




THE BISMILLAH VISION

The Birmingham Islamic Society's Newsletter

Our Vision: To become the platform for developing and sustaining a vibrant Islamic community in the Greater Birmingham area. This shall be done in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, in order to help improve the quality of life for all.

January 2008  Dhul Hijjah 1428/Muharram 1429

Happy New You!

by Jveria Gauhar

A new year dawns upon us, and alhamdulillah, not only does it coincide with the Muslim new year (Muharram will soon be upon us), it coincides with a time when we have formed some good habits. Ramadan was not too long ago. And it was only recently that many of us were fasting and doing extra good deeds in the first ten days of Dhul Hija. Many among us have even performed Hajj, mashaAllah! We have so much drive and motivation to pray, fast, do du'aa during these special times. Now the only important thing left to do is maintain them! If only it was that easy. Nevertheless, if you have the intention inshaAllah, Allah can help make the difficult easy. Be-



be a work in progress. But, for example, are we able to do all five prayers? Can we make them better? Are they always on time? Ok. So this is where we see ourselves...but also look at yourself from Allah's viewpoint. Next, there are **mutual** goals. How do we exist as a family or an ummah. This includes educating our youth. Helping friends, family, and neighbors in need. Then there are goals for the **future**.

thing, but there is no excuse for us not to set goals to shape the rest of our year. The point isn't only that it's a new year and we must set these goals. The point is to reflect and move forward from any point, and this is just one of those points. What are we waiting for? So. Write it down. Decide

your timeline. Is this for the whole year? Or is it until Ramadan? And prepare to be flexible. Life is known to throw some flyballs, so be warned. Ready?

I am going to give everyone a kick-start. Here are a few goals I thought we could achieve together, inshaAllah. I hope that we will get the collective blessings in sharing something very special. Our intentions will bind

Preparation is the key. But you first have to have some idea where you want to go in life.

fore you commit, sit down and set some goals. We do it all the time without realizing it. In order to prepare a meal, you need to shop for the specific ingredients, decide on quantities, and establish a timeline, just for one example. Preparation is the key. But you first have to have some idea where you want to go in life. Now, there are goals for you **personally**. Assess where you are now and decide on who you wish to be. This, inshaAllah, will always

Even this early, we know when Ramadan is. But who knows if we will live to see it? We should plan for it as soon as we are able and, inshaAllah, get the blessings with those intentions. For instance, are we saving up for Hajj? Do we have an idea when we wish to go?

So. That's some food for thought. Now let's commit to a plan. First, we must prepare. And yeah, us Muslims are not big on this whole new year's resolution

us in an unspeakable way. What a beautiful bond with people you may never meet in your life. This life...but maybe, just maybe we can meet in a better place....So bismillah. Edit at will and share with whomsoever you wish. Try to get your entire family involved!

Jarir relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

> See **New You** Pg 6

WEEKLY PROGRAM

* = To be held at the Hoover Crescent

Friday

BIS Jumu'ah - 12:00 & 1:00

Hoover Crescent* - 1:00

Saturday

New Muslim Class* - 1:00 PM

Sunday

Weekend Islamic

School - 10 AM - 1:30 PM

Seerah Class for Adults - 12 PM

Monday

Qur'an Class* - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Tuesday

Sisters Quran Tafseer Class in Urdu* - 11 AM

Qur'an Class* - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Wednesday

Qur'an Class* - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Qur'an Tafseer Class - After Maghrib salah (6:30).

Thursday

Qur'an Class* - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

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On the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center

This past month, Shaikh Burhan, a scholar who has visited our community on several occasions, was visiting Huntsville and decided to stop by in Birmingham as well. A tour of the soon-to-open Hoover Crescent was, of course, was in order. After the trip, the sheikh was so inspired by the Hoover Crescent, the work that went into it, and the people involved in its making, that he was moved to write poetry about it. The following is what he penned:

