

## ₹ THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 1997 TO NOVEMBER 1999

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#### **¾ MEMBERSHIP** №

The Muslim Women's Association is open to all Muslim Women. Membership Fees (which includes the subscription to *The Muslim Woman*) are: Annual UK £15 Overseas £20 Life membership UK £100 Overseas £120. Meetings of the Muslim Women's Association take place on the second Sunday of each month

#### **∄ ALL CORRESPONDENCE №**

should be sent to our address, THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATION, P.O.Box 6119, London sw20 oxc. Articles,
letters and other matter appearing in this publication do not
necessarily express the official views of the Executive
Committee of The Muslim Women's Association.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Sunday, 13th June, 1999, 4.00pm Islamic Cultural Centre, (*New Wing*) 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG. CIBEDO Guiollettstr. 35 Postfach 17 04 27 60078 Frankfurt/Main

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

### EDITORIAL.

Dear Readers—Assalamu Alaykum

Our President, Mrs Khanam Hassan, has informed us she no longer wishes to stand for re-election at the forthcoming AGM later this year. Mrs Hassan has been our President for the past 20 years or so. Her dedication to the MWA and Medina House is unrivalled. We are all indebted to her for the time, effort and money she has spent presiding over the affairs of our Association. We all owe her a big *thankyou*.

Now the question arises who will step into her shoes? Whoever it will be, will have a big task ahead. Perhaps this is a good time to remind ourselves of the goals of our Association. All our activities and fund-raising are for "the advancement of the education of Muslim women concerning good citizenship in a multi-racial society and the intellectual, artistic, economic and cultural background of the inhabitants of the UK, and to provide and maintain, or to assist in providing and maintaining a home or homes in the UK for Muslim children, who are in need of care."

Fund-raising is always the bogeyman hiding in the background. But, without the support of our sponsors Medina House could not operate. Their financial support is vital, but more sponsors are needed.

I remember reading somewhere that "friendship is having a privileged position in someone else's life and giving them a privileged position in one's own." I trust this understanding of friendship exists in the MWA and I hope it will continue.

## ISLAMIC ART IN BRITAIN

## Swadeka Ahsun\*

ISLAMIC ART AND CIVILISATION rest on the revealed word of Allah as recorded in the sacred text of the Qur'an and reproduced in the calligraphic characters of the Arabic Language. The forming of the letters and alphabet is held in special reverence by Muslims as it is intimately associated with Islam. The Calligraphers and Artists are initially honoured by reproducing from the Qur'an and then using the sacred graphic characters for other textual and decorative purposes.

With the actual Festival of Art in Britain, the work of aspiring and renowned artists are being exhibited all over England. The collection of the work of the artists range from calligraphy, letter form movements, fabric printing, geometry, photography, etc., and they normally display a fusion of traditional and contemporary influences in every domain.

As expressed in Art Conferences in London, 'Islamic Art is associated with the representing the beauty of Islam, in its highest form because it beautifies the word of Allah. Unlike the western approach, Islam distinguishes between good and bad, an art that is transcending and an art that is degrading. Islamic Art is both practical and beautiful. The beauty is the synthesis of what is inward and outward and this can be interpreted in a mental image or rendered in paper. This synthesis is unique to each individual and each artist has the opportunity to interpret the essence of his experience in an art work that is at once unique and adaptable. Islamic Art is indeed repetitious and repetitive, it reflects the style of the Qur'an because it reiterates one message.'

The contemporary artist has a tremendous responsibility today if he would like to make a contribution to the civilisation of Islam and the Islamic Art movement of this generation. Anyone who would like to be immersed on it would also have to look into different aspects of Islam as well as the history of civilisation and traditions.

With the Mutualities Britain and Islam Cultural Art events going on, one should try to reflect on the outcome of it. Can the British Society benefit from the heritage and contribution of Islamic Art in all spheres of public and private life. We have to bear in mind that British Muslims with their wide varieties of cultures have a lot to contribute to the country's artistic and intellectual life. The attitude towards the past heritage of Islam still remains predatory. Muslim textile design, jewellry, carpets, rugs and antiques are loved by almost everyone but unfortunately not the same love is levelled to our faith.

