

# Islamic Center Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 1  
January 15, 2003  
Zul Qa'dah 12, 1423

ICNEF, St. John's Bluff Road S., Jacksonville, Florida 32246

## CALENDAR

### **ELECTIONS OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS, MONTHLY GATHERING**

Saturday, January 25th  
5:30pm

Guest Speaker, Joe Honeycutt

### **HOST FAMILIES**

Dr. Asadullah and Razia Mojadidi  
Ashraf and Fauzia Shaikh

### **ICNEF BOARD MEETING**

Sunday, January 26th  
After Zuhr Prayer

### **EID UL-ADHA**

Either February 11th or 12th, please call the Islamic Center after the 4th Prayer will be 9am at the Metropolitan Park Pavilion

### **EID UL-ADHA PICNIC**

Saturday, February 15th  
11am-5pm  
Metropolitan Park

Articles News Announcements  
**FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER**

Please submit by  
Friday, January 31, 2003

## ICNA CONVENTION

### FROM A YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVE

Henna Shah: 7th Grade, Twin Lakes Academy Middle

The ICNA Southeast Convention was held in Atlanta, Georgia, the weekend of December 27th which I attended with my family and others from Jacksonville. It was very interesting but honestly it could have been made more interesting for the Muslim Youth. There were some youth seminars, but not nearly enough. In other words the youth weren't very active in the conference and we found ourselves spending a lot of time in the arcade!

Good topics were brought up for discussion, however, they weren't made to be interesting from a kid's/teenager's perspective. One exception was Imam Abdul Malik, from Brooklyn, New York. He was able to connect with the youth and make his lecture interesting. Imam Naseem also tried but wasn't quite as good as Imam Abdul Malik.

I would suggest that next year the organizers make the format more down to earth and have more hands on exercises, role-playing, and open discussions. The organizers should realize that some of their techniques aren't appealing to the youth, and try to include the youth and make it more fun. They could also have other activities, like shopping! It is fun, for the girls at least, to buy hijabs, clothes, Islamic jewelry, books, prayer rugs, and much more. And for the boy's maybe get together and play a game of basketball. There are many ways to make something educational and fun. Those are some ways the ICNA convention could be improved.

### GUEST SPEAKER

On Saturday, January 25th, Imam Zaid has invited, Joe Honeycutt, President of HabiJax, to talk about how Muslims can become homeowners without paying interest. He will also discuss how even from the Christian perspective, charging and taking interest is wrong.

## **BOARD ELECTIONS 2003**

In accordance with the Islamic Center By-Laws, five (5) members of the Islamic Center Board of Directors are elected each year in January for a one-year term. Any member of the Islamic Center that has been a member for at least two years, and has paid all of his Membership Dues as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year, and is nominated for election by the Islamic Center Board of Directors or by any member of the Islamic Center that has paid all of his membership dues may be elected.

In 2002, the Islamic Center By-Laws were revised to enable the holding of elections by mail. In accordance with the new election procedure mailed with the November 2002 Islamic Center Newsletter, ballots are to be mailed out early in January only to those members of the Islamic Center that have been members for at least one year (365 days), and have paid their membership dues as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. These ballots are to be returned to the Islamic Center in the specially marked envelopes by mail, or may be deposited in the Donation Box located in the Islamic Center hallway.

Only members of the Islamic Center, their spouses, and their unmarried children that are eighteen years old or older are entitled to participate in the management of the Islamic Center by electing members to the Board of Directors.

At the Annual Meeting of the Members scheduled to be held at the Islamic Center on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 5:30 PM, any member of the Islamic Center that is entitled to vote but has not yet voted will be issued a ballot. All ballots received will be opened at the Annual meeting and names of those elected to serve on the Board will be announced. May Allah (SWT) reward all those who have agreed to be nominated for election or participate in the election by becoming a member of the Islamic Center. May He guide us all. Ameen.

A final list of nominees whose names are to appear on the 2003 ballots is as follows:

**Brother Aslam Khan:** Born in India. Came to US in 1992. He is married. He holds a Bachelors degree in Electrical Engineering from India, a Masters and a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Central Florida. He is a Senior Manager with a major multi-national steel company. He was elected to the Islamic Center Board for one year in January 2002. He would like to continue efforts towards fiscal responsibility, enhance diversity of thought/opinion, and continue to enhance accountability and transparency of the board to the community.

