

ICCD Newsletter



Islamic Center of The Capital District

A note from the editor

By Azra Haqqie



Assalam alaikum and welcome to the third issue of the ICCD Newsletter, our spring issue.

Thanks for reading the newsletter. We have been fortunate to receive a number of responses to our question in the previous issue ("What qualities should the future imam have?"), including a humorous piece. We hope the Board of Trustees takes notice and we hope the new imam, when hired, has many of the qualities the community is hoping for.

Shaista Maqbool, a talented writer herself and wife of Brother Waliyullah, our young imam, writes about the legacy of our scholars. Brother Musodiq Bello shares his sentiments at hajj, along with those of his wife, Rasheeda.

From this issue, we introduce participation in the newsletter by students of the AnNur Islamic School. With Mother's Day coming up in spring, we asked kindergartners and first graders what their mother means to them. We loved their responses.

Samar Khan, a high school student at Niskayuna High, has taken the initiative and submitted her thoughts about members' participation at the ICCD. We hope other youth will share their views on other topics.

We have no column from a trustee this time. As has been the case since we started the newsletter, we asked one member of the ICCD board of trustees to write a column about the matters entrusted to that individual. In spite of requests and reminders both by e-mail and telephone over a period of two months, we did not receive any submission from Sister Naseem Bhatti.

In our "Serving the Community" column, Sarah Ahmed writes why she chose not to go for a career in medicine (as was expected of her) but chose instead to pursue another course of study where she could serve humanity and specially Muslims. She shares with us her experiences as she serves overseas.

We also have community announcements and an-

nouncements by the ICCD management.

We are excited that the ICCD will be host for two authors in the next three months: Yusuf Yee ("For God and Country") on March 15 and Christopher Ringwald (Sabbath) on May 17. Yee, a West Point graduate and a former Muslim chaplain in the U.S. Army, will share his experiences at Guantanamo Bay and the charges of espionage brought against him. Ringwald, former Times Union reporter, will talk about his time with the followers of the three Abrahamic faiths and how each observes the Sabbath. Both authors will sell their books and sign them.

And last but not least, our thanks to the local businesses who advertised with us. We appreciate your business.

Your ICCD Newsletter team: Zohra Ahmed, Azra Haqqie, Nesrin Morsy, Sherif Mohamed and Maliha Nazeer.

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Journey of a life time

By Musadiq Bello

Before participating in hajj, I wondered why hajj is commonly described as "a journey of a lifetime". I wondered why every person I know who went for hajj wanted to go again. I was anxious to know what makes

By the time the hajj was over and we were getting ready to leave for Jeddah, I started missing the Holy Land. When will I ever get a chance to make tawwaf again?

of others to perform the pilgrimage.

We started our journey in Madinah, "the City of the Prophet". It was no ordinary city - a blend of ancient and modern, an embodiment of Muslim history. At the Mosque of the Prophet (SAW), I was initially carried away by its size and scale, by the grandeur of the lighting fixtures all fitted with energy-efficient bulbs, by the magnificence of the arches layered one after another like feathers of a peacock, and by the detailed architecture of the minarets matched somehow by the simplicity of the domes. Suddenly, I realized I was in the same place that the blessed Prophet (SAW) and his noble companions once prayed, perhaps on the same spot! And at the same time, getting a thou-

sand times more reward, by Allah's grace, than I could get back home.

Right outside the Mosque was the Bagee cemetery. It looked as if nothing has changed inside it for 1400 years. Underneath the unmarked graves lie the best of people - those who sacrificed all they had to establish this religion of ours. I said the dua the Prophet taught us to say at graveyards and my eyes swelled when I got to the end: ".and inshaAllah, we will be joining you soon".

We had the opportunity of visiting Mount Uhud and I could almost see the battle of Uhud unfold before my eyes when we were shown the mountain pass that the archers deserted, costing the Muslims dearly. I felt as though I was living among the honored companions of the Prophet (SAW). I hope I join them in Paradis.