Islamic Art has a rich, well documented and accessible history which needs to be understood by everybody. Islamic Art can only be produced after first understanding and appreciating the Universal Message of Islam.

\* Swadeka Ahsun, an aspiring artist has been exhibiting her art work in London during the cultural events *Mutalities Britain and Islam*.



## EXTRACT FROM THE PROPHET

## by Khalil Gibran

 ${f A}^{
m nd}$  then a scholar said, Speak of Talking. And he answered, saying:

You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts;

And when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime.

And in much of your talking, thinking is half murdered.

For thought is a bird of space, that in a cage of words may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly.

There are those among you who seek the talkative through fear of being alone.

The silence of aloneness reveals to their eyes their naked selves and they would escape.

And thee are those who talk, and without know-ledge for forethought reveal a truth which they themselves do not understand.

And there are those who have the truth within them, but they tell it not in words.

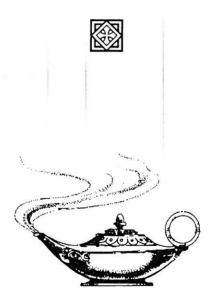
In the bosom of such as these the spirit dwells in rhythmic silence.

When you meet your friend on the roadside or in the market-place, let the spirit in you move your lips and direct your tongue.

Let the voice within your voice speak to the ear of his ear;

For his soul will keep the truth of your heart as the taste of the wine is remembered.

When the colour is forgotten and the vessel is no more.



## MOHAMMED—THE LAST PROPHET

by S. Youssef

WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE PROPHET of Islam from other messengers of God is the fact that he was sent for all humanity as he was declared to be the last of the Prophets. He was sent as a manifestation of God's mercy to mankind. His mercy was all embracing. God had commanded the Holy Prophet to shoulder the responsibility of conveying His Message to mankind and of leading them back to Him. The Holy Prophet's impact is not confined to the age in which he lived, nor to the people with whom he physically came into contact. For he had been sent with a code of guidance for the whole world and for all times to come. He therefore generated undying spiritual and moral forces in history and left indelible imprints of moral idealism and purity of character. The Prophet and his companions exemplified moral ideals in their practical conduct with such grace that these examples of dedications to higher and finer objectives of life have become perennial sources of spiritual inspiration for all mankind. The moral excellence of the early Islamic Society stemmed from the very nature of the prophetic mission which, in the words of the Holy Qur'an, was "... that men may stand forth in justice" (57:25).

The means by which the Holy Prophet brought about the moral regeneration of his Times was by awakening God-consciousness and intensifying it to the extent of making it the supreme factor in human life. The conviction that there is a God; who is aware of the apparent as well as the hidden, whose Sight penetrates even the darkest sides of the human brain, and to whom man is bound

to render a full account of his deeds, invigorated the conscience of the people to an extent nothing else could have done. The result was that the whole scale of values changed. Evil lost its glittering and righteousness assumed a fresh glamour. Consequently, the Holy Prophet succeeded in producing ideal human beings since a living belief in Allah enlightened the heart of every believer, and created an inexhaustible reservoir of inspiration for righteousness and virtue. It is on the solid rock of morally reformed and spiritually-orientated individuals that the Holy Prophet built up an ideal society. This moral and spiritual transformation of a whole society was the real miracle brought by the Holy Prophet. And it is this miracle which is the real measure of the Holy Prophet's greatness.

Dear Sisters. The life of the Holy Prophet is like a mirror for everyone to see and compare. The Holy Prophet set an example before us in spiritual as well as worldly life as he was a moral leader, an administrator, an army general, a trader, and arbiter, a father and a husband. He established examples in all walks of life, so that his follower are not handicapped for want of an example to follow. We should resolve to follow the examples of the Holy Prophet both in words and in action. May God give us the strength to fulfil this resolution. Amen.



