




# THE BISMILLAH VISION

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.*

April 2008  Rabi' al-Awwal/Rabi' athOThaani 1429

## The Muslim Voice

by Jveria Gauhar

Every channel on TV. All the same things. Reality shows. Game shows. And of course – you cannot avoid it even if you wanted to – elections! Politics. Debates. Speeches. Promises. It is getting pretty heated. Especially while one candidate in particular is so blatant about how he or she is *not* Muslim. As if it is so wrong to be a Muslim. So here are some ponderings of a confused girl...

Well, for starters, Muslims are woven in each and every fiber of the blanket that is America. We live here. We work here. And many of us are masha'Allah very happy as such and would like to maintain this country as our home.

Yes, some of us get the occasional "where are you from" despite having been born, raised, and maybe never even stepped out of this country. But why are we *still* different? Why are we always referred to as "they" and not necessarily Muslim Americans. Of course, no one can literally deny that we are Americans. And many of us have really played integral roles in our communities. So I guess it goes without saying that you cannot just live in America and not vote. Pretty blunt, right? Well, if we

make this our home and we wish to keep on living here, don't we have a say in what we want? The only way we can make sure is by voting.

Here is an example. It's the future. What if you're a doctor and you deliver babies. And what if abortion is legal without restrictions, at any point in the pregnancy. A woman comes to you and asks for an abortion, say, 7 months pregnant. As a doctor you cannot deny her care. As a Muslim, you must. Sure, you can refer her to someone who will, which given the circumstances you will have to, but what hand do you want to play in this situation? What will Allah ask you? Far

Muslims are woven in each and every fiber of the blanket that is America.

reaching example, but if abortion was legal despite circumstances, imagine how the number of abortions would increase. Furthermore, it is not just about you as a doctor, but what about us as a people. What new issues do we want our kids to deal with? What will their friends be doing? Now, we already are exposing our children to countless temptations. Illegitimate children have been on the rise in this country for years now. Why are we setting the stage to where it can affect Muslims? No. Islam does not promote illicit rela-



tionships. But this society makes it all too easy. Abortion is not the issue at stake. But the future is and the choices we make now will help mold the environment into one we hope to live in. So what do you do? The point I am trying to make is that we are not alone. Not as Muslims. And certainly not as Americans. We share many beliefs with some candidates. We need to balance what is important to us and decide what we want this country to become.

We do not have a choice to vote a Muslim for President. We might never. However, we must vote a person that is receptive to our needs, beliefs, and aware of who we are. It is tiring to constantly wake up each day and be treated different than others, while I spend so much effort

> See **Muslim Vote** Pg 6

## WEEKLY PROGRAM

### Friday

Homewood Jumu'ah - 1:15

Hoover Crescent Jumu'ah\* - 1:00

### Saturday

New Muslim Class - 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

### Sunday

Weekend Islamic

School - 10 AM - 1:30 PM

Aqeeda 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 Isha salah (7:15).

### Thursday

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

**All events in the Weekly Program are held at the Hoover Crescent,**

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## That Day

by Aiman Fatima

India... Those were the days.....I was in a world of my own. My parents were young. That is how, I thought, they would always be. I saw a kind of stability in my teachers. They would always be there – young and enthusiastic about life. It was just yesterday when I was still thinking and dreaming of what I would become. Life was long and unending. Life would go on.....there were all those years lying ahead.

### Cut

I just got married, I am in Birmingham, AL and India is now far behind me.

I now look back at all those years. They seem to have been fast forwarded. My parents look old and tired. The past years are picture post cards, half torn, half crisscrossed with lines. There are all these faces, events and gatherings staring back from them. Some I remember, some I have forgotten. The faces look familiar. These were the people I had been destined to meet in my life until now. How fast they had faded, how fast they had vanished! How fast some of them were still fading! There would be new postcards with new faces and they would start vanishing too! Time is quick paced. The present becomes the past and the future becomes the present a bit too fast.

