



Salaam

The monthly newsletter of the Huntsville Islamic Center

From the Editorial Board

Assalamu Alaikum! Daylight saving time starts this month on March 14th. While many of us are happy to spring forward and have a little more 'light' especially after the dreary winter months, the first few days can be a bit jarring. Our devices may adjust themselves automatically, but losing just an hour's sleep has our body clocks scrambling to adapt. Isn't that ironic?

But perhaps, as Muslims, we should take this moment to truly reflect on the nature of time... and how fleeting it can be. As the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) advised us, "Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death."

This isn't always easy but as Ramadan in particular rolls around, let's try and make it our most productive one yet, inshaAllah. In this issue and the next few, we will continue with our focus on the Holy Month, truly the best time of the year, and hope you will join us along the journey. This issue also debuts a new series of articles that explores what it means to be Muslim in secular America.

As always, we'd love to hear from you. Please send your thoughts, reflections, or feedback to: secretary@huntsvilleislamiccenter.org



From the Imam's Desk

The Meaning and Importance of Aqeedah *By Imam Ragab Abdelmoneim*

Aqeedah is an Arabic word derived from (*Aqd*), which means contract. It is also derived from (*Uqdah*) which refers to a tight knot that is impossible to untie. Islamic *Aqeedah* is what Muslims have in their heart, a strong conviction that in no way tolerates doubt or suspicion. It includes firm belief in the One Almighty God, His Angels, His Messengers, His Books, the Last Day, and *Qadr* (predestination). It is also a complete acknowledgement of the Lordship of God, His Divinity, His Attributes as well as the fundamentals of religion and matters of the unseen that are mentioned in authentic legal texts.

Muslims who have true *Aqeedah* have complete confidence in all the rules that are in the Quran and authentic Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They are different from the disbelievers, especially in their religious practices. Additionally, Muslims must be aware of those who contradict Islamic *Aqeedah*, and learn how to refute their accusations. Finally, we must be confident that Islamic *Aqeedah* is the best belief system and the final message for the entire world. May Allah grant us all steadfastness in our *Aqeedah*! Ameen!

Scholarship Opportunity

With its Pathway 2 Success (P2S) program, AUM Foundation offers \$2000 in scholarships, laptops, mentorship programs, and enrichment classes to high school rising senior girls (current juniors), whose family income is at or below 2.5 times the federal poverty level.

Applications are currently being accepted. For further information, please email: hiba.najjar@aumfoundationusa.org

Community Recognition

HIC would like to express thanks to all the people who donated to the recent clothing drive held in conjunction with Helping Hand For Relief And Development.

Special recognition also goes to the organizers and volunteers who helped facilitate the drive and make it successful.

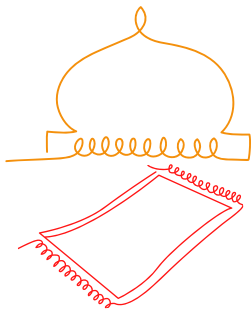
Weekly Online Schedule

Friday Halaqah
Sunday Seerah Class (6:30 PM)
Join using this [Zoom Link](#).

Balancing Ramadan and School

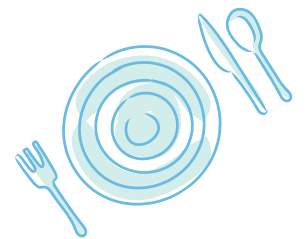
By Aasim Musani

Assignment deadlines, exams, and other school work often pose a challenge for Muslims students observing Ramadan. However, there is no doubt that the rewards far outweigh the difficulties. Let's hear what some of our community's students have to say about how they balance both academic and religious pursuits!



"As a university student, one of the challenges that I face during Ramadan is being in an environment where most people are not fasting. Due to this, I need to remind myself of the aim of my fast continually. It is not only a period when you don't consume any food and water but also a time to appreciate all that Allah (SWT) has blessed you with. Fortunately, at my university, there is a significant Muslim population and even a student-run prayer room. Once I found a group of Muslim friends, it became easier to achieve my Ramadan goals. We made sure to check on each other and even occasionally broke our fast together. Fasting as a university student can be intimidating but knowing that your efforts will be rewarded can be a great motivator." - **Hamna Syed, UAB**

"The most difficult thing to do while fasting in university is having to walk around campus, typically in the heat. Although it can be taxing on the body, having other Muslims who are fasting at university as company helps because we all have the same goal and mindset. Overall, it brings Muslims on campus closer because they are all practicing Islam and remembering Allah (SWT) throughout the day. Another challenge is waking up for *suhoor*. Especially as students, we are used to having *suhoor* with family and eating together. But when at university and alone, it becomes difficult. But inshAllah, Allah (SWT) gives patience to those who go through hardships." - **Hamad Muhammad, UAB**



"For me, the biggest challenge fasting in this upcoming Ramadan while in university will be maintaining a healthy sleep cycle. Much of the core activities of Ramadan, such as *taraweeh*, *suhoor*, and *qiyam al-layl* (night vigil) happen in the hours of night which I currently use to sleep so I am not tired when working in the daytime. This Ramadan, I will have to both maintain my study routine in the day while also performing my regular devotions at night. I will have to learn how to balance these with each other while also finding time to sleep." - **Shaheer Abdullah Seljuki, UAB**

