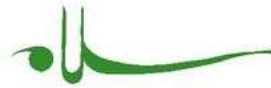




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The Muslim Planet Project

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Acknowledgments:

This issue consists of one article contributed by Professor Abdur Rahim Choudhary who is a leading thinker and an author.

Disclaimer: Views expressed in the articles are those of their authors and do not necessarily represent the Muslim Planet Project.



An Action Plan for the Muslim Community in North America

By Professor Abdur Rahim Choudhary
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Abstract

In this issue of the News Journal we present an action plan for the Muslim Community in North America. The goal of this plan is to effectively respond (not just react) to the sociopolitical realities prevailing in USA in order to ensure a future of strength, security, prosperity, sharing, and political consequentiality. This is a plan of living dynamism that self evaluates and self improves in order to always remain valid, effective, and consequential with respect to the current interests of the community, the fruits of its past actions, and the outlook towards its future aspirations.

While these considerations are important for the individual members of the community, they carry a greatly enhanced importance when applied at the level of the entire community. The two aspects are strongly coupled. An individual derives its strength from the connectedness to the community. Many individuals who achieve prosperity within a weak or unsupportive community often do so via their connectedness to some other community. As a result they often carry within themselves a feeling of being dis-empowered and an outsider. There is no way around this situation. On the other hand, a community that is weak within the community of communities and therefore becomes dis-empowered, can neither support its members nor a standing of itself. The community needs its members, and the members need the community. This mutual dependence is intrinsic and innate almost by the very definition of the concept of a community and the meaning of its membership. This article is the application of these thoughts and principles to the Muslim community within North America in general, and USA in particular.

Introduction

On December 03, 2016, some concerned citizens gathered to assess the treatment meted to the Muslim Citizens of USA. They unanimously observed the following:

In the current political and social environment of USA the American Muslim Community does not receive human respect, citizen's dignity, equal justice, and proper image depiction.

As a think-tank for American Muslim Community, the group deemed it important that some entity act in order to rectify the situation. The **Muslim Planet** project was started as that entity from where the action shall come.

Subsequently, focus was directed on two strategic aspects.

1. A platform of the American Muslim Community is needed, that is designed and operated for the community, and by the community. We now call it iCommunity Platform (the web material is currently being reorganized so please excuse the broken links). It has two components: a technology component and a sociological component. The technology platform has been completed, deployed, and operationalized.
2. An intra-community outreach program is needed in the spirit of self-help towards prosperity and strength. This program requires an in depth understanding of the community and to reach out to its members. This is the sociological platform. Work is ongoing on this part to achieve an integrated and unified action platform. A face of this component is the **Muslim Voice** project within the Muslim Planet. This News Journal is also a part of the sociological component to be achieved by leveraging the technological component.

We are very pleased with the progress that we have made so far. We now provide five significant services that are operational in the service of the community. We also use these services for the Muslim Voice project that enables the community to have its own voice in main street USA.

We look forward to the coming years with great expectations.

iCommunity

The iCommunity Technology Platform under Muslim Planet enables understanding of the Muslim community coming from within. It leads to deeper knowledge about the community dynamics. Following are some examples.

- What is the size of the community, how is it geographically distributed in terms of election districts, can we leverage this distribution to have our own representatives at governmental and public forums, and if so how best to actualize the potential? Such inquiries are worthy contributions for our peer reviewed Journal of Muslim Culture.
- What is the financial state of the community, and how the financial resources can be mobilized, including to help the above mentioned electoral potential?
- What are the common religious commitments and motivations? Examples include the following needs of the community members:
 - Salat needs,
 - Saum needs,
 - Need to pay Fitrah on Eid-alFitr,
 - Need to sacrifice animals on Eid-al-Azha,
 - Need to pay Zakah on yearly basis,
 - Travel needs for Haj,
 - Halal food needs,
 - Hijab and Ihram needs.

How can these needs be met in an optimized way? That means that the needs be met in a way that the individual is helped in meeting them in a cost effective way consistent with his religious preferences, and at the same time the community also benefits from this activity in the sense that the community becomes more empowered and prosperous as well as spiritually enlightened.

Such knowledge leads to social, political, economic, and religious avenues for the benefit of the community and its members. For example, is there an economic pursuit that the Muslim community can preferentially benefit from if proper planning and resources from within the community can be mobilized? There are multi billion dollar Muslim activities that are profitably used by non Muslims. Examples include the Halal foods, Halal travel and tourism, Sharia compliant banking and lending, and Hijab clothing.

