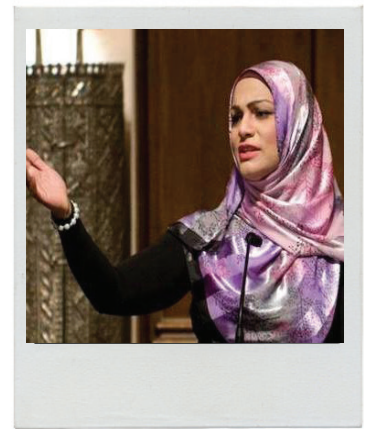


# Al-Risalah

**“In the (Blessed) Name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful.”**



***Farewell  
IAW 2014 Review  
Senior Shoutouts***

On behalf of the MSA Shura, we hope you enjoy this issue. Please understand that this is the culmination of the hard work of your fellow students and the scholars of our community. Therefore, it needs to be treated with all due respect. If you are not going to read the issue, kindly refrain from using it otherwise. Many of the articles, if not all, have direct Islamic themes therein, and some may include verses from the Holy Qur'an or Hadith of the Prophet (S). Thus, it is to our common understanding that everyone will treasure this humble work. May Allah (SWT) allow Al-Risalah to serve as the beacon of light it is intended to be, Aameen.

~ The Al-Risalah Staff

# Welcome to Al-Risalah

## IN THE LAST ISSUE...



## Contents

Page 2-3	Farewell from Your Shura
Page 4-10	IAW Reflections
Page 11	Art Corner
Page 12	Reflection
Page 13	Umrah Reflection
Page 14	Dear Mufti Questions
Page 15	Scholarly Article
Page 16	Book Review
Page 17-18	Senior Shoutouts
Page 19	Word Search

(S): sallallaahu `alayhi wa aalihi wa sallam; prayers and peace be upon him and his progeny (SWT): subhaanahu wa ta`aala; may He be Glorified and Exalted (r): radiullaahu `anh/`anha; may Allah be pleased with him/her (a): alyahis salaam; upon him be peace



# President's Farewell

I never thought a farewell reflection could feel so weighty. I can safely say that much to the dismay of the Risalah team I have spent a good portion of the past 72 hours, post-deadline, pouring over how I could possibly and genuinely summarize my time spent here. So in the words of the great cliché, here it goes...

Although this is supposed to be my reflection I'll ask you, the reader, to reflect on a quote for a moment, "We as human beings are simply the sum of our individual experiences." That is the various moments of our lives, describe precisely who we are at this present moment. For all of you 90s children, remember the game Jenga? A fragile nerve-wrecking tower built from curiously stacked wooden rectangles. Disregard the object of the game for a second and imagine that each piece of the puzzle is any one experience you have had. One piece is you walking to class this morning, the next is your third birthday, moving on to your first infatuation with someone of the opposite gender, your first bicycle, last week's Shura meeting, and so on.

Our MSA is basically a conglomeration of everybody's respective experiences. When we break down the Jenga tower, those little pieces independently mean very little. But in its entirety, contextualizing each block is everything. The pieces above, below, under, and around, define and substantiate the tower's essence. By itself our brief period here at Loyola serving the LUC community with a dedicated group of sisters and brothers is insignificant. Nevertheless when you take a moment to survey the whole puzzle that is our mission, it becomes easy to see that what we have accomplished is a crucial piece.

That begs the question, what exactly is that mission? Way back in the fall while interviewing for the two Freshman Representative Shura positions, we concluded each interview with a seemingly simple and straightforward request. "Come up with a mission statement for the MSA." Naturally, the responses began with an interval of utter silence. Now I'll be honest, looking back I don't think that even we as board members ever took the time to consider what we hoped to represent. I believe it hit us sometime early this spring semester as we deliberated on the title of our upcoming talk by Ustadh Usama Canon: "Creating Safe Spaces." Before we knew it, the lecture had concluded and the next set of questions were made obvious as a result. Is our MSA a safe space? If not, how do we make it one?

Usama Canon left us with a prelude to the answer. We have no choice but to change and become a centripetal force that brings all people together, not a centrifugal one that pushes "outliers" away. To achieve this, that force has to demand a mindset that says, "Hold yourself to your own 'private maximum,' and ask nothing of others besides the 'public minimum.'" \* Anyone should be able to walk through the same doors which read, "Verily only through the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest," without first having to remember to fit some sort of stereotype or image.

So looking forward we have to get real with our collective selves as a group of Muslims on campus and really tune into that first quote above. In regards to our MSA experience where were we last year? Last month? Last Friday? Where will we be this Friday? This fall? All with respect to now. The change we want to instill is dynamic one and we have to grasp that. It's a derivative of something with respect to another. MashaAllah our MSA is filled with ridiculously talented and inspirational individuals with many more waiting to be realized. In the coming years, I earnestly hope that their combined skills will continue to build a safe space on campus using only the most beneficial of what came before as a foundation. Additionally, I hope that we can appreciate even our differences as being the most crucial of those building blocks. Know this: Every idea matters, and the person behind that idea matters even more.

Finally I have said this many times before, and I will continue to say it for as long as I can. What we have represents a small subset of a small subset of a small subset of a microcosm of respective Muslim students all around the globe. Contrastingly, what the Most High has blessed us with however is both a candidly sublime and marvelously precious gift. So if I can leave you with one thing, it is to just take a moment and remember this as you pray, eat and relax in the Musalla. Remember this as you listen to someone like Omar Suleiman speak words that pierce you somewhere very deep. Remember this as you effortlessly walk around our beautiful campus on a more beautiful lake. Remember this as you and some friends venture to Devon for a late meal. Remember this at the Shura meeting where you consider the color the balloons will be at the Fast-a-thon banquet. Remember this as you head back home to your living quarters to retire for the night. Remember this when you find yourself in a place where the nature of reality is frighteningly different than the one you find here overflowing with mercy. Vitaly, remember this when you consider where you were, where you are, and where you're going.

Everything that I have attempted to say is a reminder to me, myself, and I first and foremost. May Allah (SWT) continue to bless us and may He graciously intensify our nur.

Wasalaamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatoh,

**Laith Elkurd**

*MSA President, 2013-2014*

\*Shout out to Sidi Usama Canon for the wordage.

## *Vice-President's Farewell Advice*

How do you say farewell to the people who made four years of your life so unbelievably wonderful?

Thank you for giving me a home away from home, for exemplifying the true meaning of akhuwa (brotherhood), and for your salaams and positivity. Thank you for challenging me to better myself, for showing me the beauty of giving back and celebrating one another, and for helping me strengthen my relationship with Allah(SWT).

While reflecting over what to include in this farewell, I realized I don't have much parting advice. I wanted to share, however, the three things that I continue to struggle with and wish I did more of during my time here:

**Being Grateful:** These four years just fly by! Our time at Loyola consists of thousands of ups and downs, and as our amazing alumni constantly reminded me, never forget to thank Him for both. It is during the "bad" and the stressful, that we are most challenged to change and grow. Allah (SWT) tells us that He never burdens a soul more than he or she can bear. And that's a promise from the best of planners and the Most Loving (SWT) that we CAN handle anything, God willing. During the times when you feel your hard work isn't "paying off," know that Allah (SWT) knows when we're trying our best and He is rewarding you in ways we couldn't even begin to imagine.

**Not Procrastinating:** Our amazing mentor Professor Mozaffar reminds us time and time again that the person we are today will be the same person we will be a year from now, 10 years from now, or even 40 years from now unless we're actively trying to change. Procrastination seems to trump productivity every time. More significantly, I delay making some of those necessary changes to better myself and strengthen my imaan. The idea that we can essentially procrastinate our whole lives away is frightening. What better time than in college to reflect on who we hope to be and actively take small and consistent steps toward improvement insha'Allah.

**Doing Justice to our Sisters (and Brothers):** The brotherhood and sisterhood that we have at LUC is something we mention often, but sometimes it can get easy to lose sight of the obligations that this beautiful bond carries. Do we love for one another what we want for ourselves? Do we cherish our relationships and the people in them? Do we celebrate one another's differences and accomplishments? Do we, at the very least, say salaam to one another?

I ask you all to please find it in your hearts to forgive me for my shortcomings or if I've wronged, knowingly or unknowingly, any of you during my time here. If there's anything I can do to make it up to you, please let me know. I pray that Allah (SWT) allows us to make the most of our college days and this life, makes us people of genuine compassion and service, and reunites us again and our families in Jannatul-Fardous, Allahuma Ameen! JazaakumAllahu khair for an amazing college experience.

Assalaamalykum Wa Rahmatallahi Wa Barakhatu.

Your sister, **Yara Shams**

## *Newsletter Coordinator Farewell*

Saying goodbye. It's something we all have to do at some point in our lives. Some of those times might be harder than others, but with every end comes a new beginning. I can say that I'm truly lucky to have something so great that makes saying goodbye so hard. That something, of course, is Al-Risalah and all the memories that come along with it.

