

November 2007 -Shawal1428

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

Assalamu alaikum,

Ma sha-Allah, our community continues to grow in numbers. Attendance for Eid ul Fitr was bigger than ever and those of you who attend Jum'ua prayers can't help but notice that it is difficult to find a place to sit if you show up late. Because we have so many newcomers to our community, the ICCR Membership Committee and the Board of Directors have scheduled a "Newcomer's Welcome Potluck Dinner" The dinner will allow community members to get to meet and know each other and introduce non members to the benefits of paid membership. The dinner event will be on Saturday, November 17, at 5:30 PM and is open to all. Please make plans to attend.

Also, special thanks to all of those who worked to make our community events successful and those who have volunteered to serve on committees.

Your chairman,
Hassan Igram

Annual Thanksgiving Service & Bed Drive

The annual Inter Religious Council of Linn County Thanksgiving Service will be held at the Unity Center of Cedar Rapids on 3791 Blairs Ferry Road NE (between WalMart and Edgewood Road) on Monday November 19 at 7:00pm. Refreshments will be served afterwards. The ICCR has regularly participated in this service and encourages our Muslim community members to attend.

For the past several years, the Partnership for Safe Families (PSF) and Slumberland Furniture (and its employees) have donated money and time to provide single and full size beds for the children of needy families in our community who don't have their own beds in their homes.

This year's collection during the service will go toward the purchase of beds for this annual bed drive program. The reduced price for a single size mattress, box spring and frame is \$100.00 and \$145.00 for a full size mattress, box spring and frame.

Instead of an additional food drive for the service, we are also encouraging the donation of new packaged bedding (single or full size) for the donated beds which may include sheets, pillows and/or blankets.

If you are unable to attend the service, you may send a donation check beforehand payable to IRCLC, 1035 3rd Avenue, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403 to arrive by 11/19/07 or give it to me, Timothy Hyatt, your Muslim representative on the Inter Religious Council Board of Directors. Please reference your payment as a donation for the PSF Bed Drive.

Thank you for remembering locally less fortunate children in your zakat donations.

Jazak Allah Khair
Timothy Hyatt
Secretary, ICCR Board of Directors
Member, IRCLC Board of Directors
Steering Committee Member,
Children of Abraham

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This newsletter is compiled by the Public Relations Committee (PRC) members include Mohamed Azkalany, Akif Shaikh, Sohail Hussaini, Timothy Hyatt, Ridwan Rashid, Sarah Tawil, Jordan Trcka and Mohamed Soliman.

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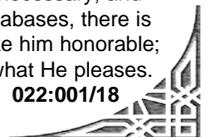


In the name of Allah, The ompassionate, The erciful

O mankind! Fear your Lord. Lo! the earthquake of the Hour (of Doom) is a tremendous thing.

Do you not see that Allah is He, Whom obeys whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the mountains and the trees, and the animals and many of the people; and many there are against whom chastisement has become necessary; and whomsoever Allah abases, there is none who can make him honorable; surely Allah does what He pleases.

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GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday 11/4

Friday 11/9

Saturday and Sunday 11/10 & 11/11

Saturday 11/17

Daylight savings end - prayer times will change as well

Jumma Prayer will be held at 12:15 PM

Training and Presentation for the teachers and parents -

Newcomers Welcome Potluck

Membership Dues:

We urge our Muslim brothers and sisters to pay their membership dues if they are current members of the ICCR or to register to be members if they have not done so.

It is one way to show support for our community and participation to the good up-keeping of the ICCR

Effective Communications Between Teachers and Parents Essam Mahmoud, Ph.D. at the Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids

In order to have a quality educational process, we must establish a good communication system between teachers and parents. We must recognize the valuable role that parents play in the success of their children. Effective communications between parents and teachers help create the environment for this success.

This workshop will show how important it is to have trust between teachers and parents. Parents must trust that teachers are there to provide the best environment for their children and parents must share their concerns about their children with their teachers. Teachers must inform the students parents about the childrens achievements and skills. Then the parents and teachers can work closely together to nurture the childrens performance.

The workshop will discuss different ways to ensure full understanding and cooperation among parents and teachers.

Who Should Attend?

- Parents

- Community members

"All teachers of the Islamic weekend school, the principal, and administrators.

"Any brother or sister who is currently teaching or planning to teach.

"Anyone who is interested in the

subject.

