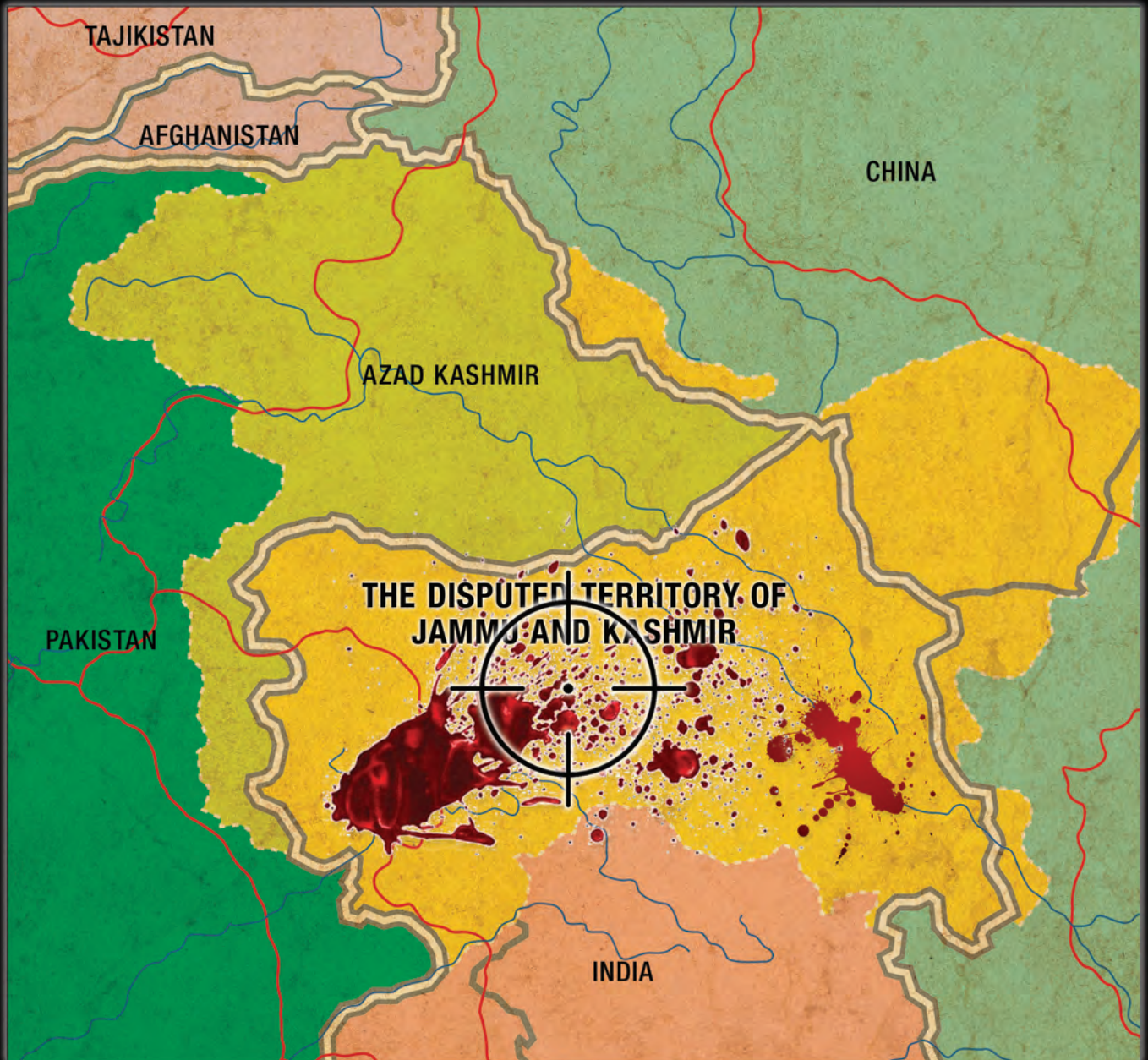


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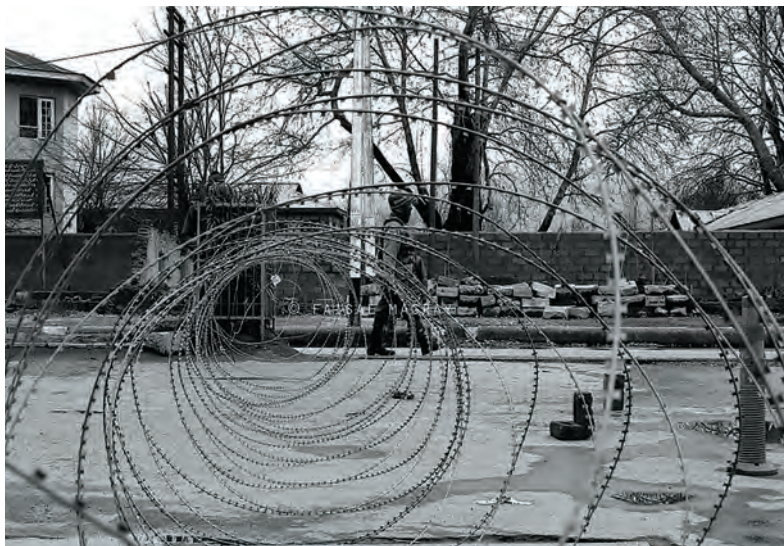
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# Profits Outweigh Humanity

**A**S WE GO TO PRESS, 8 MILLION Kashmiris face a new threat: becoming a minority in their own land. On Aug. 5, 2019, India, the world's largest "democracy," unilaterally revoked Kashmir's autonomous status in an attempt to change its demography. In addition, the 900,000 strong Indian Occupation Force is enforcing a harsh curfew that has imprisoned everyone in their homes, as well as imposed a total communications blackout.

Surprisingly, nuclear-armed India, with a \$57 billion annual war budget, fears even children. For instance, a mid-September news report stated that Gulzar Ahmad Wagey of Shopian, Kashmir, hadn't seen his detained 11-year-old son for 22 days and counting.

On Sept. 15, Genocide Watch ([www.genocidewatch.com](http://www.genocidewatch.com)) issued its first-ever genocide alert for Indian-occupied Kashmir. President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who were busy attending a Houston celebration, along with a clutch of Republicans, Democrats and business leaders, ignored it.

Modi must think that he has a free hand, given the many countries, politicians and people who [selectively] champion "human rights" and "democracy." Their continued silence — maybe indifference? — only encourages him to "push the envelope," as they say. After all, and as every good capitalist knows, India's 1.2 billion strong market is vastly more important than some Muslims.

Unsurprisingly, on Sept. 24 the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation presented Modi with one of its Global Goal Awards in New York based on Clean India Mission's *claim* to have built 100 million new toilets in India over the past five years. Of course, no need to mention that Microsoft first entered the Indian market in 1990 and has since worked closely with the *government* and others; it made \$893.5 million in India in 2017-18.

In keeping with tradition, ISNA held its annual convention on Labor Day — its 56th event, and once again in Houston. The theme, "What's your superpower


for social good?" was omnipresent. One waits to see how the attendees will use their "superpowers" in the years to come.

Staying within its legal obligations, ISNA invited political candidates from various parties, but only Bernie Sanders and Julian Castro responded and spoke. Their decision to do so was yet another affirmation that Muslim Americans are not only part of the American fabric, but that they also willing and equal participants in its democratic process.

ISNA scored another first when Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan addressed the convention via satellite hookup. He called upon ISNA to spread awareness of why Muslims are so offended when the Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is mocked and/or insulted, why "Islam" and "Muslim" must be delinked from "terrorism" and similar terms, and what is "this phenomenon [Hindu supremacy] which has overtaken India."

This year, we celebrate the Council on American Islamic Rights' (CAIR) 25th anniversary. From its humble beginnings, CAIR has now become synonymous with Muslim civil rights. At a time when Islamophobia continues to spiral, Muslim Americans need all of the support that CAIR can give them.

But Muslim Americans also need to do their part as well, which includes nurturing and supporting such essential organizations because, as tax-paying citizens, it is their right and duty to have their own rights officially recognized, implemented and protected.

Islamic Horizons continues to document the growth of domestic Muslim communities. This issue celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Islamic Society of Baltimore (ISB), which has grown from a small mosque into a thriving community that is doing its best to provide education, elder care and health care irrespective of the person's religious faith or lack thereof. ISB is a fine example of a Muslim American community that cares and shares with everyone. 

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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# What's Your Superpower for Social Good?

Houston hosts the 56th ISNA Annual Convention

BY SAMAN ESSA

**T**HE FIRST THING ATTENDEES SAW walking into the George R. Brown Convention Center's main hall was the digital backdrop lighting up the otherwise dark room. Beautifully illustrating the Houston skyline in a comic-book way, it featured a male and a female superhero with their capes fluttering in the night sky.

This year's annual convention, hosted by Houston for the second consecutive year, weaved the theme of "What's Your Superpower for Social Good?" throughout its numerous sessions. Dubbed "ISNACon," attendees were encouraged to think about how they could return home as superheroes and become local agents of social change.



▲ *The opening press conference: ISNA president Dr. Syeed, flanked by vice president Safa Zarzour (left), and board members Lubabah Abdullah (rear center) and Dr. Asra Ali (right)*



▲ (TOP) Nabeel ElSanousi bags a memento to treasure. The Daily Show host Trevor Noah answers questions put up by Al Jazeera's Malika Bilal



▲ (Top left) Sen. Sanders with Zeyn Patel; (bottom right) with Dr. Iqbal Unus

Several special events, such as ISNACares Community Service, sowed the seeds for community service projects that could be implemented back home, such as donating blood and swabbing for Be the Match, a bone marrow matching initiative. ISNA arranged for attendees to pack and deliver hygiene kits to Houston's homeless and organized a 5K fun-run on Sunday morning around and through Houston's skyscrapers. Proceeds went toward the Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston's Meals on Wheels program.

On Monday, American Muslim Health Professionals conducted an eight-hour Mental Health First Aid training certification program that introduces individuals involved with youth to risk factors and red flags that

commonly precede mental health issues.

One of ISNACon's first events was the Friday morning chaplaincy conference. Chaplains wearing uniforms and hijabs, along with others who work in hospital and prison settings, related their stories and discussed effective strategies. One participant from the Texas Medical Center, which employs over 90,000 people, talked about her ability to serve everyone through this profession. Chaplains, usually the first source of comfort, talk to individuals undergoing chemotherapy or are on-site when a tragedy occurs to provide prayers and comfort – in short, superheroes.

Friday night also included the stellar main session "Allah's Attributes: The Source of Our Superpowers." Former ISNA vice president Altaf Husain focused on the names al-Wudud (The Most Loving), al-Haleem (The Most Gentle and Tolerant) and al-Lateef (The Most Kind). He urged attendees to try to turn people back to God. One way would be to embody those three names.

Shaykh Faraz Khan focused on the names al-Ghani (the Richest), al-Samad (the Independent) and al-Qayyum (The Maintainer). He urged the audience to respond to life's blessings and hardships with "Whatever Allah wills, exists." Linda Sarsour lasered in on God as the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful and The

Most Forgiving. She stressed that we, as an ummah, are not those things but that we need to become better versions of ourselves by knowing His qualities if we are to succeed.

Finally, ADAMS Center Executive Imam Mohamed Magid emphasized the two names that we recite most often: al-Rahman (The Source of Mercy) and al-Raheem (The Giver of Mercy). He stressed that as all God's names are inter-connected, we must extend mercy to each other because we, like God's attributes, are also interlaced.

There were six parallel sessions. "Falling in Love with Allah, His 99 Attributes" featured Hassan Shibly (attorney), Ustadha Fatima Lette (instructor, Qalam Institute), Aisha Al-Adawia (founder, Women in Islam), Ebrahim Rasool (former South African ambassador), Ustadh Hisham Mahmoud (Boston Islamic Seminary), Zahra Billoo (director, CAIR-San Francisco), Kameelah Rashad (founder and president, Muslim Wellness Foundation), Shaykh Yasir Qadhi (dean of academic affairs, Al-Maghrib Institute), Rania Awaad (psychiatrist, Stanford University School of Medicine), Muzammil Siddiqi (a former





▲ **Altaf Hussain**



▲ **Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner**



▲ **Julián Castro**



▲ **ISNA events always feature ASL interpreters**

ISNA president), Nurriddeen Knight (fellow, Yaqeen Institute), Imam Siraj Wahhaj, Nihad Awad (executive director, CAIR) and Ustadha Zaynab Ansari (scholar-in-residence, Tayseer Foundation).

Each session discussed a different attribute to reframe our perceptions of God. Each name reveals a certain quality. Unfortunately, many times children are taught to fear God instead of love Him, even though time and again He shows us His mercy. “He is the One who is waiting for you to shower you with His mercy,” Lette proclaimed. Another neglected key point is that although God possesses the most and highest form of that attribute, He has placed a fraction of it in humanity. Although God is The Most Merciful, He has made everyone capable of showing mercy as well.

We acknowledge that God exerts power over all, but our ability to show a fragment of God’s virtues means that we can harness these “superpowers” by showing gratitude or forgiving others.

Imam Arshad Anwar (Roswell Community Masjid) urged his audience to connect with God’s names on a personal level via one’s own life experiences. “In that way,” he says, “we can easily preserve those names in our minds.” He also suggested incorporating various names in our *du’as* to personalize and strengthen them. Another speaker stated that we can apply these names to all of our actions by recognizing and then acting upon our strengths.



**THE 20TH ANNUAL  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
RECOGNITION LUNCHEON  
HONORED SHEIKH  
ABDALLA IDRIS ALI (ISNA  
PRESIDENT 1992-97),  
WHO BEGAN CANADA’S  
FIRST FULL-TIME ISLAMIC  
SCHOOL BEFORE JOINING  
THE COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC  
SCHOOLS IN NORTH  
AMERICA, WHERE HE  
HELPED DEVELOP AND  
IMPLEMENT ISLAMIC AND  
ARABIC CURRICULA IN  
K-12 ISLAMIC SCHOOLS.**

◀ **Abdullah Idris (second left) receives the ISNA Community Service Award for 2019**

Other sessions addressed being superheroes in ways that are very much grounded in faith. During the US Census #MuslimCount2020 session, Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich) discussed the importance of voting: “If you have the courage to come to America, then have the courage to count in America.” Muslims in Congress, among them Palestinian-born Tlaib, implement their values by upholding policies and creating laws. They give future Muslim politicians hope that they too belong here and have the power to become involved at the national level. She urged the audience to get involved in local elections and census efforts because small acts will make huge differences. Such an attitude can help us become superheroes in our own right and in our own communities.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner (D), another panel member, declared, “we don’t build walls, we build relationships ... Houston is the number one most diverse city in America, and the city is also one of immigrants who need to be counted so that their presence is known and heard.”

Rep. Al Green (D-Tex.) also featured in panels.

In “The Return of Super(Wo)Man: Inspirational Stories from Muslim Americans” session, panelists talked about small acts that can have a great impact. Rashed Fakhruddin (president, Islamic Center of Nashville)





## ► ISNA CONVENTION

remarked that attending town halls, getting to know local politicians and visiting political offices was one way to be heard. He also talked about such non-political acts of kindness as caring for homeless and battered women or mentoring a high school freshman. He urged people to “start with our neighbors and organizations close to us” because the Prophet (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said “if your neighbors say you’re doing good, you’re doing good; if your neighbors say you’re doing ill, you’re doing ill.” Sending a card to those who are sick or visiting them is one way we can all be superheroes.

Magda Elkadi Saleh (member, Muslim Advisory Council) talked about other ways to become a superhero in “Making the World a Better Place, One Individual, One Organization, and One Community at a Time.” She encouraged people to surround themselves with capable people who enable us to do the best job possible because none of us can solve the world’s problems on our own. She asked attendees to write down three things Allah blessed them with to help them identify their own strengths, for “we each have a role in this world ... We need to identify the needs of those around us, identify own strengths and those of others to unleash our superpowers and change the world.”

Another session, featuring members of the nationwide Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, discussed the power of friendship in building bridges. Members take a yearly trip to learn about the history of various places globally. Connecting with others to dispel myths and stereotypes is yet another way to be a superhero, because breaking down walls is powerful.

Superheroes come in all forms and use their powers in many different ways. In fact, some of them produce coffee. In “Love, Coffee, Yemen: A Story of Hope Fueled by Coffee,” Mokhtar Alkhanshali, the subject of Dave Eggers’ “The Monk of Mokha,” told his compelling life story. The son of Yemeni immigrants, he grew up in California but returned to his home country to explore the origins of coffee. Once there, he became aware of how the workers were exploited and began to question how corporations could charge \$4 for a cup for coffee while paying the harvesters next to nothing. Inspired, Alkhanshali began working with Yemeni farmers to ensure fair trade and improve their quality of life. His ethics-based business model transformed their lives and Yemeni society as well.



▲ MYNA members share the joy



▲ Convention is fun for the kids



▲ Jogging for a cause



▲ Rep. Rashida Tlaib

Additional programs included a mini-film festival that featured amazing works, such as “Unconditional Care: How Muslims are Closing the Healthcare Gap Across America and How You Can Get Involved,” “Lamya’s Poem: The Power of Animated Film to Tell the Muslim Story” and “The Feeling of Being Watched” — all powerful stories of Muslim experiences around the world. The first film especially struck a chord, as it was relevant to ISNACon’s superhero theme. It shed light on the spectacular work being done by Muslim physicians and medically trained personnel to bridge the health care gap. This documentary highlighted this extraordinary nationwide initiative of Muslim-run free

clinics that provides medical care to nearly 50,000 uninsured Americans.

The 20th annual Community Service Recognition Luncheon honored Sheikh Abdalla Idris Ali (ISNA president 1992-97), who began Canada’s first full-time Islamic school before joining the Council of Islamic Schools in North America, where he helped develop and implement Islamic and Arabic curricula in K-12 Islamic schools. He noted that all of his accomplishments were due to the Almighty and then to the *du’as* made by himself and the community on his behalf. Before Adama Dieng, UN under-secretary-general and Special Adviser of the Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide, gave the keynote address. Mayor Turner restated his support of the city’s Muslim community. Ebrahim Rasool concluded with a short fundraising speech.

ISNA also hosted prominent non-Muslims at the conference, including South African comedian, writer, political commentator and The Daily Show host Trevor Noah. Al Jazeera’s Malika Bilal and Medhi Hasan moderated “A Conversation with Trevor Noah.” The much-anticipated segment opened with a spoken word performance by Houston native Muhammad Yunus, whose reflective and energetic piece set the stage for a conversation pertaining to immigrants in the U.S. Both the performance and the ensuing dialogue elicited feelings of pride, being immigrants and being able to influence thousands of people through their jobs in news. Noah noted that “you can be more Muslim in America than in Europe,” speaking to the idea that the U.S. allows for religious freedom on a level incomprehensible in many countries.

On Saturday evening, ISNA, in conjunction with Emgage and the Muslim Public Affairs Council, hosted its first-ever presidential forum with Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Julian Castro, Obama’s Housing and Urban Development secretary. ISNA, a 501(c)3 that endorses no candidate, reached out to all presidential candidates. However, only these two agreed to come. This was truly an emotional moment because of the sheer implications of what it means for Muslims to have a real voice in next year’s presidential election.

Sanders’ key points included universal health care and college tuition, stopping mass shootings and emphasizing how inherently un-American it is to divide people based on country of origin, skin color and religion. Castro emphasized similar education and





▲ Pakistani prime minister addresses through video link


healthcare reforms and stressed the wrongful nature of profiling by law enforcement, separating families and implementing the refugee ban.

All in all, the presidential forum was a huge stride for this country's Muslims in terms of becoming politically involved and making their presence known. However, both declined to endorse the BDS campaign, keeping themselves in stride with the official Israeli policy.

Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan, who addressed the Convention over video hookup from Islamabad, said that the convention is great platform to raise awareness of Islam among the most powerful country in the world. He said Muslims should transmit the love and affection that we have for our Prophet so they comprehend why we get agitated when he is denigrated in any manner whatsoever. He stressed that Muslims have to convey that you cannot hurt the sentiments of 1.5 billion people under the garb of "freedom of speech." Also, we should make it clear that there only one Islam, the one one taught by our Prophet. He said terrorism has nothing to do with religion.

ISNA's traditional Sunday night entertainment event featured Muslim superstars Harris J, Rozina Malik, Siedd and Omar Offendum. Audience members sang the night away to their favorite tunes. The *qawwali* (devotional Sufi) music session, with performances by Riyaaz Qawaali, attracted a large South Asian crowd.

The musical night marked the end of an eventful weekend. Attendees returned to their hotel rooms and homes in the wee hours of Monday morning eager to sleep, but heavy-hearted that the convention was over. Thank you, Houston, for a wonderful, wholesome ISNACon convention and for enabling attendees to harness their superpowers.

Stay tuned for the exciting location of ISNA #57! 

Saman Essa, a doctoral student in counseling psychology, is an instructional assistant, Office of National Fellowships and Major Awards, University of Houston.

# Houston, We Have a Solution

## MYNA offers avenues of meeting and bonding

BY NAUMAAN HUSSAIN

**L**ABOR DAY WEEKEND 2019 IN Houston was the place to be to have a life-changing experience. Home of the 34th annual MYNACON – the Muslim Youth of North America convention — tens of thousands of Muslims from around the globe gathered to meet influencers such as Trevor Noah and Sen. Bernie Sanders, listen to sessions by renowned scholars and participate in workshops that engendered self-reflection. Coming together for the sake of God, we opened our hearts to one of Islam's great beauties: unity.

**AS WE CONTINUE DOWN THE PATH OF YOUNG ADULTHOOD AND RUN INTO OBSTACLES WE MAY NOT KNOW HOW TO OVERCOME, YOUNG MUSLIMS NEED LOOK TO ORGANIZATIONS LIKE MYNA AND EVENTS LIKE MYNACON TO REDISCOVER THEIR ISLAMIC ROOTS.**

Among the thousands of attendees were the young and brilliant minds that constitute MYNA. Embarking on a journey to find their passion and purpose in this world, they were inspired and transformed. From delving into the glories of the Quran and its recitation styles to deepening their understanding of Islam's role in our passions, they capitalized on the available opportunities.

Perhaps most impactful were the MYNA Youth Lounge sessions. Here, we held Quran recitation sessions with actual MYNA youth, a slam poetry competition and an Open Mic talent show. With over 100 members in attendance at each, their roaring applause, resounding cheers and — at times — jaw-dropped faces revealed each event's profound impact upon them.

The first-ever MYNACON Ping Pong tournament also can't be forgotten. While some battled it out in their "fierce" games, others took some time out to relax and watch. The tournament really came full circle, however, when the shy young brothers who had



been encouraged by their fathers to participate were the very same ones with ear-to-ear smiles and infectious laughs at the end.


MYNA frequently tends to have this effect on youth, for you don't find this sort of comfort and love anywhere else. "When I'm surrounded by my peers and friends who work just as tirelessly as me for this organization that we love so much, I'm filled with absolute peace and excitement," participant Salimah Hagmagid said.

As the convention was coming to a close, the jam-packed closing session with Fiyyaz Jaat (director, ISNA Youth Programs and Services Department), Imam Khalid Latif (executive director and chaplain, Islamic Center at New York University) and Dalia Mogahed (director of research, ISPU) really hit home.

It was obvious from the stage that every participant had been moved to tears, crying as Imam Khalid led a 10-minute *du'a*. It was hard not to think in that moment: This is what Islam is — the effects it has, the peace it brings, the friendships it fosters, the passions it creates. MYNACON undoubtedly touched the hearts of thousands and, for many, it was their "first time at MYNA, but it felt like home."

As we continue down the path of young adulthood and run into obstacles we may not know how to overcome, young Muslims need look to organizations like MYNA and events like MYNACON to rediscover their Islamic roots. The convention gave the motivation and inspiration, and now it's time to use it.

So let's transform ourselves into society's new role models, which we are in desperate need of. Let's aspire and dream and hope, because with Islam all these can become reality.


Let's not wait until tomorrow. Let's start today. And let's never forget, "Houston, we have a solution." 





◀ L-R Dr. Hayu Prabowo, Dr. Jamal Badawi, Br. Kamran Shezad, Dr. Abdalla Idris Ali, Br. Dawud Zwink, Imam Saffet A. Catovic (not pictured) and Imam Qari Asim

to a renewable energy-powered economy, as well as Islamic investment houses and other investment fund administrators and managers to immediately develop fossil fuel-free investment vehicles and portfolios that include investments in renewable and clean energy companies.

The North American-UK Muslim delegation met with the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC; est.1945) and many Cape Town mosques, schools and Muslim institutions. MJC welcomed the FCNA fatwa and UK statement, affirmed their general agreement with its contents and said that they would refer these to the MJC Fatawa Committee for their positive consideration, review and action. 

## FINANCING THE FUTURE

ISNA LEADERS IMAM SAFFET A. CATOVIC (member, drafting team, the Fiqh Council of North America [FCNA] Fossil Fuel Religious Ruling; head, Joint North American and United Kingdom delegation to Financing the Future Cape Town Summit), Dr. Jamal Badawi (executive member, FCNA; editor, FCNA Fossil Fuel Ruling), Dr. Abdalla Idris Ali (scholar in residence, ISNA-Canada), Dawud Zwink (co-founder, Somali Relief Fund and ISNA-Canada; director, Halal Certification), Imam Qari Asim (chair, Mosques & Imams National Advisory Board, U.K.) and Kamran Shezad (representative, the Bahu Trust and the Islamic Foundation for Environmental & Ecology) attended the “Financing the Future Summit” (Sept. 10-12) in Cape Town, South Africa.

Over 300 leaders from 44 countries, representing faith-based institutions, governments, NGOs, foundations, academia, environmental and human rights advocates, social impact investing, healthcare, social enterprise and other values-driven institutions, came together to oppose climate change and continue to build upon the achievements of the fossil fuel divestment movement that has recently seen \$11 trillion of total assets pledged to divest from fossil fuels.

