

The **MUSLIM WOMAN**

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A monthly journal published by The Muslim Women's Association (Regd. Charity)

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FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 1997 TO
NOVEMBER 1999

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❧ 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 0XG. 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, 9th May, 1999, 4.00pm

Guest Speaker to be announced

Islamic Cultural Centre, (*New Wing*)

146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG.

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICIENT, THE MERCIFUL

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers

Assalamu Alaykum

We thank all those contributors who have helped us with articles, poems, and recipes during the past few months. Our hope is that more members would avail themselves of the opportunity to share with others their favourite story, news and views. Let this magazine be a platform for Muslim women's points of views and aspirations. If it leads to stimulation of thoughts and provokes discussions the better it will be. You may find yourself wanting to challenge or question the various points of view. Only through full participation can we grow spiritually and morally.

We are all bombarded, particularly through the media, with conflict of a global nature, within and between communities, at our work place and even in our homes. Let us explore the religious and moral interpretations of conflict and reconciliation. How do all these issues affect us? Let's hear what you have to say.

REMINDER

Will members and friends who support our sponsored children abroad kindly be reminded that their contributions are due now in April. Your continued help is greatly appreciated—thank you.



ISLAM, RELIGION OF FORGIVING, LOVE AND PEACE

The main essence of all true religions, from Zoroastrianism in ancient Persia, to Judaism, Christianity, and finally Islam, the most up-to-date set of rules revealed to mankind by our Creator, is true belief in Allah.

Yet, that is surely not the only common point shared among the monotheists.

According to the teachings of all true messengers of Allah, besides the high morals which are to be observed, the human beings are invited to be kind to the whole mankind, forgive if they wish to be forgiven in the Day of Judgement, and live in peace with the followers of all the other faiths.

These are the points stressed on in Islam, more than any other religion, and that is why the Muslims have always been the pioneers of peace and love throughout the history.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself, never started a war, but defended whenever necessary. He also never took revenge when he himself was insulted. A zealous Jew lived in the ally through which the Prophet (SAW) often passed to reach the Mosque. This man always threw ashes, as some historians reveal, or some dirtier stuff, as others have narrated, on the Prophet's head from the roof of his house.

One day when this did not happen, the Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW) went to this man's house and asked about the reason why he had not practised his everyday conduct. He found out that the Jew was sick in bed. The Holy Prophet (SAW) sat beside his bed

and prayed for man's fast recovery. This made the Jew extremely ashamed of his bad conduct to the extent that he soon became a good Muslim.

There are lots of instances of such high morals taught to mankind by Islamic leaders, like the way the Muslim leaders treated the Europeans during their few decades of reigning over a vast part of that continent, which caused many Europeans to convert to Islam despite the harsh, physical objection of the Church. If today the world media, under the hegemony of the Zionists, is portraying a harsh picture of Islam and the Muslims, and does not even fail to make these words synonymous with terrorism, militancy, bombings etc., it is surely not only the duty of all true Muslims, but all the monotheists' duty to annul these satanic efforts, because they are generating useless fear and hatred in a world that is thirsty for peace and tranquillity among all nations, and followers of all true religions.

MAHJUBAH Vol.15 No.7 (146) July 1996



JUNIORS' CORNER

THE HOLY PROPHET & KA'BA

One day (long time ago), when the Prophet (SAW) was only 30 year-old, the Quraysh decided to repair the Ka'ba. Because of floods and storms, the Ka'ba was damaged. All tribes were eager to have the honour of repairing the Ka'ba, and so each of them took on the task of repairing one part of the Ka'ba.

First, they took down the damaged parts, until only the pillars that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) had built were left. Then they started rebuilding it. Each tribe worked hard to make sure they built firm and strong walls for the Ka'ba. The weather was hot and dry, but the tribes worked on. When it was finished they gazed at their work proudly. They had done a good job. It was now time to put on the *Hajar al-Aswad* (The Black Stone) in its special place. But they could not all put it together. One of them would have to do it. Each tribe wanted the honour of doing that. Confusion arose as none could decide who would have the special task of placing The Black Stone.

The confusion turned into a harsh argument. The people were ready to fight in order to win the special honour. Nobody wanted to allow another to do the task. The Quraysh were known to fight long battles over small arguments, and many were afraid that the fight over The Black Stone could become just that; a long unnecessary battle.