As soon as we wore the ihram on the way to Makkah, I started missing Madinah and the Mosque of the Prophet (SAW). But I had the consolation I was going to a more honored place in Makkah. Labayka Allahu labayk "Here we come, O Allah." Just beholding the Ka'bah was worth every penny of the trip. The Ancient House, The House of Allah, the foundation of which was laid by no other than Ibrahim (AS), the friend of Allah. It was the simplest of structures - a simple four-cornered building, with a multitude of people mak-

ing the simplest of movements round it, called tawwaf. And then the Black

Stone, the kissing of which is an act of worship that only one person in the whole world can perform it at any given time. It was then I realized it was truly a blessing to be one of the three million or so to make it to hajj out of the billion plus Muslims around the world. If I were to describe the hajj rites with one word, it was "humbling" Staying under tents in Mina and Arafah with only two pieces of cloth on; sleeping on the floor under "a thousand stars" in Muzdalifah; walking for an hour to throw small pebbles at the Jamarah; and meeting all shades of Muslims, including some interesting group who came in several large buses after driving for eight days continuously from Kyrgyzstan in the former Soviet Republics. By the time the hajj was over and we were getting ready to leave for Jeddah, I started missing the Holy Land. When will I ever get a chance to make tawwaf again? When next will I be granted a hundred thousand times reward for each salaah? And when next will I have the opportunity to be forgiven all my sins and be like a newborn baby? Hajj is truly a journey of a lifetime. I hope and pray I'll get another chance.



The Role of the ICCD: A Youth's Perspective

By Samar Khan, Niskayuna High School

I have been coming to the ICCD for almost half of my life. As a child, I was brought to the ICCD Weekend School and the mosque a lot, and as I got older I came to appreciate it myself. When I was younger, I didn't understand everything that went on in the Islamic Center too well. I only saw what was on the surface. As I grew up and became more involved in different activities in the ICCD along with my parents, I grew more aware of people's detachment towards certain things.

Muslims always mention how we should change non-Muslims' perspectives of the ICCD. People are always willing to tell others how things in our community could improve, but few people are ready to do any work. Of course, people donate money, but sometimes that by itself isn't enough. People should try to help out more, by actually going and volunteering at Muslim and non-Muslim organizations. If Muslims make an effort to help people of

different religions, they will do the same when we need help. Also, at the ICCD itself, people always seem to complain, to never think that things are good enough. Some people do a lot for the mosque, but if more people helped, the workload would lessen for everyone involved.

Commitment is another big problem for our people. If you agree to do something, to help in some way, people are counting on you to fulfill your task. If you neglect to complete your undertaking, people lose faith in you. People wouldn't be able to accomplish anything if others decided not to follow through with something, after saying they would. After all, the ICCD has been here for a long time, and Inshallah, will continue for many more years. If we want it to continue well, though, we all have to help, not just agree to.

Another thing I have noticed is people's differences of opinions in various issues. Some people feel very strongly about one topic, while

others feel strongly about the opposite view point. Compromise is rare. People are almost never ready to conciliate with others of opposing viewpoints. If Muslims can peacefully coexist with people of different faiths, why it is so difficult to live with fellow Muslims without fighting? Being too extreme is never a good idea, and it is especially disastrous in religion, where practiced ideas can vary. By having opposing ideas on what is right and what is wrong, we only continue the problems among Muslims for future generations. If people tried to find the middle path in arguments, problems could be avoided.

The mosque has always been like a second home to me. It has gone through many changes, but these few things haven't changed. Volunteering, committing to volunteering and compromising extremities are some things that we have to strive to improve, to make the mosque more enjoyable for everyone.

Reader's response

This one is mostly for our youth: What would attract you to the ICCD?

Some random answers:

- (1) a monthly social evening
- (2) a young, cool imam
- (3) no adults present (only youth allowed for that evening)
- (4) book club
- (5) movie and popcorn night

Share your thoughts about how to increase youth attendance and participation. Send your ideas/suggestions to: newsletter@iccdny.org.



