

SBIA MEDIA COMMITTEE

MEDIA AND ISLAM

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ONE GOD, WHY NOT ONE PEOPLE?

YAHSMIN M. B. BOBO

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Kind

"The believers are but a single brotherhood."

(Qur'an 49: 10)

When I conjure thoughts of Muslim Unity, I think back to the earliest days in the establishment of Islam. I envision our blessed Nabi, peace be upon him, his family and companions, may Allah be pleased with them. I ponder the persecution, alienation, and hardship they endured during their difficult stay in Mecca and during both migrations first to Abyssinia and later to Medina. Their unity and support of one another was inescapable and indeed, crucial in their survival. This is the

greatest reflection of *sacrifice and dedication* I learned of, and one that has remained unmatched since.

Today, as Muslims, we take these same sentiments for granted and uncaringly concentrate on our petty differences more than focusing on the precious similarities. Why is this? Have we forgotten the essence of Islam- our unity and cooperation? The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) once said, "A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other," while he clasped his hands and interlaced his fingers. Imagine that we are a building, whose structure is dependent on cooperation, tolerance and love for the sake of

Allah. If that were so, we'd need a lot more of these characteristics to stand upright.

The first step in a better direction is to embrace our differences and try to understand the nature of our misunderstandings and sometimes even intolerance. This requires active and ongoing communication between the conflicting groups of Believers. Usually, our misunderstandings come from culture, language, and financial backgrounds. While Islamically speaking, our spiritual studies based on Madhab or Fiqh often cause division among the most sincere servants of Allah, sometimes the media and its misinformation campaign have not only affected

the perception of Islam altogether, but have created dissension among the Muslims by affixing sectarian labels and racially compartmentalizing the Ummah. Granted, some of this may be necessary to mention, however the danger lies in our acceptance of their perception and reliance on the mainstream media as our only means of information.

When all is said and done, most of these things are relatively superficial and have very little importance in the broader picture. Remember that, on the Day of Reckon

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MEDIA REVIEW—ISLAM AND PODCASTING

BUSHRA BURNEY

A relatively new type of media has slowly making itself mainstream: podcasting, which is a form of audio broadcasting. It has gained importance with iTunes, which lets the public download podcasts for free. While there are many professional organizations who make recordings avail-

able, anyone can also utilize this form of media. You don't even need an iPod.

I searched for 'Islam' on iTunes to see what was available. Caveat: because anyone can submit a podcast for distribution through iTunes, a person needs to be aware that all points of views and opinions are ex-

pressed, even when browsing through the podcasts under 'Islam'. A person submitting a podcast may be more concerned with forwarding their agenda rather than inform the public objectively.

One such Islamic podcast I downloaded was from

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 09/02— Family Night at SBIA with 3 mayoral candidates of San Jose
- 9/18 Media Committee presentation at Islamic Center of Zahra
- 09/25—Muslim Unity Day at Great America

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800 GUESTS ATTEND FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT NEEDY

ATHAR SIDDIQEE

The Santa Clara Marriott was the venue for the Human Development Foundation's (HDF) 2nd Annual Silicon Valley Benefit Dinner, held on Saturday, July 16 in front of a packed crowd of 800 attendees. HDF is a non-governmental organization (NGO) which aims to assist the disenfranchised in Pakistan by helping them to help themselves, through education, literacy, infrastructure improvements, and micro-loan based business creation projects. The event itself was a celebration of the humanitarian work that HDF has accomplished since its inception in 1997, and featured a good mix of brief motivational speeches, a moving video, entertainment, and a fund raiser. Pakistani Cricket legend Imran Khan was the Keynote speaker and he was certainly a popular choice, as evidenced by the numerous photograph and autograph requests that were solicited from him throughout the course of the evening. Mr. Khan spoke eloquently and candidly about the challenges facing his country, from poverty to illiteracy to corruption. Following his talk, Mr. Khan answered audience questions along with his panelist, Dr. Khalid Riaz, the co-Chairperson of HDF

and one of its founders. Dr. Riaz provided an overview of HDF and explained what its vision and strategy was for the coming years.

