

MY VOICE

MAGAZINE

your voice matters

DIS-CRIMINATION

IDENTITY

GAZA CRISIS

EXAM WORRIES

GANG LIFE

MYMAG MEETS....
MECCA2MEDINA
MY Voice Interviews UK
pioneers of Muslim rap>

JUST ASK RABIA!
MY Voice's own in-house
agony aunt>





MY VOICE

Editors Note

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AVAN ALI

For many young Muslims living in the west, in countries such as the UK, the issue of identity has been a subject under much discussion. Some of us feel ashamed identifying ourselves as Muslims, due to the new stream of Islamophobia. Others do not really know the religion which they claim to belong to, and for many, we seem to be in a state of confusion, as to how to live a life being a good Muslim, as well as a good British citizen, whilst fighting the urges of temptations brought by teenage hood.

For many of us at the MY Voice project, it has served as a spring board for us; to express our identity as young British Muslims in new innovative ways. We learned we could voice our opinions and make changes by continuing to persist and integrate with the rest of the community, even though most of the time changes were slow. From meeting professional Muslim boxers, human rights activists, and politicians, to appearing in a channel 4 dispatches documentary (our only opportunity to fame!!!). As young Muslims, much like other young people, we believe that we can make a vivid future for ourselves.

Many of us at the MY Voice project felt it served as a guide to the great journey ahead of us as young Muslims. We dreaded meeting on Saturday mornings every fortnights, while the rest of our families laid gloriously in bed, yet at the same time, a sense of excitement and elation overcame this feeling. We gave up our weekends to take part in the workshops, and as usual we were rewarded with paninis.

For this we would like to thank all those who have worked and still work with MY Voice project. First and foremost, we would like to thank Brother Fuad, for continuously pestering us (with endless meetings) to compile this magazine together. Thanks to him we were able to make the first edition of the MY Voice magazine. In addition to this we would also like to thank Brother Suhel, Sister Yasmin and Sister Sana, and for all of those who worked with the MY Voice project. Above all, I would like to show gratitude to the MY Voice participants, whose perseverance and hard work brought the production of this magazine. May Allah reward you all with abundance. Ameen.

Now relax and enjoy the first edition of MY Voice magazine, and release the Voice within you.

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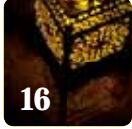
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GAZA: An Underground Passage to Protest

As I sit on the Underground Tube, I wait patiently for my stop. I look to my left: 'Lloyds pays \$350m to end US case', I look to my right: a young woman is applying mascara, lips pursed. Then I sigh and look down at myself, armed with a thick pair of gloves, boots and a coat. Another woman looks over her newspaper at me and stares unwaveringly. Perplexed, I begin to think what the focus of her interest may be... Then I remember. A black, green and white flag with a red triangle is painted on my cheek, a Palestinian scarf around my neck reads: 'Al quds a len-eh, Yaa quds ana qadimoon.'

I remembered reading about Gaza in the past, and all the conflict with Israel. The name Palestine (Philistine) means 'the land of wanderers' or 'of strangers'. This land is accustomed to witnessing bloodshed and turmoil, serving as a battlefield during the First World War, running right up until the present day. The most recent conflict we have witnessed started when Israel launched a military campaign in the Gaza Strip on the 27th December 2008. The aim of this campaign was to stop Hamas (Gaza's democratically elected ruling party) to stop attacking southern Israel. However, people are beginning to contemplate who is to blame for the conflict.

Hamas and the Israeli forces agreed to a truce, which expired on 19th December 2008, and the agreements on the renewal of the truce drew little consensus between both sides. Both Israel and Hamas breached the agreements, however Israel felt it was necessary to launch a full-fledged attack on the small nation. This began with an intense air-raid, which saw Israel bombing much of the Gaza strip, including mosques, houses, medical facilities and schools. When challenged about these blatantly wanton attacks, Israel stated that these buildings 'were occupied by combatants'.



It was extremely moving to see people of all ages, all races and religions, culminating for a common cause: humanity.

Whilst we, in Britain, welcomed the New Year with fireworks and celebration, the people of Gaza looked to the bombs exploding in the sky, and welcomed 2009 with prayers of salvation. As any nation under siege, Hamas began to fight back in retaliation. However, on 3rd January 2009, the Israeli ground invasion began. This advance was the main stimulus which triggered a series of international reactions, including calls for an immediate ceasefire from the United Nations. Another problem that people were extremely angered about was the blockade of aid being delivered to Gaza.

People all over the world were

outraged at the callous violation of human rights for these people, being deprived of basic amenities during this time of war. London, in particular, held many demonstrations against the Israeli forces. On the 3rd January 2009, the first National demonstration was held in central London and boasted tens of thousands of protestors in its crowds. However, the really impressive turnout followed a week later, with numbers reaching hundreds of thousands of protestors, ranging from young children to elderly couples.

It was extremely moving to see people of all ages, all races and religions culminating for a common cause: humanity. The facts and figures were clear: there were casualties on both sides of the war.

On the 18th January 2009, Hamas and Israel finally agreed a ceasefire, which resulted in the withdrawal of the Israeli troops. The people of Israel and Palestine will undoubtedly lift their hands in prayer in an attempt to sustain this newfound peace.

As I contemplated the journey I was about to take, after stepping onto the platform, thousands of protestors would be joining me. I walked out onto the street and smiled as I saw the solidarity and compassion these people displayed for strangers living thousands of miles away. I looked at the scarf around my neck: 'Jerusalem is ours, Oh Jerusalem, we are coming.'

ANEESA CHAUDRI

GAZA: What Can I do?

that allows you to increase the value of your donation by 28% at no extra cost to you. So, for every £10 you donate, the charity is able to claim back £2.82, making your donation worth £12.82. The Muslim Hands website covers the topic well on their frequently asked questions pages (www.muslimhands.org).

