

Trump Administration getting ready to ban the Muslim Brotherhood

By **Dr. Aslam Abdulah**

A possible executive order or a congressional bill that would have a severe impact on the Muslim American community is in the offing as President's special advisor, John Bolton, and the secretary of the State Department, Mike Pompeo, the secretary of state, who as a member of Congress co-sponsored a bill to ban the Muslim Brotherhood are eager to ensure that the organization known as Ikhwanul Muslimeen in Arabic is declared as a terrorist organization and banned before the end of Trump's first term.



Seemingly, Both seem to enjoy support for their crusade amongst pro-Israel lobbyists and evangelical Christians, the two major groups who

have adopted the Trump agenda in totality. Behind the move of banning the organization is the influence of religious ideas of evangelical

Christians and the pressure of the Israeli Prime Minister. Of the two Pompeo reflect the religious ideas openly and

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President's Racism
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The doors of heavens
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RAMADAN Kareem

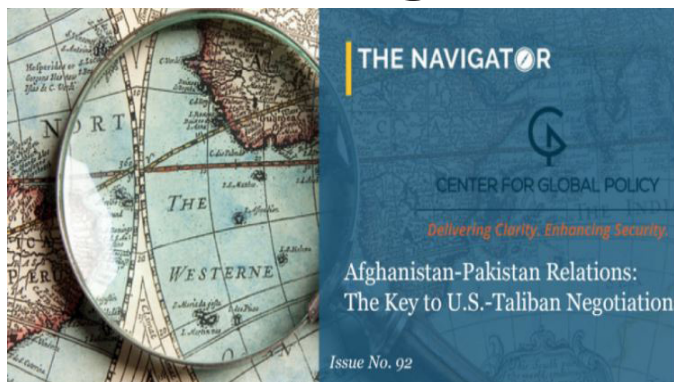
Rallies Outside of Chinese Embassy

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Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations: The Key to U.S.-Taliban Negotiations

By **Imtiaz Ali**

Of all the challenges Washington faces in the Afghan peace process, the continuing strained relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan has proven to be one of the most difficult. The recent deterioration of relations between the two countries is hindering Washington's ongoing efforts for a negotiated settlement with the



Taliban insurgents after 18 years of conflict. If not addressed, the deep mistrust on both sides of the Durand Line can even paralyze U.S. plans to bring an end to the longest running war in American history. While it tries to negotiate with the Taliban, the Trump administration must also work to mitigate Ka-

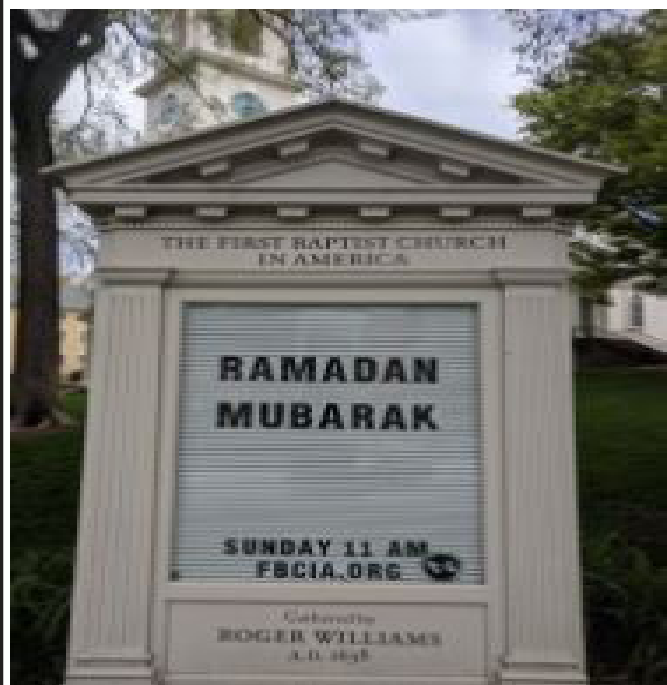
bul-Islamabad tensions.

Recent Tensions

The most recent open hostility between Islamabad and Kabul was triggered by comments from Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. He proposed an interim caretaker government to oversee the peace

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Ramadan Promotes Unity and Interfaith Relationships



By **Aysha Qamar**

Ramadan is upon us and is being celebrated by Muslims and non-Mus-

lims alike. Churches, Temples and Synagogues have shown their

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Actor Ramy Youssef and his original Muslim-American comedy 'Ramy'

By Aysha Qamar

First generation Egyptian-American Ramy Youssef is the creator and star of Hulu's new comedy "Ramy." The twenty-eight-year-old comedian and actor has made a 10-episode series depicting the spiritual and identity journey of a Muslim-American millennial in North Jersey.

"It shows someone engaging with their faith in an honest way. I felt like a lot of narratives I saw with first-generation children of immigrants or anyone from a strong faith background was watching them kind of try to erase where they come from and distance themselves from the tension of their parents and the culture that they come from," Youssef said. "I wanted to make something that reflected my experience, which was trying to honestly engage with my background and actually identify with it



while questioning myself within that.

With a 97% rate on Rotten Tomatoes, the show stars Youssef as Ramy Hassan, a Muslim who is unsure what type of Muslim he is or ought to be. The show breaks stigmas and barriers in the Muslim community

by addressing topics like sex and dating in Islam as well as post 9/11 feels.

We had the opportunity to speak with Youssef on his new series 'Ramy' and Muslim representation in the media. He told us about his character and spoke of the importance of diverse and

authentic representation in the entertainment industry.

The show's trailer premiered in March and since then has had over 5.6 million views on YouTube. Muslims, in particular, have reacted in various ways with many feeling represented while

others critical of the portrayal of American Muslims, many criticizing the lack of representation of Muslim women.

But Youssef acknowledges this and admits that the show does not represent all Muslims, it's "simple just one piece of

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www.MuslimObserver.com

Established in 1998

FOUNDER
A. RAHEMAN NAKADAR, M.D.

