



"In the (Blessed) Name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful."

ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK

ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK 2013
Living His Legacy

<p>Monday MARCH 18</p> <p>TASTE OF FAITH 3- 5PM McCormick Lounge IN SEARCH OF PEACE 4PM McCormick Lounge MUHAMMAD 7-30PM McCormick Lounge Speaker: Professor Omer Moazzifur</p> <p>Tuesday MARCH 19</p> <p>EXPLORING ISLAMIC ART 3-5PM Simpson MPR UNDERSTANDING JIHAD 7PM Galvin Auditorium Speaker: Ahmed Rehab (CAIR)</p> <p>Wednesday MARCH 20</p> <p>WALK A MILE IN HER HIJAB All Day RETHINKING FEMINISM 4:15PM Bremner Lounge Speaker: Humaira Basith (CIOGC) HIJABI MONOLOGUES 8PM Galvin Auditorium</p>	<p>Thursday MARCH 21</p> <p>SHARING A MEAL WITH OUR NEIGHBORS 12-2PM Bremner Lounge OUR SHARED LINEAGE: AN INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN ABRAHAMIC FAITHS 6 PM Cuneo 210 Speaker: Professor Zubeyir Nisanci ENTERTAINMENT NIGHT 8PM Galvin Auditorium</p> <p>Friday MARCH 22</p> <p>JUMMAAH 1:40 & 2:40PM Mundelein 14th Floor CULMINATION DINNER 7PM Mundelein Auditorium Speaker: Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All Week</p> <p>INFORMATION BOOTH CFSU OPEN MOSQUE Mundelein S11</p>
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lucmsa
www.loyolamsa.com

Funded by SAF

Islam Awareness Week is an annual event hosted by the Muslim Student Association of Loyola University Chicago. The week consists of a series of lectures and activities organized by the MSA to increase awareness of the beliefs, values and practices of Islam, as well as to tackle misconceptions about our religion in a positive way. The goal is to achieve greater understanding between us all, by bridging the gaps through better communication and new relationships. Activities during the week include Mosque open house days, talks lead by respected scholars, exhibits showcasing culture and art, and general information displays. All together, this collaborative event will give people insight into the Islamic way of life and the Muslims who follow it.

see IAW pages 6-7

My Journey to Islam

Anonymous
Guest Writer

I am not sure where to begin. It is really hard for me to talk about myself. To start with, I was raised in an Episcopalian/Catholic household. My adoptive dad is Episcopalian, though he really doesn't practice, and my mother converted from Catholicism when she married but still leans very much toward it. My mother did all she could to instill a love of God (SWT) and a sense of faith in me. I was very obedient, especially when I was younger, and I went through all of the proper motions to please her. I read at our church, went through Communion and Confirmation, participated in a church youth group, went on church missions, represented my church during large Episcopal events, and volunteered for everything. I was a well-known person around our church, but I felt absolutely nothing. I believed nothing. I did not understand the emphasis on Saints and

Jesus. I tried very hard to feel a spiritual connection, but it just never clicked. I never told my mom that. I knew it would hurt her.

When I went to college, I still did not feel any sort of connection, so I decided I must be an atheist. While I did not speak out against religion for the most part, I rejected anything to do with it in my own life. My life had always been full of chaos and pressures. I was struggling to find my identity, and I was trying absolutely everything I could just to know how it felt. I would joke with my friends that I would try anything twice...just to be sure. During this time, I experienced a great deal of personal trauma as well and started seeing some truly horrible things happening in the world. All of this just seemed to confirm the fact that we were all alone on this earth.

I lived like this for a while, always wondering why I couldn't just get things right and how people could be happy in a world like this. I started graduate school for social work, and things started getting really bad.

see REFLECTION page 11



ZAKAT
FOUNDATION
of AMERICA

The Leader in Empowering Lives Through Zakat

1 Year, 100 Wells

Founded by the Zakat Foundation of America, the "1 Year, 100 Wells" campaign aims to build 100 wells in 100 different villages and communities across Africa that lack access to clean water. Building each well costs \$2500. So far they have raised enough money for 56 wells built in countries like Ghana, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. Their goal is to have all 100 wells funded, if not built, by April 2013. The MSA wants to help them reach their goal by raising enough money to sponsor the construction of at least one well. The plan is to get 50 people to pledge \$50. We encourage you to go back to your communities and ask friends and family to contribute to this cause. Every dollar counts, so please donate!

see NEWS page 4

Dear Mufti... ...with Mufti Abrar Mirza

DEAR MUFTI: I've been hearing this word a lot and I'm curious as to what this is all about: Tasawwuf. Can you please provide a brief explanation? Also, can it be held synonymous to Sufism? Barak Allahu Feek.
-Curious MSA member

In the simplest of explanations, Tasawwuf is the science of keeping oneself spiritually healthy. One may draw several analogies from medical sciences. Just as it is important to keep one's body healthy, it is necessary to keep oneself healthy spiritually. At times, a person gets a cold or a headache and knows that he is sick. He even knows what steps he needs to take in order to get better. Similarly, a person may be aware of spiritual ailments, such as jealousy or a habit of backbiting, and knows exactly what to do to cure himself. On the other hand, sometimes a person does not know how to cure himself, or his attempts at self-remedy are unsuccessful. In such a case, just like a person would visit a doctor for an expert analysis and cure, a person with a spiritual sickness needs to seek advice from an expert in the field of spiritual rectification. Upon acting on the advice of the expert, a person will surely cure himself.

In the medical field, it is known that an absence of a symptom is not necessarily indicative of good health. Sometimes a person has sicknesses or is prone to sickness, but is unaware of it. For such reasons, a person has regular health check-ups with a doctor. In fact, a person tries to keep a primary doctor whom they can regularly

see for such check-ups, someone who knows the medical history of the person and can advise accordingly. Similarly, a person may have a spiritual sickness that he is unaware of, or the person could be prone to a spiritual disease but does not realize it. Thinking of oneself as above any spiritual sicknesses is a spiritual sickness in itself. Hence, a person should try to keep a primary spiritual "doctor" who can analyze and assist the person, someone who understands the person and can advise accordingly.

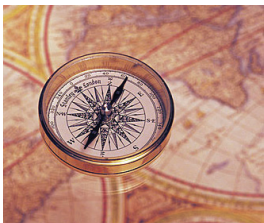
Tasawwuf is a simple, yet very important concept. It is often misunderstood and wrongly associated with practices that do not reflect it, but rather contradict it (grave worshipping, whirling dervishes, etc.). As important as a person's bodily health is, the health of a person's imaan, his spirituality, is much more important. The health of a person's body has an impact on a person's life in this world; whereas a person's spiritual well-being is vital for this world and the hereafter. Every person must be concerned about his spiritual rectification, as everyone is susceptible to sickness. May Allah Ta'ala grant us health, spirituality, and closeness to Him. Aameen.