3) Participate in public protests for Gaza support

Some of you may think it's a waste of time, but by doing such protests, you are demonstrating your anger peacefully. It's also a good place to see that many non-Muslims are also in protest with you and that the opinion of others will shift to that against the injustice as seen in Gaza. You can even sign up to online protests on facebook.

4) Think of Tomorrow

Don't forget tomorrow is just around the corner. Set yourself an ambition of becoming a professional who can do more in a situation like Gaza. This can be aiming to become a doctor, a nurse, an HGV driver, a politician, a civil engineer and so on. By being skilled in specialist areas, you can do more, not just for your own life here in the UK, but also for overseas where other humanitarian crises can occur and need specialists for rebuilding communities.

5) Make Dua

It is one of the least things we can physically do and make time for. Make a sincere dua to Allah that humanitarian injustice is removed from the Earth and that peace can prevail. We must have faith in Allah that He will answer a sincere prayer. Our Beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said in one hadith:

“the muslim ummah is like one body. if the eye is in pain then the whole body is in pain and if the head is in pain then the whole body is in pain”

Remember, it is normal to feel hurt by such events and this hadith gives us an analogy. But you must also be patient and self controlled in your response and be upright British citizens, setting a positive example for those around you.

ABDULLAH YUSEF

Muslims and non-Muslims the world over have felt the pain that the people of Gaza are going through. In spite of this, we must remain restrained, yet vocal in our response to the current crisis in how we respond to the situation. Here are 5 things you can do.

1) Be Creative

Get a group of yourselves together and organise a fundraiser. You can do things like hold a cake sale, hold a henna stall, have a games console tournament or even collect unused goods from your estate and sell them on ebay!

2) Get the Most out of your Money

One important and overlooked aspect of raising money for charity is that you can claim Gift Aid on this. The best way to do this is to channel raised funds into a single bank account, e.g. one of your parents. When they proceed to make a donation, either via cheque with the slip, debit card online or on telephone, make sure they select or declare Gift Aid Declaration. Remember, to declare this, the person making the donation must be a UK Tax payer. Gift Aid is a government scheme

Spare Some Change?

A young man, a student in one of the universities, was one day taking a walk with a Professor, who was commonly called the student's friend, from his kindness to those who waited on his instructions.

As they went along, they saw lying in the path a pair of old shoes, which they assumed to belong to a poor man who was employed in a field close by, and who had nearly finished his day's work.

The student turned to the professor, saying: "Let us play the man a trick: we will hide his shoes, and conceal ourselves behind those bushes, and wait to see his perplexity when he cannot find them."

"My young friend," answered the professor, "we should never amuse ourselves at the expense of the poor. But you are rich, and may give yourself a much greater pleasure by means of this poor man. Put a coin in each shoe, and then we will hide ourselves and watch how this affects him."

The student did so and they both placed themselves behind the bushes close by. The poor man soon finished his work, and came across the field to the path where he had left his coat and shoes.

While putting on his coat he slipped his foot into one of his shoes, but feeling something hard, he stooped down to feel what it was, and found the coin. Astonishment and wonder were seen upon his countenance. He gazed upon the coin, turned it around, and looked at it again and again.

He then looked around him on all sides, but no person was to be seen. He now put the money into his pocket, and proceeded to put on the other shoe; but his surprise was doubled on finding the other coin.

His feelings overcame him; he fell upon his knees, looked up to the heavens and uttered aloud a fervent thanksgiving in which he spoke of his wife who was sick and helpless, and his children without bread, whom this timely bounty, from some unknown hand, would save from perishing.

The student stood there deeply affected, and his eyes filled with tears. "Now," said the professor, are you not much better pleased than if you had played your intended trick?"

The youth replied, "You have taught me a lesson which I will never forget. I feel now the truth of these words, which I never understood before: "It's more blessed to give than to receive."

Abdullah bin Abbas (radi Allahu anhu) reported that the Prophet (sallAllahu alaihi wassallam) said that encouraging good, prohibiting evil, lifting the burden of the weak person and removing an offensive thing from a path are all acceptable prayers to Allah.



STOP &
SEARCH >>

Know Your Statistics

Counter-terrorism efforts by police include the use of Section 44, which permits police the use of stop and search against anyone in any area, on grounds of suspicion of terrorism. This police power is part of the Terrorism Act 2000. Prior to this, police could only stop individuals on the basis of reasonable suspicion of criminal activity, and provided certain criteria where met. With section 44, such criteria are no longer necessary, due to the urgency of the counter-terrorism efforts which section 44 is supposedly for.

Reports have indicated that terrorism acts have increased dramatically over the past year, up 3 times as much, peaking at 124,687 stops. Most of the searches have been done by London Metropolitan Police, which leapt after the attempted bombings of West End London. Regular stop and search frequency also increased for the fourth successive time in a row, reaching over 1 million. Again, like the Section 44 stop and searches, most of the ordinary stop and searches where carried out in London. Given that

90% of section 44 stops where in London alone and most ordinary stops where also in London, let's assume 90% of these stops where undertaken in the capital. With a population of 7.5 million, that means that over 1 in 6 of us have been stopped and searched by

With a population of 7.5 million, that means that over 1 in 6 of us have been stopped and searched by police in London alone, all within a year.

police in London alone, all within a year. In addition, of the section 44 stops from the 124,687 a total of 1,271 arrests where made related to non-terrorist offences, where only 73 could be connected to terrorism. That equates to less than 0.06% of section 44 stop and searches leading to a related arrest. This clearly indicates that police powers from legislation put in place to tackle terrorism are being highly abused. Both opposition parties had views on this

Lib Dem spokesperson - Chris Huhne "There is a real risk that

indiscriminate or excessive use of stop and search may alienate the communities we rely most on for intelligence, which is a far more crucial tool in the fight against terrorism."