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dr. Aslam Abdullah

dr.aslamabdullah@gmail.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Aysha Qamar

editor@muslimobserver.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Javeria Ahmed

marketing@muslimobserver.com

VIDEO MEDIA DIRECTOR

Samana Shaikh

samana@muslimobserver.com

CHICAGO COORDINATOR

Mujeeb Osman

chicago@muslimobserver.com

HOUSTON COORDINATOR

Ilyas Choudry

houston@muslimobserver.com

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Omar and Tlaib challenge President's Racism



By Dr. Aslam Abdullah

Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, the two junior congresswomen have put their political career on the line by challenging two most powerful lobbies, the pro-Netanyahu and the white supremacists and they are not afraid of picking up a fight with the most powerful man in the world, the President of the United States.

The two freshwomen in Congress have galvanized millennials all over the country with their bold and brave stand on racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia.

On Tuesday, April 30, the Movement for Black Lives Matter organized a powerful rally outside the Capitol to show support for Omar with big signs saying "Black Women in Defense of Ilhan Omar" hanging behind the stage.

The rally was attended by Tlaib, and speakers included Tlaib of Michigan and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Angela Davis. Tlaib is heading the campaign to impeach the President.

Speaking about the courage of Tlaib, Avanna Pressley said: "I can't even believe that we're in a debate about whether or not to impeach when the occupant, the man in the highest office in the land, emboldens white supremacy and endangers the lives of a member of Congress."

Referring to the attacks on Omar by the White House, especially the tweets by the President critic, Tlaib said: "I say hands off, hands off of the women of color that serve in the United States Congress. Not only do we look different but we serve and we fight differently. But it also means that we talk differently. It's also that we are allowed to be angry in this country."

Omar used the occasion to openly challenge the President who had publicly criticized her comments on Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. She called those comments "vile attacks and demented views" To a cheering audience, she explained

"We are collectively saying your vile attacks, your demented views are not welcome here, This is not going to be the country of the xenophobics. This is not going to be the country of white people. This is not going to be the country of the few. This is going to be the country of the many." Speaking about life threats she has received since the Presidential tweets, she said: "When this occupant of the White House chooses to attack me, we know — we know — that that attack isn't for Ilhan, that attack is the continuation of the attacks that he has leveled against women, against people of color, against immigrants, against refugees and certainly against Muslims."

In her speech, Omar spoke about attacks on Jewish synagogues and Muslim places of worship and she said: "they are two sides of the same coin of bigotry."

Omar and Tlaib's open challenge to racism and bigotry has angered white supremacists and

pro-Netanyahu groups in the country. They are calling for their resignation and some even making death threats to them. This is the first time in the country when death threats have been issued to lawmakers by people who support the President and his party. Democrats have condemned these death threats, but many are still reluctant to join them against white supremacy and blind support to human rights violators in Israel.

However, the millennial is backing the two congresswomen and showing solidarity to their position.

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Reaffirming Conviction in Ramadan

By Yousuf Ali

“So (endure) patiently; surely the promise of Allah is true, and do not let the ones who have no certitude induce you to levity”. -Surah 30:60 translated by Dr. Ghali

Ramadan is here with many of us trying to understand what the best actions to take during the month are. In this article, I share some of the actions I take to reap the benefits of Ramadan. I hope these tips enable you to have a more reflective and beneficial Ramadan.

Reaffirm Your Faith:

In order to do something as arduous as Ramadan, you have to take the time to ask Allah for the strength. This is because of the nature of the society we live in- we are being inundated with doubts from left, right and center. We have to recognize doubts them for what they are: doubts of no avail in face of reality. After this acknowledgment, we can



take the time to become strong in this regard. Here is one famous prophetic du'a through which we may do so:

Transliteration: ya muqalliba al qulub thabit qalbi a'la dinika.

English: Oh turner of hearts, make them firm upon your way.

Declare A Goal:

When in Ramadan, we

have to understand that there are so many opportunities to do good and we should not let them go by. In that respect, see where you are at spiritually and find a way by which you may advance. This can be done by reading Qur'an, increasing du'a or other ways such as general remembrance of Allah. Here are some things

you can do in addition to the conventional wisdom:

•Make Du'a during Suhoor-

It is well attested that Allah descends to the lowest heaven and asks which of his servants are calling upon him and asking for forgiveness in the last 3rd of the night. As it happens, this is precisely when we are having suhoor as it takes

place before Fajr. What better way to kill two birds with one stone then beseeching the Almighty for help while eating your meal.

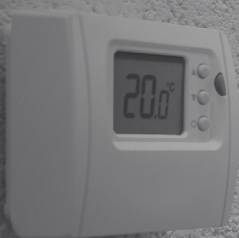
•Access the meaning of the Qur'an-

While there is nothing wrong with going to Taraweeh, we should also try to develop a direct relationship with

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Do You Know These 10 Health Benefits of Fasting?



By **Vanessa Elshamy**

We are a week into Ramadan, and what a whirlwind it has been. No, Ramadan isn't just about not eating or drinking during the time the sun is up. It's also about abstaining from impurities, living as frugally as possible, performing extra prayers for ourselves and for others, etc. However, most people probably know Ramadan as the holiday where you don't get to eat or drink anything (not even water?!).

Actually, different types of fasting have been all the rage lately, and diets seem to be getting kicked to the curb. These different types of non-religious fasting include intermittent, alternate-day, etc. Other religions also present the concept of fasting in their own ways. All this to say, fasting isn't a new concept, and some of the health benefits have been known, but they're still foreign to some people who don't understand why anyone would ever do it for any reason.

For those who don't know much about Ramadan or fasting in general, or have always fasted but didn't really know the bodily gains behind it, here are 10 health benefits—backed by science—of fasting for you to look into:

1. Blood-Sugar Management

Multiple studies have found that fasting can improve and control blood sugar levels. This can be especially helpful for people at risk of—or those with—diabetes. It can lead to decreased insulin resistance, which in other words can increase your body's sensitivity to insulin and will let your body transport glucose from your bloodstream to your cells more easily. When you're pre-diabetic or have diabetes, it's vital to keep your blood sugar levels prime (not too low or too high), and fasting can prevent these sudden spikes and crashes.

2. Battling Inflammation

Research shows that inflammation in the body can lead to chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. Studies also show that fasting can help decrease this inflammation in the body, which hopefully helps some people have less of a risk of getting chronic conditions.

3. Lowering Cholesterol

As Muslims, we fast because it's one of the five pillars of Islam. Some people however, fast because they want to lose weight. In addition to that, studies show that you can also lower your cholesterol at the same time. When fasting, your lipid (fatty acids in the body) profile improves, in turn leading to less

cholesterol in the blood. This means there's less of a chance of you developing blood clots and such, which will lessen your risk of heart attacks, strokes, and more.