The joint North American-UK Muslim delegation issued the first-ever fatwa by a nationally recognized fiqh council — the Council of Muslim Scholars/Jurists — to acknowledge and affirm ISNA’s 2016 fossil fuel divestment commitment. Based on scholarly work regarding Islam and the environment, particularly the devastating impact of fossil fuel burning, it stated the council’s emphasis that this directly undermines the

Sharia’s goals and objectives as well as the principle of doing no harm or at least trying to alleviate the harm already done.

The ruling calls for a rapid transition

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## Fordham Students Win the Right to Establish a Palestine Club



FIVE FORDHAM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS won a landmark legal victory against their university (*Awad, et al. v. Fordham University*) on Aug. 6, which sought to prohibit them from forming a Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) club. The students, represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights (<https://ccrjustice.org>), Palestine Legal (<https://palestinelegal.org>) and co-operating counsel Alan Levine, argued that Fordham violated its own rules when, in

2016, it vetoed the United Student Government's approval of SJP.

"The administration unfairly hindered my and my fellow classmates' abilities to advocate for the human rights of Palestinians," said Ahmad Awad, who graduated in 2017.

Filed in April 2017, the lawsuit argued that Fordham's veto was arbitrary and capricious, violating its own policies. The court annulled the decision on those grounds,

noting that nothing in the university's rules permitted it to "reject an application of a student club because it criticized the policies of only one nation."

Justice Nancy Bannon ruled that "it must be concluded that [Fordham University's] disapproval of SJP was made in large part because the subject of SJP's criticism is the State of Israel, rather than some other nation, in spite of the fact that SJP advocates only legal, nonviolent tactics aimed at changing Israel's policies."

Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights have documented "the Palestine Exception" (<https://ccrjustice.org/the-palestine-exception>) to free speech and the broad and growing pattern of suppression of activism for Palestinian rights across the U.S., particularly on college campuses.

As this was the first lawsuit in the country to challenge the institutional censorship of students advocating for justice in Palestine, this win marks the first major legal victory for free speech for advocates of Palestine on college campuses.

Tactics used to suppress such advocacy include administrative disciplinary actions, harassment, firings, baseless legal complaints, legislative attacks and false accusations of terrorism and anti-Semitism. Palestine Legal has documented 1,247 incidents of suppression targeting speech that supports Palestinian rights between 2014 and 2018. *ih*

## Post Office Named for Humuyan Khan

THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE NAMED A CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va., post office in honor of Capt. Humuyan Khan, who died in action in Iraq in 2004. The soldier, who was killed while approaching a suspicious vehicle just before it exploded and was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star, was only 27 years old. This event was held on his birthday: Sept. 9.

His father Khizr Khan, a speaker at the ceremony, cited what his son called his best three decisions: going to the University of Virginia, joining the Army ROTC while there and joining the Army when he left.

"This tribute is to the University of Virginia, his alma mater, where he learned what public service is all about," Khan said.

Senators Mark Warner (D) and Tim Kaine (D), who also spoke, worked to have the post office named in Khan's honor. President Trump signed the final bill into law during April. *ih*




▲ Khizr and Ghazala Khan (center) were at hand to honor their son's memory





ISLAMIC RELIEF USA BOARD CHAIRMAN KHALED LAMADA and vice president Azhar Azeez helped ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019.

IRUSA also participated in a large-scale meal-packing event in New York City, being one of many organizations to help pack thousands of meals. Some of the meals went to Barbados, which was devastated by Hurricane Dorian. 



THE SKOKIE VILLAGE (ILL.) Board voted 7-0 on Aug. 5 to give the Madinat ul Uloom mosque the needed zoning relief. The building had housed a VFW Post for about 60 years.

“Welcome to the village of Skokie,” mayor George Van Dusen told several members of the mosque after the vote. “It will


be a wonderful project.”

The mosque will also include an educational facility and hold the daily prayers with weekday attendance of approximately 30 people.

The group expects about 50 people on the weekend, 100 for Friday prayers and 30 people for educational weekday classes. During special events like the end of Ramadan, they expect to exceed the maximum of 192 parishioners.

THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (ADOC) ANNOUNCED Sept. 6 that it has reached an agreement to resolve a federal case regarding Alaska’s religious accommodations for Muslim inmates. The CAIR Legal Defense Fund represented the inmates.



ALTHOUGH THE WEATHER WAS GETTING HOT IN WASHINGTON, D.C., the young and the not-so-young waited patiently for their turns to try *ebru*, the Turkish art of water marbling. On Sept. 29, Sabiha Ozgur and two of her students — Salwa and Marcia — focused on guiding participants, showing them how to paint on water and then transfer the image from water to paper. This took place at the annual Turkish Festival, an occasion on which people from near and far gather to experience and enjoy Turkey’s culture, food and art. To learn more about this decorative art, contact Sabhia Ozgur <https://www.sabihaozgur.com> and Salwa Medani (<https://www.linesofgold.com>). 

The lawsuit, filed on May 22, 2018, alleged that ADOC failed to provide Muslim inmates with sufficient nutrition during Ramadan 2018. The plaintiffs later added claims regarding the department’s policies on Muslims gathering for the daily prayers, *jum’ah* services and other religious-based activities.

Starting with Ramadan 2019, fasting inmates in all state facilities will receive 3,000 nutritionally balanced calories daily, including two hot meals. Meals will be logged to ensure their contents and timeliness of delivery within religious-permissible times during Ramadan. No meals will contain pork products, and inmates will be provided with nutrition labels, such as for turkey bologna, to confirm those contents.

The department now permits Muslim inmates to congregate in their housing mods to offer their Friday congregational and daily prayers together. They are permitted to facilitate these services themselves, even when no outside religious volunteer is present.

The settlement also provides for a payment of \$102,500 to cover damages, costs and attorneys’ fees.

CAIR National Litigation Director Lena Masri said, “The policy changes Alaska has now implemented are a model for correctional institutions across the country in accommodating the religious practices of Muslim inmates.”







THE TORONTO RAPTORS, WHO BECAME the first Canadian team to win an NBA Championship in June, is also the first NBA franchise to introduce team-branded hijabs. Partnering with Nike and unveiling the product on Twitter, they said that it had been “inspired by those brave enough to change the game.”




Jerry Ferguson, senior marketing director of Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment and owner of The Raptors, told the Associated Press that the idea was inspired by the Hijabi Ballers, a Toronto organization that promotes Muslim women in sports.

“They really wanted to involve local Muslim female athletes,” Amreen Kadwa, who founded the group two years ago, stated. “There was a genuine partnership and interest to highlight this group, making it authentic to the Muslim community.”

“It’s been received positively among Muslim females and Raptors fans,” she said of the new apparel. “Toronto is a great multicultural city to introduce something like this.”

According to national data from 2011, the most recent available, more than 400,000 Muslims live in the Toronto area.

CAIR national communications director Ibrahim Hooper notes that this product “sends a powerful message of inclusion to the Muslim community. I think the Raptors deserve to be congratulated for taking a step that other teams have yet to make.” 

## ACHIEVERS



ON JULY 29 HANAA UNUS, WHO HAS A graduate certificate from Hartford Seminary, joined Shenandoah University’s Office of Spiritual Life as chaplain and Muslim community coordinator. She is the first non-Christian clergy person in the Methodist university’s nearly 150-year history.

“We’ve always wanted to be more inclusive and more diverse. It was about finding the right person. We hired Hanaa to increase student readiness in the world outside of higher education. We want to prepare business and health leaders to work in a diverse world. We’re not far from an environment in Northern Virginia that is religiously and racially diverse. This is an opportunity to teach students to be great leaders in a diverse world,” said Justin Allen, D.Min., dean of Spiritual Life.

Unus will work with Rev. Dr. Allen and the Office of Spiritual Life on education through interfaith programs, as well as with Muslim and non-Muslim students, to address their spiritual care and needs.

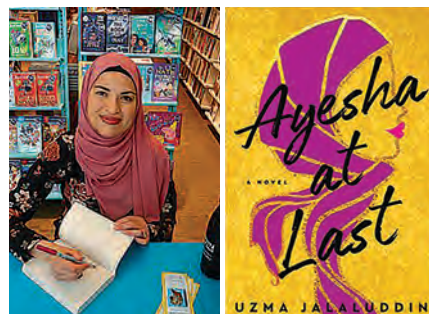
Part of her job is to enable Muslim high school students to see Shenandoah as a potential “home.” She will also educate non-Muslim students about Islam and Muslim culture. Her goal is to create a peaceful environment both on campus and locally.

Unus, who spent five years as the ADAMS Center’s education coordinator, developed and maintained programs that emphasized how youth could practice and live simultaneously as both Muslims and Americans. She also worked with the International Interfaith Peace Corps in Herndon, Va., where she organized international conferences on empowering imams and religious leaders to counter violent extremism by promoting interreligious dialogue.

She has also worked with ISNA and MYNA.



ZULFAT SUARA BECAME THE FIRST MUSLIM elected to Nashville’s (Tenn.) Metro Council on Sept. 12, winning one of the five at-large council seats. A certified public accountant, she is assistant controller at Meharry Medical College. Emigrating from Nigeria in 1993, she moved to Nashville in 1998 after her husband was accepted into a Vanderbilt fellowship program.



PASCAL PICTURES HAS ACQUIRED UZMA Jalaluddin’s romantic dramedy novel “Ayesha at Last” for making into a movie. A present-day retelling of “Pride and Prejudice” set in a Toronto Muslim community, the book was published by HarperCollins Canada last year and by Berkley (U.S.) and Atlantic Books (U.K.) this year.

Protagonist Ayesha Shamsi, who set aside her dreams of being a poet for a teaching job to pay off her debts to her wealthy uncle, lives with her boisterous Muslim family and is always being reminded that her flighty younger cousin, Hafsa, is close to rejecting her 100th marriage proposal. Despite being lonely, Ayesha doesn’t want an arranged marriage. Then she meets Khalid, who is just as smart and handsome as he is conservative and judgmental. She is irritatingly attracted to someone who looks down on her choices and dresses like he belongs in the seventh century.



The surprise engagement between Khalid and Hafsa causes her to become torn between how she feels about the straightforward Khalid and his family and the truth she realizes about herself. And Khalid, who is also wrestling with what he believes and what he wants, just can't get this beautiful, outspoken woman out of his mind.

Jaluluddin, who writes a column for the *Toronto Star*, is a high school teacher.



DAVID ABDULLAH MUHAMMAD, A MEMBER of Team USA, won his first international medals in the World Association of Kickboxing Organizations competitions in Guatemala, held July 12 and 13. He is a public school teacher, a coach at the Integrity Martial Arts Academy, a family man and an active member of the Kansas City Muslim community.



DR. AZEEM IBRAHIM, DIRECTOR OF Displacement and Migration Program, The Center for Global Policy, was awarded the

prestigious Engaged Scholar Prize for 2019 by The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS).

This award recognizes an individual scholar who has made a substantial impact on the study of genocide and mass violence. Dr. Ibrahim is being recognized for his work on the Rohingya genocide, as well as other human rights violations and mass violence cases, which has been called "exemplary in both their vision and their influence."

Dr. Ibrahim, the author of "The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide" (Hurst: 2016) and other books, has researched and written extensively on the impact of displaced populations. His writings have appeared in several leading international media.

IAGS president Henry C. Theriault said, "The entire board is thrilled that the award has gone to Dr. Ibrahim, as his accomplishments and commitment to human rights are truly impressive."



GRADUATE SCHOLAR AYAH NURIDDIN B. became the first humanities scholar to be inducted into the Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honors Society, Johns Hopkins chapter, on May 10.

Named for the first African American to receive a doctorate, this society seeks to develop a network of pre-eminent scholars who exemplify academic and personal excellence, foster environments of support and serve as examples of scholarship, leadership,

## Nigerian Gets U.S. Religious Freedom Award



NIGERIAN IMAM ABUBAKAR ABDULLAHI, 84, received the State Department's first-ever International Religious Freedom Award in recognition of selflessly risking his life to shelter and protect Christians during the June 2018 attacks in Ngar Yelwa village, central Nigeria, first in his house and then at the mosque.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo hosted the award ceremony during his visit to the country on July 17.

The State Department website said, "Imam Abdullahi's courage in the face of imminent danger and his history of outreach across religious divides demonstrates his lifelong commitment to promoting interfaith understanding and peace."

The award honors extraordinary advocates of religious freedom from around the world.

President Muhammadu Buhari issued a statement, "On behalf of the Federal Government [of Nigeria], President Buhari heartily congratulates Imam Abubakar on the well-deserved honor by no less a credible and formidable government agency of the United States."

He also affirmed his administration's commitment to the freedom of religion and worship for all Nigerians, as guaranteed by the Constitution, stressing that under no circumstance will any religion or faith be imposed on the nation. *ih*



## ► COMMUNITY MATTERS

character, service and advocacy for traditionally underrepresented students in higher education.

Nuriddin, one of six inductees, is the only scholar in the inaugural class whose studies fall within the humanities.




THE MEMPHIS BUSINESS JOURNAL NAMED ISNA board member attorney Sehrish Siddiqui to its Super Women in Business list for 2019.

Each year, the publication honors 25 standout female business leaders for making positive contributions to both their professions and their communities. All of the women were honored at a luncheon held on Sept. 26.

Siddiqui, vice president of National Association of Muslim Lawyers, counsels national and international public and private companies on a variety of transactions and matters related to corporate finance, compliance and governance. She has served as counsel to underwriters, agents and issuers for more than 100 initial public offerings, follow-on offerings and at-the-market programs of various NYSE- and Nasdaq-traded entities. In addition to her pro bono activities at the firm, she is also involved in several legal and community organizations, including the American and Tennessee Bar Associations' Young Lawyers Divisions, the National Association of Muslim Lawyers and the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA).

Prior to joining the firm, Sehrish interned at the SEC's Office of the Inspector General, where she assisted with internal audits and investigations.

ZAID SALAHUDDIN, 13, SON OF MOHAMMAD Ronosentono and Yulianti Ismail, graduated as *hafiz al-Quran* on Aug. 21, joining the ADAMS galaxy of *huffaz*. 

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# KASHMIR: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

**Will there ever be an end to  
the suffering in Kashmir?**



BY GHULAM NABI FAI

**T**HE KASHMIR ISSUE IS SIMPLY THIS: The international community, represented by the UN, had assured the people of a large territory that had never been part of an existing sovereign state that they could decide their future by a free vote. And yet after 70 years they are still enduring a barbarous military occupation foisted upon them by the oft-proclaimed world's largest "democracy."

Their current uprising in Kashmir is the culmination of a seven-decade-long nonviolent resistance.

A society with its own unique settled historical continuity, Kashmir often enjoyed long periods of independence. Under British colonial rule, it was one of the "states" ruled by hereditary feudal chiefs granted internal autonomy by Britain.

Hari Singh, the state's maharaja, was the descendent of a freebooter who had purchased the land and its people — as if they were nothing more than chattel — from the British East India Company in 1846. The Kashmiris' simmering resentment of their "sale" exploded in a freedom movement on July 13, 1931. Local Hindus, who enjoyed government patronage, crushed the movement and defamed Islam. Muslims were disarmed, discriminated against and denied educational opportunities and jobs.

## THE BACKGROUND

The 1931 uprising was sparked by a state official who tried (and failed) to obstruct Imam Abdul Qadeer from delivering the Friday sermon. After his impassioned speech assailing the violation of religious freedom and encouraging the congregation to resist Hari Singh's tyranny, he was arrested and tried in Srinagar, the state's summer capital.

The police's response — slaughtering 22 protestors — gave birth to Martyr's Day, which marks the beginning of Kashmir's quest for self-determination and human rights. It culminated in the Quit Kashmir campaign against the maharaja in 1946 and to Azad [Free] Kashmir movement that gained momentum a year later. The first armed encounter between the two sides occurred in August 1947.

Britain, having decided to liquidate its empire in the Subcontinent, signed a tripartite agreement with the Indian National Congress [representing Hindus] and the Muslim League [representing Muslims] to

create "India" and "Pakistan." This settlement ended British paramountcy over the states and allowed them to choose which country to join, based on their people's wishes and the principle of partition that the Hindu-majority states would go with India and the Muslim-majority states with Pakistan.



**INSPIRED BY THE  
TIDE OF FREEDOM  
THAT ROLLED ACROSS  
THE WORLD IN THE  
LATE 1980s AND  
ENCOURAGED BY THE  
UN'S RE-EMERGENCE  
AS A CENTRAL  
PEACEMAKING AGENCY,  
THE KASHMIRIS  
INTENSIFIED THEIR  
STRUGGLE FOR  
SELF-DETERMINATION.**

Predominantly Muslim Kashmir, which was far more contiguous with Pakistan, was expected to accede to it. But the maharaja rejected the first option and could not manage the second. Faced with the insurgency, which had been joined by civilian volunteers from Pakistan, he fled Srinagar on Oct. 25, 1947, and arranged for India to send its army to help him crush the movement. India, coveting the territory, set the condition: The maharaja would sign an Instrument of Accession to India. India didn't even wait for his signature before it invaded.

Although long planned and swiftly executed, this annexation violated the principle of partition. While accepting Hari Singh's "instrument of accession," India faced another issue: The principle that the people's wishes must prevail over that of the ruler. Not wanting to jeopardize its designs on annexing two other states, Hindu-majority but Muslim-ruled Hyderabad and Junagadh, India attached a condition to its deal with the maharaja: The accession was subject to "reference to the people."

## THE KASHMIR QUESTION AT THE UN

Between October and December 1947, the Azad Kashmir forces resisted India's armed intervention and liberated one third of the state. Realizing that it couldn't quell the resistance, in January 1948 India approached the UN.

As Pakistani volunteers had joined the freedom fighters, India asked the UN to oblige Pakistan to withdraw the "armed raiders" it had allegedly sent into Kashmir and promised to hold an impartial plebiscite to decide Kashmir's future status. In reply, Pakistan charged India with having maneuvered the maharaja's accession through "fraud and violence" and in collusion with a discredited and repressive ruler. Pakistan also proposed a plebiscite under UN supervision and control.

The Security Council, after exhaustively debating the question from January to April 1948, agreed with both side's proposed impartial plebiscite. Its ensuing proposals, based on this common ground, the UN resolution 47 of April 21, 1948, called for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of all outside forces and a plebiscite to be controlled by an administrator nominated by the Secretary General. The security council appointed a five member commission (including the U.S.) to negotiate the plan's details, which left for the Subcontinent in July.

The UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) worked out the concrete terms of settlement in close and continuous consultations with both countries. These were crystallized in two resolutions adopted on Aug. 13, 1948, and Jan. 5, 1949, respectively.

Part III of the Aug. 13 resolution states: "The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people and to that





▲ A massive protest against human rights violations in Indian Occupied Kashmir was held when President Trump joined Narendra Modi for an event in Houston

end, upon acceptance of the truce agreement, both Governments agree to enter into consultations with the Commission to determine fair and equitable conditions whereby such free expression will be assured.”

The Jan. 5 resolution mandated that all of the state’s authorities collaborate with the plebiscite administrator to guarantee the basic conditions for free and informed voting, including the protection of the fundamental political rights of expression and association.

As both governments formally signified their acceptance of the proposals, these constituted an international agreement as binding as a treaty. A ceasefire was immediately enforced. The commission then started negotiating a plan for the organized withdrawal of the Indian army and Pakistani volunteers that would not disadvantage either side or imperil the freedom of the plebiscite. Meanwhile, a distinguished American, Admiral Chester Nimitz (d. 1966), was designated as plebiscite administrator.

One development that hardened India’s stance was Pakistan’s joining U.S.-sponsored military pacts during the Cold War. In 1955, India argued that in view of this alliance it could no longer countenance withdrawing its troops. Rejecting repeated pleas that both sides would be withdrawing their troops, India found a ready supporter in the Soviet Union that, after 1958, blocked every Security Council attempt to implement the originally agreed-upon peace plan.

## ON-THE-GROUND REALITIES

The international community has remained largely indifferent despite the Kashmiris’ various uprisings, notably in 1953 and 1964; the violence employed to end their ongoing

peaceful protests; and the fact that nuclear-armed India and Pakistan have fought four wars over the state. The international media, which gave sustained attention to Eastern Europe, seems to have deemed Kashmir “unworthy” of similar coverage, even though:

- India has a highly visible military presence. It’s more than 750,000 troops, including 48,000 deployed in August 2019, are no more than thugs and torturers in uniform.
- Sixteen secret service agencies operate ubiquitously, spying on the 14.5 million Kashmiris.
- Since 1989, India has killed 100,000 Kashmiris. Tens of thousands have been maimed, tortured, illegally imprisoned or condemned to starvation by being robbed of their occupations. India routinely uses rape as a weapon of subjugation.
- Kashmir’s economy, untouched by industrialization, has been made dependent upon Indian subsidies and supplies of basic necessities like food.

Inspired by the tide of freedom that rolled across the world in the late 1980s and encouraged by the UN’s re-emergence as a central peacemaking agency, the Kashmiris intensified their struggle for self-determination. Entering its current phase in July 1989, their struggle clearly enjoys widespread support. On many occasions since 1990, virtually the entire population of Srinagar has taken to the streets to protest the oppressive status quo.

Their presentation of petitions at the United Nations Military Observers Group’s (UNMOGIP) office shows both the uprising’s peaceful nature and the people’s trust in justice under international law, thereby refuting India’s assertion that it is the work

of terrorists or fanatics. But an entire population cannot be “terrorists,” and “fanatics” do not look to the UN to achieve a pacific and rational settlement.

India’s response also reveals the identity of the real terrorists and fanatics. From January 1990 to September 2019, the latest date up to which corroborated estimates are available — over 100,000 Kashmiris have been killed in several massacres. Rampaging troops in Srinagar and elsewhere ignore their victims’ gender and age. While raiding houses without warning, they have raped over 6,000 women. The international media has documented their raping of more than 70 women of all ages in Kunan-Poshpora village.

Indian troops routinely dump corpses in government warehouses and hand them over to the near of kin at night with strict orders to arrange burials in the dark.

Since the start of the current uprising, over 20,000 Kashmiris, mostly young men and women, have been imprisoned. Of these, about 1,000 have been kept in torture cells. Those regarded as unworthy of the labor and expenses of extreme torture are subjected to other kinds of treatment. An apparent favorite one involves stripping and photographing them and then blackmailing their families and extorting information.

The injured are removed to hospitals in Jammu where, under the pretext of a lack of medicines, their limbs have been amputated.

India has also intensified its scorched earth policy by destroying the valley’s apple orchards and torching more than 55,000 homes and shops in 65 localities. According to eyewitness accounts, those troops who torched the homes kept firefighters and other relief personnel out.

## INDIA’S LATEST ILLEGAL ACTION

New Delhi’s abrogation of articles 370 and 35A of the constitution, both of which guarantee Kashmir’s special status, has been condemned not only by the entire Kashmiri leadership, but also by world leaders.

This unilateral action is as an act of aggression and assault on the Kashmiris’ rights, for they are in open contravention of UN resolutions #122 (Jan. 24, 1957), #123 (Feb. 21, 1957) and #126 (Dec. 2, 1957), all of which prohibit any unilateral action to change the state’s disputed nature.

As of this writing, India has banned all public meetings, arrested more than 20,000 youth and placed the state’s leadership under



house arrest. Internet services have been blocked and all university examinations postponed. Barricades have been erected throughout Srinagar and other towns. Since Aug. 5, more than 8.5 million Kashmiris have endured dawn-to-dusk curfews, and shoot-on-sight orders have been imposed on entire cities and towns. Unable to obtain the necessities of daily life and medical help due to being confined to their homes, many sick and infirm people have died.

Under the pretext of “violent religious strife,” the Indian occupation authorities arranged and paid for the evacuation a major proportion of Hindu laborers and pilgrims. New Delhi has also sent in extreme rightwing armed gangs and Hindu fundamentalist organizations such as the Shiv Sena and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), thereby setting the stage for more “violence” (read “raping and mass slaughter”) that can be blamed on “Muslim fanatics and militants.”

On Sept. 5, Amnesty International initiated a campaign by proclaiming: “Nearly 8 million people in Kashmir have been living through a communication shut down since August 5. The world needs to know what’s happening. Take action and demand that the government let Kashmir speak.”

According to expert consensus, Kashmir is now the world’s most militarized and dangerous place. Thus, the UN should seek mediation, appoint a special envoy and seek implementation of the UN Security Council’s self-determination resolutions. In the interim, it should strongly urge India to release all of the state’s political detainees, punish human rights violators, end its suppression of peaceful political dissent, open Kashmir to the international print and broadcast media and issue travel documents to the Kashmiri leadership of the political resistance to facilitate consultation and consensus with the Kashmiri diaspora.

The world powers must understand that bilateral India-Pakistan talks have failed, for the only thing that ever changes is the faces. Both countries should be persuaded to include the Kashmiri leadership — the All Parties Hurriyat [Freedom] Conference — in the peace process.

It is a test of the world’s conscience, whether or not humanity outweighs the lure of the billion plus Indian market. **ih**

Ghulam Nabi Fai, secretary general of the World Kashmir Awareness Forum, can be reached at 1-202-607-6435 or gnfai2003@yahoo.com.

# INDIA EARNS A GENOCIDE CITATION

## Are Muslim Kashmiris about to become the new Rohingya?

BY FARHAN MUJAHID CHAK



▲ Sisters, Professor Qanita Alvi (top, first left) and Dr. Nazifa Alvi (top, first right) are among those leading the first protest after temporary lifting of curfew on Oct. 15, 2019 in Srinagar. Indian troops arrested several of the women protestors and dispersed the rally. They had gathered for the peaceful protest a day after prepaid cellphone services in Kashmir were restored, 72 days after India blocked cellphone and internet communications.

**W**HAT IS SO REVOLTING ABOUT tyranny that it stirs the human spirit in such a way that we are compelled to resist? Instinctively, the thought of oppression pierces the very essence of our human condition. Film, music, art and literature all celebrate those who, with an unconquerable will, struggle against all odds and defy persecution. Although victory is no easy feat, history records countless proofs that it comes from the esprit de résistance.

