

Islamic Center Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 11
November 15, 2003
Ramadhan 20, 1424

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

CALENDAR

MONTHLY GATHERING

Cancelled due to Eid

DECEMBER 2003 HOST FAMILIES

No Monthly Gathering
due to Holidays

ICNEF MANAGING COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday, November 29, 2003
After Zuhr Prayer

EID UL-FITR PRAYER

Tuesday, November 25, 2003
9:00AM Sharp
At the Islamic Center
(Please Call ICNEF to confirm)

EID PARKING

Please allow at least 15 minutes for
parking across the street. Only parking
permit holders may park on
the premises

Articles News Announcements

FOR NEWSLETTER

Please submit by
Friday, November 21, 2003

ICNEF WEBSITE

<http://www.ICNEF.org>

EID UL-FITR

THE DEFINITION OF EID:

Eid is an Arabic word derived from `aada that means a recurring event. In Islam it denotes the festivals of Islam.

Anas (RA) reported that upon arriving in Madina, the Prophet (PBUH) found its people celebrating two days whose significance was held over from the non-believers. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "When I came upon you, you had two days that you continued to celebrate from the Jaahiliyyah; indeed Allah has substituted them for you with what is better: the day of Sacrifice and the day of Fitr (breaking the fast). (Ahmad and Abu Dawood)

Fitr means to break and Eid ul-Fitr marks the breaking of the fasting period. Muslims see this happy day as a sign of gratefulness on the accomplishment of Ramadhan and as an immediate reward by Allah for those who spent the month of Ramadhan in fasting and performing other forms of worship.

The Prophet (PBUH) told Abu Bakr (RA): "For every people there is a feast and this is our feast." (Al-Bukhari)

ZAKAT UL FITR:

During Ramadhan we become familiar with the experience of the needy and poor who stay hungry not out of choice but because of lack of food. By fasting we appreciate the blessings bestowed upon us by Allah and become charitable towards those in need. As if to re-enforce the idea in our minds, Allah has made a wajib charity of Zakat ul-Fitr at the end of Ramadhan.

This year, Zakat ul-Fitr is \$8.00 per person and should be paid before the Eid prayer. It is preferred that it is paid as soon as possible during the month of Ramadhan so we can send the money to those who need it before Eid ul-Fitr.

THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR EID DAY:

1. Prepare all clothes, donations, and belongings one day in advance.
2. Talk to your children about proper behavior (make sure they know the etiquettes of the Masjid and teach them how the Eid prayer is performed).
3. Say the Takbir on the way to the Eid prayer and all day.
4. Aim to pray in the first line (this means arriving early).
5. Be quiet while the Imam is explaining how to pray.
6. Be quiet during the khutbah (it is highly encouraged to stay and listen, however, if you must leave, please do so quietly as not to disturb those listening).
7. After the khutbah is over, greet those whom you know and those you don't.
8. Get the family to help up with the clean up (get your family to help clean up the prayer area after everyone has left-this is a great way for your children to learn selfless giving and community service).

2004 ICNEF ELECTIONS

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 31st 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.

Members of the Islamic Center that are qualified to vote are free to submit names and the biographical information (100 words or less) of additional nominees in writing to the Islamic Center Secretary by **December 15th**. Such nominations may be mailed to the Islamic Center or deposited in the Donation Box at the Islamic Center.

The following nominees have been suggested by the Nominations Committee:

Brother James Abdur Rahman: Was born in Gary, Indiana. He has been a part of the Jacksonville Community for more than 5 years. He is employed as a Dispute Resolution Specialist for the State of Florida, is married and has 2 children. He has been an active member of our community and currently serves on the AFA School Board. He would like to bring his expertise in conflict resolution as well as his insight into the Jacksonville community at large to the ICNEF Board.

Brother Hilmi Al Shami: Was born in Amman, Jordan. He is recently married. He graduated with a degree in Aviation from California. He is self-employed and owns a distribution corporation for restaurants, supplying them with their needs. He has been a part of the Jacksonville community for 3 years now. He would like to work for all our Muslim community needs, focusing on the construction of the Masjid.

Brother Edis Bosnic: Was born in Bosnia. He is married and the couple is expecting their first child. He came to the US in 1995. He completed his high school and then two years of College (FCCJ). He is 23. He would like to represent the Bosnian community and serve the Ummah at large for the sake and pleasure of Allah.

Brother Khalid Kamal: Was born in Cairo, Egypt. He came to the US in 1992. He is married and has 4 children. He is a Physical Therapist. As a Board Member he would like to focus his energies on those areas where most needed, at all times seeking the pleasure of Allah.