I have no idea how my two years working with this newsletter went by so fast; it seems like just yesterday when I was a freshman starting off as an Editor. I fell in love with it from the start, and it taught me a lot. Al-Risalah both only helped me further my passion for writing, but it was the means through which I got involved with MSA. It gave me the opportunity to meet some beautiful people, and an even more beautiful sisterhood, which I will carry with me for a lifetime inshAllah. Through the submission of diverse pieces for our issues, Al-Risalah helped me become aware of and embrace the different perspectives we have on campus. It showed me the power of words and the myriad of ways people have used them to vocalize their opinions. Al-Risalah not only became a platform for brothers and sisters on campus to express themselves, but for me as well.

Looking back and seeing how much Al-Risalah has evolved for the better is unbelievable, and that's all due to Allah (SWT). He blessed me with an amazing and dedicated team. This goes out to every individual who has contributed - the writers, designers, editors, and printers. The progress of Al-Risalah through each issue would not have been possible without your hard work, time, and creativity. I pray that all of your efforts are accepted inshAllah and that Allah (SWT) continues to make Al-Risalah a beacon of light which not only act as a means of knowledge, but flourishes as an outlet where every student can feel comfortable to share their thoughts. Because even though we're not all writers, I'm sure each of us knows of a story that needs to be discovered and told. And where else is a better place to do that than Al-Risalah? For those who have been part of my wonderful experience at Loyola, I'll miss you. Lastly, if you are reading this and I've done anything to hurt or offend you in any way, please forgive me.

Keep in touch and salaam,

**Shaziya Barkat**

*Newsletter Coordinator*



# ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK

## ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK 2014

MONDAY, MARCH 31st

### FACES OF ISLAM

#### Taste of Faith

| 3-5pm | McCormick Lounge

Explore the diversity of Muslims through cuisines from across the globe.

#### Inroads of the Heart, A Pathway to Peace

| 4-5pm | McCormick Lounge

A diverse panel of speakers share their journeys to Islam.

Speaker: Abdullah Madyun, Imam of Islamic Institute of Urban Affairs, & 3 LUC Students

#### The Secret Lives of Muslims

| 7pm | Bremner Lounge

Take a deeper look into American Islam.

Speaker: Tahera Ahmed, Associate Chaplain of Northwestern University



## ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK 2014 FACES OF ISLAM

TUESDAY, APRIL 1st

#### Tapestry of Mastery: Exploring Islamic Art | 3-5pm | Damen MPR

Appreciate a collection of paintings, sculptures, and spoken word at this exposition of artwork. Receive your very own calligraphy tile and henna tattoo!

#### Quranic Ethics | 7pm | McCormick Lounge

Join us as we delve into the Quran's numerous teachings on human conduct and ethics.

Speaker: Abdul-Malik Ryan, Assistant Director of DePaul University's Office of Religious Diversity

#### Walk a Mile in Her Hijab | All Day

Try out the hijab (headscarf) to experience a day in the life of many Muslim women.

### ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK 2014 FACES OF ISLAM WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

#### Hijabi Monologues | 8pm | Mullady Theatre (CFSU)

Through sharing stories, strangers touch and connect. Through stories, we are human.

#### The Legacy of Female Scholarship in Islam

| 4-15pm | Damen MPR North

Learn the important role females have played in Islamic scholarship and how Islam empowers women.

Speaker: Humaira Basith, former Executive Director of CIOGC

Sponsored by: LUCES, Invisible Conflicts, Women Studies and Gender Studies, Gillin Center for Women and Leadership, CCFIA, MESA, Delta Phi Lambda, and IPI.

Funded By: SAF



#LoyolaMSA #IAW2014

**Bag a Lunch, Brighten a Day**  
[12-2 pm] Damen MPR South  
Help make a difference by packing a lunch for Chicagoans in need.

**Service as a Mandate for Humanity: Am I My Neighbor's Keeper?**  
| 4:30pm | McCormick Lounge  
Discover how Islam promotes service and caring for our community.  
Speaker: Edmund Arroyo, Founder of the HeartSpeak Institute

**Entertainment Night**  
| 8pm | LSB 142  
Enjoy an evening of comedic acts and inspirational performances by fellow students.

## ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK

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### FACES OF ISLAM

Thursday, APRIL 3rd

## Islam Awareness Week 2014 FACES OF ISLAM FRIDAY, APRIL 4

#### FRIDAY PRAYER

12:40 & 1:40 | Bremner Lounge (CFSU)

Observe a prayer and sermon attended weekly by over a billion Muslims around the world.

#### IS MAN TRULY DISUNITED WITH HIMSELF? A PRESCRIPTION FOR UNITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

7:00pm | Damen Student Center MPR  
Join us in celebrating the diversity of our community with a complimentary dinner.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rami Nashabibi, Director of IMAN



# Taste of Faith

*Mehreen Rahim* | Editor

To keep tradition alive, this year's Islam Awareness Week started with the "Taste of Faith" event. With tables and food representing various geographical regions, our MSA exemplified diversity at its finest. Students from all over campus came out to enjoy fine cuisines from Europe, South America, Africa, North America, South Asia, Asia, and the Middle East.

Every table had both a delicacy and an educational item to allow viewers to learn more about Islam's origins and statistics in the designated regions. The turnout was wonderful Alhamdulillah, and the food was a hit. "Taste of Faith" showcased everything from cupcakes and pizza from Europe and North America, to veggie tofu noodles and falafel from Asia and the Middle East. Overall, the event was a great success and start to IAW.



# The Secret Lives of Muslims

*Sonia Sherwani* | Editor

Tahera Ahmad went to a private Islamic school before attending public Niles West High School. When she decided to transition into wearing a headscarf, it was normal to her. In high school, Ahmad was on the varsity basketball team and the records she broke in track still stand to this day. However, everything changed when the fire nation attacked her senior year after the unfortunate events of September 11th streamed through the media. The locker room got quiet and her English teacher was sincerely concerned, "If your father beats you at home, I am here for you." During a basketball game, she was sidelined because of her hijab uniform when a parent told her, "It is a shame they let you back in."

Being a devoted fellow American Muslim and a courageous orator, Ahmad shared her journey as a modern Muslim woman and listed a few key points in her lecture about American Islam to the Loyola audience.

Ahmad highlighted and discussed three misconceptions non-Muslims usually have about Islam:

- 1) Islam promotes violence and terrorism.
- 2) Muslim women are oppressed.
- 3) All Muslims are Arabs or from Saudi Arabia.

By giving a brief overview of the true practices of Islam and Muslims' theological responsibilities, she urged her audience to not only continue their virtuous path but also to be aware of how other Muslims are responding to these misconceptions.

Some Muslims have organized into communities in

which they protest and march to educate non-Muslims that Islam is indeed a religion of peace. Ahmad also informed us that suicide bombers are a reality, but we must understand how certain situations lead to people becoming suicide bombers. We must understand the difference of "who is recruiting and who has been recruited." Ahmad further pointed out that women in Islam are respected and have rights as well.

She ends her speech by stating Muslims come from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and occupations. We need to share who we truly are so these false accusations and prejudices about Islam can disappear. We are spread wide across the globe and all we need to do is open up our secret lives and have a continuous dialogue with fellow Muslims and non-Muslims.

"...all we need to do is open up our secret lives and have a continuous dialogue..."



# Tapestry of Mastery

*Aoun Khan* | Staff Writer

The power of art is wondrous. Islamic art has had a profound impact on the world from the 8th century during the reign of Abbasid caliphates to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century. The Alhambra Palace in Granada, Spain, a majestically example of the elegant art of the emirs of the 9th century and has been described by poets as “a pearl set in emeralds”. Likewise, the Blue Mosque built in 17th century is considered the mystical gem of the Ottoman Empire. The architecture style in the Blue Mosque has not only influenced numerous mosques in Turkey but also throughout the world.

I find art intriguing because of a certain independence the artist enjoys from his instrument. No matter what medium is used, art is only as compelling as the artists mind. A lavish pen doesn't tell any better stories. People of all calibers use art to express thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories and concerns otherwise obscured. Art is in culture, religion, architecture, and heart. Art is used to find God. Art is companionship. Art lives on.

On Tuesday April 1st, Loyola MSA hosted yet another exhilarating Art Exhibit, titled Tapestry of Mastery, as a part of the University's annual Islam Awareness Week. The exhibit included paintings, cultural artifacts, and other fine art showcases. A separate segment included a henna station, a calligraphy station, and an ongoing nasheed performance throughout the exhibit, all of which was donned by the talented student artists of Loyola.

The exhibit in itself was nothing short of breathtaking. Each of the twenty masterpieces left the observer in awe. Each piece offered a unique sense of essence and abstraction. A phenomenon of the event that caught my attention was the queues forming around the henna and calligraphy stations. It is not only human nature to create art, but a desire to be a part of it is intrinsic as well. And rightfully so, who would abstain from an opportunity to find God within themselves?

