

Dar al Islam Teachers Institute

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER - Winter 1997/98

Edited by Dr. Mohammad Shafi - Dar al Islam Chairman, Karima Diane Alavi, and Hakim Archuletta

Notes on Qur'an and Hadith

RAMADAN 1998

You may already know that Ramadan started on the last day of 1997. Some of your Muslim students may be fasting for a month, and some of your non-Muslim students may have questions about Ramadan, and religious fasting in general. One of the most frequently asked questions is "why do Muslims fast during Ramadan?" Of course, you can point out to them that the fast is ordained in the Qur'an, but there are reasons for the fast mentioned in the Qur'an as well, such as those listed below:

- To learn self-restraint:

Oh ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint. (2:183)

- To commemorate the month in which the Revelation to the Prophet Muhammad began:

Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgement. (2:185)

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What's New?

TEACHERS INSTITUTE APPROACHES 5TH YEAR

The summer of 1998 will mark the 5th year for Teachers Institutes at Dar al Islam's New Mexico site. There are currently over 120 alumni of this program teaching in schools across the nation. We implemented changes in response to your suggestions, as we continue to evolve and strive to serve the needs of educators who have shown an interest in learning and teaching about Islamic faith, practice, culture, history and world view.

The first Institute ('94), lasted four weeks, and was attended by 30 teachers. In 1995 we shortened the Institutes to two weeks. Since 1996 we have offered two Institutes each year with 20 participants in each. We made changes in the facilities as well: more showers were added, the dorms are carpeted and less crowded, and classroom seats are more comfortable, just to name a few.

This is the first of our new bi-annual Institute Newsletter. We hope to support you in your teaching, keep you abreast of new developments in curriculum, spread the word about other programs which may be of interest to you, and offer you a link with Dar al Islam and other Institute alumni. We welcome suggestions as well as your input into the newsletter. This is your chance to share ideas that work, and let us know how we can be of further assistance to you.

If you know of summer programs, travel or study grants, interesting web sites, or other things which may be of interest to your colleagues, please let us know so it can be shared with others. Also, if you would like to share a teaching idea or experience with us, please write about it, and we will consider it for publication in the "Ideas That Work" segment. Send your comments, ideas and articles to Karima Diane Alavi ('94), Institute Director, at the Dar al

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Curriculum Corner

New Resources and Where
to Find Them

Books

WORLD HISTORY OR WORLD CULTURE TEXT BOOKS

Is your school adopting a new text soon? There are organizations working to monitor and improve the way in which Islam, the Middle East and Arabs are portrayed in general world history textbooks. Many parents of students are also making their voices heard. As a result, some of the negative stereotyping which has been a problem in the past is being replaced by a more balanced outlook. Some of the most popular texts on the market are:

- FOR WORLD HISTORY:

World History: The Human Experience, by Mounir Farah and Andrea Karis (1994, Glencoe)

Our World's Story, by Boehm, Hoone, McGowen, Browning and Miramontes (1997, Harcourt Brace)

- FOR WORLD CULTURE:

World Cultures: A Global Mosaic, by Ahmad, Brodsky, Crofts and Ellis (1995, Prentice Hall)

Global Insights, Peoples and Cultures, by Mounir Farah, et. al. (1994, Glencoe)

Do you want to know how your current text stands up to these new titles? Check it out in the *Evaluation of Secondary-Level Textbooks for Coverage of the Middle East and North Africa*, by Betsy Barlow. (1994) Available for \$12.00 from the Middle East Studies Association, 1232 North Cherry Street, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721 — or you can find the entire text evaluation on the web at www.umich.edu/~iinet/cmenas/textbooks/reviews/summaryBhtml#B4

RENAISSANCE HISTORY

The Council on Islamic Education will soon publish a curriculum unit on links between Islamic scholarship and the European Renaissance. *Emergence of Renaissance, Interactions Between Europe and the Muslim World*, by Susan Douglass and Karima Diane Alavi, available this spring through the Council at (714) 839-2929 or <http://islam.org/CIE/default.htm>

Posters

For free posters of Makkah and Madinah, contact the



Ideas That Work
Alumni share their ideas and
experiences

By Carol Costa, Potomac School

ISLAMIC STUDIES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. - A MINI COURSE

Every fall for four days, eighth graders at the Potomac School in McLean, VA leave their regular classrooms to experience some of the many opportunities for learning offered by our nation's capital. During what is perhaps their most original Washington adventure, the students, in rotating groups of twenty per day, experience first hand, several facets of Islam.

The Islamic Studies Day begins when the students arrive at school to find the Spanish classroom transformed into a Middle Eastern style sitting area decorated with pillows and posters from various countries in the Islamic world. The students enjoy a typical Middle Eastern breakfast of yogurt, pita bread, and dried fruits. Each day a different graduate student from the Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies comes to talk about their experience living in a predominantly Islamic country. We also have a "fashion show" as students model different garments from Saudi Arabia.

Fortified with breakfast, the group travels to the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia for a slide show and another "fashion show," this time with clothing provided by the embassy. In the lobby of the embassy, the students enjoy looking at the models of Makkah and Madinah. Then it's off to eat again, this time at a Lebanese restaurant. After lunch we visit the Mosque where students witness the call to prayer and midday prayers.

The remainder of the day is spent back at school. The students learn the basics of Arabic and how to write their name in Arabic which they put onto a small circular sticker to be used later in their art project. The mid afternoon snack of water, fruit and baklava is meant to simulate the *iftar* meal at the end of Ramadan. During the snack, the students participate in a poetry recitation. They are asked to bring a favorite poem to read or recite, and we have had everything from Frost to poems memorized as young children. The final part of the day is an art project that involves transferring an Islamic geometric pattern onto a paper plate. This pattern is then colored in, with many students doing additional arabesque designs on their plate. In the center they place the sticker with their name in Arabic. These plates are later displayed in the hallway, and it is amazing how different each one is.