Another highlight of the evening was Greg Mortenson, Executive Director of the Central Asia Institute, who recounted his own personal journey from climbing K2 to recuperating in a village at the mountain's base to deciding to devote his future to improving the lives of the very poor residents of the areas surrounding Pakistan's world-renowned peaks. This story of a non-Muslim, non-Pakistani who, in the past 12 years, has helped create 48 schools serving 2000 children in some of the most down-trodden areas of Pakistan, left the crowd amazed and heart warmed.

Next, a brief video was shown which outlined some of the work HDF has accomplished and included some of its success stories. This short film, entitled 'Progress For Peace', was noteworthy for the fact that it was produced not by either HDF or a Pakistani-affiliated firm, but rather an independent production company called Visionaries (www.visionaries.org), which is airing the program on PBS outlets throughout the United States. The video

brought to life many of the residents who are benefiting from HDF's work, and provided a glimpse into how those efforts have translated into real-life successes.

The video was followed by a fundraising session in which the evening's goal was, Alhamdulillah, achieved. The Silicon Valley Coordinator for HDF, Mr. Javed Khan, remarked: "Tonight's event was a resounding success in that we were able to attract a huge audience, generate a great deal of awareness about HDF, and attain our fundraising goal. Insha-Allah, this will enable HDF to continue its work toward the betterment of Pakistan and humanity overall."

The evening concluded with yet another treat, a two-hour performance by ghazal

singer Habib Wali Muhammed and his group. As usual, the world-renowned singer thrilled the crowd with his choice of songs as well as his vocal range, and showed that he is still capable of an incredible performance at his tender age of 79. All in all, the program was a most enjoyable evening and all who attended felt it was one of the most inspiring, informative, and entertaining programs in memory, which the organizers hope translates to greater exposure and support of HDF going forward.

For more information or to contribute to the Human Development Foundation, contact HDF at (866)762-5806 or WWW.HDF.COM



ONE GOD, WHY NOT ONE PEOPLE?

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ing, we will not be called to account for the superficialities of speech, money, or intellect. Rather, what we will be called to account for is how we used that language to speak kindly to one another, how much of our wealth was used in charitable means, and whether or not we actually implemented our studies of Islam into our character and daily interactions.

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” (Q: 49.013)

Undoubtedly, we believe that Allah is One (Tawhid). With the same theme of oneness and unity, we should consider ourselves in the same light. We are one people, in spite of our countries of origin, the many different languages we speak, the hues of our skin and the Masjid of which we attend. Our Shahadah, Salat, and Sawm are the same. Zakat is the same and finally, our Hajj is performed with the likeness of every other Believer in the Ummah. And this is what the focus must remain on. This is the personal sacrifice and the dedication that we must aim to demonstrate, as the blessed Sahabah once did.

There is a story about when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) contemplated the

disunity that persisted, so he called for Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) and asked him, "Why should this *Ummah* be tormented by disagreement when it has the same Prophet, the same *qiblah* and the same book?" Ibn Abbas answered, "The Qur'an was revealed and we read it and comprehended the reasons for its revelation. But there will come people who will read the Qur'an and fail to understand the occasions and subjects of revelation. As a result they will make different interpretations and will, therefore, disagree." Ibn Abbas added, "Every group of people will have an opinion about the Qur'an, which will lead to disagreement, and then to fighting." (Source: "Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism" Yusuf Al-Qaradawi)

Obviously any such fighting

should be avoided at all costs and there are certainly preventative measures within reach. This invaluable wisdom from the Qur'an is our preventative medicine for any such ills that the Muslim community falls prey to.

