

MOSQUE AND MADRASSAH QUARTERLY

BUILDING STANDARDS, INSPIRING THE FUTURE | 2014 ISSUE 1, Q1



IN THIS ISSUE:

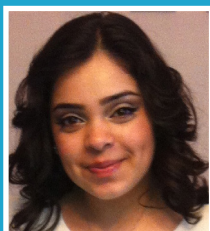
- IMAMS ONLINE.COM
- BUILDING FUTURE LEADERSHIP IN THE MASJID
- LAUNCH OF IMAM'S ON-LINE RESOURCES
- PEACE FOR OUR TIME
- SAFEGUARDING IN THE MOSQUE AND MADRASSAH
- SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING THE ELDERLY IN OUR COMMUNITY

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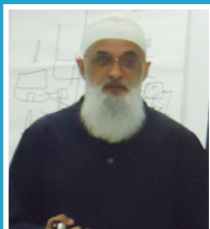
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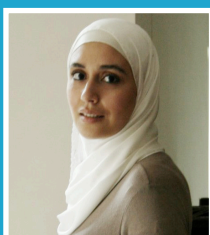
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Website www.faithassociates.co.uk



www.Imamsonline.com launched.
Global voice for Imam's

Imamsonline.com (Website) has been launched to support the ever increasing demands placed on Imams and Islamic religious leaders. The website will showcase excellent practices of Imams and female Imam's, in various national and community settings from around the world. The website will highlighting schemes of activities beyond the normal religious practices associated with Imams. The website covers issues such as safeguarding, Chaplaincy, Immigration, Civic leadership and Interfaith communication.

Imamsonline.com will also profile Imams that have demonstrated global reach such as Hamza Yusuf, Imam Zahid Shakir, Shaikh Abdul Hakim Murad, and Imam Siraj Wahhaj who are making a significant contribution in fields beyond the Mosque.

The Website will also act as a bridge to support communities and institutions such as Mosques find imams as well provide a platform for Imams looking for new opportunities in different fields.

Imamsonline.com has been developed by Faith Associates, following 3 years of research & consultation with Imams about their needs and aspirations. In particular supporting their requirements for career progression and continuous professional development. Imamsonline.com will also act as a voice to raise issues pertaining to Imams working conditions and related matters and to raise standards in which Imams have to work in.

As the editor this unique website seeks to support existing Imams & give an insight to future leaders and preachers that will benefit all community irrespective of creed /colour/ or faith.

The website will showcase excellent practices in the field of interfaith relations, community building, and effective practices to support the needy in the community and others, with the objective to raise positively the profile of Imams.

To get in touch with the team at Imamsonline call +44 845 2733904

Or email: info@imamsonline.com



Imams
Online.com

Support | Recruit | Inspire

The Imams, Scholars, Islamic thinkers, community champions and Islamic leaders presented on Imamsonline have been chosen because they have demonstrated excellence in certain fields of leadership, scholarship, community development or nation building.

These individuals are renowned for their outstanding contribution to areas such as chaplaincy work, holding relevant inter-faith dialogues, engaging effectively with both the youth and women and understanding their roles in relation to the needs of the wider community.

These individuals could be used as a benchmark for prospective Islamic leaders, Imams or individuals seeking to develop their potential to serve their community.

The list of leaders and Imams will be revised periodically to reflect our research and feedback received via our blog. If you believe a personality should be highlighted on ImamsOnline.com please send your views, comments, video links to info@imamsonline.com or use the contact form on this site.



Dr. Mustafa Ceric

VIDEO



Hamza Yusuf

VIDEO



Ruqaiyyah Waris

VIDEO

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Building Future leadership in the Masjid



In the summer of 2013 the AL Madina mosque youth wing undertook to raise the full financial cost of building an extension for the Aji Fatou Bah nursery at the Brufut education project, Banjul, Gambia.

In the summer of 2013 the AL Madina mosque youth wing undertook to raise the full financial cost of building an extension for the Aji Fatou Bah nursery at the Brufut education project, Banjul, Gambia.