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It could all be a dream and I might wake up and not even remember the dream or the night. How do you explain the time period from the moment you went to sleep to the moment you got up? Where were you and what happened during that time? Suddenly it hits you and it hits you hard. It's all too short. It's a journey with an abrupt end. Everything around is in a state of transition, nearing the end. In a way you have to accept this and constantly remind yourself about your proximity to the end. It can give you a sudden jolt and can inspire you to become a better human being. You and I have to realize that it's all going to end one day and then there will be another beginning. A beginning, which cannot be perceived by the human mind.

In the Quran, Allah says 'Anyone who chooses this fleeting life as his priority, we will rush to him what we decide to give him, and then we commit him to suffering. As for those who choose the Hereafter as their priority, and work righteousness, while believing, their efforts will be appreciated. Note how we preferred some people above others (in this life). The differences in the Hereafter are far greater and far more significant.'

The Messenger of Allah once said 'Be in the world as if you are a stranger or like one who is passing by as in a journey and count yourself among the peoples of the graves.'



The Messenger also said 'When you wake up in the morning don't talk to yourself about tonight and when night has come don't worry about the morning for surely you don't know what your state will be tomorrow. The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever. Be greedier in terms of your time (life span).'

As I keep moving ahead in life, the past seems to be nothing but a fraction of a second or even less. It's all frozen behind me. Later, my life as a whole will be frozen. It will be melted in the hereafter, for me to see. All

my actions and deeds, good or bad will then flow before me.

I have to keep moving with a strong belief in the hereafter. I have to keep moving with the belief that my end could be round the corner. The journey in itself is important to reach the end. It's the little time I have for preparing myself for that day. I am fortunate. I am blessed. I have the message, the revelation by Allah, the Quran. It's a means for me to talk directly to Allah. I have to read, comprehend and follow. I have the directions for moving ahead in this journey. The Quran also gives me a clear concept of the metaphysical question of life after death (what follows after this journey).

The very fact that all the messengers of Allah dealt with this concept so confidently and so uniformly- the gap between their ages in some cases, being thousands of years- goes to prove that the source of their knowledge of life after death as proclaimed by them all, was the same, Divine revelation.

Allah says in the Quran: 'And he (i.e. man) presents for Us an example (i.e. attempting to establish the finality of death) and forgets his [own] creation. He says, "Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?" Say, "He will give them life who produced them the first time; and He is, of all creation, Knowing." [It is] He who made for you from the green tree, fire, and then from it you ignite. Is not He who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them? Yes, [it is so]; and He is the Knowing Creator (Quran, 36:78-81).

On another occasion the Quran very clearly says that the disbelievers have no sound basis for their denial of life after death. It is based on pure conjecture: 'And they say, "There is not but our worldly life; we die and live (i.e. some people die and others live, replacing them) and nothing destroys us except time." And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.

> See **That Day** Pg 4



# COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

## Births

*A very late announcement:* Br. Lucas Gambino and his wife Sawsan were blessed with a baby boy in November of last year; they named him Jude. We send him and his family a hearty Mubarak and sincere apologies for overlooking this announcement!



Br. Arif Malik and his wife were blessed with a baby girl whom they named Mariam.

Br. Adam Awad and his wife Tahani were blessed with a baby girl whom they have named Deena.

*May these children be a blessing for their families.*

## Sicknesses

Br. Hakeem Umrani had surgery at Cooper Green Hospital.

Br. Hassan Saad, who is the father-in-law of Br. Lucas Gambino, had an open heart surgery.

Br. Nayef Tarawama's wife is sick in Jordan .

Br. Mohammad Tahan had a serious surgery at UAB hospital.

*Please make dua for a complete and speedy recovery of all these individuals.*

## Deaths

Br. Moeen Chaudry's father passed away in Pakistan .

Br. Hafiz Farman's grandmother passed away in Pakistan. Please make dua for her maghfirah.

*Please make dua for the maghfirah (forgiveness) of these individuals and patience for the family.*



## Mark Your Calendars!



- ◆ **Sunday, April 20th** - Community Bowling at Vestavia Bowl from 9 am to 12 pm. Please note that there will be no Weekend Islamic School on this date.
- ◆ **Friday, April 25th** - Life for Relief and Development Fundraiser at the Hoover Crescent.

