

CIMIC Community Picnic

Sunday, July 5, 2009

4 p.m.—7 p.m.

Lake of the Woods, Mahomet

This event is **POTLUCK**.

To volunteer, or for any questions, please contact Br. Said at hadasaid@yahoo.com.

June 23, 2009

Dear Community Members,
Assalamu 'alaykum

As you can see when you enter the mosque or as you review the content of the enclosed newsletter, the talents and contributions of the Muslim community in Champaign-Urbana are plentiful. Our community includes faculties and students in every field, business people, professionals, entrepreneurs, parents with great qualities, volunteers and more. Our mosque unifies us and provides us a venue for worship, social gatherings, brotherhood and sisterhood, education, and more.

In order to maintain the level of activities and the property itself, CIMIC has been bearing a large financial burden. Now is the time to remember the mosque not only through our prayer and volunteer works, but also with our financial commitments. CIMIC pays its bills and supports its various activities with what you offer as donation. In other words, the mosque *literally* runs on your donations.

On behalf of the CIMIC Board of Directors, I appeal to you to donate generously for the operating cost of the CIMIC as well as for the new project on the property across the street which is currently under preparation.

We are pleased to announce that CIMIC is now capable of receiving donations through **direct deposit** from your bank account and by **credit card**. You may make one-time donation, or you may authorize CIMIC to make multiple withdrawals, in any amount and time-duration you choose.

The mosque needs your support and giving that support is now easier. Please fill out the form at the bottom of this letter and send it to CIMIC in the enclosed envelope. If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail CIMIC@cimic.org. May Allah bless you for your support and donation to CIMIC.

Sincerely,

Muhammad al-Faruque
CIMIC President

Donation Form

Name: Phone Number:

Address:

Amount of Donation: \$..... Signature:

How frequently would you like to make this donation?

- One Time
- Two Times
- Three Times
- Monthly for month/year

For Credit Card Donations:

Card Number: Expiration Date:

Three-digit Security Number on Back of Your Card: _____

For **Direct Deposit** Donations: Please include a VOID check of the account from which money will be withdrawn.



SUMMER 2009

Volume 3, Issue 2

Rising Up: Enacting Change in Our Community

By **Hatim Rahman**

With so many of us struggling with pressure from the economy, our jobs, and the society we live in, we must ask ourselves what is our role in bringing change to our community? There are some, in the face of these difficulties, who will be discouraged and feel helpless, while others will simply wait for someone else to solve our problems. Both of these approaches are lacking and deficient, because an optimistic Muslims do whatever they can with whatever Allah has blessed them.

From Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the righteous companions, to Malcolm X, our history is rife with examples of individuals who could have easily given in to the vices of laziness and apathy, but instead tried their best to change the condition in which they lived. Alhumdulillah, with Allah's guidance and help, they succeeded in enacting posi-

tive change.

Every single one of us, from the youngest to the oldest, has a role to play in our community; however, one thing is for sure, we will never find out what we are capable of until we push ourselves. Sometimes it is the smallest of acts, such as picking up a piece of garbage from the masjid, done consistently, that have the largest impact. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, "'The deeds most loved by Allah swt (are those) done regularly, even if they are small" (Bukhari, Muslim).

Even if you have one spare hour in the month, you can help! There are opportunities to help teaching children, outreach to the community (da'wah), designing flyers and web pages, writing articles, gardening, and many more opportunities.

Email volunteer@cimic.org to find out how you can help!

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Did you know?

The tea party cost CIMIC \$150, but raised more than \$1,500 in donations! Every event held at CIMIC builds unity and also helps the community in other ways, too.

Layout and editing by **Abrar Al-Heeti** and **Roaa Al-Heeti**.

Muslim Women's Tea Party offers time for unity, collaboration

By **Roaa Al-Heeti**

The first ever Muslim Women's Appreciation Tea Party was held at CIMIC on Sunday, May 3. The event lasted several hours, and was a success by any standard.

More than 50 women attended the gathering. The sisters brought delicious foods to share, and even more welcoming company.

Several sisters presented at the event. Br. Alia Bilal presented a spoken word on her experiences growing up with hijab. Sr. Fatima Ahmed read Urdu poetry. Sr. Bushra Radeef read Arabic poetry. Sr. Benazir Chhotani shared her experiences as a member of the Muslim community in Champaign-Urbana, and how CIMIC was there for her during her college years. Sr. Ayanna Qadeem prepared the programs. Sr. Yusra Al-Shawaf and Sr. Alia Bilal helped plan the event.