4. Detoxing

Detoxing your body is definitely popular these days. Fasting is one way you can flush your body out from impurities. I mean think about it; you're not putting anything into your body for about 12 hours per day, therefore nothing harmful can enter your body that entire time. If you do this for an entire month, you will be very cleansed out by the end of it. Toxins will be burned away by your body so that when you start eating regularly again, you will surely feel like you're starting on a blank slate.

5. Nutrient Absorption

Not ingesting anything for hours on end will boost your metabolism and allow your body to absorb more nutrients from the food you do eat at the end of each day. A hormone called adiponectin is produced at higher rates, causing your muscles to absorb nutrients at higher rates as well. And as a general rule, the more nutrients being utilized, the better.

6. Growth Hormone Increase

Several studies have proven that fasting can

increase Human Growth Hormone (HGH) levels in the body. This is a type of protein that helps you grow how you're supposed to, gain muscle strength, etc. Put simply, an increase in this protein hormone is not a bad thing.

7. Delaying Effects of Aging

In animal studies, scientists have been able to show that fasting delays the rate of aging slightly and can even increase longevity and survival rates when it comes to certain diseases. While this isn't the strongest point because of the little amount of research done so far, this is a very promising idea.

8. Brain Function Boost

Fasting doesn't just have positive impacts on the body. Fasting tests your mental wellbeing and spirituality, but it also physically affects your brain in a positive way. A specific experiment showed that fasting during Ramadan causes the brain to release an increased amount of neurotrophic factor—something that actually causes more brain cells to be made, and in turn improves all brain functions. The brain is just as important as the body, so it's nice to know that while fasting, we're helping ourselves have better functioning versions of both.

9. Less Stress

Fasting also causes a reduction in the production of the hormone called cortisol, which is the hormone produced by our adrenal glands that causes us to get stressed out. This can even lead to less stress for a while after Ramadan ends, because the reduced levels of cortisol have lasting effects in the brain. And I think I can safely speak for everyone when I say that we ALL need less stress in our lives.

10. Date Energy

Although it's not a requirement to eat dates during Ramadan, most of us do as a tradition and for spiritual reasons. Eating dates can also give us super beneficial health enhancements. To fast properly and safely, one must have enough energy to get through the day. A serving of dates has 31 grams of natural carbs, which will no doubt give you a boost of energy. They also contain great amounts of fiber, potassium, magnesium, and vitamin B, which can all help with digestion at sundown. Overall, dates are extremely good for you, and should be a staple of every Muslim household during Ramadan no matter what.

This piece was originally posted on Muslimgirl.com.

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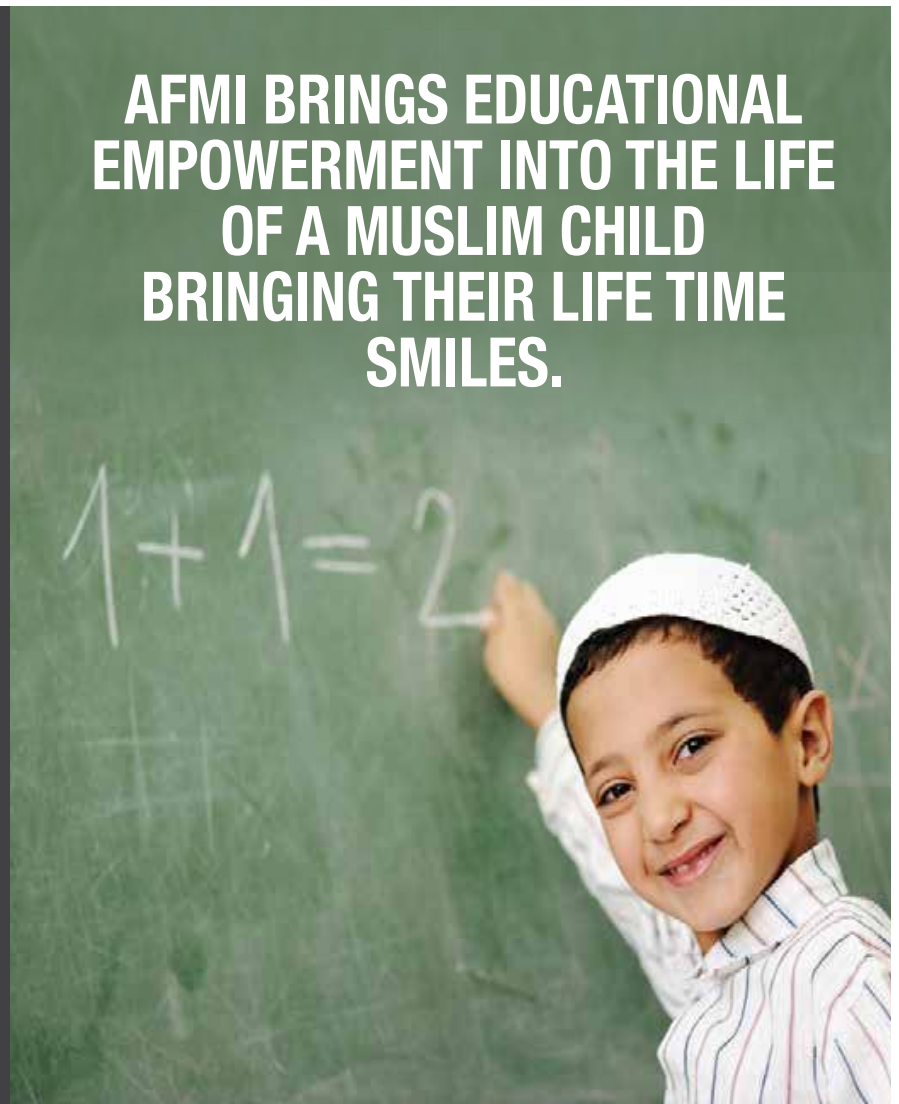


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Silver Lining: Sold Out IlmNight with Yasmin Mogahed

By: Noor H. Salem

It's no longer a surprise, but another sold-out event goes down in the history of Qabeelah Ittihaad Michigan as they welcome Ustadha Yasmin Mogahed for a very hope inspiring and heartwarming evening for her course, Silver Lining: Rising Above the Storm.