## IAA Science Fair Achievement

The community is extremely proud and congratulate the Islamic Academy of AL (IAA) students who placed in the UAB Regional Science Fair!

Two students won 1st place, one student won 2nd place and three students received awards.

**Masha'Allah!**

**The Bismillah Vision is now open to business advertisements. Please see page 5 for details.**



## That Day

>Cont'd from Pg 2

'And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, their argument is only that they say, "Bring [back] our forefathers, if you should be truthful." Say, "God causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt," but most of the people do not know' (Quran, 45:24-26).

Allah will surely raise all the dead. That day the whole universe will be destroyed and then the dead will be resurrected to stand before Allah. That day will be the beginning of a life that will never end, and on that day every person will be rewarded by Allah according to his or her deeds. That day scares me. It brings tears to my eyes. It shakes me up from my monotonous busy life. It brings me closer to Allah. It strengthens my belief in Allah. It makes me work harder towards realization of my faith. It makes me more responsible and dutiful as a person. It enables me to put in more efforts.

The azure sky hanging over me, the emerald green grass, the innocently staring flowers, the tall trees . . . have a message. As I look at them walking back home, I realize the immense beauty Allah, my creator has showered for me in this life. These are signs for me to realize His immense powers. These are signs for me to contemplate. It increases my yearning for paradise and the life to be. I cannot even perceive the beauty, promised to the righteous in that life. It will be of a billions and billions folds higher magnitude than the beauty I see around. There is no comparison. This beauty is just the trailer, a preview before the feature presentation!

I need to thank Allah for this life which in itself is a miracle. This life is a way to make me realize His power and supremacy. I have little time. I have to be prepared for the meeting with my Creator. I have to follow the directions carefully. One wrong turn and I might not even have the time to find my way back. That day is not far. It's closer than I thought. That day when my new, unending life begins. ■

## **Your Contributions Needed!**

**Do you have any  
Profound Thoughts  
you would like to share  
with the rest of us?  
Inspiring advice?  
Constructive criticisms?  
Or any other  
Practical Suggestions?**

Please send them in to  
[bismillahvision@yahoo.com](mailto:bismillahvision@yahoo.com)  
for a chance to get published!  
Remember, this publication reaches  
almost 800 people!  
Here's your chance to be heard!

## Facing Allah

It is reported from Abu ad-Darda that he said, "That my face be covered in dust for my Rabb (is most loved by me), - for that is the best kind of worship for Allah." So let none of you fear the dust, nor find it distasteful to make sujud in it, for there is no doubt that every one of you comes from it. Nor should any of you fear an excess of it, for verily, it is by this means that one attempts to attain freedom from slavery and salvation from the Hellfire - a fire before which the fixed lofty mountains which were placed as pegs (holding the earth) could not stand, nor the seven strong heavens, built one above another, which are placed as a well graded canopy over us, nor the earth, which was placed as a dwelling for us, nor the seven seas, of which none knows their depths or their size except the One Who created them. Then what about us, with our feeble bodies, our delicate bones, our flimsy skin? We seek refuge with Allah from the Fire!

So should any of you stand in Salah - may Allah have mercy on you - then let him be as if he sees Allah before him, for though he may not see Allah, verily, Allah sees him. It is narrated in a hadith that Allah's Messenger, advised a man, saying:

"Fear Allah as though you see Him, for verily, though you may not see Him, He sees you."

This then, is the advice of the Prophet to the slave in all his affairs, so what about when he performs Salah, when he stands before Allah, in a particular place, a sacred place, desiring Allah and turning his face towards Him? Does not his standing, his situation in Salah merit the same ihsan as all his affairs?

It is also narrated in a hadith: "Verily, the slave, as long as he is in Salah, possesses three qualities: Blessings are showered upon his head from the heavens above, the angels sit around him, from his feet to the heavens and a caller says: 'If the slave knew the One Who hears his whispered utterances, he would never leave his Salah.'"