On Aug. 5, India took its settler-colonial project in occupied Kashmir to another level. By abrogating Article 370, which has been part of the constitution since 1947, New Delhi unilaterally, illegally and undemocratically revoked the disputed province’s autonomy, which it had originally introduced to seek “legality” for its occupation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has now torn that veil asunder.

This move has been condemned worldwide by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. On Aug. 15, the United Nations Security Council convened an

emergency meeting, the first in over 50 years, to discuss the deteriorating situation and call for all involved parties to respect the relevant UN resolutions. More specifically, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concern at the ongoing human rights situation, and David Haye, the UN’s special rapporteur on freedom of expression, described the situation as “draconian.”

Yet, most terrifyingly, Genocide Watch (<https://www.genocidewatch.com>) issued its first-ever genocide alert for Kashmir on Aug. 15, after Modi and other ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, monstrously used the grotesque term of “Final Solution” (with due apologies to the master, Adolf Hitler) in reference to it — yet another achievement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s cementing of India’s fascist credentials.

Indian actions are fully commensurate with Genocide Watch’s list of ten stages of the genocidal process: the horrendous onslaught on Kashmiri civil liberties, terrorizing the entire population, cutting



off all of their communications and flouting international law and norms, all accompanied by a long litany of human rights abuses.

First, an unforgiving binary of “us” versus “them,” labelled “classification,” is disseminated. The Indian state translates “us” into supporters of its army/occupation forces and “them” into Kashmiri Muslims. Of course, preventative measures would include fostering universalistic institutions that transcend ethnic/racial divisions and actively promote inclusion. Yet this is precisely what the fascist BJP does not want, for its members need to spread the false threat of terror to rationalize their persecution.

Second “symbolization,” combined with visceral hate, involves forcing symbols upon members of the purported pariah group, such as the “blue scarf” for people from the Eastern Zone in Khmer Rouge-ruled Cambodia or for the Kashmiri Muslims who, due to their distinctive language and clothing, are being issued ID cards that designate them as Muslim. Third, the genocidal project moves forward by clear “discrimination,” in which the dominant group uses law, custom and political power to deny basic rights to the victims. Driven by an exclusionary ideology, it legitimizes this victimization by such labels as “separatist,” “fanatic” and “terrorist.”

Fourth, heightened levels of bias, prejudice and disempowerment lead to “dehumanization,” which incapacitates the normal human revulsion against murder. At this stage, hate propaganda in print, on hate radios and in social media vilifies the targeted group. This material has been incorporated into Hindutva school textbooks, preparing the way for incitement. Fifth, the grotesque phenomenon of genocide is always well planned and requires “organization.” New Delhi is using Hindutva militias to provide deniability for the state’s responsibility — such as Hindu mobs led by local RSS militants, who may be disguised and inserted into the additional 38,000 Indian soldiers sent to Kashmir to join the nearly 700,000 heavily armed Indian Army troops and police that already dominate the disputed province. Why send more?

Sixth, extremists need to enhance “polarization” to drive the groups apart. Hate groups



▲ People from all ethnic groups came out to protest in Houston against human rights violations in Indian Occupied Kashmir

**YET, MOST TERRIFYINGLY, THE RENOWNED NGO GENOCIDE WATCH ([HTTPS://WWW.GENOCIDEWATCH.COM](https://www.genocidewatch.com)) HAS ISSUED ITS FIRST-EVER GENOCIDE ALERT ON KASHMIR AFTER MODI AND OTHER RULING BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP) LEADERS, MONSTROUSLY USING THE GROTESQUE TERM OF “FINAL SOLUTION” FOR KASHMIR.**

broadcast polarizing propaganda, and laws may forbid intermarriage or social interaction. Hindutva extremists target moderates from all religions/backgrounds to intimidate and silence the center. As moderates from the perpetrators’ own group are the ones most able to stop the oncoming genocide, all of those who had previously been dealing with the Indian state are now under arrest, including former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti — ironically empowered through the

farcical Indian-imposed elections since its occupation.

Seventh, at this “preparation” stage, BJP leaders have spoken, both chillingly and openly, about the “Final Solution,” which they use as an euphemism to cloak their intentions of future genocide and ethnic cleansing campaigns. Eighth, as the stages of genocide advance, “persecution” is heightened. The targeted group’s most basic human rights are systematically violated through extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and forced displacement. Death lists are drawn up, and property is expropriated. Immediately after announcing the annulment of Article 370, Kashmiri Muslims were placed under an unrelenting lock down and subjected to arbitrary arrest,

torture, rape, and murder.

Ninth, “extermination” begins and quickly becomes the mass killing legally called “genocide.” At this horrific moment, the armed forces often work with RSS militias to do the killing. Tenth, the final stage, “denial,” lasts throughout the entire process and is among the surest indicators of the likelihood of genocidal massacres. The perpetrators dig up the mass graves, burn the bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses, all the while claiming that all is normal. In Kashmir, the denial has gone to such obscene levels that Modi and the BJP say their goals are to “bring prosperity and development” and “end terrorism.”

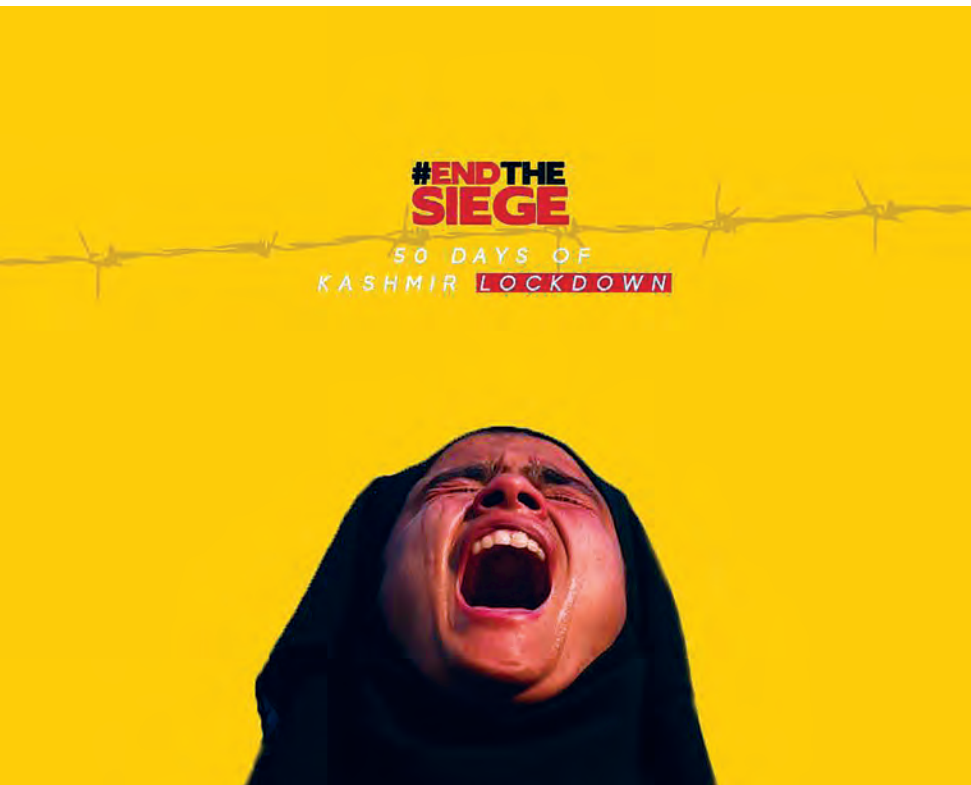
In order to hoodwink world opinion, India announced that it has begun to gradually ease the communications blockade. As of this writing, such a claim is absolutely false. A total internet, land-line and communication black-out continues and, ominously, foreshadows something more sinister yet to come: the very real possibility of genocide. Yet, amidst these awful scenes of death, desolation and despair, Kashmiris have only become emboldened with the spirit of “rebellion.” In actuality, there is no other choice. Faced with an unruly, unforgiving adversary, all of the minorities — the Bakerwals, Gujjars, Biharis, Bakris, Shers, Sikhs, Pandits, Sunnis and Shias — must unite against tyranny. *ih*

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# PARADISE UNDER SIEGE

India's decades-long occupation of Kashmir enters a new, and far more destructive, phase



BY KHADEEJA R. MIR

**T**HE “HEAVEN ON EARTH” THAT HAS been invaded by serpents for decades has now been usurped in the name of “integration.”

The heaven under siege is Kashmir, about which Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1569-1627) said: “If heaven exists anywhere, then it’s here, it’s here, it’s here.” The valley’s beauty has confirmed his impression for centuries.

I remember my uncle telling me about the Indian occupation army’s dreaded crackdowns in the 1990s that brought whole neighborhoods to a standstill. It was depressing for him to tell us, and traumatic for us to hear, about the ordeals that he and all Kashmiris (mostly men) endured during those dark days. Their throats used to go dry while they waited for the inevitable interrogation and humiliation.

The army subjected captured freedom fighters to intense torture and coercive interrogations. Forced to wear masks with eye slits, they were then bludgeoned into telling

which of the Kashmiri men who had been lined up were part of the freedom struggle. The tortured men often nodded their heads toward various people to avoid further pain and humiliation — a move that would determine a stranger’s (read: hostage’s) fate. In fact, not all of these lined-up men returned to their worried families. The Indian army still uses this torture to stifle resistance.

Since the Aug. 5, 2019, communications blackout, the world does not know the extent of gruesome atrocities going on there.

I still cannot forget the horror when, in the late 1990s, Indian soldiers barged into our home with their guns drawn, kicking down bedroom doors and employing their scare tactics to frighten us. I remember the look of worry on my mother’s face as she pushed me and my brother behind her, trying to protect our young eyes from witnessing terror.

For more than two decades Kashmiris, who have been demanding their right of self-determination ever since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution #47 on

April 21, 1948, promised it to them, have experienced many brutal atrocities under the dreadful presence of nearly a million Indian troops.

On Aug. 5, India brazenly displayed its total lack of respect for the Kashmiris and naked desire for their land. The more than 8 million Kashmiris, who are now undergoing one of the most stringent curfews and shut-downs they have ever endured, are preparing themselves for a prolonged phase of fear and uncertainty.

For decades, Indian-occupied Kashmir has been an open-air prison. This time, however, the Indian government has blocked all communications, including telephone and internet.

Living in Southeast Asia, thousands of miles away from home, I don’t know how my parents and other family members are and how my homeland is doing under such occupation. I feel stranded.

I last talked to my parents on the night of Aug. 3. They told me about the widespread rumors, as New Delhi had issued an advisory that all Indians should leave the province. My parents’ goodbye couldn’t hide their apprehension that something more ominous was coming.

Since then, I’ve only managed to contact them four times through a broken landline connection that needs dozens of trials to get through. Compared to those who have not been in touch with their families, I feel fortunate. In early September, one of my friends had to try 67 times before her call went through; the rest of times, it was just a recorded message repeating “This number does not exist” or a dead dial tone.

It feels like my family is light-years away from me, millions and millions of miles away in space and in time. And this is happening in the 21st century of sophisticated telecommunication services! It’s like Kashmir has been relegated to the Dark Ages with no internet or means of communication, desperate for a ray of light, desperate to survive this wave of Hindutva bent on erasing my people’s identity.

I’m still trying to grasp the fact that New Delhi evacuated over 20,000 Indians within 48 hours. I feel betrayed by those in power,





▲ The Alliance for Justice and Accountability marches for restoration of Kashmiri rights

## ONE WONDERS WHAT KIND OF “DEVELOPMENT” COMES WITH BESIEGING AND PUTTING AN ENTIRE POPULATION UNDER HOUSE ARREST WITH NO ACCESS TO FOOD, MEDICINE, LIVELIHOOD OR ANY MODE OF COMMUNICATION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

as they have reduced my people to living in cages like animals. I shudder to think that it has continued to breach the legal order and use brutal force for decades. And now this government is besieging an entire population. Sadly, India trumpets this state coercion, rights violation and gruesome ordeal of intimidation as a victory. But how can silencing an entire population be called a victory?

By restricting the people’s movement and repeatedly subjecting them to house arrest, the occupation forces have created a new “normal.” Manufacturing this state of helplessness is designed to create an exhausted, passive population that will surrender to fear and lose hope. It seeks to remove my people’s rights and bludgeon them into enduring even more injustice.

On the evening of Aug. 8, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told India that abrogating Article 370 of the constitution was a move to foster “development” in the occupied valley. One wonders what kind of “development” comes with besieging and

putting an entire population under house arrest with no access to food, medicine, livelihood or any mode of communication to the outside world. Already, tens of thousands of Kashmiris have been detained and tortured. No one knows how many more have been disappeared.

In early September, my cousin arrived and a few dozen other Kashmiris, the highest number ever, entered my university. Many worried parents are sending their children overseas to study because they don’t know what the future holds. I am worried more about those who cannot afford to do this. I feel guilty for belonging to the privileged few, while innumerable young men and women like me face an uncertain future back home.

Abrogating Article 370 could mean political and economic instability for years to come, which means that education and employment will suffer as well. Regardless of how long this new reality exists, the psychological effects of house arrest are grave and long-lasting.

On Aug. 25, a Kashmiri physician was

detained for talking to the BBC about the dangers of the current communications blackout and how the consequent shortage of services and medical supplies in hospitals and drugstores can eventually lead to more deaths. In some places, the Indian occupation army has detained ambulances for hours at checkpoints, even barring them from Srinagar’s large hospitals.

Boys as young as 12 are being jailed for participating in peaceful protests and for no reason whatsoever, for the Indian Public Security Act grants the occupation army full authority to imprison anyone without trial or justification. What is worse, detainees are taken to unknown locations and their family members have no idea where they are.

Stories are trickling out of the army barging into homes for random searches, stopping and beating young men in the streets and whisking them away to detention centers for electroshock torture. A piece of anecdotal evidence: A group of soldiers ordered a married woman to accompany them while they searched around her house. When she refused to be alone with them out of fear of being raped, she was physically abused in her own home.

Kashmiris have endured this horrible reality for decades. Is this the price for asking for peace and human rights? All they want is to preserve their land and identity, the right to decide their own future and international support for their cause. Is this too much to ask? [ih](#)

Khadeeja R. Mir is pursuing a graduate degree in English literature in a Southeast Asian university.



# VARIED STANCES

## Dhaka's continued harping on its "liberation spirit" belies its stance on Kashmir

BY RAMADAN ALIG

**S**WADHINATA (INDEPENDENCE) IS A word that is routinely touted, especially during electioneering in Bangladesh. Politicians regurgitate it to make claims on the country's 1971 war of independence or to discredit opponents. The ruling Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League (AL) government in Dhaka leads in capitalizing on the rhetoric of East Pakistan's separation from West Pakistan.

Importantly, after attaining power in 2009 by lauding 1971, Hasina set up special tribunals (read "kangaroo courts") that condemned and executed some of her top political opponents from both the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. On Aug. 1, 2013, the Bangladesh Supreme Court, citing procedural issues, declared against Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami's registration and therefore unfit to contest national elections.

Almost all of today's political parties took part in the 1971 war. However, through media-driven propaganda and inflammatory rhetoric, the AL seems to have established an exclusive claim on the 1971 movement, although many of its leaders who sat out the war in India only returned to an independent Bangladesh after Pakistan's forces surrendered to the Indian army.

Historically, the AL has maintained continued and close ties with India and its political and cultural establishments. This show of loyalty violates the very idea of Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty. India's regional hegemony and big-brotherly attitude have significantly ruined Bangladesh's political stability, economic self-determination, territorial integrity and cultural autonomy. Here lies a clear contradiction between the AL's avowal of independence and its unquestioned allegiance to a regional hegemonic power.

The AL's claim on independence is also deflated when its leaders and intelligentsia remain largely silent over the Indian Border Security Force's (BSF) continuous killing of Bangladeshis. Those living in the border region dread its very name because of its



▲ Sheikh Hasina

**REMARKABLY, SOON AFTER THE AUG. 5 CRACKDOWN THE AL GOVERNMENT RUSHED TO LEND ITS SUPPORT TO NEW DELHI, PARROTING THE ROTE INDIAN LINE THAT KASHMIR IS AN "INTERNAL" MATTER.**

decades-long killings as well as employment of torture.

How independent is Bangladesh when the BSF routinely kill its citizens? In the last decades, this force has killed thousands of Bangladeshis, while tumultuous celebrations of Bangladesh's independence have gone on year after year.


The true spirit of liberation remains unshakable when taking an impartial

stance on issues of justice and human rights becomes necessary. As a result, the ethnic territory or state boundaries shouldn't matter. And in that sense, there is a gaping gap between the AL's vociferous rhetoric of independence and its silence over the fates of Palestine, Indian-occupied Kashmir and Arakan. The AL's leaders and intelligentsia remain especially tongue-tied when it comes to the Kashmiris' freedom struggle, as everyone can see today.

Remarkably, soon after the Aug. 5 crackdown the AL government rushed to lend its support to New Delhi, parroting the rote Indian line that Kashmir is an "internal" matter. Benazir Ahmed, director general of Bangladesh's elite security force, the Rapid Action Battalion, warned against any street protests in Dhaka, although the vast majority of Bangladeshis are clearly sympathetic to the Kashmiris' cause.

Dhaka's power circuit reiterated in unison that it had nothing to say because Kashmir is an "internal" Indian issue. Given that India has snatched away Kashmir's freedom and autonomy, as well as the hopes of an entire generation, this stance violates the spirit of liberation. A freedom-loving government can neither deny the history of its own country nor support a government that oppresses another human community.

Just as East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) wasn't considered an internal issue of West Pakistan (now Pakistan), Kashmir isn't an internal Indian matter. Just as the Pakistani crackdown in 1971 was unjustified, so is the current Indian crackdown. Therefore, a freedom-loving government in Dhaka cannot side with an oppressive regime in New Delhi. Given the AL's unquestioned allegiance to the Indian establishment, its commitment to the principle of independence has remained a topic of considerable interest.

Like Bangladesh, India celebrates Dec. 16 to mark its victory over Pakistan. But if India really wanted an independent Bangladesh in 1971, it cannot continue killing Bangladeshis in the border region and exploiting Bangladesh on all fronts — political, economic and cultural. Nor can it continue persecuting the Kashmiris and other minorities. If the AL still sticks to the Indian establishment, the inevitable question arises: Whose victory does the political party celebrate on Dec. 16 — India's or Bangladesh's victory over Pakistan? 

Ramadan Alig is a freelance writer.



# The Young Hajjis

Across the U.S., young Muslims embark on hajj to hit the reset button on their lives earlier rather than later

BY HABEEBA HUSAIN

**A**FTER IMTIAZ SYED RECEIVED HIS GREEN CARD (PERMANENT residence) a year ago, he and his [newly-wed] wife Hajra began planning their first international trip together.

“We have to do *umra*. Nowhere else matters,” says Hajra, 26, who will celebrate her second wedding anniversary this December. “Nothing else compares to Makka and Madina.”

With vacation time approaching, the couple marked their calendar for a winter trip. Upon hearing the news, her father suggested, “Why not go on hajj?”

Their *umra* trip was already finalized — a wonderful way to spend their first anniversary — but the hajj idea lingered. After some research, the couple chose and paid for a summer hajj package.

When her brother, 27-year-old Mazhar, learned of his sister’s hajj plans, he studied the package and did the math. “I could afford it, but do I want to go now or not?” the older Syed sibling remembers thinking.

While this debate was going on in his head, his father shared a story with him about a young man who died in the hospital where he worked.

“The signs came at that moment,” Mazhar says. “I shouldn’t worry about money. I should worry about what I can do right now. Life is short, so I decided to sign up for hajj.”

The financial worry is real for many people, especially for those just beginning to establish their independent lives like Mazhar, who married soon after returning from hajj.

“Whatever you’ve saved up, put it toward this, and Allah will multiply it numerous folds,” says Tauqeer Zaidi, travel director at Qalam Institute. “Don’t let the financial implications frighten you. We made hajj, and that same year we bought a house. I never thought in my life I’d buy a house!”

Imam Tahir Anwar, group scholar for El Madina Travel of New York, also echoes Zaidi’s message. “A lot of times we want to accomplish certain things in life before we go for hajj, and I think that’s a flawed concept,” he says. “I think the way we should look at it is, let me go for hajj *so that* my needs and wants are fulfilled.”

Muzdalifa Ayub, 24, experienced this firsthand when she went

with her parents and teenage brother, Arafat, in 2017. A recent Rutgers University graduate, the then 22-year-old had seen her initial dream — a career in the medical field — fizzle out and didn’t have anything else lined up.

“If I didn’t know that we were going on hajj at the end of the summer, I probably would have been freaking out,” she says. “Hajj [plans] gave me solace. Hopefully I’ll get clarity, and Allah will point me toward the right path of where to go and what to do for my school and career.”

And that’s exactly what happened. Within a month of coming back, she applied for a master’s program and even received a job offer.

For Ayub, the timing worked out perfectly. Other young adults, however, like Long Islander Samad Tirmizi, face more of a challenge with their schedule.

After marrying in 2016, Tirmizi received a generous wedding gift — hajj. In 2017, aged 26, he committed to a group when Dhul-Hijjah would hopefully fall during a transition period between

completing his pharmacy residency in July and starting work. While on the job hunt, he told his potential employers that he would need time off to fulfill a religious commitment.

“I figured if [they say] I can’t go, then I’m not going to take this job,” says Tirmizi, now 28. “We had already committed ... so I figured if I have to find a different job, I have to find a different job.”

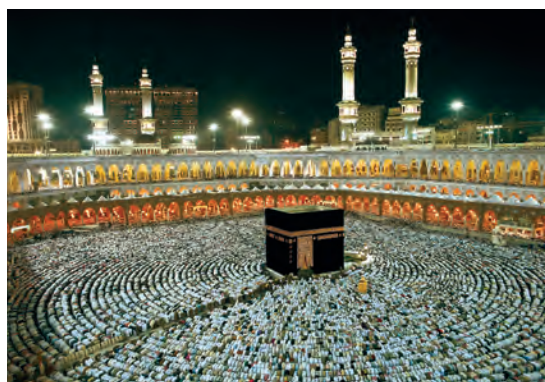
He got the green light from his potential employer, although his hajj dates landed mere weeks after his first day on the job. He then accepted the offer.

Still other young Muslim adults need to work for years before they can even begin thinking about hajj. Haris Farooqi, 24, shared the story about a young hotel staffer his friend met while visiting Indonesia.

The man was also in his 20s and had begun saving the previous year. But his hajj wasn’t scheduled for that year or even the next ... he has to wait until 2050 due to his country’s quota and waitlist system. When Farooqi heard this story, he made his plan to go, for “God’s giving you a second chance very early on [in life]. So you take it, and you try to start things the right way.”

Although he was financially ready in 2018, Farooqi waited until this past summer. Wanting his parents to go first, he watched over his siblings and earned money should anything happen on their journey. In 2018, he was at home making sure things ran smoothly for his family. In 2019, he was making sure things were running smoothly for people in his group, whether that meant offering to carry a load or pushing a wheelchair.

Muzdalifa and Arafat also helped the older members of their group. “When someone asks you to do something ten times, at some



**“GO WHEN YOU’RE YOUNG,” SAYS HAFIZ SAYEED SHARIFF, A DIRECTOR FOR SACRED HAJJ IN CHICAGO. “THAT’S WHEN YOU WANT TO SET YOUR LIFE ON TRACK AND STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF OUT ... WE ARE ALL PEOPLE WHO MAKE MISTAKES, BUT AT LEAST YOU HAVE [YOUR HAJJ] TO HOLD ONTO.”**



point you get annoyed,” Muzdalifa says. “But the fact that we were on hajj, we had that mindset of helping people and being selfless.”

Her younger brother Arafat, now an 18-year-old college freshman, adds, “When we were looking at older people doing *tawaf*, they were getting tired. It seemed really hard for them, but we were racing through it all.” At the ripe age of 16, Arafat had already hajj checked off of his bucket list.

Urooj Usman, a mother of four from Texas, took her 15-year-old son when she and her husband went on hajj in 2017, even though she herself did not feel ready.

Usman believes her mother’s *du’a* at the end of her life early in 2017 facilitated her hajj. When a *du’a* is accepted, one just goes with the flow. So that’s what she did.

Although she candidly says that her son seemed a little young to mentally grasp the huge significance of this *fard* and maximize each spare moment, she’s still glad that he fulfilled his obligation.

“I definitely think taking your children when they’re *baligh* (adult) and younger is a good thing to connect them spiritually,” Usman says. “It gives them confidence in their practice, knowing that they have something that’s so big and valued so highly in our religion under their belt.”

After completing hajj, an individual ideally tries to hit the reset button on life. Many hajj group leaders recommend that if you have the means and are physically able, the earlier you hit that button, the better.

“Go when you’re young,” says Hafiz Sayeed Shariff, a director for Sacred Hajj in Chicago. “That’s when you want to set your life on track and straighten yourself out ... We are all people who make mistakes, but at least you have [your hajj] to hold onto.”

Allah provides the clean slate, and it is up to the hajji to approach life with a newly attained clear head and focused heart.

That is what Hajra tries to do. A year ago, she and Imtiaz mapped out their first international getaway. Today, the couple maps out their life journey to end up at the ultimate destination. “It’s a primary goal in our life,” she says. “Please Allah, *subhana wa ta’ala* — and do it together — so you can be in *jannah* (heaven) together.” *ih*

Habeeba Husain, a freelance journalist based in New York/New Jersey, contributes to SLAM Magazine, blogs for Why-Islam and is social media manager for WuduGear. Her work has also appeared in Narrative.ly and MuslimGirl.com, among other online and print publications.