## KITCHEN TALK

## Glacé Fruit Triem (Cake)

This RICH FRUIT CAKE is expensive to make and considered a luxury. It is generally served for special occasions like Eid ul-Fi<sup>+</sup>r.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

250 g mixed whole glacé fruit – pineapple, watermelon, figs.

250 g fruit cake mix

50 g glacé cherries

100 g walnuts, chopped

200 g butter

4 large eggs

750 g self-raising flour

250 g brown sugar

125 ml cream

60 ml sunflower oil

60 ml golden syrup

10 ml vanilla essence

10 g baking powder

5 g ground cinnamon

5 g salt

#### **METHOD**

Half cherries and add to fruit cake mix. Chop mixed glacé fruit. Sift flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon into a bowl and stir in nuts, cherries and fruit to coat well with flour. Cream sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating

well after each addition. Add oil and mix well. Stir in golden syrup and vanilla essence, then add flour mixture and cream and mix very well.

Grease and line a large, deep square cake tin and pour mixture into it. Bake at 180 degrees C for 45 minutes then reduce temperature to 160 degrees C and bake for a further 45 minutes. Test with a thin skewer; if it comes out clean the cake is done. Leave in switched-off oven for 15 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack to cool.

It makes one large loaf of cake.

Mahjubah, vol. 17, no. 12 (174), December 1998/January 1999.(edited)





## CONVOY OF MERCY— HUMANITARIAN AID

Registered Number: 1028734 Camp Project for Kosovar Refugees

UNHCR HAS SET UP TRANSIT CAMPS in Kukës, Shkodër and Tiranë from where the Kosovar refugees are moved to semi-permanent camps,

In Shkodër the sports centre houses some 1,400 to 2,000 refugees in the most squalid of conditions, a sea of humanity lying on the floor of the centre with no privacy for individual families. The UNHCR is clearly unable to put enough resources to care for the Muslim Kosovars in a dignified manner.

The tobacco factory which houses some 5,000 refugees was even worse, it was like stepping into the dark ages with refugees herded together in cramped conditions with no light, adequate washing facility or proper food.

The Montenegro border with Albania has seen a rising influx of refugees both Kosovars and Sandjak Muslims coming to Shkodër the nearest city, thus putting even more of a strain on the transit camps. These inadequate conditions for refugees are being repeated throughout Albania at Kukës, Tiranë, Durrës and Bilqisa, with UNHCR and other organisations trying to cope with nearly 5000,000 refugees.

Convoy of Mercy has identified a great need to support young, vulnerable families with small children in a well-run smaller camp housing and caring for some 200-300 refugees.

For information write to: Convoy of Mercy, Humanitarian Aid, London Office, 34 Squires Lane, London N3 2AT. Tel/Fax 0181 346 7334.



#### SAYINGS

The really fatal condition of men is to be bereft of hope.

Hugo Gryn, 1996.

for me home is above all the people I can trust and who trust me.

Hannah Walcher, from Braunwald (who fled France for Switzerland in 1940 with eleven children, leaving everything behind including pets.)

## AN APPEAL Madina House

## A MUSLIM HOME FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF CARE IN LONDON

Madina House is a Muslim home for children in need of care, established in 1981 under the auspices of the Muslim Women's Association (a registered charity which has been functioning since 1962)

From its inception the organisers worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Security and all other Social Services Agencies in order to comply with the current guidelines on the running of Children's Homes. Subsequently Madina House was registered by the Department of S.S.I. under the Child Care Act.

Aim—The main aim of Madina House is to provide an alternative home for children who for whatever reason, are temporarily unable to live with their parent/s. At Madina House we provide a stable, caring background, founded on Islamic principles and practices. Since its founding we have cared for over 400 children.

The present home does no longer comply with today's regulations and we have been asked to find more suitable accommodation. Thus, we are in desperate need of finance to buy an appropriate building. Failing to do so, the future of Madina House is in question.

Please help us by giving generously to continue to care for our children in need.

Donations, whether by Cheques or Banker's Orders would be greatly appreciated.

# AN APPEAL Madina House

"You shall not attain righteousness unless you spend on others of that which you love, and whatever you spend, verily God has knowledge of it."