The sisters also discussed ways in which we, as Muslim women, can help our masjid. Look forward to events sponsored by the



Muslim Sisters of C-U soon,

Insha Allah.

The flowers for the event were donated by Sr. Karen Jassim, which were planted in the CIMIC garden after the event.

This event gave Muslim women an opportunity to meet, socialize, and celebrate accomplishments of local Muslim women.

Insha Allah this event will be repeated.

Calendar

CAMP CIMIC:

- June 7 - August 2
- Sundays from 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- Ages 5 to 18

CIMIC Dawa Committee Booth at the Urbana Farmer's Market every Saturday, 8 a.m.– 12 p.m. until November

Tae Kwon Do: Thursdays 5-6 p.m., Saturdays 8-11 a.m. Additional summer sessions may be added.

Friday Seminars every week at CIMIC

Dawa Committee Meetings at CIMIC:

- June 7
- July 5
- August 2

Community Picnics:

- July 5 at Lake of the Woods
- August 2 at Crystal Lake
- Weekend after Eid at Lake of the Woods

CIMIC Board Meetings:

- June 18
- July 16
- August 20

Addressing domestic violence by strengthening the community

By Dr. Mohammad Khalil

In February 2009, a Muslim woman named Aasiya Zubair was murdered by decapitation in the state of New York. Her husband has reportedly confessed to the crime and has been arrested. What makes this tragedy peculiar is the fact that he had launched a television network dedicated to countering anti-Muslim stereotypes. (It is worth noting, however, that the very idea of establishing the network was that of the victim.)

The media ran with this story because it seemed so ironic; it seemed to confirm many of the stereotypes people have of Muslims, particularly the stereotypes of misogyny, violence, and barbarism. We know better. We know that these kinds of crimes have nothing to do with our faith; they are antithetical to our faith. And we know that there is nothing particularly Muslim about any of this. There is no reason why we should be on the defensive.

But if we leave aside the sensationalism that this incident has attracted, we are nevertheless confronted with the fact that this crime occurred in an American Muslim community. If we begin to dig beneath the surface and examine the social, institutional, and individual pathologies that may have led to this crime, we find that there is much that we have to confront if we seek to be an honest, healthy community.

We have good reason to believe that the confessed murderer had a long history of domestic abuse. And domestic abuse not only paves the way to gruesome acts like the one that occurred, but is evil in and of itself. And it is a problem that is more common than we may care to admit. Every single day, countless women, children, and, yes, men are abused throughout the world and right here in the United States – not just among non-Muslims, but also among Muslims. I will never forget speaking with a group of well-educated American Muslim women who recounted the numerous cases of domestic abuse they and others experienced and witnessed.

This is not something I like writing about. And this is not something many like to read. The truth hurts sometimes, and as the Qur'an tells us, many people hate the truth. But as the Qur'an also makes clear, we have to stand for the truth. And if we are people of justice, then we have to reject oppression, regardless of who is involved. "You who believe, uphold justice and bear witness to God, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your close rela-

tives" (Q. 4:135). This is the Islamic message. It is about going beyond *'asabiyya*, the tribal mentality where we only do and say what is *apparently* good for our own people. If we ignore the problem of domestic abuse publicly it will only fester beneath the surface and get worse privately, and there are many examples of this phenomenon. So we must confront this problem head on, not because others want us to, but because it is our duty before God.

But in order for a community to deal properly with domestic abuse, it has to be a healthy community. In this regard, the most successful communities are those in which its many individuals feel a sense of belonging. And not just belonging, but a sense of ownership. When you feel that you at least have the potential to play an important role in your community, it allows you to take your community seriously. There are many Muslims who choose not to be a part of their Muslim community because they simply do not feel that they belong. Some might say that that is their problem. But I do not think that would have been the attitude of our Prophet, peace be upon him.

In fact, there are countless examples of the Prophet going out of his way to reach out to others, be they children or former enemies. After he conquered Mecca, he forgave many of the same individuals who oppressed him and his followers. And, to the shock of some of his followers, he gave them unusually large shares of spoils after the battles at Hunayn and Ta'if. He wanted these new members of his community to develop a sense of belonging and ownership – and that they certainly did.