2) Improving Your Teaching Skills in the Classroom

Learning can be much more effective when students participate actively in the learning process. This seminar focuses on how to develop teaching skills especially with respect to leading discussions in the classroom. The seminar leader, Dr. Essam Mahmoud, will emphasize the importance of using the case method and learning by participation. He also will discuss how learning can be enhanced when educators utilize technology.

itive advantage. Quality is merely the price of market entry. Educators, just like businesspeople, must implement Total Quality Management (TQM). They must then go beyond TQM. In order to prepare children the best possible way in the competitive and dynamic education market, teachers should integrate both TQM and creativity into their efforts. Educators must have a future orientation and must implement creative methods of teaching.

This workshop reviews some principles of TQM and the integration of creativ-

Friday, November 9th (One session at 7:00 PM)
Saturday, November 10th (Two sessions at 9:00 AM and 7:00 PM)

Who Should Attend?

This workshop is suitable for teachers who are seeking to improve their performance continuously. Thus, the workshop would be useful to:

"School teachers, the principal, and administrators.

"Any brother or sister who is currently teaching or planning to teach.

"Anyone who is interested in the subject.

3) Total Quality Management and Creativity in Education

Essam Mahmoud, Ph.D.

Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids

ABSTRACT

Now that we have reached the 21st Century, quality is no longer a compet-

ity. Then, through illustrative examples, the presentation examines how creativity and innovation in education institutions contribute to success.

Who Should Attend?

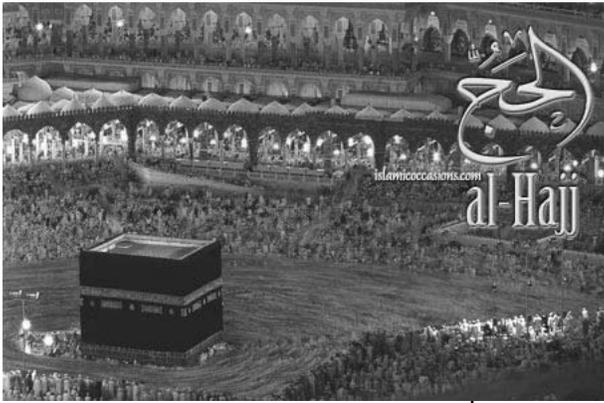
This workshop is suitable for all community members of Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids as well as all teachers at ICCR weekend school. Thus, the workshop would be useful to:

"Members of ICCR

"All teachers of the Islamic weekend school, the principal, and administrators.

"Any brother or sister who is currently teaching or planning to teach.

"Anyone who is interested in the subject.



In the days of Hajj Allah Subhana wa Taala (SWT) provides us another way and opportunity to clean ourselves and achieve closeness to Him. Each year whether we are going on the journey to perform Hajj, or stay home we celebrate the great event with a reminder of our turn to meet the great Creator Allah. It reminds us of the day of judgement when the worldly things will become insignificant.

It is an opportunity to experience the distance between our possessions and us. It reminds us of spending generously in the way of Allah (SWT).

When we are on the journey and during the time of Hajj we try to perfect the teaching of Prophet Mohammed (SAS). His teachings, particularly regarding Hajj were based on the life of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his family. Prophet Ibrahim brought his family to settle among the barren rocky hills where nothing grew by the command of Allah (SWT). Putting his trust only on Allah (SWT) that He will provide. Even today when you go there the barren rocks and surrounding hills and desert are so daunting you can imagine how they felt. They were as weak as us, the common people. They also felt scared and helpless. And then Allah (SWT) delivered His miracle from nowhere. His promise is true. He created us and He can take care of us. He is watching us. We are just watching His majesty.

Even today it seems miraculous how this town of Makkah emerged and the grand mosque the house of Allah

became. Allah commanded prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his son Ismael (AS) to built Kaba the house of Allah and keep it clean for the people who come to worship Allah. They could not imagine who would come to this barren place. These days, each year, about four million people visit Makkah. Prophet Ibrahim asked Allah (SWT) to keep this town a place of peace. And to provide the best of food for the people who live there and who visit. Allah (SWT) accepted his prayers. With all the people of the world visiting we can still experience His promise for the town.

Hajj is strenuous, it needs effort, energy, and patients. Certainly, it is a test of our belief and our desire to please Him. How much we can bear in His obedience, resist evil from inside and outside, and maintain our composure in a state of Ahram. During performance of Hajj we need to maintain a special state of purity of mind and body called Ahram. The clothing for men are two simple unstitched sheets of cloth. Women may dress in regular simple clothes. We achieve closeness to Allah by being humble and by giving up our desires and concerns for our pride and looks. The days of Hajj are sacred even if we stay home we try to honor them by fasting. After Ramadan, the first ten days of the month of Zul-Hajj are considered very special days when Allah (SWT) accepts our prayers. Not just that the clothing is simple we experience a simple life living in a tent in the valley of Mina near Makkah.