The Legacy of Our Scholars

By Shaista Maqbool

Throughout Islamic history, the Sunnah has been preserved by some of the greatest prodigies to ever have treaded the earth. From our primary exemplar, Abu Hurairah, may Allah be well pleased with him and all the companions, to the commander and master of hadith, Imam al-Bukhari, to imams

our scholars were not beguiled by their intelligence; rather, it was this very brilliance which enabled them to affirm what they knew and acknowledge that which they knew not.

such as Al-Daraqutni, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and Al-Suyuti, the Sunnah has been preserved with the utmost precision and proficiency.

These scholars spared no efforts in differentiating the weak from the authentic, in recording the names, lineages, towns, travel records, births and deaths of those who the hadith were narrated from. They did the same for the teachers of these narrators as well as their students, memorizing as well the records of their integrity. A science of astonishing scope --- tackled by just as astonishing men and women. They sacrificed literally everything they had, even the necessities. The great imam of the science of narrators, Abu Hatim al-Razi said, "I stayed in Bosra in year 114 A.H. for eight months and I had it in myself to stay one year. Then my money expired! So I began selling my clothes, little by little until I had no expenditure left. I would go with a

friend of mine to the mashaikh (teachers) and hear from them until evening. My friend would leave and I would return to an empty house such that I began to drink water from hunger." Imam al-Sha'bi, a prominent tabi'i, traveled from Kufa to Makkah for just three narrations which were mentioned to him and said, "Perhaps I may meet a man who met the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah upon him." It is no wonder that these generations - with their fervent aspirations and noble intentions - reached in a few years what latter generations have not achieved in lifetimes.

Imam Ahmad ibn al-Hanbal was asked, "If a man was to write 30,000 ahadith is it not sufficient for him?" Imam Ahmad remained silent. The man asked, "Sixty thousand?!" Imam Ahmad remained silent. He asked, "One hundred thousand?" Imam Ahmad said, "Then he knows something." Nonetheless, despite their depth and command in their sciences, they never hesitated to benefit from each other or from conceding to each other's merits, even those imams who differed in methodology. On the contrary, they sought out each other to understand the other's view, this being from nothing else except their staunch commitment to the Truth, their only objective being to win unto understanding what Allah and His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, intended for mankind. Look, may Allah have mercy on you, how one of the greatest imams of

hadith of all time, Yahya ibn Sa'eed al-Qattan, after correcting his teacher, Sufyan al-Thawri, was told by Sufyan, "You are right, Yahya. Show me your books!" Sufyan, who was given the rare title of the Commander of the Believers in Hadith, did not let his eminent position deter him from accepting his student's correction; moreover, he requested to read his student's books. Imam Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Shaybani, even after taking his fiqh from Imam Abu Hanifah, traveled to Imam Malik in Medinah to hear his Muwatta' from him. Imams al-Shafi'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal likewise traveled around the Islamic world in pursuit of knowledge, (this after being recognized as prominent scholars themselves) and they both took from Imams Muhammad and Malik. Imam al-Shafi'i said about Imam Malik: "When the scholars are mentioned, Malik is the star." His praise of Imam Abu Hanifah is well known: "People are dependents of Abu Hanifah in fiqh." The spirit of our predecessors was thus that fifteen scholars - none of the from the Hanafi school - compiled books on the virtues of Imam Abu Hanifah! The "two schools" of Imam al-Shafi'i also serve as prime examples in this regard: the old and the new; his old school comprising of his opinions before his travels and his new school of those after his travels; making it obvious to all that the goal was Truth, far from obstinacy in methodology and legal rulings.