# More of Cambodia’s Muslims Undertaking the Hajj

Lives are being changed as people plan for their life

BY SLES NAZY

**T**HE NUMBERS OF HAJJ PILGRIMS from Cambodia has been increasing in recent years due to growing incomes and belief. According to a recent Cambodian Muslim Media Center report, 1,008 Cambodian Muslims performed hajj in 2018 and 1,210 in 2019. The number has been increasing because individuals are earning more money due to selling property, families are saving money and some donors have recently begun supporting and sponsoring pilgrims, among them the king of Saudi Arabia. Strong *iman* also causes many of our Muslims to save as much of their money as they can to go on this once-in-a-lifetime journey.

The Prophet (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “Whoever performs hajj and does not commit any obscenity or any evil will go back (free of) sin as on the day his

mother bore him” (al-Bukhari). In conjunction with this hadith, our pilgrims believe that performing this ritual will strengthen their worship and be rewarded by God both in this life and the hereafter. More than that, they hope that their hajj will cleanse them of their past sins. Several pilgrims told our reporter that they were excited to see the holy cities of Makkah and Madina, as well as the Ka’bah, and that their journey had changed both their spiritual life and behavior.

Mrs. Asmak Saleh, 45, from Charoy Changwa village, Phnom Penh, undertook the hajj with her husband this year. She said that both of them had saved money from their jobs after getting married and were really excited to see so many Muslims from around world in the holy land that all Muslim wish to see. She mentioned that after making hajj she changed her attire. “Before going to hajj, we never thought about what we were wearing. We just wore whatever we liked. But after our return I wore my

▼ Hajjis welcomed upon arrival





# Muslims Are

## in the hereafter

headscarf more properly and began wearing long-sleeved blouses.” She continued, “I encourage those who can afford to do so to go on hajj, especially those who are young and strong enough so that Allah will reward them.”

Saleh also said that “having more hajjis in the village will help strengthen our belief, because our young people will respect them more and they will become more influential when it comes to solving some family problems in an Islamic way. It is also playing an important role in spreading Islam among believers in other religions.”

Ali, 58, also from Phnom Penh, went on hajj in 2018. He affirmed that this experience not only gave him the chance to see the holy land and different colors of Muslims from across the world, but also changed his life and belief. “Before that, if I wanted to go out for fun or amusement I would do so. But now I have to think whether it is *halal* or *haram* because I am a hajji. Seeing so many Muslims in Makkah made my *iman* stronger too.”

He added, “I got more experience in




▲ Asmak and spouse

**MS. ASMAK ALSO SAID THAT “HAVING MORE HAJJIS IN THE VILLAGE WILL HELP STRENGTHEN OUR BELIEF, BECAUSE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WILL RESPECT THEM MORE AND THEY WILL BECOME MORE INFLUENTIAL WHEN IT COMES TO SOLVING SOME FAMILY PROBLEMS IN AN ISLAMIC WAY.”**

life by travelling abroad too. It is not only Cambodia that has Muslims, so my *iman* is stronger. Even my behavior has changed a lot. Most of the people [who go on hajj] have changed from bad to good,” he explained.

Mais Som Abdullah, 49, from Kandal Province, went on hajj in 2018 when her husband, a Malaysian, helped. She told our reporter that she was very lucky in this regard and that the hajj had changed her life, for “Allah accepted her *du’a* in the holy land. I never expected that I would ever be able to afford this journey, because I was very poor. Luckily I married a Malaysian man who could afford to send me.”

Moreover, “I had the chance to supplicate to Allah for the reward and change. Before I went I did not feel good in my heart. But upon my return, I understood this journey’s importance and my heart started getting better and stronger in belief. I hope that I can go again and again.”

Even if Muslims are obliged to go on hajj once in a lifetime if they can afford to do so, some richer Cambodian Muslims have done so several times. Others have even performed *umrah* during Ramadan, since they believe that by doing so they can change their life with the hope that their efforts will be accepted and their sins wiped. However, we have noticed that few young Cambodian Muslims go for hajj — most of those who go are somewhere between 50 and 70 years old. 

Sles Nazy, president, Cambodian Muslim Media Center, and Advisor to the Ministry of Information.





# More Than a Mere Destination

The hajj experience bestows a specific direction upon one's life

BY RASHEED RABBI

**T**HE GLOW OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND excitement radiated off Ahmed and his wife Amira's faces during our last meeting in Makka. Finally, their long 29-year wait had ended! Their every move suggested that they had already confirmed their places in paradise. How, I envied them, for I hadn't found such contentment after making hajj more than six times. Instead, I always felt a strong urge to fulfill many new faith-related commitments.

This difference in understanding the purpose of hajj was noticeable not just with their family, but also with scores of Western reverts performing this ritual. Indeed, I had been hoping for a similar culmination during my first hajj. Like many others, I was trying to tie up the loose ends of my faith — but every subsequent hajj only opened new threads of insight. It gradually dawned on me that making hajj wasn't the final destination of our spiritual endeavor.

Perhaps the problem lies in its translation as “pilgrimage,” which, in English, presumes a specific destination: the shrine being visited. But this doesn't work for Muslims — the Ka'bah is only our starting point, for visiting it enables us to initiate a spiritual transformation.

Another common translation, “religious journey,” also doesn't work because every journey eventually ends, whereas hajj simply starts a momentous life-changing process. Hajj involves a physical journey, obliges pilgrims to leave behind all worldly distractions and brings our inner vision to the fore. But that's only the beginning, because we need to retain that awakened vision and sustain our spiritual movement upon return.

Such traditional definitions devalue this core ritual's spiritual depth. As opposed to just visiting the Ka'bah and performing a few rituals, hajj symbolizes the process of moving from the beginning (the Ka'bah) to the end (the field of Arafat) of humanity's

**I GRADUALLY REALIZED THAT HAJJ SIMPLY SOWS MANY HIDDEN SEEDS OF VIRTUES, ALL OF WHICH NEED TO BE NURTURED UPON ONE'S RETURN. THE GREATER CHALLENGE IS TO REMAIN FOCUSED AT HOME, WHERE EVERYTHING IS TEMPORARY, CHANGING, PERISHING AND DYING; WHERE THERE ARE NO ECSTATIC EMOTIONS AND MANY DISTRACTIONS.**

creation. When Adam (*'alayhi as salaam*), was led astray, he travelled for years to reach Arafat, where he was forgiven, reunited with Eve (*'alayha as salaam*) and returned to heaven to begin their new life in proximity to the Divine.

Hence, going to Arafat during hajj emulates both the return to our origin and to God. This is just one gnostic perception of hajj, which is unanimously considered a tangible representation of a divine reunion, every person's ultimate destination (29:5; 33:44; 2:46, 223). Each of its ceremonies exemplifies an interim station to stress that final return.

The efficacy of these cosmological insights depends upon our deliberate post-hajj efforts to purify ourselves. Rumi recounts hajj as a

process of returning to our inherent divine selves (*fitra*). This *tazkiyyat al-nafs* (purification of the self) aptly corresponds with the sinless state of pilgrims, who are entitled to a new birth.

Mistakenly, I expected this post-hajj state to be permanent. Poet-philosopher Allama Iqbal perceives hajj as a return not to primeval existence, but to the root of all perfection, which requires a ceaseless striving to become God's vicegerent (2:30, 6:165, 33:72). Ali Shariati describes it as a definitive movement toward goodness, knowledge, value, beauty, power, facts and absolute perfection.

I gradually realized that hajj simply sows many hidden seeds of virtues, all of which need to be nurtured upon one's return. The greater challenge is to remain focused at home, where everything is temporary, changing, perishing and dying; where there are no ecstatic emotions and many distractions. To overpower these distractions symbolically, the final ritual requires pilgrims to return to the Ka'bah, a spiritual compass that directs us toward True North — God.

*Tawaf* further embroils us with the cosmic motion to calibrate the path of Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), Moses, Ibrahim and Adam (*'alayhum as salaam*) for embodying the full spectrum of Islamic virtues. Facing the Ka'bah while praying resets our destination (6:79). Meanwhile, the memory of physically standing in front of it restores our earnestness for recalculating the direction. Emulating that meeting during every prayer and embodying God's vice-regent beyond rituals move us closer to that final destination.

In sum, hajj sparks the beginning, but its completion depends on continuously enacting those virtues in day-to-day life. Once back home, pilgrims have to expel evil from their minds consciously to continue their pursuit of humanity's inevitable destiny. We need to appreciate the opportunity to complete hajj by learning how to tolerate worldly disturbances, watching out for Satan's wicked whispers and being resolute in our turning to the right direction. **ih**

Rasheed Rabbi, a full-time IT professional, who earned an MA in religious studies (2016) and a graduate certificate in Islamic chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary, is also founder of e-Dawah ([www.edawah.net](http://www.edawah.net)); secretary of the Association of Muslim Scientists, Engineers & Technology Professionals; serves as a *khateeb* and leads the Friday prayers at ADAMS Center; and works as a chaplain at iNova Fairfax, iNova Loudoun, and Virginia's Alexandria and Loudoun Adult Detention Centers.





◀ **Muhammad Ali's visit to ISB on Sunday to pick up dawah materials 1994.**

# The Islamic Society of Baltimore Turns Fifty

## The Growing Pains of a Vibrant Community

BY ZOOBIA W. CHAUDHRY

**B**ALTIMORE, WHICH HAS SHOT INTO the news for reasons good and bad, has an open secret: Muslim communities have been thriving there for more than half a century.

This year, the Islamic Society of Baltimore (ISB; <https://isb.org>) marked its 50th year of service to Muslims and its community at large — a microcosm of the Muslim American experience from the early days of establishing mosques in the U.S.

Islam only took communal shape in the U.S. during the 1960s, due to the American civil rights movement, growth in the non-profit sector, changing immigration laws, the arrival of Muslim immigrants for work and education and other factors.

K. GhaneaBassiri, author of “A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order” (Cambridge University Press, 2010) states that most non-activist Muslims prioritized the building of mosques because gradually a community would form and enable them to socialize with other Muslims and raise their children with an Islamic background.

Around that time, other places of worship

in Baltimore were Masjiid As Saffat and the Nation of Islam's (NOI) Temple #6, which later became Masjid Al Huqq.

The new immigrant families — mostly young professionals — started meeting on Sundays at Johns Hopkins University's Homewood campus for a meal and children and adult *halaqas* (study circles). Records indicate that Yusuf E. El-Abdullah, Salatiel H. Bey and Ali Tabow Holly registered ISB with the State of Maryland in Sept. 1969. Little is known about them, but it appears that two of them were Moroccan immigrants and one was an African American revert.

One can appreciate the clarity and the purpose in their submitted statement: “... are to conduct a program of Islamic education for adults and children, to organize religious, social and cultural activities for the benefit of the Muslim community and to help the American people to understand the Islamic principles and the Islamic way of life.”

### GROWTH

Shortly thereafter, the community held the Meena Bazaar in 1971 to raise funds. Like

many other mosques, in the beginning donations came from the local community and well as national and foreign communities.

In the mid-seventies, ISB purchased a nearly 8-acre lot at its current location. A judge approved the zoning application, even though no member of the local community or ISB leadership was present.

ISB moved to its current location in 1982-83. The weekend school was established in 1984, and the full-time school in 1987 (See p. 34). By 1993-94, besides observing the five daily prayers, ISB was offering daily Quranic and hadith lessons, Friday prayers and the annual Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha celebrations, *taraweeh* prayers, a full-time and a Sunday school and *tafseer* classes, *zakat* and *sadaqa* services, *da'wa* and special classes for non-Muslims, funeral services, seminars and lectures on Islam, youth involvement and other activities.

ISB is a community hub and a house of worship with community gatherings around meals, especially during Ramadan. It has been following the electoral system of selecting leaders from all walks of life and from various school of thought followers. For instance, one of the past presidents during the late eighties was a Shi'i.

### DEVELOPMENT PHASES

Over the years, ISB has embarked on various development projects, among them expanding the facilities and educational opportunities.

- **1984:** Residential properties adjoining the main building were purchased for the imam and rental income. They later became classrooms and office spaces.

- **1991-94:** A gymnasium, kitchen and eight classrooms for the full-time school were added. The gymnasium hosts athletic activities, community events and private events. Prefabricated trailers were added to accommodate the school's growth.

- **2006-10:** A \$3.5 million expansion was started to add the lobby, enlarge the prayer area and add a third-floor mezzanine for the women. Four additional classrooms were also added by renovating the previous *musalla*.

- **2014:** Thirty-two acres of raw land about three miles away were bought for future use. There is an ongoing discussion about how it should be used.



▲ Al-Rahmah School Student Competition 2013

### THE BIGGEST CRISIS FACING MUSLIM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES CONCERNS THE FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE *TALEEM* AND *TARBIYAH*. THE CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION ARE DIFFERENT FROM OURS — ATTACKS ON REASONING, TRADITION, FAITH, THE LGBT ISSUE BEING PRESENTED AS A CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE, AND SO ON. THESE WILL REQUIRE SPIRITUALLY POWERFUL AND INTELLECTUALLY FORMIDABLE RESPONSES.

- **2018:** ISB started a multimillion-dollar project for replacing the prefabricated trailer classrooms to meet the county's requirements and reforest the affected area.

ISB has also purchased houses to accommodate a resident scholar and a clinic, as well as to earn rental income. The resident scholar's house would later serve as *hifz* classrooms.

#### FINANCES/GRANTS

ISB has largely depended upon its donors' generosity and *qard hasana* (beautiful loan). In 1998 and 2001, it received \$200,000 and \$250,000, respectively, as capital project grants from the county, which were used to build a community center and a parking facility. ISB has also received grants to install security and school cafeteria equipment, as well as an aging building grant. Membership and rental properties generate a nominal income.

#### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Children's educational programs (see p. 34). Scholars and dedicated volunteer

teachers have conducted religious education classes and seminars since the beginning. Initial documents refer to religious scholars as imams and, later on, as resident scholars. In addition to his regular duties, the imam was expected to sit on a few standing committees and attend board meetings as a non-voting member. ISB's first imam, who stayed for 15 years, also acted as director of the full-time school.

Succeeding resident scholars stayed for approximately two to three years. The foreign-born imams and resident scholars had graduate degrees in Islamic studies. This trend is common in the majority of U.S. mosques (ISNA, "The American Mosque 2011: Report Number 2, U.S. Mosque Study 2011," 2012).

Their role gradually evolved toward focusing on educational activities for the community and disengagement with ISB operations. However, some continued to provide counseling services.

Marriage and *shahada* ceremonies, along with funeral services, are conducted on site. For the last 10-15 years, volunteer teachers

and local scholars have held Arabic and *tafseer* classes for adults in various languages. The weekend seminars, held by nationally recognized scholars, have attracted both local and neighboring community members.

Adult education programs also include volunteer lead IT courses.

#### YOUTH SERVICES

Since its inception, volunteers and religious leaders have led youth (aged 5-18) activities. Many such activities — *qira'at* and quiz competitions and plays — are part of the Sunday and the full-time schools. However, some were ended due to inconsistency and the organizer's departure, such as Muslim Kids Club.

ISB has provided a space to hang out, play basketball and make friends. Many lead the efforts to hold annual Summerfests that attracted youth from other areas. The Foodfest now serves the same purpose, and the proceedings support the full-time school endowment fund. Many of the young people eventually became involved in area charities, and some of them have returned as leaders of ISB's executive board.

Over the last several years, the Muslim Interscholastic Tournament (MIST) team has participated annually with around 100 high school students and even won some regional competitions. This has excited the youth in and around the greater Baltimore area.

The Muslim Athletic Program (MAP), active for several years, has enrolled 70-90 boys and girls in selected sports. Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts, which operate under the national organizations' guidelines, are relatively new. A set of dedicated and mostly female volunteers are active in these programs, which have adopted a co-op model to maintain sustainability and avoid volunteer burnout.

Islamic Horizons magazine thanks Dr. Zoobia W. Chaudhry for helping us document the ISB's first 50 years. Special thanks to ISB Council and past ISB presidents Syed Habeeb Ashruf, Mohammad Awan, Maqbool Patel, Tufail Chaudhry, Muhammad Jameel and Umar Mustafa, along with volunteers Francesca Pagan, Farooq Marafani, Nasrin Rahman, Syed Abid Husain, Anwar Khokhar, Zulf Baig, Eram Abbasi, Rashid Chotani, Faizan Mahmoodi and Sharif Silmi.





▲ Ground breaking ceremony, 2018



▲ Congregation leaving premises after Eid prayer

## SOCIAL SERVICES

ISB runs social services projects, such as the Golden Age Committee (See p. 35) and the Community Health Center (See p. 36).

## ZAKAT SERVICES

For the last five years, ISB has collected about \$200,000 annually in its zakat fund. Some of this money is given to qualified students as financial aid.

Financial transparency and accountability discussions have taken place within the broader Muslim community about how to distribute zakat funds. Past misdirection of some of these funds has resulted in carrying a liability of more than \$400,000 since 2011-12. Some community members have insisted that ISB should redirect these funds to the zakat fund.

In 2015-16, ISB's resident scholars created a framework for the leadership to distribute these funds to avoid future misdirection. However, it has been unable to nullify this liability, despite earnest efforts. There have been several attempts to collaborate among area mosques when it comes to distributing these funds.

## FUNERAL SERVICES

In 1984, ISB obtained the approval of the local zoning board to use the space behind the center as a cemetery. Twenty-two Muslims have been buried there. However, as the community continues to grow, ISB purchased two lots (1.5 and 4.5 acres, respectively) in a nearby cemetery. A local licensed funeral service provider washes the corpse with the help of volunteers. The cemetery management committee coordinates the burial services with the help of ISB volunteers.

ISB, which is committed to providing funeral service to any Muslim in the greater Baltimore community regardless of his/her ability to pay, continues to examine the

feasibility of establishing its own on-site facility.

## OUTREACH

ISB hosts several schools, colleges and churches to deconstruct the negative image of Islam. Its Outreach Committee has undergone several periods of revitalization, depending upon the focus of the serving leadership and volunteer availability. ISB volunteers give talks to non-Muslim visitors both on site and on college campuses. The Outreach Committee plans to focus on including reverts and new community members by hosting potlucks and classes for mentoring and enhancing Islamic education.

## CAFETERIA

The on-site cafeteria, which provides lunches to the full-time school students and the Friday attendees, has become a community hub for the weekend breakfasts. This enables badminton players to enjoy traditional Pakistani *halwa*, *puri* and *nihari*. The cafeteria also provides the meals for all ISB events. However, this arrangement has its challenges — health inspections, ensuring consistency in the food's quality and running a small business in a nonprofit setting.

## CHALLENGES

Muslim Americans continue to face the post-9/11 challenges of Islamophobia, bigotry and security issues, as well as the uptick in such happenings since the 2016 presidential election. The unfavorable experiences of many Muslims in the U.S. are largely fueled by negative misconceptions of Islam and Muslims. Being Maryland's central mosque, ISB has become the community's grounds for civic engagement during such difficult times.

It has sought to fulfill this role by facilitating large gatherings to host political leaders

— the highlight was President Barak Obama's 2016 visit. After 9/11, Maryland Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Sen. Ben Cardin attended an interfaith function. Such events serve as a morale booster for the community and also remind us that challenges are best handled at the grassroots level, as we have learned from our tradition and history.

Seeking knowledge can help us understand that the Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) actively served his society at a time when his fellow Makkans were doubting him. At a recent event, Chaplain Khalil Abdur-Rashid of Harvard University reminded his audience that the African American Muslim communities of New York and Atlanta have demonstrated a basic principle of Islam: cultivating a commitment to serve the community.

All Muslims need to feel included and welcomed so they can have a memorable experience. The lack of inclusivity in many mosques in the U.S. has led to the "Third Space" phenomenon. ISB has been fortunate to attract Muslims from diverse backgrounds to be part of its growth. Over the years, many of the ensuing interactions have been complex and challenging — and remain unresolved.

The ISB community came to this raw realization at a town hall meeting after one of its student members committed suicide. Many alumni, staff and community members came forward with emotional and gut-wrenching stories of discriminatory interactions over the past decades. This outpouring led to some local efforts to deal with the issue of racism within the community; however, it is too soon to assess the outcome.

ISB has had its fair share of conflicts and crises. The crisis management at the time of that tragedy revealed many hidden challenges, although many of them may not have been related to that incident. Besides a lack of

inclusivity, it also revealed under-preparedness for crisis management.

Crisis leadership involves five critical tasks: making sense, decision making, meaning making, terminating and learning. While such issues are not expected to be resolved completely, ineffective crisis management contributes to incomplete closure for those affected and makes it difficult to learn from the experience.


Another serious issue is the lack of women's representation on the executive boards of immigrant-run mosques. Such representation is essential in any American organization to meeting the needs of those it serves and to ensuring that the agreed-upon policies are implemented accordingly. ISB is no different in needing to meet this challenge. Although women volunteer at all levels, their lack of representation in top leadership positions may be secondary to the lack of effective and transparent governance and, in part, from community engagement.

Muslims must also learn how to disagree with each other in the Islamic manner in order to achieve homogeneity in the decision-making process and genuine tolerance for the dissenters.

Long-standing governance issues have resulted in an inclination toward the corporate model in search of professionalism at the expense of community engagement and creating fellowship.

The biggest crisis facing Muslim American communities concerns the failure to provide adequate *taleem* and *tarbiyah* through established and relevant institutions. The challenges for the next generation are different, for they range from attacks on reason, tradition, faith; the LGBT issue being presented as a civil rights issue; and so on. These will require spiritually powerful and intellectually formidable responses.

ISB evolved as a grassroots organization, as a place to educate children and for worship, and has served as a community hub. The work and efforts of the few known and numerous anonymous volunteers have brought this institution to where it is today. Looking back, it seems like they successfully laid the foundations for these institutions in an attempt to meet the challenges of their time and place.

The current generation should look back with gratitude and plan ahead with focus, dedication and understanding the ongoing challenges of the present time. As Malcom X said, "Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research." 

Zoobia W. Chaudhry, a practicing physician in Baltimore, is Al-Rahmah School parent and volunteers as charter organization representative for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts at ISB.

## ISB's Educational Institutions

**T**HE WEEKEND AL-RAHMAH Sunday School, which started in 1984 with a few pupils, had 150-200 enrolled by 1990 and now serves more than 350 students. Having implemented ISNA and then IQRA curriculum by pairing them with project-based learning, its curriculum includes field trips, building models and service projects. Muhammad Ali was interviewed by one of the Sunday school students when he visited ISB in 1993-94 to gather dawah materials.

During its early years, the school maintained the tradition of having parents, alumni and community members serve as teachers and volunteers. Now the teachers, who are paid a stipend, is assisted by a core group of volunteers, many of whom have been involved from the school's beginning.

The full-time al-Rahmah School and Nursery (ARS) was established in 1987 with 28 students and two full-time teachers. The following year, it expanded to about 50 students and up to the seventh grade. ISB expanded its facilities to accommodate the growing enrollment. Except for the initial few years, most of the school's administrators have been educators. A preschool was added in 2000 to financially support the school's operations. An all-girls' high school was added in 2009.

On average, the ARS principal's tenure has been about two years. The national estimate is three years for Islamic schools and six years for public schools.

Unfortunately, administrator and teacher turnover, as well as student attrition, have impacted academic


progress. ARS continues to struggle to gain legitimacy in the community despite acquiring state and third-party accreditation. Due to low enrollment, it decided to stop accepting high school students so it could focus on its elementary and middle schools.

ARS's Achilles heel has been its governance structure under ISB. The efforts to resolve the governance challenges made during 2003 to 2008 have not been sustained.

The *hifz* and Quranic education program, which started in 1999-2000 and is considered the community's crown jewel, has around 100 male and female students. In fact, many families have moved closer to ISB to enroll their children in this program.

To lessen the burden of homeschooling on parents, several efforts have been undertaken to initiate a joint homeschooling and Islamic studies program to provide *hifz* students an all-round education. However, no such program has been consistently implemented.

An after-school Quranic reading program (*nazarah*) is offered to about 100 students four days a week.

The seminary program, which was launched in 2013, closed in 2016 when its director/resident scholar relocated. One of the many reasons for discontinuation of the seminary program is that leadership was not assured of the community's readiness to support an institute of higher Islamic learning. No formal assessment was presented to the community and the enrolled Alim students were relocated to other seminary programs in the U.S. 

### ▼ Al-Rahmah School brings together young Muslims





# The Golden Age Committee

Baltimore social service project cares for the founding generation

BY ZOOBIA CHAUDHRY



▲ Senior's trip to DC Museum

**F**ORMER GENERATIONS WERE ABLE TO care for their parents and elders directly. But due to changing lifestyles and family structures, longer lifespans and the rise of chronic disease, such care is not always possible.

Some senior members of the Islamic Society of Baltimore (ISB; <https://isb.org>) noticed that staying at home for extended periods was having a negative impact on their health. In 2007, this led to the initiative of a senior citizen's social service committee that tried to re-engage seniors with the community via *halaqas*, picnics and conferences. Over the next few years, it morphed into the Golden Age Committee (GAC; <https://www.facebook.com/GoldenAgeVillage>).

Few senior members of the community noticed that, at a local nursing home, Muslim were not receiving care according to Muslim standards of purification (*tahara*) and covering up (*satr*). ISPU's 2016 report on "Caring for Aging Muslim Families: A Needs Assessment" (<https://www.ispu.org/?s=aging>) presented similar scenarios where service providers were not always culturally sensitive to these senior citizens' needs.

**GAC'S INITIAL ATTEMPT TO WORK FOR A SENIOR RESIDENTIAL FACILITY RAN INTO SOME BARRIERS. MEMBERS THEREFORE PRUDENTLY SHIFTED THEIR FOCUS TO CREATE SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS THAT WOULD ENHANCE SENIORS' EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.**


GAC's initial attempt to work for a senior residential facility ran into some barriers. Members therefore prudently shifted their focus to create spiritual and social programs that would enhance seniors' emotional health and well-being.

GAC has conducted need assessment of its members and modified its services and programs accordingly. GAC also brought the concept of *village movement*, which links neighbors together to help one another while elders remain in their homes as they grow old. The idea is to give seniors the facilities they would get in a retirement home and not uproot them from their homes.

GAC members rated socialization, transportation and physical fitness as the senior members' top three needs. These were a few of the top needs listed in the ISPU report.