The main event of Hajj is the day of Arafat. All the pilgrims are required to be on the ground of Arafat on 9th day of the month of Zul-Hajj. In a way the whole events is about getting all together on the ground of Arafat and pray. Here when you come before Allah (SWT) and feel His presence all the problems of the world become insignificant. Whatever you ask shall be grant-

ed. He may choose to give you even better than what you ask for. Or He may save it for later for your own good. He will certainly make you happy and fulfilled and make your difficulties easy for you.

There are a number of other details to complete the requirements of Hajj. The steps as well as the sequence are important. Spending the night at Muzdalifah in an open ground then going back to Mina, casting pebbles on Satan at Jamrat, etc. The magnificent moment of Hajj is Tawaaf of Kaba. To see so many people walking together in harmony around Kaba. You feel so united with everybody and yet so individual towards one singular Allah (SWT). Prophet Mohammed (SAS) described each step by words and by his own example. Most of them are supported by direct commands in Quran. Even after so many centuries people are following it so diligently.

The annual event of Hajj reminds us of the life of prophet Ibrahim and his family. The sacrifices they all made. He made their life an example for us. How they were tested and they fulfilled their obligations. How little is asked of us. Imagine prophet Ibrahim and his beloved son Ismael giving up their will and desires and agreed not just is spirit but acted upon it. Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismael physically proceeded when father took the knife to sacrifice his son for Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) has the ultimate control over reality. Miraculously He switched reality, instead of his son prophet Ibrahim sacrificed an animal. Allah (SWT) is very merciful. He is also very proud. He tests us before He accepts us. The sacrifice of an animal is required as part of Hajj but even when we stay away we are expected to do it.

The meat becomes part of the celebration. Sharing with people, congratulating each other, and giving thanks to Allah (SWT) for all He has provided us is part of Hajj. He chooses us for Hajj if He wants to bring us close to Him. Don't miss the opportunity if you have the wealth and health. Time is just a short window of opportunity.



Mother Hajar was not just a wife of Ibrahim, but she was deeply loved by him. But, once again, to fulfill the wish of God, he brought Mother Hajar and their beloved infant son, Ismail, to this abandoned, desolate, barren valley of Makkah. There was no such inhabited place called Makkah at that time.

As Ibrahim brought Mother Hajar and Ismail to that barren, rugged valley, she asks (as in the Hadith): 'O Ibrahim! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is neither any person nor anything else (to survive)?' She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him, 'Has God instructed you to do so?' He replied, 'Yes.'...

That was enough for Mother Hajar. Now she knew that it was according to the

Hajj and the Neglected Legacy of a Great Woman

Divine Will. With the same nobility and dignity of faith as it ran in that family, "She said, 'Then God will not neglect us.' (In another version): 'I am pleased to be (left) with God.'

Then Ibrahim left and she was alone with her infant. Makkah was not an inhabited place yet. Food and water that Ibrahim provided them with were consumed by the mother and baby. Desperately, she started searching for water running back and forth through the valley between the hills of Safaa and Marwah. Surely Allah would not abandon the family of Ibrahim and so, she was visited by the arch-angel Jibril. This is an significant point to ponder: What kind of person is visited individually by Jibril?

Water, in the form of an ever flowing spring, the Zamzam, was made available to them by direct intervention of God. Right during that time, the tribe of Jurhum, passing by the valley saw birds flying. Realizing that water must be available, they searched and discovered Mother Hajar and Ismail. They sought permission to settle there. Thus, the desolate valley of Makkah became an inhabited area. Ibrahim returned there much later and laid the foundation of Ka'ba. Makkah ultimately was to emerge as a city and as the perennial heartland of Tawheed, the belief in oneness of

God.

Subhanallah, God is glorified. He took such a significant and noble service from a woman. But consider another aspect. What kind of situation Mother Hajar was placed into? In that desolate, uninhabited valley, what might have been going on in her mind? While unconditionally committed to her Lord, she was constantly searching, moving and struggling not thinking about herself any longer, but to find some water and save her child. What could she think about herself? Dr. Ali Shariati, in his well known book Hajj, attempts to provide a glimpse. Once she was slave only to be given away by her Master, a king representing the owning class; now a victim and a stranger, exiled and abandoned by her family all alone with her child in her arms! She hardly ever had a dignified identity. Had she not been the mother of Ismail, who would have given her any recognition and worth? There, in that barren place, her identity did not matter any further. Yet, she reposed her complete trust in her true Lord (Rabb) and was determined to pursue whatever she could in the Way of God.

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