Allah showers His Mercy upon the worshipper who approaches prayer in a state of humility and meekness towards Allah, in fear and supplicating Him with desire (for His Pleasure), and in hope (of His Mercy). He stands before his Rabb, earnestly, with deep feelings, hoping for its acceptance and fearing its rejection, for verily, its acceptance is a cause for joy, while its rejection is a cause for misery and wretchedness.

Do you know if your sins will be forgiven at all? After all this, you have no assurance that you will be spared from it (the Hellfire). So who is more deserving of your tears and sadness [than Allah] - that He may accept from you (your deeds)? In addition to this, you know not whether or not you will awaken in the morning, nor if you will still be here in the evening - will you be given the good news of Paradise, or the bad news of the Hellfire? ■

Source: From sayings of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal - Yahya Ibrahim List



To all local businesses that would like to have their names made known to almost 800 people!

Yes, now you can have your business become a household name!

That's right. The Bismillah Vision is now open to business advertisements!  
And the introductory rates are irresistible!

Alhamdulillah, with such a large readership and the demand for a comprehensive community newsletter at its highest, The Bismillah Vision more than ever in need of financial support. What better way than to support your newsletter *and* get your name out there!

Rates:

Business Card Size (2"x3.5")	\$10.00/month	\$120.00/year
2 Business Card Size or 1/4 Page (3.5" x 4")	\$20.00/month	\$210.00/year
4 Business Card Size or 1/2 Page (7" x 4" )	\$40.00/month	\$420.00/year
Full Page (7" x 10")	\$100.00/month	\$1000.00/year

Please contact Brother Muzaffar Zuberi at 205.421.1541.



**DON'T FORGET!**

The BIS headquarter is now located at the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center at the following address:

2524 Hackberry Lane  
Hoover, AL 35226

The phone number remains the same: 205.879.4247. In addition, you may contact the office via. e-mail at [bisoffice@bisweb.org](mailto:bisoffice@bisweb.org)



## Muslim Vote

>Cont'd from Pg 1

to treat people in the best way I know. And somehow people still don't know what I truly believe in. I'm not talking about halaal meat and scarf issues and fasting. People get that. But here is the kicker. (1) I am a Muslim and I live here. I have no where to go "back" to. (2) My religion is special to me. Yes, I represent the monotheistic religions, but I differ from the others. I believe in ONE GOD. Allah is not translatable to *just* "God." It is "one God," a word that has no plural form possible. And yes, I believe in Jesus. The surprise I get when people hear me say that is incredible. It is not about the scarf. It is not about the fasting. The truth is getting lost behind the appearance. Of course, it is not America's responsibility to teach Americans about who I am. But why am I on the defense? Why do I have to explain myself? I think it has something to do with American perception. And I think that considering the number of generations Muslims have been residing in this country, things should change.

And I know America is ready to find out about me and how I really *do* fit in. Because despite all the ignorance and all the questions, I have made such amazing and beautiful friends and relayed concrete answers – relationships that make me very proud to be an American and have neighbors and colleagues that are different than me...different and same at the same time, who would imagine? It is just common sense that if we live here and support this country through our work, efforts and (ha, ha) taxes that we should expect it to serve our most fundamental needs of safety, recognition, and

satisfaction. And we should demand it – mostly because through us, we represent the most important part – our religion. If we show we care and are concerned, then people need to find out who we are and where we are coming from. How can we do this by *not* voting? So, yes we need to vote. Yes, we need to get active in our communities. We need to be a presence that cannot be mistaken. And yes, we need to support (as some have suggested) financially those candidates that are there for *us*. And the way we do that is by identifying the similarities that we share with those running for office. As Americans, we share common goals in the future. And while we live in a primarily non-Muslim country, we need to ensure that whoever becomes our President works in a just way on behalf of everyone.

