

Rabi ul Awwal 1421 - June 2000

Ja'ffari News



Design By: Mazahir Somji

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Quality Journalism that crosses barriers

First and foremost, I must congratulate you on a wonderful and groundbreaking year. Being the skeptic that I am, I suspended my initial reactions of delight and surprise after reading the first edition of the "new" *Ja'ffari News*. I decided to "test" my initial reaction and continued scrupulously to look forward to the three editions of JN that followed the first one. Suffice it to say, unlike many magazines that start off with a "big bang", JN continues to create noise in its successful attempt to keep the readers attentive and cover events that many of us are not fortunate enough to attend. However, I must admit that my initial reaction of surprise and amazement has quickly dwindled. Instead, this reaction has been replaced with high expectations and eager anticipation. JN continues to take itself to a higher standard and I applaud your efforts in not only providing us with quality journalism but more importantly, with a magazine that attempts to cross barriers such as ageism, sexism and language obstacles (just to name a few!). I wish you and your team continued success...Continue to set high goals and continue to set higher expectations.

Sajida Mehdi
Toronto

Congratulations on a super job

I am writing to congratulate you for the super job you are doing with *Ja'ffari News* since you took over. The March 2000 issue is especially eye-catching. As soon as one sees the front cover, you feel like picking it up and reading it.

All the articles contained in the issue are very interesting, informative and well written. In particular, the articles to do with disability, marriage contracts, Shia Muslims in Singapore, tips on careers and of course, the Letter from Jeddah. The last issue had a well-written and moving piece titled, "Living with Widowhood" by Shyrose Jaffer-Dhalla.

In regard to the recent visit by Hafeez-e-Quran, the Waziri (Miracle) Family in Toronto, I would like to acknowledge with thanks, the efforts by Asgar Manek and especially, the Honorable Tony Valeri, M.P., in obtaining the visas to enable the family to visit Canada.

Ramzan Manek
Stoney Creek, Ontario

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JN indicates the progress of our community

Ja'ffari News of October 1999 was sent to me by a sister who knows of my appetite for the written word. That day I thanked God for the progress our community has made on this side of the world!

First, Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi's article on *Ghadeer Khumm* — so concise, so logical and with that most simple, sweet Persian ending. May the community continue to benefit from his knowledge.

Secondly, I was also very happy to hear of Mr. Nisar Sheraly's achievements. May he reach higher peaks. Thank you Zainab Somji, for your article.

Finally, *Living with Widowhood* was a touching article that opened our eyes to the reality faced by widowed men and women. I applaud each of the brothers and sisters who agreed to be interviewed and who opened their hearts to the interviewer — no easy task — but one which will help the community to offer appropriate support during this painful period...support that moves beyond the traditional, ritualistic mourning that we observe and impose upon the bereaved, and support that allows our sisters to retain their dignity and independence by upgrading their positions to be able to sustain their families single-handedly. Thank you Shyrose Jaffer-Dhalla for your effort in preparing this special feature — it was probably not an easy one.

Above all, the journal has a female Editor — our own! I am glad that I lived long enough to see this day. Congratulations, Mahjabeen, for winning the JIBA Professional Woman of the Year Award. Now you must seek out other interested sisters from the community and encourage them to write. Be our standard bearer! With all our prayers,

Raziya Tejani
Vancouver, BC

Keep up the great work

Congratulations on another excellent issue of *Ja'ffari News*. The community can feel proud and confident that their publication is in very capable and competent hands and it seems to be getting better with every issue. The articles are informative, enlightening, and interesting. Keep up the great work and pass on my congratulations to your entire team. May Allah (swt) reward you all and give you the strength and foresight to continue this excellent task, ameen.

Shabbir Mohamed
Toronto

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An exceptional magazine

It has been almost one year now that I have consistently read *Ja'ffari News*. I truly enjoy the articles, and the amount of excellent information they relate about our community. The layout is exceptional and something I would only expect to see on a magazine rack in Chapters! What is most appealing about *Ja'ffari News* is that each time you open it something new always presents itself. *Ja'ffari News* is not so much a magazine that you read one time through and put it away, but rather, a magazine that you keep coming back to again and again. This is where the true appeal of this publication lies. Keep up the excellent work, Insha'Allah.