Over the last several years GAC has been offering several needed programs, among them a state-subsidized nutrition program offered during weekly breakfast and monthly dinners; talks from local experts on financial-, medical- or aging-related issues; a weekly lunch and *halaqa* for women; picnics, tours to museums and hiking trips; grocery and prescription delivery; visitation of Muslim patients in nursing homes and area hospitals and reliable and affordable transportation

At its prefabricated trailer, GAC has tried to create a "safe space" and "bond of sisterhood" for the seniors, especially women. Women get together weekly for a *halaqa*, lunch or service project. The committee also maintains a list of sick and ailing members and visits them on a regular basis. Future plans include maintaining the sense of belonging and dignity for the seniors, establishing assisted-living, adult daycare, a nursing home and a senior housing project. Some of these projects are now in the developmental stage. Seeking support from ISB's elected leadership and the community at large has been a challenge.

ISPU's report suggested that taking small steps was the desired approach, as there is a perception that since providing such formal services is essentially uncharted territory, perhaps the interested parties should consider carving out a section for Muslims. An existing senior center that could also cater to the community's needs would be another small step. Such an approach can help these seniors determine what works for them. 

# Wellness Outreach

ISB Community Health Center serves anyone who qualifies for free treatment



**T**HE CREATION OF MEDICARE AND Medicaid in 1965 encouraged many Muslim and other overseas medical graduates to immigrate to the U.S. for training. Many of them eventually decided to stay.

Since then, Muslim American physicians have played an important role in building Islamic institutions. Some of them also laid the foundation for providing health care services to the uninsured in their communities.

In the Baltimore area, they have been doing this since 1999. Their efforts gradually led to the establishment of the future Community Health Center (CHC). Seven years later, in 2006, ISB purchased an adjacent house and moved the clinic there.

Many volunteers and community members helped clean, refurbish and furnish it, and several others donated time and money to get it ready to function as an operational clinic. A retiring local non-Muslim physician donated his clinic office equipment.

The clinic at the Silver Spring, Md.-based Muslim Community Center provided sample policies and procedures. CHC developed relationships with a laboratory and

**ACCORDING TO  
ISPU 2012 REPORT  
A WINDOW INTO  
AMERICAN MUSLIM  
PHYSICIAN ([HTTPS://  
WWW.ISPU.  
ORG/LIBRARY](https://www.ispu.org/library)),  
MUSLIM AMERICAN  
PHYSICIANS  
COMPRISE 5 PERCENT  
OF ALL LICENSED  
PHYSICIANS IN  
U.S., EVEN THOUGH  
MUSLIMS ARE ONLY  
1-2 PERCENT OF THE  
TOTAL POPULATION.**

some local specialists to provide subsidized services.

While the community came together to support this cause, some of ISB's neighbors who noticed these activities filed a complaint about zoning violation. The CHC leadership of that time worked with local county officials and the health department to resolve the issue.


Currently, all of the physicians are volunteers who are helped by two part-time administrators. Free primary care and preventive health care consultations are also available. CHC provides the avenue whereby ISB extends its services to everyone who requests them.

Since 2008, CHC has been offering 6 hours of clinical services to an average of 30 patients per week. In an attempt to grow, in 2012 it applied for a Susan G. Komen grant (formerly the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure; originally The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation) and to the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission in 2016; however, these grants were not funded.

In the last few years, CHC has been able to add 2.5 hours of psychiatric care per month. The leadership cites its current inability to provide malpractice insurance and increase administrative support as the reason for expanding its services.

Recently, CHC received a grant from Islamic Relief USA, which it plans to use for marketing its existing services and renovating its current structure.

In the Islamic and humanistic traditions, healing has been considered a vocation. According to the ISPU 2012 report *A Window into American Muslim Physician* (<https://www.ispu.org/library>), Muslim American physicians comprise 5 percent of all licensed physicians in U.S., even though Muslims are only 1-2 percent of the total population. The Baltimore area continues to struggle to dispense health care services to its uninsured and underinsured residents and has a high prevalence of health care disparities.

Area Muslim physicians hope to provide solutions for needy patients and the health care system. Perhaps the first step could be the model of MCC's Medical Clinic (JIMA 42 [2010]: 117), which operates seven days a week with the help of both Muslim and non-Muslim staff with several subspecialties, including mental health and counseling services. 





# A Quarter Century of Striving to be a Model Islamic Community

Dar-us-Salaam and Al-Huda School continue to thrive

BY WENDY DÍAZ

**N**ESTLED IN AN INCONSPICUOUS corner of the Hollywood neighborhood of College Park, Md., is the Dar-us-Salaam/Al-Huda School ([alhudaschoolmd.org](http://alhudaschoolmd.org)) community. The main campus consists of a K-12 private Islamic school, a nursery and preschool, a *musalla*, a *hifzh* school, a gift store and a martial arts studio. It also runs two branches of the Qur'an Institute: one in Rockville, Md, and the other in McLean, Va.

The tucked-away lot is surrounded by tall, luscious trees at the very edge of Edgewood Road and hidden from the busy drivers turning into side streets. A business office and operational headquarters can be found just up the road in a quaint brown-stone office building. With the arrival of the brisk fall months, when neighboring

trees begin shedding their leaves, Al-Huda School is most visible. The hustle and bustle of morning commuters and afternoon pickups announce the beginning of a new school year.

This 2019-20 calendar marks its 25th anniversary, with a current enrollment of approximately 600 students.

When the Silver Spring K-2 school opened in 1995 with 26 students, volunteer Minhaj Hassan never imagined that it would flourish and become one Maryland's top-rated private schools. Now, as former editor of Dar-us-Salaam's community newspaper, the Muslim Link, and current director of funding development and marketing for Al-Huda, Inc., he says, "The community idea was there before the school was started as the foundation of the community vision.

We just did not give the vision a name until after the school was established."

Building a model community with a mosque and an Islamic-based educational system was the brainchild of founding member and leader Imam Safi Khan. This idea gave birth to Dar-us-Salaam, in reference to "God invites to the Home of Peace and guides whom He wills to a straight path..." (10:25).

With the Quran and Sunnah providing *al-huda* (the guidance), a group of founding members and volunteers began building their own "abode of peace" in College Park. "We have a big vision in a small footprint," Hassan explained. "A lot of work is being done by a small amount of people, or small core group, but the vision is very big. The idea is that we are not just a school [but] a community, and a community needs

## ► CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

educational institutions, an Islamic center, quality healthcare, affordable housing, a media outlet, strong leadership, financial independence, and a Muslim neighborhood with Muslims living side by side to support each other.”


Hassan and his wife Aisha Elahi, the school’s vice-principal, have worked for over two decades to achieve this greater mission. Hassan expressed, “The school is a huge miracle. When it first started, people scoffed at it. But now it’s established and growing. We even have delegations from other countries visit at least once a year who have heard about the school.”

competition and robotics challenge. Several clubs are offered, as well as AP classes for high schoolers. Arabic, Quran and Islamic studies courses are taught in place of music and other widely spoken languages. Students are escorted to the *musalla* for daily prayers and attend the Friday congregational prayer with their teachers. The school’s slogan is, “Where guidance is part of the curriculum.”

Arif Kabir, an IBM project manager and consultant, as well as an Al-Huda School and *hifzh* school graduate, appreciates the upbringing and guidance he received there. During Dar-us-Salaam’s annual fundraiser in December 2018, he shared his moving story

main campus building are upgraded air conditioning and heating for the entire school, renovated offices, bathrooms and a prayer hall. A future goal is to acquire a larger property or complex to continue to expand and accommodate the increasing number of students. Improvement projects are ongoing, and donors are welcome to contribute to upgrading the school or to the Dar-us-Salaam community’s many other service initiatives.

Hassan believes that building lasting institutions requires a lifetime commitment. Former students continue to support the nonprofit through such undertakings as fundraising, volunteering and returning to work as teachers and staff, all the while hoping to pay it forward.

As Hassan explained, “All Muslims in America should be thinking about community building. During the lifetime of the Prophet (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), the huge throngs of people who came to Madina to accept Islam came after Madina was established, and they could see the brotherhood [and sisterhood] and the embodiment of Islam. We need to have enough successful institutions for people to see the progress. If not in our lifetime, then in someone’s lifetime.” 

### GRADUATES HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED TO MANY PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES SUCH AS MIT, GEORGETOWN, JOHNS HOPKINS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, WHERE SOME HAVE TAKEN LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THE MSA AND OTHER ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS.

According to Niche School ranking, Al-Huda is ranked as the best (out of 12) private school in Prince George’s County. Niche’s ranking system is based on “rigorous analysis of key statistics and millions of reviews from students and parents.” Ranking factors include “SAT and ACT scores, the quality of colleges that students consider, student-teacher ratio, private school ratings, and more.” Since 2011, over 100 students have graduated from the Al-Huda High School, which is led by principal Dr. Haroon Baqai, a business professor and renowned Quran reciter.

Graduates have been accepted to such prestigious universities as MIT, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, where some have taken leadership roles in the MSA and other Islamic organizations.

As stated on its website, Al-Huda is a college preparatory and Islamic studies school accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools. Beyond the preschool grades, it provides separate classes for boys and girls. Students are required to wear modest uniforms that consist of white polos and navy slacks or dress, and a white headscarf.

Maryland state-approved academics are presented in an Islamic context, with Islamic studies integrated into every subject. There is an annual science fair, spelling bee, Quran

with thousands of attendees. He said, “There is no initiative or organization that has had the impact on me that Dar-us-Salaam has had.”

As a first grader, Kabir rode a school bus that picked him up in Falls Church, Va., and carried him to the campus in College Park, easily a 45-minute commute – depending on traffic. Finally, his family decided to move closer to the school.

“My parents bought a house connected to the (Dar-us-Salaam) *masjid*, and for many years we were [its] closest neighbors ... My parents made sure my brother and me went with them to pray *salah* there every day. And in praying there and saying *salaams* to my beloved uncles, aunties, brothers, and sisters, I had a beautiful support network ... *Alhamdulillah*, as a result of the countless blessings of Allah, the love and investment into my life by Sheikh Safi, our community, my parents, my wife, and my friends, I am the man I am now.”

Al-Huda’s reach extends beyond College Park, with former students and graduates providing Islamic communities with a pool of public speakers, *khateeb*s, and trained *qaris* to lead Ramadan *taraweeh* prayers locally and nationwide. Currently, branches of Dar-us-Salaam’s Qur’an Institute operate in three Maryland locations, and an Al-Huda K-6 grade school branch with about 200 students operates in Pennsylvania.

Among the improvements made to the

Wendy Diaz is the co-founder and director of Hablamos Islam (We Speak Islam; <https://www.facebook.com/hablamosislam>), a program dedicated to producing educational resources about Islam in Spanish.

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# The Dimensions and Dialectic of Islamophobia

Muslims must first reckon with how the state propagates Islamophobia by way of law and policy

BY KHALED A. BEYDOUN

I WROTE MY BOOK, “AMERICAN ISLAMOPHOBIA: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear” (2018) to address how it is was being narrowly framed and misrepresented by mainstream media. Islamophobia was far more than Donald Trump, the swelling hatemongering emboldened by his administration, and most importantly, not a recent or new phenomenon.

Islamophobia in America is, in great part, a racial project. It was spawned by a master discourse that drove European supremacy and today is powered by popular views and state policy seeking to safeguard its domestic progeny: white supremacy. The narrow racial framing of Muslim identity, deeply embedded in the American imagination, not only converges with the rising tide of anti-Muslim animus we now understand and know as “Islamophobia” — but indeed, an integral part of it.

Islamophobia is far more than merely “dread or hatred of Muslims,” or “fear or dislike” of the religion and its followers. These prevailing definitions tend to fixate on explicit or irrational animus, and far too often, the behaviors and actions of individuals. The role of the state, and its vast network of agencies and agents, is often removed from discussions of Islamophobia. However, the



**ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AMERICA IS, IN GREAT PART, A RACIAL PROJECT. IT WAS SPAWNED BY A MASTER DISCOURSE THAT DROVE EUROPEAN SUPREMACY AND TODAY IS POWERED BY POPULAR VIEWS AND STATE POLICY SEEKING TO SAFEGUARD ITS DOMESTIC PROGENY: WHITE SUPREMACY.**

actions of the state and the state’s relationship to the actions of citizens, is vital to understanding it.

Most crucially, Islamophobia is state policy and law. It is expressly found in its letter and hidden in facially neutral terms intended to discriminate, affixed with the state seals of approval that obliges the polity to adhere to the message that Muslim identity is presumptive of a terror threat, and Islam a civilizational foil that must be confronted or contorted in a form palatable to the state. Approaching a definition and framework for understanding Islamophobia, in all of its complexity, enables an appreciation of its numerous tentacles, and how these tentacles intersect with other forms of racism and bigotry are extended by law and policy, and reach to color the perspectives of not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims, and everybody and anybody conditioned by the American Islamophobia that prevails today.

This historical context, coupled with its modern complexity, inspired my new definition and framing of Islamophobia. Above all, Islamophobia is founded upon the presumption that Islam is inherently violent, alien, and inassimilable — driven by the belief that expressions of Muslim identity correlate with a propensity for terrorism. In addition to this foundational definition are three attendant dimensions: (1) private Islamophobia; (2) structural Islamophobia, and; (3) dialectical Islamophobia.


First, private Islamophobia is the fear, suspicion, and violent targeting of Muslims by private actors. These actors could be individuals or institutions acting in a capacity not directed to the state. Craig Hick’s murder of the three Muslim American students — Deah Shaddy Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, and Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha — in Chapel Hill, N.C. in February 2015 is a clear example of private Islamophobia, as is the massacre of 51 Muslims in New Zealand, or the arsons on mosques or attacks on visible Muslims. Acts of private Islamophobia, oftentimes driven by caricatured understandings of Muslims and Islam, also menace non-Muslim individuals and institutions thought to be Muslim, such as South Asian Americans or Sikh temples.

Structural Islamophobia, the second dimension, is the fear and suspicion of Muslims on the part of government institutions. This fear and suspicion are manifested and enforced through the enactment of and advancements of laws, policy,

programming, or formal pronouncements by state agents. Laws like the US PATRIOT Act or Countering Violent Extremism, the vile anti-Muslim rhetoric of President Trump and the campaigns of state congressmen to pass anti-Sharia legislation distinctly and diversely illustrate structural Islamophobia. Structural Islamophobia has been openly extended by statesmen on the Right, including Presidents George W. Bush and Trump, but also Democrats like President Barack Obama, who established counter-radicalization policing as his signature counterterrorism policy. Unlike private Islamophobia, structural Islamophobic policy and positions are just as often driven by rational motives as they are by irrational motives, strategically deployed to carry forward specific domestic and international state objectives.

Third, dialectical Islamophobia is the process by which structural Islamophobia shapes, reshapes and endorses views or attitudes about Islam and Muslim subjects. State action legitimizes prevailing misconceptions and misrepresentations of Islam and communicates these damaging ideas through state-sponsored policy, programming or rhetoric. Law is not merely policy, but also a set of messages and directives disseminated to the broader society, instructing them to partake in the project of policing, punishing and extra-judicially prosecuting Muslims. We see this process functioning most vividly during times of crisis, such as the direct aftermath of a terror attack, when hate incidents and violence toward Muslims and perceived Muslims are pervasive.

This definition enables an understanding of the epistemological and legal roots of American Islamophobia, and its ferocious rise during the past several decades. Just as critically, this framework enables analyses of Islamophobia as it interacts and converges with other systems of stigma and subordination.

In order to reckon with the Islamophobia swelling and spreading today, we must first reckon with how the state propagates it by way of law and policy. Although the media fixates on the most gruesome accounts of private Islamophobia, the Trump administration has vividly revealed that the state is indeed the source and spearhead of American Islamophobia — past and present. 

Khaled A. Beydown is a law professor and author of "American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear" (University of California Press, 2018). He is a native of Detroit and tweets @khaledbeydown.

# The Systematic Creation of Islamophobia

A domestic financial and structural network of policymakers, foundations and think tanks are involved in promoting hate

BY FARID HAFEZ



**A**NTI-MUSLIM ATTITUDES DON'T just appear out of the blue. Indeed, when speaking about Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism, many critics focus on its obvious manifestation within the radical right and blatant anti-Muslim politicians.

As a matter of fact, it's rather easy to decipher President Donald Trump's statement "Islam hates us" as anti-Muslim. But how has it become possible for him to say something like this? What has changed from George W. Bush, who declared that Islam was a religion of peace, to Trump, who has implemented Muslim Ban 3.0?

This brings into focus the role of a more covert industry that has mainstreamed anti-Muslim views both here and abroad. When speaking about Islamophobia, less attention is paid to the think tanks' role in producing such knowledge. The pioneering work conducted by the Center for American Progress (CAP; <https://www.americanprogress.org>), which published one of the first reports on what has become known as the "Organized Islamophobia Network" in 2011 and 2015, reveals the

financial and structural network of policymakers, foundations and think tanks that systematically use the Muslim scapegoat to mobilize for their own goals.

While these reports have focused on drawing a political map of these foundations and organizations, the pioneering work of Duke University sociologist Christopher A. Bail details how understaffed radical right-wing fringe organizations expanded their sociopolitical networks, impact and access to funding monumentally after 9/11. In his seminal study "Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream" (Princeton University Press, 2015), Bail explains how, by 2008, these organizations' use of the big data methodology enabled them to largely displace the mainstream Muslim organizations as privileged interlocutors for Congress and U.S. state actors.

Bail reveals how those originally fringe anti-Muslim organizations became the most influential voices on Islam in the public discourse and, subsequently, within the political elite. He analyses how the 300,000+ press releases, newspaper



articles, television transcripts, non-profit tax forms, legislative documents, and social media messages produced by 120 civil society organizations competed and ultimately shaped shared (mis)understandings of Islam.

These organizations were successful because their emotion-based messages caught the media's attention. According to various polls conducted shortly after 9/11, U.S. public opinion was highly sympathetic to Islam. Muslim and other civil society organizations produced pro-Muslim messages for the first several post-9/11 years, as did the Bush administration.

The fringe organizations' angry messages marked their entry point into the media landscape. Their profile increased due to the subsequent angry denouncement by mainstream Muslim organizations. These former organizations had only small social networks and financial resources before 9/11.

But after that tragedy, their creation of a large social network and accumulation of hundreds of millions of dollars enabled them to create a pool of terrorism "experts" and develop a sophisticated institutional infrastructure. These, in turn, were used to make "the threat of Islam" media productions. Central to this development was the establishment of think tank-like propaganda organizations.

At least by 2008, their formerly peripheral voices had become part of the mainstream. They challenged the mainstream Muslim organizations, which until then had enjoyed the political elite's recognition, before U.S. policymakers. After that date these latter organizations, which used to be part of the government's dialogue on Islam and legislative hearings about U.S. policy on counterterrorism, were excluded. Thus, lawmakers in 32 states were convinced to introduce anti-Sharia law within U.S. courts, and anti-Muslim fringe organizations began training federal and local counterterrorism officials.

In other words, it wasn't the state that created social change, but rather a window of opportunity that enabled these anti-Muslim networks to use a major crisis to influence policymakers' perceptions of social problems and develop policies to redress them.

These now widely accepted and mainstream anti-Muslim organizations also managed to influence grassroots anti-mosque activities, including the first national debate on the proposed New York City Park51 Islamic Center — the "Ground Zero" mosque debate. In some way, as Bail suggests, the

shift shows that these fringe organizations have won the hearts and minds of too many Americans.

In addition to this new social environment and the concerted effort by an organized network is the financial support given by wealthy foundations. According to CAP, a network launched with \$57 million startup funds, fuels the domestic Islamophobia network. Among the largest donors are Donors Capital Fund and Donors Trust, who contributed \$27,042,600 between 2005 and 2012 to groups promoting Islamophobia.

They are followed by Scaife Foundations (\$10,475,000), the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (\$6,540,000), the William Rosenwald Family Fund (\$4,952,979), the

**IN OTHER WORDS, IT WASN'T THE STATE THAT CREATED SOCIAL CHANGE, BUT RATHER A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY THAT ENABLED THESE ANTI-MUSLIM NETWORKS TO USE A MAJOR CRISIS TO INFLUENCE POLICYMAKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND DEVELOP POLICIES TO REDRESS THEM.**

Russell Berrie Foundation (\$3,802,351), the Fairbrook Foundation (\$1,859,450), the Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation (\$1,411,000) and the Alan and Hope Winters Family Foundation (\$817,060).

All of this information is public, thanks to the 990-Ns they have filed with the IRS — the primary tool for gathering information about tax-exempt organizations, educating them about tax law requirements and promoting compliance.

The largest benefactors are, among others, the Clarion Project (\$18,508,600), the Middle East Forum (\$12,593,745), the David Horowitz Freedom Center (\$10,848,250), the Center for Security Policy (\$7,050,275), the Counterterrorism


& Security Education and Research Fund (\$5,351,000) and the Investigative Project on Terrorism (\$1,484,335).

The central figures involved in many of these think tanks are well-known people, such as Daniel Pipes, Robert Spencer, David Horowitz, Frank Gaffney and Steven Emerson.

This network is also influential in Europe, for the same people are funding the European Foundation for Democracy (EFD) in Brussels and the Henry Jackson Society in London. Between 2009 and 2013, the Marcus Foundation gave \$12,155,000 to various organizations, among them the EFD, which also received funds from the Paul E. Singer Foundations — \$1,475,000 to EFD and other think tanks. During 2016 Singer, listed as the second largest conservative donor in the U.S., gave \$23.5 million to Republican causes; Marcus gave \$13.5 million.

The fact that ideas don't always remain just ideas becomes clear when one looks at the anti-Sharia movement. A report conducted by U.C. Berkeley's Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society (<https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu>) found that from 2010 to 2016, these highly financed think tank-related anti-Muslim activists helped get nearly 200 bills introduced in 39 state legislatures across the country that sought to ban "Sharia law."

Of the 194 bills introduced in various state legislatures, 18 have passed and been enacted into law in 12 states. But, the report shows, this movement's primary strategic goal was to exacerbate a climate of fear of Muslims and exclude them from society. It shows that this legislation goes hand in hand with other conservative policy claims to restrict other minorities' rights as well.

Across the Atlantic, the anti-Muslim agenda of the EFD and similar think tanks has delegitimized Muslim civic society actors and been doing foundational work to implement new legislation that excludes Muslim societies from the political field. These "experts" have successfully shaped the destiny of Muslim minorities. To counteract these developments, these structures must be opposed via a collective effort based upon a realistic counterstrategy. 

Farid Hafez, a political scientist and non-resident researcher at Georgetown University's The Bridge Initiative (<https://bridge.georgetown.edu>), is also resident scholar at the Department of Political Science at Salzburg University (Austria). The initiative disseminates original and accessible research on contemporary issues to inform the general public about Islamophobia.



## Sharing Positive News About Muslims

A dedicated American heartland Muslim keeps the larger community up-to-date with news and events

BY HILAL SHIMLAVI

**M**ORE THAN 2,200 LOCAL, NATIONAL and international readers receive a weekly e-mail with “Muslim News Digest” in its subject line.

Did you ever wonder how this project, which keeps you abreast of Muslim activities and happenings both in the U.S. and around the world, got started?

Kansas City Star’s Donna Ziegenhorn, a playwright and author, described the Muslim News Digest as “A treasure trove providing a variety of news items from national and international sources” (Jan. 20, 2015).

This journey effectively began in 1974, which was not only the start of the Islamic Society of Greater Kansas City, but also the

start of the free news service’s founder and doer Zulfiqar Ali Malik’s family life.

He and Shaista, now his wife of 45 years, got involved in the community. Malik, an “elder” who had been in the community for almost five years, and Shaista would welcome new Muslims, most of them students or medical interns. Retiring after a 36-year career as a government-employed statistician, he and others started the monthly newsletter An-Noor. It features included the monthly prayer schedule, an article on Islam and such community news as arrivals and departures, marriages and new babies.

### GROWING NEEDS SPUR NEW MEDIUM

The community kept growing, more mosques were appearing and technology was improving. And so Malik, the newsletter’s editor for about 20 years, started the online Muslim News Digest newsletter. The contents remained the same, but the news section now covered national and international news.

This was no surprise, for the mainstream media’s coverage of Muslims was becoming more negative than that of other minority groups. As an example, he offers Taameen Mohammad’s report “Media Coverage of Muslims more Negative than Other Minority Groups” (Newsweek, Sept. 5, 2019). Conducted by the Project Lab at Vermont’s Middlebury College and entitled “The Media Portrayals of Minorities,” it analyzed 26,626 articles and revealed that the 2018 coverage of Muslims was rated an average of -.092, as compared to -.13 for Latinos and +0.17 for Asian Americans.

A study led by lab director Erik Bleich also examined articles published in The New York Times and The Guardian between 1985 and 2014 and found that headlines about Muslims were more negative than those about Jews or Catholics.

Malik emphasizes that an alternate media was needed to project a positive outlook.

In May 2019, the Pakistan American Society of Greater Kansas City recognized Malik with its Lifetime Achievement award for his interfaith outreach and informational services to the community. After several refusals to accept it, they finally surprised him with it on the grounds that the recognition was more for the good work being done, rather than the person doing it. Moreover, this display of appreciation might motivate others to do the same.

The Muslim News Digest is circulated by



emails. For a while a website had been set up and operated, but this ended when its designer/host moved away without sharing the password.

Malik says, “The feedback I got was that readers prefer the email format [more] than the website. There are more than subscribers. Often news gets replicated in other websites and newsletters. Some selected items from the newsletter I post on the social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) where I have tens of thousands of followers/connections. It gets exponential exposure when others click on ‘like,’ ‘comment’ or ‘share.’”

When asked how he collects the news items, Malik jokingly quips “from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security,” since they claim to know more about Muslims than the Muslims know about themselves. In reality, he subscribes to and reads several newspapers, newsletters, magazines and news agencies. Family, friends, community and readers often provide information and feedback. He says that news search engines have plenty of material. For example, a Google or Yahoo search on “Islam” or “Muslim” gets millions of results.