In December 2013 nineteen volunteers from AL Madina mosque, Barking, Essex, England, travelled at their own cost to the village of Brufut and over a period of 15 days worked with professional craftsmen and the local community in building the second floor of the community school.

The volunteers lived in a nearby dirt compound, slept in tents and fended for themselves with the minimum of electricity and no running water.

The project provided many opportunities to gain invaluable life skills ranging from personal discipline, instilling a work ethic, team and community work and the value of public service. It highlighted the privilege of living in a developed country with a social welfare and support system and helped appreciate the value of basic necessities which are often taken for granted.

Most of the volunteers had travelled abroad for the first time without the company of close family. The project tested them as individuals, highlighted their strengths and identified their weakness whilst providing them with valuable personal insight as well as an experience which they will be able to tell their own children about in the future, InshaAllah.

Above all the project helped them appreciate that Allah SWT mercies and favours upon them and in doing so will hopefully make them better human beings, InshaAllah.

We ask that the Almighty Allah SWT accept this sadaqa as a form of intercession for us on the day of judgment and pray that he reward each and every individual who contributed to the completion of the project in any shape or form.

Haji Muhammed Siddique

Chairman AL madina Mosque, Barking

**To find out more please contact Mr
Ashfaq Saddique**

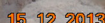
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LAUNCH OF IMAM'S ON-LINE RESOURCE

By Qari Muhammad Asim

Chief Imam Makkah Masjid

Leeds Email: qmasim@yahoo.co.uk

Imams, or Islamic leaders, have a very unique role in Islam. They are inheritors of the knowledge and wisdom of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and they are ultimately responsible for inspiring, shaping and guiding their communities. It is often the voice and message of Imams from the pulpit that has inspired Muslims to become active citizens.

For many years there have been discussions within British Muslim circles and amongst other interested parties about the role of, and the skills and services offered by, Imams. The expectations of the Muslim community and/or non-Muslims are constantly rising, as are the demands that are placed on Imams. However, at the same time, the structures and support mechanisms required for Imams to be able to fulfill their roles and provide an efficient service are missing.

In this article we have explored the desperate need for Imams to have a platform which provides them with the support and guidance they need, to in turn, support and guide their communities and congregations.

Different Types of Imams

We have used the title 'Imam' broadly to cover various roles and disciplines that the term 'Imam' encompasses. There are different types of roles that are performed by individuals who are considered to be "Imams". Generally, depending on the nature of the duties performed by them, Imams can be either full time, part time or honorary. Some of the different categories of Imam are:

- Full Time Imams - they are, essentially, the soul of the mosque and almost all the activities of the mosque revolve around them or are managed by them, in particular in small to medium sized religious establishments.
- Prayer Imams – these Imams lead either all five or the majority of the daily prayers. They may also teach children in classes held at the mosque.
- Part time and Honorary Imams - Imams who lead only Friday prayers (also known as Khateeb); that is they lead the prayer once a week, or lead on the mosque's key initiatives.
- Chaplains - these are men and women who are working in prisons, hospitals, educational institutions and armed forces etc. and serve a cross faith group of constituents
- Muftis/resident 'Alim - they are usually scholars who interpret or expound on Islamic law to give a ruling/fatwa on pertinent issues; e.g. on the rules relating to divorce, the issue of lawful earnings etc.

- Huffaz/Teachers – devout men and women who may have memorised the entire Glorious Qur'an and teach children to memorise either particular sections of, or the entire, Qur'an or learn to recite the Holy Qur'an. At times, they also lead prayers, especially the Taraweeh prayer during the month of Ramadan.
- Community Imams/speakers – these are multi-talented inspiring individuals of professional status, with sound educational qualifications, who appeal to a cross section of the Muslim community. They are called upon to lead the community in a confident, self-assuring and professional manner. Many of these men and women are of enormous talent who have an international appeal and hundreds and thousands of followers.

We can see from the above broad categories that there are different types of Imams, performing various demanding roles, which require a varying skill set and knowledge base.

Un due Demands Made on Imams

Increasingly Imams are beginning to feel that undue demands are being made on them and that every aspect of their service is being scrutinised and often criticised. The community in general does not, they feel, appreciate the value of the Imam's services and takes them for granted.