“Art is a collaboration between God and the artist, and the less the artist does the better.” – Andre Gide

# Walk A Mile In Her Hijab

*Mehreen Rahim* | Editor

Wednesday, April 2, marked a day our unity as Muslims was exemplified campus-wide. Participants of other religions and cultures joined our MSA in the publicizing of the meaning, feelings, and beauty in wearing hijab. I think I speak on behalf of the majority when I say the turnout for those who “walked a mile in her hijab” was astounding mashaAllah. When we gathered for the picture in the quad, seeing an enormous group of girls wearing pink hijabs congregate in the center of campus was heart-warming to say the least. One of our sisters reflected on her experience wearing the hijab for a day:

“Wearing a hijab yesterday felt amazing. I loved the unity and purpose of it all. I woke up this morning and felt like putting it on again but decided I'll do it when I'm fully committed and ready. InshAllah, it's soon.” – Anonymous

Many people underestimate the true meaning of wearing a hijab. I think this experience was definitely an enlightening one for many, myself included. The strengthening of sisterhood, faith, and oneself are amongst the blessings that came with this day. You never really realize how unified we are as Muslims on campus until you walk by another girl wearing a pink hijab and automatically exchange smiles. This day, undoubtedly, embodied the theme of this week – to increase awareness of Islam.





# Female Scholarship in Islam

**Saadia Gaziuddin**

Guest Writer

**...with Hind Makki**

As a Muslim woman who wears the hijab in the United States, I have felt the need to state and restate that Islam does not “oppress women,” it empowers them. In the last few weeks, I have gotten so many questions about gender equality and whether or not men and women are really treated equally in Islam. Though I am respectful and cautious with my answers, in my head I’m thinking, “Really? Men and women are not biologically equal; therefore, I don’t know why gender roles should be cut and dry EQUAL.” In Islam, the roles of women accommodate for the biological inequality and therefore create an equal playing ground for both men and women.

It was like a breath of fresh air when I attended the lecture on Female Scholarship in Islam, on Wednesday of Islam Awareness Week. The guest speaker, Hind Makki, walked us through the role of women in early Islamic history and in the modern world. She started off by clarifying that Islam does not oppress women and historically did not oppress women.

This idea of oppression stems from lack of primary education for children of

both genders. The perspective that is often shown is that Muslim men are inherently oppressive and women need to be freed from the veil. But in actuality, the denial for access to education is the true form of oppression. Makki explained that we’re [veiled women] trying to reframe the narrative by telling our stories.

Makki started at the beginning of Islamic history to share the significant role that women played in laying down the foundation of the Islamic faith. Ayesha (r), the second wife of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, transmitted around 1500-2400 hadith or the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad (S). In the first years after the Prophet’s passing women were the majority of the individuals transmitting hadith. Usually men were the ones that would compile hadith because they would travel. Women would transmit because they often had a shorter chain of transmission. No woman has ever been accused of forgery. Women who were transmitting were mostly women who were closest to the Prophet (S). These women have been the source of many hadith that the Sunni tradition has accepted as authentic.

Then began a period where women weren’t doing as much in regards to scholarly work. Asma Sayeed, in her book *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization), follows the scholarship of women in depth throughout Islamic history.

Makki also spoke about her blog, “Side Entrance” where women can share photos and express their feelings on female prayer spaces within the Muslim community. Some of the questions that Makki emphasized were: What are spaces women occupy in mosques? How do we build mosques so that everyone is served? How should we segregate? She talked about the third space, a place



that is neither the home nor the mosque where people come together to pray. An example of such is the Ta’leef space. It allows for people to pray together and to learn together outside the mosque.

Her advice to the youth is to remain engaged with the mosque so that the people in the mosque positively engage them.

Makki continued on to give brief descriptions of Muslim women who opened their homes to visiting scholars, who were dedicated to philanthropy and building schools, who used their wealth to provide comfort to traveling Muslims on the holy pilgrimage, etc.

Makki described the modern-day definition of feminism and how there was no such concept in the early Islamic period. At the time women were not feminists, just Muslim women scholars. Muslim women scholars were teachers to prominent and influential figures like Imam Malik and Imam Shafi. A woman started the longest functioning university. A Muslim sister founded Cordoba Mosque in Spain. Queen Zubaida, one of the best known Abbasid princesses, opened a space for elites in the community to share thoughts. Her palace employed a hundred female maids who were educated in the memorization of the Holy Qur’an.

Makki closed by rationalizing that having female scholarship restores divine balance because God created everything in pairs. If we don’t restore balance we won’t get fruits of divine balance. SubhanAllah.

#mindblown #MuslimwomenareAwesome #Guysneedahistorylesson #AllahisGreat



Makki Graduated from Brown University and is a leadership associate at the Interfaith Youth Core where she has developed and implements the One Chicago, One Nation program (<http://crcc.usc.edu/initiatives/amcli/hind-makki.html>).

For more information on Ta’leef classes in Chicago, please visit <http://www.taleefcollective.org/taleef-chicago-summer-classes/>



# Am I My Neighbor's Keeper?

Zainab Bozai | Guest Writer

After a successful morning of making 840 lunches for the underprivileged in Chicago, alhamdulillah, we were graced with the wonderful presence of Edmund Arroyo who spoke about building strong communities through fulfilling the rights of our neighbors. Arroyo spoke about how much importance our faith gives to service and being a good neighbor. He mentioned multiple ahadith that refer to your neighbor. A specific hadith he mentioned said that stealing from your neighbor is worse than stealing from ten other people. An example he gave of a good neighbor was his wife's grandfather who lived in India in a community that was half Muslim and half Hindu. For his whole life he made a commitment to never cook beef in his house out of respect for his Hindu neighbor. In Islam the concept of the neighbor is about the community in general, not just the one who is right next to you. It begins with your parents. Some people think that parents become a burden when they get older, but in Islam we have to serve our parents because they served us when we were younger and they have that right over us. Then when you get married, it's about serving your spouse. He emphasizes the importance of approaching marriage not with the mindset of what you can get out of this relationship, but rather how you can serve your spouse and be the best spouse.

An aspect of service is giving charity. Arroyo highlighted that in Islam it's okay to be wealthy, as long as you don't let the world and your wealth enter your heart. Keep it in your hand and know that you can lose it at any moment and you'll be happy because you can use it to benefit others and yourself. Once you allow it to become part of who you are, then giving some of it away hurts because it's as if you're giving away a part of yourself. Arroyo gave two examples of such people. The first was Umar ibn Al-Khattab who, as a caliph, was known to go out and be amongst the people as much as possible so that he could see what the state of the community was. He met a woman who was unable to feed her chil-

**"In Islam the concept of the neighbor is about the community in general, not just the one who is right next to you."**

dren and blamed the leader, Umar, not knowing that she was talking to him, for not taking care of her. He then saw it as his responsibility to provide her with food and supplies because he knew that she was holding him accountable for not having enough food to feed her family. In Islam, those with more power are more accountable on the Day of Judgement because they have more power to effect change. This was an example of a ruler who saw himself as a person of service, not someone who needed to be served. The second was also a companion of the Prophet (PBUH): a wealthy merchant by the name of Abdur Rahman ibn Awf who was known for his ability to make money. By the time the Prophet (PBUH) passed away, Abdur Rahman had amassed a large amount of wealth. When Aisha (RA) heard the loud noise of Abdur Rahman's caravan because of how much wealth was in it, she remembered that the Prophet (pbuh) had said that Abdur Rahman would enter heaven crawling. When Abdur Rahman heard this, he gave his whole caravan away in charity because he just wanted to enter heaven walking. He was able to give everything of his away because he didn't allow his wealth to consume him. Entering heaven with dignity was more important to him.

The first thing we can do to build a strong community where people have each others' backs is to reach out to our neighbors and simply talk to them. People often fear what they don't know. Most people get all their information about what Muslims are like from mass media and form all kinds of misconceptions. If we just talk to them and get to know them, we can show them that we have more commonalities than differences. As Muslims, we have to make the first step and fulfill the rights our neighbors have over us. It's not as hard as it seems. Arroyo mentioned it's as easy as going door to door and inviting everyone over for brunch. Simple things like this create long lasting relationships that are the foundation of a safe and happy neighborhood.





# Entertainment Night Highlights

## Mohammed Nooruddin

Guest Writer

Entertainment Night, one of IAW's most anticipated events, was a great success alhamdulillah. It was a night filled with fun, creative, and inspirational performances led by many talented individuals from the MSA. Although the event unexpectedly stretched to 4 hours in length, it was still not sufficient to illustrate the sheer amount of talent that exists within the MSA. There are many memorable highlights which still remain in the hearts and minds of the attendees. The event commenced with Loyola MSA's first and original acapella group. This group of 8 brothers immediately raised the standard with their impeccable execution and synchronization. They started a unique idea which will remain for many more Entertainment Nights to come. For those who missed this exceptional performance, the video can be found on Loyola MSA's Facebook page.