More than 700 attendees joined Saturday night at the IAGD masjid in Troy, making a beautiful social gathering quite memorable. The scene truly left the volunteer team in awe and evidently uplifted them from deep within. The class sold out prior to the evening of the course, leaving the team excited to see the fruits of their efforts ripen right before their eyes.

Ustadha Yasmin Mogahed, author of Reclaim Your Heart, seemed to touch the heart of every single individual sitting in that room that very



evening. From reminding the audience about trust in Allah (SWT) through patience and hope to re-shaping their vision and outlook on the future, she truly hit home. This was the perfect course to come to town after His Majesty with Shaykh Ammar AlShukry, as he

shared insights of living with the names of Allah (SWT) in your day to day life. Remember, during hardship, prosperity, laughter and tears, through the graduation celebrations, or the pains of burying a loved one; Allah (SWT) is Al-Hayy, the Ever-Living.

He (SWT) is with you in every moment and is closer to you than your own jugular vein. During those moments where you feel like you are choking on your heart and your vision is blurred, as you feel like the weight of life has become too heavy to carry,

He (SWT) is Al-Fattah, who will open doors that you thought were forever sealed. During those moments where your heart feels shattered to pieces, and the light at the end of the tunnel is nowhere at sight, He (SWT) is

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The doors of heavens are closed and the gates of heaven are opened



By TMO Staff

The Sahih Bukhari includes a hadith repeatedly that gives assurance to people that “When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained.” (???(1899)

The hadith is rated authentic and it is reported in other books of ahadith. All the original narrators of the hadith joined the faith of Islam some three years before the death of the prophet, so it can be safely assumed that the companions learned about it some five years after the month of fasting was made obligatory upon the Muslim community forever. Obviously, it does not mean that the doors of hell were not closed or the gates of heaven were not opened during the earlier years of fasting when this hadith was not reported by the Prophet. How should one read this hadith and what is the essential message that is being relayed in it?

Obviously, it does not mean that the gates of heaven remain closed in all other 11 months of Islamic lunar calendar or the gates of hell are closed only for one month. It also does not mean for obvious reasons that devils are fettered only during this month

because of everything that is described as sinful in religious scriptures does not vanish for one month to return immediately after the conclusion of Ramadan.

The hadith is a symbolic explanation of the conditions that prevail during the month of Ramadan among the fasting believers. What is explained in this hadith is here that the fasting believers feel empowered during this month to take control of themselves and avoid committing anything that may be considered sinful in the divine message. Researchers have conducted studies on the lifestyle of people fasting during the month of Ramadan and they have observed at least interesting patterns.

1. Those fasting are conscious of the fact that they are in a process of spiritual purification, i.e. trying to follow divine guidance on fasting to get closer to the Creator.
2. They are aware of the consequence of any deviation for their personal and spiritual growth. For instance, they would not eat or drink knowingly to falsely claim their fasting or would not indulge in any activities such as backbiting or cheating or anything that can be termed as a behavioral deviation that might invalidate the fasting.

3. They generally tend to be more generous during this month. For instance, they would share their resources with the poor and the needy or would support a cause that may benefit the community at large.

4. They would focus more on their family and encourage each other to pray more and to remind them to fulfill their responsibilities to the divine message.

5. They would spend more time on personal reflections on their life and work

6. They would connect with the Muslim community to ensure that they share the moments of spirituality with others.

7. They increase visitations to each other's homes to bring closeness with the community

8. They would usually give their zakat during this month to take care of the poor and the needy.

9. They would become more disciplined in their work and family chores.

10. They would be happier during this month compared with other months and occasions.

All these patterns create a positive impact on the life of an individual as they try to avoid anything that is negative, thus preventing evil and deviant ideas to influence their behavior and action. Obviously, a religion that places emphasis on strong moral character recognizes its value and promises rewards for it in this life as well as in life hereafter. In other words, the fasting believers through their behavior and action create conditions that increase their chances of achieving high rewards from God and preventing the punishment, thus overpowering the Satanic forces to play any significant role in their life at least during the month.

However, if a fasting believer is not careful in watching his or her behavior and actions, the Satanic forces would always be there to manipulate him or her the way they want to.

It is in this context this hadith should be read. In a way, this hadith reinforces the idea that the Quran strongly promotes “human beings are responsible for their actions.” (5:105) If they are careful, they are closer to God and if they are careless, Satan overpowers them. This month is giving every fasting believer the opportunity to prove to himself and herself that they are capable of taking control of their lives and assert their independence from the Satanic circles. This way they would close the doors of hell and open the gates of heaven, chaining satan with their action and behavior.

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This bogey of Islamophobia is raising its ugly head worldwide. We recently saw the most gruesome terrorist attack on the innocent congregation gathered for Friday prayers in Christchurch, New Zealand.



Islamophobia has its roots in the US and Europe among those who believe in the concepts of supremacy on the basis of race, religion and ethnicity. Only through a long process of dialogue, discussions and education, this menace that is spreading fast can be checked effectively.



We need to invest in our younger generation to be able to counter constant attacks on Islam and Muslims. We want them to be skillful communicators, excellent writers and objective researchers. Only through bringing out facts and demolishing myths and stereotypes, our young journalists can challenge the narratives spread by Islamophobes.

TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES:

- We must prepare** a strong team of our own reporters and communicators that will report objectively.
- We must support** students willing to do accurate and balanced research on the issues that impact Muslims and other fellow citizens in America.
- We must fund** Internship with State and Federal Law makers by providing living expense stipends for Muslim students,
- We must provide** Education on the political process and facilitate Muslim participation in local and federal government.

We need your help in carrying out this strategy that will prepare a strong contingent of our own reporters to effectively convey our message.

We are together in our movement to achieve these objectives. Many of our past interns and writers are now part of the main stream media.

Our interns and writers with the help of researchers have carried out following research projects in the past.

Here are the examples:

- 1) Demographic survey of Michigan Muslims and its political impact on Congressional districts,
- 2) Safeguarding Muslim civil right in America,
- 3) States that have passed Halal laws
- 4) How cities with high Muslim concentration have effectively used their positions to gain access to local councils or other legislative bodies,
- 5) And a Muslim perspective on Obama health care, etc.