Some of the Imams are expected to take on extended duties which may include taking part in interfaith activities, visiting local schools or radio stations to talk about Islam, dealing with conflicts within the community, and providing family support and general counseling services to their local community. Imams may also be assigned the task of writing references for school admissions and employment, attending intra and inter- community events, visiting local schools to take part in religious assemblies and delivering short courses on the basics of Islam in local schools and colleges. In short, the list of potential duties of Imams is extensive. All of these duties are expected of Imams without any moral or financial recognition. In the large majority of cases, if an Imam requests that manpower is provided to him help with these ever increasing duties, or for his modest salary be increased to reflect his increasing responsibilities, he is met with scorn and criticism.

In addition to the internal scrutiny that Imams are subjected to, Imams seem to be blamed in the media for failing young Muslims and not being visionaries or being able to inspire their communities.

Lack of Support for Imams

Yet despite the vast array of services they are expected to provide, in the majority of instances Imams are not offered the support that they need. There is no 'union' of Imams; there is no platform for Imams to raise their voice, and nor is there any unified source of information and guidance to support them in their role.

British born and educated Imams are often not attracted to the prospect of being an Imam, particularly an Imam employed in a mosque, as they have a reputation of paying low salaries, expecting Imams to work long hours, not giving them any time off from their ever increasing duties and dismissing them unfairly.

Imams argue that they are not offered respect, financial and moral support or the infrastructure that they deserve and need to guide and inspire their communities. If it were not for the love that they have for their faith, passion that they have about their profession, they argue, they would seek some other profession.

To address the lack of support Imams feel they have, Imams should be given a more active role in the management of the mosque and a voice in deciding on the direction the mosque takes and the initiatives it involves itself in. They should be treated more as leaders of their community rather than as employees of the mosque.

Imams Online Resource

As British Muslim communities are increasingly looking to employ Imams who are well qualified, well versed in English language and with the culture of their country, who are able to 'connect' with young Muslims and offer a true voice of Islam to others, the crucial leadership role of Imams is becoming increasingly even more critical. Therefore, it is imperative that a resource is available to help them in their role, and such a support mechanism is urgently needed and long overdue.

Imams Online.com is an online resource whose functions can be split into three broad categories:

- Providing guidance on and promoting primary aspects of the work of Imams;
- Providing information on matters affecting Imams; and
- Promoting those Imams who are recognised as leading figures amongst Muslims.

Guidance and Promotion

In terms of providing guidance on primary aspects of an Imam's work in the Western World, the online resource focuses on three key areas.

- **Safeguarding:** this section of the website sets out the critical needs of Muslims that require safeguarding- working with youth, women and vulnerable groups in society. The section provides tips and techniques that an Imam requires to be an effective community leader and make a profound impact in these areas.
- **Inter-faith:** In the West, inter-faith work is crucial to dealing with some of the prejudices that exist between individuals due to lack of information or not knowing the 'other'. Inter Faith programmes present an opportunity for people to come together for dialogue; such dialogue must move to learning and action on both sides. As Imams play critical roles in bridging the gap between communities, Imams Online.com covers this crucial aspect of Imams' work.

- **'Civic Leadership'** is another aspect of Imams' work. This section of the portal is concerned with promoting the importance of Leadership and highlighting foresighted approaches when engaging on the needs of the wider community by understanding the social issues that various faith and no faith communities face. Aside from Islamic teaching, the site hopes to show how Imams are actively promoting cohesion and integration within their communities and are acting to build bridges, heal social divisions, address local economic, environmental and social challenges as well as removing misconceptions about Islam displayed in certain sections of the media and advocated by hate groups.

In the section concerning providing information on matters affecting Imams, immigration is one such area that is of interest to a large number of Imams. The Immigration section of the portal focuses on providing relevant information to prospective Imams looking to work or to travel to different countries. It outlines by country, visa and immigration requirements as well as keeping prospective leaders up to date on government regulations and changes on Immigration laws.

The Imams Online Resource hopes to add more sections to the portal providing useful information on matters that affects Imams.