Thereafter, the event followed through with many videos, guest performances, and talk/game shows. This includes recorded vocal and guitar covers, comedic videos such as, a sisters' impersonation of what happens on the brother's side of the musallah, "MSA Stereotypes", "The Sister's Hashtag Video", "First World Problems", and a video portraying the absurdity of translating Bollywood songs into English, all of which were very-well put together and enjoyable to watch. Guest performances included 2 representatives from Loyola's Acting and Speech team. These two talented individuals moved the audience with their prepared and extemporaneous skits as well. The MCs did a phenomenal job with keeping the audience alive despite the event going into the late hours of the night. They organized comedic talk shows, a couple rounds of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire", a brothers beard contest, and a flappy bird contest. These

quick skits provided breaks for the audience from strings of performances and videos.

After the half-time break, the event moved forward with a sister performing a live sign language version of a Muslim interpretation of the song titled "Friday". It was a very unique and entertaining performance as well. Another highlighted performance was a violin duet by two sisters. They performed famous musical tunes, the Mario Bros., Harry Potter, and Avatar to name a few. It was definitely one of the star performances of the night. As the event progressed into its final stage, a live performance was done by myself where I gave my departing words to the audience as a long-time participant and Loyola Alumus thereafter continuing my performance with a 10 nasheed mash-up in 5 different languages. This was succeeded by dynamic nasheed cousin duo Syed Ali Nasaruddin and myself who performed a nasheed together with Ali providing primary vocals and duff and me with secondary vocals. Thereafter, a surprise guest performance was done by Sumeed Manzoor, a prospective Loyola student who blew the minds of the audience with his exceptional Yo-Yo skills. Although very late into the event, his performance awoke the audience and brought them back into the show. As the event crossed into its final two skits, the MCs called MSA President Laith Elkurd onto the stage and distracted him as two brothers came from behind and pie-ed him. It was a practical joke which was long overdue for Mr. President. And at the very end, a short glimpse was taken at a full-length feature film made by Anas Gandhi and myself titled "The Final Quest". Although intended as a parody about Islami-Quest, the video ended on a serious note to drive home the main purpose of life. As Anas Gandhi stated "Time, people, and the environment change, but the quest (to paradise) remains the

same". For those who missed the short screening, the film can also be found on Loyola's MSA Facebook page. The entire night was an overall success. In addition, all the performances and videos were recorded and will be put up on Loyola MSA's youtube channel and the Loyola MSA website as soon as time permits.

I have always loved Entertainment Night and the performances which are given by our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters. This event truly brings out hidden talents which you may not have known about an individual in any other setting. It is an event that allows us to gather and enjoy a night of creativity, joy, and inspiration.

Before I end this article, I would just like to take a moment to say my farewell. I did try to give my departing words during my performance but it was already really late in the night when had I come onto the stage. Hence, I was extremely tired and may not have conveyed my last words in the manner that I wanted to. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to do just that. I have participated in the Entertainment Night since my freshman year and my experience has been great, Alhamdulillah. It seems like only a few weeks ago that I had my debut in the IAW 2010 Talent Show and that I had just gotten used to being known as "The Nasheed Guy" (Ali stole my title). I honestly did believe that my senior year performance was going to be my last but it turned out that I was going to accept a research offer at Loyola for another year, through which I got the opportunity to stick around longer and be a part of this year's unique talent show. However, this year I am almost certain that I won't be able to participate in next year's talent show. In Sha Allah, I will be moving on from Loyola to new beginnings. But then again you never know, another solo, another quest, or the original MSAcapella just may make



## ...CONT'D

a surprise appearance next year. It also just so happened that I was a part of multiple things in this year's Entertainment Night. MSAcapella, solo nasheed, duet nasheed, "MSA Stereotype" video, and of course "The Final Quest" film. It's the reason why Anas Gandhi likes to dub this year's Entertainment Night as "Nooruddin Night". It felt like as if I happened to take part in all these performances/videos because this truly was my last appearance, and I enjoyed every moment of it.

On a final note, I would just like to thank the Loyola MSA for always doing a great job with organizing all their events, especially during IAW week when it gets quite hectic and stressful. I have benefitted much more from the MSA than I can convey in words. I thank the MSA for letting me participate in their Entertainment Night these last 5 years and I hope you all have enjoyed my nasheed performances and that they were worth your time. I pray that our MSA continues to be blessed with such talented individuals and that we continue to move forward as one unit in a direction which will be beneficial for us all. And I pray that Allah SWT forgive us for our shortcomings and continues to shower his mercy and blessings upon us as we strive to better ourselves in this Final Quest of life. I ask you all to please forgive me for anything which I have said that offend anyone in my time here at Loyola as well as for my shortcomings. May Allah SWT grant us the highest level of Jannah (Paradise) and may we all gather there and recall such precious moments. May Allah SWT protect us and may he grant us, aameen, in sha Allah. I leave you now in the hands of my cousin, Syed Ali Nasaruddin, who I know will keep the legacy of nasheeds alive and well for the years to come in sha Allah. Jazakallahu Khair Loyola MSA for all the amazing memories and moments. I will keep you all in my duas and I humbly request that you all keep me in yours as well and pray for my wellbeing and success in all aspects of this life and the next. It's been a great 5-year run Loyola, until next time, in sha Allah.

Wa As Salaamu Alaykum,  
(Noor-Un-Nikaah)

# IAW Culmination Dinner



**Rizwan Khan** | Staff Writer

"Without further ado, here is Dr. Rami Nashabsjdjefnsruvni." Cue applause and weird looks. Dr. Nashashibi (na-sha-shi-bi) gave, arguably, the most insightful Islam Awareness Week Culmination Dinner speeches I have ever heard. Speaking on his background as the executive director of IMAN (Inner-City Muslim Action Network - you guys should read up on the awesome work this organization has done), Dr. Nashashibi gave insight on his current projects in the South Side such as working with Muslim and non-Muslim shop owners to wean out selling alcohol and substituting other means of revenue - a clear indication IMAN is here to assist in its community for the long haul. He also acknowledged the diversity in our audience, mentioning the efforts other faith traditions have made in support of the community. It would be unfair to limit any summary of Dr. Nashashibi's speech here, so stop reading and go watch his lecture online, now.

One facet of the night to work on in the future is how prayer accommodations are fitted into the program. The event was scheduled to start at 7 pm, with a break for prayer once Maghrib sets in (roughly 7:20). However, given the large audience we had, for many from other schools, older guests (parents, faculty, etc.) and non-Muslims, the break for prayer was very inopportune and disruptive from the schedule of the night. So much so, that two uncles openly voiced their criticisms at the late start of praying Maghrib while many of the audience waited in Damen MPR for the program to continue. My advice to the organizers of the night is to begin the program after prayer. This way, the event can be advertised for 7:30 pm, with Maghrib prayer offered at 7:xx (before the program); now, those who would like to attend the congregational prayer may do so and those who would not like to take part will not be burdened by the service.

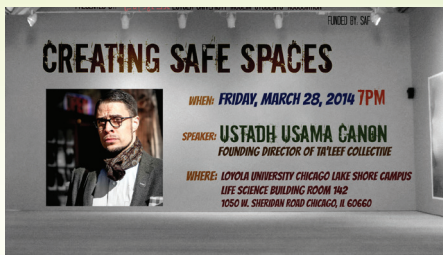
Additionally, MSA decided to change the program order of the Culmination Dinner from previous years, by now offering dinner at the conclusion of the speech. In my experience, this worked out relatively well; though the delay in beginning the program and length of the speech (not a fault which can be attributed to Dr. Nashashibi) were major setbacks in the success of the night. I would like to see this current program schedule in the future, with the conditions the program begins on time, and a short speech is allotted for the guest speaker, to accommodate the day long hunger many students keep to prepare for the food of the night (catered from Usmania Fine Dining and Hala Inn).

All in all, the Culmination Dinner was a great way to finish Islam Awareness Week on our campus and was a medium for many diverse members of our communities to come together and commemorate the hard work of many individuals and the time others took out to attend the programs. Let's say a loud salawaat and ask Allah (SWT) to bless our campus with mercy and our endeavors with success. Allaahumma salli alaa Muhammadin wa aali Muhammad.



# Creating a Safe MSA

Ali Nasaruddin | Staff Writer



Ustadh Usama Canon comes to Chicago every month, but last month he blessed Loyola by giving us advice on a topic that was becoming more and more discussed among the members of MSA. When looking to improve anything, one must have a goal in mind. Everyone in the MSA had their own vision for what they wanted the MSA to be but Ustadh Usama came and helped us organize our thoughts.