Finally, one wise man came up with a solution: "I have a suggestion" he said. "Let us wait and see who will be the first man to enter the Mosque today. We shall tell him to decide, and

whatever he says – it will be accepted by all of us." Everyone agreed as it seemed a reasonable suggestion.

Now, they all turned towards the entrance (of the Mosque) to see who it would be who came first to the Mosque. Who would come along, but Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself. This event took place before the Prophet (SAW) announced his prophethood, but the people respected him for his honest and trustworthiness. "Here comes Al-Amin" shouted one of the Quraysh excitedly. "Yes! Let Muhammad decide," said another,

"We can trust him as we always have." They explained their problem to the Prophet (SAW). He told them not to worry as he would help them how to solve it.

The Prophet (SAW) said: "Get me a piece of cloth." They were surprised, but they did what they were told. The Prophet (SAW) spread out the cloth, and placed The Black Stone on it. Then he asked each of the leaders of the tribes to take a corner of the cloth and lift it up. When this was done, and the cloth was raised to the point where The Black Stone was to be placed, the Prophet himself took The Black Stone and put it in its place.

Mahjubah, Vol. 18 No. 1(175), February/March 1999

Try to answer the following question without reading the story again:

- 1) How old was the Prophet (SWA) when he solved the problem of re-building the Ka'ba?
- 2) What special task did each of the tribe want to do?
- 3) What title had the Quraysh given the Prophet (SWA) before he announced his Prophethood?
- 4) What was the Prophet's suggestion to solve the problem of the Quraysh?

KITCHEN TALK

Vegetable and Lentil Casserole

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp. coriander seeds
- 1 tsp. mustard seeds
- 25g fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 Onions
- 450g Carrots
- 350g Cauliflower
- 350g Salsify
- 200g Mushrooms
- 3 tbsp. Olive Oil
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1/4 tsp. turmeric
- 175g split red lentils
- 50g brown or green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 1 1/2 pints boiling water
- 2 tbsp. chopped coriander leaves
- Parsley sprigs

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180C/ 350F/ Gas Mark 4. Crush the cumin, coriander and mustard seeds together. Prepare the onions carrots and leeks by peeling and slicing them. Peel and chop the mooli. Halve the mushrooms. Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish. Add the onions carrots, leeks and mooli and fry for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly. Next, add the mushrooms, garlic, ginger and crushed spices; fry these for a further 2-3 minutes. Add the lentils and boiling water. Season with salt and

pepper and return to the boil. Cover and then cook in the oven for about 45 minutes or until all the ingredients are tender. Once cooked, stir in the coriander and serve piping hot.



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COLLEGE OF NORTH WEST LONDON

BRITAIN'S OLDEST MOSQUE

The Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking was the first mosque in Britain. It was built to cater for the needs of students attending the nearby Oriental Institute at Maybury. The mosque was designed by W.L. Chambers using Indian precedents and it opened in 1889.

When the institute closed in 1899, the Mosque closed with it and was not re-opened until 1912 when a Muslim Missionary set up a trust to finance its running.

Britain's first Muslim cemetery lies nearby on Horsell Common. Almost 1.3m Indians, the bulk of them Muslims, took part in the Great War, making up about a tenth of the British empire forces. Indian nationalism and western political correctness have relegated them to the sidelines of history, which has led to the cemetery not getting the attention it deserves as it was commissioned by The War Office in 1917.

If you are in the area, however, both sites are well worth a visit.



LETTER

15 March 1999

Dear Brother/Sister-in-Islam,

Assalamu alaikum

I pray to ALLAH Subhanahu wa 'Tha'ala that this letter will reach you in the best of your health and spirits. Please read the following points carefully:

I wish to convey my heartfelt congratulations to you and your family on this happy occasion and pray to ALLAH S.W.T. to bless the Muslim Ummah with Unity and strength to overcome contemporary challenges. I also pray for the safe journey for those who are going to perform Haj, Ameen.