**Brother Amjad Khayat:** Born in Palestine. Came to US in 1979. He is married and has five (5) children. He holds a Bachelors and a Masters in Civil Engineering, and a Masters Degree in Engineering Management. He is a senior Structural Engineer and Project Manager for a local consulting firm. He has been a member of the

Islamic Center since 1995, and has previously served as a member of the Islamic Center Board for one year. He would like to work for all of our Muslim community needs especially the youth.

**Brother M. Fawad Mansoori:** Born in Pakistan. Came to US in 1991. He is married and has two (2) children. He holds a Masters degree in Accounting and works as a CPA with an accounting firm. He is a member CAIR, AICPA, FICPA, and is certified with the Georgia Board of Public Accountancy. Was elected to the Islamic Center Board for one year in January 2002. Previously served as a member of the Al-Furqan Academy Board, and was Treasurer for one year. Would like to focus on increasing participation from the community in Islamic Center affairs, mentoring and education of new Muslims, and improving communication between the Islamic Center board and general community.

**Sister Homa Mojadidi:** Born in Afghanistan. Came to US in 1991. In 1996, received a Bachelors degree in Health Administration, and in 2002, received a Masters degree in English Literature, both from the University of North Florida. She participated in the Open House at the Islamic Center in 2002; has made presentations in several forums about the woman's role in Islam, and has appeared on the Television Program, 'Understanding Islam'. She has been a member of the Islamic Center since 1993. She would like to contribute towards the betterment of our community in any way she can.

**Sister Sameen Piracha:** Born in Pakistan. Came to the US in 1984. She has a Bachelors in Psychology from the University of Florida and a Law Degree (J.D.) from Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in 2001. She has been a member of the Islamic Center since 1985. She is currently the Editor of the Islamic Center Newsletter and plans to continue in that role during 2003. She looks forward in furthering the efforts of, Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad, in creating the Islamic Center Newsletter and would like to make it a vehicle for community appreciation and unification.

**Brother Rahim Shah:** Born in Pakistan. Came to the US in 1982. He is married and has three (3) children. He completed his Bachelors and MBA degrees here in the USA and is currently working for a Fortune 500 company in an executive management position with P&L responsibility. As a board member, he would like to focus on: the Muslim youth, the new Muslims, bringing the Muslim community of Jacksonville together by bridging the perceived gaps, and working on a long term strategic plan for the Islamic Center growth.

## ONE HISTORY PAPER AT A TIME

Jehan Shah: 6th Grade, Twin Lakes Academy Middle

**F**or those who do not know what “da’wa” is, it’s educating people about Islam. Earlier in the year I had to do a major project for my gifted class and I thought why don’t I try to work on this project while doing “da’wa” at the same time. The topic I selected was “The Rights and Responsibilities brought about with the Revelation of the Qur’an.” I chose this topic because I knew most kids would write about the Hoover Dam, Manatees, and the like. Also, if I wrote about Islam I would be doing “da’wa” since I knew that in order to grade my paper my teacher and classmates would have to read about Islam and in doing so they would be learning about Islam. In addition, if my paper advances to the county, state, and national competitions more people would be reading my paper.

Here is a short passage from my paper, where the key topics covered in the paper are: equality of all humankind, women’s rights, usury and trade, family/society, and warfare.

The Word “Islam” comes from an Arabic word that means peace. Many people think that right when they hear the word peace they should think about flowers or things that make them feel good. Well, before this religion, “Islam,” it didn’t occur to kings or rulers that other people weren’t happy or that people were dying because they didn’t care about anyone but themselves. Later on, something changed that.

So we have many opportunities to spread Islam or to do “da’wa” if we would take the opportunity to come together and work as we did in the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); we would probably be more successful in what we try to accomplish. Also, while doing “da’wa” you’re not only pleasing yourself but you are also pleasing Allah (SWT) or I hope it would be pleasing to you and when you write about religion your teacher will most likely give you a good grade. By doing “da’wa” you start to make the world a better place for Muslims and Non-Muslims, one History paper at a time.

## A WEDDING CELEBRATION

Alicia Shah

**O**n Sunday, December 22, Yusuf Propes and Erica Swindell, both of whom are new Muslims, celebrated their nikah at the Islamic Center -- with a little help from the Welcome to Islam! organization. The event was special for a number of reasons. Though the core-planning group was comprised of Welcome to Islam! members, the entire Jacksonville Muslim community participated. Some cooked food, some provided beverages, some donated money, others helped set up and decorate, and many shared in the celebration.