Furthermore, our scholars were not beguiled by their intelligence; rather, it was this very brilliance which enabled them to affirm what they knew and acknowledge that which they knew not. Yahya ibn Ma'een, one of the pillars of the science of narrators and hadith in general (he wrote 600,000 ahadith by hand), when asked a question on divorce, answered, "Ask the people of knowledge." He meant the fuqaha, i.e. the scholars of law (fiqh); for it does not necessitate that a scholar of hadith be a scholar of fiqh; as al-Hafiz al-Khatib al-Baghdadi explains, "Let it be known that [obtaining] a lot of the books of hadith and its narration - a person does not become a faqih [scholar of law] by it. He only learns fiqh by extracting the meanings of [the hadith] and probing deeply into [the hadith]." Ishaq ibn Ibraheem said, "I used to meet in Iraq with Yahya ibn Ma'een and Khalaf and our companions. We would study one hadith from two or three different chains. I would say, "Isn't this [hadith] authentic by our consensus?" They would say, "Yes." I would say, "What is its meaning? What is its purport? What is its fiqh?" All of them would remain silent except Ahmad ibn Hanbal, for he would speak with strong words." This is why even the giants from amongst the hadith scholars would not venture to derive legal rulings themselves; instead, they would defer this to the specialists in fiqh. One of these giants, Yahya ibn Sa'eed al-Qattan, one of the Commanders of the Believers in Hadith said, "We do not belie Allah; we haven't heard of judgment better than the judgment of

Abu Hanifah and we have adopted most of his views." Likewise, Waki' ibn Jarrah, another wonder from the scholars of hadith, would not give legal rulings from himself; rather he would give the ruling of Abu Hanifah. Yahya Ibn Ma'een, who was one of Waki's students, said, "I never saw anyone better than Waki'; he would face the qiblah, memorize his narration[s], pray at night, fast consecutively, and give fatwa (legal ruling) by Abu Hanifa's views." Even with their renowned expertise in the field of ahadith, with people flocking to them from around the world to hear and ask them about a hadith, they never dared to venture into issuing legal rulings as it was not their domain. It was this spirit of our predecessors - of selfless commitment to the truth with acknowledgment for all those who strive on this path and concession for those who have strode it - that our tradition was built on for centuries. Through these remarkable personalities, Allah preserved our deen, the ahadith through the muhadithoon, and the laws through the fuqaha. Today, Muslims have drifted away from these concepts and ideals which for so long shaped our tradition. True scholarship has become rare and when present, has become difficult to perceive. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah upon him, warned about this state of affairs; he said: "Indeed Allah does not remove knowledge by taking it away from the servants; rather He removes it by the death of the scholars, such that when there is no scholar left, people take as leaders ignoramus. They are asked

and they give rulings without knowledge, deviating themselves and others."

Yet, alongside this warning, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah upon him, also gave a glad tiding, saying, " There will not cease to be a group [of people] from my Ummah standing firmly on the Truth, not harming them whoever opposes them, until the matter of Allah comes [to pass] and they are thus."

The jama'ah of the Muslims is not merely the community existing today in America or a contemporary group calling to "reformation" of what was agreed upon since the beginning of Islamic history. Nor is it a group innovating ideas two or three - or even five - centuries old. Rather, it is the group of the tradition which Muslims across the world and in all generations of Islamic history have associated with; the way of our predecessors, the way of the overwhelming majority of the scholars of this deen.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, wholly fulfilled his duty of guiding us to that in which is our salvation, and our scholars followed by preserving the deen, elucidating it, and advising us likewise. The liability of seeking out this jam'ah now lies on each one of us; who we choose to associate ourselves with today, we will be with them tomorrow in the Hereafter.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "This knowledge is deen, so let one of you look to whom he takes his deen from."

And all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

From Albany to Iraq: In pursuit of peace

By Sarah Ahmed



toward a world where people and communities think first of peaceful mechanisms for change instead of resorting to violence.



When I was approached to write an article about my part in serving the global community, I thought, "How am I going to condense what I do into two pages?" When I tell people, "I work in international relations," people respond, "Oh, that's great! Will you work for the United Nations someday?"