MAFF legislation on halal slaughter of animals: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food have notified us about a new legislation which requires all religious slaughter to be carried out in licensed slaughterhouses by registered slaughtermen. Those who were doing Qurbani during Eid-ul-Adha in open-air should note this change. Experienced Muslim slaughtermen can apply for assessment of competence for a Regular or Provisional License. But our right to slaughter sheep, goat or cow according to the Islamic requirement i.e. without stunning is retained.

UMO Twenty-sixth Winter Conference: This Conference which was held in Nottingham University last month was successful, AlhamduliALLAH. A Press Release of this event is enclosed. You will note from the resolutions that we have a great opportunity for Da'wah in the twenty-first century. As you are aware, our Union has a project to construct a Da'wah Centre. I appeal for generous donations for this project.

UMO News Review: The third issue came out on time, Alhamdulillah. It was posted to you last month. We have some encouraging comments by prominent personalities who are impressed by our Union's efforts to project the true image of Islam as a religion of peace, tolerance, and justice. We are in need of urgent financial help for the next issue.

NMEC Conference on Muslim Teacher Recruitment: A Press Release of this event held last month was posted to you. It was very successful, Alhamdulillah. Please encourage Muslim graduates to become teachers.

Muslim Unity: For the past twenty nine-years, the UMO has been striving to promote Muslim Unity. It is the duty of all Muslims to help us.

Hijra and Ashoura Commemoration: This will be held on Saturday, 24 April 1999 at 6-00 p.m. at UMO Centre, InshaALLAH. You are invited with your family.

Yours brother-in-Islam,



Dr. Syed Aziz Pasha
General Secretary

MUSLIM PARENTS' GROUP IN BRENT

by Jasmine Ansari

In February a few mothers and fathers got together one evening in an informal environment to discuss the concerns they face as Muslim parents. All the parents agreed that they were concerned about the easy access to "drugs" in Schools - both Primary and Secondary. They also feared for the safety of their children out of doors.

Once children/teenagers are out of the home the street culture and peer influence is strong. Children choose their role models from the world of musicians, athletes or actors and actresses according to the dictates of fashion, which is followed "slavishly" by today's youth. They "enjoy" the same taste in dress, food and entertainment as their counterparts. For someone to be different would be inviting ridicule and - worst - "bullying" at school or on the street. Acceptance in society for our youth is important and in order to be part of the group they need to dress, speak and adopt attitudes that fit in with everybody else's.

Similarly, inside the home, the media plays a very important part in promoting and bringing fashion "icons" in to our bedrooms through television, films or newspapers and now the Internet! In some cases these super stars promote drugs and violence through their lifestyles and creative works of art and they are idolised and appreciated by millions of youth. Our children are being constantly bombarded by a permissive culture which is full of images of a materialistic world where God and religion play no part.

In the light of this situation, Muslim parents are despairing as there are times when they feel they are losing a grasp over their

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 make a donation/Zakat and enclose a cheque for the amount of £..... payable to Muslim Women's Association 'Account Madina House'.

To be send either to:

MWA, P.O.Box 6119, London SW20 0XG

or direct to:

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

children and they are not able to communicate with them. Our youth in turn feel that they cannot talk to their parents as they would never even remotely begin to understand their problems! These situations can create friction and unhappiness in families. Family units are the stabilising influence in a society and every means and effort should be made by the Muslim community to protect them from disintegrating.

Muslim parents can do much to improve the situation for their children. They need to be aware of their duties as Muslims and practice Islam in their daily lives so that they are a role model to their children. As parents we must avoid setting double standards. If we expect our children to pray, we must first incorporate "salat" in our own lives. If we are uncomfortable with the idea that our children are socialising late in the evenings then we must provide them with some alternatives. We could create community clubs where our children can play pool and relax as well as be in an Islamic atmosphere

At the Parent's meeting in Brent it was suggested that Parent Associations should be set up so that they can fund sports activities and social gatherings for their youth. We as Muslim parents are sitting on a time bomb and if we don't react quickly by providing resources for our youth we may lose them to the wave of drugs and crime, which is already a strife in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community.



MWA EID CELEBRATIONS: BEHIND THE SCENES

For many years the MWA has been organising Eid functions successfully. Behind the scenes however, a lot of preparation goes in to such events. A group of dedicated members work quietly behind the scenes with the help and support of Mrs. Hasan, the President, who ensures that everything runs smoothly on the day.