About 150 attendees enjoyed Middle Eastern, South Asian and American cuisine, as well as an atmosphere of festivity and goodwill. Brothers and sisters from a variety of ethnic groups came together for a common cause -- to share in the happiness of this couple and support them as they begin their life in Islam together. May Allah (SWT) accept our sincere efforts to serve Him, and may He give our community more opportunities to come together for that purpose.

## SUPPORT GROUP FOR ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN

Dr. Sunyia Shujaat & Sadida Ahmed

**S**isters have put together a support group for women and girls. The group will meet on the second Sunday of every month after Zuhr prayer (1:30pm) at the Islamic Center. Please make an effort to attend and participate.

## 2003 ISLAMIC CALENDAR

**I**f you still have not been able to purchase your own 2003 Islamic Calendar, it’s not too late! They only cost \$10 and all the money raised will benefit the Islamic Center and AFA. With Eid ul-Adha being around the corner, this would make a great gift for your Muslim and non-Muslim friends. Please drop by the Imam’s office to purchase yours.

## TO ALLAH WE BELONG, AND TO HIM IS OUR RETURN

### Professor Muhammad Hamidullah

The world of Islam has lost a great scholar in Professor Muhammad Hamidullah, who passed away quietly in Jacksonville, Florida, US, on December 17. He was 94. His janaza prayer was led by his friend, Dr Yusuf Zia Kavakci, and he was laid to rest in the Muslim cemetery in Jacksonville. Professor Hamidullah went to rest after breakfast, having performed fajr earlier that morning; he did not wake up: inna lillah-e wa inna ilaih-e raje'oon.

His life spanned many decades of research and writing. He was born in Hyderabad, Deccan, on February 19, 1908. He started his publishing career at the age of 16 in 1924. In 1935 he obtained a PhD from the University of Bonn, Germany; then came a PhD in Law from the Sorbonne (Paris, France) in 1936. He returned to Hyderabad to resume his teaching career at Usmania University. From 1946 to 1948 Professor Hamidullah was actively involved in the struggle against Indian occupation; after the fall of Kashmir to Indian military invasion he went into exile in France. In 1996 he moved to the US, where a grandniece, Sadida Ahmed, looked after him (he was not married). Professor Hamidullah was fluent in 22 languages beside Urdu, his mother tongue; he was the first Muslim to translate the Qur'an into French.

He will be sorely missed because he did so much original work on the Seerah. A fitting tribute to him would be for us to continue the work that he pioneered, rather than simply heaping accolades on him without building on his intellectual contribution.

Abu Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying, "When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except in three cases: an ongoing charity, knowledge from which people continue to benefit, and a righteous child who prays for him." [Sahih Muslim, and Sunan Abu Dawud]

### Kaniz Fatima

On January 9th, my father's mother passed away in Pakistan. My family and I would like to thank the community for their kind words and thoughts. May Allah (SWT) bless you all. She had been sick for the last couple of years, and I pray that her soul has found the peace she deserves. Ameen. She is survived by seven (7) children and 19 grandchildren.

Let us pray that we are among those who work to have an easy trip and have as the end to their journey, the final abode of Paradise. O Allah, we seek refuge with you from the punishment of the grave. O Allah, help us to live and die as Muslims and help us to understand the true object of this life. O Allah, grant us good in this life and good in the life to come, and save us from the torment of the Hellfire. Ameen.

Safwaan [the narrator mentioned that Safwaan ibn 'Abdillaah ibn Safwaan was married to ad-Dardaa] said, "I visited Abud-Dardaa's home in Syria, but did not find him there. Ummud-Dardaa asked [me], 'Are you going to make Hajj this year?' I said: 'Yes.' She said, 'Pray to Allah for good for us, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The prayer of a Muslim for his Muslim brother in his absence will be answered. As long as he prays for the good of his brother, there is an angel assigned near his head who says: Amen, and may the same be for you."' I left and went to the marketplace where I met Abud-Dardaa and he related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) the same as that."

[Sahih Muslim]

## THE EVILS OF GHEEBAT

Homa Mojadidi

Every year Muslims are anxious to feed the poor, clothe the needy, and give in charity, which is great and as it should be. We are not doing those less fortunate than ourselves a favor by helping them, it is simply our religious duty and obligation to do so.