We want our next research project to focus on the sources of Islamophobia and hatred incited to pitch communities against each other. We need at least \$50,000 for this project. Please fund this project and donate generously. Your donations are tax deductible.

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Rallies Outside of Chinese Embassy Increase



By Yousuf Ali

As more reports of the imprisonment of Uyghurs are released, there has been an increase in the activism protesting the Chinese government, embassy and officials. Muslims worldwide are outraged at the violation of religious freedoms and human rights against the Uyghur Muslim minority in China.

Most recently, the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) organized a rally in Washington DC against “Muslims being ethnically cleansed in China” on May 4.

The organizers also noted the persecution of other faiths in the country in the event description on Facebook as well. This event was one of several over the last several months in an attempt to express solidarity with the Uyghur people.

In addition to ICNA, several other organizations have made it a point to express their opposition to Chinese policies outside the country’s embassies and consulates. For example, the Islamic Community National View (ICMG) protested outside the Chinese consulate in Dusseldorf.

According to ICMG’s head organizer Kemal Ergun, “Uyghur children and public servants are not allowed to go to mosques, or pray even at

their homes. The public servants can’t even fast in Ramadan,” Andalou reported,

These protests were done in conjunction with several NGOs who shared the common goal of affirming religious freedom for the Uyghur people. Such action has been motivated by research done by several general human rights groups as well as those specializing

in Uyghur advocacy.

Over the past few years, China has been in the spotlight regarding escalating conditions of the Uyghurs. According to Amnesty International, China escalated restrictions against the Uyghurs in response to ethnic cleanses in 2017.

“Open or even private displays of religious affiliation – including growing an ‘abnormal’ beard,

wearing a veil or headscarf, regular prayer, fasting or avoidance of alcohol – are categorized as ‘signs of extremism’ in some location,” Amnesty International stated.

Human Rights Watch reported that Chinese authorities consider certain peaceful religious activities as suspicious, such as donating to mosques or preaching the Quran. This is all in the context

of a Muslim minority living in a resource heavy region which China wishes to double down in its control over that region.

It has also been reported the Chinese government is forcefully prohibiting Muslims in China from fasting. This is just one of many restrictions put on Muslims for being just Muslims in the Xinjiang region of China.

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Perfect Creamy Soup for Ramadan



By Noor H. Salem

Since you are fasting during the long days of Ramadan, it's important to intake a sufficient amount of dietary fiber at iftar. Make sure you choose wholesome and natural foods, that will provide your body with the proper nutrients and energy that it needs. Lentils are a powerhouse of both dietary fiber and protein, thus grant you satiety and keep you from experiencing cravings after your meal. This lentil soup is loaded with vegetables that boost its nutritional

value, without feeling like you are munching on celery just to reach your daily vegetable intake. Feel free to use butternut squash or sweet potatoes instead of the carrots for a twist to the flavor and natural sweetness. Carrots are loaded with vitamin A, vitamin C, dietary fiber, and a ton of other vitamins and minerals. They balance your blood sugar levels, contain heart health benefits, and are also great for digestion. The best part about the soup is your capability of tossing in

various vegetables, such as carrots and zucchini and blending it thereafter. Blending the soup until it's smooth does not only make a creamy but also makes it more kids friendly as well. Enjoy this at your next family iftar for a delicious and satisfying appetizer.

Ingredients:

- 7 cups of water
- 1 cup dried split red lentils, soaked
- 6 carrots, sliced
- 1 small onion, peeled and sliced
- 2 tablespoons organic cold-pressed avocado oil

- 3 zucchinis, sliced
- 1 tablespoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon dried cilantro
- 1 tablespoon Himalayan pink salt
- 1-2 tablespoons parsley, chopped

Directions:

- 1.Place water, lentils, avocado oil, and vegetables in a pressure cooker.
- 2.Add all spices except

the fresh parsley. Stir slightly.

- 3.Cover properly and cook on high heat for about 20 minutes.
- 4.Once the pressure cooker whistles, leave on the stove for about 10 more minutes.
- 5.Turn off heat. Before opening the pot, make sure all the pressure is released.
- 6.Use a hand blender and carefully blend the soup until smooth and creamy.
- 7.Garnish with fresh parsley; serve warm.

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Cont. from page 2.
Actor Ramy
the puzzle.”

“We take a burden on to try to represent everybody and that’s not fair, that’s not something other creators have to do in the same way. It’s important to tell the most specific story to you, don’t worry about any of the feedback or blowback because your job is to actually make something that you can grow from.”

He spoke to The Tempest on the importance of representation and on inaccurate, harsh portrayals of Muslims in the media. As an Arab-Muslim, he represented the identity he could best depict.

“This is just one piece of representation. This is a small slice of an Arab Muslim family, most Muslims in America don’t even fall under

that category,” Youssef said. “Most Muslims in America are Black, many are South Asian. So this isn’t an antidote to a 24-hour news cycle or years of propaganda and war literature on Muslims. It’s simply just one piece of the puzzle.”

According to Youssef, there are a lot of differences between the Ramy he plays and his real life. He spoke about the family in the show as compared to his own and described how in real life he has a creative outlet to express himself, whereas Ramy, the character, does not.

“This character, this family talks a little less to each other and this character has less of an outlet so he’s more stuck. But the thing that I really love about this character and something that really resonates with me

in real life is that when he has a problem or when he’s trying to figure himself out or get the best version of himself he prays,” Youssef said. “He turns to God. That is where he goes, that is how he feels comfortable expressing himself and trying to figure himself out. This was something that was really important for me to put out there and that I wanted to have seen,” he added.

Youssef aims to depict the reality of Muslims in his show. He wants the audience to see that Muslims have the same problems, values and desires other Americans do.

“I want the audience to see that Muslims have vulnerabilities. I want them [the audience] to take a look at the types of problems that this family and character face

and understand that our problems are very much like anybody else problems.”

Through this show, Youssef hopes to recontextualize words and spaces, while also demystifying the tropes about how Muslims are and operate.

“When you hear ‘Allahu Akhbar’ in America it means something violent, but when you watch this show, you realize that is something people say when they are looking to find a calm moment—when they are looking to reflect, just an act of worship that is tied to being a human.”

“Dehumanization here is what’s most important. Anything else is just very specific to this story and not really indicative of anything more than that,” he added.