It is perhaps unsurprising that after the Prophet passed away, there was much debate about who had been his dearest friend. This debate did not simply involve the well-known companions, but a *wide* variety of people. In fact, the Prophet was even good friends with the kind of people that society rejected.

Memorable is the story of Zahir. He was poor and physically small. He was often disrespected. And yet, our Prophet, peace be upon him, was very fond of him and thought of him as a good friend. One day, he saw Zahir at the market and, like friends do, came up from behind him and covered his eyes. Zahir tried to get away. Perhaps he thought this was yet another heckler coming to harass him. But then he discovered that it was the Prophet, and he became happy. Instead of trying to escape, he leaned back against the Prophet's chest. Zahir

then said that he was worthless. The Prophet corrected him, saying that Zahir's "value in the sight of God is great."

There was another companion named Julaybib, who is described as being very ugly and deformed – that is actually how he is described – and he was constantly mocked. And yet our Prophet was loving and kind with him. During one of the battles, Julaybib was killed. And when the Prophet inquired as to who had been killed, people listed their relatives and friends, but no one mentioned Julaybib. And so the Prophet said, "But I have lost Julaybib. Search for him on the battlefield." When the Prophet found Julaybib lying dead, he declared, "This man is of me and I am of him," and he repeated this 2 or 3 times. The Prophet then took him in his arms and embraced him. He then buried Julaybib himself.

Even though he was an active leader of a growing community, the Prophet made it a point to make the many individuals of his community feel that they belonged – even when no one else would do the same. He reached out to people of all races. There is a reason why the heroes of early Islamic history include Bilal the Abyssinian (the African), Salman the Persian, and Suhaib the Greek (literally "the Roman").

The Prophet also made it a point to reach out to both men and women. There is a reason why we have reports of women filling the mosques during the time of the Prophet. There is a reason why we have reports of the Prophet making sure that both men and women heard his sermons. There is a reason why we have reports of the Prophet devoting time each week to providing religious instruction just to women. As a community, we need each other. We need men and we need women. Was it not a man who delivered God's final message? Was it not a woman who became the first believer and who pushed that man to go on when he was weak? Was it not a man who helped save the Prophet from assassination in Mecca by taking his place in his bed? Was it not a woman who saved the Prophet on the battlefield near mount Uhud? Was it not a man who accompanied the Prophet as he emigrated from Mecca to Medina? Was it not a woman who refused to give up her faith and who became the first martyr of Islamic history? Was it not a man who led the Muslim community politically after the Prophet's death? Was it not a woman who became *the* scholar of Medina after the Prophet's death? Men

and women are integral to the history of our faith, and we must make it a point to develop a strong sense of trust of one another.

What is unhealthy is when we begin to regard those of the opposite gender with suspicion, and then disrespect them. What is unhealthy is when – and this certainly happens – brothers are rude and ignore their sisters, while acknowledging and having lively conversations with other women. What is unhealthy is when sisters assume that brothers are nothing more than shallow women-haters. Brothers, if you want a healthy community, you must sincerely love your sis-

ters and assume the best of them. Sisters, if you want a healthy community, you must sincerely love your brothers and assume the best of them. We are a single unit. It is not us versus them, brothers versus sisters.

We have to be inclusive. And, along these lines, we must develop communities in which we can safely ask sincere questions without feeling that our status as Muslims is going to be questioned by an arbitrary morality police that was never commissioned by God. A truly healthy community is one in which its members feel at home. To be sure, it is only a healthy commu-

nity that will succeed in tackling a problem like domestic abuse. It is one in which its members can talk openly about controversial issues without resorting to unfounded apologetics (claiming, for example, that domestic abuse does not exist among Muslims). It is one in which victims can find the help they need without being shunned.

In Islamic Law, there is a category called *fard kifayah*, which refers to those obligations that are the responsibility, not of individuals, but the community as a whole. If Muslim communities fail to fulfill their communal duties, then the individuals of those communities are held responsible. The problem of domestic abuse concerns us all. The failure to address it is a victory for the agents of oppression. We must turn to God for forgiveness and start anew. Life is short. The time for action is now.

Mohammad Hassan Khalil (Ph.D., University of Michigan) is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Illinois.

Muslim Men Against Domestic Abuse

Professor Khalil is a Member of Muslim Men Against Domestic Abuse.