I will not work for the United Nations someday. I would rather do as I have - put on a bulletproof vest and spend time with Kurdish soldiers trying to find out exactly what drives their society than sit behind a desk in New York City writing papers about issues I've never experienced. Choosing to work in development was not an easy process. I was well on my way to becoming a surgeon, as many in my family have become, when I realized there were enough doctors in our community and I felt I could be more useful to the world doing something else. I had more than just a passing interest in the social sciences and the role they play in demonstrating the trends of social and political movements throughout the world. Surrounded by a sea of highly successful doctors, engineers

and entrepreneurs, I found no encouraging words of advice regarding just how to pursue a career outside of these established and accepted occupations.

So, I decided to move to Washington, D.C., where I knew no one and had no job prospects lined up, to figure it all out in the city that was and is a key player in domestic and international politics.

I spent the first few years working in media and communications for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, focusing on youth advocacy and fundraising efforts. During that time, I volunteered for both the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition (NYSPC), advocating for the protection of Muslim and Arab Americans' (Nat. MSA) civil rights in a post-9/11 United States, and the National Muslim Students' Association, serving as Outreach Coordinator for the U.S. I spent many lunch breaks on the phone with journalists and non-Muslim student groups alike, garnering support for both organizations and their activities.

After three years in the non-

profit sector, I chose to pursue a master's degree in International Peace and Conflict Resolution. In my research of graduate programs, I came across conflict resolution as a field of study.

I was immediately intrigued, especially as I remembered what life was like for a first-generation minority American growing up in an affluent suburb in upstate New York. It was not easy navigating the waters of my reality in America, heavily influenced by both Islam and South Asian culture.

Internal and external conflict was a daily reality both within and outside of the relative safety of my home. Since the source of change in my life, as well as in social, political and economic trends, was conflict, I thought studying it would be the natural place to start if I wanted to eventually find resolutions. I had already decided, even before beginning graduate school, that I wanted to work internationally and travel to places that were so different from the life I'd always known. While in school, I realized I had a penchant for active conflict zones

and became what we in the development field refer to as a "conflict junkie". I attribute this fascination to the safety and security my parents have always provided to us, despite the violent and politically unstable realities of their own childhoods in India and Pakistan. The act, along with the long-term consequences, of the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan is nothing short of fascinating to me, fueled by the reluctance with which people are willing to discuss the hardships and tragedies of the world's largest mass migration to date, which continues to haunt parts of the sub-continent's social, economic and political infrastructures.

This fascination led me to spend an eye-opening summer in Karachi, Pakistan, in 2004, working for a non-government organization focused on human rights issues affecting women and children within the country. My primary contribution to the organization was to conduct research, and write the first draft of a report, on the trafficking of women and children within and through Pakistan, commissioned by the International Organization for Migration. It was through this experience, both at work and in my free time with family and friends, where I truly came to appreciate the impact of violent conflict on a society. I learned that socio-economic disparity was an inevitable consequence of conflict, where the haves usually escape the worst of the violence, leaving the have-nots to suffer, thereby opening the door for frustra-

tion to fester. Through my studies as well as this experience, and subsequent visits to Pakistan in 2006 and 2007, I learned that these gaps in a post-conflict society cannot be peacefully addressed if communications among individuals, development workers, government officials, etc. are not effective. In societies with so many competing ideals that have a tendency to reduce opposing parties to violence as a means of problem solving, skills in negotiation, conflict resolution, cross-cultural communication and mediation are necessary to achieve results in a peaceful manner. An understanding of the driving principles of a particular society is equally necessary to implement sustainable solutions to a wide variety of social, economic and political issues.

Since graduation, I've worked with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (<http://www.ndi.org>), a non-partisan NGO focused on political development in over 50 countries. I focus on Iraq, and specifically, on civil society development and women's political participation in the country. Our programs aim to provide assistance to Iraqis in the form of capacity and skills-building to effectively participate in the political process by providing both non-governmental organizations and individual civic leaders with the skills needed to build coalitions with one another based on issues rather than ethnic or sectarian loyalties. The focus of the women's program is to enable women activists to build issues-

based coalitions, gain positions of leadership within political parties and run for elected office, both nationally and at the governorate council level.