There is a real concern, not just by MPs, but also by civil liberty campaigners and us regular folk. A danger is that police are alienating themselves against the public, particularly after the G20 protest mistakes where Ian Tomlinson later died. And it's not just the general public, but ethnic groups, with black people eight times more likely to be stopped.

Home Office minister Vernon Coaker feels it is important that police have the right powers to fight terrorism, who recently said "stop and search is aimed at disrupting crime and responding to intelligence and levels of risk. It is an important tool - helping to tackle knife crime and to fight terrorism."

Gareth Crossman from Civil rights group Liberty does recognise terrorist threats, although states that "exceptional powers of stop-and-search without suspicion should only be used when facing specific threats".

Know Your Rights >>>

Well guess what, it could happen to you. And to help you get out of the mess, make sure you know your rights

Police do have authority, but that does not mean they can talk to you any way they like. You have the right to be talked to fairly and with respect. Just remember that you have done nothing wrong so keep your cool. And I guess for those who have done something against the law, it's the same advice, keep cool and relaxed as screaming and shouting will just make matters worse.

[continue to page 10>>>](#)





If you feel you have been treated unfairly, you can complain to:

Your local police station
www.met.police.co.uk

Your local citizens Advice Bureau
www.citizensadvice.co.uk

The commission for Racial Equality
www.cre.gov.uk

Stopped

If you're stopped by police, you have the right to ask for:

Name(s) of the officer(s)

The station where they are based

Why they have stopped you

If you are asked, you must give your name and address but you are not obliged to answer any legal questions without advice from legal aid. Your clothing (only the outer layer) can be searched if you are suspected of carrying:

Controlled drugs

Offensive weapon or firearms

Carrying a sharp article (e.g. knives, screw drivers)

Carrying stolen goods

If you are in a coach or train going to or you have arrived at a sports stadium

If you think you are being unlawfully searched, the advice given is to allow the search to commence but take lawful action later. Resisting arrest will not do you any favours.

Arrested

You always have the right:

To be treated humanely and with respect

To see the written codes governing your rights and how you are treated

To speak to the custody officer (the officer who must look after your welfare) to know why you have been arrested

Have a phone call made to let someone know about your arrest

To consult your solicitor alone

If you are under the age of 17 police cannot question you at a police station without a parent or carer present. If they are not present then an appropriate adult must be found e.g. a relative or family friend.

The police can only keep you for a certain period of time - normally a maximum of 24 hours (36 hours for a serious offence).

Whatever your age, you have the right to speak to the free duty solicitor to obtain advice. Always ask for the solicitor. It is always recommended that you answer no comment to questions, do not write or sign statement until you have seen a solicitor.

Court

If you have to go to court and are aged 10 -17 you are taken to the Youth Court. If you are 18 and above, you will go to the Magistrates Court. At court you will be found either guilty, not guilty or the case could be dropped. If you are found not guilty you are free to go and also get back any property of yours that the Police have.

...keep cool and relaxed as screaming and shouting will just make matters worse.

Wrongful Arrest

If you want to challenge anything the police have done, then try and get the names and addresses of any witnesses. Also it is handy to make a written record of the event. It should be witnessed, dated and signed. If you are injured or property is damaged then take photographs or video recordings as soon as possible and have physical injuries medically examined.

Know Your Rights!

AISHAH IQBAL
WWW.MUSLIMYOUTH.NET

Just ask Rabia! >>>

MY VOICE
HAS ITS OWN
CU HOUSE
ABOUT

She's here to help you with your questions. And if she can't help, she'll find someone who can. People may find it easier to confide in someone else that doesn't know them so well, as this makes the problem less embarrassing. If this is you, then just ask Rabia! **In this issue, we had Rabia address the topic of exam revision.**

Hiya Rabia,
I'm having problems with exams at the moment. I am stressing out too much and I get sudden headaches every now and again. My friends are telling me that I am studying too hard. But you see, they are doing so much better than me. They are naturally clever. I don't know what to do; I'm worried. All my GCSE's are together. How am I going to handle everything?

From Shahida, age 15,
Cranford

This is a problem shared by many, and school exams are the number one cause of stress in people your age. Up and down the country, students are feeling it with you. Although competition is healthy amongst your fellow class mates, in your case, it isn't productive to compare yourself against them, so focus on yourself. Don't worry about how much easier it is for your mates; everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses.

Exam stress is natural. You have to channel it positively, recognising the need to prepare for them and building up an attitude of wanting to study. However, too much stress can affect concentration, mood, sleep and even your appetite

and thirst. The stress could be the cause of your headaches. Are you drinking enough water? You need this to hydrate your brain and free up some of the locked energy molecules in your body to remedy this. If problems persist, it's definitely worth booking an appointment with the doctor.

Everyone approaches revision in different ways; just make sure your method is right for you. Do this by writing down paragraph chunks repeatedly on what you have revised. This will help cement your knowledge and can be used as a gauge to see how much your choice of revision is progressing. You'll find that each time you write down your paragraphs, it takes less thinking, as you are actively committing this knowledge to memory and regurgitating it. This technique is ideal for short term memory use, which should be useful if your exams are all together; just tackle one subject at a time.

Make sure you take a time-out. Studies have shown that it is productive to take a 10 minute break from your work for every hour you put in. This will help you make sense of what you have revised and form an idea of how different aspects come together, helping you to better write down your answers. It's also common to feel sluggish from sitting at your desk for long periods. You need to get your circulation going!