Ustadh Usama started off straight to the point and made it very personal to our MSA by asking us the bare minimum we require to be part of the MSA and the bare minimum that we require from members. This public minimum was contrasted to the concept of the private maximum. The private maxi-

um is your own level of faith. Ustadh Usama emphasized that we all have different private maximums and that we should work on those private maximums. However, we should not take that and impose it on people to turn it into a public maximum. When we do that, we exclude a large group of people and that is when you see dwindling numbers and half-hearted attendance from many in the community.

He challenged us to think outside our comfort zone with different scenarios when deciding our public minimum and encouraged the shura (MSA board) to continue this discussion. The talk lasted for a couple of hours but most will attest to the fact that the crowd was craving more. Some of the audience members asked questions related and unrelated to the topic. The questions included highly “controversial” questions such as the topic of the death penalty and the Islamic science of Sufism. Other questions asked about what to do when your home as a safe space has the parents’ private maximum enforced upon you. He gave

us examples of how that can be dangerous and that we have to make sure that we are not putting our faith at risk by making negotiables into non-negotiables. He also strongly emphasized respecting your parents and making sure that you are not unnecessarily doing anything that bothers or hurts them out of any sense of rebellion or self-righteousness.

As if this event was not enough, it ended with Brother Louis Dornseifer taking his shahadah (declaration of faith) with Ustadh Usama. The crowd huddled around him and witnessed an amazing and beautiful oath that Louis made to God and the oath Ustadh Usama said we made to Louis by the mere fact of us witnessing to help him in any way possible.

Overall, Ustadh Usama’s lecture was one of the best lectures that I have been to as well as the most relevant to the audience. Ustadh Usama did an amazing job and I look forward to inviting him again during his monthly visits to Chicago.

Art Corner



- (TOP)  
By Shaziya Barkat.  
Mumbai, India.



- (TOP) By Shahid Barkat. Jannatul Baqi, “Everyone shall taste death. And only on the day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the fire and admitted to Paradise he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception” (3:185)



# Thank You, Allah

Anonymous

In my nineteen years of experience, in the different parts of the Chicagoland area, around the time of Rabi'ul-Awwal, our communities have a tendency to start dividing and fighting more than they already do. These arguments focus on the mawlid. After spending years trying to find well-qualified and dependable teachers, I was finally able to bring peace at least in my heart; InshaAllah may God bring peace into our communities as well.

The word "mawlid" is an Arabic word meaning birth. The division occurs between people who celebrate the birth of the Prophet (S) and those who call it shirk (polytheism) or bidah (innovation) or both.

Unfortunately, a majority of this division and argumentation is among people who are in no way qualified to be having discourses about religion due to simple lack of knowledge and holistic understanding that our beloved



scholars have spent decades trying to achieve. Lack of humility is a huge cause of the discord in our fragmented communities. The celebration of the mawlid has been ongoing for over a thousand years and, according to Dr. Umar Faruq AbdAllah, no Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali or Shafi'i scholar has ever said anything about the mawlid except that it is a very good thing to do. My next question for my teachers was what even goes on in these mawlids?

The mawlid is an occasion of festivity, joy and gratitude. It is incumbent for all Muslims to feel joy and be grateful for the birth of the Prophet (S). Additionally, the expression of gratitude for the mawlid through gatherings that we see today is seen as a great thing to do by consensus of the scholars. The mawlid, as an expression of gratitude, is an act

that has been approved by a majority of Sunni scholars consists of the gathering and reading the shamail (qualities) of the Prophet (S), the seerah (life) of the Prophet (S) singing poetry in praise of him (S) among other acts that connect us with Allah (SWT) and His beloved (S). The mawlid is a formal name for something that we are commanded to do: be grateful for the blessings that Allah bestows upon us. What greater blessing is there besides the Prophet (S)?

Dr. Abdul Hakim Murad says he (S) is "ni'matul-kubra," or the greatest blessing. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf reminds us that we are to be grateful and feel joy and happiness with Allah's blessings. If we don't feel happiness with what Allah has given us, then there is something deficient in our hearts. The mawlid celebrates the birth of the Prophet (S), or in other words, the coming of the Mercy to the Worlds (S) to us by the mercy of Allah (SWT). It is the day that Allah (SWT) granted us the greatest favor upon us. The Prophet (S) coming to this earth is the way

that Allah (SWT) taught us everything. Whatever guidance we have is thanks to Allah sending us the Prophet (S). We would be lost in a dark abyss with nowhere to go if Allah had not blessed us with the Prophet (S). Allah (SWT) tells us in Surah Anbiya in ayah 107, "And we have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a mercy to the universe."

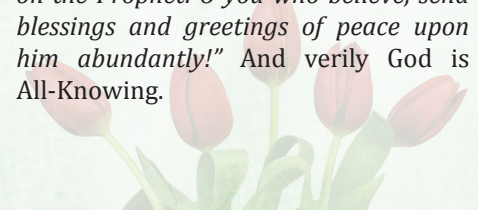
The Prophet (S) himself celebrated the mawlid as narrated in Bukhari. When the Prophet (S) was asked why he fasted on Mondays, the Prophet (S) said that it is because he was born on that day. This is a form of the mawlid. RasulAllah (S) tells us that, "You have not tasted the sweetness of faith until Allah and His messenger are more beloved to you than your own self." The mawlid, the scholars say, is a way of taking our love for Allah (SWT) and His beloved (S) and

turning it from a mundane lip service into something real. When the Sahabah, in the battle of Uhud, jumped in front of the Prophet (S) so that the Prophet (S) is not harmed, that is a level of love that we aim to achieve. That jumping in front of the Prophet (S) and taking the arrows to their own selves and protecting the Prophet (S) is a mawlid. We are so far away from Allah and His messenger that the scholars say that the mawlid is one of the best ways to melting our hearts and connecting ourselves with Allah and His prophet. The sole purpose is to increase our love and bring it to the level of those Sahabah whose love manifested itself into reality.

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf says beautifully that using an alarm clock to wake up for fajr is a bidah, an innovation. The Prophet(S) never did it nor did the Sahabah. They woke up on their own for fajr. However, using the alarm clock to get up for fajr is a type of innovation that does not conflict with the principles of Islam and actually helps us gain nearness to Allah(SWT) by virtue of getting up for our prayer. Similarly, the mawlid is our alarm clock. It wakes up our hearts and allows us to come closer to Allah(SWT) and His beloved prophet(S).

As long as nothing going on in these mawlids goes against our core principles, there is nothing but benefit for us in these gatherings. And it is important that the thankfulness to Allah for sending us His beloved messenger(S) not be restricted to only once a year. Once a year is better than never, but our aim should be that we are grateful in every breathing moment.

I end this reflection with a command of Allah to all believers as recorded in Surah Ahzab, ayah 56 "Verily, Allah and His angels send blessings and greetings on the Prophet. O you who believe, send blessings and greetings of peace upon him abundantly!" And verily God is All-Knowing.

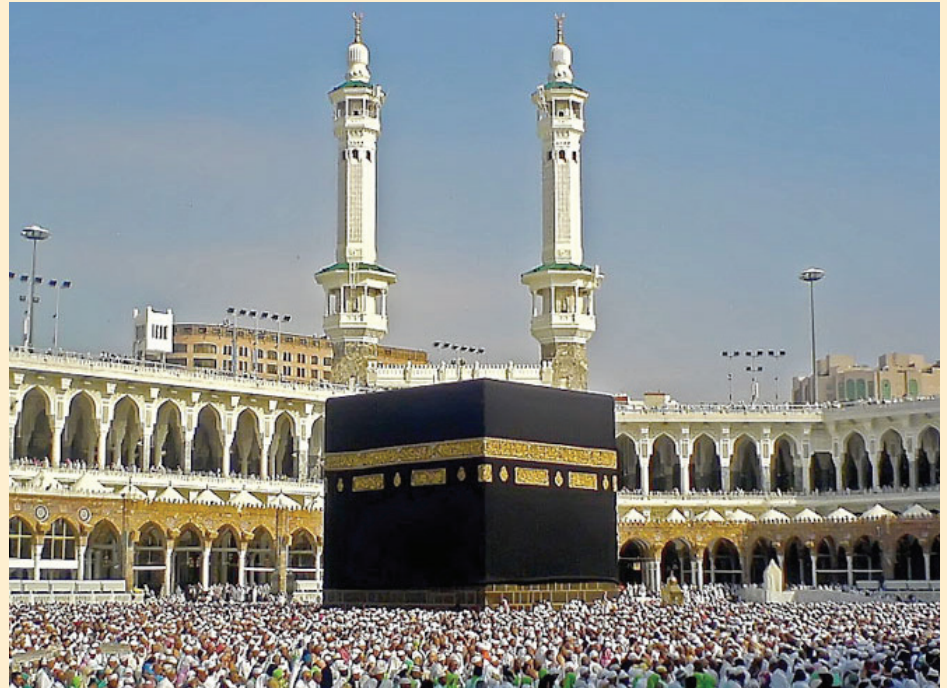


# Umrah Diaries

Shaziya Barkat | Newsletter Coordinator

## My First Look

“Don’t look up until you feel the sun on your face,” said Brother Wisam Sharieff, my Umrah tour guide. I walked head down until the white marble floor beamed with bright rays and the heat radiated on my face. We were extremely close. This was it. I couldn’t believe I was here, at the epicenter at which billions of people from all over the world face 5 times a day. I took a breath and looked up. The Kaaba’s intricate golden door faced us, the black cloth wrapped around it, waiting. No matter how much I try, words honestly cannot describe the beauty of it. That is just something each one of us has to experience on our own InshAllah.