The unique perspective I hold as a Muslim American woman allows me to find out directly from the people NDI's initiatives are implemented for what they consider to be the most pressing political and social issues, and what suggestions they have for sustainable solutions. Developing programs in Iraq for both short-term and long-term political development that are based on what Iraqis are themselves identifying as significant makes the work my colleagues and I do more effective, relevant and organic. The technicalities of what I do at work are not as important as the opportunities that are afforded to serve and support a movement toward a world where people and communities think first of peaceful mechanisms for change instead of resorting to violence.

**Sarah Ahmed, Loudonville and Washington D.C.
Program Officer, Iraq Programs
National Democratic Institute**

ICCD Announcements

Young imam

Br. Waliyullah Amin will be available every night between Moughrib and Isha prayers to give clinics on tajweed and reading Quran to the community. He also offers the following regular halaqas:

1. Qur'anic Arabic, 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, open to all ages.
2. For Youth, 6 to 7 p.m. Friday, includes Islamic studies, fiqh and seerah.
3. For Youth, 9 to 11 a.m. Sunday, includes Islamic studies, fiqh and seerah.
4. For Adults, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, tajweed and fiqh.

Guest speakers

March 15: U.S. Army Muslim Chaplain Yusuf Yee (author "For God and Country")

April 19: Guest imam (to be announced)

May 17: Former Times Union reporter and Author Christopher Ringwald ("A Day Apart: How Jews, Christians and Muslims Find Faith, Freedom and Joy on the Sabbath")

Community gatherings and meetings will be held on the third Saturday of the month. Community members are requested to not plan other activities on those days. They are requested to attend the ICCD events.

Electronic bulletin board

has been installed in the main lobby at the ICCD and will

run announcements relating to the mosque, AnNur School, MCC, and cemetery. It will have prayer times for the week as well as slide show of any past or upcoming events in the Capital Region. The total cost was \$500 and it was paid for by the Masjid Fund.



New Treasurer

Mofeez Murtaza has stepped down as treasurer, but he continues to serve on the BoT. The new treasurer is Saeed Siddiqui. Mofeez will be working as a financial comptroller for the Islamic Center.

Imam Search committee update

The ICCD has received five official resumes from different imams around the country. So far, it has invited two candidates, the latest candidate being Dr. Mohammad Salem Agwa from Niagara Falls area. Imam Agwa is interested in serving in our community but at the same time he is also committed to his community in Niagara Falls. The Board will look into ways to benefit from Imam Agwa's knowledge on a part time basis.

Jummah

Because we are on daylight savings time, Jummah times will be 1 p.m. khutba, 1:30 p.m. jamaat.

Muslim Kitchen Soup

The Muslim Soup Kitchen Project welcomes ICCD youth 15 and up to volunteer on the last Saturday of the month in different locations of the Capital Region. Transportation is provided from the ICCD to the soup kitchen site.

Volunteers should be able to spend three hours setting up and cleaning up. They must sign up online at least three days before the event. For details or to volunteer, log on to <http://www.mskp.org>.



Community Announcements

Hajj mabroor

The following community members performed hajj in December:

Muzaffar and Meher Nigar Baig, Zafar and Najmah Maqsood, Laeeque and Alia Khan, all of Clifton Park.

Musodiq and Rasheeda Bello of Niskayuna.

Azra Haqqie of Loudonville and Naseem Haqqie of Loudonville and Syracuse.

Hikmatullah Khan of Latham.

Liaquat Ashiq Khan and Rubina Mumtaz of Latham.

Sherif Mohamed of Niskayuna.

Ahmed and Ummahani Naina and their daughter Razia, all of Albany.

Tipu Nazeer of East Greenbush.

Zahid Nazir of Latham.

and Ayesha (Brook), formerly of Saratoga Springs and now of Canada, and her husband, Muhammad Muhammad.

New babies

Arifa and Kamal Sheikh of Latham welcomed a baby boy, Faraz Kamal Sheikh, on Jan. 21.