And Allah knows best.



Dear Mufti... ...with Mufti Hussain Kamani

DEAR MUFTI: I really need your help! I have been trying really hard to concentrate during prayer, but thoughts keep distracting me and I find myself making mistakes often. What is going on? Can you please suggest some methods using which I can focus better when performing acts of worship, especially my Salah? Your precious advice will be greatly appreciated inshaAllah.
-Frustrated Brother



This is a common issue that plagues many of us, but Alhamdulillah, there are a few steps that we can take to, inshaAllah, focus and truly make Salaah a spiritual journey to Allah. Firstly, realize that the quality of our Wudu is reflective of the Salaah we pray. Hence, to improve our Salaah, we have to make an extra effort to perfect our Wudu and complete it with concentration. Secondly, understanding the meaning and context of the different recitations in the prayer will drastically improve our concentration. As it stands, many of us do not know what the Qur'an is saying, nor do we do fully understand the verses that we recite in Salaah or where they originated from. If one takes time out to comprehend the significance of the Surahs and Tasbihs we recite in Salaah, it will naturally become more meaningful and not a monotonous ritual of worship that we perform or a time to brainstorm calculus equations.

Would you like to have your questions answered by Mufti Hussain or Mufti Abrar, and featured in future issues inshaAllah? Brothers, please contact Ahmed Aleem (maleem920@gmail.com). Sisters, please contact Shaziya Barkat (shaziyaBarkat@gmail.com.) We limit questions to 3-4 per issue, so space is limited! Any questions, please do not hold back and benefit from this blessed opportunity.

Three Stages to Tahajjud

Stage 1: I just can't wake up
 Stage 2: I am sporadic in my tahajjud
 Stage 3: I regularly wake up for tahajjud

Mawlana Khalid Abdul Sattar Islamic Scholar

One of the most virtuous of the nawafil acts of worship is waking up in the middle of the night for tahajjud prayer. This is that special time when the doors of mercy are thrown open and the angels are dispersed, seeking out those in need of their Lord. Yet, how unfortunate our situation is that we are deprived from this great bounty.

“Their sides shun their beds in order to pray to their Lord in fear and hope...” (Quran, 32: 16)

Abu Hurayrah (radiallahu anhu) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said, “The best prayer after the obligatory prayers is the night prayer.” (Muslim)

I remember anytime one of the narrations regarding tahajjud would come up in a text, or was mentioned by one of our teachers, the

students would eagerly ask how they could become regular in this blessed act. Here are a few suggestions based on their responses.

Stage 1 – I just can't wake up

Despite your best efforts (asking a friend to call, multiple alarms, sleeping early, making a firm intention at night, etc.) if you simply cannot force yourself to get up, pray your tahajjud prayer before you go to sleep. Its time technically begins after Isha, so this can be a means of showing Allah that you are serious, and truly desirous of this great bounty. Couple this with dua admitting your inability and asking Allah for His bounty.

Stage 2 – I am sporadic in my tahajjud

If you are blessed to wake up for tahajjud on occasion, or get up most days, but miss a few here and there, be sure to “make-up” the prayer on the days that you don't get up. And

of course couple this with dua.

Umar (radiallahu anhu) narrates that “I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) say, ‘Whenever one of you sleeps through his night devotions, or through a part of them, then, if you perform them between the Fajr (i.e after Ishraq) and Dhuhr prayer, you will receive the same reward as if you performed them at night.’” (Muslim)

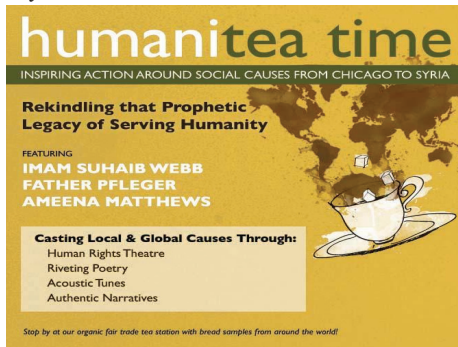
Stage 3 – I regularly wake up for tahajjud

Alhamdulillah, if you are at this stage you need to ensure 3 things:

1. Give shukr every night that Allah allowed you take advantage of this great blessing.
2. Admit to Allah that while you are unworthy of such a blessing, you are in need of it.
3. Beg Allah that He allow you to wake up the following night as well.

May Allah, Most High, allow each of us to be regular in our tahajjud prayers!

Omar Harb Michel
"The Chicago Crescent" Writer
 Loyola Alum



A father spills kisses across the blood-laden collar of his teenage son, pleading for the glimmer of a heartbeat against the crackling gunfire of war-torn Homs, Syria. Eyes burn steadily at a street vigil for a 6-year-old girl who never returned home from school one day because of a stray bullet in Little Village, Chicago.

The Holy Qur'an describes the "gardens under which rivers flow" as a resplendent oasis in the afterlife where peace reigns and death and violence have no dominion; those passing through its gates are bestowed with the finest silk robes, succulent fruits, and are greeted tenderly by the companions of The Prophet (SAW) with their lovely, soulful gazes (44:52-56).

This lush paradise is reserved for those dearest to Allah and is the most fitting place our minds can fathom for the fallen innocents of brutality. On January 13, 2013 the Zakat Foundation's Humanitea Time event offered us a glimpse into this garden, those who now reside there and those worthy of inheriting it.

A brilliant constellation of prophetic speakers, activist and artists converted the packed International House at the University of Chicago into a sacred ground for mourning, celebration and deep introspection; the activists shattering our illusions of the world, the artists picking up the pieces and the speakers reassembling them to form a new vision.

Acclaimed poet and activist Amal Kassir enthralled viewers with a shivering account of the conflict in Syria through spoken word poetry. In a commanding tone, Kassir masterfully channeled the fears and emotions of Syrians to the audience in an almost carnal experience. Skin-tingling cheers of solidarity peppered the performance as Kassir

laid bare the suffering and ardent desire for life and liberty of the Syrian people:

*"Stalin, McCarthy, Hiroshima-me, I will not fall!
 Lie, shackle, bound, sweatshop-me, refugee water-board, oppress me.
 You will try to crack my ribs, shotgun-me,
 But the bending of my knees belongs only to my Lord!"*

As the gravity of the content may have weighed heavy on some, the Kuumba Lynx performance ensemble re-charged the audience with bursts of adrenaline through a hip-hop dance and a spoken word performance. With a distinct urban flavor, the artists reminded the audience that one need look no further than Chicago to find oppression and violence through a set of slick steps and buoyant street verses.

The performers, primarily African-American and from urban communities, gave a powerful testimony to the racial and socio-economic dimensions of violence

Humani-tea Time Event To the Gardens Under Which Rivers Flow: Cease the Violence

and its disproportionate effect on minority communities. At performance end, the audience once again testified to the magnificent beauty and culture that can spring from even the most desperate conditions.