Exercises

could include 20 star jumps, 20 push-ups or even a brief stroll.

One more important piece of info - you cannot revise material you have not learnt before. As obvious as it may sound, many students fall into this trap by using revision guides only and not fully understanding them. Revision is the process of reviewing already taught material that you have understood previously. If you are going over a topic that is new to you, learn it from the text books and ask your teachers or friends for help first.

Work hard and good luck. Don't forget, the holidays are just around the corner, so there's plenty of time for fun.

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION OR NEED ADVICE, WHY NOT ASK RABIA? YOU CAN REACH HER AT RABIA, MY VOICE-HAAYA, 111 KINGSLEY ROAD, HOUNSLOW, MIDDX, TW3 4AJ
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The role of Muslim women in Islam, has been an ongoing topic. We frequently hear of great men of this religion such as Umar, Abu Bakr, Ali, Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them all), however rarely do we mention the great women of this religion. Companions such as Khalid Ibn Walid led military expeditions to countries as far as the west. His intelligence of war tactics and his bravery on the battlefield are well known to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Well known physicians such as Ibn Sina whose books: 'The book of Canon, and the 'The Book of Healing' were and still are considered as the 'Bible of medicine'.


There are numerous accounts of the accomplishment and contribution Muslim men have made both towards general society and towards the Muslim community. One comes to wonder whether there were any Muslim women who actively took part in the spread of Islam.

Misconceptions about Muslim women and their roles in Islam have always been an issue for not only non Muslims but also among Muslims too. Our lack of knowledge on great women such as Umm Haram, Umm Ammarah, Umm Salamah, Aisha and Khawla, deprive us of knowing what Muslim women in history have done for the cause of Islam. Instead we hold onto our cultural beliefs on the status of Muslim women, and deprive them of the freedom in which Islam had given them fourteen centuries ago, before the western women's rights movements.

The role of Muslim women in Islam in fields of medicine, Islamic studies, and in literature is sadly overshadowed by the dark clouds of the fallacy of oppression and

HEROINES OF ISLAM





illiteracy. It is only by bringing to light the accomplishments and achievements of Muslim women in the past, can we dispel the derogatory image of Muslim women, wherever they maybe.

In regards to the contribution from Muslim women in the field of knowledge, there are countless Muslim women scholars who have passed on their chains of knowledge to some of the greatest male scholars in Islam. Among the first is Aisha, whose sound knowledge and understanding of Islamic jurisprudence and the saying of the Holy prophet Muhammad (pbuh), have led to compilations of books such as Sahih Bukhari.

“Muslim Women were amongst the first to establish Universities which were to quench the thirst many had for the knowledge of the Sciences”

Setting aside knowledge in the Islamic field, Muslim women were among the first to establish Universities which were to quench the thirst many had for the knowledge of the Sciences. Such women include Fatima Al Fihri, who founded the oldest academic degree granting University which is still in existence. Fatima Al-Fihri had contributed the money which she had inherited from her father's wealthy business towards the University of Qarawiyyin.

It is amazing how Muslim women back then emphasised such great importance on knowledge and sought after it, whilst the rest of the world struggled to give its women the basic rights of life. Yet today ironically, the first perception that enters the mind of a person upon seeing a Muslim woman, is that of oppression and illiteracy, how can this be so when Muslim

women were among the first to establish Universities, Muslim women were learning along with their male counterparts and also earning academic degrees as early as the 12th century. Muslim women were as active in the field of both Islamic knowledge and the scientific knowledge as their male counterparts were.

Surprisingly the role of Muslim women has not just been confined to the 'mere walls' of Universities, rather it has expanded onto the battlefield.

The story of Khawla Bint Al Azwan, is a story that should enlighten every young Muslim girl. Her courage, bravery, and strong faith, which made her stand defiant against the Romans, has shown the true strength of a young Muslim woman. During the Caliphate of Umar, the battle of Ajnadin took place. At some point during the battle the Roman Army attacked the womens' camp where Khawla was. Peter the Great, who was the commander of the Roman Army, immediately, became attracted to the young beautiful Khawla. He made promises to her calling her unto him, yet Khawla replied calmly with great contempt rejecting his advances, even so far as saying that he would not be fit enough to shepherd her camels!

If we learn our history, we will come to understand that there are many significant women from the Muslim world who have contributed greatly to society. We should learn of our historic great figures, both men and women alike, in that we can show others that women in Islam are respected individuals with freedoms in both education and enterprise.

AYAN ALI

TO BRIT OR NOT TO BRIT?

For some, there is a feeling that Muslims have no desire to associate with the wider community and that Muslims have no sense of belonging to Britain. MY Voice wanted to see this for themselves and what better way than to ask some locals directly. We found six young people and asked them what their thoughts were on being Muslims living in Britain. Here's what we found.

Tayyab Chaudri, 11 >>>

"It's nice that I feel I belong to two different communities. But sometimes it worries me that people are being treated badly just because they are Muslims in the UK. It's not a nice feeling knowing that, maybe when I get older, I might also be treated badly, but luckily living in Hounslow means everyone gets on with each other. But I know that I can say my Shahadah and sing 'God Save the Queen' in the same voice, because I'm a Muslim who happens to have citizenship in the UK."



<<< Soheal Malik, 21

"The reality is that I live in England, I didn't grow up surrounded by people who followed Islam, even though my parents are Muslims. It's a secular, non-religious environment, and I wasn't into religion for a very long time. People around me aren't religious, and I was personally raised on a diet of going out, boxing, football, Coronation Street, Eastenders, and PlayStation. I only follow what comes naturally to me. It would be easier for me to be part of my environment and not believe in God and fit in with rest of society, as religion and God are not something given much importance in England. I don't mind my way of life or belief being questioned; I encourage it because I know I have some answers and I would like others to know about Islam too."