The Muslims of Birmingham came from distant lands,
Their majestic center on the lofty hill stands.
This was brought about by your vivid Iman,
Humble students of the glorious Quran.
Blessed are those who helped and contributed,
By the bliss of Jannah they will be saluted.
And naming no one I am not going to
For Almighty Allah knows all of you.
Intention, vision and action well combined,
With the threads of Iman well intertwined.
Allah I praise and Him I exalt,
May your efforts bring the due result!
We are proud of you for this great stand,
Making history in this great land.
The land of the free and opportunity,
In this melting pot of humanity.
As your for fathers have done before,
And, now is your turn, to do even more.
I wish you prosperity in every aspect,
Accept my humble Salam coupled with respect.
The angels from the heavens people like greet,
With Resul Allah, inshaAllah, in Jannah we meet!
Thinking about each other is always neat,
Making duaa for one another is a two way street.
These lines were written by abd Burhan,
A piece of clay from the land Alban,
Insha-Allah a humble of true Iman!

Huntsville, Alabama, 12/15/07

The Hoover Crescent is now OFICCIALLY OPEN and FUNCTIONAL!

This means that most classes will be moving to the new location, including the following

Wednesday Tafseer Class

Saturday New Muslims Class

Sunday Seerah Class

All Quran classes previously conducted at the Hoover Musallah

Weekend Islamic School is due to move to the Hoover Crescent location mid January. BIS will make the announcement once the date is confirmed,

For more information regarding the weekly classes, please refer to the Weekly Program on page 1.

The Quiet After the Storm

by Adam Taufique

A Muslim brother accepts his shahadah after Friday prayer. A crowd of people rush over to our new brother and gives hugs and congratulates him on being a new born baby. Everyone eagerly asks him about his experience, if he has thought about his Muslim name, and some go as far to give their phone number for future assistance. But what happens when this high wears off and things die down? Everyone leaves and the person who just accepted their shahadah is left dumbfounded. No one calls. No one picks up. The rush that our brother had just a couple of days ago is now over and he is sitting there wondering what he is to do now.

This is a common scene, one that unfolds almost identically in many masjid across the country. We, being a people of the moment, don't really think about what happens after the moment passes. Everyone is excited when someone becomes

a Muslim but a few are really there to help them out. This is where it will change, inshaAllah. Starting Saturday, January 5th we will begin classes at the new Hoover Crescent for our Muslim brothers and sisters who have recently converted into Islam and wish to grow in their faith. The classes will begin after Dhuhr prayer (1 PM) and will last about an hour. During the class, we will go over essential information that everyone as newly converts into Islam (and "regular" Muslims as well) need to know. Such topics will be covered as Iman (faith), belief, explanation of the Qur'an, basic everyday fiqh, and practical aspects on how to live one's daily lives as Muslims. So if you know someone (or yourself) that would benefit from this class, please feel free to contact me at adam-taufique@gmail.com. I look forward to helping my new brothers and sisters grow in this faith. ■



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Deaths

Br. Muzaffer Sheikh's brother-in-law in Detroit has passed away.

Sheik Abdullah Idris Ali's mother passed away.

Please pray for the maghfirah (forgiveness) of the deceased and patience for the family.

Jobs

IAA is accepting applications for a Middle School Social Studies teaching position. Please go to the IAA Office to apply or call 870-0422.

Help

Sponsors are needed for some of the students of IAA so if you are able to donate towards a child's Islamic education, please leave your information with the IAA administration.



Mark Your Calendars!



- ◆ Saturday, January 5th – Prison Eid Gathering
- ◆ Thursday, January 10th – Islamic New Year Begins
- ◆ Saturday, January 19th – Aashura
- ◆ Saturday, January 19th – Positive Parenting Skills Workshop. See flier on page 4.



**BIS WANTS
YOU
TO BECOME A MEMBER**

The BIS community is presently preparing for the upcoming election. For members, please promptly renew your dues. For those wishing to become members, please fill out a membership form and pay your dues at the BIS office. A good membership base will make January 2008 meaningful.

BIS membership allows permission to take part in elections and meetings on matters which concern the community.

Membership forms are available on the BIS webpage (www.bisweb.org), in the BIS Office, or at the Hoover Crescent. Fill it out and return it to the BIS office along with your membership dues. Please include dues with membership form, as it will not be processed without payment of dues. Membership is open to ALL MUSLIM BROTHERS AND SISTERS (ages 18+).

Let your voice be heard today!

We Need Your Work!

Any thoughts about the opening of the Hoover Crescent? First impressions upon visiting? The impact it can make on our community?