Fr. Pfleger, a Catholic Priest at St. Sabina Church, and long-time champion of the poor and voiceless, unpacked a bitter indictment against those politicians blocking passage of new Common Sense Gun Control Laws; the legislation would ban military-style assault weapons and require titles for handguns just as cars.

Best known for his scathing criticism and uncanny ability to spot hypocrisy, Fr. Pfleger noted the nations lopsided reaction to the massacred children of Connecticut as compared to the apathy shown for the countless African-American and Latino children killed regularly on Chicago's south-side. In his closing remarks, Fr. Pfleger challenged all people of conscious who claim to love God, Jesus and Dr. King to combat discrimination and violence wherever it exists.

Pfeger, who began his talk with the Islamic greeting As-salamu alaykum, has reached across racial and religious divi-

sions to formulate gun control legislation and presented listeners with an alternative vision for America that is founded upon peace, tolerance and civic engagement.

Imam Suhaib Webb, one of the 500 most influential Muslim men and frequent lecturer on college campuses on contemporary matters related to Islam sealed the night. Imam Webb's speech focused on the cultural underpinnings of violence in America and what he articulated as the "sphere of influence", or the societal discourse and attitudes towards violence that hinder or sustain aggression.

The senseless violence found in video games, movies and music were all cited by Webb as catalysts for violence and the burning coals of our superficial, consumer-driven society. In a poignant moment of exaltation, Webb kicked off his \$200 pair of shoes on stage because they were manufactured in a sweat-shop at the hands of unprotected child workers. Silence blanketed the room as Webb urged the whole audience to simply "look at your shoes" if you love humanity and want peace.

For Tammy Abughnam, 21 year old Biology Major at University of Chicago who attended the event, Webb's message of confronting the "culture of violence" in America landed squarely on her mind and heart, "As long as guns are around violence will persist, but it is a preventable disease and needs to be addressed at its source."

War will persist and more innocent children will likely suffer because of it. The raging tides of violence and greed will continue to pound unrelentingly against the backs of those clinging to the fragile rocks of peace and human dignity; however, as the Humanitea Time event exquisitely captured, as long as we are still moved by the beauty of a poem or feel our hearts jump at the sight of a loved one, we know there his hope and that the gardens under which rivers flow cannot be far off.

The Humani-tea Time event stood courageously behind several causes for a more just and peaceful world. Please consider supporting one of these or visiting the Zakat Foundation website at zakat.org for more ways to help:

Campaign for Common Sense Gun Legislation:
 (HR 5831): www.passthebill.us
Street Violence Prevention; Community-Center Chicago: www.zakat.org
Global Water Crisis; 100 Wells Campaign:
www.100wellscampaign.com

99 Problems: One Year, 100 Wells Campaign

Mohammed Akhtar
Staff Writer

America lives for the future. We are an authoritative culture that nourishes on anything and everything in excess ranging from technology to agriculture to industry and onwards. America isn't to blame because of its advantageous resources that it has to offer, but rather the self-control that we as Americans lack sometimes. Now this article doesn't serve a purpose to condemn someone's lack of conservativeness but instead to inform the general public on issues that need attention in the developing world. Let's face it: Americans are spoiled and we all know that there are whole continents in the world that are way less fortunate than our country alone. Case in point: Africa.

Although I can't name off all the problems that are ongoing in Africa, experts are claiming that dirty water is becoming the top cause of infant deaths more than malaria and HIV/AIDS combined. Experts are estimating that 5,000 children under the age of 5 die everyday due to contaminated water. The reason is the prevalence of contaminated water produced from man made pollution, waste, and naturally occurring toxins have several ways of entering the body. Contaminated water accounts for 80% of the total disease epidemic, which include diarrhea, arsenicosis, flurosis, cholera, typhoid, guinea worm disease, intestinal worms, schistosomiasis and Trachoma. Contaminated water can also make someone more susceptible to HIV/AIDS by infection and also serves breeding ground for mosquitoes to spread malaria and encephalitis.

The average person in America uses about 175 gallons a day of which 30% is used for toilet flushing. Guess what the average family in Africa uses? Four gallons. Yes, four gallons. The average American uses so much water that one-year of accumulation could fill an entire Olympic size swimming pool. Who

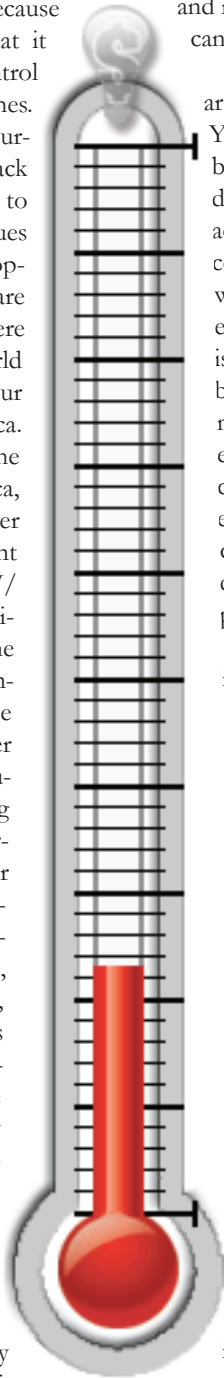
knows what it could be for an average African, but it is noted that 2.5 billion gallons of water are used everyday to irrigate the world's top golf courses. That same 2.5 billion gallons of water could save 5 billion people per day in Africa! This nonsense needs to change and if you don't think your involvement can make that change, think again.

LUC MSA and Zakat Foundation are teaming up to help fund the One Year, 100 well project in hopes of building 100 wells and providing safe drinking water to various countries across Africa in a year. Each well costs \$2,500 and we need all the help we can get to raise that much by the end of IAW week. Zakat Foundation is 25% complete and has successfully built 15 wells with plans to build 10 more that are already funded. By the end of the project, it is hoped that clean drinking water will be provided to 75,000 people in Africa. Each community serves up to 3,000 residents that we as a Loyola MSA could potentially change for the better.

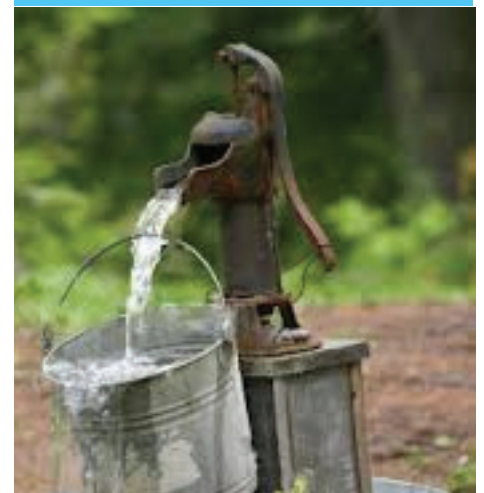
An interesting quote by Zainab S. illustrates the impact that we can have,

"There was a pump at the hospital, but we had to restrict access to ten gallons per person in order to make sure the hospital had enough for us. The new pump is able to supply us with plenty of water and we aren't suffering anymore for water. The well will save many lives."