The Qur'an 3:92

From					
Name					
Address					
Telephone					
I would like to ma	ke a donatio	on/Zakat	and enclose	e a cheque for	the amount of
£	payable t	o Muslim	Women's	Association 'A	ccount Madina
House'.					

#### To be send either to:

MWA, P.O.Box 6119, London SW20 oXG

#### or direct to:

The National Westminster Bank, Royal Garden Branch, Kensington High
Street, London W8 5EQ
Account Number 25941364; Sort Number 50-30-10

## JUNIORS' CORNER

#### The Sultan and the Pious Baker

Once upon a time there was a Sultan who liked occasionally to dress as a dervish or a poor man and, when the sun had gone down, to wander in the city and mingle unrecognised with his subjects. One evening, when he was walking thus through the bazaar, carrying his begging bowl, he happened to pass a baker's shop from which he heard coming sounds of fervent prayer. He stopped and looked in, and there he saw the baker, standing by his scales and repeating aloud: "What Allah has willed, so be it. Allah's will, be done." The Sultan was most impressed by the man's piety and said to himself: "Either this fellow is one of the most devout of my subjects and deserves to be honoured, or he is the worst dissembler I have ever encountered and should suffer. I will put his trust in Allah to the test.

The Sultan went up to the baker and said: "I need a loaf of bread but have no money with which to pay for it. Please give me the bread and take this ring as a pledge; it is worth 2,000 tumans." And so saying the Sultan removed a valuable ring from his finger and passed it to the baker, who handed him the bread and put the ring in the till.

The Sultan then returned to his palace and told his minister what he had done. "And now," said the Sultan, "I command you to get the ring back from the baker without the baker knowing and return it to me,"

On the following morning the minister went into the bazaar accompanied by two servants, announcing that he was a government official and had come to test all the traders' weights

and scales to ensure that the people were getting fair measure and were not being defrauded. The three men went from shop to shop carrying out their pretended mission until they arrived at the house of the pious baker. He respectfully made way for the so-called inspectors and allowed him to make the necessary tests. The minister then said: "The weights and scales in your shop are in order. Now I require to test the scales upon which you weigh the flour."

"Certainly," said the baker. "They are behind the shop in the bake-house," and he made to lead the way.

"Kindly bring them to me here," ordered the minister, and the baker departed.

No sooner had the baker turned his back than the minister opened the till and after searching rapidly among the coins which were there, he found the Sultan's ring. He quickly secreted this on his percel and the baker returned with his flour scales, quite unsuspecting.

Highly delighted with the easy success of his mission, the minister hurried back to the palace, and returned the ring to the Sultan, who replaced it upon his finger. The Sultan then dispatched one of his servants to bring the baker to him.

When the baker was brought before the Sultan, the ruler said: "Last evening, after sundown, I came to your shop disguised as a dervish and bought from you a loaf of bread, giving my ring to you as a pledge. Now here is the money for the bread. Please take it and return to me my ring."

"Your Majesty," said the poor bewildered baker, "it grieves me to tell you that the ring has vanished from my till." "Vanished!" cried the Sultan. "How could it vanish? Either you return my ring to me at once or pay me what it is worth. That ring, as you know, is worth a lot."

The baker in great distress, begged the Sultan to allow him a few days in which to search for the ring and make inquiries as to what could have happened to it.

"You shall have ten days in which to produce it," said the Sultan.
"But if my ring is not returned to me within ten days, you must either give me its value in money or face execution."

"So be it," said the unfortunate baker, and returned home. "What Allah has willed, so be it. Allah's will, will be done," he said, over and over again.

Now on the eighth day of the baker's respite, the Sultan happened to be out hunting. Ready for rest and refreshment, the Sultan reined in his horse by a stream and dismounted. He then knelt on the grass and plunged his hands into the cool water of the stream. As he did this, to his dismay his ring slipped from his finger and was carried away by the current. Farther down the stream a man was fishing and when he had got a good catch he closed his basket and made for the bazaar to sell his wares,

The baker, who by now was convinced that he faced certain execution at the hands of the Sultan, heard the fisherman calling his wares and said to his wife: "Come, let us cheer ourselves with a good meal. Here is a man selling fresh fish, just caught, let us eat and enjoy it.