Jobsite

Finally, one particularly practical section of the website offers the opportunity for those seeking to employ an Imam that possesses the qualities required to meet the needs of their community and Imams looking for the right opportunity to showcase their skills and provide their services to connect together. The jobsite will be an invaluable tool in placing the right Imam in the right environment, and ultimately will facilitate the employment of Imams.

There are currently many mosques that are searching for a Jumma khateeb to deliver sermons and the jobsite will also offer the opportunity to quickly search for an Imam to deliver the Friday sermon.

In summary, there is much need for Imams to have a voice, a platform which promotes the fantastic work that many Imams are undertaking, provides an opportunity to share good practices and to learn from bad practices and provides Imams with the support and guidance they need to serve their communities effectively. There is also a need for Imams to be able to see what other roles are available to spiritually uplift the Muslim communities and provide inspiration and guidance in challenging times. Imams Online.com is an attempt to address some of the issues affecting Imams. The website is still in its formative stage and is very much a work in progress, therefore all feedback would be welcome.

Peace For Our Time

By Imam Qari Asim, MBE
Imam, Makkah Masjid Leeds

On 9 and 10 March 2014 an unprecedented conference of Muslim scholars took place in Abu Dhabi under the inspiring leadership of Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah, head of the Global Centre for Renewal and Guidance and the generous patronage of United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister of Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The crème de la crème of Muslim scholars and thinkers from all over the world - belonging to different races and countries, speaking different native languages, having different backgrounds, and wearing different national dress of varying colours – gathered in Abu Dhabi to show their extreme concern at the lack of peace in contemporary Muslim societies throughout the globe. These celebrated scholars were invited to be part of a fresh and ground-breaking initiative, aimed at tackling the disharmony and violence that abounds across the Muslim world. They were all determined to put aside their differences for a common goal: bringing peace and reconciliation to the hearts and minds of their followers so that peace may prevail in the world.

It was the first occasion in recent times on which 250 distinguished Muslim scholars, religious ministers and thinkers from across the globe had gathered in one place. Leading Imams, profound thinkers and grand muftis from the Middle East, including war-torn Syria and the recently liberated Libya, the Indian sub-continent, North Africa, South Africa, America, Europe, Australia, Central Asia Bosnia and the Far East -whether Sunni, Shia, Salafi, Sufi or other - came together in search of 'Peace in Our Societies'.

It was extremely encouraging to see that women scholars and thinkers were part of the Peace forum. Some of the women scholars were moderators of the sessions whereas others were speakers who addressed the audience, thereby dismissing the allegations made by some quarters that women do not have any role in reviving and uplifting the spirit of their communities.

Shaykha Halima Krausen, a German scholar, opened the second day of the conference and urged the delegates to focus on setting up more institutions to train women scholars. She reminded the participants that their mothers, aunts and grandmothers must have played a key role in their tarbiyyah (raising up) and therefore the role of women in shaping societies and promoting peace in societies cannot be underestimated.

Objectives of the Peace Forum

Highlighting the reason for convening the Peace Forum, the leader Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah said: "We have come to the 'Peace Forum' to meet the demands of faith and humanity." The aim of the Peace Forum was to debate key concepts that are being misused and abused, leading to confusion, chaos and turmoil in the world.

These following key concepts were all scrutinised by specialists and the extremists' ideology concerning these was obliterated though intellectually reasoned arguments and debate.

-Correcting Concepts: Jihad, Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil, Adherence to the Law of the Land, Loyalty and Disavowal.

-Fatwa in a World of Strife: Fatwas and their Conditions and Constraints, the Degrees of Fatwa, and the Qualities and Qualifications of Muftis.

-Islam's Contribution Toward World Peace

-The Humanistic Ethical Values of the Islamic Social Order

The Foreign Minister of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, opened the Peace forum and reminded the participants that they live in a world which is constantly changing and the scholars need to be equipped to guide their communities accordingly. Scholars must enlighten the hearts of their followers with love and their minds with peace, not hatred and resentment towards one another.

Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah's Leadership

The two-day conference was held under the extraordinary leadership of Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah. From European governments to the White House, Muslim governments in the Middle East to the Far East, and from contemporary scholars to ordinary Muslims, the 78 year old Mauritanian scholar, Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah has the respect and the confidence of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

One of the reasons Shaykh bin Bayyah can engage a diverse group of people ranging in age, race, background and knowledge, and they are willingly listen to him, is because of his charisma, command of diverse branches of Islamic knowledge and unique way of explaining complicated subjects. One thing that distinguishes Sheikh bin Bayyah from his contemporaries is his ability to freely weave spirituality with secular rationality and philosophy. Shaykh bin Bayyah serves Muslims as a judicious and astute role model, particularly Muslim youth, who may too easily be swayed by the glitz and glamour of extremist ideologies.

Shaykh bin Bayyah's key message: Jihad was undertaken by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to bring peace in the land and to the lives of his followers, not to destroy lives and properties.

Peace in Our Societies

Islam has always been, and will always be, the religion of good, tolerance, love and solidarity among human beings. Of late, some isolated minority groups have started to instill hatred among people through their twisted thoughts, narrow-minded interpretations, exploitation of contemporary Muslim politics and to distort the image of Islam and Muslims by creating conflicts and spreading terror.

The scholars at the Peace Forum called on Imams, preachers, leaders and ordinary Muslims to seek peace in their communities and to help build a safe society. Achieving safety and security has been the mission of the Prophets (peace be upon them), in particular Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Peace and tranquillity is a necessity for human society to function. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would pray after every prayer: 'Oh Allah, You are peace, and peace is from You, be blessed O Glorious and Honourable.' The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) also advised people to seek peace to remain always at peace.

Shaykh bin Bayyah maintained that there needs to be a shift in Muslim public discourse/narrative: focus on seeking "our rights" needs to move to "peace in our society". In order to achieve peace, the narrative of Muslim activists seeking "full rights" by any means necessary will have to be put aside in favour of reconciliation. Compromise and concession is not defeat if it is for the realisation of peace. Peace is the first and foremost condition (or "right"); once that is secured, other rights can follow.

Shaykh bin Bayyah reminded the audience that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) signed the treaty of Hudaibiyah with his oppressors to bring peace between the oppressors and the oppressed. When the non-Muslims of Makkah objected to the treaty being started with the attributes of Allah as "merciful and compassionate" and being signed by Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the "Messenger of Allah", the Prophet of Islam, despite being in a position of authority, was prepared to accept such objections of the oppressors for the sake of peace. The fundamentals of Islam - belief in God's characteristics and the Prophet's prophethood - had been dismissed but the Prophet (peace be upon him) agreed for maintaining wider peace in society.

Shaykh bin Bayyah continued drawing from the formative period of Islamic history to strengthen his argument that the relinquishing of rights for the greater objective of achieving peace in society is at the core of Islamic practice. The Prophet's own grandson, Imam Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him), some decades after the Prophet's passing away, relinquished his own right to the caliphate for peace and reconciliation.

Shaykh bin Bayyah's candid and blunt message was: "We must declare war on war so that the outcome is peace upon peace."

Jihad

The scholars at the Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies conference attempted to define jihad in the context of current events in the Muslim world. It is a unanimously agreed fact amongst the mainstream orthodox scholars that the term "Jihad" has been hijacked by some who "brainwash" youth into radicalism by distorting the true meaning of the term.

The scholars explained the different forms and contexts which come under the concept of "Jihad". "Jihad, in a general sense, means to put in a maximum effort to reach a legitimate goal, to seek Allah's pleasure" said Dr Adel Qouteh, a professor at the King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. Dr Amshanan of the Ministry

of Religious Affairs of Algeria said jihad involving arms is a last resort, only to be applied when a Muslim state's security is at risk.

There was recognition amongst the scholars that people need to be vigilant against the practices of those who pretend to be scholars but are actually ignorant of the holistic teachings of Islam. In order to exploit Muslim politics, they have used the exceptions permitted under jihad to apply to general matters.

Armed Jihad was undertaken by the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) to bring peace to the world, not to destroy the lives and properties of the inhabitants of the world, advocated Shaykh bin Bayyah.