Now let me ask you this, do you believe that everyone has an equal right to clean, safe water? Do you think that a child in Ghana should spend her day in school or fetching dirty water from a pit? I believe everyone has a right to clean water. Nearly one billion people are suffering because they don't have access to clean water. Next time you are at the water fountain, taking a shower, brushing your teeth, using the washing machine, washing your car, watering the plants, leaving the faucet on, or even having a water balloon fight, take a second to step back and think.



**“And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?”
- Allah (Most High) [Quran 56: 58-70].**





ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK

MAIN EVENTS

MONDAY

MUHAMMAD

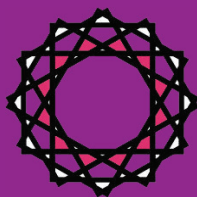
A leader, diplomat, father, reformer, philosopher, visionary, general, and Messenger of God

March 18 | 7:30 PM

McCormick Lounge

Speaker:

Professor Omer Mozaffar



TUESDAY

UNDERSTANDING JIHAD

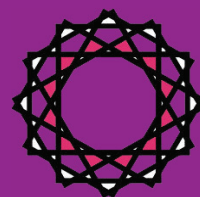
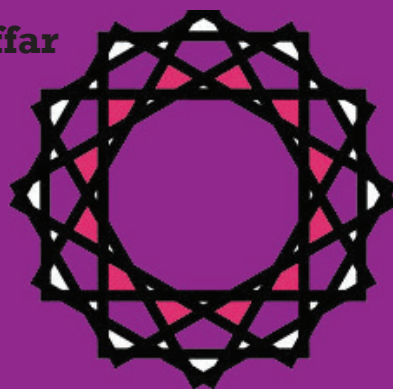
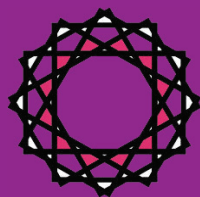
A struggle for peace or a threat to the West?

March 19 | 7 PM

Galvin Auditorium

Speaker:

Ahmed Rehab



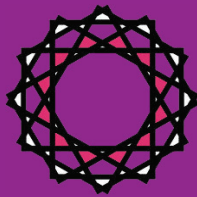
WEDNESDAY

HIJABI MONOLOGUES

A journey into the soul of the American Muslim hijabi

March 20 | 8 PM

Galvin Auditorium



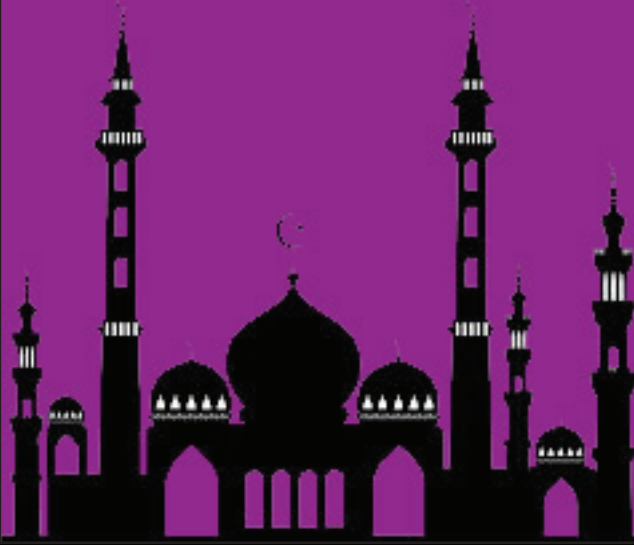
THURSDAY

ENTERTAINMENT NIGHT

A night of entertainment where students showcase their talents

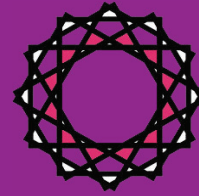
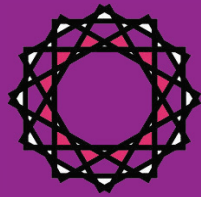
March 21 | 8 PM

Galvin Auditorium

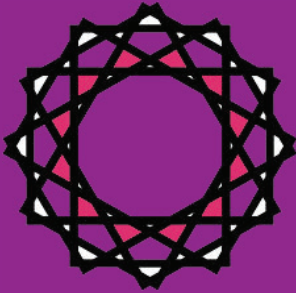


ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK

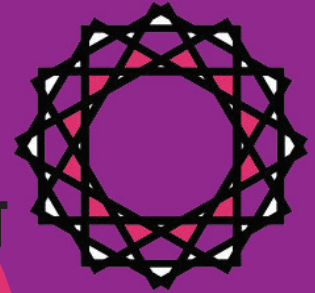
CHECK OUT OUR FLYERS FOR MORE
EVENTS



FRIDAY



ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK CULMINATION DINNER



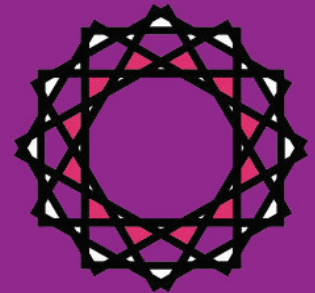
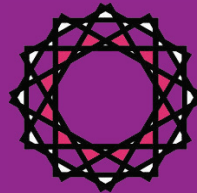
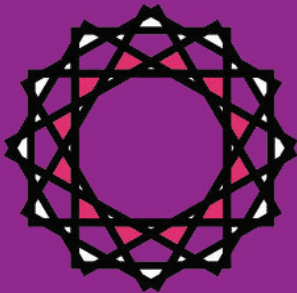
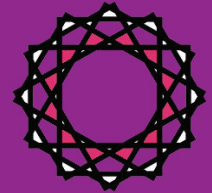
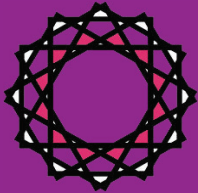
*Join us for a complimentary dinner where we
explore the life and legacy of Prophet Muhammad
(S) over the past 1400 years*

March 22 | 7 PM

Mundelein Auditorium

Speaker:

Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah



LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

Getting to Know Your Peers

Zuren Shethwala Staff Writer

Interview of a Transfer Student**What is your name and what year are you?**

Darakshan Anwer and I am a Junior.

What is your major, if decided?

Health Systems Management (HSM) because when I got out of high school I wanted to do something in business and health so I googled it up and this is what I found. I want the best of both worlds. I want to be the Hannah Montana of this generation.

Where did you transfer from?

I went to high school at Niles West and then I went to Oakton for two years and then I transferred here.

What made you transfer to Loyola?

The beauty of the school. I wanted to go to UIC but my dad made me go to Loyola. Chicago is near and dear to me you know. It is my heart. And it's a campus by the lake; it is too pretty to be true.