When asked about the advice he would give to fellow American-Muslims, who wish to follow in his career path, Youssef spoke of the importance of taking risks.

“Take risks, don’t be worried about the feedback that you may or not get. Just you know, if you’re young and want to be something, you just have to be as authentic as you can and be yourself,” Youssef said. “Try to pray and drink a lot of water,” he added.

The first season of ‘Ramy’ is available on Hulu. Earlier this month, the television network announced it is renewing for a second season.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Ramadan Quran Series

by **Dr. Aslam Abdullah**

1. Al-‘Alaq (The Germ-Cell) (96)

Makkah

Al-‘Alaq is the 96th Surah in traditionally arranged Quran. It is the first Surah revealed upon the Prophet. It was revealed in Makkah and it has one Ruku and 19 Ayah. The first five Ayahs were revealed in the Cave of Hira in Makkah and the remaining 14 ayahs were revealed when the Prophet was asked to perform the prayers in Kasbah.

The Surah lays the foundation of faith and invites people to build their character, life, family and society on the divinely created knowledge. It invites human being to reflect on the process of his or her own creation and alludes to the fact that only through divinely revealed knowledge. Human beings can control their rebellious instincts.

2. Al-Qalam (The Pen) (68)

Place of Revelation: Makkah

Al-Qalam was the second Surah revealed upon the Prophet. It is the 68th Surah in the traditionally arranged Quran. It was revealed in Makkah



and has two Ruku and 52 Ayah. The name itself suggests that the art of writing down on paper with a pen was known to the people around the Prophet. It also implied that the divine guidance would no longer be at the discretionary power of the memory, however strong it may be, rather it would be penned down so that every letter and word is recorded for eternity.

The Surah reminds people that the message being revealed upon the Prophet is the continuation of the divine message given to human beings through messengers throughout human history. Even though it is

being revealed in the Arabic language, it is for all human beings. It is also declaring that the ideas that are shared by the Prophet were rooted in rationality and they were relevant to the needs of the society. It asks people to ensure that those who are forced to live in a state of dependence causing them humiliation must be helped. It shares the story of a people who had a garden with plenty of produce, yet they would deny the needy any share in it. Consequently, they lost everything. It lays the foundation of a society that creates conditions for acquiring means of subsistence for

everyone. It also narrated the story of Prophet Jonah, and his followers and urges the followers of the Prophet not to give up and continue their mission to spread virtue in their society. It introduces the idea of learning from the past to better the present.

3. Al-Muzzammil (The Enwrapped one) (73)

Place of Revelation: Makkah

Al-Muzzammil was the third Surah revealed upon the Prophet. It is the 73rd Surah in the traditionally arranged Quran. It was revealed in Makkah and has two Ruku (sections) and 20 ayahs. It is the seventy-third Surah in tradi-

tionally arranged Quran. It reminds the believers to focus on the message of the Quran and make its reading part of the prayer. It invites the adherents to the faith to take strength from reliance on the divine message as being revealed upon the Prophet.

4. Al-Muddathir (The Enfolded One) (74)

Place of Revelation: Makkah

Al-Mudassir was the fourth Surah revealed upon the Prophet. It is the 74th Surah in the traditionally arranged Quran. It was revealed in Makkah and has two Ruku and 56 ayah. It dwells upon the manners of sharing the faith with others and elaborates upon the manners of dawah. It exhorts the believers to identify the evils plaguing the society and work to remove the, It also reminds the people that those who deny the truth would suffer the consequences.

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Cont. from page 1. Afghanistan

talks and the coming elections in Afghanistan as a possible solution to an apparent deadlock in the U.S.-led peace process with the Taliban. Strongly reacting to these comments, the Afghan government called them a “flagrant interference” in Afghanistan’s internal affairs and, in protest, recalled its envoy from Islamabad. Soon after the flare-up, a meeting of Taliban representatives and Afghan officials scheduled in Qatar was postponed, and the Taliban announced the “spring offensive” – renewing their attacks in the war-ravaged country.

On previous occasions, the United States would either try relieving the tensions or remain silent. However, this time, the U.S. ambassador to Kabul, John Bass, exacerbated the situation when he joined a Twitter war between the countries and criticized Khan’s remarks.

In reaction, a Pakistani minister called the U.S. ambassador a “little pygmy and ignorant,” further vexing the already complex relationship among the three countries. Washington’s relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan – separately and jointly – have been challenging for a variety of reasons.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani’s government has openly shown its unhappiness over Washington’s overtures to the Taliban because Kabul has felt left out of the peace process. In some stunning remarks, Afghan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib openly accused U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad of sidelining the Afghan

government in the peace talks and acting like a “viceroy” because of his personal ambitions. As for Pakistan, the Trump administration initially took a hard line toward Islamabad but changed its approach to express appreciation for Pakistan’s support in the Afghan peace process. In dealing with both countries together, Washington has failed to get them to cooperate on major policy issues.

Lingering Bilateral Mistrust

The relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan appears to be reactionary, with endless mutual blame games following disruptive incidents on both sides of the border. This is due to the countries’ mutual decades-old deep mistrust. Kabul has held Pakistan largely responsible for the destruction of Afghanistan. The country’s National Directorate of Security (NDS) and top officials blame Pakistan for almost every security issue in Afghanistan. Their principal grievance continues to be that Pakistan supports the Taliban leaders, gives them shelter and uses them to wield influence within Afghanistan. Pakistan denies that it has a hidden agenda in Afghanistan, however, Pakistan’s support for the Taliban is a well-documented charge that Islamabad can hardly deny.

For the Pakistanis, a major point of contention is the refusal of successive Afghan governments to accept the Durand line border. The Durand line was drawn up by the British government in 1893 and imposed on the monarchy that ruled Afghan-

istan at the time. As part of stronger border management, Islamabad recently fenced the long and porous border despite Kabul’s claims that the fencing would divide the Pashtun families living on both sides of the Durand line. Pakistan also has accused Afghanistan of giving shelter to Pakistani militants and inciting ethnic strife in Pakistan.

Top Afghan officials’ recent statements supporting a Pakistani civil rights group called the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) have aggravated the decades-old paranoia of perceived Pashtun nationalism. Pakistan called Ghani’s tweet in support of the PTM a “gross interference” in Pakistan’s internal affairs. Islamabad fears that Pashtun nationalists and Baluch separatists will get support from Afghanistan and India, respectively, and begin destabilizing the country. Stoking these fears is the developing relationship between Afghanistan and India, which makes Pakistan feel surrounded.