## Medina

There was something peaceful about the breeze in Medina. I fell in love with the city the minute I stepped in. I loved hearing the adhaan penetrate loudly through the air as everyone left their work and the dunya behind to fill the streets and head towards Masjid al-Nawabi. It was one of the most beautiful sights I’ve seen. The mosque of the Prophet (S) was something else. The ceilings of the masjid would slide open, allowing the sun to filter through. The feeling of praying in Riyaad ul-Jannah (Gardens of Paradise) under the Green Dome, only a distance away from the rawdah (Prophet’s tomb) is indescribable. Not only that, but the local people of Medina are beyond compassionate. They would offer us food as we walked through the streets and refuse to take payment when we used a taxi, asking for just a dua instead. When a friend of mine did not have enough money on her to pay for some abayas, the store owner told her to take the abayas and return to pay him back whenever she got the chance. This is definitely something I haven’t seen here in the states,

and the hospitality made it even more unique than it already was. No wonder this is the city that welcomed the Prophet (S).

## The Boat Sails On

It was early in the morning on Jumu’ah day. She was sitting in the row ahead of me in Masjid Al-Haram. Tiny and cute, with a black hijab and black abaya, and a Hello Kitty watch around her wrist, she seemed to be around the age of seven or so. Now and then, she would turn and smile at my sister and I, and then shy away. As she turned back to me once more, I thought I should try to make conversation with her. The only problem was she spoke Arabic. My ability to carry a conversation in Arabic is extremely limited, but what I soon came to realize is that even with a language barrier, Islam has a way of connecting people, subhanAllah. Through hand signals, facial expressions, and laughs, I found out her name was Bayan. My sister pulled out a piece of paper and started making paper boats, and then handed them to her. Bayan was amazed. So for a time after, we taught her how to make paper boats,

step by step, using no words. She was eventually making them herself, running around the masjid unable to contain her excitement, and teaching others her new found ability. Even though it was something so minute, I realized that each of us can learn something from others, despite our barriers in culture, ethnicity, or language. That despite our differences, Islam brings forth one united ummah that can connect with one another. And that wasn’t the last time we saw Bayan. A few days later, we were in Masjid al-Nawabi in Medina. Sitting just a few rows ahead of my sister, among the crowd, was a tiny little girl with a paper boat. SubhanAllah.





# Continued: Umrah Diaries

## Just Some of the Things I Learned...

...are that no matter how diverse we are, Islam brings us together in an astonishing way. That it doesn't matter that the Malaysian sister sitting next to me in the masjid has a different background than I do; we are both descendants



from Adam (a). It doesn't matter that I couldn't communicate with her because of the different language-

es we speak; rather we both stood up to recite in unison to one single beautiful language. Despite the different clothes we wear, Ihram throws away any notion of differences in our wealth or status, emphasizing that we are all equal in the sight of Allah except in terms of righteousness. As the Prophet (saw) said in his last farewell speech on the Mount Arafat,

*"All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; white has no superiority over black, nor does a black have any superiority over white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the*

*Muslims constitute one brotherhood."*

Despite our diversity, our faith connects us in such a way where no barrier can restrict us from learning from one another. Take the opportunity of meeting a Muslim who may not have the same lifestyle as you do. Learn from them and pass it along; keep the boat sailing on.

And the current of tawaaf will also continue to flow on. It is in that moment, when you walk around the Kaaba in a crowd of thousands of different faces, that you lose yourself. But it is in that moment, when you walk around the Kaaba in a crowd of thousand of different faces, that you find yourself.

## Dear Mufti...

### ...with Mufti Abrar Mirza

**1. When an MSA is so gender segregated, young Muslims take away from that inability to talk to the opposite gender appropriately. When an MSA acts this way, people adapt these situations to social judgment and rejection. Often times, Muslims, unable to cope with the social pressure of gender separation, end up inappropriately committing zinnah and losing control. What can we do as an MSA from preventing this to occur? Is MSA's role to act as a completely perfect entity? Where does human error add up in that?**

The MSA should provide an Islamic environment for students to learn about their religion. It should address pertinent topics, including the laws and etiquette surrounding gender interaction. Students should learn the ideals, as well as receive practical suggestions and advice. When faced with challenges, the students will be equipped with the knowledge to react appropriately. Sins are not often committed due to a person's lack of knowledge; they are mostly committed due to the person's choice of not acting upon his or her knowl-

edge. The logic that gender separation could actually contribute to inappropriate relations is faulty and against the guidance provided by the Quran, which advocates not even coming close to fornication through minimizing gender interaction and providing etiquette when interaction is necessary. The MSA's role, as is the role of community leaders and was the role of the Prophets (peace be upon them), is to convey the message and guide towards the right path. It does not control the outcome.

**2. Does Allah SWT forgive someone because someone else has made a sincere dua? (e.g. If a brother were to ask for forgiveness for another brother). What if that "other" brother is under the wrath of Allah (SWT) because of something he did, will he be forgiven?**

Allah Ta'ala informs us that if we call Him, he will respond. At the same time, Allah Ta'ala commands us not to despair from His mercy, as He forgives all sins. A person should never assume that he or, even worse, another person is under the wrath of Allah Ta'ala. Once



a person sincerely repents, our hope is that Allah Ta'ala will forgive him. Hence, any sincere du'a for forgiveness, whether for oneself or others and irrespective of the amounts of sins, will be accepted by Allah Ta'ala, as promised by Him in the Quran.

# THE VIRTUES OF FASTING IN THE SUMMER

An excerpt from *Lata'if al-Ma'arif*  
By Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (ra)

"...And from the acts of worship whose reward is multiplied during the heat is fasting, and this is because of the thirst that one experiences in the mid-day heat. This is why Mu'adh bin Jabal expressed regret on his deathbed that he would no longer experience this mid-day thirst, as did other early Muslims. And it was related that Abu Bakr would fast in the summer and not fast in the winter, and 'Umar advised his son 'Abdullah on his deathbed: "Try to obtain the characteristics of faith," and the first one he mentioned was fasting in the intense summer heat.

And al-Qasim bin Muhammad said that 'Aishah would fast in the intense heat, and he was asked: "What drove her to do this?" He replied: "She would take advantage of the days before death." And some of the righteous women would choose the hottest days and fast them, saying: "If the price is low, everyone will buy," meaning that she wanted to do those actions that only a few were capable of due to how hard it was to do them, and this is indicative of the high aspirations these women had.

And Abu Musa al-Ash'ari was on a boat, and he heard someone calling out: "O passengers, stand up!" And he said this three times. So, Abu Musa told him: "How can we stand up? Don't you see where we are? How can we stand up?"



So, the caller said: "Let me tell you of a rule that Allah made upon Himself: whoever makes himself thirsty for Allah's sake on a hot day has the right upon Allah to have his thirst quenched on the Day of Resurrection." So, Abu Musa would search out the days that were so hot that one would feel he was being cooked, and he would fast those days.

Ka'b said that Allah `azza wa jal said to Musa: "I made it incumbent upon Myself that whoever is thirsty for My sake will have his thirst quenched on the Day

of Resurrection," and others said that it's written in the Torah: "Glad tidings for whoever makes himself hungry in anticipation of the Great Day where he will have his hunger satisfied, and glad tidings for whoever makes himself thirsty in anticipation of the Great Day where he will have his thirst quenched."

al-Hasan said: "A maiden of Paradise will speak to the Wali of Allah while he is laying with her on the shore of a river of honey in Paradise while she hands him a glass of the sweetest drink, and she will ask him: "Do you know what day Allah married me to you? He saw you on a long summer day while you were thirsty in the mid-day heat, and He called the Angels and said: "Look at My slave. He has left his wife and pleasure and food and drink for Me out of his desire for what I have for him. Bear witness that I have forgiven him," and He forgave you on that day and married you to me.""

And when 'Amir bin 'Abd Qays went from Basrah to Sham, Mu'awiyah would ask him to tell him what he needed. He refused to ask of him, and eventually said: "All I need is for you to return the heat of Basrah to me to make the fasting a bit harder, as it is too easy in your lands."