Sayed Askari Raza
Toronto

9000 Bathurst Focus Groups Impressive

I was very impressed with the Focus Session for the Bathurst property held at 9000 Bathurst last Saturday. This shows the excellent vision and wisdom of the current E.C. and of course the entire PMC team. I was especially proud of the democratic process and input requested of ALL the community members. The *Ja'ffari News* Editor and her assistant Shyroose Jaffer-Dhalla conducted the 4-5 p.m. session very well and got everyone charged up to get involved. Though some of the suggestions - in my opinion - may have been unrealistic, I feel this was a very healthy exercise and indicated the genuine intention of the PMC team to involve the members of the community at every step of the way in planning 9000 Bathurst.

To go a step further, the Saturday session was even followed up by individual phone calls where very pleasant volunteers from the community patiently and very politely asked for our feedback on the future of this investment of ours. I sincerely wish and pray that Allah (swt) gives the perspicacity and effort to keep on with this task, ameen.

Shabbir Mohamed
Toronto

Kenyan reader distributes JN article

I receive your magazine from my son Haider Jaffer who lives in Brampton, Toronto. It is a very well produced magazine. The article on *Living with Widowhood* was just excellent. I made copies of the article in both Gujarati and English and distributed it locally.

Hassan Ali M. Jaffer
Mombasa, Kenya

Another great issue

You've done it again! Congratulations on another great issue of *Ja'ffari News*. Once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down! In fact, I kept reading it over and over again.

Being away from home, *Ja'ffari News* brings me closer to home. All the articles have been very well-written, and may Allah reward you for all your efforts.

It is nice to see such varied issues tackled in your magazine - from *Living with Disability* to *The Religious Significance of Gemstones*. Regarding the article *Spiritual Journeys* -- to the families who make the journey to the Toronto Madressas, keep it up! It is definitely worth the drive! I wish my drive to Toronto wasn't eight hours, or I would have been one of the people commuting to Toronto Madressas every Sunday too.

The articles on *Volunteering* certainly makes us appreciate the wonderful job being done by our volunteers. I would, however, like to add that we should (especially in the ladies' section) encourage more youth involvement in the volunteer groups as well as in the committee. Our youths need to be integrated in the day-to-day functions of our mosque.

Please convey my congratulations to the co-ordinator and volunteers of Nonihal for the wonderful job that they are doing. It is great to hear that Nonihal has expanded to Nonihal Seniors!

Tahera Jessa
Ridgewood, N.J.

JN Disability Article can bring about change

I want to say Ahsant, Jazakullah to the editor of *Ja'ffari News*. I found the articles to be very insightful and thought provoking. Please continue with this excellent job. I was really impressed by one of the articles *Living With Disability: A Test of God, Punishable by Man*, written by Yasin Devji.

As an occupational therapist who is working to empower clients with physical and psychiatric disabilities I feel that there is a need in our community to bring about awareness and to advocate for the disabled population. There is a need for us to form a committee to approach government and non-profit organizations to ask for funding. I look forward to meeting Brother Yasin Devji, and perhaps we can work to bring about more awareness, and implement some changes.

Azim Chagani
Toronto

Read more correspondence overleaf...

Meeting the Waziri Family: Words of Wisdom

By Mahjabeen Jaffer-Yusufali and Mohamed Jaffer

To someone meeting them for the first time, they may seem like any ordinary family. But, of course, this is definitely not the case. The Waziri family is unique, to say the least. All five members of the family have memorized the complete holy Qur'an and any list of their combined talents and abilities would fail to do them justice. Not only have they memorized the location, text and translation of the Quran's ayaat and many ahadith, they have also memorized the name of the book the hadith can be found in, along with the volume number and page number of the hadith. Their uncanny ability to memorize and recite in various orders has enabled them to learn, by heart, the Nahj ul-Balagha, Sahifa as-Sajjadiya, Usoul e Kaafi, seventy-two books on traditions, and many other Islamic works.