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

Submit an article or any other form of literature/art to be published!

E-mail:

bismillahvision@yahoo.com

Jazaakum Allah kheir!





YOUTH SOAPBOX

Squeaky Wheels Get the Grease

Anonymous Youth

A man gets in his car to drive to work and notices that his brakes are squeaky. The first thing he would do is take his car to a mechanic, not just wait until the breaks completely fail. But when the ummah's "breaks are squeaking," everyone seems to turn a blind eye. Why does it seem so simple to realize you need to fix your car, but so difficult to see the problems accumulating within one's Muslim community, and even more difficult to actually attempt to do something about it.

Alhamdulillah, Birmingham seems to be gaining more and more Muslims. The Muslim population has grown so much from years before, which was definitely visible during the recent Eid. The hall was bursting, MashAllah, with Muslims, and it was great site. However, why must that be limited to one day a year?

I think a major problem with our community is the lack unity embedded into it. Those who wish to get involved are not quite sure how and may actually get intimidated by the separation among the people. People seem to unconsciously detach themselves from people who are of different cultures or have slightly different views. Allah (SWT) has stated many times of his hate towards disunity and He mentions in Surah Al-Imran "... be not divided among yourselves," (103).

One step in hopefully uniting different groups of Muslims is having a Muslim youth group. Currently there is a

youth group, but it does not seem to be networked properly. It is a great opportunity for Muslim youths to get involved and in action, but it does currently seem to be consisting of a select few. There are not enough active, reliable members, which is key for having a youth group.

My dream is to have a youth group that I revolve my week around. A group of people I see often, can learn about Islam with, and enjoy fun activities with. I want for it to be something that is ongoing, not something that starts and ends after one halaqa, or one event.

Our community is known for starting projects, but never finishing them. People seem to enjoy the idea of doing something good, but do not wish having to worry about it weekly, or monthly. Somehow, we need to get organized. We need things we can rely on, that are ongoing. People do not even worry about starting things anymore, because they know it is going to end soon enough.

I also feel as though there is a lack of parental involvement. Are parents actually doing their part in encouraging their kids to go to the Youth Group, Weekend Islamic School, or Islamic classes offered at the masjid? Of course this does not apply to everyone, but so many parents do not seem to care about what is happening in our community, or what opportunities they and their children can get involved with.

Yet, the most important thing to building a stronger Ummah is having motivated people involved. There are always the same people trying to handle everything, and the same people watching them. With this line repeatedly heard, inshAllah we will get better at involvement as a whole in order to create a better Muslim environment for children, youth, and adults. ■

This article was written by a 15 years old Muslimah from the Birmingham, AL community. Although she prefers to remain unnamed, she wrote this article in hopes of reaching out to both the youth and the parents.

If you are a young adult interested in sharing some insight with the community, your contribution would be more than welcome in this section of the newsletter. We would like to make "Youth Soapbox" a permanent column to the Bismillah Vision, but in order to do so we need your help! Please send your thoughts to bismillahvision@yahoo.com



New You

>Cont'd from Pg 1

"Whoever initiates a good practice (*sunnah hasanah*) in Islam and is emulated by others in doing so will get the reward of it and the reward of all those who act upon it without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And whosoever initiates an evil practice (*sunnah sayyi'ah*) in Islam and is emulated by others will bear the sin of it and the sin of all those who act on it without their burden being diminished in the least." [*Sahih Muslim*: (1017)]

Weekly goals: (I tried to keep them realistic. But obviously I would hope that we'll distribute the effort over the week and not wait until Friday night to finish them all. But who's to know *how* you did it, as long as you try, inshaAllah.)

1. Thank Allah for what you know and have. All thanks and praise is due to the most high. And without Him, we are nothing. Sit for 5 minutes and thank Him for all the things that come to mind.
2. Follow #1 by saying: Rabbana atina fid-dunya hasanatan wa fil 'akhirati hasanatan waqina 'adhaban-nar. "O our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!" (Quran 2:201)
3. Call a family member that you have not spoken to in a long time.
4. Pray in jama'at. If you already do this, try to take someone/invite someone new. Share your jama'at.