Consider the following: Aren't we blessed to live in a country where elections are closely regulated to assure fairness and accuracy? The process is fairly simple and safe. We never asked for these rights. We did not have to fight for these rights. And to not use them? What excuse do we have when our government undermines our beliefs? There are an estimated 6.7 million Muslims in America (most surveys range between 3 to 9 million; no definite number is known). Also consider that (based on unscientific studies) it is suggested that almost 80% of Muslim Americans voted for Bush in 2000. Muslims are thought to be the only group to vote united. There are even theories that some 60,000 Muslims in Florida put him in power. If Muslims voted together, we would be a voice too loud to ignore. And we might just

get more than we could ever imagine – dreams to make this country a home we cherish and a world of peace.

We know that our religion is the truth. We cannot establish an Islamic country. In fact, it's sad to say that no one country in the world is grounded in exclusively Islamic policies, although few come close. Granted, there are problems in every society. However, in this country, there are people that share many of our morals. And we must participate in society for not only our sake, for our children and really, the world. America is always going to be a global power. We need to make sure that it serves our needs as Muslim Americans and Muslims worldwide. It is a simple cause-and-effect relationship. Muslims vote for a candidate that stands on righteous grounds – candidate gets elected recognizing Muslim support – candidate brings good to society because they need to be held accountable – Muslims are a part of that society – society as a whole benefits – Muslims all over the world are impacted by American policies. And you can only do that by going to the polls. Muslims have the power to make a difference. And inshaAllah, proof is in firm belief and *numbers!* I hope I nipped at your conscience. Now...I do not claim to know *how* Muslims should vote. But I think if we start talking, there are enough smart Muslims to help figure that part out. Abortion might not be crucially important to us. But education, taxes, health care, the economy, the war, ...list goes on...all are. They are important to us as Americans – Muslim or not. See you in line. ■

### Some Thoughts about the New Mosque. . .

The Birmingham Islamic Society leadership has won admiration and laurels from its Muslim community for transforming a church into a mosque with the mutual consent and agreement between the two parties. It was a good grace of the institution of cross to give place to the institution of crescent. The crescent is God-created while the cross is man-made. The crescent is a sign of glad tidings and growth leading to full moon that brightens the night and dispels darkness. May this tradition be repeated and the crescent of Islam may shine all over the world!

Ameen.

**-Muhammad Shareef Ashraf**



## Pearls of Wisdom

### Requirements of the Journey

Imam Ibn ul Qayyim al Jawziyyah  
Hudaa, Muharram 1414

One of the best ways of mutual support (in righteousness and piety) is to help one another on the journey of migration to Allah and to ar-Rasool (peace be on him) with hands, tongues and hearts, and by teaching, educating and caring. A person having the attitude toward al-`Ibaad (the worshippers) of Allah will see prosperity rush to him from all directions. Allah will move toward him the hearts of His `Ibaad, will open for his heart the gates of knowledge, and will make smooth for him the path bliss. Conversely, one with an opposite attitude will receive opposite consequences.

If one then asks, "You have described a very great journey and a very important matter; but what provisions should be taken along? What's the way to follow? And what are the means to be used for transportation?" The answer would be as follows.

#### The Provisions

The provisions for this journey are the knowledge inherited from the Seal of the Prophets, peace be on him. There are no other provisions. Let anyone not prepared with these provisions stay in his home and sit with those who lag behind. He

will find a multitude of others who lag behind to accompany him. Let him follow their example, but let him know that this company will not avail him anything on the Day of Distress. Allah Ta`ala said:

"When you have done wrong, it will avail you nothing on that Day; then you shall be partners in punishment." [Az-Zukhruf:39]

Thus Allah Ta`ala assures us that the association of the wrongdoers in punishment will not help them. It is true that people feel comforted when they share disasters in this life. Al-Khansaa`, an Arab poetess who lived in the early days of Islaam, said,

"If it were not for the large numbers of people wailing around me because of the loss of their brethren, I would have killed myself. And even though none of those for whom they are wailing resembles my brother, yet, I comfort myself in that we all share similar disasters."

However – this kind of consolation will not exist among those sharing the punishment on the Day of Resurrection.