For almost a year, Toronto waited in anticipation of the Waziri family, whom the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Husain al-Khameni' has called, "the miracle of the Quran in the present century". Their much awaited appearance at the Jaffa'ri Islamic Centre was met with a spellbound audience that watched in amazement as the members of the Waziri family demonstrated their astonishing skills. Even more incredible was the realization that all the children of the Waziri family are under 14.

My family and I had the good fortune and pleasure of spending an evening with the Waziris at an informal dinner held at the home of Miriam and Sajjad Ali. Afterwards, as my brother Mohamed and I sat down with Mr. Waziri for an interview in the Urdu language, we were impressed by Mr. Waziri's warmth, friendliness and good sense of humour. He gave us a glimpse of his life, his views and some of the key elements of the personal method he used to train his children. It was a valuable opportunity to learn more about the

personal lives of these admirable, dedicated individuals and to understand a little bit more about the making of a miracle.

Hurmat Ali Waziri holds a degree in law from Karachi University. Born in Karachi, Mr. Waziri came from a well-to-do Pakistani family who owned the historical residence that Pakistan's Founder of the Nation, Mohamed Ali Jinnah lived in. It was on his first visit to the Holy Ka'aba that Hurmat Ali resolved to pursue his dream of having children whom he could devote to Allah (s.w.t) and the propagation of Islam. He prayed for Allah (sw.t.) to give him a pious wife who could share in his dream. It was on that same trip that he met a family from Pakistan whose daughter he eventually married.

When their son Mohamed Sadiq was born to Hurmat Ali and Rukhsana Waziri, Hurmat Ali consulted with Agha Seestani and other ulema about his mission and *niyyah* to make his children Qur'an reciters; they advised him to leave Pakistan and to move to Qum to be truly successful. Leaving his extended family, wealth and an attractive law career behind him, Mr. Waziri decided to go to Qum and began his studies in the Hawza ilmiyyah. When his son, Mohamed Sadiq, turned eight, Mr. Waziri took over the supervision of teaching him the memorization of the holy Qura'n.

"With the high ambitions and aspirations that we had and keeping in mind the value and importance of the Qur'an, we started working on an organized program", recalls Mr. Waziri. He explained that "when the children are 5-7 years of age, my wife supervises their

learning. I take over when the child reaches the age of 7." An English translation of the Farsi book, "*Ba Khadaman-e-Qur'an*" (i.e., 'with the servants of the Qur'an') covering the various aspects of the life of the Waziri



Fatima Khanum (12), Muhammad Sadiq (14), Zahra Khanum (7), and Mr. Hurmat Ali Waziri converse with JN Editor

family, and methodology of memorization of the Qur'an, pictures, awards, etc. will be available shortly.

"People tell me that memorizing Qur'an is difficult or takes too long" says Mr. Waziri. "I have continually said that when you want to get a bachelor's degree or Ph.D. degree you have to spend 5 years at elementary school, 3 years at secondary school, 4 years at high school and university 4 to 7 years. On the whole that is 19 years, and during this period of time you put yourself and your family through quite a struggle in order to get this Ph.D. Well, this degree is important but in comparison with Qur'an it is nothing".

As he extols the virtues and stresses the importance of reciting Qur'an, Mr. Waziri freely quotes from various ahadith and Quranic Ayaat. "It is mentioned in the narrative and tradition that it is recommended for everyone to read 50 verses or one-fifth or one *joze* of Qur'an each day", he explains.