Malik states, “A recent Yahoo search of the words ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslim’ resulted in over 30 million each. The difficult part is the news and opinions, which are authentic and not negative. Every effort is made to select the positive news only. It must not be hateful to Islam and its followers. On the same token, it must not be hateful to other faiths and ethnicities. We safeguard our list-serve and do not sell, rent or permit the use of our list by others, at any time, for any reason.”

Originally a print edition, Muslim News Digest switched to electronic distribution nearly 20 years ago. Although it is meant for Muslims, it has gradually become popular among interfaith groups and, surprisingly, other news media outlets.

Malik is quick to add, “Due to the information overload, the task gets difficult, as to which handful of news to select for my newsletter ... 24/7 access to news is convenient, but can be equally harmful if not presented accurately, unbiased and objectively. Often it gets difficult to separate facts from fiction and fake news from the



◀ Zulfiqar Ali Malik and his wife Shaista

philanthropy. Muslim News Digest includes all Muslims highlighting their faith, history, aspirations, activities and achievements.

## UNITY AND DIVERSITY

The world's over 2 billion Muslims (World Population Review 2019) all believe in one God, Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alyhi wa sallam*) and the Quran. Core practices — the “Five Pillars” — are the same or similar throughout the Muslim world. Sectarian differences do exist, but they are not so severe that they divide the ummah.

Malik, an active participant in ISNA, is the founding member and has taken a leading role in establishing the Islamic Society of Greater Kansas City, the Islamic Center of Kansas City, the Mid-America Muslim Cemetery and the Islamic School. He has distributed Islamic literature at prisons, hospitals and schools; been a key member of interfaith initiatives; and conveyed the thoughts of local Muslims on relevant local, national and international issues.

The ISNA Kansas Chapter, the Crescent Peace Society, the Midland Islamic Council, the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) Heartland and the Pakistan American Society of Greater Kansas City have all recognized him for his community service.

As a member of local interfaith groups who currently serves on the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council's board and executive committee, Malik says that learning the diversity of faith traditions enhances appreciation of one's own faith. Some principles on interfaith interaction can also be applied to intra-faith interaction, for “diversity among Muslims is an asset rather than a weakness.”

Malik and Shaista have two sons, Farhan and Adnan; two daughters-in-law, Azra and Aini; and three lovely grandchildren, Zayna, Iman and Faiz. *ih*

[Editor's note: Get your free subscription at <http://eepurl.com/Jp3E9> or by sending an email to [HeartlandMuslimCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:HeartlandMuslimCouncil@gmail.com)].

Hilal Shmilavi is a freelance writer.

**ORIGINALLY A PRINT EDITION, MUSLIM NEWS DIGEST SWITCHED TO ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO. ALTHOUGH IT IS MEANT FOR MUSLIMS, IT HAS GRADUALLY BECOME POPULAR AMONG INTERFAITH GROUPS AND, SURPRISINGLY, OTHER NEWS MEDIA OUTLETS.**

real ones. My online newsletter is sort of a compromise between the print newspapers and magazines and the fast-paced social media. One can easily compare the fast news to fast food, also called junk food. Watch what you are [reading].”

Muslims are just as good — or maybe even better — as any other group in the fields of knowledge, art, architecture, science, medicine, technology, sports and

# In Defense of Muslim American Civil Rights

CAIR marks its first quarter century of activism

BY AYAN AJEEN

**O**N NOV. 9, CAIR HELD ITS ANNIVERSARY gala in Washington, D.C., to celebrate 25 years of “defending, educating, and empowering” Muslim Americans ([cair.com/events](http://cair.com/events)).

From inside a two-room office on K Street in Washington, D.C., its initial campaigns targeted Islamophobia in the popular culture – for example, the stereotypical portrayal of Arabs and Muslims as “terrorists” in “True Lies,” a 1994 film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger that netted \$379 million. Directed community action convinced the studio to include the following disclaimer: “This film is a work of fiction and does not represent the actions or beliefs of a particular culture or religion.”

That “small” victory put Muslim Americans on the media map and helped create a snowball effect, such as the successful outcome of the three-month campaign against a greeting card company that sold a get-well card mocking Muslims and challenging anti-Muslim smears in Steven Emerson’s 1994 PBS documentary “Jihad in America.”



▲ For the first hijab discrimination case in 1996, CAIR held a press conference outside Quality Inn Hotels in Falls Church, Va.

Other victories soon followed against a beer company that included an Islamic phrase in a television commercial and in support of Muslimah’s right to wear hijab in the workplace. Major companies such as Sears, Quality Inn Hotels, OfficeMax, and JCPenney came to acknowledge a person’s right to wear religious attire in the workplace.

Some people jokingly referred to CAIR

as the “hijab defense league” for its repeated efforts to defend this particular right.

These victories showed a sometimes-dispirited community that positive action would bring positive results.

CAIR’s strength comes from the community’s support and its nationwide network of chapters. The first chapter was established in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1994.

A turning point came in 1995 with the bombing of Oklahoma City’s Murrah Federal Building, for which Muslims were initially suspected and/or accused of carrying out. The ensuing backlash resulted in a Muslim losing her baby when her home was attacked.

CAIR leaders’ quick and professional response to accusations to this bombing and its Islamophobic backlash set two more milestones: its first national report on Islamophobic incidents — “A Rush to Judgment” — and the creation of its research department.

In the following years, CAIR launched successful education initiatives about Ramadan, hajj and religious practices to inform educators, employers, law enforcement officers and health care workers. One result of this was the skyrocketing number of articles about this annual fast.



▲ One of the first media trainings, held at George Washington University in 1994, led by CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper.

CAIR also educated Muslim Americans about their constitutional protections by distributing a “Know Your Rights” pocket

guide to hundreds of thousands of Muslim parents, travelers and employees. More than 2,000 seminars, trainings and workshops were offered. This guide is currently available in Arabic, Somali, Urdu, Farsi, Bengali and Bosnian.

While working with the mainstream media, CAIR also challenged media stereotypes, such as when Mortimer Zuckerman, editor-in-chief of US News and World Report, defamed the Prophet (*salla Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) in 1996. After thousands of Muslims responded to a CAIR action alert, the editor retracted his statement.

As the need for CAIR’s work grew, another chapter was founded in Los Angeles.

Following successes in defending Muslim civil rights in the workplace and the media, in 1996 CAIR sought to mobilize and empower Muslim Americans in the political arena.

In anticipation of the presidential election, it undertook a national survey of Muslim voters, held a national Muslim voter registration drive and conducted several community-supported successful campaigns against anti-Muslim cartoons, children’s books promoting false and defamatory information about Islam and the Prophet and Islamophobic films like “The Siege” (1998).

Perhaps one of the most famous cases in those early years was that of the Nike shoe with a symbol resembling “Allah.” Nike ultimately apologized and recalled the shoes — news of the campaign even made its way into National Geographic.

As the community came to recognize the need for CAIR’s vital work, the civil rights organization opened its national headquarters on Capitol Hill and chapters in Texas, New York, Ohio and Michigan.

In 2001, it released the first census of American mosques based on in-depth interviews with a sample drawn from 1,200 mosques around the country.

But that same year came one of the greatest tragedies for our nation, namely, 9/11. CAIR coordinated the national Muslim response. It issued a joint public statement condemning the perpetrators, placed a full-page ad in the Washington Post condemning terrorism in all its forms, coordinated blood drives for those wounded and met with President George W. Bush at the iconic Islamic Center of Washington, D.C.

Again, due to the growing need, new chapters were founded in Florida, Arizona, Illinois, California, Texas, Washington State and Georgia.



In subsequent years, CAIR continued its efforts to educate Americans about Islam through initiatives such as:

- The Library Project, which placed Islamic materials in almost half (8,000) of the nation's public libraries.
- The "Islam in America" advertising campaign that placed ads on the New York Times editorial page.
- "I am an American Muslim" public services announcements distributed to television stations nationwide.
- A "Not in the Name of Islam" online petition clearly stating Islam's prohibition of terrorism.
- The "Explore the Quran" campaign that distributed 150,000 free copies of the Quran to the country's opinion leaders.
- The "Explore the Life of Muhammad" distribution of materials (25,000) about the Prophet.

While educating fellow Americans about Islam, CAIR also defended constitutional protections for religious freedom and civil rights.

Wherever right-wing lawmakers in state legislatures introduced anti-Islam laws, CAIR launched legal challenges on the ground that they were discriminatory and unconstitutional.

In a major 2010 lawsuit, CAIR successfully blocked the certification of an "anti-Sharia" state constitutional amendment in Oklahoma that would have been the first-of-its-kind institutionalized discrimination against Islam and American Muslims.

In 2011, it was possibly the first Muslim organization to submit an *amicus* (friend of the court) brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in a case about warrantless GPS tracking by law enforcement.

Similarly, in 2015, CAIR welcomed a "historic" ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in favor of a Muslimah who sued retailer Abercrombie & Fitch after she was denied a job because of her hijab. That case began in 2008, when the woman approached the Oklahoma office with her allegation of workplace discrimination.

Workplace discrimination has been a key focus of CAIR's 25-year history, and settlements favoring Muslim workers have been reached with major corporations.

In 2018, CAIR announced a settlement to resolve EEOC charges filed on behalf of 138 Somali-American Muslim workers at Cargill Meat Solutions.

When a number of mosques were



▲ CAIR's press conference following the watchlist victory in which the federal watchlist was declared unconstitutional, September 2019 (photo Omar Al Saray)

## A QUARTER CENTURY AGO, NIHAD AWAD, IBRAHIM HOOPER AND OMAR AHMAD ENVISIONED WHAT WOULD BECOME THE NATION'S LARGEST MUSLIM CIVIL RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION. THEIR VISION: AN ORGANIZATION THAT DEFENDS MUSLIM AMERICANS' CIVIL RIGHTS AND CHALLENGES NEGATIVE PORTRAYALS OF ISLAM.

targeted by hate nationwide, CAIR published and distributed a "Best Practices for Mosque and Community Safety" booklet to better equip community leaders with the information needed to safeguard mosques and Islamic institutions against bias-motivated violence or vandalism.

When Muslim Americans and their families were targeted by the Trump

administration's discriminatory "Muslim Ban," and terror watchlist and similar policies, CAIR took immediate legal action. Targets of the watchlisting system could be denied travel by air, subjected to invasive and stigmatizing searches and interrogations, detained for hours at border crossings, have their electronics seized, be deprived of the right to purchase a firearm and have their bank accounts closed.

In the biggest legal case for Muslims in the U.S., CAIR recently proclaimed victory when a federal judge granted its motion for summary judgment in the case of 23 Muslim Americans whom the government unjustly labeled "suspected terrorists" and placed on the watchlist, thereby causing extensive harm to their families, careers and ability to travel.

CAIR recently submitted a written statement to the joint congressional oversight hearing on the Trump administration's Muslim ban by the U.S. House Judiciary's Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship and the Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

During these years of growing activism and empowerment, CAIR has trained Muslim leaders and activists in media and political engagement. It now has more than 50 full-time attorneys and 65 trained spokespeople nationwide. Hundreds of Muslim leaders trained in CAIR's media relations and lobbying efforts are now employing it in their communities. That training includes youth, with CAIR's "Muslim Youth Leadership Symposium" events being replicated in communities around the country.

"It is becoming common to see Muslim representation in the media, in Congress, in government agencies, in the workplace, in schools, in athletics, and in television programming. When we began, the only Muslims on TV were suspects in the news or stereotypical movie bad guys. The seeds of this empowerment were planted in the early days of CAIR and throughout the past twenty-five years," said CAIR's national executive director and co-founder Nihad Awad.

None of these successes could have been achieved without the help of God, the community's support and the professional efforts of hundreds of staff, board members and volunteers nationwide. *ih*

Ayan Ajeen is CAIR communications coordinator

# Divine Guidance for Caring

The Quran and Sunnah emphasize and regulate orphan and foster care

BY SHIFA GHIZIA MOHIUDDIN

**I**N THE SPRING OF 2015, A CLOSE FRIEND introduced me to Aisha, a young Afghan refugee who had survived a drone strike that left her orphaned and severely wounded. In the aftermath of that incident, the U.S. government sponsored her to receive medical treatment at suburban Washington D.C.'s Bethesda Naval Medical Center.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to teach her basic Quran memorization over the weekends at my home, not far from where her Muslim foster parents lived. We started reading from the shorter and easier-to-memorize end chapters and moved forward slowly. I was impressed with how beautifully she could repeat the Arabic recitation after me, for the drone strike had rendered her blind. She was positive, full of spirit, confident and committed to learning the Quran.

Aisha's resiliency reminded me that Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) grew up without a biological father and that, during his infancy, his wet nurse Halima in effect became his foster mother. This relationship allowed him to regard Harith as his father and the couple's children as his real siblings. Thus he could not marry them, for the woman who nurses a child more than five times before the age of two becomes his or her nursing mother. No other religion accords such a status to suckling mothers.

After his mother Amina's death, Muhammad was taken in by his grandfather Abd al-Muttalib. Upon his demise, he entered the household of his uncle Abu Talib (*radi Allahu 'anh*). As an adult, Muhammad freed, adopted and treated his wife Khadija's (*radi Allahu 'anha*) household slave Zayd ibn Haritha like his own son (33:37). Later verses revealed prohibited adoption by name so that a person's lineage would not be lost (33:4-5).

Another strong foster mother is Aasiya (*radi Allahu 'anha*), the wife of Pharaoh, who raised the infant Moses in her tyrannical

spouse's palace. The Quran relates that Pharaoh had ordered the killing of all sons born to the Children of Israel. Naturally, his mother feared for his life: "And We inspired to the mother of Moses, 'Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him [one] of the messengers'" (28:7).

One day, Aasiya was walking along the Nile with some of her maids and saw a basket drifting on the water. Upon opening it, she saw and fell in love with the infant: "And the wife of Pharaoh said, '[He will be] a comfort of the eye for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son.' And they perceived not" (28:9). As he matured, Moses considered Aasiya as his mother, while his birth mother became his wet nurse and thus could watch him grow and help raise him. Moses therefore provided Aasiya the happiness and contentment for which she was looking in a foster child.

Amidst these historical examples, contemporary Muslim communities in the West have struggled to bring foster children into their own homes.

According to the Muslim Foster Care Association (MFCA; <https://muslimfoster-care.org>), the shortage of licensed Muslim foster homes causes most Muslim children in foster care to be placed with non-Muslims. Outcomes for children and families improve when Muslim children are placed in Muslim foster homes. Although Aisha's foster parents were not Muslim, they arranged for her to learn the Quran with people in her local community so that she would not lose touch with Islam.

Many Muslims mistakenly believe that Islam prohibits fostering. As not enough imams and community leaders address this issue, we must become fully educated about orphan and foster care, especially its legal and social implications.

The child's well-being must be the foremost consideration in all relevant decisions:



"And they ask you about orphans. Say, 'Improvement (*islah*) for them is best. If you mix your affairs with theirs — they are your brothers. Allah knows the corrupter from the amender. If Allah had willed, He could have put you in difficulty. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise" (2:220). The Arabic root word for orphans is *yatim*, "something that is singular." In the context of a human being, it means "a minor who has lost his or her father." Here, *islah* means "in the child's best interests." The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the importance of caring for orphans and safeguarding their rights, as one can see in 2:67, 4:36 and 6:152. God allows the orphan's guardian to spend a reasonable amount of the latter's estate on the condition that he/she intends to compensate the orphan later on.

According to the Orphan Care Project, Muslims need to ensure that the most appropriate and effective model for orphan and foster care is available, accessible and correctly instituted. Collaborative discussions across civil society should encourage holistic and productive debate on the history and future of orphans, familial ethics and law. Muslims should be actively engaged in working to improve such institutional frameworks seeking to secure justice,





## **MANY MUSLIMS MISTAKENLY BELIEVE THAT ISLAM PROHIBITS FOSTERING. AS NOT ENOUGH IMAMS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ADDRESS THIS ISSUE, WE MUST BECOME FULLY EDUCATED ABOUT ORPHAN AND FOSTER CARE, ESPECIALLY ITS LEGAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS.**

psychological and socio-economic stability for all orphans (<https://www.orphancare-project.com/orphan-care-in-islam>).

In Madina, the Prophet made every family responsible for fostering a child as if he/she were their own biological children. Many lament that Muslim Americans have lost that spirit of mercy and compassion. A central concept in this regard is *kafala*, assuming the responsibility for someone's maintenance, allowance and care ([www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/7\\_1/Dialogue\\_January\\_March2012\\_35-49.pdf](http://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/7_1/Dialogue_January_March2012_35-49.pdf)). *Kafala 'aamaah* is the general care and support given to those who are deprived of such basic needs as food and shelter. Those who

have enough resources are obliged to feed the poor.

The Quran emphasizes caring for orphans, as they are among the destitute and helpless, and condemns those people or societies that humiliate orphans, the helpless, widows or the disabled. Muslims cannot deny that the poor have a share in a rich Muslim's wealth, for the Quran states: "Therefore, do not treat the orphan harshly, nor repel the petitioner" (93: 9-10) and reminds us that we are duty-bound to treat orphans equitably (4:127) and that wronging them is a sin


The Prophet said, "The one who cares for an orphan and myself will be together in

Paradise like this," and he held his two fingers together to illustrate (Sahih al-Bukhari).

In the West, many children in the foster care system fall through the cracks due to mental health issues, homelessness, extreme poverty or domestic abuse. Several barriers to accepting orphaned or abandoned children into mainstream Muslim households still exist, among them financial or language concerns or a lack of understanding of American family law, which leads many to believe that there is no alternative to adoption. The issue for many orphans and foster children is adjusting to their new life. While joining a new family is psychologically taxing in itself, many of these children have a history of post-traumatic stress disorders or neglect, both of which may require psychological counseling or even medication.

Research shows that adopted children may have a difficult time understanding emotions in others, which can lead to misunderstandings and learned behaviors that are not very helpful in social exchanges (<https://www.chop.edu/conditions-diseases/behavioral-and-emotional-issues-adopted-and-foster-children>). One study shows that early neglect in foster children was demonstrated by low morning cortisol levels or dysregulated cortisol throughout the day (<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/06/neglect>).

These facts support the Islamic demand that orphans and foster children be treated with great mercy and compassion. Sidi Ahmad Zarruq (1442-93), one of the most prominent Maliki scholars, was orphaned within the first week of his birth and was cared for by his grandmother, an accomplished jurist who was his first teacher. A student of the traditional Islamic sciences, some considered him to be one of the spiritual renewers (*mujaddid*) of his time.

In his final *khutba*, the Prophet emphasized treating all orphans with dignity. Rejecting them is considered a sign of rejection of all moral law (107:1-7). God is depicted as their ultimate caretaker (93:5-6), and the Prophet declared: "Anyone who neither shows mercy to our children nor acknowledges the right of our old people is not one of us" (Al-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud). 

Shifa Mohiuddin, who majored in theology at George Washington University, received her MPH in community-oriented primary care from GWU. She also holds *ijazat* in *tajweed* and *qira'at al-Qur'an* from teachers based in Jordan and Chicago.



## Uzbekistan Preserves its Heritage

Uzbek Muslims defied or circumvented Soviet strictures by observing Islam and its rituals covertly

BY SHAKEEL SYED

“WELCOME TO UZBEKISTAN, NOT A country but a civilization!” enthuses my tour guide, Babur Shah, as he welcomed me at the airport.

Two millennia ago, Uzbekistan was the cradle of trade and culture of the ancient Silk Road. Today, it is one of the most ancient lands rediscovering its Islamic roots. Islam is said to have arrived through Silk Route traders and itinerant preachers during the seventh century. Despite being suppressed for centuries, Muslims maintained their relationship with Islam, albeit in the private sphere. That era is almost over, and still Islam lives on.

Uzbek Muslims defied or circumvented Soviet strictures by observing Islam and its rituals covertly. They now practice it more openly and almost everywhere. This is more so under current president Shavkat Mirziyoyev than his predecessor, Islam Abduganievich Karimov, who became first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in 1989 and was elected president of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in 1990. After the USSR collapsed in 1991, he was elected president of independent Uzbekistan, which he ruled with an iron fist until his death in 2016.

Nearly all iterations of Muslim life are now visible, from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to the Naqshbandi, Qadiri, Kubrawi and Qalandari Sufi orders.

I fell in love with the land and its people after my first visit in 2003, in the aftermath of its declaration of independence in 1991-92. Last year, this love summoned me back to



▲ Imam Bukhari Mausoleum

the land that belongs to Imam Bukhari and Imam Maturidi (*may Allah be pleased with them*), Amir Timur (Taimurlane, founder of the Timurid Empire) and Ulugh Beg, who is known for unlocking the universe through astronomy.

The legacy of the Silk Road has always intrigued me. After having visited its beginning (China) and end points (Turkey), I had always wanted to visit the three most important stops for its travelers and traders — Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva.



▲ Ibn Abbas Mausoleum

Realizing Uzbekistan's centrality in Central Asia, the Uzbek government has been working diligently to restore the country's former glory by showcasing its architecture of glittering minarets, voluptuous domes and hypnotic mosaics, along with its rich Islamic heritage, by restoring the two imams' mausoleums, libraries and seminaries.

Tashkent, currently home to approximately three million Uzbeks, continues to serve as the country's political center, a position it occupied during the Tsarist and Soviet

**FROM THE OPULENT REGISTAN SQUARE IN SAMARKAND TO THE TWISTING ALLEYS OF THE MUSEUM TOWN OF KHIVA, UZBEKISTAN IS A LAND OF ONION DOMES, GRAND ARCHWAYS AND TOWERING MINARETS. BUT THE COUNTRY OFFERS MORE THAN JUST DROOL-WORTHY ARCHITECTURE.**





PHOTO (C) WWW.MUSAFIR.US

▲ **Tashkent Jamia Masjid**

periods. It is also home to one of the only three hand-written copies of the Quran from the time of Caliph Uthman (*'alayhi rahma*). The other two are preserved in the British Museum (London) and the Topkapi Palace (Istanbul). The city is also known for hosting India and Pakistan, who resolved their 1965 war via the Soviet-brokered Tashkent Declaration.

Tashkent's famous Kukeldash Madrasah has been imparting religious education to Uzbeks for the last four centuries, with some gaps — the Soviets banned religious education. Like many other historical places, the Silk Road's traders and travelers also used this madrasah as a caravanserai.

Bukhara, considered Muslim Central Asia's holiest city, features an expanse of mosques and minarets, ornate craftsmanship and intricate tilework, turquoise domes and leafy plazas peppered all around the sprawl of the city.

The 2,000-year-old city stands proud with its tall minarets, such as the Kalon Minaret that is embellished with intricate colorful patterns, jagged stone tiles and colorful mosaics. The old city is a picture-perfect place. The Bolo-Hauz Mosque (1712), with its large pool and its most colorful 20 pillars, each 66 foot tall, is a testament of the Uzbek people's resilience.

If there is one thing that Uzbekistan seems to be exceptionally good at, it is designing and then dressing onion-shaped domes and minarets in bright colors and intricate brick patterns. In Bukhara, the minaret of one of the country's largest mosque has stood gracefully for more than a millennium. In addition to a very large prayer hall, the Kalon Mosque has a large open courtyard and a massive network of white archways that encircle the lonesome tree standing in its center.

Not too far away is the 16th-century Mir-Arab Madrassa that serves as "the" Islamic seminary for all of Central Asia. I met with a cohort of young students from neighboring Tajikistan who were enrolled in a four-year program to become imams. Its grand turquoise tile dome is one of Bukhara's most impressive sights and can be seen from afar.



PHOTO (C) WWW.MUSAFIR.US

▲ **Kalon Minaret-Bukhara**

The adage "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" seems to apply well in case of the Chor Minar (1807) of Bukhara with the Char Minar (1591) of [Indian-occupied] Hyderabad Deccan.

Samarkand claims to be one of Central Asia's oldest and continuously inhabited cities and the capital of the Timurid empire. One of its most prominent and must-see landmarks for most tourists is the massive Registan Square, a complex that comprises three inactive madrassas. The classrooms have been converted into souvenir shops.

For me, the most important place to visit was Imam Bukhari's (810-70) mausoleum. One cannot help but become emotional when standing in awe for the unparalleled contributions of this giant of Islam, who was born in Bukhara and laid to rest in Samarkand. People from all over Central Asia and the Muslim world can be found paying their respects to him at his mausoleum, which is about an hour's drive from the old city of Bukhara.

Standing in the presence of this scholar, who spent his lifetime traveling to gather, compile and preserve the Prophet's sayings is an indescribable experience. The ummah owes him its deepest respect, for through him we know so much more about our beloved Prophet.

Samarkand is also home to the mausoleum of Amir Timur, who remains a much-admired military leader for the Uzbeks. Not too far from this site is the Shah-e-Zinda cemetery, where many rulers and their offspring are buried in separate mausoleums connected to a small prayer hall.

One of them is believed to be the grave



PHOTO (C) WWW.MUSAFIR.US

▲ **Imam Maturidi Mausoleum**


of Ibn Abbas (619-87), a close Companion. *The Rihlah*, the 14th-century travelogue of Ibn Battuta, marks the cemetery's religious and historical significance by mentioning him by name.

The sparsely populated sixth-century walled Silk Road city of Khiva, a UNESCO protected World Heritage site, looks and feels like a living museum. Just as in other historical Uzbek cities, Khiva has ornate mosques, mausoleums and madrassas all around its labyrinth of streets, all of which have been artfully restored.

Uzbekistan's undoubted hero is Amir Timur, whose face is found on everything from hotel lobby paintings and banknotes to various packagings. It is said that he called upon the artists and architects from all over the empire to beautify Khiva, Samarkand and Bukhara. During his time, the mosques were adorned with the finest murals and mosaics, techniques and materials.

Generations later, some artisans are keeping these skills alive in handmade ceramics, needlework, silk cloth and miniaturist paintings, as well as extraordinarily beautiful calligraphy.

