



November 2005

WAHDAT

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Expected date of 1st Dhil Oa'ada is December 3rd

'A free human being is free in all circumstances. Should a misfortune befall him he bears it with patience (*sabr*). If calamities strike him, they don't shatter him. If taken captive and subdued; he turns hardship into ease, as was the case of Joseph, the truthful and trustworthy (may God's benedictions be upon him). His freedom saved him from harm, although he was enslaved, subdued, and imprisoned. The darkness of the pit, the dread and whatever befell him did him no harm, until God favored him and made the insolent tyrant, who had been his master, his slave. Then God made him His apostle and through him was merciful to a people. In this way patience is followed by good. So be patient and reconcile yourself to patience in order to be rewarded.' - Imam Hussain (AS)

Masjid (Mosque)

By. Moulana Hurr Shabbiri

"Annal masajda lillah fala tadoo ma'Allahi Ahada (72:19)

The word *Masjid* is stated in Qur'an in several places. Masjid literally means "a place to prostrate before Allah." Historically, the first Masjid was built by the holy prophet of Islam when he entered the city of Medina. He stayed for 20 days outside Medina waiting for his family and some other companions, so during this time he built the mosque called Masjid e Quba. This became a tradition and all Muslims started to build mosques following the holy prophet (P.B.U.H).

In Surah Tawba, Allah (SWT) mentions some of the qualities of those who build and maintain the masjid:

"Only those shall maintain the mosques of Allah who believe in God and the last day, establish regular prayer and practice regular charity and fear none (at all) except God. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance." (9:18)

In verses (107-109) Allah declared the aims and philosophy to build a mosque:

"As for those who took a mosque for sabotage and for defiance and to cause division among the faithful and for the purpose of ambush (used) by those who have fought Allah and his apostle before (this). They surely swear: We desired nothing but good and Allah is witness that they are liars!"

The prophet has also talked of how to maintain Masjid:

"People should lower their voices, shouldn't speak falsely, and they shouldn't buy or sell the things (Avoid doing business). They must avoid from meaningless talks; if they do so they must be ashamed of themselves."

The Masjid is not only a place of prayer, but also a central place for Muslim society, or a multipurpose place. When we look at the life of holy Prophet (pbuh), we see that he used it for justice, social needs, Jihad etc. May Allah consider us as those who fulfill the rights of Masjid.

This Ummah is One Ummah: Building Real Community in Our Mosque

Part II (By. Sr Saliha Hejazi)

Note: Sr. Saliha's previous article (Part I) was published with her email address 'Nin Hajaba'

Many of us lead busy lives. Between the duties of family, work, higher education and religion, we often find that we have little time to relax and derive pleasure from our lives. Many of us, however, find that we do have some free time that we would like to use constructively, but we are not sure how to best spend that time. Perhaps we feel guilty because we cannot afford to donate as much money as we would like to the mosque even though the resources our mosques need are not always monetary. Our community is filled with doctors, artists, poets, tile-layers, engineers and people with a wide variety of special skills and knowledge that could be of benefit to the entire community.

Get Involved:

Volunteer need to put together and coach a sports team for our youth, replace a door, fix some electrical wiring, or even to give a speech or lecture, because these are all ways we can improve our mosque. Picking up garbage or cleaning a wall takes no special knowledge or skill, yet it brings us the tremendous blessing of caring for a house of worship, and helps to ease the burden of our hard-working mosque maintenance crew.

Do you have any ideas about how our mosque could be made a better place? Instead of complaining to friends, writing a letter or sending an e-mail to board members, why not put together your own proposal? Detail inexpensive or free ways to acquire the resources to turn your idea into reality. Our responsibility to our community extends beyond electing board members, paying a maintenance crew, and the occasional monetary donation. Though each of those things are important, none of them match the tremendous resources of your sincerely good intentions.

Be Patient, Be Persistent:

Change is often difficult and resisted. Allah (swt) sent thousands of Prophets to people across the globe proclaiming one very simple message, yet through the millions of years of human existence only a tiny fraction of people chose to embrace and live this truth. If people won't even listen to God, why should they listen to us? The truth is that there are a number of reasons why your ideas may meet with resistance. This does not mean that your input is not valuable. Keep trying and keep working. Also, remember that our community extends beyond the physical walls of the mosque. Organizing a sports team, a book club, a study group, a playgroup or any other number of needed activities for ourselves and our children does not have to be done with anyone's permission or even using mosque facilities, yet these activities bring us closer together as sisters and brothers in Islam and strengthen the bonds that create a strong *ummah* and a community environment that is beneficial to everyone.