And al-Hajjaj was on a journey between Makkah and Madinah. He pulled out his dinner and invited a bedouin to eat with him, and the bedouin said: "I have been invited by One who is better than you and I have accepted the invita-

tion." He asked: "And who is this?" The man replied: "Allah invited me to fast, and I fasted." al-Hajjaj asked: "On this very hot day?" The man replied: "Yes. I am fasting it in anticipation of a much hotter day." al-Hajjaj said: "So, eat today and fast tomorrow." The man replied: "Only if you can guarantee that I will live until tomorrow." al-Hajjaj said: "This isn't in my hands." The man said: "How can you ask me to do something now when there is something of the future that isn't in your hands?"

And Ibn 'Umar went on a trip once with some companions, and they saw a sheep-herder who they invited to eat with them. He said: "I am fasting," and Ibn 'Umar said: "You are fasting in heat like this, and while you are between all these plants and sheep?" The herder replied: "I'm taking advantage of my remaining days." Ibn 'Umar was impressed by this reply and said: "Can you sell one of your sheep to us? We'll feed you from its meat when you break your fast, and we'll also pay you for it." The herder said: "It doesn't belong to me. It belongs to my



master." Ibn 'Umar said: "What would your master say if you told him that it was eaten by a wolf?" The herder raised his finger to the sky and said: "What about Allah?" Ibn 'Umar kept repeating this phrase that the herder was saying, and when he got to the city, he went to the herder's owner and bought him and his sheep from him. He then freed the herder and gave him his sheep as a gift.

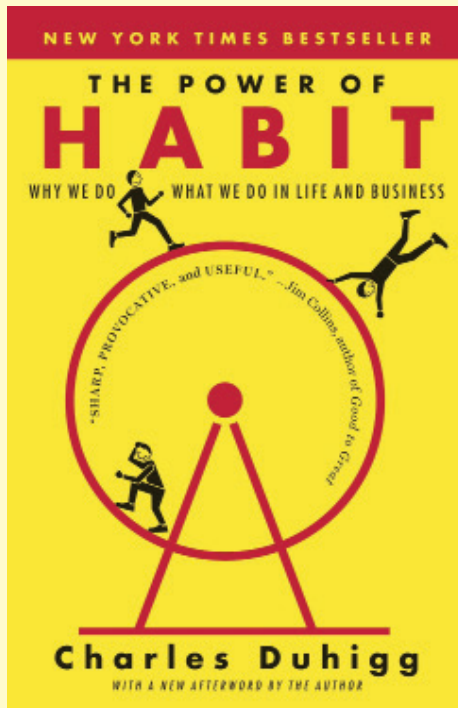
And Ruh bin Zinba' was traveling between Makkah and Madinah on a very hot day. A herder living on a mountain approached him, and he said to him: "O herder, come eat with me." The herder said: "I'm fasting." Ruh said: "You're fasting in this heat?" The herder replied: "Should I let my days pass by in vain?"

Read the full article at [ilmgate.org](http://ilmgate.org)



# Book Review: *The Power of Habit*

Laith Elkurd | Guest Writer



Stop for a moment. Carefully go over your past hour. Good. Now reflect on your past day. Better. Now, methodically break down your entire week. Did you find anything? A pattern? Behaviors? Nuances? Thought processes? Interactions? Have you ever wondered why exercising regularly is so difficult? Or perhaps why certain behaviors become so debilitatingly ingrained into our psyche? If not, stop reading here. If so, you'll find that we as individuals in this world are simply the sum of our habits. In *The Power of Habit*, New York Times investigative reporter, Charles Duhigg, masterfully plunges into the science of habits and the fascinating way that they control our lives.

Duhigg frequently refers to what psychologists term 'habit loops.' Quite a clever name considering that the nature of habits is cyclic and leave you right back where you started without ever knowing that's you moved. The formula is simple, 'Cue, routine, reward, cue, routine, reward.' Imagine that you are in the library (or maybe you actually are in the library) and have been exhaustedly working on a term paper {cue}. The next thing you know is you find yourself holding your favorite carbonated beverage, knee-deep in Facebook, and suddenly very

occupied with pictures of your brother's friend's uncle's new car {routine}. A deceptively short hour later as if some sort of tension has been released {reward}, you snap out of it and get back to work. What just happened?

In the year 1987 Aluminum Company of America, or Alcoa for short, hired former government bureaucrat Paul O'Neill as their new CEO. Only one short year later O'Neill was able to transform the fiscally stagnant Alcoa into a Dow Jones powerhouse, with a fivefold increase in annual revenue. More importantly, he was able to take a company made infamous as having among the highest rates of workplace injury to one of the safest in the entire world. O'Neill made these revolutionary transformations not by some kind of shrewd Wall Street wisdom but simply by taking aim at company wide habits. Not just any habits, but 'keystone habits' that could transform the routine tendencies of an entire system.

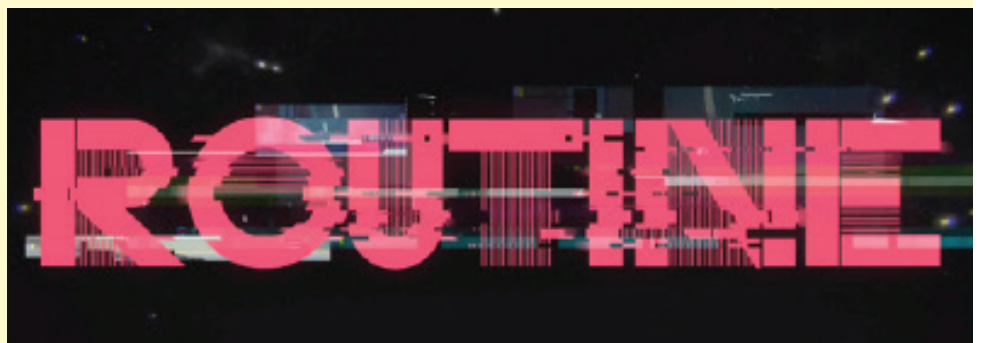
"I knew I had to transform Alcoa... But you can't *order* people to change. That's not how the brain works... If I could start disrupting the habits around one thing, it would spread throughout the entire company."

Do you or your family shop at Target? If so, take a closer look at the coupon book that comes in the mail. You're probably thinking, "What? A coupon book? That's harmless!" Target has cunningly advanced their shopper information database to the point where their shopper profile "guest IDs" can systematically predict anything from pregnancies to political leanings far before even close family members ever have the slightest inkling. Target and many other corporations around the world have exploited the nature of shopping habits and

manipulated them with concise, Big Brother-esque, couponery. "A series of experiments convinced marketers that if they managed to understand a particular shopper's habits, they could get them to buy almost anything."

For humans living in a society and time of confusion and informational bombardment *The Power of Habit* is as relevant as ever. The short preludes from the text I have written above are just a few of those Duhigg uses in his attempt to understand the curious underpinnings of habits. If these examples and many others aren't your particular cup of masala chai then understand that it essentially all comes down to how we can manipulate the information provided to better ourselves. As we have grown accustomed to hearing, *The All Knowing* says in the Qur'an: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." [Al-Ra'd : 11].

Habits, both good and bad, don't just exist inevitably and generate spontaneously. In order to overpower bad habits, we have to make an effort to recognize the cue that triggers them and replace the routine that follows with something beneficial. To create good ones we must set systems in place that allow us to yearn for some sort of reward that outweighs the willpower activation energy required to do something that we would rather not #orgoreference. Because, "Once you realize how a habit operates, you gain power over it." So instead of habitually dropping \$10.50 on lunch tomorrow {cue}, pick up *The Power of Habit* {routine}, and enjoy an introspectively stimulating read {reward}.



As another year comes to an end, we look back at all the memories we made and all the people who affected us. MashAllah, Loyola's MSA is made up of some very influential and wonderful people, some of whom leave us this year with more of an impact than they acknowledge. Here are some shoutouts to our graduating class of 2014:



**"#Zeba**

Why do you gotta leave and be this way? Come on now... I haven't even had your chai yet.

#youbetterknowyou'llbemissed #is-tillwantthatchai #weshallmeetagain #onatrain #chaiyachaiyaa"

"This is a shout out for **President Laith**. Thanks for the effort you and all the other members have put in to make the MSA great. Why you flop on plans and I would just have you confess that you work for the FBI."

**"Adem Shuaipaj,**

I remember meeting you freshman year and considering you as another one of Samer's friends. Who knew that we would actually get closer in the coming years. Whether it was you insisting that I take your umbrella or giving me the best college advice, you have always been there for me. Words cannot describe how supportive you have been. I am honored to have met you. I pray that you are successful at whatever you pursue and I hope that we will be in touch, even after you leave. You and your Jummah khutbahs will truly be missed.