Khiva is not a very popular destination for most tourists because of the logistics; however, it is worth visiting this meticulously preserved walled city.

From the opulent Registan Square in Samarkand to the twisting alleys of the museum town of Khiva, Uzbekistan is a land of onion domes, grand archways and towering minarets. But the country offers more than just drool-worthy architecture. From hopping bazaars in Tashkent filled with trinkets from China to the Valley of Ferghana, whose inhabitants continue the centuries-old tradition of producing and weaving silk by hand, and from the heavenly designed ceramics to the incredible beauty and majesty of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, Uzbekistan is a country with many faces, almost all of them smiling and welcoming Muslims from everywhere. 

Shakeel Syed is co-founder of [www.Musafir.us](http://www.Musafir.us), a tour company.

# A New Old Beginning

“When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills.” — Chinese proverb

BY LUKE PETERSON

**O**N JUNE 4, 2009, AT A SPEECH PERFORMED at Cairo University, co-hosted by Al-Azhar University, one of the Muslim world’s most esteemed centers of learning, the then newly elected President Barack Hussein Obama spoke of a sea change in the American attitude toward, and presence in, the Middle East. With what became known as his characteristic eloquence, he spoke of the connectedness among the Abrahamic faiths and called for a new era in cooperation between Washington and the Middle East. Entitled “A New Beginning,” his speech offered an outstretched hand to Middle Eastern governments and citizens who had known only invasion, occupation and bloodshed at the hands of Washington policymakers for the better part of the previous decade and then some.

Speaking specifically about Iran and the CIA-orchestrated 1953 coup d’état against Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh (d. 1976), Obama freely admitted that the U.S. had “played a role in the overthrow of a democratically elected Iranian government.” Arguably, the speech’s most illuminating moment came when the president declared that he and his administration were “not simply about America’s interests” in the region, but about encapsulating the regional and global policy priorities to lay the foundations for more productive and less violent relations in the years to come.

And although he chided the Islamic Republic for sanctioning the hostage-taking of U.S. diplomats during the Islamic Revolution, he nevertheless concluded that the two countries must not “remain trapped in the past,” but rather ought to “move forward ... with courage, rectitude, and resolve.”

Though clearly intended to reset his predecessor’s belligerent and ill-fated foreign policy decisions, this particular speech might now be viewed as a nostalgic cautionary tale, one in which the president’s fundamental desire was to lead the U.S. away from cataclysmically destructive conflict. Today, this motive can no longer be taken for granted, as his successor is so set upon

an “America First” platform (read: “America Only”) that he is willing to risk regional and global calamity up to and including war with Iran in order to pander to his nativist, xenophobic constituency.

## TWO STEPS BACK

Early on (Feb. 2017), the Trump White House began a targeted campaign of chastising individuals and groups connected with Iranian national defense, especially the then-neutralized Iranian nuclear program that had been vetted and approved as solely peaceable as part and parcel of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, an Obama administration-led initiative.

But in May 2018, Trump unilaterally withdrew from that international agreement, thereby rendering its delicately constructed and intensely worked multilateral agreement null and void.

In this instance, his timing seems deliberate. According to Holly Dagues, in her article for the Atlantic Council’s IranSource, Washington sources indicated that “Trump waited until his second year as president to formally withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [in order to] reshuffle[e] his cabinet to eliminate JCPOA supporters ... appointing Iran hawks John Bolton and Mike Pompeo as national security adviser and Secretary of State respectively.”

It must be said, however, that many if not most of the current president’s foreign policy decisions lack any similar amount of forethought.

For his part, poster-boy GOP hawk Bolton was among the staunchest advocates for invading Iraq in 2003 and famously quipped that if the U.N. “lost 10 stories it wouldn’t make a bit of difference.” But he reserved a special amount of vitriol for Iran, a state and a people that he constantly linked with international terrorism and the sponsorship of proxy violence. As such, as national security adviser he always sought to connect the dots of radical Republican warmongers openly targeting Iran ever since the George W. Bush administration.



Bizarrely, though, at the time of this writing Bolton was dismissed (or has resigned [Sept. 15]) over disputes with the president over just how much force should be used in American foreign policy. And it is indeed possible that his departure is emblematic of an actual professional difference of opinion over this country’s position in the international arena.

It’s also entirely possible that this incident stemmed from a basic personality conflict between the two hawkish Iran-bashers. In fact, Trump’s motivations are as likely to be personal as they are to be based on any real policy considerations, given the frequent reports indicating that his most frequently asked question during policy briefings is “What did Obama do?” so that he could move policy in precisely the opposite direction. In short, his policies are underwritten by an obsessive personal vendetta.

Like inauguration attendance numbers, Trump has constantly demonstrated that he is gripped by the memory of a more popular, and actually popularly elected, president. So where Obama zigged, Trump makes sure to zag; a central component of this fixation, of course, being the scrapping of the JCPOA and the reimagining of Iran as American foreign policy enemy number one.

## WORSE THAN WE MIGHT THINK

But Trump’s dismantling of Obama’s international agenda in the Middle East didn’t stop with the JCPOA. In April 2019, he further antagonized Iran by designating the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a robust Iranian military unit called into being shortly after the 1979 revolution, a foreign terrorist organization. And more recently, in May 2019 the administration cancelled the





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economic waivers to a smattering of countries that continued to import Iranian crude and sought an all-out embargo of the Iranian oil industry — an action that senior Iranian officials have called “economic terrorism.”

These antagonistic policy formulations and Trump's additional bellicose rhetoric have, to say the least, rankled senior Iranian officials. Not content to take these slights lying down, Tehran has sought to fight back against Trump's antagonism. Recently, the Iranian *majlis* (parliament) sanctioned 15 American businesses within the country — a diverse group of interests ranging from the real-estate giant Re/Max to the infamous Texas-based weapons manufacturer Raytheon — and prohibited Iranian brokers from dealing with any of them.

Furthermore, additional pending legislation proposes to declare the CIA and the U.S. military “terrorist entities” for prosecuting war, civilian deaths and, in the case of the CIA, meddling in the affairs of foreign governments all over the globe, most pointedly in Iran itself.

Trump's decision to rehash U.S.-Iranian

hostility, which his predecessor had substantially mitigated, has also impacted the broader regional circumstances. Populist militias in Iraq, the so-called Popular Mobilization Units, have grown markedly in number and firepower during the last two years, and recent interviews with these leaders indicate that Tehran has been filling the socio-political void where U.S. officials used to tread.

The Trump administration has also been at great pains to link the recent bombing of Saudi oil fields at Abqaiq to Iranian planners despite claims of responsibility from Houthis insurgents in Yemen. Finally, the administration's public chastisement of the Iranian leadership has also weakened the U.S. position in Afghanistan, where the Taliban now hold more territory than at any point since 2001 (CNN, Nov. 1, 2018).


Seen in this light, Trump's on-again off-again peace talks with the Taliban is really only window dressing on what has been established as the *de facto* on-the-ground reality: The Taliban have won and now are in Afghanistan to stay.

In sum, Trump's disengagement with Tehran has severed lines of communication that previous administrations had used to stabilize the region and its primary actors. In other words, while Trump publicly baits Iran, other regional actors are now substantially determining reality in the Middle East.

### THE ROAD AHEAD

Where will the U.S. go from here? Trump's erratic nature means that no cabinet seat is safe, which in turn means that no stable policy initiatives can be articulated, let alone tried and tested in the Middle East's quickly changing political landscape. However, the White House's inconsistency and pedantry has motivated a capable, young Middle Eastern leadership to steer its own course in policy and the economy. In fact, according to a March 12, 2018 Public Radio International (PRI) report, there is evidence that in places like Baghdad, for example, it is working.

Further, as reported in the Straits Times (Singapore) on Sept. 25, rumors abound that Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan has been recruited to smooth things over between the U.S. and Iran ahead of a possible summit in France between all of the main players involved in current Mid-East tensions. And while this may seem a fanciful outcome, a president under reinvigorated pressure from his political opponents at home may have to begin delivering solid successes on the international political stage to help him hang on to what looks like an increasingly tenuous seat in the White House. Similar rumors are also rife that Trump has asked Khan to help restart the talks with the Taliban — rather ironic, since he called them off on Sept. 7. An Afghan Taliban delegation led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar visited Pakistan Oct. 2, where the Foreign Office said it would provide the “opportunity to review the progress made under U.S.-Taliban peace talks so far, and discuss the possibilities of resuming the paused political settlement process in Afghanistan.”

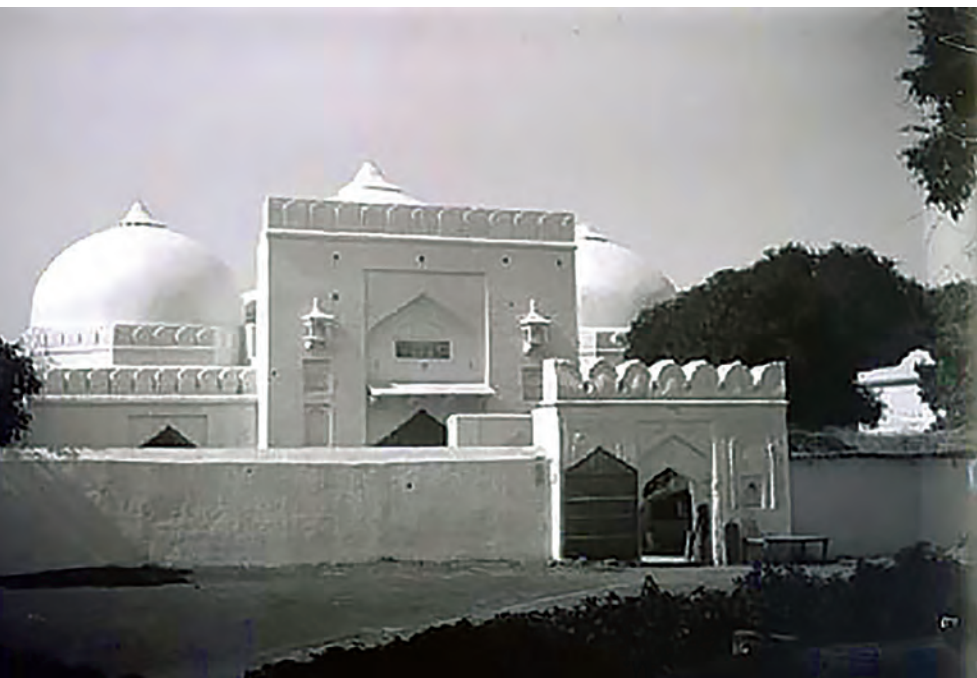
Perhaps, then, with global powers arrayed on the side of peace and a hemmed-in president desperate for forward progress, the embattled region's future may be brighter than was once imagined. 

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# Longing for the Reconstruction

Indian Hindu extremism pumped itself up with the destruction of the 600-year old Babri Masjid

BY MISBAHUDDIN MIRZA



▲ Babri Masjid in the early 1990s. (source: Wikipedia).

ON DEC. 6, 1992, AYODHYA'S LOCAL administration ignored the then-prime minister Narasimha Rao's orders to protect the sixteenth-century historic Babri Masjid. Thus enabled, a mob of 300,000 ultra-right-wing Hindu fanatics to tear it down on the pretext that it stood on the site of a destroyed Ram temple dedicated to the mythical god's birthplace. The ensuing anti-Muslim violence in various regions claimed numerous lives. Such groups have made similar false claims against more than 3,000 historic Indian mosques and even the Taj Mahal.

But consider the following. India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, stated in his "Discovery of India" (pp. 74-75) that "Hindu" was first used in the 8th century to describe the people, not a religion. Before the Muslims arrived, the land's inhabitants were bitterly divided by their religious practices, race and political kingdoms. The invading Aryans had implemented the caste system, relegated the indigenous Dravidians to the

lower castes and physically pushed them into southern India. Much later, the British imperialists lumped all non-Muslims into a single "religion" called "Hindu."

The most ancient and sacred Hindu text — the Rig Veda — has verses that teach strict monotheism. However, the "Hindus" neither teach nor practice this cardinal teaching. In order of importance, after the Vedas and the Upanishads come the Puranas (not considered as divine words) and the Itihas (Epics) consisting of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Today, most Hindus limit their spiritual practice to Bhagavad Gita (part of the Mahabharata) and the Ramayana.

The Mahabharata is a story about a quarrel and subsequent battle between the cousins — the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Ramayana is a story about the life of Prince Ram, who is banished for 14 years and lives in the forests with his wife and brother. Over a thousand years later, the poet Tulsidas rewrote it and sanitized Ram's human flaws. Now, most "Hindus" worship Ram as an avatar of Vishnu.

Eminent Hindu historians agree recorded Indian history contains no mention of Ram.

In response to the appeal filed by the (now ruling party) BJP that the Sethusamudram project — to provide a shorter sea route from Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka — would destroy a part of the 22-mile Adam's Bridge, claiming that it was, in fact, Ram Setu, which Lord Ram built to get his army across to Lanka to rescue Sita from Ravana's captivity, the federal government and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) told the Supreme Court, "The petitioners while seeking relief have primarily relied upon the contents of the Valmiki Ramayana, the Ram Charit Manas by Tulsidas and mythological texts, which formed an important part of ancient Indian literature, but which cannot be said to be historical records to incontrovertibly prove the existence of the characters or the occurrence of the event, depicted therein." The study, however, concluded that the Adam's bridge is not man-made.

The Muslim Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (d. 1707) gave land grants and funds to build countless large temples. However, the British imperialists sought to rule this large country by sowing enmity between the Hindus and Muslims. During the twilight of British rule, right-wing Hindu extremist groups realized that before Muslim rule, India had been bitterly divided among various "Hindu" kingdoms and that an independent India might face this same situation.

Thus they adopted the British label of "Hindus" to unite all non-Muslims under a common umbrella. To cement these groups together, they used the glue of hatred by creating a bogeyman — the Muslims. History was re-invented to create fictional anti-Muslim horror stories, including the myth of razing of Ram's temple to build the Babri Masjid.

Jawaharlal Nehru University historian Harbans Mukhia pointed out that even Tulsidas, the staunchest worshiper of Ram





**“THE BABRI MOSQUE ISSUE IS CENTRAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE HINDU MILITANT REVIVALISM AND MILITANCY THAT HAS LEFT THOUSANDS DEAD IN INDIA IN THE LAST 50 YEARS. THE BABRI MASJID HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF HINDU EXTREMIST MOBILIZATION FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS.”**  
**— ABDUL MALIK MUJAHID, SOUND VISION.**

who wrote about 60 years after the Babri Masjid was erected, never mentioned that it was built on Ram's birthplace or after razing a Ram temple. Mukhia also pointed out that the site was not associated with Ram for the next 300 years (writing in the Sept. 3, 2019, *The Indian Express*).

In Dec. 1949, a right-wing Hindu group installed a Ram statue in the mosque and invited Hindus to visit it. Contrary to the prime minister's and the interior minister's orders to remove it, the local authorities locked the mosque.

In October 1990, B. B. Lal, an ex-director general of the ASI, wrote an article in the ultra-right-wing RSS group's magazine *Manthan* in which he included a photo from the excavations that he had reportedly conducted in Ayodhya between 1975 and 1980. He claimed that this photo, which showed several heaps of broken bricks, were actually the bases of temple pillars that Emperor Babar had destroyed. The courts could not ignore the statements of a former ASI director general. The right-wing Hindutva groups took over this issue,

which culminated in the destruction of the elegant mosque in December 1992 while the police remained passive.


In 2003, the judges overseeing the title lawsuit ordered the ASI to excavate and determine if it had been built over a razed Hindu temple. Not only did this widen the case's scope beyond legal bounds, but it was also like asking the wolf to guard the chicken coop. The eminent scholar Dr. Omar Khalidi (d. 2010) defined ASI as the handmaiden of Hindutva. Ashish Chadha's doctoral thesis on the ASI, submitted to the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology at Stanford University in 2007, stated, "ASI needs to learn new methods of digging and new techniques of excavation. This makes people in the ASI insecure about new theories in archaeology. They are closed and uninterested in learning" (Chadha 2007:90). The ASI lacks credibility among the intelligentsia.

Archeologists Prof. Jaya Menon (director, Archaeology Section and Museum of the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University) and Prof. Supriya Varma (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Centre for

Historical Studies) witnessed a major portion of the mosque's excavations carried out by the ASI in 2003. Representing the Sunni Waqf Board, a party to the lawsuit, they detail the many irregularities and outdated methods in ASI's work in their article "Was There a Temple under the Babri Masjid? Reading the Archaeological 'Evidence'" (<https://www.epw.in/journal/2010/50/verdict-ayodhya-special-issues/was-there-temple-under-babri-masjid-reading>). They stress that there is little doubt that the kind of archeology practiced by the statist ASI, whose archaeologists see themselves primarily as bureaucrats, suffers from a serious absence of academic engagement and training.

Varma told *Huffington Post's* Betwa Sharma on Dec. 5, 2018, that no archeological evidence suggested any such earlier temple, adding that the evidence actually pointed to the existence of older mosques.

Abdul Malik Mujahid of *Sound Vision* has rightly noted, "The Babri Mosque issue is central to understanding the Hindu militant revivalism and militancy that has left thousands dead in India in the last 50 years. The Babri Masjid has been a source of Hindu extremist mobilization for the last 20 years" (<https://www.soundvision.com/article/what-is-the-babri-mosque-issue>).

It is time for the Indian judges overseeing this case to see the clear and unmistakable hand of the Hindutva brigade behind the ASI's discredited, baseless findings and take immediate steps to rebuild the mosque. 

Misbahuddin Mirza, M.S., P.E., a licensed professional engineer, registered in New York and New Jersey, who served as the regional quality control engineer for the New York State Department of Transportation's New York City Region, is the author of the eBook "Illustrated Muslim Travel Guide to Jerusalem." He has written for major U.S. and Indian publications.

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# You Are Welcome Here

Chicagoan Joohi Tahir and her team at Muhsen are dedicated to addressing the functional needs of Muslims with disabilities

BY HABEEBA HUSAIN



▲ A Muhsen volunteer helps a ISNA Convention attendee

**F**OR NEARLY 10 YEARS JOOHI TAHIR stayed far away from her local mosque. As the mother of three girls with one on the autism spectrum, she felt anything but welcome there.

“We tell mothers with children with special needs, ‘You don’t belong here. Your kid is making too much noise. Go home,’” she says. “It happened to me.”

When her daughter was young, Tahir decided to take her for the Friday prayer. As was the norm, her daughter began to vocalize a little bit. Tahir decided to walk out of the prayer hall to calm her down and play with her, when she saw a woman running behind them.

“I thought she was going to help me calm her down,” Tahir says. “[Instead] she said, ‘Beta (daughter), it’s not *fard* for you to be here.’ That’s what I got told.”

This moment is all too familiar for functional-needs families, but Tahir wants to change that through Muhsen (<https://muhsen.org>), an organization dedicated to foster awareness, accommodation and acceptance of such individuals in our sacred spaces.

“It is a right of every Muslim to have a place in the house of God — end of story,” Tahir says. “As a society ... we don’t even count these people as Muslims. We ignore the fact that these people have a right to be there. We park in their parking spaces because we are late for *jumuah*.”

In 2012, when she and her husband went on hajj with Shaykh Omar Suleiman’s group, she informed him of her concerns. As the son of a mother who struggled with cancer and multiple strokes, he empathized with her stories and challenges immediately.

“He listened very carefully and very patiently,” Tahir says, “[and] was very keen that we do something beyond awareness.”

Upon their return, he emailed the couple that he wanted to meet with them on his visit to Chicago to figure out what could be done.

Tahir prepared a presentation, listing everything that would help families like hers feel more cared for and accepted. At the 2014 annual ISNA Convention in Detroit, Shaykh Omar announced the launch of Muslims Understanding and Helping Special Education Needs (Muhsen). In Arabic, this word means “someone who helps others.”

“Shaykh Omar is a visionary. He said this organization is going to grow like you won’t believe,” says Tahir. “Here I am — this mother whose child has been very alienated at the masjid — and I’m like, really? This is going to grow in the community? I hope it does, but I don’t know.”

But the shaykh was right. This past September, Muhsen celebrated its fifth anniversary at the 56th ISNA convention — the event at which it was launched. Working with ISNA to provide services for all of these families, a week before the convention it had to close registration because its available capacity had already been reached.

As of this writing, Muhsen has certified 42 Islamic centers nationwide as “friendly and accommodating.” At the end of November, it embarked on its third *umrah* trip for families that need an extra pair of hands to help out with their loved ones.

“Having that individual walk up to me at *umrah* saying, ‘We never dreamt this was possible,’ — that for me is ‘mission accomplished’ for that family,” Tahir says. “That for me is the most favorite part of my job.”

Clearly, there is a need in the community for Muhsen’s services, whether that be guiding mosques to install accessibility features like elevators and ramps, offering respite care or providing signing and closed-captioning at lectures, among other things.



Despite these strides, Tahir says there is still a long way to go. The hardest thing she has to deal with are the naysayers, those who think their community has no functional-needs families. But Tahir knows they exist — they are just not visible in those mosques that have yet to accommodate them.

The Needs Assessment Survey on Muhsen's website provides an insight into the specifics for which people look. The survey

Muhsen has what Tahir has dubbed “a dream project” — establishing a day program for adults with disabilities and, eventually, a residential facility for functional-needs Muslims.

“We have to think big. We have to believe in it in order to make it happen, because it's a need a lot of families are thinking about already,” Tahir notes. “That's why we plant the seeds today that these people are bless-

**“CARE ABOUT IT. DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, EVEN IF IT DOESN'T IMPACT YOUR LIFE TODAY,” TAHIR SAYS. “I WANT TO RIDE ON THEIR COATTAILS. I WANT TO HELP THEM. I WANT TO SERVE THEM. I WANT TO INCLUDE THEM BECAUSE THEY MAY INTERCEDE ON MY BEHALF ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. AT THE END OF THE DAY, WHO DOESN'T WANT THAT? WHO DOESN'T NEED THAT?”**

pinpoints the families' locations, and Tahir takes note. When board members tell her that their congregation has no such individuals, she pulls out her map that proves otherwise.

“If you have one brother who wants to come to the mosque and you're not accommodating — that's a problem!” Tahir proclaims. “Who knows what act that you commit in a good way, Allah doesn't see it as the most beautiful thing that you ever did? We need these people.”

And these people need us. Not only in the present, but also in the future. The future is a scary thought for many parents whose functional-needs children are entering adulthood. They can care for their kids as long as they are alive and healthy, but what happens when the parent can no longer do so?

“This is a question on all of our minds. It keeps me up at night,” Tahir states. “I know there's got to be something we can do.”


She remarks that her functional-needs daughter, now 19, will likely neither go to college in the traditional sense nor get married or have children. What is textbook for so many is simply not in the picture for these individuals.

To help with this looming uncertainty,

ings in your community ... You should want to support them and empower them and help them.”

Even Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) understood this truth. When a sight-impaired Companion like Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum couldn't join the battle, the Prophet entrusted him with carrying the flag. This is an example of caring and including everyone.

“Care about it. Do something about it, even if it doesn't impact your life today,” Tahir says. “I want to ride on their coattails. I want to help them. I want to serve them. I want to include them because they may intercede on my behalf on the Day of Judgment. At the end of the day, who doesn't want that? Who doesn't need that?”

Just as we do not want to be left behind when God welcomes these chosen individuals into His Paradise, they do not want to be left out of their communities today. Let's tell all of them together — loudly and clearly — that they most definitely are welcome here! 

Habeeba Husain, a freelance journalist based in New York/New Jersey, contributes to SLAM Magazine, blogs for Why-Islam and is social media manager for WuduGear. Her work has also appeared in Narrative.ly and MuslimGirl.com, among other online and print publications.



## Pleasant View School Seeks Elementary Level Assistant Principal

Pleasant View School (PVS) is seeking an Elementary Level Assistant Principal to meet the needs of our rapidly growing school.

PVS is an AdvancEd accredited PreK-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Islamic School located in Memphis, Tennessee, with approximately 420 students. Founded in 1997, PVS is currently undertaking a large expansion project that will add 50% more space to its already beautiful campus, which is located on 14 acres of land in a centrally located part of the Memphis (Tenn.) metropolitan area. PVS has earned a reputation as an academically strong school whose students do well in numerous project-based competitions at the city, state, and national level.

The school has doubled the number of students it serves in the past few years and is now looking for an Assistant Principal that has the skills, initiative and drive to maintain the strong academic record of the school and establish more elementary level programs.

### Responsibilities of the Assistant Principal:

- 1 Lead a rigorous elementary level instructional program focused on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- 2 Develop curricular and extracurricular elementary level schedules, activities, events, and programs that develop student academic, athletic, religious and other interests.
- 3 Manage elementary level personnel operations to ensure that all elementary teachers abide by school procedures and participate in promoting the school vision.
- 4 Maintain a high level of personal communication and manage school communication tools with all school stakeholders.
- 5 Oversee the accreditation, expansion, and professional development of the Preschool Program.

### Academic qualifications:

- 1 A minimum of a master's degree in education from an accredited institution.
- 2 Has a minimum experience of 4 years in an administrative role at an Islamic school in the US/Canada or applicable experience.

If interested, please email your cover letter, resume, and your future academic plans to [Careers@pleasantviewschool.com](mailto:Careers@pleasantviewschool.com)

Selected applicants will be contacted by phone and invited for an onsite interview. A background check will be conducted on the selected applicant.



# Is All Meatless Meat Really Meatless?

A rather tasty way to decrease our impact on the environment



**WHILE PLANT-BASED MEAT ENTREES AND PRODUCTS ATTEMPT TO IMITATE THE OVERALL LOOK AND TASTE OF TRADITIONAL MEATS, CELL-BASED MEAT USES ANIMAL CELLS AND IS THUS NOT VEGAN.**

BY ASMA JARRAD

**T**HESE DAYS, VEGAN FOOD OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE LIKE NEVER BEFORE. Big box stores to small, local co-ops and farmer's markets carry animal-free foods to please even the pickiest vegan and entice newbies to try that meatless burger. The real issues, therefore, are whether these options are in fact 100 percent vegan and good for you. Are they made only from plant-based foods or does the process include animals and/or animal products?