Muslim Men Against Domestic Abuse (MMADA) is an organization dedicated to domestic tranquility. By joining our group, you make a commitment never to engage in, support, or remain silent about the physical, psychological, and emotional abuse of Muslim and non-Muslim women and children.

MMADA aims to provide educational resources and serve as a tool for advocacy and counseling. Recognizing that domestic abuse is merely a symptom of much larger social, institutional, and individual pathologies, this group seeks to identify and eradicate its root causes. MMADA members do so with the belief that our religion calls us to stand for justice and reject all forms of oppression.

Despite its focus on women and children, MMADA recognizes that the victims of domestic abuse include men, and that this is a phenomenon that should not be ignored or overlooked. And though MMADA is an organization comprised of men, it rejects the notion that men are the exclusive arbiters of morality.

Members of MMADA pray that their intention in establishing this organization is not to please any particular audience, but rather to work toward the betterment of society for the sake of God alone.

This group is on Facebook.

The Peril of Weight

By Fatima Ahmed

Allah says in the Qur'an "Eat and drink, but not to excess." Yet the number of those of us who defy this command is staggering. More than a quarter of the adults in Illinois today are obese. In three southern states (Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee) every one in three person is obese. In the US, every state but one (Colorado) had an obesity rate greater than 20%. These high rates are not limited to the US alone.

Obesity means having too much body fat. The Body mass Index (BMI) is a simple weight over height ratio (kg/m^2) and a reliable indicator of body fatness. A BMI of 25 or more is considered overweight and a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese.

The obesity epidemic is of our own making—a result of economic, social and technological advances of the past decades. An abundant and cheap food supply, readily available high-caloric foods, labor saving technologies that reduce physical activity and widespread electronic devices that lure us to sedentary entertainment all promote overeating and underactive lifestyles. In addition, poor stress management and poor sleeping habits contribute to hormonal imbalance, which can also lead to overeating. Lastly, genetics plays a key role in body fat accumulation.

Increased rates of obesity raise concern because of their implication on health. Elevated BMI, or excess body fat, has been associated with a number of diseases. Our Prophet warned us of this: On seeing a fat man, the Prophet is reported to have said, "If you did not have a punch (belly fat), it would be better for you." He also said, "Overeating does not go with good health." (Al-Haythami).

Obesity has dire consequences, but losing even 5-10% of your weight can delay or prevent some of these conditions. Overeating and sedentary lifestyle, as mentioned earlier, are prime suspects but these are also traits that can be readily fixed. Our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) warned us about the dangers of overeating: "No human ever filled a vessel worse than the stomach. Sufficient for any son of Adam are some morsels to keep his back straight. But if it must be, then one third for his food, one third for his drink and one third for his breath" (Ahmed). The Prophet (pbuh) also said, "Food for one is enough for two and food for two is enough for three and food for three is enough for four" (Ahmed). If we follow the advice of our Prophet and limit our food intake, we can certainly reduce our body fat and live healthier, fuller lives.

At Ease with Nature

By Fatima Ahmed

There was a general feeling of restlessness. Moods were sour and easily annoyed. A general feeling ensued in the house that something was amiss- we were clothed and fed, Alhamdulillah, but there was a disconnect. Someone suggested a walk outdoors, and the four of us bounded out, finally released from some self-imposed exile. Once outside, it was as if we were in another

world. The countless shades of green, blossomed trees, peonies heavy under their own beauty and the soft gurgling of a slow moving creek- a glimpse of natural beauty reminded us how much we ignore, and how must at ease we are with nature.

Engaging the great outdoors is one of the best

ways to remain spiritually and physically fit. The sheer magnitude of the natural world increases our faith as well as our heart rate, and reminds us of Allah's magnificence. "It is He who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures. Therein is fruit and date-palms, producing spathes (enclosing dates). Also corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder and sweet-smelling plants. Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?" (55:10-13).

We engage with nature in several ways — a brisk walk in a garden, skiing down a mountain, swimming in a lake, hiking on a trail or planting a garden. Each of these activities burns calories, and if done properly, enhances our muscle and bone mass. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "The deeds most beloved to Allah are the ones done regularly, even if they are small" (Bukhari). This means that a short half-hour walk after dinner every evening will not only burn about 150 calories, it'll give you time to praise Allah's beautiful creation. You increase both in health and faith.

Take a look at the amount of calories burned doing recreational nature activities. The next time your members of your house get uneasy — open the door and step out. Be at ease with nature- it's good for you!