Brother Amjad Khayat: Was born in Nablus, Palestine. He came to the US in 1979. He is married and has 5 children. He received his Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Civil Engineering and a Masters Degree in Engineering Management. He is a senior Structural Engineer and a 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 ISCNEF Board. He would like to work for all of our Muslim community needs especially the youths'.

THE CRITICISM OF MEN

Hodja and his son went on a journey once. Hodja preferred that his son ride the donkey and that he himself go on foot. On the way they met some people who said:

-Look at that healthy young boy! That is today's youth for you. They have no respect for elders. He rides on the donkey and makes his poor father walk!

When they had passed by these people the boy felt very ashamed and insisted that the walk and his father ride the donkey. So Hodja mounted the donkey and the boy walked at his side. A little later they met some other people who said:

-Well, look at that! That poor little boy has to walk while his father rides the donkey.

After they had passed by these people, Hodja told his son:

-The best thing to do is for both of us to walk. Then no one can complain.

So they continued on their journey, both of them walking. A little ways down the road they met some others who said:

-Just take a look at those fools. Both of them are walking under this hot sun and neither of them are riding the donkey!

Hodja turned to his son and said:

-That just goes to show how hard it is to escape the opinions of men.

EID MUBARAK

**We at the Islamic Center pray
that this day brings Happiness,
Joy, and Peace on Earth. Ameen**

ISLAM: A RELIGION OF PEACE

Homa Mojadidi

Dr. Michael Sells delivered a speech titled "Islam: A Religion of Peace," to a packed audience at UNF's Robinson Theater, on September 23, 2003. Dr. Sells is a Professor of Comparative Religion at the Haverford College in Pennsylvania, where he has taught since 1984. Dr. Sells began his speech on a humorous note by saying that he has been "accused of luring people to Islam by making them listen to Qur'anic spells" because of the CD's of Qur'anic recitations (from around the world) which he has released. However, on a more serious note, he said that the "Qur'an is considered a spellbinding miracle" because the sense of intimacy and tenderness that exists in the Qur'an in the original Arabic is often not present in the English translation. He said that most of his critics who opposed North Carolina University's adopting his books such as *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*, as part of their curriculum, had not heard or seen the Qur'an, and therefore were suspicious of it.

Dr. Sells said that Bernard Lewis has glamorized the clash of civilizations theory by stating that Islam is by nature contradictory to Western civilization and that Samuel Huntington has adapted this to a global theory of the division of civilizations. The effect of making such a claim, according to Dr. Sells, is that if this claim is true, "the world is in a tough situation because Islam is deeply rooted in communities around the world." But if this statement is not true, then its effect is problematic. "If I think a person is an enemy," continued Dr. Sells, "I interpret everything he does as something my enemy would do because believing someone is your enemy can help create the antagonism that did not exist in the first place." Dr. Sells pointed out that the media excludes from us 90-95% of the world and thus propagates the clash of civilizations. He said that "historically it is impossible to gauge which religion is peaceful because people who have power are more likely to misuse it."

Dr. Sells asked the question "What are the ways a sacred text can be used to motivate and justify violence?" Responding to his own question, he said that Jerry Vines and Jerry Falwell have used verses saying it's okay to slay non-Muslims, but their claims "can be countered by even more violent and gruesome passages in the Bible." Dr. Sells said that the three main religions are founded on acts of iconoclasm and these acts are "viewed by many as foundations of ethical choices." He said, "the same message can be one of peace or liberation or of conquering and violence."



Dr. Sells said that if he had a thousand lifetimes he would never understand the depth of issues which Muslim philosophers, theologians, and other scholars have debated (for centuries), and that he believes that to be true of all traditions. However, he said that it is very important to discuss these issues as people are making "smug self-congratulatory claims such as ours is a religion of peace and yours is a religion of war." He said, "only God can judge who is a believer and who is not—in Islam it is an act of *takfir* (disbelief) to take this duty upon ourselves." In his concluding comments Dr. Sells posed the question, "Is Islam a religion of peace?" and responded with "it all depends on what question one asks and what interpretation they use."

PARKING AT PREMISES

Khadim Hussain

This is the time of year when we request our community to help raise funds for paying the police officers who help our community members cross the street when they park in the Church parking lot. For the year 2004, the cost to acquire a parking spot on Islamic Center premises will be \$120. This turns out to be only \$2 each time you park at ICNEF premises on Fridays and Eid days. Remember, any donation to the Islamic Center is tax deductible, including this parking fund payment, is tax deductible. Anyone who is interested in reserving a parking spot should contact Br. Aatif Barbari for a form or download it from our website at <http://www.icnef.org/forms.htm>. **The deadline to submit the form is December 15, 2003.** Please return the **filled out form with full payment** to Br. Aatif Barbari, hand it to me, mail it to the Islamic Center, or drop it in the donation box before the deadline. The new parking stickers will be given out on December 26, 2003, the last Friday of the year.