5. Read about a surah in the Qur'an. Learn about the history and the meaning of the title.

6. (Some of us might need to do this daily) Fight your anger. Yeah. That's right. Just realize that you have an opportunity to remember these words and just let it go. Take a deep breath. Drink a glass of water. Seek refuge in Allah from the shaytaan. And let it go.

"And what is with Allah is better and more enduring for those who believe and who rely upon their Lord. And those who avoid the major sins and indecencies, and when they become angry, they forgive." [*Sûrah al-Shûrâ* : 36-37]

7. Do tahajjud. We all get a break in the week. Break the routine at least once to give Allah 10 minutes of your time, inshaAllah. Even having the intention and preparing to wake up alone counts for something, inshallah. And may Allah help us all.

8. Recite the Qur'an. Not only weekly. Daily if possible. But I am going to put an arbitrary suggestion of two hours through the week inshaAllah. We take breaks to watch TV, go for a walk, call our friends, whatever...take a break from the routine to take a vacation with Allah. And hey...it takes not even a few minutes to recite a third of the Qur'an; In regards to Surah al-Ikhlâs: "(The chapter of) 'Allah is the One... the Needless...' is a third of the Qur'an." [*Sahih al-Bukhârî* (5015)]

9. Read Surah Kahf on Jumuah before maghrib.

Monthly goals:

1. Help a neighbor whether they need it or not. Share something special with them, whether it's

a quick conversation or a tray of food. It could be easy as sending them home baked cookies (which is pretty easy these days with the help of Pillsbury). Kindness goes a long way. This should be extended especially to your non-Muslim neighbors.

Abû Hurayrah relates that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak a good word or remain silent. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should show hospitality to his neighbor. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should show hospitality to his guest." [*Sahih al-Bukhârî* and *Sahih Muslim*]

2. Donate something that you are not using. Could be a sweater or a lawn mower. Find someone who could put something your not using to some purpose. And with the right intention, every time that person uses it, you will get the rewards inshaAllah. Got nothing old? Buy something new and gift it to someone.

Allah says: "Establish prayer and pay Zakâh. And whatever good you send forth for your souls, you shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees well all that you do." [*Sûrah al-Baqarah*: 110]

3. Try to fast on Mondays and/or Thursdays. If not, then fast at least once in the month. If this, too, is difficult, do charity.

Now. It does not amount to much effort. We do more in three days of Ramadan than what I am suggesting. Below is a quick reference sheet. Cut it out and put it on your fridge! And get poppin. ■

WEEKLY	MONTHLY
Shukr for 5 minutes.	Help a neighbor. Share food and a conversation.
Recite: Rabbana atina fid-dunya hasanatan wa fil 'akhirati hasanatan waqina 'adhaban-nar	Donate something other than money to someone in need (i.e. Article of clothing, shoes, etc.).
Call a family member you haven't spoken to in a while.	Give a gift to someone you love (friend, spouse, child)
Fast on a Monday and/or Thursday . . . OR ———>	Fast one day.
Learn about a Surah in the Quran.	Visit a sick brother/sister.
Let go of your anger.	Read an Islamic book.
Make intention to pray tajahhud one night.	Listen to an Islamic lecture.
Read recite Quran for _____ minutes/hours.	
Read Surahtul Kahf on Friday.	
Pray in a jama'at.	
Attend a weekly halaqa.	



Pearls of Wisdom

Helping Others

Doing service for humanity is one of the greatest ways we can show our devotion to Allah. All of the revealed scriptures place great emphasis on helping others. In Islam, helping others and solving their problems is not only an important virtue, it is also a profound act of worship. It is a means of righteousness that promotes peace on Earth and allows us to earn Allah's eternal reward in the Hereafter.

Allah likes it so much when we help others that He forgives us our sins for something as simple as moving some thorns out of the path where people walk.

Abû Hurayrah quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: "A man was going on his way when he saw brambles in the path. He moved these out of the way. Allah so esteemed his virtuous act that He granted him forgiveness." [Sahih Muslim]

In another narration of the same hadith, Abû Hurayrah relates that the Prophet said he saw a man strolling in Paradise. The deed that he had performed was to cut down and removed a tree from the path that was causing trouble to passers by.

In his commentary on this hadith, al-Nawawi says that there is reward for any virtuous deed that provides help to others.