-Ahad Bagasra"

**"Rwaida Izar,**

I don't know where to begin. I met you my junior year, when Sarah wanted to borrow your lab coat. I remember thinking to myself that you will just be another MSA sister that I said hi to. Fortunately, that was not the case. Through all the madness and stress this past year, I have come to realize how blessed I am to have you as a friend. I can't wrap my mind around the fact that you will be graduating this year. Remember our vent sessions, when I told you we won't make it? Well, you have and I am so proud of you. Mabrook! Words can describe how much Wolfie and I will miss you! With honor, Prince Ahad"

**"Nuhie!** You are honestly one of the sweetest people I have ever met and I'm so glad Relay brought us together four years ago because I don't know what I would have done without you. I'm proud of everything you have accomplished and know that you will be the best teacher ever! I love you, cutie!"

"Dear **Nuhie**, <3  
Keep smiling. You're beautiful!"

**"AMBREEN MAAN!**  
You are crazy, hilarious, sarcastic, strong, cute, smart, kind, inspirational and I LOVE YOU! Go forth and set the world on fire, but don't forget us little people while you're out there taking over the world :D"

"To the best big sister any freshie could have hoped for: **Yara Shams** <3. Thank you for being such a role model and a friend. Your smile will always stay with me (insh'Allah). You have such a loving spirit and have touched the hearts of so many, Alhamdulillah. I love you! xoxo, your lil sister"

**"Farah!!!**

Spending my first two years at Loyola with you has been amazing! I would have been a lost freshmen soul last year if you weren't there to guide me every step of the way!

Love you and I'll miss you cuzzo!

The better Bozai  
(aka Zainab)"

**"Yara!** You're such an amazing person, I wish you all the best InshAllah in your future endeavors! You deserve nothing but the best! <3"

**"Laith,**

I love it whenever I see Laith, cuz it just increases my faith."

**"Shaziyaaa,**

Why are you in the pharm program? Two years was not enough :( iA, we'll hang out a bunch this summer and even once school starts. Why do you live so far away? You better visit me over the summer. Don't get too busy.  
Shifa "

**"Sarah & Sujud,**

You two are such a dream team, mash'Allah! Your friendship is so beautiful and I don't think I can function without your dynamic duo around next year. Please visit---OFTEN!  
Keep smiling. <3 lots of love,  
Lyba"

**"Saadia Geee,**

I think YOU are the next Oprah!  
Love, Lyba"

**"Ameir Barakat,**

Gonna miss the tarneeb and just chillin at your place. You ain't just my brother in Islam."







**"Sarah Choudhry,**

The first time I met you, you were creepily watching me sign up for the MSA Listserve during the Org Fair my freshman year. Then you asked me if I was Wara and I replied yes. I was so creeped out I didn't know what to do. When you talked about mutual friends from Alabama, your creepiness went away. Anyways since then, I have always considered you my big sister on campus. I have never told anyone this, but you are one of the people who inspired me to start wearing hijab. I thank you for always keeping me on the straight path when I go astray. You inspire me to let Islam lead my life and that family is always first. I will definitely miss seeing you and crashing at your place. Thank you for everything. Your fellow FOB, little sister, and 5th roommate, Wara"

**"Swagyub,**

JazakAllah Khair for all the advice you give, but they're just as useless as Rizwan's advice. #JK #TBH #I<3U  
Btw, do you wanna marry her? We can make it happen.  
Noor-un-nikkah"

**"Salaam GUYS!!!!**

I have only been here for a semester, but I feel like Allah swt has blessed me with a beautiful Loyola MSA FAMILY!!! So I just want to put this out there.....  
I'VE GOT A MAN CRUSH ON LAITH **"THE PRESIDENT" ELKURD**  
His afro is too beautiful and I've fallen for both his personality and 'fro. He's beautiful on the inside and outside. His level of "haya" has got me singing ahhhhhh....ahhhhh  
XOXO, Ali Uddin"

**"Laith,**  
You are so frikin' adorable, mA.  
-Everyone"

**"Waqar Ahsan,**  
Keep smiling.  
- Young Blood"

**"Mariam Ethezaz,**

I'm going to miss you so much :( Who am I supposed to explore the city with now? Even though we didn't really do a good job of that. Thank god you aren't going to Boston. You better come visit me at least once a month from the Illinois School of Optometry! We still need to get ice cream with B and go to J's place.  
<3 S."

**"Dureshahwar,**  
Thanks for being so kind and helpful. I will miss you.  
You know who I am ;)"

**"To all the sisters,**  
I hope y'all get great rishtas.  
Inshaa'Allah. "

**"Calling Batman,**

First thing is first, MSA would not have been what it is without you. You have made it such an amazing year for all of us aH and mA. There are so much I admire about you and look up to you for. First of all, you never get angry. Even though I have messed up so many times and disappointed you, you never get mad. You always make me feel like I have done something when I know I haven't. Second thing is your dedication and perseverance. You are so dedicated in everything that you do. Third, you are too sweet and you always are ready to help. Last but not least, you are a great friend and that is why everyone loves you. I do not know how MSA or even I will function without you. We will miss you, but I know you will save the world like you did with us iA. - Love, Robin"

"Shoutout to **Laith Elkurd** for being such an amazing role model for me. He is a man who constantly sees room for improvement in himself. He is a man with beautiful balance in all things and I truly admire that. I've only known him for a couple of months but he has left a life-long lasting impact on me. He is someone who has a future that I believe is beyond comprehension for many of us. People like Laith are definitely not common and we are blessed to have someone special like him amongst us and leading us. Allah protect him and bless him.  
Aameen. -Syed Ali Nasaruddin"

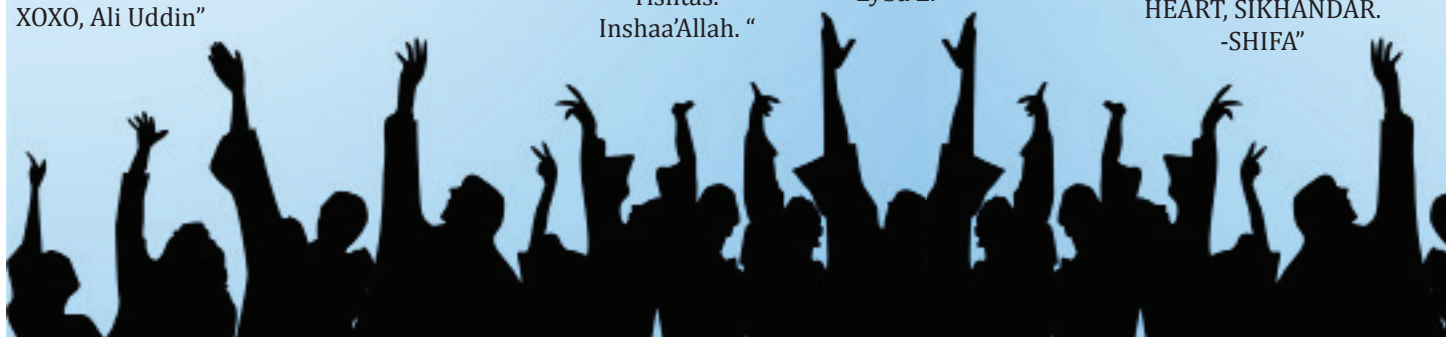
**"Rizwan Rizzy,** you say you hate the MSA but I know you still love us. We'll miss you, COME BACK AND VISIT. PLEASE"

**"Sujud,**  
To you and your secret life!"

**"To Sujud Su'jud!"**

**"SARAHHHHHHH**  
I AM GOING TO MISS YOU SOSOSOSOSO MUCH! WHY DID YOU GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL EARLY?? YOU BETTER NOT MARRY A TEXAN AND MOVE THERE TOO. SERIOUSLY, YOU'RE NEXT. WHO AM I SUPPOSED TO BE FOBBY WITH NOW?? YOU'RE BREAKING MY HEART, SIKHANDAR. -SHIFA"

**"To all the sisters and brothers** leaving, May you find the greatest ease in all of your endeavors and continue to inspire and give back to your communities. Alhamdulillah, this was an amazing year and it wouldn't have been possible without you!  
- Lyba Z. "



# Find the Prophets

(peace be upon them all)



T F S U E X A V Y S Q E O L L  
 N A M I E L U S A I I G F E Y  
 Z U I D P E X B H R S H X A T  
 Q O I Q U Q Y S Y D A G M M B  
 C T P A N W A S A I H U O S L  
 N I L E R Y A D E O H U D I K  
 M L U O L B G D Y A X Q M E C  
 H I G I U B C R M A A G G F Y  
 N I H Y A D A M L N Q G T U Z  
 B Q Y A U I A M V A Q U S A I  
 O A W X R D I S H A Q U B G D  
 P Q L M U B N D G J F N I G Z  
 C W J S U U I B W D R Q Z J H  
 C S X U H S K R T A P U L H D  
 F S U N U Y A K Y U V C N G W



## WORD BANK

ADAM  
IDRIS  
ISMAEL  
SULEIMAN  
YUSUF

AYYUB  
ILYAS  
MUHAMMAD  
YAHYA

DAWUD  
ISA  
MUSA  
YAQUB

IBRAHIM  
ISHAQ  
NUH  
YUNUS

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