The second step is enjoying the company of others with every opportunity that Allah provides. When Malcolm X performed his Hajj, he marveled at the diversity and beauty of the Muslims, feeling as though he belonged to something much greater than the nationalism he left behind in the United States. We should marvel in this too and be proud that Allah gave us one another to learn from. Although we all share the personal goal of performing Hajj, we ought to reap the benefits of this harmony in other settings as well. *Salatul Ju'maa*, the two

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PODCASTING

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AltMuslim.com, an Islamic site that describes itself as "an interactive news and discussion forum that helps promote a critical (and self-critical) analysis of issues regarding the Muslim community." Now podcasting on a regular basis, the site is up to their 5th cast by editors Shahed Amanullah and Zahed Amunallah. Their podcasts range in topics: from Britain's anti-terror legislation (audio cast #4) to discussing the Muslim voice in the media (audio cast #5). Already a website filled with a wealth of interesting articles, AltMuslim has composed podcasts that further enlighten. As evidence to the reach of this form of media, the editors mentioned in their 4th podcast that they have received many comments and emails regarding their podcasts, many from non-Muslims who have learned a lot from AltMuslim's casts. Another podcast under Islam that I listened to titled 'Ali's America' dealt with the person's family and football rather than religion. Although, I hadn't considered this one seriously from the beginning since the political commentator producing these casts is the founder for "Muslims for Bush."

These two podcasts represent the different kinds of Islamic podcasts the public can listen to: AltMuslim informs the listener about events and ideas pertaining to Islam while Ali's America. . . not so much. While podcasting is still in its early stage, there is much potential. For instance, there are a few hundred organizations/people who produce podcasts under 'Christianity.' As of now, there are only a handful of regular Islamic podcasts available. Because many are embracing podcasting, Muslims have the ability to further reach out and teach the public about the truth of Islam through this particular form of media.

BEWARE OF THE MEDIA LANGUAGE

ONE GOD

IMAM BILAL IBNMUHAMMAD
Bismе-Allah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem

Assalaamu-Alaykum

When we look at nature, we learn of Allah’s natural order of things (swt), which is the order of Al-Islam. Let’s take the **Human Family**. In English the denotation of the word **family** refers to those who are **familiar** with one another beginning with the wife and the husband and their children; and of course their **family** extensions – Parents, Uncles, Aunts and Cousins, etc.

Notice Our Language

In Al-Islam the **Human Family** is the **Muslim Family** or the **Family of the Righteous**, not the **self-righteous**, that would be an individual, not a **family**.

In the circle of Al-Islam, Allah (swt), has ordained the Muslim family’s business (purpose, duties, etc). The mother is the first comforter, nurse, and teacher for the children. She also **familiarizes** the children in a good way about their father.

The duties of the father initially include providing a stable home environment for the new mother and baby. After children reach a given maturity, the father’s duties include advancing the children **further** in their social development, adding the **man** factor into the equation. The parents are to be honored by the children and the children are to be honored by the parents. This is the **family-business, family planning** as is ordained by Allah (swt).

The Media’s Family

In this non-Islamic country, the **biggest business failure** of all to date, is the failure of the **Human-Family**. In the psychology of today’s language, **family-planning** has the opposite meaning of Allah’s natural order and **family-roles** are re-defined, taking the society into deeper perversion.

Conclusion: In an un-Islamic country, the **Muslim Home**, in order to protect the **family** must serve as an **Islamic Embassy** and we must all begin to serve as **good-will Ambassadors** to those in other walks of life.

Jazakumullah Khair

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‘Eid celebrations and Iftaar during the month of Ramadhan are all merriments, however, let’s take it above and beyond obligation and seek to incorporate Muslim unity into ordinary events and activities.

I know that I’m not alone in wanting to look around and see my brothers and sisters in faith enjoying the similarities that we share and feeling that strong sense of camaraderie. And now, Insha’Allah, the Bay Area Muslim community is being awarded that perfect opportunity for the Muslim Unity Day at Paramount’s Great America on Sunday September 25th from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Let’s pray that we all walk away that evening, after a fun filled day, with the dedication it takes to sustain a community as large and blessed as ours.

For any questions, please visit <http://www.muslimunity.us>

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"Muslim Unity Day"



Paramount's Great America
Santa Clara, CA
Sunday September 25th, 2005
10:00am to 6:00pm

Discounted Tickets are \$30.00
(Includes Park Admission, Halal Lunch, Entertainment Program)
For More Information: www.MuslimUnity.us
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