In February 1999, the Association organised a dinner in celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr. The preparation for dinner was planned weeks in advance by the committee members and a lot of thought was given to planning the menu and to sending out invitations to guests.

On the evening of the dinner, a group of volunteers arrived early to set the tables and decorate them with bowls of sweets and flowers arranged in vases. By 6 pm the seats in the dining hall were already being taken up by visitors and more tables were being set up. There were between 250-300 women and children attired in colourful clothes from all parts of the Muslim world sitting in expectation as the President, Mrs Hasan welcomed her guest speakers and the Imam and showed them to their seats.

In the style of MWA functions, the dinner was opened by the recitation of the Qur'an by the Imam of the Islamic Cultural Centre & Mosque, Regents Park. The recitation was followed by a few words by the President who took this occasion to thank everybody for their support and to announce that she would not be standing as President at the AGM later this year. The chief guest was the wife of the High Commissioner of Pakistan who spoke briefly on the importance of education particularly for Muslim women. Next the main guest speaker, Mrs. Saeeda

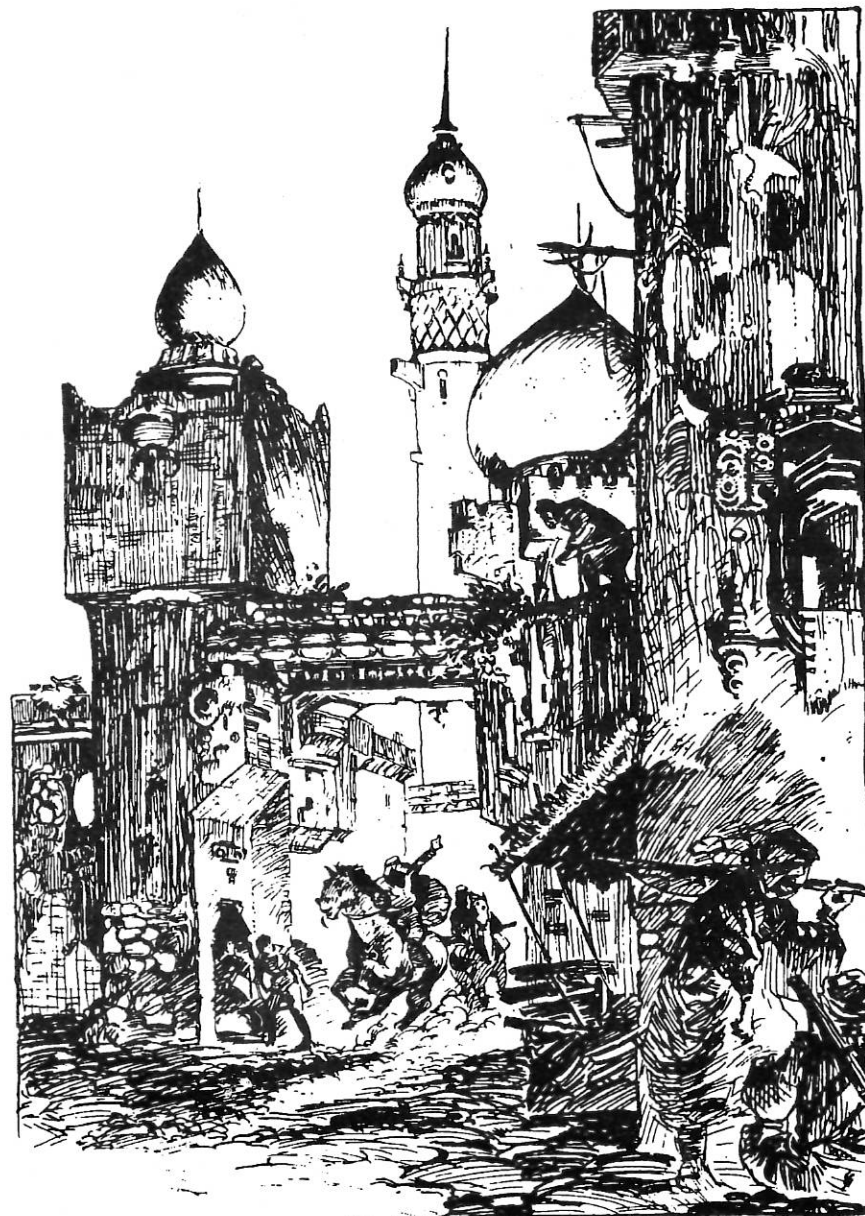
Sherif, spoke about her journey to Bosnia and her vivid encounters both with Muslims and non-Muslims. Finally, dinner was announced at 7 pm, and speakers were available to answer any questions put to them from the audience.