Nighat and Ayaz Lari of Clifton Park are the maternal grandparents of Tihami Abdullaha Maqsood, who was born on Jan. 27 in New Jersey. Parents are Noera Ayaz and Maqsood Afaq.

Nighat and Anwar Khan of Albany are the paternal grandparents of Ilana Iman Khan, who was born Feb. 7 in California. Parents are Sadia and Shiraz Khan.

Akhtara and Iqbal Ali of Loudonville are maternal grandparents of Aleena Mariam Rafiyath, who was born Feb. 13 to Sana Ali.

May Allah bless them all with happy and healthy lives and



may He guide them on the right path. ameen.

Welcome

Asma Arif has relocated from Syracuse to Loudonville with her children, Valeid, Iman and Zoha, and her parents.

Mosadiq and Rasheeda Belo and their son Yusuf have relocated from Toronto to Niskayuna.

Deaths

Laeque-un-nisa, sister-in-law of Brother Sabir Siddiqi of Albany, passed away in Pakistan during Ramadan. She and her husband had spent many years in Niskayuna and Albany with the Siddiqis.

Rabia Hashmi, sister of Dr. Sabira Ghauri of Latham, passed away in Pakistan on Dec. 27. She had visited this area and many people in the community knew her. Also, Dr. Ghauri's brother, Moinuddin Hashmi passed away in Pakistan in January.

The maternal grandmother of Rasheeda Khan of Niskayuna passed away in North Carolina in January.

The maternal grandmother of Adil Khan of Niskayuna passed away in India in January.

Kamron Nessa Begum, mother of Akhtara Ali of Loudonville, passed away in India in January.

Inna lilla he wa inna ilaihi rajioon.

Interfaith

Muslim-Catholic dialogue is scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m. June 3, 2008 in the Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary, The College of Saint Rose, 432 Western Ave., Albany.

The topic is "Abraham." Everyone is welcome to attend.

To contribute a community item, please call Sr. Zohra Ahmed @ 462-3571, or e-mail the announcement to: newsletter@iccdny.org



Reader's Question response

Qualities of an Imam

I want our new Imam to:

1. be proficient in English and a good communicator
2. lead youth activities
3. have a great deal of Islamic knowledge, and
4. be approachable. I want an Imam who everyone feels comfortable being able to ask a question and talk to.

[Samar Khan, Niskayuna](#)

According to my humble opinion the Imam should have the 5 qualities:

- 1 He should have a fist-length beard
- 2 He should be preferably following the Hanafi fiqh
- 3 He should follow the Shariah in every aspect of his life.
- 4 He should have a good command over English and its desirable if he knows Urdu too.
- 5 He should be bold and brave enough to face the numerous challenges in doing dawah work in our Masjid

[Uzma Sayeed, Albany](#)

Some important requirements/qualities an imam should possess have already been mentioned in the question but the most important quality of an imam should be his ability to lead and guide the Muslim community according to the teachings of the Quran and the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Without this, all other qualities are baseless and useless.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said in his last sermon, "I leave behind me two things, the Quran and the Sunnah (Hadith), and if you follow these you will never go astray." (Bukhari, Muslim, Masnud Ahmed)

[Ayesha Ropri, Latham](#)

The imam should...

- (1) know the Quran by heart and with appropriate English translation.
- (2) should be well-versed in hadith.
- (3) should have at least four years of education in the United States and should have at least a master's degree (or equivalent).
- (4) should have the ability to interact with the media in order to project a positive image of the Muslim community in the Capital Region.
- (5) should possess the skills to communicate with the young Muslims.
- (6) should be willing and able to interact with the Christian and Jewish communities.
- (7) should be non-political.

[Muhammad Siddique, Delmar](#)

would like to see these qualifications in the future Imam of ICCD.

1. Should have a very good well rounded education and an excellent Islamic education.
2. If someone has a question/objection on his teaching/sermon, he should be able to reply honestly instead of ignoring or disparaging the person.
3. Strong communication skills including fluency in English and not a very heavy foreign accent.
4. Should be able to get along with the youths at the center and continue or establish new programs, if needed.