Before embarking on this one day adventure into Islam, the students have read and discussed the Calliope book, *Islam*. The combination of reading and hands-on experience gives our students a brief but intense insight into the Islamic world. With the exception of the visit to the Saudi embassy, this program could be done almost anywhere in the U.S. I rely heavily on parent support (they provide the breakfasts and snacks, and both the art and Arabic teachers are parents) and two of our local universities. This year one of our guests was a former student of mine who had spent several weeks in Saudi Arabia. A phone call to the Saudi, Indonesian, Egyptian or Turkish embassies will generate free posters. The Saudis give out several posters, including beautiful ones of Makkah and Madinah. I made the pillows for my classroom out of art department remnants. The day takes a great deal of planning,

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- To increase compassion for those who are forced to go hungry at times. Ramadan is the month when Muslims are encouraged to be more generous than usual, giving, according to their means, even more than what is obligatory. Charity is encouraged by sayings and actions of the Prophet such as reported in the Bukhari Hadith collection:

"Allah's Apostle was the most generous of all the people, and he used to reach the peak in generosity in the month of Ramadan ..."

OTHER ASPECTS OF RAMADAN AND HOW THEY CAN AFFECT YOUR MUSLIM STUDENTS

While most people know that Muslims fast during Ramadan, few are aware of how some other aspects of the month-long religious activity influence the lives of those who are observing the fast. If you have students who are fasting, the month of Ramadan can alter their lives in the following ways:

- Sleep patterns will change. One must rise early enough to eat a healthy breakfast before dawn and say the morning prayer before sunrise. This year, that requires waking up before 5:00 am.
- Energy levels will change due to the drop in food intake and new sleep patterns.
- Family obligations may take up more evening time. Relatives frequently gather at one home to break the fast together. For your student, this means less time to complete school work.
- There is a focus on spiritual matters both within the family and the larger Muslim community. Many families go to the local mosque for night prayers and Qur'anic recitation. Some families read the entire Qur'an together during the month of Ramadan, by reciting 1/30th of the Book per evening. Again, this means less time for sleep and homework.
- This year's fasting will end either on January 28 or 29, depending on the sighting of the moon. The 'Eid celebration following the fast is a time of special prayers and family gatherings.

Ramadan brings a sense of excitement and exhilaration as students anticipate spending more time with family and friends and learning to cope with the challenges and joys that this month brings to their lives. This is a time that instills a sense of renewal and delight as Muslims reflect upon their religious faith and

Alumni News

- * **Lucille Hansen** ('94): leave it to this Utah grandmother to do something unusual. Lucille has gone to China to teach English to college students. Soon after arrival, she started a chorus which now has 200 members made up of Chinese students and their faculty.
- * **Rebecca Hanson and Jackie Walker** (both '95) have served as Assistant Directors of the Dar al Islam Teachers Institutes. Jackie is also very busy with the Model Arab League.
- * **Eugene Earsom** ('96) is now State Coordinator for the Social Studies in the state of Oklahoma.
- * Institute alumni who have presented workshops on Islam include **Amanda McClure** ('95), **Patricia Anduss** ('96) and **Sandy Senior Dauer and Keith Dauer** ('96).
- * **Randall Datus** ('97) published "A Child's Guide to Muslim Prayer" to be used in classrooms in

Calendar of Events

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL MIDDLE EAST AND ISLAMIC STUDIES SEMINAR (MARCH, 1998)

Mary Washington College, VA
John Parcels
(PARCELS@gsvms2.cc.gasou.edu)

SUMMER OUTREACH WORKSHOP ON THE MIDDLE EAST FOR PRE-COLLEGIATE TEACHERS (JUNE, 1998)

Ohio State University, OH
Kim Schreiber (614) 688-4406

APPROACHES TO TEACHING THE MIDDLE EAST (SUMMER, 1998)

Georgetown University, DC
Zeina Seikaly (202) 687-6176

FULBRIGHT - HAYES STUDY TOUR OF TURKEY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS (JUNE 1 - JULY 5, 1998)

Tyler Junior College, TX
Manoucher Khosrowshahi (903) 510-2279

DAR AL ISLAM 1998 TEACHERS INSTITUTES (JULY 12-25 AND AUGUST 2-15)

Surfing the Web

DISCOVERING SITES TO VISIT IN THE CLASSROOM



If you want to help your students understand how Islamic philosophical and intellectual thought has woven its way into our lives, visit the web site *Muslim Scientists, Mathematicians and Astronomers Before the European Renaissance, 700-1500 CE* (<http://www.erols.com/zenithco/>). This is a treasure house of information on science, intellectual thought, and cultural ties between East and West. It's a great starting point for students who are researching characters for a banquet, a research paper or an oral report. Give yourself time if you look this site up — there are so many links to other sites that it becomes a labyrinth of exciting places to visit!

Looking for more information on Ramadan? Try the Council on Islamic Education's site *Ramadan Information for Teachers* (<http://www.islamicity.org/CIE/Ramadan.htm>). You can also order books from their home page (see p. 2).

The Middle East Outreach Council offers lots of helpful information on summer programs, teaching resources and conferences (<http://www.link.lanic.utexas.edu/menic/meoc/services.html>).

A Nile River Map, an Arabic Alphabet Poster, tee-shirts and children's books can be ordered from AMIDEAST at (<http://www.amideast.org>). For maps and country reports turn to the National Geographic Society at (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com>).

While you're at it, check out the new Dar al Islam web site; you may be in the photo! (<http://www.daralislam.org>).

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