2004 ISLAMIC CALENDAR MOSQUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

A calendar every Muslim will be proud to display at home, in the office, or to give as a gift for family and friends.

Now available for purchase at the Islamic Center Bookstore for only \$10

LOVING THE NEW NEWSLETTER?

Let the Newsletter Team know by emailing your comments, concerns, and suggestions to icnefnews@yahoo.com

SUPPORT THE NEWSLETTER
Muslim Businesses = Monthly/Yearly Ads
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AFA Pre-K visits with a neighborhood policeman and his car.

AFA Students in the playground.



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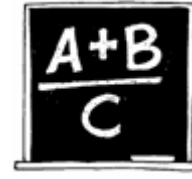
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GOD AND YOU

Homa Mojadidi

“There are some when Allah has delivered them they halt between right and wrong and they compromise—they are ungrateful for their very life.”

Yusuf Islam

“I praise the One who has guided us by birth or divine intervention,” thus Yusuf Islam began his speech on God and You: Purification and Sincerity in Relationships, at the 40th Annual ISNA Convention in Chicago. “There’s no power that can turn a man’s heart except by the power of Allah Himself,” he continued. He said that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was closest to God and when they (the prophets) became prophets, “there was complete change in their lives, they had to go through sacrifices to leave everything they had before and give everything to the service of their Lord – they were prophets but they were examples we should follow.”

Yusuf Islam continued his speech by quoting the hadith that there is nothing more beloved to Allah than the obligations He has set upon His servants. He said “prayer is so easy—difficulties are created by Shaytan,” and that what brings us closer to Allah is what extra things we do such as night prayers. He quoted the following verse of the Holy Qur’an revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

And: "Say (O Muhammad): "Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." [Surah An'aam: 162-163]

Islam said that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to say the following prayer when he went to say his nightly prayers:

“Remove sins from me as no one else but You can remove sins from me and one cannot come close to you through evil and I turn to you in prayer—I seek forgiveness from You and I turn to You in repentance. I submit to You my eyesight, my hearing, my bones. O Allah! It is to You I prostrate myself and I submit to You. Shape my soul and its faculties of hearing and saying.”

Islam continued his talk by speaking on *shukr* (gratitude) and saying that “*shukr* is the motivation to do good things—*shukr* will put you in the state of mind to achieve difficult deeds,” and that “We know the Qur’an has not been changed—what more intimacy do we need than to read His words?” He quoted the verse of the Qur’an which says, “I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls me” and said, “that’s the answer—listen and respond.”

“When you are alone in the middle of the ocean, that’s the reality we are all living in and we don’t realize that we are constantly in danger and the only One who can save us is Allah,” said Yusuf Islam. Speaking of his own conversion experience he said:

“but that moment in Malibu I didn’t know anything about Islam—no Muslim had ever come to me and said, ‘O Brother, we are both the sons of Adam and Allah is our Lord.’ Allah taught me in the middle of the sea—I found myself so fragile, weak, and insignificant, and there was no one to save me (none of my fans). With no other idea in my mind about any religion, I said, “O God! If you save me I’ll work for You.” At that moment the answer came, a wave came, and all the strength that I needed. I was floating back to the shore—saved.

The Qur’an thus became my intimate introduction to my Lord after I was saved. People were looking at me one way, I was looking at life another. I didn’t ask anyone to help me—I was enjoying to learn from this book and to understand what it means to be a human being. Before I was what people expected me to be and that is the farthest from sincerity. Only when you become a servant you recognize who you are. After reading the Qur’an, I realized this book is perfect—it can only come from my Lord. Then I approached the Muslim community. However, there were problems; when you read the Qur’an, you need it to be explained, so I learnt the Sunnah. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) became the teacher on how to understand and practice the Qur’an. What wasn’t clear after that was a question of time and circumstance and events that face us [for which] we need interpretation, and the hadith needed to be interpreted. Then Allah showed the light of Ilham and understanding in Fiqh. After the Holy Prophet (PBUH) we find Ijmaa, when all of the scholars agree and come to consensus and it becomes part of the law—the Shariah.