As we go in to the millennium we pray to Allah for the success of the MWA and that it continues to provide a venue for women and their families to meet socially. The MWA is aware of the problems that Muslim women face, both as single or as parents trying to raise a family in Britain. Muslim women need to be educated, especially in social skills in order that we can progress and make a positive impact in the society we live in.

* * *

Mrs Khanam Hassan, President of the MWA, thanks all the committee members and their families for working so hard to make the Annual Eid Dinner a successful and happy occasion.

The President would also like to thank all the members, their families and friends for offering condolences (in person or by letter) on the death of her brother. She is really touched by this kindness: may Allah Almighty bless you.



MY JOURNEY TO BOSNIA

by Saeeda Sherif

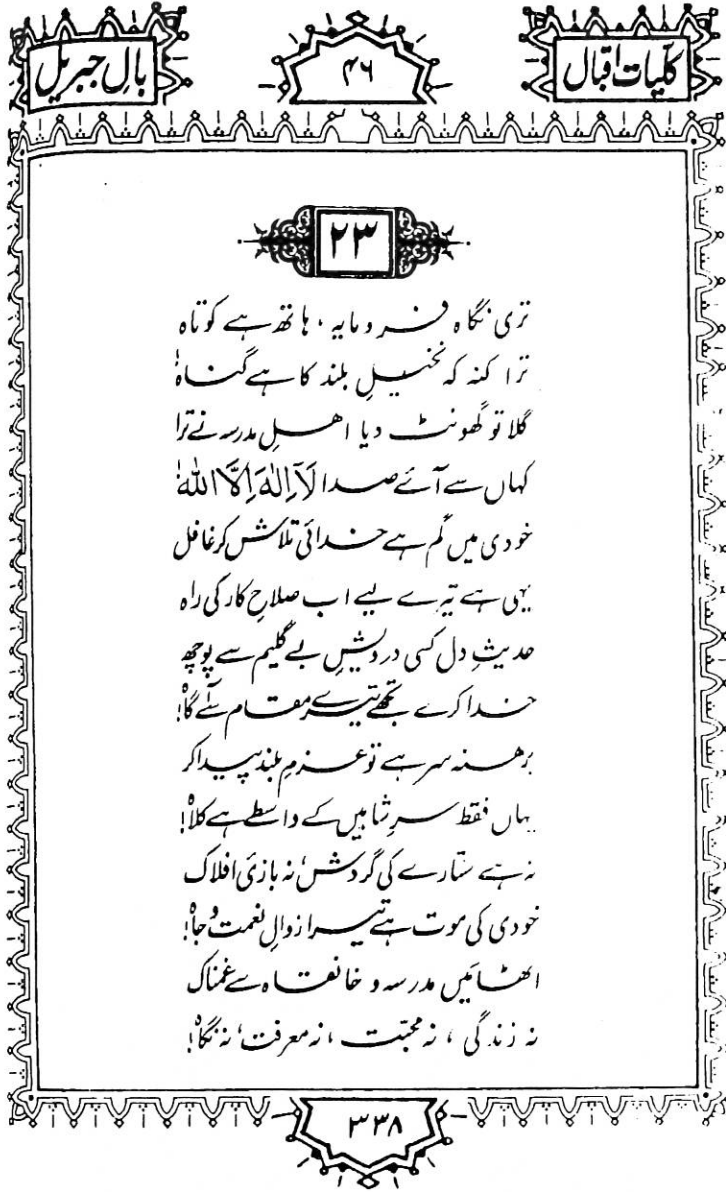
I became involved in Bosnia through a charitable organisation called "Convoy of Mercy". I was already distressed by the International News that was being televised from Sarajevo about the atrocities that were being committed against Muslims such as, the bombing of hospitals and destruction of coaches full of orphan children fleeing from the war. My "inner voice" prompted me to take some action as I could not just sit in front of the television and watch these scenes of violence every day!