Governments

The governments, media and civil community all have to play a role in promoting and communicating Islam's universal human values. The view from the Peace Forum was that political leaders must also become involved to lessen the spread of tyranny and poverty and to find solutions to chronic issues. It was also suggested that in order to combat radicalism in Muslim states, the governments should provide social justice, because by spreading equality and justice, the increasing level of frustration and anger amongst the youth can be contained.

Loss of dignity and liberty, lack of justice and equality, disregard for pluralism and cultural differences, are all breeding hatred amongst young people. We must build institutions for youth and preachers which train them in different forms of dialogue and learning. Compassionate dialogue with youth and the application of proper legal reasoning in sharia will prevent hatred and extinguish the darkness of extremism.

Scholars need to be recognised by governments as being a part of the solution, not the problem. But who is a scholar? The charismatic speaker Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, whilst speaking about the critical role of scholars in promoting peace, maintained that the advent of the Internet had produced "Google shaykhs", who are bereft of the deeper insight of Islam and are leading young people astray. A scholar's role is to facilitate the achieving of peace in a society rather than lead the society to conflict and destruction. Speaking of the challenges faced by Muslims in non-Muslim lands, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf said the "Creative minority" can overcome challenges through wisdom and patience.

Embracing Diversity

The practice of excommunication, one Muslim declaring another Muslim an unbeliever (takfir), was debated. The scholars' view was that takfir is a cancer that is breeding hatred and alienation. It is preventing peace and stability amongst the Muslims. Allah is a sufficient Judge and therefore the matters of the heart should be left to Him. "The ideology of takfir contradicts both the objective of love amongst Muslims and the foundations of Islam itself", said Dr Rouki, President of al-Qarawiyyin University, Morocco.

Muslims must learn to manage differences and embrace diversity in religious and political ideology; co-existence between different communities and schools of thought is part of the Divine plan. Learning to tolerate and accept 'the other' is the chosen path of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). "Benefit and human welfare is the foundation of the fatwa", said Shaykh Mohammed bin Ambala, Chairman of the Council of Fatwa, and therefore any fatwa given should take into account these two over-arching principles.

Continued...

Conclusion

The construction of the Ummah is dissolving and the absence of tolerant leadership is a concern. Shaykh Dr Ahmed Al Tayeb, Grand Imam and President of one of oldest educational establishment in the Muslim world, Al-Azhar, pleaded for unity for the sake of future generations; he urged scholars to endeavour harder at bringing peace in the communities that Muslims live in. He advised the leaders to stop sectarianism and realise that without tolerance and broad-mindedness, sustainable peace will not be achieved.

The scholars were in agreement that it is high time that Muslim leadership looks inwardly rather than blaming the “other” and endeavour to resolve the frustration and exasperation that exists in Muslim societies. Foreign hands may be involved in destroying peace in Muslim lands, but the lack of visionary and tolerant leadership in Muslim lands is also the cause of killing and hatred in the Muslim world. The scholars were attempting to have a sea-change towards the mentality that “Wars begin in the minds of men, so we must build castles of peace in people’s minds.”

Safeguarding in the Mosque and Madrassah



MADRASSAH PUPILS FIRST SAFEGUARDING CODE OF PRACTICE

**THIS CARD IS FOR ALL MADRASSAH STAFF.
IT CONTAINS ESSENTIAL INFORMATION
- KEEP IT WITH YOU**



www.faithassociates.co.uk



This document has been produced by Faith Associates and is endorsed and supported by MINAB (The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board).

Mosques and Madrassah are frequented by, children, young people and vulnerable adults. In the majority of locations these are safe places, tranquil and free from harm. A place where teaching and learning is taking place and a source of guidance, spiritual revival and renewal.

Imams and Islamic teachers in Mosques and Madrassah have a great deal of responsibility when children and young people are placed in their care. Mosque Management and trustees have a duty of care also to protect and safeguard anyone that enters the premises for whatever purpose be it to worship or to seek guidance and support.

In the UK there has been a spate of high profile legal cases where Imams have been convicted of crimes where children in their care have been abused.

In light of these cases Shaukat Warraich the CEO of Faith Associates has authored two pocket size information cards in partnership with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Body (MINAB) that provide quick, guidance and support to Imams and Madrassah teachers when dealing with children and young people in their care.