Scholars explain that the main

lesson to draw from this hadith is the inherent virtue of easing the distress of others in any way: "The prayers and other ritual acts of worship that we perform are fruitless unless we engage in the service of humanity."

Allah grants His forgiveness to those who sacrifice of themselves to help the victims of misfortune. Allah does not only grant forgiveness for those who engage in such virtuous deeds, but in His infinite mercy, he makes their account easy on the Day of Judgment.

Abû Hurayrah relates that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever removes one of the hardships of a believing soul, Allah will remove from him one of the distresses on the Hereafter. Whoever solves someone else's problem, Allah will make things easy for him in this world and the Hereafter... Allah is ever assisting His servant as long as that servant is helping his brother." [Sahih Muslim (4867)]

This hadith shows us that the greatest form of devotion, the best way to please Allah, is to provide service to humanity. Today our world is thirsting for peace. Though there are many programs and efforts being carried out, we are falling short. Yet the solution is clear - it lies in providing service to humanity.

Before the coming of Allah's

final Messenger, the people of Mecca lived in ignorance. Their society was harsh, far removed from the values of human dignity, fraternity, love, and affection. When those same people were brought under the guidance of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), their conduct alone was enough to communicate their newly realized social conscience. Islamic teachings, like those mentioned above, formed the basis of a new social reality for the Muslims.

We can see these values in the way all of the prophets conducted their lives. Through the example that Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and the other Messengers set, Allah guided the rest of humanity. Therefore, we should follow their righteous mode of conduct and live our lives accordingly. We need to study, especially, how the prophets maintained a state of peace in a prevailing atmosphere of gloom.

When Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) arrived in Madinah, he created bonds of brotherhood between the local inhabitants and the emigrants from Mecca. In this way, he encouraged them to render assistance to one another and live together in harmony. The Prophet, in his wisdom, brought two different peoples together into one combined society, who became the best generation humanity has ever witnessed.

When the Jews of Madinah saw the conduct of this combined society of the emigrants and the local people, they were greatly impressed. Some of them embraced Islam after seeing the reality of the faith in practice.

Solving other peoples' problems is a way to soften hearts and establish harmony. Sometimes a cruel man's hardness melts away when he sees some gentle soul, out of sheer kindness, help him out of his difficulties. There are abundant examples of this in our daily lives and in the life of the Prophet, but unfortunately many of us do not take heed. This is one of the reasons why there is so much sorrow in the world.

The value of helping others is a universal truth, because Allah does not ignore the person who makes sacrifices in the service of fulfilling people's needs. We as Muslims should try to cultivate the habit of giving service to humanity, seeking only Allah's pleasure and His reward in the Hereafter. ■

Tariq Sohrab Ghazipuri
www.islamtoday.com



Pause and Ponder

Al-Baqarah (The Cow)

Chapter 2: Verse 44

Double Standards

"How can you bid others to piety and forget yourselves even while you are reciting the Book? Do you not understand?"

This may have well been directed at the Jews of Madinah on certain specific occasions, but it applies to all believers and religious leaders of all groups and generations.

When religious teaching becomes a mere "profession" it loses its fervor; those who take it up begin to say things they do not believe and their actions tend to become divorced from their words. This can lead them to twist facts and compromise ideas and principles to serve their interests and desires. Their rulings, pronouncements and opinions, or fatwas, may sound convincing but they are far removed from the spirit and the letter of the religion.

The double standards of those who claim to represent a certain religion or ideology not only harm them personally, but also undermine the

ideas and the religions they are advocating. They confuse people and weaken their trust and confidence in the religion, so that they lose interest in it. When people lose trust in their preachers, the preachers become even more diffident and arrogant.

When they are not uttered with sincerity and conviction, words lose their impact. A man's beliefs are meaningless unless his actions and behavior become a practical translation of those beliefs. When a man's conduct reflects his words, no matter how plain and ordinary these words are, people will trust him and take him seriously. His words draw their power and effect from the sincerity and honesty with which they are being uttered, not from the rhetoric or eloquence in which they are delivered. They assume a force of their own. ■

Source: "In The Shade Of The Quran" - Sayyid Qutb, Vol 1, pp. 62, 63

THE BISMILLAH VISION

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