#### The Way

And the way to accomplish this journey is by exerting full capacity and by striving to the extreme. It can never be accomplished by wishes, or by going slow. It is only as an Arab poet once said.

"Dive into the darkness of death and rise to eminence. Thus will you earn a distinguished and lasting honor. No good is there in a soul which fears death, nor in a willpower which is annoyed by the reproaches of those who like to find faults."

In fact, it is not possible to take this way except by two means:

Firstly, never to be afraid, so long as you are right, of the reproaches of those who like to find faults. Some forms of reproach can hit even a strong knight so hard as to cause him to drop to the ground dead.

Secondly, one's self should be so worthless to him, for Allah's sake, that he would rush forward, fearless of any perils. The moment the soul becomes fearful, it retreats and turns away from facing dangers, preferring the lowliness of the Earth.

These two matters cannot

be further fulfilled without patience. One who exercises patience, or just a short while will find dangers turn into a smooth breeze, which can carry him where he wishes. Thus the danger that he feared suddenly changes to become his best helper and assistant. This is a matter that cannot be comprehended well except by those who have tried it.

#### The Means of Transportation

And the means of transportation in this journey are true confidence in Allah, turning to Him with the whole self, satisfying Him and seeking His help. It is by lying down before Him as a subdued and defeated person, who possesses nothing, a person who looks up to his Master for dignity and security and for attaining some of His bounty, hoping that He would shelter him. Such is the one whom, it is hoped, Allah will guide and to whom He will show what has been concealed from others concerning the way of this Hijrah (migration). ■

The danger that he feared suddenly changes to become his best helper and assistant.





## Pause and Ponder

Al-Insan (The Humans)  
Chapter 76: Verse 2

### The Gifts

"Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him: so We gave him (the gifts), of Hearing and Sight."

We are not like the trees and animals that the object of our creation be fulfilled on the earth itself, and we should die and perish here after we have played our appointed role over a period of time according to the law of nature. This world is neither a place of punishment for us, as the monks think, nor a place of rewards as the believers of the law of transmigration think, nor a place of entertainment and enjoyment, as the materialists think, nor a battlefield, as the followers of Darwin and Marx think, but in fact it is a place of test and trial for us. That which we regard as our age, is in fact the time given to us for the test. Whatever powers and capabilities we have been given in the world, the things that have been placed under our control and authority, the various positions and capacities in which we function, and the relationships that we enjoy with others, all these are the countless papers of the test and this test continues till the last breath of our lives.

The result is not to be announced in this world but in the Hereafter when all our answer-books will be assessed, decision will be given whether we have come out successful or failed. And our success or failure wholly depends on what we thought of ourselves while we functioned here and how we answered the papers that were given to us here.

The word sami (hearing) and basir (seeing) in the original actually imply being "sensible and intelligent". These words of the Arabic language are never used with respect to the animal although it also hears-and sees. Thus, hearing and

seeing here do not imply only the powers of hearing and seeing which have been given to the animals too, but those means through which we obtain knowledge and then draw conclusions from it. Besides, since hearing and seeing are among the most important means of knowledge for us, only these two have been mentioned briefly; otherwise it actually implies giving us all those senses of the body by which we gather information.

Then the senses given to man are quite different in their nature from those given to animals, for at the back of every sense he has a thinking brain, which collects information gained through the senses; arranges it, draws conclusions from it, forms opinions, and then takes some decisions which become the basis of his attitude and conduct in life. Hence, after saying, "We created man in order to try him," to say, "therefore, We made him capable of hearing and seeing" actually contains the meaning that Allah gave us the faculties of knowledge and reason to enable us to take the test. Obviously, if this were not the meaning and the meaning of making man hearing and seeing just implied the one who could hear and see, then a blind and deaf person would stand exempted from the test, whereas unless a person is utterly devoid of knowledge and reason, there can be no question of his being exempted from the test. ■

Source: "Towards Understanding The Quran"

**Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi**

## THE BISMILLAH VISION

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*Faiza Malik*

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