Come Together For Change:

Beyond our own personal initiative, there are issues that we must begin to address as a community. As it stands, most mosques are built and run to serve the needs and desires of older men. Just about anybody under 30 is often conspicuously absent from decision-making positions in the mosque and their needs and desires go almost completely ignored.

Our own mosque provides a spacious, private area outside of the prayer area for women and children to sit. Yet, this area has no speaker system. This means that a woman nursing a young child -an activity that Allah (swt) has granted equal status with that of the *mujahid*-their young children are completely exiled from the rest of the *jamaat* (gathering). As a mother of two small children who is often nursing a child, I rarely come to the mosque because the services are of little benefit to my children or myself.

When children are tired of sitting they want to walk, run or even talk a little. Although our community members tend to be patient with and understanding of young children, children should not come to the mosque and learn that it is a place to run wild. They must learn that they can benefit from their experience at the mosque while being respectful of the mosque itself.

No matter how many times we tell children how to behave at the mosque, they cannot learn unless they have the opportunity to practice. Still, why should a mother take the time and effort to ready herself and her children for the trip, drive a long distance through heavy traffic, only to be exiled to a room where the only thing there is to listen to is the chatter of other women and the playing of their children? That space could be better used if there were some way for us to listen to the lecture while the children play. This way, a mother can talk to her children about what they are hearing and assist them

in understanding lectures, du'a, nohas etc. They can interact with one another while benefiting from the mosque environment and not disturbing other worshippers.

Young people are filled with fresh ideas and energy. We must begin to take advantage of that energy by opening a place for them in the mosque environment. High school and college-aged students are capable of remarkable organization and effectiveness when given the chance and a little bit of guidance. They must be welcomed into the community and their advice and action actively sought.

Imam Ali (as) advised: If you need counsel about some matter ...begin by exposing it to the spontaneity of the young, for surely their minds are sharper, and their intuition is quicker; then after that refer it to the judgment of those who are mature and old, so that they can analyze it, and describe what is best for it, for surely they are the most experienced.

Our beloved Ahl al bayt (as) are the perfect examples of building community: Prophet Muhammad as the pious middle-aged man, Imam Ali (as) as the sharp minded and energetic youth, and Khadija al Kubra as the wise and patient woman, were all carefully chosen by God to become the axis from which Islam sprung. When Imam Hussain (as) went to Karbala he chose amongst his companions, very carefully, women both old and young, men both old and young, the married and the single. We must be careful not to stray too far in favor of men or women, the young or the old; Islam is the religion of balance. We cannot succeed unless we follow the example of Ahl al bayt (as). We cannot succeed unless we work together. As we are reminded in the divine revelation of the Qur'an, this ummah is one ummah.

Halal Turkey - to eat or not to eat -

Update on Bird Flu

By Br. Qamber Jafri

Lately we have been seeing headlines like, "The Bird Flu - The race to prevent a global epidemic" (*Newsweek* - Oct 31 ,2005) or, "The Next Killer Flu - Can we stop it?" (*National Geographic* - October 2005,) just to name a few. With the recent scare, some people are asking the question: is it safe to eat turkey this Thanksgiving?

The bird flu virus is an H5N1 variant of the avian flu. It has killed millions of birds in the past few years and is responsible for about 75 deaths worldwide, particularly in SE Asia; in the case of a pandemic, the bird flu could kill over 7 million people.

The virus originates from wild aquatic birds such as waterfowls and ducks. In 1997, in Hong Kong, the virus, with an H5N1 strain, spread from chickens to humans. A pandemic was prevented by killing 1.5 million chicken in the farms and markets of Hong Kong.

In chickens, the virus spreads throughout the whole

body- guts, lungs, brains, muscles. In humans, it mainly attacks the lungs, although reports of brain damage have also been reported. There have been no reported cases of the virus being spread amongst humans.

With the fiasco and mismanagement of natural disasters like the Katrina and Rita hurricanes, earthquake in SE Asia, and the Tsunami, it has been made quite clear that governments throughout the world are unprepared for this potential threat.

What to do for this flu season

For many, flu shots are usually not worth the time, but if you have not gotten one yet, this is the year to get one. Although it will not protect you from the bird flu, it will protect against circulating bugs that cause illnesses and will increase tolerance against other viruses. Health experts do not advocate hoarding antiviral drugs like *Tamiflu* or *Relenza*, because if a pandemic does occur, all available medicines will be needed.

Travel Advice

Stay away from animal markets and poultry farms. Wash your hands and do not eat undercooked eggs or poultry. Frequent hand washing is the single most effective disease prevention measure there is. If you travel to an endemic area and develop flu symptoms such as fever or respiratory illness, seek medical help. Drugs like *Tamiflu*, if taken within two days of initial symptoms, reduce the severity of the flu illness. Bird flu patients will need more potent medicines.