<<< Jamal Ali, 16

"The people living in America, regardless of their cultural background, race or religion have no problem calling themselves American. I don't see why I cannot call myself Muslim and British either and don't feel that they are separate features of myself that clash. I live here and will eventually get a job here and pay taxes for contributing to society and will be able to vote in a couple of years. I enjoy many freedoms in Britain, like many other residents here, and feel safe in being a Muslim"



<<< Zobe Hussain, 17

"I see myself as both British and Muslim because I don't believe that the two are anything to do with each other really. Britain is where I was born, and Islam was the religion I was born into. It's dangerous territory when people begin to mistake the two like oil and water, which have difficulty in mixing. Some British Muslims are facing persecution, but the solution isn't to isolate yourself even more from society, in fact it's the opposite. The thing that makes Great Britain so great is the fact that we can be from any background, religion, and race, and still be regarded as British."

Farhana Ali, 18 >>>

"I feel I am able to confidently speak out for Islam, despite facing a great deal of prejudice, especially on public transport. I work with people of diverse backgrounds and I am able to see that not all people share the same views and believe the media hype. I'm proud to live in a society where all cultures are accepted, but it's a shame that certain minorities of people can't accept that Britain is becoming increasingly multicultural... For example the fact that curry has replaced bangers and mash as the nation's favourite dish!"



<<< Nabila Khan, 17

"I feel so blessed living in front of the local mosque, and it touches my heart that people crowd into the building to offer their Friday prayers. Ramadhan is another time which really makes me realise that Muslims in Britain have all the facilities to carry out their faith just like any other country. We aren't at a disadvantage just because we live in a 'western' society, but the problem begins when we begin to consider differences between 'us' and 'them'. My family have been living in Britain for nearly three generations, and we've been brought up as British, and have never felt that being British and being Muslim are two things that can't go together."





iman(faith)

The Arabic word Iman, when translated into English, literally means 'to believe' or 'to be convinced without a shadow of doubt'. Loosely translated, it means faith >>>

Specifically, Iman is of the second level of faith, placed after the five pillars of Islam and before the concept of Ihsan. It defines how in touch with religion a person is, or how confident they are in God.

It is believed that, as Muslims, we must accept our religion as Islam and adhere to its five major obligations; Shahadah (testimony of faith), Salah (Prayer), Zakah (Charity), Sawm (Fasting), Hajj (Pilgrimage).

After attaining this level of faith, a Muslim should aim to further himself in his/her religion, and by doing so, he/she can attain greater rewards from his Lord in this life and in the next. It is here that Iman is introduced.

As narrated by Ibn Umar, The Holy Prophet said: faith is composed of five factors, belief in the angels, belief in the books of Allah, belief in the Prophets and Messengers

As young Muslims, the strength of our Iman is shown in how we hold ourselves and live our lives.

of Allah, belief in the Day of Judgment and Life after Death, and belief in destiny.

These are specifically as follows;

A Muslim believes that there are other creations of God other than human beings, particularly angels. Among these are Jibril (Gabriel, the medium between God and His human messengers), Michael (angel of sustenance), Izrael; the angel of death, Israfael; the angel of the Trumpet, Radhwan; the guardian of Paradise, Malek; the guardian of the Hellfire and Ateb & Raqeeb; the angels who keep records of our deeds. A Muslim

who submits whole-heartedly to God and does so with Iman is a Mu'men, loosely translated as a believer.

A Mu'men also believes that God revealed His guidance to humanity in previous books before the Holy Qur'an; revealed to Muhammad (pbuh). These included the Torah; revealed to Musa (Moses), the Zaboor (Psalms); revealed to Prophet Dawood (David) and the Injil (Gospels); revealed to Isa (Jesus). These books included the same message of guidance to humanity summarized in the Holy Qur'an. A Mu'men has the same respect and love to the previous messengers of God, and should not differentiate one from the other, or side with one against the other.

A Mu'men believes that this life is a test, in which all our deeds and activities are recorded by angels. We will be held accountable

for the entire test when we meet our Creator in the Day of Judgment. So, the belief in the Last Day is an acknowledgement of accountability and reckoning. It is an incentive for people to do good in this life in order to be rewarded in Paradise, and a warning against doing bad in order to avoid punishment in the Hellfire.

However, Iman does not end there. In another Hadith, mentioned by Abu Huraira, the Holy Prophet said that "Faith consists of more than sixty branches and Haya (self respect, modesty, bashfulness, and scruple)".



It can be seen that Iman encompasses much more than simple belief in five factors. As young Muslims, the strength of our Iman is shown in how we hold ourselves and live our lives.

The way you walk, the way you eat, even the way you greet each other. It is very important for Muslims to realise that even the smallest good action is a step towards stronger Iman. It is narrated that when the Holy Prophet was asked which deed was most beloved by Allah, he replied "The one that is continuous, even if it is small".

Living in the west it can be difficult to put our Iman into practice. For example, praying at school or work, or regularly going to the Masjid. But by putting in the effort and fulfilling tasks such as these, we can increase our Iman and achieve the level of the Mu'men, and become among the pious, loved by Allah.

And in a finishing statement, the Holy Prophet said "Iman wears out in one's heart, just as the dress wears out (becomes thin). Therefore, ask Allah to renew Iman in your hearts."

JUNAID BAIG

ISLAM OPHOBIA

Discrimination towards Muslims

The definition of Islamophobia is a term that refers to prejudice or discrimination against Islam or Muslims. It dates back to the 1980s and became more commonly used after the 9/11 bombings and the 7/7 London bombings. For most of us, it has been used recently.