Hence, I gave my resignation from my teaching post in Greenhill College, London in December 1993 and joined this volunteer group. My first experience of setting eyes on Bosnia has always been the same and it has never changed after so many years. This region is surrounded by mountains and lakes and the scenery is breathtaking. The people of Bosnia are gentle and kind hearted and I have always felt welcomed here.

The people of Bosnia have undergone grief and tragedies beyond our comprehension. One in every three families have lost their kin. They have experienced torture and concentration camps. Their daughters were raped and brutalised by Serbian soldiers. Their mosques and libraries were bombed. Bosnians avoided desecrating Churches on the other hand and even during the war some Serbs and Croats continued to live in Muslim areas. As Muslims, Allah sends us trials and tribulations to awaken us and to reinforce our faith. In Bosnia there has been an awakening of Islam and the young generation especially are eager to learn about Islam.

I have found deep satisfaction in being able to work with a people who have suffered devastating losses in all walks of life. I have learnt to listen to my "inner voice" which we all possess within us, and which guided me to this part of the world.





TREK ARABIA

One of our members has recently returned from trekking in Jordan in aid of Barnardos and Kith & Kids. Each participant had to raise a minimum of £2000 for children and young people with disabilities.

The adventure started in Damascus (Syria) by boarding an old steam train on the Hedjaz Railway. The journey took the entire day to reach Amman (Jordan) where we were greeted by the Minister of Tourism and a Television Film Crew. After a good night's sleep the 4-day trek to Aqaba began. We trekked through the formidable and awesome canyon of Zarka Ma'in, scrambled up a gorge, through rugged and sometimes arduous terrain, and through Wadi Rum (in the footsteps of Lawrence of Arabia)—the most spectacular desert scenery to be found anywhere.

Incredible, absolutely brilliant!

What may be of interest to MWA members is that many Muslim children and their families get help from Barnardos. Equally, this fund-raising trek was supported by a few Muslims.



THE HIJAZ RAILWAYS

After the battle of Marj Dabiq in 1516 AD, Jordan became part of the Ottoman Empire. The Turks protected the old pilgrims routes, and built castles along the way, e.g., at Qatranah and Ma'an. At the turn of this century, Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909 AD) had a vision. He wanted to make it easier for Muslims to visit the holy cities of Madina and Makkah. In 1900 he launched a project, called the Hijaz Railways – a rail link between Istanbul, the seat of the caliphate, and Makkah. By 1908 the stretch from Damascus to Madina, built by Heinrich Meissner, was completed.

Heinrich Meissner later directed the operations of the Baghdad line—Berlin to Baghdad. This enterprise was largely financed by the French-controlled Imperial Ottoman Bank, undertaken by German engineers and using German-made tracks, engines and rolling stock.

The *Young Turks* who had deposed the Sultan in 1909 took Ottoman Turkey into the First World War in support of Germany. This in turn led Britain (and France) to instigate the Arab revolt against the Turks. Sharif Husain's (of Makkah) Bedouins, under the guidance of Lawrence of Arabia, fought the Turks and destroyed the Hijaz Railways.

Today one can take a train ride on the Hijaz Railways but only from Damascus to Jiza, south of Amman. It takes about 10 to 12 hours and the service runs once a week. The fare is \$3. Beware! Don't expect any comfort. The train is old. At the station in Damascus we saw a Swiss-made engine dated 1894; older than the actual Hijaz Railways. By the way, the first steam engine was built in 1825 by Stephenson in England.

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

P. O. Box 6119, London SW20 0XG, 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 year's subscription*). **Thank you for your continuous support.**

✉ MWA Membership Secretary, 63 Coombe Lane, London, SW20 0BD

In order to renew my Membership of the Muslim Women's Association (U.K.) and the subscription to **The Muslim Woman**, I enclose a crossed cheque/postal order for £ payable to the "Muslim Women's Association (UK)".

☞ Title (Miss, Ms., Mrs., other):Surname:

Forename(s):Telephone:

Address:

.....

.....

.....Post Code:

Signature:Date:

THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
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