What do you like about Loyola so far?

I like the IC; I like the fact that it is Harry Potter-ish.

What do you dislike about Loyola?

The tuition is too high, but whatever. I don't like the cold, it's too windy. They need some wind control.

Are you Muslim?

Yes.

Are you considering being involved in the MSA?

Yes, I am a member. I am already part of it. I get the emails.

How was the MSA at your previous college?

Oakton did not have one, I don't think so.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I see myself happy, married and working.

Interview of a Freshman Student**What is your name and what year are you?**

Zeeshan Qazi and I am a freshman.

Why Loyola University Chicago?

It is in Chicago which is close to my family and it is one of the better schools that I got accepted to.

What do you like about Loyola?

I like the diversity. There's a ton of different cultures and people of different backgrounds.

What do you dislike about Loyola?

I dislike the tuition and any other unnecessary things like meal plans.

What is your major and why did you chose this major?

Biology. I chose this because I want to go on the pre-med track.

Are any of your family members doctors and if so who?

My father and a couple of my cousins.

Are you an active member of the MSA?

Yes, I am. I am the Freshman Representative.

What do you like about Loyola's MSA?

I like how close everybody is and the tight bonds that people have.

What are some ways that the MSA can improve?

More events together. I know they have events, but more would be better.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Hopefully, medical school.

Overcoming the Tide

Shaziya Barkat

Newsletter Coordinator

faithpeacelove.wordpress.com

I stand staring at myself in the mirror, carefully wrapping my headscarf around me; it still feels loose. This image staring back, of someone I had dreamt of becoming, is as clear as pure water... and the purity I see makes me cringe. I will have to struggle against the tide, against the norm of society, to fully embody the pure image in that mirror. This would not be as simple as draping a cloth over my head, classifying me as a Muslim. Rather, it would take the reconciliation of two very different elements of nature.

Again I laid the scarf on my head; there were no pins to keep it in place. The hijab, like me, was insecure. My stomach felt the rapid beatings of wings arising from self doubts and societal pressures. Like most, I was raised with a standard of living, a standard of behavior, and a standard of beauty. It is hard to count how many times I hesitated before finally pinning up the cloth; I did not know how people would react. Nevertheless, my religion felt incomplete without this symbol of my devotion to God. I finally became tired of trying to please others to fit in, of concealing my beliefs, and of letting false impressions of my peaceful religion spread. Belief in God and myself helped me through the first week, urging me forward in this new direction against the current.

After laying the cloth on my head, I made sure the two sides were somewhat equal. I struggled with the cloth, tugging on one side and then the other, finally reaching what I aimed for - Balance. Balance between the two ends in order to fold one over the other, balance between my religion and society. I was born and raised as an American and was among the first to wear the hijab in my family; it was an unnerving experience. Still today, my peers' reactions seem to be at both sides of the spectrum. While I deal with mistrust and common misconceptions about Islam, I also find those who are accepting of my difference.

I took the ends, wrapping them around my head, making one layer at a time. The hijab enfolded me, embraced me. Even now, it shows me its deeper purpose as I walk through the campus at Loyola University Chicago, garnering curious glances from my peers; it urges individuals to look past my outer beauty and truly acknowledge my personality and morals. It covers me, reminding me of the modest woman I hope to become. My hijab provides me with new confidence and self-respect. And today, rather than attempting to fit in with the crowd, I'm helping to complete the intricate tapestry of multicultural America.

I pinned my scarf in place, holding it down. My hijab is now secure; my faith firm. Even though I continue to face challenges and crash head on into the waves, I have become the image in the mirror. Yes, I have been overwhelmed by my own fears and uncertainties. Yes, I have faced prejudices. But if you take a second glance at my hijab and unravel it piece by piece, you will find that it is not just cloth. It is a state of mind. My hijab is a constant reminder of my values, my enduring journey, and the time when I overcame the ocean's tide.

The Greatest Calamity

Muhammad Saifullah
Loyola [MSA] Alum

It was a time of liberation and victory. Years of hardship had gone by, and the Muslims, through patience, perseverance, and dedication to the truth, had come a long way. What began with one man (peace be upon him) and his handful of followers was now reverberating through a nation ready to reclaim the holiest of lands. With the Mercy of Allah, the Most High, the conquest of Makkah was finally at hand. A powerful yet humble army marched peacefully into the Holy City; not much resistance could be put forth at this point. The people of Makkah watched in awe as the Muslims returned home, chanting the name of their Lord.

Fear began to creep into the hearts of those who had persecuted the righteous servants of Allah as they awaited retribution for their deeds. All eyes were on one man, who, at this point, had lowered his blessed head out of humility so much that it touched the back of his camel as he rode into his beloved city. The beautiful Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), with the calmness of a messenger of Allah, came over to the blessed Ka'bah and cleansed it of the idols that polluted society. Then, despite all that he and his beloved Companions had been through, he announced that there shall be no fear or bloodshed on this day. With the exception of the most heinous of criminals, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had forgiven all those who had tortured and even attempted to assassinate him. With what seemed like a single sweep of a cleansing tide, the great conquest was over and Makkah was delivered from the hands of idolatry and disbelief to the peaceful embrace of Islam.

Then, Surah Nasr was revealed, foretelling the many great conquests yet to come for the Muslims. The servants of the Most Merciful were rejoicing! The help of Allah was going to come! The conquests were going to come! But one man, whose understanding went beyond those of even the great Companions surrounding him, realized what this victory implied for his beloved childhood friend (PBUH). Overwhelmed by this realization as those around him celebrated, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) wept for the tremendous loss that was to come.

Back in the blessed city of Madinah, a while after this momentous event, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) began feeling very ill and could not join the believers for prayer for some time. When he felt better, he decided to join his beloved Companions. He entered the mosque, where Abu Bakr was about to lead a congregation in prayer. The Muslims were overjoyed to see the Prophet (PBUH) well again and Abu Bakr began to move back to let his beloved lead in his stead, but his friend motioned that he remain in his place. After the prayer, the Prophet (PBUH) delivered a sermon in which he gave a parable

of a servant who was given a choice to remain or return to his Lord; he had chosen the latter. While the others assumed this to simply be a parable, Abu Bakr's keen insight grasped the true meaning behind the Prophet (PBUH)'s words and he began to cry uncontrollably. After the Prophet (PBUH) calmed his beloved friend down, he said, "I have repaid all those who have given me favors. As for the favors of Abu Bakr, Allah will repay him."