The baker accordingly bought two large fish and handed them to his wife to cook for supper. She laid them on a board and cut them open to clean them and to her astonishment in the belly of the larger of the two fishes, she found a magnificent ring. In great

excitement she called her husband, who at once saw that it was the very ring which the Sultan had handed to him.

"Allah be praised!" cried the baker, and on the following day hastened to the palace and handed the ring to the Sultan.

The Sultan, when his eyes beheld the ring, so miraculously returned to him, was stricken with awe and wonder. He needed no further proof of the baker's sincerity than this astounding evidence of Allah's care for him and ordered that he should at once be clothed in a robe of honour.

In the time that followed, the baker, who had so impressed the Sultan with his piety, became one of the court favourites.

Mahjubah, vol. 18, no. 2 (176), April/May 1999.



# THE CASE OF A BIRD'S FLYING & FEEDING WITH A BIRD THAT IS NOT OF ITS OWN KIND.

Said a certain sage, "I saw a crow running about with a stork.

I marvelled long<sup>1</sup>, and I investigated their case, in order that I might find the clue as to what it was that they had in common2.

When, amazed and bewildered, I approached them, then indeed I saw that both of them were lame."

In particular, how should a royal falcon, which is of the highest heaven, consort with an owl, which is of the low earth?

That one is the sun of 'Illiyyun, while the other is a bat which belongs to Sijjin.

That one is a luminary, free from every defect, while this other one is a blind man begging at every door.

That one is a moon that strikes its beams upon the Pleiades, while this other one is a worm that cleaves to dung.

That one has the face of a Joseph, the breath of a Jesus, while this other one is a wolf or an ass with a bell.

That one has flown to Spacelessness, while this other one is in the straw-barn, like the dogs.

With the tongue of unspoken meaning the rose is saying to the beetle this \_ "O stinking creature,"

If thou art fleeing from the rose-bed, doubtless that aversion shown by thee is a sign of the perfection of the rose-garden.

My jealousy sense of dignity smites thee on the head with a

baton, warning thee to keep far away from her, O vile one;

For if, base wretch, thou sholdest mix with me, it will be thought that thou art of my stock.<sup>4</sup>

For nightingales the garden is he proper place; for the beetle the best home is in ordure."

Since God has keopt me pure from filth, how were it seemly to appoint a foul one for companionship with me?

I had in me a vein of them of their nature. He, God, cut it out: how then will he with the vein of evil attain unto me?

One mark of Adam from eternity was this, that the angels should lay their heads on the ground before him, because it was his place proper to his dignity.

Another mark was that Iblis, saying, "I am the king and chief," should not lay down his head before him.

But if Iblis too had become a worshipper of Adam, He, Adam, would not have been Adam: he would have been another.

At once the worship of every angle is the test5 of him, and the denial of him by that enemy Iblis is the proof of him.

At once the acknowledgment made by the angels is witness for him, and the disbelief of that petty cur, Iblis, is witness for him.

Mathnawi, Book 11, pp 330-31.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, " I remained in astonishment."

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "what was the common quantity."

<sup>3</sup> Literally, "with stinking armpits."

<sup>4</sup> Literally, "of my mine."

<sup>5</sup> Literally, "the balance in which he is weighed."

## **MWA BUSINESS**

#### **MINUTES**

The monthly MWA meeting was held on Sunday, 9th May, at the Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London, NW8 7RG.

The meeting started at 4.25 pm with a recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Souraya Yussef, Religious Adviser.

Apologies were received from Mr Allande (main speaker).

Saeda Sharif gave an account of her work with the Convoy of Mercy in Bosnia and Kosovo.

£600 was raised for the Kosovo fund by members – a cheque for this amount was sent to Yusuf Islam, who is helping Kosovo orphans of war.