The two information cards are called

- Madrassah Pupils first – Safeguarding code of practice
- Staying safe – Safety checklist for Madrassah teachers and staff

The information cards can be downloaded from www.faithassociates.co.uk to receive printed versions call faith Associates on 0845 273 3904

SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING THE ELDERLY IN OUR COMMUNITY



BY RASHID LAHER

Issue 1Q1 (2013) of this worthy publication attempted to raise awareness and understanding of a long established and reputable Charity: Age Concern. Age Concerns are usually based locally, and they are active throughout the United Kingdom. Their structure provides a national and regional focus, for example Age UK (www.ageuk.org.uk) and Age UK London (www.ageuk.org.uk/london/). Age Concerns deal with very wide range matters affecting Elders in our Society.

In mentioning Age Concern, I must reiterate that there are also other, perhaps similar organisations, some run by Muslims, as well as a host of like-minded Multi-Cultural Charities. In most instances these provide appropriate and regulated “Elderly Day Care” Centres. Some have their own Mini Buses. Some endeavour to provide Faith and Culturally sensitive services. Further details on these may be obtained from your local Council, GP/Medical Centre, local Age Concern, Etc...

I am deeply conscious of many social and welfare challenges, as well as inter generation issues. In attempting to share what little I know, I am hoping readers can help us focus on articles which can contribute to a healthier, happier Ummah. Your advice and guidance will be most welcome.

This article is written in the same vein, seeking to remind readers of some of the issues surrounding Elders within our Society, and by implication within our Homes. Thus continuing to champion the need to support and sustain our Seniors! This contribution covers dealing with the Elderly, through bringing to our attention a fading issue. This reminder “An Etiquette Tip Sheet” has been borrowed from Radio Islam International (South Africa) ~ see web link at the end of quoted article...

“Dealing with the Elderly ~ An Etiquette Tip Sheet” ~ By Samana Siddiqui”

“How often is it that we see people, Muslim or not, uttering worse than the ‘Uff’ Allah orders us not to say in dealing with their aging Parents? Keeping Islamic etiquette when it comes to our Parents or Seniors is hard in a culture that’s becoming increasingly rude. Below are five tips that can help:

Remember that the Elderly are people too: They aren’t cast off, they are not burdens. They were once our age, young, with dreams, aspirations, in most cases Families. They are individuals who have contributed to Society by raising kids, working in a number of professions, and they were and can be productive now too. See them as people, who deserve respect!

Spend quality time with them: This means spending quality time with them, taking meals with them. We’re less likely to treat someone we consider a friend rudely than someone who we deem a stranger.

Take a break from care giving: If you’re one of the Muslims who, Alhamdulillah, has taken on the task of caring for Parents who are Seniors, take a day off from the ‘job’. Give yourself a break by asking help from a relative who lives nearby or a friend. This will ease the pressure and stress, which can lead to a build-up in emotions, especially anger and frustration.

Give someone else a break from care giving: If you know of a brother or sister who is taking care of his/her Parent(s), give them a break. Take their Parents out for a day or just to your home for meals. Do what you can to ease the pressure. This can also benefit you if you never grew up around Seniors. The experience can teach patience, kindness and you can even learn from Seniors.

Be Patient: While this is easier said than done, it is necessary. While many of us tend to exercise patience with kids in the face of bad behaviour, this practice is often thrown out the window when it comes to our Seniors. Think of them as children now too, part of the life cycle. They are frail physically as well as emotionally. There is so much emphasis on building the self-esteem of our kids, but we often see people tearing down the self-esteem of our Elders. We can only truly stop this practice with patience.

AND a special note should be made of long stories, which Seniors are often fond of sharing. Instead of interrupting or expressing exasperation, perhaps take out a tape recorder, or better yet, write down the story being recounted. That way you will force yourself to listen, and you’ll have a great historical document once the narration is complete... (EveryMuslim)”

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http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1117&Itemid=47

Please do explore the Age Concern websites shown, or attempt to find your local branch. You will certainly not be disappointed ~ at least you will be able to sign-post those less-able, perhaps more vulnerable amongst us, directly to local professionals best equipped to help them!

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