Abu Bakr then asked permission from the Prophet (PBUH) to spend some time with family outside the city. It was not long after his departure that he received the news of the passing of his beloved (PBUH). Saddened, tears began flowing from his eyes. He made haste to return to Madinah, only to discover that this occurrence had done damage and had torn the Companions apart. So much so, that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), who was considered among the strongest of the Companions, was not willing to even accept this news. In a fit of rage, he threatened those claiming that the Prophet (PBUH) was no more: "The Prophet (PBUH) has not died! He has gone to visit his Lord and will be back! Those who make this claim will die by my hands!" If this was the state of the strongest, what would be that of one who was considered most soft and gentle? Logic would

dictate that if the likes of Abu Bakr broke down at this point, it would be justified. But what did the faithful Companion do? He quietly entered the mosque and asked permission from his daughter A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) to see his beloved (PBUH) one last time. He entered her dwelling, proceeded to where the Prophet (PBUH) lay, removed the sheet covering his beautiful face, and kissed

him on his forehead, tears flowing from his eyes. "What Ibn Khattab is saying is not true, you have indeed passed on. May the Mercy of Allah descend upon you! You are beautiful in death as you were beautiful in life."

When everyone was rejoicing, Abu Bakr was crying. But when every-

one was crying, he had already cried. In such a critical situation, the loyal Companion rose, reentered the mosque, and while everyone around him was crumbling, he firmly delivered his monumental sermon. "Oh my companions, didn't the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) inform you of his inevitable departure? Didn't Allah Almighty inform you that he shall one day leave this world as we all shall? Didn't our Lord say that Muhammad (PBUH) is but a Messenger, and many came and left before him? Oh people, those who worship Allah Almighty, know that Allah is Eternal and shall never die. Oh people, those who worship Muhammad (PBUH), know that he is no more. Fear the Almighty and grab hold of your faith!" It is only after this powerful sermon from a gentle and kind-hearted man known to be closest to the dearly departed (PBUH), do the Companions come around. The mighty 'Umar, when he heard Abu Bakr reciting the verses foretelling the demise of the Prophet (PBUH), said that it was as though he was hearing these verses for the first time. Realization finally dawned onto 'Umar, and he said that his legs could no longer hold him at that moment of truth. In time, the Companions realized that they had to somehow move on, as many challenges and

"Oh people, those who worship Allah Almighty, know that Allah is Eternal and shall never die. Oh people, those who worship Muhammad (PBUH), know that he is no more. Fear the Almighty and grab hold of your faith!"

-Abu Bakr (R)

CALAMITY: The Prophet's (S) Passing

continued from PAGE 10

conquests awaited them. The need to select a new leader arose, and the unanimous decision among the Companions was to have Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq assume the role of the first rightly guided Caliph of Islam.

The Prophet (PBUH) mentioned, to the

effect, upon occasion, "If one is afflicted with a calamity, then one should remember my death. This will dwarf every other calamity possible." You have to be among the people who lived in the time of the Prophet (PBUH) to truly grasp the value of this statement. The blessed Companions went through some of the most intense trials possible, as

their faith was tested in ways we cannot begin to imagine. Yet they stood firm through it all, with patience and perseverance, until they emerged from their toils as the best of people after the Prophets (upon them be peace). But after all these tribulations, the passing of their beloved Prophet (PBUH) nearly broke their resolve. They could withstand any kind of physical torture and exertion, yet they could not bear parting company with one they considered dearer than even their parents. Yet even this greatest of calamities did not stop their advance into the glorious eras to come. Now, the world is in darkness once again. As the ummah of today complain about the "trials" we are facing as Muslims, we need to remember the life of our beloved Messenger (PBUH) and the events surrounding his demise. We need to honor the legacy of those who were able to strive on even after witnessing such a heartbreaking departure, and ask our Lord to help us stay strong and weather the storms of modern times. Keeping this heartwarming display of strength in our minds and hearts, let us move on to a future where peace prevails insha'Allah!



REFLECTION: Taking the Shahada (Declaration of Faith)

continued from PAGE 1

I couldn't handle my own mind anymore. I have never in my life felt so hopeless and disgusted with myself. I sought counseling, and I was diagnosed as Bipolar. The psychiatrist and counselors labeled me and immediately started me on medication. I started to feel back in control of my life, but most importantly I started questioning how I had survived everything that I had done, how I had made it through some of the worst things a woman can experience. In my thinking, God (SWT) did not seem so impossible anymore.

It was at that point that one of my dear friends came in. During one of my many sleepless nights, I just happened to see a picture of my Indian friend in hijab on Facebook. At first, I'll admit that I was a bit judgmental. The gender studies and feminist scholar in me wondered how she could follow such an archaic and oppressive rule. That soon gave way to curiosity, though. I was fascinated by this change in her. She had never worn it before and now here she was embracing something

that was alien to me. I knew her. I respected her. Before making a fool of myself, I started researching Islam. I poured through books, read forums, and started to read the English Quran. I'd like to express what happened during that time, but I can't. For once in my life, something just clicked. It was truth to me. I started thinking about all of the good and bad that had happened in my life, and I could not find one event without purpose. I had always just blamed things on luck (or the lack thereof), but it could not be just that. I was exactly where I was supposed to be in my life. Every single step (and misstep) had led me to a place of health and a connection to Allah (SWT). It felt as though I had just solved a divine puzzle. I tried negating the concepts in my mind, but it was as if a light was turned on. Again, the only way I can express the beautiful feeling of finding Allah (SWT) was that it was just the truth. Every part. I am not a sentimental person at all, but I actually cried.

I did not take the Shahada for a while after that moment. I was so scared about what re-

verting to Islam would mean. I am not sure if anybody who reads this understands, but it is hard to "come out" as Muslim when you are surrounded by non-Muslims. In addition to that, I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. I could read Arabic, but I didn't know how to pray, where to find a community, or even how to cover my head. I actually looked that last part up on YouTube! Above all, I was terrified that I would do something wrong and offend Allah (SWT).

Luckily, I found a wonderful masjid near me. The women there have been my mentors throughout all of my transition. They have become like a Muslim extension of my family. They gave me books to read about Islam and continue to instruct me every week. They have been there to help me develop my faith and to serve as constant reminders of what is truly important in life. After a couple of months with them, I timidly asked about the Shahada. My mentor explained that, whenever I was ready, the women at the masjid would support me and bear witness. I officially became a Muslim that day. My life has never felt fuller.

Food Review: Makki Fast Food & Grill

Zuren Shethwala
Staff Writer

If you are looking to indulge in something very satisfying yet greasy, or if you are just feeling some All-American food (zabiha), then this is the food for you!

Their menu is very eclectic as it is a mix of Middle Eastern, Indian, and Pakistani food. They have a wide variety of foods to choose from. They serve everything from regular cheeseburgers to Philly cheesesteaks to pizzas.



One of their most famous dishes is their gyros cheeseburger. It is made on two, soft hamburger buns with mayonnaise spread in a circular manner. It has a well-cooked beef patty at the base of the burger and is topped off with an assortment of freshly cooked gyros strips. Additionally, the cheese is melted onto the patty to give the burger that smooth blend between beef patty and gyros. If you didn't think it was good enough, you can also add an assortment of toppings to your burger, including lettuce, tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, grilled peppers, and green peppers. The reason the gyros burger is the top seller is because of the exquisite taste. It has a certain distinct taste to it that is unmatched to any of its competitors i.e. Italian Express, Agees.