An Uncertain Future

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are fraught with deeply entrenched political positions. Both countries would, however, benefit greatly from even limited peace and stability within Afghanistan. Perhaps avoiding reactionary responses to any unwanted incident would be the first step toward confidence-building measures and more constructive relations. However, that is not likely to happen in the current context, where minor incidents and sometimes even apparently well-intended

statements escalate into diplomatic crises.

Recently, Ghani appointed two former intelligence chiefs — Amrullah Saleh and Asadullah Khalid — to consolidate power in local politics. The appointments are also a clear message to Islamabad of Kabul’s new proactive and aggressive strategy because of the men’s harsh anti-Pakistan views. Moreover, things are likely to heat up in the coming Afghan presidential election, scheduled in September this year. Criticizing Islamabad will be a key electoral tool for leading presidential candidates looking to cash in on the widespread anti-Pakistan sentiments.

Another issue that could weaken the Afghani-Pakistani relationship is the rising Pashtun movement in Pakistan, which has generated a lot of interest and support from Pashtuns in Afghanistan. The PTM is a civil rights movement demanding constitutional rights for the Pashtun, who have suffered in the long “war against terror” and are seeking transparency in the disappearances of citizens, extrajudicial killings, and other human rights grievances. However, the Pakistani state is handling it badly, which could create internal problems as well as new tensions with Afghanistan. On one hand, Khan said last week that PTM demands are genuine. Separately, this week Pakistani military spokesman Maj-Gen. Asif Ghafoor not only accused the PTM leadership of receiving funds from Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies but also gave a stern warning to the PTM leaders

that they will be no longer tolerated.

The United States is engaged in a highly complicated peace process with the Taliban. Currently, Washington is struggling in its one-on-one talks with the Taliban and is having a hard time getting the jihadist movement to negotiate with its Afghan opponents. The key to an intra-Afghan dialogue is getting Pakistan to nudge the Taliban to engage in serious talks with the current Afghan government. For this to happen though Washington must focus on getting Kabul and Islamabad together.

This article was originally published on The Navigator, the Center for Global Policy.

Imtiaz Ali is a Washington D.C.-based analyst and consultant whose work focuses on political, security, development and media-related issues related to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Ali worked at the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute as a curriculum specialist (2011-15). He has also served as a Jennings Randolph Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (2009-10), a Yale World Fellow (2008) and a Knight Journalism Fellow at Stanford University (2006-07). Ali has also had a long career in journalism while working in Pakistan for the Washington Post, the BBC, Daily Telegraph, and Pakistani newspapers, The News and Dawn. He tweets at @imtiaz999. The views expressed herein are the author’s and do not necessarily reflect those of CGP.

Cont. from page 1. Ramadan Promotes Unity

support for Muslims in America by posting signs outside their doors or on social media wishing their Muslim neighbors a happy Ramadan.

Over 80 percent of Muslims living in the United States fast during Ramadan, according to Pew Research Center. The research center estimates

that there are about 3.45 million Muslims of all ages living in the United States.

Its 2017 survey of U.S. Muslims found that more adults fast during Ramadan than pray five times a day or attend mosque. It also found that more women fast during Ramadan than wear the traditional hijab hair and neck covering throughout the year.

As different faiths join Muslims in breaking fast and creating interfaith dialogue and relationships a significant relationship in the U.S. has been built this year between the First Baptist Church of America and Muslims.

Known for playing a key role in forming what is often referred to as the Separation of Church and State and the Free

Exercise of Religion, the First Baptist Church in America in Providence, RI is also known as the oldest church congregation in the country founded by Roger Williams in 1938.

This Ramadan the Church extended its best wishes to Muslims in the country by wishing them a Ramadan Mubarak.

This relationship along-

side many others has created a feeling of unity and support. With the recent events targetting religious institutions, fear has spread amongst many. Ramadan being a spiritual time is a great time for different faith backgrounds to come together and prove we can coexist.

CONTINUED STORY

**Cont. from page 1
Ready to ban**

loudly he is on a crusade to put it in action.

Not long ago, he is reported to have told the well known Islamophobe Frank Gaffney “There are organizations and networks here in the United States tied to radical Islam in deep and fundamental ways. They’re not just in places like Libya and Syria and Iraq, but in places like Coldwater, Kansas, and small towns all throughout America.”

Pompeo is an evangelical Christian, and in an interview that he gave to a Christian broadcasting network in March this year, he responded to a question around Biblical mythological story about a queen who saved Jews from a Persian official said: Mr. President Trump had been “raised to help save the Jewish people from the Iranian menace?” He further explained: “I am confident that the Lord is at work here.”

Later, while attending the American Israeli Public Affairs Council’s annual convention, the secretary of state asserted: “As secretary of state and as a Christian, I’m proud to lead American diplomacy to support Israel’s right to defend itself.

As an evangelical Christian, he believes that Israel fulfills a biblical prophecy because of God promised land to the Jews and that the gathering of Jews in Israel is

foretold in the prophecy of the rapture — the ascent of Christians into the kingdom of God.

In a rally in 2015 on God and country, he said that “We will continue to fight these battles, until “the rapture.” Pompeo believes that any territorial concession to Palestinians would violate the Biblical prophecy, hence he is opposed to a Palestinian state on theological grounds.

He believes that that the Muslim Brotherhood is the main Muslim organization that has kept the idea of a Palestinian state alive globally since 1947 interfering in the divine plan. He believes that a ban on the organization would weaken the Palestinian resistance for a statehood.

But this is not the only reason the Trump Administration is keen to ban the organization. The dictators and monarchs have also been advocating a ban on Muslim Organization in the US. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Russia, and the United Arab Emirates have already declared the organization as a terrorist organization.

The dictators are apparently opposed to any movement that wants to restore democracy in their countries. Even though the US Administration vows to promote democracy in the region, it has sided with dictators and monarchs always even when it was evidently known that pro-democracy elements were brutally crushed by

them.

The case to ban the organization was made by Egyptian dictator General Sisi recently when he visited Washington recently. During a private conversation with Trump, General Sisi reportedly urged US President to join Egypt in designating the group a terror organization.