Discrimination is when a populous is treated unfairly and it can be seen in nearly every aspect of society; in school, in the workplace and even on the streets.

Let's look at a school. At this school, bullying happens time to time, including bullying based on faith. The anti-bullying charity called BeatBullying researched

that 23% of pupils were bullied based on faith.

From this same school, a 13-year-old Muslim girl said:

"These two girls knew we were fasting, they got me, in the toilets and tried to force crisps down my throat; they were all laughing their heads off."

How would you like to be ostracised because of what you represent? Islam is a huge part of the lives of millions across the world and some of these Muslims have felt the harshness of being put down by other people who don't like their religion. Sound wrong, right? So I ask how and why it has come to this and how do we solve this problem.

Now I hate to hear people linking Islam with terrorism when the very meaning of Islam is peace. But why do people join the two together? - My answer lies within every one of us who has access to the global community, (e.g. news & TV) including you.

We each have the responsibility to believe or not believe what we hear or see. Now we all probably know that the media does not portray stories very truthfully but it's not all their fault, the so called 'Islamic terrorists' have given Islam a bad name. It is this reason that Islamophobia has grown - people fear what they see in their global community; they don't know enough about the real truth of Islam.

So how do we tackle this problem?

I believe we each have a role to play to stop Islamophobia from dividing groups and nations. You could try to:

Not to disrespect other religions in your conversations.

Be open with our religion whether it is with innocent action or speech. But we must not forcibly impose Islam.

Try to be the best Muslim you can be so that you can be a positive example of someone from Islam.

I came across lots of articles on Islamophobia and this one stood out for me.

Young thugs attack Southend mosque

A Muslim leader fears for the safety of his family, after attacks on a mosque and his flat next door. The gang of teenagers have repeatedly targeted the Essex Jamme Masjid mosque, in Chelmsford Avenue, Southend, which was converted from a church earlier this year. Imam Mahmudul Hasan said he had been left shocked and scared after teenagers also smashed the front door windows at his home.

ESSEX ECHO, 17
DECEMBER 2008



PHOTO: RIZDESIGN

It stood out because yes, it is a horrible hate crime but there must be a reason why those teenagers did that, could it be the recent conversion of the church into a mosque or another reason? What we all need to do is to show these people that Islam isn't scary and it isn't trying to indoctrinate the world and it doesn't oppress groups or individuals.

Islamophobia shouldn't exist. It is an exaggerated divider between people and stops us from seeing our similarities. This country has already had its citizens in the past been discriminated on grounds of race, where progress has been made, but we still need to clear misconceptions and stigmas associated with Islam to reveal the truth.

Let's not repeat the bad history.

SUMAYA KHANOM



PHOTO: RIZDESIGN

For more advice on Islamophobia, visit the FAIR website www.fairuk.org

If you need advice, talk to Muslim Youth helpline on their free phone **0808 808 2008**

Don't forget, **Islamophobia is a crime.** If you are a victim, report it to the police.

MECCA2MEDINA >>>

ISMAEL LEA SOUTH



MY VOICE holds its first interview, where **Fuad Uddin** speaks with **Muslim personalities Rakin Misbah and Ismael Lea South.**

MYV: Here I am with both Rakin and Ismael of Mecca2Medina, also known as M2M for short. For the benefit of our readers who do not know you, tell us a bit about yourselves!

RAKIN: Okay, Mecca2Medina started off as a rap group and is now a movement. We now own and manage a label called Crescent Moon Media. We have a clothes line called Crescent Moon Wear and a dawah movement called The Salam Project. We also do a lot of youth work in identity, what it means to be British and Muslim and creativity work with poetry, rap & the spoken word with young people. We go into youth centres, classrooms, prisons...

MYV: Prisons as well! Which ones?

ISMAIL: Yep, we've been to Feltham Youth offenders' institution, Pentonville in Kings Cross, and Woomword Scrubs in North London.

MYV: Let's talk more about your company Crescent Moon Media, your record label. Who do you have signed up for this?

RAKIN: Yeah, we're excited about the new talent we have, there's Lil Mia, Masikah, Baby Muslim, Musa Mumin, and Miss Undastood. Both Musa and Miss Undastood are from America.

MYV: Great! Any outside UK, like from Europe for example?

RAKIN: No, not at the moment. We're hoping to start expanding our movement further into Europe, source some new talent from there.

MYV: What about South Asia? It has a huge Muslim population. One mainstream artist that comes to my mind is Akon, who has had success in countries like Bangladesh.

RAKIN: True, we would like to do more. We have done a collaboration with Raihan, the Malaysian Nasheed group. They're really nice guys. We'd love to perform more in the area, and grow the Mecca2Medina movement.

MYV: OK. That's one part of the world. What about America? You now have two artists under your label, so I'm assuming you've

MY VOICE TWO-PAGE SPECIAL INTERVIEW



performed there. Which parts of America have you worked in? And how did these artists get in touch with you? Or did you get in touch with them?

ISMAIL: We've been to Chicago. We've been to New York and New Jersey. But there are many other parts of America we want to get into and perform.

RAKIN: With the two artists from America, we got in touch with them. We've done our own research work on propagating the Mecca2Medina movement and came across both of them using the internet.

MYV: *It seems to me that you have studied the market well and are doing a lot of work in the background. I imagine you're still having to research into this. Are you learning new things?*

ISMAIL: Definitely. The Muslim hip-hop movement is moving forward now, and Rakin is a pioneer of this in the UK. We don't just work with the hip-hop industry. We discovered there is talent in the Muslim community with comedians. We are nurturing

new Muslim comedians and guiding them, and encouraging them to the path of Islam and to use truthful comedy, keeping it clean, with no swearing. But at the same time, we are keeping it educational. We like to call it edutainment. We're working with a few brothers, Prince Abdi, Jeff Mirza and Nabil Abdul Rashid.