£300 was sent to the Surti Orphanage in India – this was the 1999 sponsorship for Indian children.

Nine children are being sponsored by members in Lebanon. This sponsorship has been going on for the past twenty years. Two children are also being sponsored in Pakistan, along with two children in 'Palestine' (through Interpal).

Could members who are sponsoring these children and who have not yet paid, please send their sponsorship money as soon as possible.

Please note that there is going to be an interesting talk at the next meeting (13th June) by Layla El-Droubie on her charity walk to the Middle East in aid of Barnardo's and Kith and Kids. Remember to put this date in your diary.

The meeting, which was well attended, ended at 7pm with a Dua by Souraya Yussef.

Refreshments were served.

NB: Please make sure that you attend the June meeting as it is a very important meeting. We will be discussing the Bazaar after the talk.

Any donations for the Kosovo fund please send to Mrs Khanam Hassan, our President. Cheques should be payable to "MWA – Kosovo Fund".

#### ABSIT INVIDIA VERBO

(May it be said without giving offense)

It's never easy, come what may

To remind you that it's time to pay.

Your sponsorship will lapse and die

If donations wane. They aren't too high!

So please, dear member, come what may,

Why not post your cheque today?

Bankers' Order? Fine, that's great.

But are you sure its up-to-date?
A lapse will mean your donations are short
So check you're paying what you ought.
Some pounds are due each year,
So tell your Banker, loud and clear
To pay the MWA what it needs
To carry on with planting seeds
Of caring, friendship
And International comradeship.

Philoctetes (E.P., W's C.; adapted for the MWA)

## THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

As NO DOUBT OUR MANY readers know June 10th is polling day for the European elections. As Muslims we don't often get involved in the debate about Europe, but I would like to point out some concerns that effect us all.

First of all the closed list system is being used for the first time in these elections. We now can only vote for the party rather than the candidate. As everybody knows there is a difference between the Ken Clarkes and Norman Tebbitts of this world, and for the voter to be denied that choice is terribly un-British. There is now an in-built bias towards a political elite making it harder for minorities to get elected on their own merits.

Secondly, as continental politicians plan for greater integration there is an effort to forge a sense of European identity, most crudely executed by lots of flag waving and playing of the European National Anthem. As Muslim's we tend to be non-Caucasian and are a visible reminder of Britain's non-European heritage. A heritage that is being sidelined as European links are heavily promoted. With the new millennium approaching and the world getting increasingly smaller promoting this country's global links is surely the direction to go. Is navel gazing at Europe really an option?

Thirdly, in the European Parliament, one of the most influencial parties is the European People's Party—a Christian Democratic grouping to which many of our MEPs are affiliated. One should realise that the Christian Democratic parties take the Christian element rather seriously and this is one of the factors of Turkey's bad standing in Europe. Surely religious parties in a multi-ethnic and cultural society should be viewed with suspicion. If you bother to vote or not I hope I have given you something to ponder.

## The Muslim Women's Association (U.K.)

P. O. Box 6119, London SW20 OXG, Registered Charity No. 264608

Date:				
RENEWAL FOR MEMBERSHIP				
Dear,				
Your yearly MWA-Membership (which includes the subscription to "The Muslim Woman") will be/was due for renewal on				
We trust you have enjoyed the past meetings/functions and reading "The Muslim				
Woman". We look forward to your renewal of membership and request you kindly to pay the annual fee of £15.00 within the next thirty days (Life Membership £100.00).				
Please fill in the form below and send it together with your payment to our Membership				
Secretary. (Please ignore this form if you are a life member, or if you have already paid this				
pear's subscription). Thank you for your continuous support.				
MWA Membership Secretary, 63 Coombe Lane, London, sw20 OBD				
In order to renew my Membership of the Muslim Women's Association (U.K.) and the subscription to <b>The Muslim Woman</b> , 1 enclose a crossed cheque/postal order for $f$				
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⇒ Title (Miss, Ms., Mrs., other):Surname:				
Forename(s):Telephone:				
Address:				
Post Code:				
ignature: Date:				