"While fasting during university can be exhausting and trying to pay attention to lectures that interfere with the break of fast can be tedious, the more challenges we face during our time of fast the more rewards we gain inshAllah." - **Sarah Hakim, UAH**



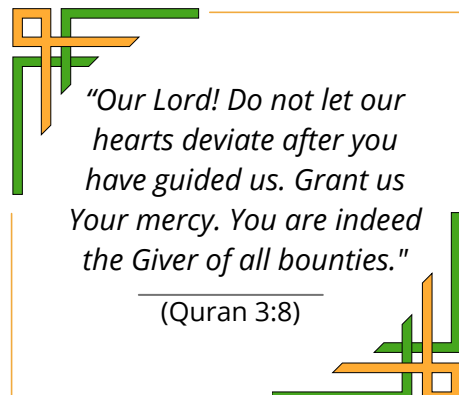
Words of Wisdom

By Abdullah Sheikh

Every month we hope to share some wisdom, lessons learnt, and/or advice from the elders in our community. This month's column features **Mohamed Elhady (Abu Hussein)**. An engineer by profession, Brother El Hady also previously served as HIC's president.

"Some advice for the community:

- Be a good Muslim and stay steadfast to your belief.
The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "A strong believer is better and is more lovable to Allah than a weak believer, and there is good in everyone..."
- You must fear Allah (SWT).
- Represent Islam through your actions. Persuade the non-believers to love Islam and Muslims.
- It doesn't hurt to ask for guidance."



Being Muslim in Secular America

By Wafa Hakim Orman

This is the first part of what I hope, inshaAllah, will be a series of articles with community input. I would like to spark a conversation on what is likely to be the biggest question facing us as a community in the coming years, i.e., how do we as Muslims preserve our faith and values while passing them along to future generations in a society that is becoming increasingly secular?

On the surface, this may look like a bizarre assertion especially for Alabama, a state considered by many to be the heart of the Bible Belt. But look a little deeper. There are now about [as many Americans who profess no religion as those who attend religious services weekly](#), and the trend is growing even [closer to home](#) with many distancing themselves from faith-based practices.

We Muslims are not immune. Back in 2014, Pew reported that more than [one in five American Muslims seldom or never attended prayer services](#), and it's unlikely that this number has gotten any smaller since then. We, and our children, are as embedded in the broader culture as anyone - so how do we remain true to who Allah (SWT) wants us to be?

As we head into Ramadan, we need to see this Holy Month for the blessing that it is. In a consumerist culture that demands instant gratification, we deny ourselves our most basic needs - food and water - for the sake of Allah (SWT). Our focus willingly shifts from *dunya* towards *akhirah*. Let's ask ourselves - Why is this a gift?

Because holding firm to our faith in a society that is indifferent to it needs spiritual training. You can't compete in a marathon by waking up one morning and deciding to run 26.2 miles! You need to slowly build up to it. This one month of worship is Allah (SWT)'s way of making us train for the spiritual marathon that is key to remaining a faithful Muslim year-around.

➡ If you'd like to be a part of this conversation, please email secretary@huntsvilleislamiccenter.org



Word Search

By Sohail Baig

Find the names of the Prophets hidden in the puzzle using the list below! The names can be found in any direction - horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. Do you know any of their stories?

"We sent not a messenger, but to be obeyed, in accordance with the will of Allah." (Quran 4:64)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| Muhammad | Shuaib |
| Sulayman | Ilyas |
| Ayyub | Dawud |
| Hud | Dhulkifl |
| Ishaq | Ibrahim |
| Nuh | Alyasa |
| Adam | Idris |
| Harun | Yahya |
| Yusuf | Zakariya |
| Saleh | Isa |
| Lut | Ismail |
| Yaqub | Yunus |

S	A	Y	L	I	D	Y	L	A	A	A	S	S	H
A	Y	Y	U	B	I	A	L	Y	A	S	A	S	A
U	A	B	U	Q	A	Y	W	E	L	I	I	A	R
A	M	S	S	I	R	D	I	U	S	R	I	Y	U
A	H	S	U	K	S	U	Z	H	D	U	A	U	N
S	B	D	A	L	S	A	A	L	I	I	N	H	A
A	H	H	L	L	A	I	I	I	S	I	W	U	H
Y	I	U	Y	U	D	Y	I	S	H	B	N	I	Y
I	Y	L	A	U	T	Q	M	M	A	R	S	F	Y
R	H	K	H	I	U	M	F	A	Q	A	A	U	S
A	U	I	Y	N	B	A	E	I	N	H	A	S	A
K	N	F	A	A	D	D	D	L	Y	I	A	U	L
A	L	L	Y	U	Y	A	H	A	H	M	H	Y	E
Z	A	H	M	U	H	A	M	M	A	D	N	B	H