So what about halal turkey?

The answer is - if it is halal and cooked well - go for it, because you cannot get bird flu from a well-cooked turkey. Bon appetit.

IEC Elite Basketball Team

By Tabish Agha

We have recently formed a boys' basketball team, (appropriately named) the IEC ELITE. We are a tight nit group who has been through a lot together in the last six months, from broken bones to victories and defeats. However, what stands out the most about our team is what we have accomplished in such a short amount of time: brotherhood. We are loyal to each other and encourage one another to do better with each passing day.

There will soon be a tournament held by the North Zone masjid. The team entry fee is \$900 so we are looking for sponsors and donations. The games will be at Sharpstown high school, and InshAllah, we intend on bringing the trophy home for IEC. We encourage the community to come and cheer for us. There will be more updates coming up in the near future, and if you are
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interested in helping, please contact any team member or the IEC.

May Allah Bless you.

How did you spend your Eid

"I spent my Eid going to Eid Namaaz, out to eat, and going to our friends' house. I got two presents. I had a happy day with my friends and family."

Habeeb Hooshmand, Grade 3

"On the day of Eid, I met all my friends and family and greeted them. Later that day, I went to the First Colony mall, we went to different stores. I ate cinnabon, it was sugary. At night, we went to the Knowledge Contest at Al Ghadeer."

Kulsoom Ali, age 7

"I celebrated Eid by going to the carnival and dinner. We went to namaaz. We had a fun time."

Layla Hooshmand, Grade 2

"On the morning of Eid I woke up and had a very good feeling because we were going to go to the I.E.C and meet all of my friends and pray my Eid prayer. I quickly washed my hands and face and got ready to go. When I got in to the living room I saw my family all ready so we quickly got in to the car and drove to the masjid. First I saw my friends and went over and said Eid Mubarak. Right after that I went inside the prayer hall and prayed Eid prayer. After that my family and I went home and my dad gave me my present. I liked it very much. That was one of my favorite Eids of my life."

- Sina Mirab, age 11

"First I woke up for Fajr. And after that I took a shower and put on my new clothes. Then I went to the masjid to pray namaaz. After that I went to my Grandma's house to eat and to discuss with my family what we were going to do. We invited some guests over. Then the grown-ups gave the children money. But it wasn't over. After that, we went to my friends house and then we ate dinner and talked. That was lots of fun. I hope we do that again."

- Batool Naqvi, age 10



Programs for the month of December

December 3rd, Saturday

Al-Hadi School turns 10 this year!!!

Al-Hadi School of Accelerative Learning invites you to its 10th Anniversary Celebration

Date: Saturday, December 3rd, 2005

Time: 6:30 pm

Events: Student Performances, Dinner & Fund Raising Auction

Tickets: Adults & Youth (12+) - \$20

Children under 12 – Free

Kindly purchase tickets from the Al-Hadi PTO

PTO email: pto@mrtz.com

Event hosted by Al-Hadi School

December 10, Saturday

IEC Annual Picnic

Kitty Hollow Park

12 Noon - 5 pm

Salat Zohr/Asr will be offered at the Park.

December 12, Monday

Wiladat of Imam Reza (AS)

{11th Dhul-Qaddah}

Isha Prayer: 7:00 pm

Qaseeda/Youth Presentation: 7:30 pm

Speech by Moulana Hurr Shabbiri: 8:00 pm

Tabaruk: 8:45 pm

December 17, Saturday

Community Visit to Cemetery

Place: Paradise Funeral Homes

1401 W. Montgomery Road, Houston, TX 77088

Time: 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Direction:

Available on the IEC website or contact Br. Hasan Syed @ 832-419-2019

Program:

- Recitation of Surah Yaseen at the Muslim Burial Site
- Update of available burial places at Paradise Funeral Home
- Dua & speech by Hujatul Islam Moulana Ghulam Hurr Shabbiri
- Tabarruk

Note: Covered shade will be provided for the families at the burial site.

Please inform all the momineen specially those who have relatives buried at Paradise Funeral Home. Please contact Hasan Syed @ 832-419-2019 if you want to sponsor Tabaruk for the sawab of deceased family members.

We thank all those who contributed to the publication of this newsletter: Moulana Hurr Shabbiri, Samira Irani, Madiha Zaidi, Tabish Agha, Qambar Jafri, Kumail Mirza and especially the children.
We welcome contributions from our community members.
May Allah bless you.