On May 29, the CIMIC Friday Seminar Committee held a talk called "Live Healthy, Be Well," presented by Dr. Aisha Ahmed and Dr. Hany Youssef.

Would you like to help plan a potluck dinner at CIMIC?

Would you like to help with the next CIMIC newsletter?

Please contact CIMIC@cimic.org to volunteer!

Big Lessons from a Small Creature – A Short Story

By Naeem Sheikh

About two years ago, a chipmunk ended up in the basement of Coble Hall (U of I campus) where I and my fellow math graduate students have offices. I and my office mate tried very hard to catch the chipmunk (using trash and recycling bins) release him outside, but the chipmunk was fast and could crawl under things, and we couldn't manage to catch him. He would roam the whole basement presumably looking for an exit. One day, he would be sighted in one corner of the building, and next day, a graduate student would sight him in the bathroom, and so on. We were getting concerned about him having enough food and energy, so we would leave granola bars near the big heater enclosure he would often hide in, and we would find he had eaten parts of them. It went on like this for about three weeks.

One Monday morning, I came in early and was printing some stuff. When I went to the printer station, I heard a shuffling sound coming from somewhere near me. I looked everywhere, but I couldn't find the source of the sound. Furthermore, if I moved, the sound seemed to stop. So, I stood still for a while to hear the sound again and locate the source. Finally, I figured out that the sound seemed to be coming from the paper recycling bin right next to the printer station. I looked inside the almost 4-foot tall bin, and the chipmunk was inside!

This was perfect -- I immediately took the bin outside and lay it down on its side, and the chipmunk crawled out, back to his natural environment.



I surmised that what had happened was this: The printer station and the recycling bin are right under a window. The chipmunk must have tried getting out by climbing to the printer stand and then from there to the window. The window has a sheet of slanting glass in front of it to prevent leaves from coming in. The chipmunk must have slipped because of that glass or otherwise. He fell right onto the recycling bin and because this bin had the "revolving door" lid, he fell right into the bin, and of course couldn't climb out of the tall plastic bin. This must have happened sometime over the weekend as I found the chipmunk on Friday.

This story brought home to me so many lessons: When we are in a difficult situation, we shouldn't despair, as Allah is in control of everything, at the same time, we should keep trying our best -- our efforts might not yield the result the way we imagined it, but through those efforts, Allah might help us in a different way. The difficult situation might go from seemingly bad to worse right before the deliverance.

Activity	Calories burned*
Walking (moderate pace)	246
Backpacking	493
Hiking	422
Bicycling	281
Jogging	493
Swimming (leisurely)	422
Canoeing	281
Golf	281
Downhill skiing	352
Cross-country skiing	493
(per hour for a 155 pound person) Source: www.nutristrategy.com	

Chronic conditions related to Obesity
Coronary heart disease
Type 2 diabetes
Cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon)
Hypertension (high blood pressure)
Dyslipidemia (for example, high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides)
Stroke
Liver and Gallbladder disease
Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
Osteoarthritis (a degeneration of cartilage and its underlying bone within a joint)
Gynecological problems (abnormal menses, infertility)

How to Overcome Obesity
Follow a middle way in eating and drinking
Be physically active
Establish a regular sleep schedule (6-8 hrs every night)
Drink more water
Join a support group
Prayer and Meditation

Tables by
Fatima Ahmed

The Just Governor

By Zuhaib Sheikh

Beha ed-Din, the author of “The Life of Salah - Din (Saladin),” accompanied the Sultan on many important campaigns and watched him at close quarters. It is written in the translation of his book under the Chapter, HIS LOVE OF JUSTICE, “ABU BEKR – God be gracious to him! – records that the Holy Prophet said: ‘A just Governor is the shadow of God upon earth. He who serves God faithfully himself and for others, God will place under the shadow of His throne on that day when no other will remain except that shadow; but he who seeks to deceive God in matters which concern himself or other men, God will deprive of all hope on the day of resurrection. To the just governor, for the good work he has done day by day, He will assign a reward equal to that of sixty true-hearted men who each have worked for their own salvation.’ Our Sultan-may the mercy of God rest upon him! – was just, merciful, compassionate, and ready to aid the weak against the strong. Every Monday and Thursday he sat in public to administer justice, and on these occasions jurist consults, Qadhis, and men learned in the law were present. Everyone who had a grievance was admitted – great and small, aged women and feeble men. He sat thus, not only when he was in the city, but even when he was travelling; and he always received with his own hand the petitions that were presented to him, and he did his utmost to put an end to every form of oppression that was reported. Every day he made a packet to these documents, and opened the doors of justice (to the complainants); he never sent away those who came to complain of their wrongs or to demand redress. Every day, either during the daytime or in the night, he spent an hour with his secretary, and wrote on each petition, in the terms which God suggested to him, and answer to its prayer.”

