too dissimilar from challenges Muslims are facing in other countries. In particular, there is a lack of Islamic knowledge amongst many Muslims, both the elderly and young. Muslims are lacking when it comes to taking the time to seriously study the Qur'an, Sunnah and other Islamic sciences. This can then be seen in their actions and the way in which Muslims behave amongst themselves and in wider communities and societies. Muslims need to learn what Allah has given to them in the Qur'an and what has been left in the Sunnah. All the issues and challenges we as Muslims face, wherever we are, go back to this crucial point.

**Q. You have visited Canada a couple of times now. What are some similarities and differences you notice between Muslims in North America and England?**

A: Masha Allah, I have seen the same type of enthusiasm between Muslims in both these countries. I recently visited Winnipeg, a city I had not heard of before. However, it was so beautiful to see how thriving Islam is here, and how enthusiastic the brothers and sisters are in seeking Islamic knowledge. This is the beauty of Islam. Wherever Muslims are learning about their deen and implementing it, you will see the beauty of Islam. At the same time, another similarity is that there is always so much more left to do in terms of da'wah and teaching people about Islam. This is the duty of every Muslim to do according to his or her ability and knowledge.

**Q: What are some of the challenges the youth face in acquiring Islamic Education?**

A: I see a lot of enthusiasm amongst the youth in wanting to learn about Islam. Unfortunately, in many communities they find it difficult to find people who can communicate

with them on their level and make that connection. This in turn puts them off. We need to focus on our youth and realize that they require different things from other age groups. Recreation and activities are effective ways of teaching them, as well as organizing camps and training workshops.

**Q: Where is your next Al-Maghrib Seminar and what is the topic?**

A: Insha Allah, my next Al-Maghrib seminar will be in Windsor, Ontario. The course that I am currently teaching is Echoes of a Cave, Tafseer Surah al-Kahf. This will Insha Allah be my fourth time to Canada. I have previously taught this in Ottawa, Calgary and Winnipeg.

**Q: What book are you currently reading? What was the last book (fiction or non-fiction) you read that you would recommend?**

I have a personal and strong interest in Islamic history. There are so many lessons to be learnt and so much that we don't know about our own history. As they

say, 'history often repeats itself.' I was reading about the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, and insha Allah will now move on to the Ottoman Empire.

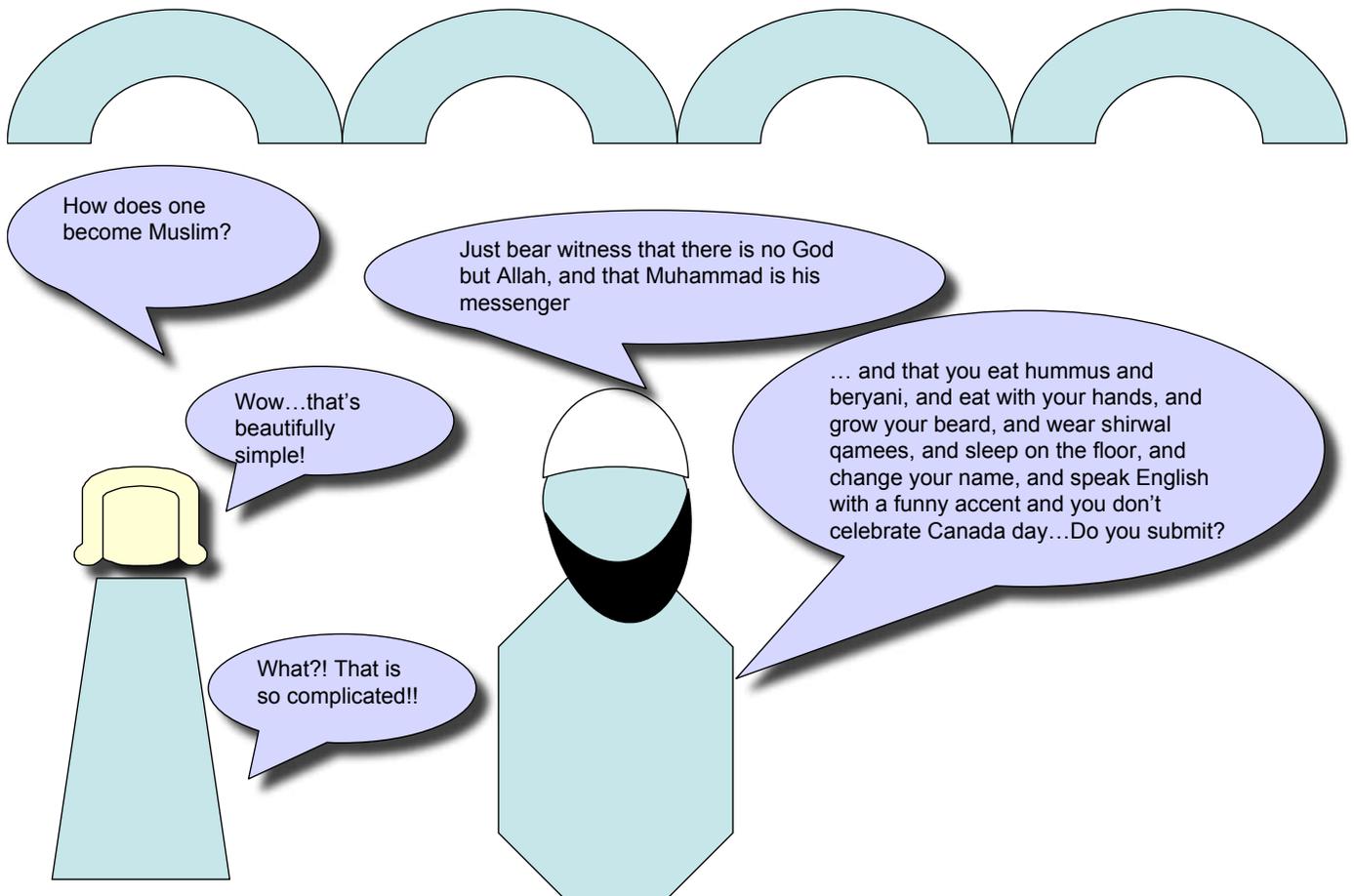
**Q: Any final thoughts?**

The advice that I always give to all the communities I visit is to seek knowledge. You can never know everything. The Qur'an alone has so much we need to study, learn and then teach to others. If we dedicated just half the time to knowledge of Islam as we do to our careers, hobbies and chilling out, the Muslim Ummah would see a massive transformation. It is this message that Al-Maghrib tries to impart, and this is the advice that I too would give.

*Br. Osaed Khan is a teacher by profession. He served previously as MIA Secretary and currently is the Winnipeg coordinator for Al-Maghrib Institute.*

*Opinions and views expressed in this newsletter are the sole responsibility of their authors.*

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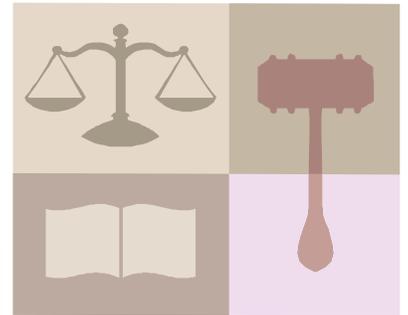
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