Trump told Sisi that the plan would make sense, which some officials said could be interpreted as a commitment. Designating the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization would mean that the members or supporters, as well as humanitarian organizations linked with it, would face economic and travel sanctions.

White House press secretary Sanders has acknowledged in a statement that the administration was looking into the designation.

On the other hand, John Bolton is a hardliner and believes in flexing muscles to force the opponents to yield to the US. He believes that by exerting force against groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, the US can dictate its terms on the Middle East. He believes that force alone will ensure continued U.S. dominance in the international system.

He sees diplomacy and negotiations, particularly through the U.N., as a tactic for weak states to tie the hands of stronger states.

The two have the support of Israeli Prime

Minister Netanyahu and his main supporters in the US, Evangelical Christians for their plan to ban the organization. The Republicans are 100 percent behind the plan while the Democrats have their majority congressional delegate supporting it.

The Muslim Brotherhood was formed in 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al Banna to challenge the military and monarchic powers and to introduce Islam as a way of life in a democratic setup. The organization was described by the Egyptian government as a violent group. However, the groups declared in its early years that it believed in nonviolence. The organization has thousands of supporters and sympathizers all over the world including the United States. The possible ban would impact such supporters and sympathizers in the United States. The news circulating in Washington states that the Administration is identifying individuals, groups, and companies associated with Muslim organizations with closer ties with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Seemingly, a task force has been established informally to define measures to be taken against such individuals and companies. There are several Muslim organizations in the US who reportedly identify with the ideas of Ikhwanul Muslimeen leaders or supporter and use their literature to create a bet-

ter awareness of Islam. The Republican leadership has often accused many Muslim organizations as supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and sought to ban them. The Democrats are not as forthright but have their sympathy with the Prime Minister Netanyahu’s position on the Muslim Brotherhood.

If the organization is banned, it would pose a serious challenge to Muslims in general in the US as anyone can be identified as a supporter or sympathizer of the Muslim Brotherhood based on their attendance of mosques and Islamic centers run by people known for their support or ties to the organization. It would also impact those who have visited the web sites associated with the organizations and those who believe that their understanding of Islam is built on the ideas of Hasan al Banna, the founder of the group or Syed Qurb, its main ideologue.

Its an issue that should alert Muslim American organizations for a unified response in cooperation with leading civil rights organizations because if they failed to take actions in defense of their constitutional rights, they and the Muslim community might face grave consequences whose limits cannot be imagined at this time because the hated promoted by the President under the influence of evangelical Christians and the Prop-Netanyahu lobbyists.

**Cont. from page 4.
Reaffirming Conviction**

the book by trying to ascertain its meaning. For those of us who have learned the Arabic language, this is far easier as it requires reading of the text. For others who have not, translations are a good substitute and are of great benefit to develop an understanding.

•Pray at night-

The fact is, Ramadan presents great opportunities to achieve spiritual heights and piety by praying at night. For most people, this involves attending the congregational Taraweeh prayer. For those who

can’t, one is allowed to pray at home and there is no problem with this.

•Have a regiment to achieve those goals-

Having a goal plan is essential as most people need structure to accomplish their goals and Ramadan goals are no different. For some people, the only way to complete the Qur’an is by reciting it during Taraweeh at night. For people who can’t attend the mosque each night (like me), it is possible with a method. Over the last several years, I’ve been able to complete the Qur’an every Ramadan by reading four pages after every single

prayer which comes out to 20 pages a day over the course of a 30 day month. This totals to about 600 pages which is the length most copies of the Qur’an come in. It is important to remember that there is no one way to observe Ramadan. Every person observes and strengthens their relationship to Islam and Allah in different ways and practice.

May Allah give us all the tawfiq to fast this month of Ramadan and advance in piety and righteousness therein, Ameen.

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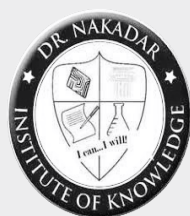
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**Con. from page 7.
Silver Lining**

Al-Jabbar, the One who will mend your heart.

Once you learn the names of Allah (SWT), you begin to call upon Him (SWT) through all ease, and through all hardship. Yasmin Mogahed shared stories, personal insights, and uplifting advice for anyone struggling, suffering, or in despair. The course

was full of self-discovery and heart healing benefits.

As she says eloquently, "We always ask Allah (SWT) to cure us of hardships, but we never stop to consider that our hardships are curing us." She adds that everyone has a struggle, but the scariest kind is to actually be oblivious of the test altogether.

Ustadha Yasmin covered things from isolation,

loneliness, and removing one's guilt of feeling down. It was truly a unique and life-changing seminar.

"Sister Yasmin made me laugh and cry at the same time, because the very eye that cried in anxiety of situation, laughed a laugh of relief truly knowing Allah (SWT) knows best" said one student with raw emotions still reflecting in their voice.

The Qabeelah's team did another incredible job impressing the audience with their unique décor; the large foil balloons stating Silver Lining, the backdrop, and the stage as a whole were remarkably done. Qabeelah Ittihaad Michigan, Al-Maghrib's chapter of Southeast Michigan, which was founded in 2005. Respect, integrity, manners, optimism, and helpfulness are all qualities of Qabeelah Ittihaad volunteers. As of today, the Qabeelah has hosted more than 79 seminars and one-day seminars.

Their mission is to help their communities by providing them with opportunities to seek Islamic knowledge in a fun, engaging, and extraordinary way. It's more than just sitting in a classroom and taking notes- bonds are built, memories are made, and seeds of friendship are planted. They've had more than four students complete the Al-Maghrib degree audit to its entirety, two of which are now Al-Maghrib instructors

themselves.

The Qabeelah hosts seminars on various topics, covering Qur'anic Tafseer, pillars of faith, beautiful patience, Fiqh of marriage, modesty and clothing, ethics and manners in Islam, history, and many more heart-warming courses.

Other than hosting seminars several times a year, Qabeelah Ittihaad's volunteers get together to put their knowledge into action: they give back to their community. Of the many projects conducted, they've made almost 300 personal hygiene packages, brought hot food to a homeless shelter, helped pack clothing for the needy, and much more. They work as a team, strive as a team, and experience the incredible fruit of their efforts as a team, alike.

To learn more about Qabeelah Ittihaad or register for their upcoming seminars visit almaghrib.org/Michigan



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