[Khalida Husain, Slingerlands](#)

Here is a job description that comes to mind. The new leader must have, first and foremost, a thick skin. He must be able to make decisions knowing fully well that no matter how appropriate, that

decision will be doubted and openly derided by at least some of his people. He must have an unblemished personal life since even minor flaws will not be tolerated. He should relocate his family to our area because in addition to giving us the comfort of knowing that he is putting down roots here, it'll allow us free access to his time and energy at all times. He must be able to lead prayers at the masjid 5 times a day even though the community is not in a position to provide him a residence in close proximity to the masjid. He should be an unpaid counselor at large to every couple and family who chooses not to use the social services and mental health system in the area, and should be able to answer calls at all hours of the day whenever crises arise in anybody's personal life. He must also be really 'cool' for the kids so they may flock to the masjid to listen to his sermons. However he must teach them only what we as parents consider appropriate, not necessarily what the kids need or want to hear. In addition to his obligations to the community, he needs to be able to fulfill his role as our representative in the capital district area. This will require excellent communication skills, a congenial personality and expertise in dealing with the media. Besides the scrutiny from the community, he should also be aware that the government is likely to give him special attention with the possibility of a sting operation or two just to ensure that he is not involved in any nefarious activities. Please everybody; get out your appointment books, I think we'll be inundated by requests for interviews anytime now.

[Aliya Saqib, Niskayuna](#)

My Mother

By Annur school students

Sr. Adeela Ikram asked Kindergartners what their mother was like. Here are some of their answers:

Maryam N.: My mother is a heart because she has a lot of love to give.

Layla A.: My mother is a cookie because she is sweet and she bakes lots of things for me.

Lubna I.: My mother is a star because she makes me smile.

Hassan A. : My mother is a flower because she smells nice and always smiles.

Salahudin A. : My mother is a candy because she is sweet.



These are some of the writing samples from first graders:

Aasim P.

I like to go with my mom to work and go to school with her. And go places with her and I like to go out with her and we like to walk.

Youssef S

I love my mother because when I do my homework, she lets me play on my computer. Then when I am done I read a book then she lets me go outside. The end.

Ayah O.

My mother takes care of me. My mother loves me. My mother plays with me. My mother buys me stuff. My mother makes me dinner. My mother goes places with me. My mother tells me jokes.

Meryem Y.

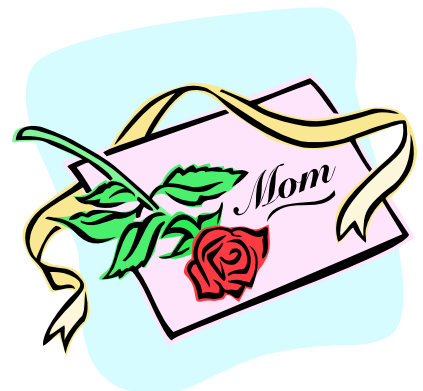
My mom is the best. She helps me. She does all the work. Every mom does that. But also babies cry all the time. Moms get tired.

Sumaiya N.

I love mommy. She is the best. She helps me and buys me toys. I love mommy so much. She hugs me. She helps me with homework. I love her so so so so so so so much. The end.

Sumayyah S.

I love my mom because my mom keeps me warm. I like my mom because she gives me food. I like my mom really much.



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www.iccdny.org

Heart Talk

Qur'an

“And Among His signs is this: that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and he has put love and mercy between your hearts, verily in that are signs for those who reflect”[30:21]

Hadeeth

Abu Hurairah reported that the

prophet Muhammad, Sallallahu Alayhe wa salam, said “let no male believer ever disgust a female believer. Though he may dislike one of her attributes, he will be pleased with another.” (Muslim)

Notable Quotes

“ Do not ask about a man. Ask about his close companions.

Every man imitates his close companions.”

-Turfah al-Abad

When you son is young, discipline him; when he grows older befriend him.”

-Anonymous

“ Envy is a fair disease. It hurts the envier more it does the envied.”

-Arab proverb