“Why don’t we look at the promises of Allah (s.w.t)? It has come in different narrations that God has said, “Read Qur’an and go up (improve); it means for each verse that he memorizes he is given a higher position. Of course, anybody who wants to do this type of work, his goal should be for the satisfaction of God. This holy work should not be polluted by worldly aims, but surely worldly blessing will come after that.” Mr. Waziri said that if we all analyze

high time that more scholarship funds rewarding the memorization of the Qur’an exist for the youth of the community. He feels that monetary rewards can motivate a child and may stir people emotionally so that an interest in Qur’an memorization will emerge. He cites the example of Qura’n khaani in Ramadhan. “Imagine the uproar if we didn’t give rewards at the end of the year? Even adults feel disappointed when they don’t receive some recognition. There

is some value in giving gifts or money. We can raise funds easily if we put our minds to it. There are so many families in Toronto. If we focused on, say, 14 children and even 1,000 people gave a \$100 dollars monthly we can motivate a child to receive a \$100 continual reward for memorizing each *jوزه* until he finishes the whole Qur’an. We pay him the \$3,000 monthly as a lifetime scholarship. Each of these



Mr. Hurmat Ali Waziri talks to JN Editor and her brother, Mohamad Jaffer

ourselves, we can see how much time, money, effort and determination we invest when we truly want something in this world. He lamented the fact that when it comes to learning the holy Qur’an, some people do not prioritize well. For example, we may spend \$125 sending our child once a week to a private academy to learn math, but how much time does that student spend at madressah or with a private Qur’an tutor? How much money are people willing to spend on a devoted and skilled aalim to teach their children on a regular basis?

“A simple degree can take up to 20 years and with a superior Book like the Qur’an we should spend twice as much time studying it. But what do we do?” asks Mr. Waziri. “We don’t even give it an hour a day. For 20 years if you dedicate to Qur’an you cannot imagine how much one would learn. We will have to respect it, elevate it, give it eminence in our lives. Allah (sw.t) will open the doors of mercy.”

According to Mr. Waziri, it is

14 students would teach another 14 students in 14 countries, thus creating a worldwide chain. Remember that anecdote about that hafiz e Quran who the Holy Prophet (SAW) bestowed with gold? Why? To attract people’s interest and attention, we could say, in today’s terms, ‘media promotion’. We have to find a way to see what people attach importance to and respect. Think for example, “x” does a great unique job, a miracle. If you declare you would give him 10 billion dollars, tell me how many people will telecast this newsworthy item? Think of how much tabligh this will generate. ABC, CNN etc. all world’s media will sit up to attention. ‘What is the Quran?’ they will ask.” Including such scholarships when writing one’s will can also help the cause, suggests Mr. Waziri.

The method of Qur’an memorization that the Waziris followed was based on five principles: pure attention, self confidence, assurance of God (certainty about God’s help), giving importance to time and continuation. With

attention to this five principles and other details such as listening to taped cassettes 14 times, working for 14 hours a day, using the same Qur’an for memorization (for visual memory) etc. Mr. Waziri believes that anyone can achieve the results that he has had with his family. He believes that if his method (as outlined in the aforementioned book) is followed, a person, even if he tries not to memorize the Quran will know it by heart. His second claim is that once learned, it is impossible to forget the memorized Qur’an, even if one tries to forget for a hundred years.

“Allah (s.w.t) has given us brains. You can use CD Roms too, if you want, it can help as a supplementary aid to learn. But various things have to be implemented together. Guidance is needed but balance it out. I have employed my skills according to my own knowledge so I would ask that you don’t implement my advice unless superiors have okayed it. I am small, my words are small. I consider myself as the missionary of God and the servant of the Qur’an. And I thank His generosity that he has given me His favour to train such children like Mohammad Sadiq, Zahra Khanum and Fatima Khanum. In the last years we have been to about 500 cities and countries. We are doing tabligh and are determined to go ahead. Until we die, we are committed to sacrifice for Allah (s.w.t), for Shariat, for Allah (sw.t.’s) message, for His Qur’an. If we keep our hopes and desires aside what is the difference? May Allah (s.w.t) accept our efforts, Ameen.

*For more information
about The Waziri Family,
visit:*

*<[http://www.geocities.com/
Heartland/Creek/2478/kids/
WAZIRI/Waziri.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Creek/2478/kids/WAZIRI/Waziri.htm)>*

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