## VEGAN VS. MEATLESS

To begin with, vegan "meat," also known as fake or mock meat, and "meatless" meat aren't the same things. The first one is completely plant-based, whereas the second one contains trace amounts of animal products such as whey, eggs, or other derived enzymes. Although some vegans may shame other vegans for eating vegan meat, all food products certified as "vegan" contain no animals and thus are just like a green salad in terms of being plant-based.

Furthermore, vegan enthusiasts such as KD Angle Traegner, creator of Your Daily Vegan and founder of Four Urban Paws Sanctuary, argues that vegan meats help meat-eaters transition to the vegan lifestyle, since they enjoy and grew up



eating meat. Traegner says, “These products imitate products that people are already familiar with, making them easy to integrate into favorite meals. Plus, they’re convenient. Most of them come precooked.”

For Muslims, vegan options have the added advantage of being halal since we don’t have to worry about the type of meat being used or whether it is *zabiha*.

With the launch of Burger King’s meatless “Impossible Burger,” which both tastes and looks meaty, one begins to wonder if meatless products do exclude all animal products in their production processes or recipes. Unlike vegan food, these products are made from vegetable protein, soy, wheat gluten and other plant ingredients. Although lab-grown meat is made from real animal cells, it is considered meatless because these cells are grown in a food production plant instead of taken from slaughtered animals.

This meat-tasting alternative targets the meat-eating customer. Muslims should always ask if the “meatless” meat is vegan based or cell-based. According to Kelsey Piper, a writer who focuses on animal welfare and the global poor, “Cell-based meat uses actual animal cells, grown in a serum instead of as part of a cow or a chicken. If it succeeds, it won’t just taste like meat — such products would actually be meat on a molecular level. But unlike plant-based meats, which are already workable, cell-based meat products are still a long way away.”

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), the widely recognized authority on protecting animals and their rights, list its top five vegan meat brands below.

**Beyond Meat**, which uses non-GMO, gluten-free, soy-free pea protein to make products such as their famous “bloody” Beyond Burger and Beyond Beef for tacos and meatballs.

**MorningStar Farms**, a Kellogg’s company, has reformulated traditional vegetarian products into 100 percent edibles, such as Buffalo Chik Patties, Buffalo Wings, Chik’n Nuggets and BBQ Chik’n Nuggets.

**Gardein**, which is known for its “fishless fish,” including golden fishless fillet and crab cakes. A popular vegan and gluten-free product is their Classic Meatless Meatballs.

**Tofurky**, which is traditionally famous for its holiday roasts but recently became known for deli slices, veggie dogs and vegan pizzas.

**Field Roast**, a company that uses grain meat to produce vegan sausages, roasts, deli

slices, Chao Slices of “cheese” to accompany their vegan burgers, and other products.

## TO GO OR NOT TO GO MEATLESS?

The demand for meat alternatives is rising because most dietitians agree that it’s healthier to decrease our dependence on animal products and because doing so is better for the environment. From land and water use to climate change, nearly every aspect of our environment thrives when we decrease our animal dependency.

In a recent interview with Business Insider, CEO Pat Brown of Impossible Foods said, “We are now in the advanced stages of the biggest environmental catastrophe that our planet has ever faced, and overwhelmingly the largest driver of that is animal-based food technology.”

Piper notes that an analysis of the Impossible Burger found that it requires 87 percent less water and 96 percent less land than a traditional meat burger. This means that if more consumers shift toward meatless entrees, we can have a huge positive impact upon our environment.

Surely, meatless and vegan foods allow consumers to substitute animal products without sacrificing options. They get the food experience while keeping other factors, such as the environment and animal sustainability, in check.


Still, despite the hype that the vegan lifestyle is all about healthy alternatives, one must keep in mind that not all vegan choices are healthy. One point that often comes up is the amount of salt used to enhance and preserve plant-based and processed food options. For example, one Tofurky sausage contains about 600 mg of salt, whereas regular turkey contains only small amounts of sodium — 55 mg of the mineral per 4-ounce serving.

The Center for Disease Control & Prevention recommends that we consume only 2,300 mg of salt, roughly one teaspoon per day. Add some bread and condiments to that Tofurky and you could easily have 1,000 mg for that single entree. Health officials caution that a high-salt diet increases one’s chances of developing heart disease — the leading cause of death for both men and women in the U.S. and worldwide.

While plant-based meat entrees and products attempt to imitate the overall look and taste of traditional meats, cell-based meat uses animal cells and is thus not vegan. As vegan products contain no animal products

in the production or end product, vegans are often asked why they would want to eat meat-tasting burgers or entrees. The answer is simple: They like the taste of meat but not the negative impact that animal-based meats have on our diets and environment. They are also concerned about the ethical treatment of animals. In a world where meat demand is rising, one can easily see its harmful effect upon our environment.

We live in the golden age of vegan products’ availability and forms, which means that you can likely find an alternative to foods that are traditionally part of your diet. Studies already show that red meat is not an essential component of everyday diets and that it’s linked to numerous health problems.

As Muslims we are allowed to eat halal meat and yet encouraged to have a balanced and moderate lifestyle that takes into consideration our personal health and the health and welfare of society at large, including animals and the environment. Thus, it’s certainly not a bad idea to replace our currently excessive intake of meat with alternate sources of protein such as legumes, nuts, vegetables — and that vegan burger, too. 

Asma Jarad works for the national nonprofit, ICNA Relief, promoting the Islamic concept that charity begins at home. Her writing is published across multiple forums and ranges from health and food trends to Islam in the U.S.

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# Helping Those You Know

## The possibilities of deceased directed donation

BY ABU FAHAD ABBASI AND AASIM I. PADELA

**N**EAR OR AT THE TIME OF OUR DEATH, many families will be asked to consider donating “our” organs. As we learn about organ donation, sometimes we wonder if there is a way to identify those who we feel should receive them.

Few of us have resolved our views on this subject, and even fewer have made them known by signing up for a donor registry or outlining our choice in our wills or advance healthcare directives. The diversity of religious opinions, societal pressures and acute need impacting one’s choices; the multiple procedures and forms that can be involved; and one’s health status and values make any decision about such bioethical issues complex. Moreover, organ donation has evolved from what it once was, as there are different types of donations and a complex terminology that differentiates them.

Organ donation is a controversial topic and, more than that, a deeply personal decision; however, it is our ethical responsibility to donate or not based on our guiding principles. From a religious ethicolegal perspective, the Fiqh Council of North America’s (<http://fiqh-council.org>) ruling considers organ donation permissible, albeit with several caveats and conditions (see Perspectives on Organ Donation and Transplantation, Islamic Horizons p. 60, Sept./Oct. 2019). Directed Deceased Donation (DDD), which gives individuals a more personalized option with greater autonomy regarding intended recipients, is permitted.

### WHAT IS DECEASED DIRECTED DONATION?

Deceased Directed Donation (DDD) allows the deceased donor’s organs to be transplanted to specific pre-appointed recipient(s) after the donor’s death. The donor can choose the organs to donate to the same person or to different people.

Some consider DDD more favorably than regular generalized organ

donation. With general organ donation, the donor is unable to choose a recipient: that decision is dictated by a complex algorithm based on geographic location and the medical status of individuals on the transplant list. DDD, however, enables donors to choose a specific person who will preferentially receive the donated organ should they have a medical need for it.

For Muslims, charity continues even after the deed (*sadaqa jariya*). If we enable another Muslim to continue worshipping God, we may also benefit from this perceived altruistic choice. Simply enabling donors by giving them a choice restores autonomy to the organ donation process.

The DDD process actually starts before the donor’s death. The hospital alerts the Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) that a potential donor is interested. After registering as an organ donor with the secretary of state, extensive medical tests are conducted and various requirements must be met before the family is informed or, in some circumstances, until their consent

is obtained. At this point the recipient has usually been identified; if not, the OPO will ask if anyone within the family has a need. Once a recipient has been identified, tests have been run and consent obtained, the transplant team facilitates a smooth transfer. The recipient will be monitored, and the OPO will support the donor’s family throughout the completion and-post completion of the process.

The practice of DDD is legally permitted in the U.S. under the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA), which is accepted by most states’ anatomical gift — “a gift that takes effect after the donor’s death” — laws. The UAGA recognizes that organs are gifts and that the donor can legally designate a recipient accordingly (A. Bianchi, R. Greenberg: “Deceased directed donation: Considering the ethical permissibility in a multicultural setting” *Bioethics*. 2018;00:108).

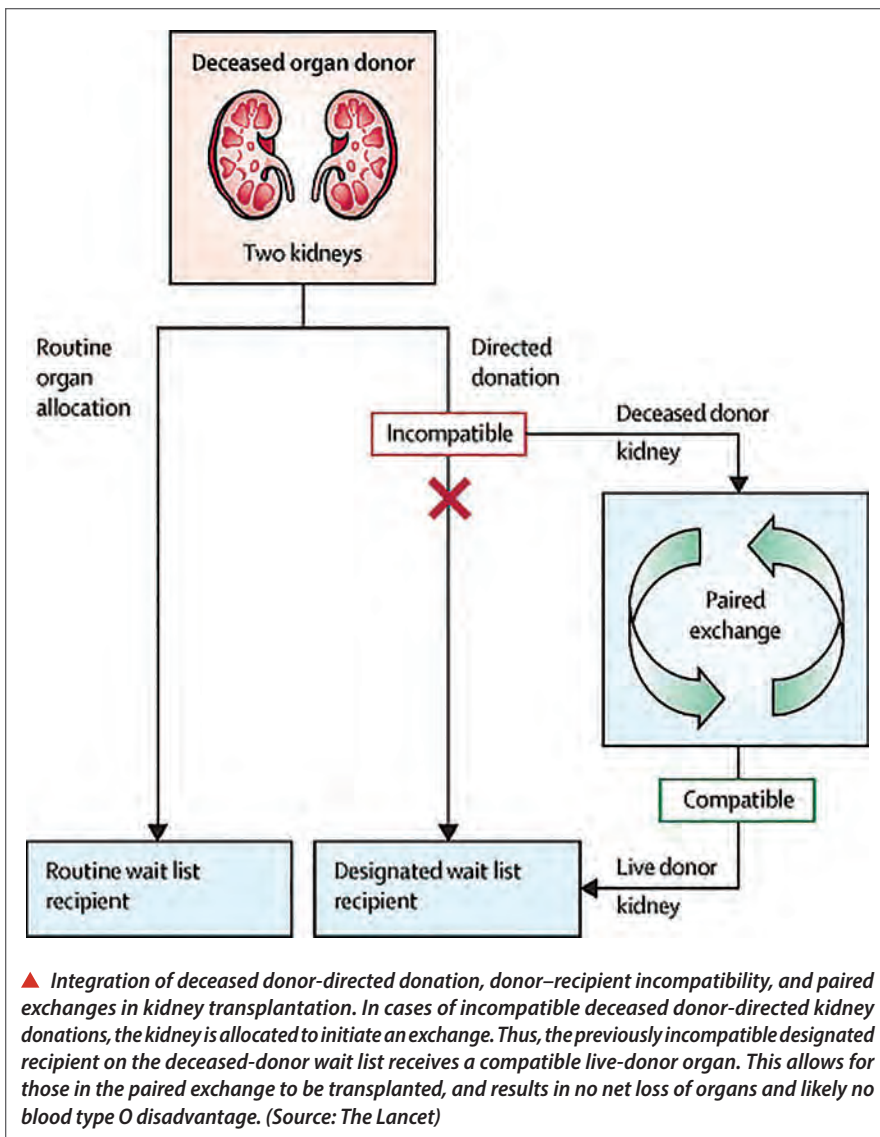
### OKAY, IT’S LEGAL, BUT IS IT HALAL?

FCNA, in unison with individual scholars and global fatwa councils, considers organ donation and transplantation permissible. The most recent Sunni position regarding this ethical permissibility, via FCNA, allows for the practice with seven main stipulations: 1) People cannot sell their organs, 2) Neither the donor nor the recipient experiences considerable harm, 3) The donor gives his/her consent and authorization, 4) A vital organ can’t be donated if removing it will kill the donor, 5) Deceased donation must occur after cardiac determination of death, 6) Major Islamic scholars agree that donating reproductive organs is prohibited and 7) Other donated organs should not compromise the quality of the donor’s life.

This fatwa defines “deceased” as cardiac death. As brain death remains a topic of contentious debate among Islamic jurists, it requires a more case-by-case evaluation. Limitations regarding organ donations are not

**OVER HALF OF ALL CANDIDATES ON THE ORGAN TRANSPLANT WAITING LIST ARE FROM A RACIAL OR ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP, BECAUSE SELECT DISEASES THAT CAUSE KIDNEY FAILURE ARE MORE COMMON WITHIN THESE POPULATIONS. THEIR HIGHER RATE OF KIDNEY FAILURE TRANSLATES TO A POTENTIALLY HIGHER NEED FOR KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS AMONG MUSLIM AMERICANS, WHO ARE PRIMARILY FROM MINORITY GROUPS.**





restricted to this list (<http://fiqhncouncil.org/on-organ-donation-and-transplantation>).

### WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

According to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, as of July 2019 there were 113,293 candidates on the organ donation waitlist, 84 percent of whom are awaiting a kidney transplant (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network [OPTN], 2019), and approximately 20 of whom will die every day waiting for a transplant. Although more people are starting to register as organ donors, only three out of every 1,000 people die in a way that makes organ donation feasible (Health Resources & Services Administration, Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (2019, July) *National Data*. Retrieved from <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data/view-data-reports/national-data>).

Over half of all candidates on the organ transplant waiting list are from a racial or ethnic minority group, because select diseases that cause kidney failure are more common within these populations. Their higher rate of kidney failure translates to a potentially higher need for kidney transplants among Muslim Americans, who are primarily from minority groups. Thus, this a formidable health concern within the community.

### WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Knowing what you know now, how might you react differently if a family member or a close friend needed an organ? Imagine that a middle-aged Muslim woman at your mosque has been diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease. Her kidneys are failing, dialysis is taking a heavy toll on her and she is the main caretaker for her two young daughters. As the disease is progressing rapidly, eventually she will require a transplant.

A group of family and friends are asking the mosque attendees to get tested in order to locate a potential living donor or perhaps a DDD. If you know about this case, then you may be able to authorize your organs to be donated to her when the opportunity arises. This is just one scenario where a kidney, via DDD from a dying person, could potentially save a life.

In 2017, PEW Research Center estimated that about 3.45 million Muslims were living within the U.S., a number projected to increase greatly during the next decade. Thus people will fall ill and require kidneys, and some of us will die with perfectly viable kidneys. We urge our families and communities to start the conversation now so that our families will know our wishes in this regard when death begins to approach us, either slowly or by surprise. <sup>ih</sup>

Abu Fahad Abbasi, an MD candidate at Saint James School of Medicine, completed a medical student internship during the summer of 2019 at the University of Chicago's Initiative on Islam and Medicine. He is interested in Muslim patient care and Islamic bioethics.

Aasim I. Padela, director of the Initiative on Islam and Medicine and associate professor of medicine at the University of Chicago, is an expert in Muslim health disparities research and Islamic bioethics.

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# Trust the Still, Small Voice

Providing the information, and then leaving the rest to God's will

BY LINDA "ILHAM" BARTO

“WHY ISLAM?” ([HTTPS://WWW.WHYISLAM.ORG](https://www.whyyislam.org)) is a Muslim American *da'wa* organization that, as its slogan “You deserve to know” suggests, seeks to provide accurate information about Islam to counter all the lies, propaganda and misunderstandings surrounding it.

The *da'wa* team travels to offer materials and talk to anyone interested in learning about Islam from faithful, practicing Muslims. During ten days in August, the team set out to witness in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland.

I received a message from a friend in South Africa asking me to contact Mostafa Higazi, a team leader in New Jersey, to see if he needed my help. I didn't know him, but his team was on its way to Charlotte, N.C., and my husband Tom and I were asked if we wanted to participate. As we live in a rural area about an hour's drive from Charlotte, we agreed to attend the brief *da'wa* seminar and then join his team on a street corner to speak with anyone who was interested.

When we arrived at our destination, a large man with a booming voice was shouting, “Jesus saves! Jesus loves you.” He could be heard a block away. A regular street preacher, he was well known to the city inhabitants and commuters for his loud and consistent monologue about “the Good News.”

Seeing our group invading his “turf,” he immediately paused and, noting my hijab, seemed to become electrified with a new surge of energy. He began shouting, “Here are the Muslims! They are misguided! They worship a false god!”

He then turned to face us began bantering, “Jesus loves you. I don't love you, but Jesus loves you.” He emphasized that he didn't love us, and his body language was somewhat threatening.



As a military veteran with the courage to face challenges straight on, I walked up to him, shook hands with him and said, “I know Jesus loves me, and I love Jesus.”

He said, “You love the wrong Jesus!”

He kept yelling at us and about us. When the men went to set up our table, I asked them, “Can't we move further down the street so we can be away from his yelling?” They said that we couldn't because the permit specified that particular street corner. So we

moved it a little farther back so we could have at least a little space away from him. Most people ignored us and our colorful array of brochures as they walked by, but others were interested and stopped to ask questions and take some of them.

In the meantime, the street preacher tried to overwhelm our efforts with his yelling. Some of our male team members tried to talk to him. Higazi asked him, “Brother, could you please not shout so loudly so that we can also talk to people on the street?”

Continuing his loud rhetoric, he insisted, “I'm not your brother! Don't call me brother!”

The Muslims tried to share something of Islam with him, but he had built a brick wall around his heart and refused to listen. Some team members shared Biblical and Quranic verses with him to show the correct perspective of Jesus (*'alayhi as salam*). Higazi, who had more knowledge of the Bible, offered him an intelligent discussion. Still, the other man's heart remained hardened.

A lady stopped by our table and asked, “Is he bothering you?”

Of course, he was, but I just said, “No, he's just doing his thing, and we're doing our thing. It's fine.”

She said, “I hate the way you Muslims are treated. You have as much right to be here as anybody, and I support you.” We thanked her for that.

Realizing that this was his technique, we focused on presenting a gentle, quiet spirit so that people could see the difference. God




**DURING THE TIME WE WERE THERE, SEVERAL PEOPLE STOPPED TO TALK WITH US. FOUR PEOPLE ACCEPTED ISLAM AND SAID THEIR *SHAHADA* AT OUR TABLE! AS WE REJOICE FOR THOSE NEW MUSLIMS, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL MONOTHEISTS TO COME TO A CONSENSUS OF UNITY IN SERVING THE ONE TRUE GOD. THOSE OF US IN HONEST SUBMISSION TO GOD SHOULDN'T FEEL THAT WE'RE IN COMPETITION TO SEE WHO CAN GET THE MOST FOLLOWERS.**

speaks in a still, small voice, so we have to be humble and let Him do the speaking. We must trust in His power to break down barriers for us in accordance to His will and timing. We don't have to do anything but reflect His grace, mercy and kindness.

During the time we were there, several people stopped to talk with us. Four people accepted Islam and said their *shahada* at our table! As we rejoice for those new Muslims, it is important for all monotheists to come to a consensus of unity in serving the One True God. Those of us in honest submission to God shouldn't feel that we're in competition to see who can get the most followers.

Rather, our purpose should be to get people to submit their whole lives to God, and then trust God to show each person the way that he or she should go. The more people learn about Islam, the more apt they will be to follow its path. But getting their hearts right with God is the first step.

When Tom and I left the street corner, I went up to the street preacher, took a brochure, shook hands with him and said, "Good luck to you. God bless you." That stunned him. His mouth dropped open, and suddenly he had nothing to say. God willing, in his few moments of silence, perhaps God spoke to his heart in that still, small voice of peace and gentle guidance. 

Linda "ilham" Barto is author of *Memoirs of a Hillbilly Muslim* (2011) and other Islamic books.

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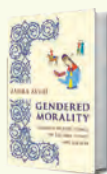
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## Gendered Morality: Classical Islamic Ethics of the Self, Family, and Society

Zahra M. S. Ayubi

2019. Pp. 368. PB. \$35.00

Columbia University Press, New York, N.Y.



**A**YUBI ARGUES THAT ALTHOUGH ISLAMIC SOURCES offer potentially radical notions of equality, classical-era Islamic philosophers chose to establish a hierarchical, male-centered virtue ethics. Approaching philosophical ethics from a feminist critical perspective, she seeks a philosophical turn in the study of gender based on the resources for gender equality unlocked by feminist engagement with the Islamic ethical tradition.

Her close readings of foundational texts by al-Ghazali, Nasir-ad Din Tusi and Jalal ad-Din Davani examine how they conceive of the ethical human being as an elite male within a hierarchical cosmology built on excluding women and nonelites. She argues that while prescribing ethical behavior, they also speak of complex gendered and human relations that contradict their hierarchies. Their metaphysical premises about the nature of the divine, humanity and moral responsibility indicate a potential egalitarian core.



## Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam

Sylvia Chan-Malik

2018. Pp. 288. HB. \$77.13, PB. \$24.37, Kindle \$23.15

NYU Press, New York, N.Y.

**I**N NEGOTIATING THE HISTORIES OF ANTI-BLACKNESS, U.S. IMPERIALISM and women's rights during the 20th and 21st centuries, Chan-Malik' cultural history of Islam in the U.S. explores how Muslim American women's identities are expressions of Islam as both a Black protest religion and a universal faith tradition. She maps how communities of American Islam became sites of safety, support, spirituality and social activism, as well as how women of color were central to their formation.

Her insight into the resistance that all Muslim women must engage in within the post-9/11 U.S. offers a new vocabulary for Muslim American feminism, one that is just as conscious of race, gender, sexuality and nation as it is of region and religion.

## Practicing Islam in Egypt: Print Media and Islamic Revival

Aaron Rock-Singer

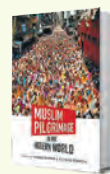
2019. Pp. 222, HB. \$99.99

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.



**F**OLLOWING THE IDEOLOGICAL DISAPPOINTMENT OF the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, an Islamic revival arose in Egypt. Rock-Singer argues that far from being a mechanical reaction to the ensuing decline of secular nationalism, this revival arose due to the impassioned competition among Muslim Brothers, Salafis and state institutions and their varied efforts to mobilize Egyptians behind their respective projects.

He shows how activists and institutions across the political spectrum reshaped daily practices in an effort to persuade followers to adopt novel models of religiosity. In so doing, he reveals how this revival emerged, who it involved and why it continues to shape Egypt today.



## Muslim Pilgrimage in the Modern World

Babak Rahimi and Peyman Eshaghi (eds.)

2019. Pp. 296. PB \$29.99

The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C.

**T**HE LIVED RELIGION OF PILGRIMAGE, DEFINED BY embodied devotional practices, is changing in an age characterized by commerce, technology and new socio-cultural and political frameworks. The contributors reveal and analyze emerging contemporary

Islamic pilgrimage practices around the world, in minority- and majority-Muslim countries as well as in urban and rural settings.

Organized around three key themes — history and politics; embodiment, memory and material religion; and communications — the book reveals how rituals, practices and institutions are experienced in the context of an inexorable global capitalism.

## The Caliphate of Man:

### Popular Sovereignty in Modern Islamic Thought

Andrew F. March

2019. Pp. 328. HB. \$45.00

Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.



**T**HE ARAB SPRING PRECIPITATED A CRISIS IN POLITICAL ISLAM. ISLAMIC activists have been crushed in Egypt, taken control in Turkey and, in Tunisia, govern but without the label of "political Islam."

March explores how, before this crisis, these activists developed a unique theory of popular sovereignty, one that promised to determine the future of democracy in the Middle East. He argues that the doctrine of the universal human caliphate underpins a specific democratic theory, a kind of Islamic republic of virtue in which the people have authority over the government and religious leaders. He asks if this is an ideal regime that is destined to survive only in the theoretical realm.



## The Idea of European Islam: Religion, Ethics, Politics and Perpetual Modernity

Mohammed Hashas

2019. Pp. 329. HB. \$63.00

Routledge, New York, N.Y.

**H**ASHAS DISCUSSES THE SPECIFICITY OF EUROPEAN Islamic thinking and emphasizes the importance of considering it just as seriously as we consider thinkers in the Middle East or Asia. He illuminates and engages intellectual landscapes at the intersection of geography, theology, philosophy and politics.

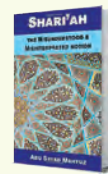
The author strives to capture the contours and details of European Islam by offering an engaging account of several of Europe's Muslim thinkers.

## Shariah: The Misunderstood & Misinterpreted Notion

Abu Sayed Mahfuz

2019. Pp. 124. PB. \$8.00

Independently published



**T**HIS BOOK, WHICH DEPARTS FROM THE CONVENTIONAL notion of Sharia and its implementation in politics or at the state policy level, advocates that one focus upon one's relationship with God and other people on the individual level.

Mahfuz cites Quranic verses and Hadith to support his contention that the Sharia's core objectives are to build one's relationship with God and serve humanity, as well as to improve the spirit of individuals and society. He maintains that these objectives can be achieved through wisdom and understanding, justice and efficient performances.




## What Do You Say? An Islamic Manners and Morals Book

Suzanne Muir

2019. Pp. 28. PB. CDN\$11.50

Compass Books, Toronto, Canada

**A**BILINGUAL ENGLISH/ARABIC STORY ABOUT A BOY WHO MEETS A dragon named Violet. They fly off on an adventure to meet trolls and a sea monster while learning some basic Islamic supplication (*du'a*), such as how to greet someone and what to say when someone sneezes. They solve problems together and become friends.

This slim but unique volume helps parents teach their young children basic Islamic manners and outlooks toward various situations. 



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*Ziauddin Sardar is the Director of the Centre for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies, a network of scholars and futurists who work on postnormal times and promote futures literacy with a particular focus on marginalized people.*

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