What about the people in our lives, our families, relatives, friends, and acquaintances? How do we fare in fulfilling our religious duties towards them? Are we treating them with respect, mercy, and dignity? Are they safe from the harm and malice that we can cause by our careless words and actions? Do we speak to them in a gentle tone and smile at them as often as we can, (because even a smile is charity), or do we speak harshly to them? Or worse still, do we praise them to their faces and talk behind their backs? And how many of us indulge in **gheebat** or idle gossip, without thinking how we harm ourselves by committing this major sin, harm the person we are gossiping with (because even if that person is merely listening they still share in that sin), and the person we are gossiping about?

I do not claim to be free of this sin, because unfortunately, it is one sin that almost everyone is guilty of, or has been at some point in their lives. In fact, some people may not even be aware of exactly what constitutes backbiting or how strictly it has been forbidden.

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrates that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "Do you know what is backbiting?" The Companions said: "Allah and His Messenger know better." Thereupon he said, "Backbiting is talking about your (Muslim) brother in a manner which he dislikes." It was said to him: "What if my (Muslim) brother is as I say." He said, "If he is actually as you say, then that is backbiting; but if that is not in him, that is slandering." [Muslim]

The Qur'an also strictly forbids **gheebat** or backbiting: "And backbite not one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate back-

iting). And fear Allah." (49:12)

Next time we are about to indulge in this heinous habit, either by being the instigator or the listener, we should try and stop ourselves, or at the very least refuse to be part of a conversation in which **gheebat** is taking place.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once said to Imam 'Ali (RA): "O Ali! When someone hears the backbiting of his Muslim brother committed in his presence, yet he does not rally to his assistance despite being capable of doing so, God shall humiliate him in the world and in the Hereafter."

We should remember how it hurts us when we hear that someone spoke ill of us behind our back, and stop ourselves from hurting someone else in turn. As Muslims we are supposed to be compassionate, forgiving, and merciful, not vengeful and vindictive. We should try to reflect on the following ahadith of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and try to follow his beautiful and ideal example as much as we can. Inshallah, God will reward us for making the effort, whether we completely succeed or not.

Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (RA) reported: I asked the Messenger of Allah (PBUH): "Who is the most excellent among the Muslims?" He said, "One from whose tongue and hands the other Muslims are secure." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

## DO WOMEN REALLY TALK MORE THAN MEN?

Here's a humorous story that relates how difficult marital communication can really be: A husband, looking through the newspaper, came upon a study that said women use more words than men. Excited to prove to his wife his long-held contention that women in general, his wife in particular, talked too much, he showed her the study results. The report stated: "Men use 15,000 words per day, while women use 30,000." His wife thought a while, then she finally said to her husband, "It's because we have to repeat everything we say." The husband said, "What?"

## THE MEANING OF HAJJ

**A**fter the Shahada (profession of faith), Salah (prayer), Sawm (the fast of Ramadan) and Zakat (almsgiving); Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca is the fifth and last pillar of Islamic faith. It is enjoined upon all adult Muslims of either sex, who have the material and financial means and the health to take it, even if only once in their lives. The financial security spoken of here means that the Hajj pilgrims should have enough to cover their expenses and those of their dependents, whether traveling with the pilgrim or not, and to pay their debts, if in debt, until the pilgrim completes the course of the Hajj.

The word Hajj literally means, "*repairing to a thing for the sake of a visit*" (al-qasd li-l-ziyāra), and in the technicality of the Islamic Law "*the repairing to Bait-Allah*" (the House of Allāh) to observe the necessary devotions (*iqāmat-an li-l-nusuk*). Bait-Allah is one of the names by which the Ka'ba is known; and *nusuk* means '*ibāda* (worship of devotion), or *tā'a* (obedience); it is also the plural of *nasīka* meaning *dhabīha* (the animal that is sacrificed).

Allah commanded all believers to honor Him through pilgrimage. The Hajj is rich in symbolism and religious duties that will be explored later; but underlying this vast richness lies a core of religious purification that must be experienced to be fully appreciated or understood.