Working as a Veterinarian

By Hany Youssef

My name is Hany Youssef, the Taekwondo instructor at CIMIC but today allow me to talk about working as a Veterinarian at the Animal Poison Control Center.

To give you an idea about how I work as a Veterinarian, please read the next paragraph, which I copied from the ASCPA, Animal Poison Control Center magazine, winter of 2006.

Just before leaving for lunch, a frantic owner arrives with his 3-year-old dachshund mix dog who chewed up a partially full antifreeze container. He thinks that the exposure was about an hour ago. There is antifreeze on the garage floor and the dog smells like the product. The amount ingested is unknown.

It is important to know what type of antifreeze to which the dog was exposed. The three most common ingredients in antifreezes are ethylene glycol, propylene glycol, and methanol, all of which differ in use, risk and approach to treatment. Generally alcohols are absorbed quickly, and decontamination may be of minimal benefit after the first 30-40 minutes. .

The owner called the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center and consulted with Dr. Hany Youssef, who was ready to give rapid and expert information.

What treatments were recommended by Dr. Youssef?

A. Tell the owner that the dog is at risk for metabolic acidosis and blindness. Administer Fomepizol (4- methylpyrazole;Antizol), a specific antagonist of alcohol dehydrogenase.

B. Admit dog for monitoring on fluids

C. Both A and B

Answer: B. Methanol’s metabolite, formaldehyde is rapidly oxidized by aldehyde dehydrogenase to formic acid (formate), which can cause metabolic acidosis if significant quantities are ingested. Treatment of methanol toxicosis with fomepizole is necessary in humans (and other primates) to prevent retinal and CNS injury, but is not indicated in non-primates, as they do not develop these lesions. Since the amount ingested is unknown, admitting the dog for monitoring and treating symptomatically would be the most appropriate management approach.

This was one of many cases we receive every day at the Animal Poison Control Center.

Muslim Youth Group ready for Summer!

By Hanady Sharabash

After a very busy school year the Muslim Youth Group will continue to have summer activities for our youths age 11-18. We have already held a Fishing Trip at Uncle Khurshid’s Farm on Saturday, June 6, from 4 p.m.-7p.m.

We also have the following activities in a planning stage: Bonfire at Meadowbrook Park; Fish fry; Barbeque with halal S’mores and hotdogs; Sleepover at Masjid: one day for boys and one day for girls; Canoeing Trip; Hiking Trip; Brother’s swim activity; Sister’s swim (Insha’allah in conjunction with Muslim Women Swim); “Are you ready for Ramadan?” youth discussion to help us plan for the next Ramadan.

In addition to these activities, the youth group coordinators of the First Mennonite and New Covenant Church were excited and pleased at how well the interfaith hunger banquet activity went. In addition to it being fun, it gave cause for their youth and our youth to reflect on those less fortunate in the



Youth group fishing trip on Saturday, June 6.

world. We are planning a future activity in conjunction with the churches at a later date to give our youth a chance to teach others about Islam and form bonds with other members of our community.

How to Discipline the Soul

By Hanady Sharabash

One of the greatest scholars of Islam, Imam Ghazali, lived in Persia circa 1058-1111. He is one of the most celebrated scholars of Islam and has produced many works, some of which are translated into English. One of his most famous works is 'Thya uloom al-din,' and an English copy is available in the CIMIC library. Here are some excerpts from some lectures on Imam Ghazali's section of 'Disciplining the Soul.' These are not directly from the book but based on the book with some commentary by Sheikh Yahya Rhodus. This article includes brief excerpts from the lecture "How to Discipline the Soul?" by Sheikh Yahya Rhodus.

For example, what it means for the Prophet (saw) to be Ummi (unable to read or write). Who taught him then? Allah taught him. 'Adabaneer Rabbee.' The first way to obtain good character is by divine grace.