MYV: *You like to feel that the Mecca2Medina movement has a dawah purpose. Have you heard of any stories to this effect?*

ISMAIL: Yeah, for sure. We've heard of conversions to Islam through our dawah work and the lyrics on our songs have encouraged Muslim sisters to wear hijab.

MYV: *Mecca2Medina, it's been a pleasure to speak to you. May Allah grant you success in this life and the next. Just one more question. Where can I buy a Mecca2Medina T-shirt?*

ISMAIL: Go on our website.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MECCA2MEDINA, AND TO BUY A T-SHIRT (AND MORE), LOG ON TO THEIR WEBSITE.

WWW.CRESCENTMOONMEDIA.COM

RAKIN MISBAH



Gang Culture >

In the name of
God, the most
merciful, the most
beneficent...

“Do good to
parents, kinsfolk,
orphans, those in
need, neighbours
who are of kin,
neighbours who
are strangers, the
companion by your
side, the wayfarer,
and what your right
hand possess”.

(QUR'AN 4:36)

Gang culture

In the past 18 months 39 youngsters have been shot or stabbed to death in the streets of London...

Many of the killings have been directly linked to feuds between rival gangs...

Why do people join gangs?

Gangs are a means for the teens to form their own youth communities which means that they will look up to operating criminals as 'role models' which eventually leads an individual to being a nuisance to society.

There are many reasons for teens to join gangs, these are:

- Power trip
- Protections
- Sense of belonging to a group
- Peer pressure
- Escapism from personal problem
- Fascination of criminal activities
- Anger/Frustration/Low Self Esteem

Criminal activities within the gangs...

Criminal activities that are carried out within the gangs are for instance drugs, forcing people to pay protection money, muggings, selling stolen goods, and also trading illegal weapons. Most gang member's deal with drugs as they feel drugs bring relief from problems at home, school or on the streets.

“[God] forbids
indecent deeds,
and evil and
rebellion: he
instructs you, that
ye may receive
admonition”.

(QUR'AN 16:90)

<GANG LIFE IS NOT THE ANSWER!>

Want to survive? Lose your identity...

Only followers have a chance in surviving in a gang.

Here are the facts:

- A top gang leader is usually one whom the others fear the most
- Gang rules and the leaders' orders must be obeyed no questions asked
- You get "promoted" in a gang by staying in it and by carrying out violent acts like robbery or murder
- "Wannabes" act and dress like gang members

Join a gang - a step into the terror zone

Joining any gang is literally like stepping into a danger zone. A world where there are beatings, and shootings that happen all the time. For people to join; boys usually have to fight several other gang members at the same time - this is named "rolled in" or "walking the line". To "prove themselves" new members may have to beat up an innocent person, shoot someone, or mug a shop, or even do a "drive by" to shoot people. Girls will have to fight with other violent female gang members.

IF YOU BREAK GANG RULES THE PUNISHMENT IS SOMETIMES DEATH... WHEN YOU JOIN A GANG, YOU MAY BE TOLD TO PLAN YOUR FUNERAL IN ADVANCE...

Gangs force people to break the law. Gangs beat up people mostly innocent. Gangs kill people. They are not there to help you.

"Whoever recommends and helps a good cause becomes a partner therein, and whoever recommends and helps an evil cause, shares in its burden".

(QUR'AN 4:85)

In the past **18** months

39 youngsters have been shot or stabbed to death in the streets of London...

Why shouldn't you join a gang?

- It can be hard to get out of a gang
- If you join a gang you will make instant enemies
- Gangs get revenge, and more revenge leads to atrocities

MAHJABEEN TARA MULBOCUS

MY Voice...The Story So Far



Muslim Youth Voice has been running now for the past two years as part of a Haaya project. The focus has been on training a group of local Muslim Youth with a programme of workshops on issues that influence and shape society to help other young Muslims, like you, living in the local area of Hounslow Borough. It is aimed to empower Muslim Youth to have a voice and allow them to speak their voice in a safe space.

Much of the work from last year was the training programme itself of workshops, examining real issues that are of concern to local Muslim Youth, such as discrimination, social responsibilities, local environmental and gender equality as examples.

The MY Voice young people were engaged with guest speakers such as:

GREG VILLALOBOS, creative director for Bold Creative. The topic was on Media, its influence in the community and discussing innovation and creative projects, such as design consultancy and viral marketing.

HUMERA KHAN, founder of An-Nisa Society, a women's managed organisation working for the welfare of families. The topics was on Gender Equality, examining the role of women in Islam and how Muslim women have a history of being scholars, academics, as well as playing an instrumental role in family upbringing.

ALEX MORRELL, Climate Change Analyst, EDF energy. The topic was on the environment, where factors such as deforestation, production, consumption and recycling all have an affect on global resources and examining where improvements can be made.

Other guest speakers included **DANNY WILLIAMS**; Professional Heavyweight British boxer, **AJMAL MASROOR**; Director for Communities in Action and TV presenter for both Islam Channel and Channel 5.

This year, MY Voice had also visited Al-Jazeera English studio in Knightsbridge, London, as part of an industry day. The programme began with a video presentation, followed by a discussion with news presenter Nazanine Moshiri and editor Suzanne Bush. The MY Voice group also went on a studio tour with Programmes Team member, Jenny Dare. The MY Voice group visited:

[The news gallery, where the cameras, autocue & sequencing can controls are stationed.](#)

[The graphics room, where the](#)



graphics design and artwork is made for the studio video wall background.

The recording studio, where programmes are filmed and the MY Voice team got to use the HD camera.