"...pilgrimage unto the Temple is a duty owed to God by all people who are able to undertake it." (3:97)

No other institution in the world can lie claim to the wonderful influence of the Hajj in leveling all distinctions of race, color and rank. Not only do all people of all walks of life meet together before the Holy House of God as His servants, but they are all clad in one dress and there remains nothing to distinguish the high from the low. Malcolm X's Hajj experience makes this point clearly:

"There were tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans. But we were all partici-

ating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experience in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and non-white. America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. [...] I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their colors. You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions."

Haley, Alex. 1965. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballentine Books, p.340.

Deeper than that, however, lies a greater value of Hajj - the higher spiritual experience made possible by this unique assemblage of man. The experience of drawing nearer and nearer to God till man feels that all those veils that keep him away from God are entirely removed and he is standing in the Divine's presence.

He discards all his creature comforts that act as a veil against his inner insight. He puts on the simplest of dress, avoids talk of any amorous nature and every kind of dispute, and he undergoes the deprivations of a journey into a barren land, all so that he may concentrate his prayers and meditation on the Divine Being. Man's creature comforts are surely a veil between man and his communion with God. It is the shedding of these veils and the richness of religious duty and piety that awakens the soul and draws the pilgrim closer to God.

Please send us your thoughts and experiences of your Hajj. What lasting impressions do you have? What spiritual awakening did you experience? What changes or transformations did it make in your life? We will print some of the responses in the upcoming issues.

To concentrate all of one's self on God, not in solitude but in congregation, is thus the meaning of Hajj. The spiritual reawakening within each pilgrim and the acceptance of God's presence. May we all, through the benevolence of Allah, enjoy this union. At least once in our lifetime.



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## IMAM'S DIARY

Imam Muhammad Zaid Malik

I am starting a new series of articles, entitled "Imam's Diary". These articles will be my personal experiences as an imam.

Since the tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, I have been invited to speak at many places; most of which were churches, including universities, colleges and high schools. It was good experience to learn that Christians have sects and denominations and they do not all believe in the same things. Did you know that some Christians do not believe that Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the son of God, which struck me as interesting. I would speak for 35-40 minutes and take questions from the audience. Most of the questions were very intelligent, however, some were based on stereotypical rhetoric. I would like to share one of the good questions with you. Someone asked why did God need to send Muhammad (peace be upon him) after Jesus (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)? It was an interesting question and the answer was very simple. I quoted a story straight from the Bible:

"... And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts and cried unto him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.' But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying; 'Send her away, for she crieth after us.' But he answered and said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Then came she and worshiped him, saying, 'Lord, help me, But he answered and said, 'It is not me to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs.' And she said, 'Truth Lord: Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered and said unto her, 'O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.'" New Testament, Matthew 15: 22-28.

In this Biblical story Jesus (peace be upon him) made very clear that he was sent only to the Israelites, and not to the whole world. Compare this to what the Qur'an says about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): " Say O Muhammad: O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah". (7:158)

Due to the limited time I could say only this as an answer, but if you read the Bible, you will see that it foretold the coming of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). I will quote a few examples from the Bible:

- ☆ Deuteronomy 18:18 (In this verse God is speaking to Moses): "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him".
- ☆ John 16:7-14: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but I depart, I will send him unto you...I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Hobeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak..."

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**ICNEF HOME PAGE**  
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To

## In This Issue

Youth Perspectives, Election 2003, Community News, Imam's Diary...

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**Imam**  
**Hafiz Muhammad Zaid Malik**

**NEWSLETTER**  
Sameen Piracha

**WEBPAGES**  
Khadim Hussain

The opinions expressed in the articles and other editorial material are those of the authors and are not to be construed as opinions and recommendations of the Islamic Center.

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## EID PRAYER AT METROPOLITAN PARK PAVILION

**WHEN:** Either February 11th or 12th, 9am sharp;  
please call after February 4th for the exact date

**WHERE:** METROPOLITAN PARK PAVILION;  
across from Alltell Stadium at 1410 Gator Bowl Blvd.

**PARKING:** There is limited FREE parking,  
and you may be assessed \$5 for parking per vehicle

**NOTE:** Areas of the Pavilion are cushioned, however,  
it is advisable to bring a prayer rug/mat

## MUSLIM COMMUNITY PICNIC AT METROPOLITAN PARK

**WHEN:** Saturday, February 15th from 11am to 5pm

**WHERE:** 1410 Gator Bowl Blvd.,  
next to Kid Kampus and across from Alltell Stadium

Please bring your favorite dish to share with the community