

Reviving the Islamic Spirit

An Overview

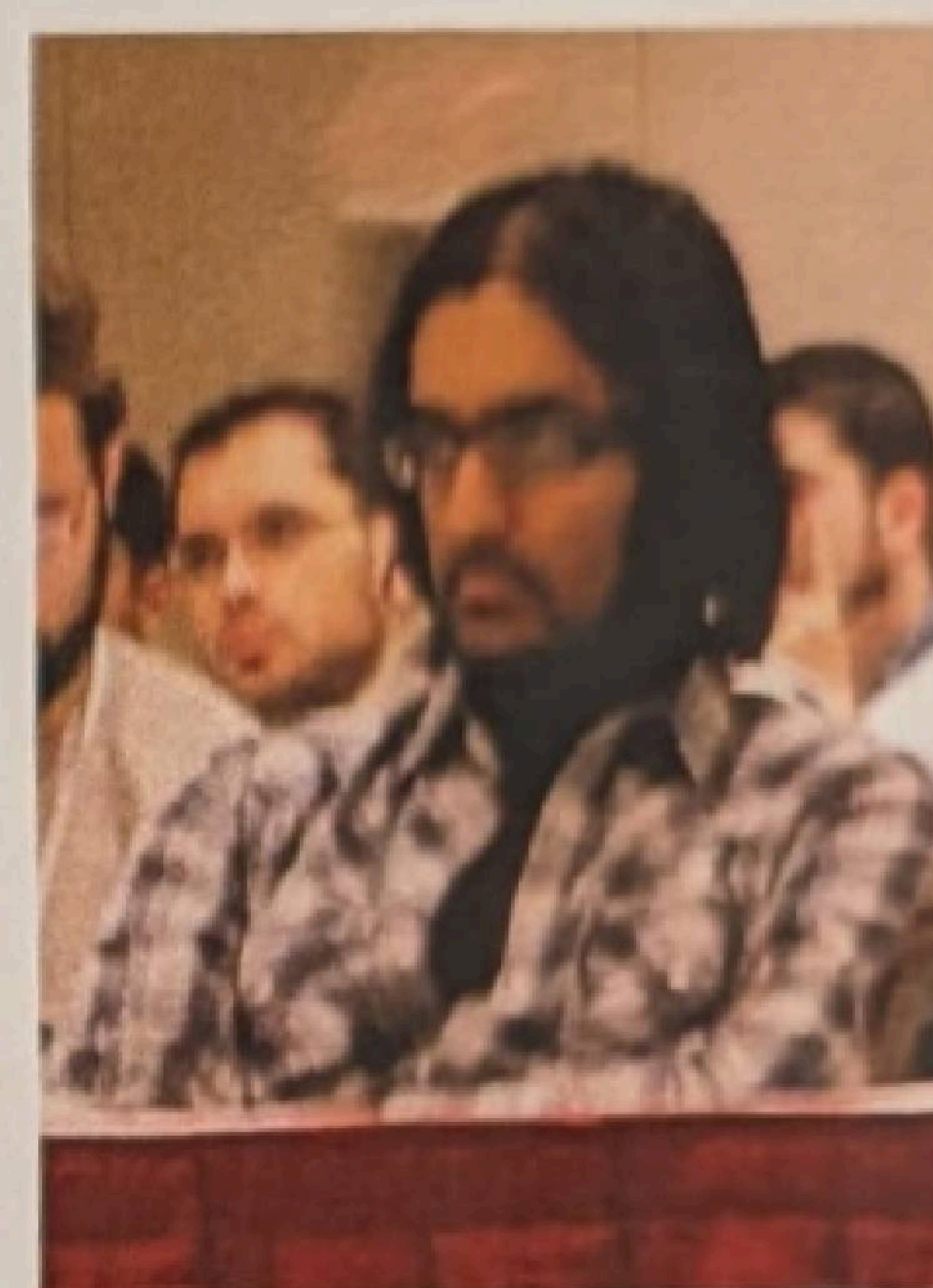
By: Nura Sedique



Shaykh Hamza Yusuf discusses Muslim Jewish relations with a Rabbi.

Over 15,000 people crowd in, faces of different colors and ethnicities all crowded in to enter in for one object: to find a means to get closer to Allah. This may not have been hajj, but for those Muslims who were unable to perform the Hajj this year, there was still a great opportunity to get closer to God. The Reviving the Islamic Spirit Conference, which occurred Christmas Weekend 2006 in Toronto Canada is now known to be one of the most effective conferences that exist in engaging the Muslim community to change their condition as Muslims.

"...your cultural identity is nothing if you can't come to terms with your spiritual identity...", said Tariq Ramadan. These words are a small illustration of the engaging thoughts that captured the attention of such a large audience. The dynamic program that RIS offers allowed the conference to go above and beyond its purpose in reviving the Islamic spirit. There is only one main session that occurs at one time, which can be considered one of the positive aspects of their conference. The program highlighted keynote speakers such as Imam Siraj Wahaj, Zaid Shakir, Tariq Ramadan, and Tariq Suwaidan, to name a few. From the spiritual to the sociopolitical realities of Europe that were discussed, Ramadan was just one of the many speakers whose teachings captivated and kept an audience in the thousands focused on the program. The dynamic program the organizers provided challenged and educated Muslims on how to revive their Islamic Spirit.



Waqas from Outlandish sitting in on a session

It is not common to experience a large sense of community in the likes of Hajj, but RIS was one experience that would fall short of holding that sense. Saturday night helped bring families and the community together through an evening of entertainment which highlighted performances by musicians as esteemed as Ehab Tawfiq and Outlandish.



Danish artists Outlandish sing "Aicha" during their first performance in North America at RIS.

The event culminated with closing remarks by Shaykh Hamza and Imam Zaid Shakir. The sense of community that was created in the weekend was left with the memory of everyone joining Imam Zaid to sing a Qasidah together. Over 15,000 people all joining together to sing a song praising Allah. The efforts were inspiring and motivating and left many like myself finding a greater awareness of their Islamic spirit, God and the important facets that make up our faith as Muslims.