

Reflecting on Islam Awareness Week

By: Danny Kallash

It may be a fair comparison to say that the product of Islam Awareness Week (IAW) was in many ways like the Zionist take-over of the Diag at its kickoff -- surprising and engaging.

The week was prefaced with an astounding Pep Rally featuring As'ad Tarsin, former MSA Islam Awareness Chair and President. The motivational Dawah workshop energized students and prepared them for the upcoming week by providing them with many tips, tricks, and keys for success in sincere dawah, as well as pizza, pop, and activities.

IAW saw a fun-filled, informative Dawah table at the Diag, creating a campus hotspot. Cider and donuts, pamphlets and flyers, questions and answers, and Muslims and non-Muslims interacted in productive ways daily from the AM to the PM. Although a drenched and rainy Tuesday got to the best of the Diag Dawah tables, MSAers proved brave, strong, and dedicated throughout.

The first evening lecture entitled "Islam According to the Quran" featured Dr. Mohamad El-Sayed, who concentrated on explaining the revelation and importance of the Quran in Islam. He expounded on the place of the other holy books in Islam, as well as the miracles and framework of the Quran

in a compelling fashion. But the night's spotlight goes to the non-Muslim who interrupted the speaker and began to debate, taking center-stage with the microphone. Dr. El-Sayed handled his biased and secular remarks well, though the non-Muslim may have left unsatisfied. Many believed this interruption made the event entertaining. Ironically, the night's snacks ended up missing, most likely stolen. Bets are leaning towards the disgruntled attendee but don't rule out the frustrated Zionists.

The week's next major event included community

leader, sister Najah Bazzy, who delved into the issue of Women in Islam. The speaker discerned the validity of certain stereotypes regarding Muslim women, including the issue of the veil, the apparent "oppression" of women, and other related misconceptions. Sister Bazzy provided insight, history, information, and active audience participation

in a productive dialogue. The event was a hit, with dozens of non-Muslims in attendance. This may have been due to the boost in publicity during President Coleman's speech on the Diag concerning diversity. Attendees of the event left with a fresh perspective and more thorough understanding of the subject.

The week ended with an amazing talk by brother Rami Nashashibi, a community activist and executive di-

rector of the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) based in Chicago, addressing the issue of "Peace or Terror: The Place of Islam in a Post-9/11 World". Nashashibi outlined the social system that develops under Islam and some of its implications. From the sociological perspective, he explicated the two competing narratives of peace and violence in a world where both are inevitably bound to exist. Nashashibi eloquently explained the attachment of many biased perspectives to 15-second soundbites on one extreme, and the complete neglect of terrorism under the name of Islam at the other extreme. Additionally the speaker began to trace many of the injustices and inconsistencies when attempting to understand the "other", be that from the perspective of those who adhere to the claim that Islam

is peaceful, or those who proclaim that Islam is nothing but terror. He stressed the need to keep an open perspective and to choose credible sources when attempt-

ing to understand the issue, and to move beyond misconception and study the religion rather than the peoples of the religion.

A special expression of gratitude must be extended to all those who helped, day and night, in organizing the week of concentrated and jam-packed dawah. May Allah reward them for their extended efforts. The Islam Awareness Committee looks forward to more amazing events next semester, insha'Allah. To get involved, contact d-crew@umich.edu.



Najah Bazzy gives a talk on women in Islam.



IAW volunteers gather around the dawah table on the diag



IAW volunteers give dawah on the diag