There are also religiously mandated regularly conducted economic activities that involve large sums of money on a yearly basis, and yet they make no significant dent in the poverty situations within the community. Example of such religiously mandated activities are the Zakah, Fitrah, and Sadaqat.

How can the potentials of the religious mandates be conducted in a way that is optimized for the good of the Great Muslim Nation? We can seek progressively measurable improvement, year over year, to remedy the poverty related social situations. The benefit of such optimized mobilizations can include jobs for community members, business investment opportunities for wealthier community members, multiple economic activity benefits along the supply chain and product delivery processes, and collaboration and alliance potentials within the community and with other communities and groups.

These are examples of the tasks to be addressed by leveraging the Muslim Planet project.

The execution is supported by a platform for the Muslims, designed and operated by the Muslims. The platform has a technological component which has already been achieved and a sociological component work on which is ongoing.

Such a platform can give voice to the Muslim community, and keep them engaged with the overarching situations impacting the community. Some elements of such a platform are knowledge through self expression and sharing using websites, blogs, newsletter, peer reviewed journal, and book publication. Easy availability of these elements is healthy.

However, the technology platform is only a tool. It is useful to the scale at which the community uses it. Fortunately the same features of the platform are also used for an outreach to the community: to persuade them of the value to get involved and stay engaged. The community can be approached using the same features of the platform as stated above, namely websites, blogs, newsletter, peer reviewed journal, and book publication.

We aim to present the Muslim contributions to the world in the areas of spirituality, culture, economic principals, scientific research, technology, ethics, and world peace. This would serve three purposes: inform the community of their strength and potential, outreach to American people about the same strengths and contributions, and know the community dynamics from within. Towards this end we are in the process of

- Starting a News Journal involving US Masajid;
- Starting a forward looking Journal of Muslim Culture involving intellectuals; and
- Hold an annual conference of the representatives of US Masajid and Muslim intellectuals.

Get Involved

Muslim community and the Muslim community members are strongly coupled. An individual derives its strength from the connectedness to the community. Many

individuals who achieve prosperity within a weak or unsupportive community often do so via their connectedness to some other community. As a result they often carry within themselves a feeling of being dis-empowered because of being an outsider to that community. There is no way around this situation.

On the other hand, a community that is weak within the community of communities and therefore becomes dis-empowered can neither support its members nor a standing of itself. The community needs its members, and the members need the community. This mutual dependence is intrinsic and innate almost by the very definition of the concept of a community and the meaning of its membership.

So please do get involved. You might ask how?

Following are some of the ways you can support your community, and in turn get supported.

1. Use the free services offered by the Muslim Planet project and its affiliated projects. For example you can go to the [Muslim Voice](#) and get a FREE blogging account on the platform of your own community. You will be among like minded people, experiencing the similar circumstances, and having similar aspirations. You can share your thoughts and ideas; listen to others and, proverbially speaking, contribute your own two cents. This is how a “Virtual Think Tank” for Muslims will emerge. Yes you can get a free account also at wordpress.com and some other web hosting entities. However, at Muslim Planet we provide you a specialized service primarily designed and operated for the Muslim Community. Further, its service is personalized for you, and also is technologically superior in editor capabilities, and the freedom in the choice of plugins, and themes. We allow you to manage your own users and accounts. All these improvements are designed to let a “Virtual Think Tank” emerge within the Muslim community; and no such possibility exists if you go to wordpress.com or other platforms. And remember, we are not for profit while the alternatives want to make a buck out of you.
2. You can contribute content to many areas provided for you by the Muslim Planet project. Following are some examples (contact email: iCommynity@mail.MuslimPlanet.org).
 1. Send us your content for the [News Journal](#).
 2. Write a scholarly contribution for the Journal of Muslim Culture.
 3. Write a Blog entry for the Muslim Voice.
 4. Write a Blog entry for Muslim Planet.
 5. Participate in the Annual Conference of Masajid and Muslim intellectuals.
3. Volunteer your time and services for the management and operations of the Muslim Planet project and its affiliated projects. The work so far has used private funds and volunteer technical and organizational capabilities.

4. Contribute financially. You can gift your contributions. You can also contribute Zakat and Sadakat and Fitra as mandated in Islam. These funds are often used for individuals who get out of their immediate predicaments but can find themselves in similar circumstances year after year. We use these funds for the upliftment and prosperity of the entire community, and therefore seek to break the perpetuating cycle of dependence. So please click to [DONATE](#).

May Allah bless you and your community.



Announcements

1. New Year Mubarak (Muharram is here)
2. Independence days in September Mubarak to Libya, Qatar, Mali, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. It is sad that these countries are currently suffering from war.