The make up room, where one of the MY Voice girls had a make-over, used for guests who make Al-Jazeera appearances.

The confidence and skills gained from this program has helped young Muslims get involved in the local community in two ways. The first way was to set-up the Muslim Youth Parliament (MY Parliament), established to campaign for local Muslim Youth issues, which seemed the most obvious route to get involved with the local Muslim Youth community. With this establishment, The MY Parliament

would be meeting on a regular basis, ready to interact with other local Muslim Youth and become involved with local politics for the benefit of the wider Muslim Youth. Current campaign agendas are:

Establishing a prayer space in the locality of Hounslow High Street, allowing young Muslims to shop freely without fear of missing their prayer times.

Encouraging young people to make use of their own gardens for home grown produce.

Run an awareness campaign for Muslim youth dress code, particularly for employers and 6th form colleges.

Naturally, if there are any more issues that are brought to our attention concerning local Muslim youth, we will be happy to hear

from you and look to what MY Parliament can do for you.

The second way for MY Voice to reach out was through the Muslim Youth magazine (MY VOICE) itself. This magazine has been brought to you to discuss and address your concerns, also to help you voice your opinion. Our aim is to keep in touch with the local Muslim Youth and increase awareness of the MY Voice project. We hope to be able to grow the MY Parliament with more members and make the MY Voice project ultimately your voice. The magazine will be used to discuss the local work that MY Voice is doing over the months in your area.

TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US, DROP US AN EMAIL AT MYVOICE@HAAYA.COM OR WRITE TO US AT MY VOICE – HAAYA, 111 KINGSLEY ROAD, HOUNSLOW, MIDDLESEX. TW3 4AJ MY VOICE WANTS TO HEAR YOUR VOICE!
FUAD UDDIN, MY VOICE CO-ORDINATOR

HAA YA >>>

HAA YA's mission is to bring out the best in young people living in and around Hounslow. HAA YA provides a range of educational, sporting, leisure, and cultural activities open to all young people regardless of their religious or ethnic background. Through these activities we aim to improve the morale, achievements, aspiration and life chance of potentially disadvantaged, disengaged, disillusioned and deprived young people.



Boys' Club

HAA YA Boys' club has been very successful in drawing a sizeable number of young people through its doors. It runs from 6.30pm to 10pm at Hounslow Youth Centre, off Kingsley Road, and is used by the entire age range of teenage boys from 12 to 18. The young people present get to play pool and hold indoor football in the sports hall. They also have access to a games console to bide their time with. The boys all look forward to Friday evenings at the club and enjoy the safe space it offers. Past events for the Boys' Club include the Residential in Carmarthen, Wales. The trip was a four day event, where a group of 16 boys were able to enjoy activities such as paintballing, go-karting, mountain climbing, abseiling, mountain biking and archery.

The Boys' Club also hosts educational workshops, on topics that affect young people, such as violence, knives & guns and crime. Guest speaker Mutha Wassin Shabazz Beale, better known as Napoleon has also visited the Boys' Club to 'jam' with the young people.

"It's important we keep these kids off the street, in an environment that is a safe space for young people. I want to plan more educational and fun visits with the youth, such as going to BBC studios, and empower them in an enjoyable way they will remember". Omar Shiraz, lead youth worker for Boys' Club.

Girls' Club

Like the Boys' Club, HAAYA Girls' Club is used by young girls to chill out. It runs on **Thursdays from 6-8pm in Da Spot Young Persons' Resource Centre on Lampton Road, Hounslow.** The focus of the club is to promote self development for the young girls in a fun and learning environment. They are able to express themselves with workshops such as Henna Hand Art and group discussions as examples. Adventure outings are also planned, including a one week trip to Stabbers residential, where we slept in a huge tent and did different activities, such as banana riding, climbing, and other team building exercises. We have also had visits to the London Dungeon, Richmond Theatre, and Bracknell Snow-tubing all as part of the girls' activities. A one week trip to France was also made, where the girls' club members had a go at horse riding and some retail therapy in group shopping. Every summer, the Girls' Club also visit a theme park, like Thorpe Park as part of a fun day out.

"The Girls' Club is somewhere you can spend time with other local young girls, regardless of culture, race or religion. They are able to come out of their shells and express their ideas, where we collectively decide on what areas we will focus on in future sessions. We have plenty of fun in our gatherings, even when we're just playing a regular game of cards". Hana Mulugeta, lead youth worker for Girls' Club.

Sat. School

HAAYA Saturday School is one of the oldest HAAYA projects. It started in February 2002 at West Thames College. In March 2007 the school moved to Convent Way Community Centre in Southall. This was to tackle under-achievement amongst the African communities – particularly the Somalian community. The attendance picked up and the project was able to reach more underprivileged children. In April 2008, the school moved to 4th Feltham Scout Hut and this has further boosted its catchment area.

HAAYA Saturday School aims to improve young people's performance, motivation and confidence. It offers young people an opportunity to re-enforce material they are doing in school. An emphasis is placed on core subjects - Mathematics, English and Science at Key Stages 1 to 4. The student ages vary from 6 to 16 years old.

HAAYA Saturday School currently has three teaching staff. All are graduates and specialists in their subject areas.

The HAAYA Saturday school runs **every Saturday from 9.30am – 11am at 4th Feltham Scout Hut, 95 High Street, Feltham, TW13 4HG.**

The lead workers for the school are Zubair Malik and Dr Obaid Khan



boys.club@haaya.com
girls.club@haaya.com
haaya.saturdayschool@gmail.com



WHAT WHICH HE **LOVES** HIMSELF
FOR FOR HIS NEIGHBOR
ILL HE LIKES FOR HIS **BELIEVE**
NONE YOU WILL BE A **TRUTHFUL**
AMONG