Personally, I enjoy their Philly cheesesteak the best. It is made of strings of beef put on a nice and well-cooked bun. It has grilled onions and green peppers and has a very nice layer of melted cheese. Although you can't go wrong with any of their menu selections, these are just a few of the greats and what your peers label as the best selections.

Makki Fast Food & Grill

Address

4702 N. Kimball Avenue, Chicago, IL

Number : (773)-661-4430

Hours

Mon-Thu: 9am-11pm
Fri-Sat: 9am-12am

Some Menu Options

Eggs, Grilled Cheese, Pancakes, Chicken Philly, Gyro Sandwich, Gyro Cheese Burger, Chicken Tender Burger, Veggie Sub, Chicken/Beef/Veggie Biryani, Catfish Nuggets, Shrimp Basket, Gyro/Smoked Beef Masala, Wings, BBQ Hot Wings, Chicken Tenders, Cheese Cake

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Film Review: *Zero Dark Thirty*

Hiba Anwer
Staff Writer
Sonia Sherwani
Editor

Directed by the Academy award-winning writer, Mark Boal, and director, Kathryn Bigelow, “Zero Dark Thirty” has received wide critical acclaim and was nominated for five Oscars including Best Picture, Actress (Jessica Chastain), Original Screenplay, Film Editing, and Sound Editing. This nearly three hour long movie shows the dramatization of the greatest hunt for the world’s dangerous man in history. The title, Zero Dark Thirty, or 5:30 a.m., marks the time Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, was assassinated by the U.S. Navy SEALs. The film not only uplifted Jessica Chastain, Mark Boal, and Kathryn Bigelow’s careers, but the series of events of the decade-long search following the 9/11 attacks also brought about controversies due to the movie’s depictions of torture and enhanced interrogation.

Despite President Obama large role in the assassination of bin Laden, Obama appears in the film once to reinforce that America doesn’t believe in torture. Contrary to his words, the first scenes of the film which depict the interrogation and torture of a man, reinvigorated the debate around the interrogation techniques. Mark Boal in an ABC News interview on January 27, 2013 states, “The controversy predates the film...You take the research and then you...transform it into a screenplay. It’s dramatized...a movie is not the same thing as a documentary.”

Most moviegoers do know that films based on true stories take on all kinds of liberties from facts, to characters, and to actual scenes. Fundamentally, this is another C.I.A. investigation movie

with the protagonist being obsessed in finding the antagonist. Of course, it took an elite team of intelligent military operatives working in under cover across the globe for a decade to seek and eliminate Osama bin Laden. There isn’t much information out for the public to know what exactly happened, so Boal and Bigelow have to dramatize.

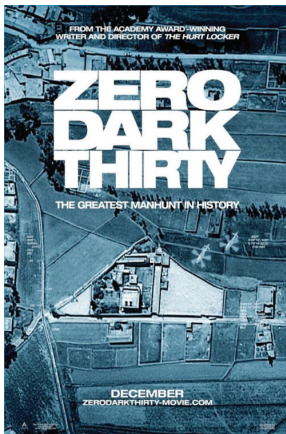
Not only does this film bring up controversies in America about torture, it also invokes debate in the Muslim world. It is evident that the intention of the movie was not to tear down Muslims or even be pro-American or pro-CIA. Rather, it was a simplified account of what really went down in the capturing of Osama bin Laden. Or is it? Is it mere coincidence that the film shows the hunting of the most dangerous man in history and he happens to be part of a religion that is being oppressed, and the producers rarely show the good side of Islam? This subtlety probably invites more non-Muslim viewers to question and even ridicule Islam.

There is an apparent good guy versus bad guy complex throughout the movie. The good guys are, of course, the Americans and the bad guys are the “terrorists” that are constantly being detained to find their leader. There is one crucial, but subtle scene where a high ranking official is shown offering salah, thus showing that the good guys can be Muslims too. People can take from this scene what they will, however, those coming in uninformed about Muslims and/or the situation in the Middle East will look for ways to reiterate their anti-Islamic beliefs. In the end it is a matter of perception, which is often clouded by our own biases.

Our biases are carried with us everywhere we go, and as humans we find ways to bind our experiences with our biases. There are certain lines in this movie that are striking, strengthening the claim that this movie has

anti-Muslim undertones. One example of such is when Maya, the main investigator, states, “Muslims don’t celebrate with cake.” It is unclear exactly what Maya intended or what the true purpose of this line was. The matter of the fact is that a Muslim can be anyone; they are not specific to a certain culture or race. Indeed Muslims around the world celebrate numerous occasions with cake. Someone who is uneducated about Muslims may say something along those lines. However, this sort of generalization is unfitting with Maya who is a supposed intelligence analyst and expert on Muslims. This line instead makes Muslims seem foreign to the average American. In depicting that Muslims cannot enjoy American traditions, in essence they are separating Muslims from the western world. Is this a reflection of the writer’s own lack of knowledge about Muslims? Or is it an attempt to feed into the stereotypes that many Americans hold about Muslims? Or both?

The movie starts out saying it is “based on firsthand accounts of actual events,” but this doesn’t mean it was historically or politically correct. In the previously mentioned ABC News article Kathryn Bigelow reflects, “I think it is a deeply moral movie that questions the use of force. It questions what was done in the name of finding bin Laden.” The audience should also be questioning whether this film is the right depiction of what Islam is, because it is not. It is just another movie about taking down a human who is responsible for killing thousands of innocent lives, not an average Muslim. As Muslim representatives, rather than starting an uproar over a movie that shows how the deadliest man in the world was assassinated, we should, in fact, create a dialogue with other non-Muslims to present that peace is truly a fundamental part of Islam.





The Art of Tajweed

Tajweed Student

Guest Writer

Who's next?" asked Sr. Tayyibah Ahmad. It was our first sisters' tajweed class for the semester and we were all going around reciting Surah Waqia. I raised my hand and, though nervous, volunteered to go next.

"Iza wa-ka atil waki'a," I said.

"Good but try it again like this: "idha wa-qa 'atil waqi'ah," she recited in a deep and melodious tone.

"Idha wa-qa 'atil waqi'ah," I repeated once more.

"Perfect!"

The word "tajweed" linguistically means 'proficiency' or 'doing something well'. When applied to the Qur'an, it means giving every letter in every verse its due rights. The Qur'an says: "And recite the Qur'an (aloud) in a (slow and melodious) style (tarteela)" (Al Qur'an 73: 4).

When asked about the meaning of Tarteel, Ali (RA) replied, "It means that the Qur'an should be recited with Tajweed and with due observance to the rules of Waqf (pausing or stopping at the end of the verse)." Thus, it's a direct commandment from Allah (SWT) to recite with tajweed.