The second way to obtain good character is by means of spiritual struggle and exercise. A man who wishes to attain the quality of generosity must oblige himself to do generous things until it becomes easy. A generosity that encompasses all of humanity is 'good character' and intending to do good to all of creation. You get a reward for it as if you did good to all of creation. The acts should be pleasurable. In the beginning it is difficult and in the end it is pleasurable. Takes pleasure in beautiful deeds and is hurt and loathes ugly ones.

Our Prophet (saw) said that prayer became his delight. As long as worship is felt to be burdensome or unpleasant, the performance of worship will be defective and cannot bring one to full felicity. There are three levels of someone in their performance of good deeds and worship. 1) Someone who doesn't do righteous works. 2) Someone who is struggling to do righteous works. 3) Someone who does righteous works easily.

Allah tells us to "Seek help in patience and prayer, and indeed it is hard except for the humble minded." The only good character trait of the ego (nafs) is that it can habituate itself to something. And that can be used for good or bad. Through habituation something can become pleasurable to an individual. So if you habituate yourself to the worship of Allah, it can become pleasurable to you.

Even a criminal can take joy in his habits, wretched as those habits are, because of the state that has overcome his heart. If someone persists and habituates to performing good deeds, there is a reality to habituation. How could the soul not take pleasure in the Truth? The soul's inclination to these disgusting things is unnatural just as it is unnatural for someone to eat mud. As to the inclination to the wisdom and knowledge and love of Allah, this is like the inclination towards food and drink. It is the expression of one's true nature towards the divine. Just as the stomach may be afflicted

by an illness that prevents it from desiring the food and drink that give it life. Notice that when you are sick, you have to force yourself to eat, even though normally states you love to eat. A heart inclines towards wisdom and the love of Allah, but when it sick and diseased, it does not find those things pleasurable. So we have to remove that disease. We must love a thing that helps us to love Allah. Everything that Allah has ordered us to love, and love everything that leads us to the love of Allah. If you have a brother that helps you remain firm on the path, then you love your brother. Every man whose heart inclines him toward something other than Allah is afflicted by a disease in proportion to its inclination unless he loves a thing that helps him to love God.

There are three levels of Nafs according to some scholars:

Amara- Nafs that inclines to evil (Evil Soul)

Lawama- Reproachful soul

Mut'ma2ina –Tranquil soul

Allah says in the Quran "ya ayuha al nafs al mut-ma2ina irja3ee ila rabeeki radayatan mirdayah."

It takes spiritual training to rise in these different ranks. Preventative maintenance, even if you're healthy you can maintain your health, same thing with the heart. And if you're ill, then you should restore it to health. The heart's sickness can be treated with its opposite. Ignorance can be treated with education. Avarice can be treated by giving money away. Pride by self-efficament. Greed by restraining oneself from the thing one craves.

There was a time in Al-Azhar where each student had a sheikh that would help him refine his character on a one on one basis. There is no formal refining of the soul these days, which is why the Ummah is the way it is. No tradition of purifying the heart not just getting the knowledge but no tassawuf with it. No light of the knowledge. If we are selves can't do it then we should want that for our children. Enabling them a path to seek sacred knowledge is the best gift that we can give them.

Below are general cures that are for everyone. There are also specific cures for individuals based on their needs.

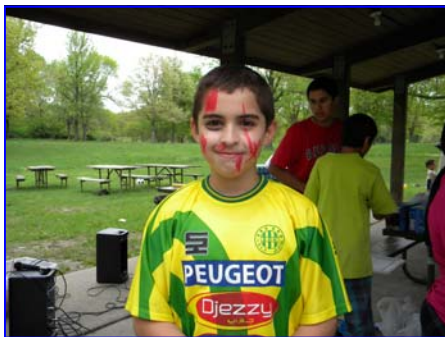
1. Reciting the Quran with Reflection
2. Turning to Allah in the last third of the night
3. Qiyaam Al-Layl
4. Lessening one's food intake
5. Sitting with the Righteous

**YOUR LOCAL MASJID RUNS ON
YOUR DONATIONS.**

DONATE GENEROUSLY TO CIMIC AND TOWARD
THE NEW PROJECT.

CIMIC Weekend and Arabic Schools' Trip to Kickapoo State Park, Illinois

An end of the year picnic was held at Kickapoo State Park, sponsored by the CIMIC Arabic and CIMIC Weekend Schools. The picnic was open to all in the community, and many joined in the festivities. A potluck was held, and certificates were awarded to teachers and students.



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