Yusuf Islam lamented “the state that we are in” as an Ummah, despite receiving all the guidance that we could possibly need from God. He said that one of the Sahaba (companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)) asked about whom we owe sincerity to and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) responded: First to Allah, to His Book, second to His Prophet (PBUH), third to the Imams of the Muslims and to the generality of the Muslims is an obligation.” Yusuf Islam concluded his speech by saying, “sincerity is the obligation without which we have no *deen* (religion).”

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IMAM'S DIARY SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

Sep. 2nd: I had lunch with Pastor Scott Rippy of HabiJax and we discussed how to involve the Muslim youth in house building projects.

Sep 6th: I visited Muslim inmates at the prison in Folkston, GA. Inshallah I will go visit them on the 2nd day of Eid and spend more time with them.

Sep.8th: Br. Parvez and I had lunch with Mr. Claud Myers, from NCCJ (National Conference for Community and Justice). We talked about several issues that relate to building bridges between different Faiths.

Sep.10th: Br. Ashraf and I attended the Interfaith Council Meeting. I introduced Dr. David Sconier, who was visiting from South Florida and lectured on The Islamic World Today, at FCCJ North Campus.

Sep. 14th: I visited the Bahai Faith Center on an invitation.

Sep.16th: I had lunch with Rabbi Michael Matuson and we discussed the importance of having a study circle type program between the Islamic Center and the Temple in an effort to better understand each other's faith.

Sep.17th: I taped our weekly program "Faith to Faith", the host was Michael Matuson and the topic was: God as the Healer of the Shattered Hearts.

Sep.21st: I, along with brothers Ashraf Shaikh, Parvez Ahmad, Muhammad Arab, Tahir Shareef, Fawad Mansoori, Samad Subedar, Faisal Shah and sister Saman Quraeshi, participated in an interfaith program organized by the NCCJ.

Sep.24th: Br. Ashraf and I taped our weekly TV program *Understanding Islam*.

Oct. 7th: Brs. Abdur Rahman James, Aatif Barbari, and I went to the Lawtey Correctional Facility to attend a presentation on starting interfaith based dorms. We were shown two dorms, one faith based and the regular. We found a big difference in the behavior of inmates of both dorms. At the end of the visit we made several committees. Br. Aatif and I are serving on the Curriculum Committee and Br. James is on the Administrative Committee.

Oct.15th: I had a ride along with a police officer in his car for over 2 hours as an observer. We responded to 3 calls during this time. It was a unique experience. I was impressed by the conduct, experience and professionalism of the officer.

Oct.17th: I attended a very good program arranged by CAIR and the UNF MSA. Dr. Jamal Badawi and Rev. Tom Borland were invited to speak on Jesus (PBUH). The program was well attended and very useful.

Oct.22nd: I attended another good program at UNF "America Two Years After 9/11" arranged by CAIR. We also taped "Faith to Faith." I was the host and the topic was: Divorce.

Oct.23rd: I attended the meeting of the Advisory Board of Reconciliation Ministry, and was given the chance by Mother Davette Turk to speak on Ramadhan briefly.

Oct.29th: Brs. Ashraf, Parvez, and I taped our weekly TV program "Understanding Islam". The topic was Muslim Contributions to Science and Culture. I also attended the annual program of the Urban League at the Prime Osborn Convention Center. I had to give benediction.

Oct. 30th: I visited the Cypress Retirement Center and gave a lecture on Islam.

Oct.31st: I attended a meeting in the Mayor's office to plan for an interfaith evening at the Riverside Presbyterian Church, where the Mayor will speak as the keynote speaker.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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To

In This Issue

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EID UL-FITR ISSUE

EID-AL-FITR MUBARAK

Khadim Hussain

Sighting of the moon will determine the end of the month of Ramadhan. The first of Shawwal could be on **Tuesday, November 25, 2003**. The sunset and moonset timings are (source Naval Observatory):

DATE	SUNSET	MOONSET
11-23-03	5:27 P.M.	5:17 P.M.
11-24-03	5:27 P.M.	6:09 P.M.
11-25-03	5:26 P.M.	7:08 P.M.

On November 23rd, the sighting of the moon to the naked eye is impossible as the moon will set before the sunset. However, on November 24th, the moon will set 42 minutes after the sun, which is a fairly long time for the moon to be sighted. The Islamic Center will have a recording of the latest information after 8:00 P.M. on November 24th. Please call one of the following numbers between the hours of 8:00 P.M. and 10:00 P.M. on November 24th to check the sighting of Eid-Al-Fitr moon:

1. Islamic Center (904) 646-3462
2. Shakur Bolden (904) 642-7039