One of my favorite times of the year is Ramadan. Not only because it's a time when my family comes closer together, but also because we attend the daily Taraweeh prayers. I

absolutely love listening to the soft, melodious voice as it echoes throughout the great hall in the masjid. It has been a dream of mine for many years to be able to recite like the great imams from around the world. The perfect stresses on each syllable, the clear and distinct articulation of each letter, and how easily the words are woven together completely immersing all those that listen.

This is primarily why I decided to attend the tajweed classes being offered here at Loyola. Although I've been reading Qur'an since I was in kindergarten, I never mastered the art of proper recitation and tajweed. I am so grateful that Allah (SWT) has presented this opportunity to me, and I recommend it to all. If you cannot attend, then find another resource. Alhamdulillah we're living in a time and age where many even have tajweed teachers skyping in from overseas. Not only is it something that we as Muslims should do, but honestly it's one of the most rewarding learning experiences in my life.

SubhanAllah, every time I listen to Sr. Tayyibah recite, I literally feel my heart reverberate, and a sakeena (tranquility) completely embraces me. May Allah (SWT) reward Sr. Tayyibah for taking time out to teach us, and may He reward us all for our continued efforts in learning proper recitation of the Qur'an. Ameen.

The sisters' tajweed classes are Monday, 5:30-6:30pm in Mundelein 519.

Professor Mozaffar's Class in Review

Aoun Khan

Staff Writer

For students here at Loyola, the University has been rather consistent with providing the best resources available to nurture academic, spiritual, and practical growth of all individuals. For a Muslim student on campus, Professor Omer Mozaffar is one of these prodigious assets. Professor Mozaffar is a University of Chicago graduate and an active leader of the Muslim community in the Chicagoland area. He currently teaches several Islamic studies courses at UChicago, Loyola, Depaul, and other local Muslim Institutions.

Almost like a tradition, Professor Omer Mozaffar volunteers to administer a three-hour weekly discussion class for Loyola students every semester. This class is generally split into three one-hour blocks of: an analysis of spirituality articles by scholars, Quran study, and open discussion of issues in student life.

The classroom environment is quite informal, so attendees may choose to come and leave as they please; and yet, witnessing a genuine, intellectually stimulating debate among students moderated by the man in the vest himself is no surprise. Issue topics range from personal struggles, such as maintaining faith on a college campus, to global affairs such as our role in the Middle Eastern uprisings. And, of course, everyone's opinion is respectfully regarded. Topics can be brought up for discussion amongst your peers, or you can stay after a few minutes to have a one-on-one chat with the professor.

Those who have attended these sessions can attest to the knowledgeable experience they provide. So if you ever feel the need to get something off your chest without being judged, have a few hours to kill between classes, or just want to fulfill your inner desire to criticize our fellow IFS/CPSA alumni on the adequacy of their Islamic education, drop by Mundelein Room 205 on Tuesdays between 10:30am and 1:30pm. There is no limit to how much can be learned by simply observing such discussions.

IF ANYONE TRAVELS ON A ROAD IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE, ALLAH WILL CAUSE HIM TO TRAVEL IN ONE OF THE ROADS OF PARADISE.

-PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S)

Week 1:**Bismillah**

Rasullallah (SAW) is reported to have said:

"As long as people keep on saying: Bismillahir Rahmani Rahim, it will be a means of safeguarding them against sickness; a means of granting rich to the destitute; a means of freedom against the fire; a means of safety against being swallowed by the earth; a means of safety against faces becoming distorted; and a means of safety from stones raining down from the heavens."

-Ghuyyatut Talhin, page 137

Insha'Allah this week, start every action with bismillah!

So how exactly does this work?

Loyola MSA launched its Sunnah-in-Action campaign earlier this semester, but what exactly is this campaign all about? The mission is to implement a new Sunnah into our lives every week with the overarching goal being that, by following the example of our beloved Rasulallah (S), we become better people, better Muslims, and overall better examples of Islam.

Week 2:**Smile**

The Prophet (SAW) always smiled.

"Your smile for your brother is charity."

-Figh-us-Sunnah, Volume 3, Number 98

Insha'Allah this week, smile at everyone you come across!

**Week 3:**

Whatever you consider hard,
Allah
can make it easier for you.
MAKE DU'A

Make Dua for Others

Our beloved Messenger of Allah (S) has taught us,

"The supplication of a Muslim for his brother in his absence will certainly be answered. Every time he makes a supplication for good for his brother, the angel appointed for this particular task says: 'Ameen! May it be for you too'."

-Muslim, 1494

Insha'Allah this week, make dua for others!

Every week we will introduce a different action or characteristic of Prophet Muhammad (S) on our Sunnah-in-Action blog. The purpose of each introductory blog is to expose you to the Sunnah accompanied by a relevant hadith and a short description explaining its importance. Insha'Allah you will come to learn, find, and experience things throughout the week, that we encourage you to share on our blog. You are encouraged to share through three ways:

1. Create a new blog post: In order to do this, write up what you wish to share separately. Once the words are drafted, email what you want posted to Sarah Choudhry at schowder0@gmail.com and Zeba Shethwala at zebashethwala@gmail.com. Please also include how you wish to be credited for the post. We can include your name or an alias if you choose to remain anonymous. We encourage you to share anything relevant to the Sunnah for the week, be it a personal story, old memory, scholarly lecture, or a hadith or Qur'anic verse. Insha'Allah your stories inspire others to join our campaign too!

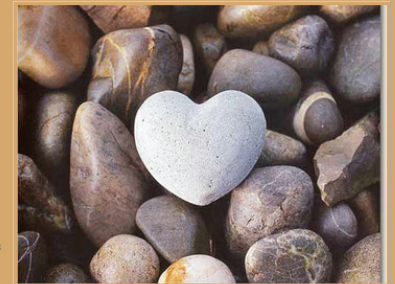
Week 4:**Love One Another for the Sake of Allah**

The Prophet (S) once said,

"None of you will attain perfect faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself"

(Bukhari and Muslim).

Insha'Allah this week, let us sincerely try to foster this love within our own communities!

**Week 5:****Forgive**

It is believed that the Prophet (S) once said,

"Whoever suffers an injury and forgives (the person responsible), God will raise his status to a higher degree and remove one of his sins."

(Al-Tirmidhi)

Insha'Allah this week, let us try and forgive all offenses.

2. Tweet your experiences: Use the hashtag #sunnabination

Week 6:**Reflection**

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], 'Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.'" (3:190-191)

Insha'Allah this week let us all take a moment to reflect on our day, our deen, and our existence.



3. Leave a comment: Scroll down to the bottom of the blog post and click the comment button to read and/or submit a comment.

Thus, on behalf of the Loyola University Chicago Muslim Students' Association, we would love for you all to take part in our movement of reviving the Prophetic Sunnah!

Check out the blog at sunnahinaction.weebly.com !

