

YOUNG EUROPEAN MUSLIM



From the Editorial Team . . .

Assalamu-Alaikum and Greetings!

Welcome to the twelfth issue of the Young European Muslim Newsletter (YEM). We are a team of young people from Blackburn in Lancashire whose ages range from 13 to 19. This newsletter is intended, not specifically for Young European Muslims, but for everyone throughout the world. We work together on a regular basis to design and produce quarterly newsletters on 'Muslim issues' such as Islamic Festivals, Drugs, and Islamophobia. We constantly seek feedback from our readers concerning the contents of this newsletter - Were there any parts you particularly enjoyed? Can we make any improvements? Any form of feedback would be highly welcome.

Introduction

This is the twelfth issue, marking our third anniversary and also the end of Volume 1. This issue is a summary of the past eleven issues we have produced over the last three years at YEM. We have covered some very emotive and emotional subjects such as Drugs, Suicide and Euthanasia, Islamophobia, Bullying and the tragedies that occurred in Gujarat. Additionally, we have also covered lighter topics concerning Ramadan and Islamic Festivals, What is Islam and the medicinal properties of Honey.

Over the next two and a half years we aim to bring you another ten issues of YEM (Volume 2). We hope you have enjoyed Volume 1 and if there are any topic that you would like us to highlight then please let us know. We will try our best to accomodate your requests.

1 - Ramadan - What is It?

Issue 1 was based on Ramadan and Eid. This was a four page issue that was published in December 2000 (Ramadan 1421 AH). The topics covered were:-

Ramadan, What is it?; Celebrating Ramadan in the UK and abroad; What is Suhoor and Iftar?; Taraweeh; Lailat-ul-Qadr (The Night of Power); The Breath Factor; Celebrating Eid in The UK and Abroad, Here is just a taster from the articles...

...Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, when. It is believed that the Holy Qur'an (the primary scripture of the muslims) was revealed through the Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) to the Prophet, Muhammed Peace be Upon Him (PBUH) by Allah, during this holy month of Ramadan. It is during this month of Ramadan that Muslims fast. On average the fast lasts between twenty-nine to thirty days.

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2 - What is Islam?

Issue 2 was based on Islam. This was a four page issue and was published in March 2001 (Dhul al-Hijjah 1421 AH). The topics covered were: -

What Is Islam?, Who Is Allah, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) The Messenger of Allah, The Islamic Lunar Calender, The Five Pillars of Islam, Women in Islam, The Day of Judgement. Here is a small snippet...

...Allah is an Arabic word for God. It is a unique term since it has no plural or gender, unlike the English word for God. To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty, the Creator of everything. There is nothing equal to Allah, he is unique, we



cannot see him yet he is everywhere and knows everything. The Holy Quran mentions that Allah is closer to us than our jugular vein. However, the Qur'an categorically states that it is beyond the human to comprehend Allah. Knowledge of Allah and belief in him is the very foundation of Islam. Allah is always there for us. He is the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent, the Provider, the All-knowing, the All Hearing and the Forgiver.

3 - Drug Abuse

Issue 3 was a Drugs Special. This was an eight page issue that was published in June 2001 (Rabbi al-awwal 1422 AH). The topics covered were: -

Drug Abuse in the Asian Community, Drugs and the Law, Islamic Law regarding intoxicants, Islam and Drugs and the A-Z of Drugs. Here is a sample...

...Out of all the European countries, Britain has the highest proportion of drug users. By the age of sixteen over half of the young people in Britain today will have experimented with drugs.

Continued from page 1.....

Drug abuse amongst the South Asian heritage communities is on the increase, the highest being the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. Nevertheless it affects everyone, regardless of class, culture and education. Even members of Parliament and their families are not exempt.

There is no simple solution to stop young people using drugs. Many attempts have been made and are still being made by the government and local communities to tackle this problem, but with very limited success. Tougher laws only seem to send the problem "further underground". To over-emphasise the dangers of drug abuse can result in young people completely disregarding the dangers.

Often parents do not understand why young people might want to try drugs, especially if their faith or culture forbids it. The influence of religion or culture offers very little safeguards for young people e.g. in Islam intoxicants are forbidden yet, despite this, the number of young Muslims using drugs is increasing...

4 - Suicide and Euthanasia

Issue 4 was based on Suicide and Euthanasia. This was an eight page issue that was published in September 2001 (Rajjab 1422 AH). The topics covered were:-

The Journey through Life; Suicide and Young People; Suicidal Behaviour; Key facts Regarding Suicide; What Is Euthanasia?; Current Legislation; Views of the BMA regarding Euthanasia; Islam and Euthanasia; Islamic Code of Medical Ethics; Nazi Germany and Euthanasia; and "I'm your Doctor, I'm here to Kill You!". Here is a selection...

...The Qur'an expressly forbids suicide and the impact of this ruling still has considerable force in Islam. There are virtually no officially recorded suicides in Muslim countries. This does not mean that suicides do not occur in these countries.

In Islam suicide is as unlawful as murder because Muslims believe that every soul and body has been created by Allah and therefore owned by Allah. In other words no person owns his own soul or body. This means he is not allowed to harm the soul, or attempt to destroy body in which he lives.

Death is beyond human control. No person can control the time of their passing unless Allah sanctions it as it states in the Holy Qur'an Surah Al - Waqi'a (56 81-87)...

5 - Islamophobia Part One

Issue 5 was based on Islamophobia. This was a twelve page issue that was published in January 2002 (Sharwwal 1422 AH). It was the first of a two part in depth investigation into Islamophobia. The topics covered were:

Islamophobia in The West, The Runnymede Trust, The Nature of Islamophobia, Open and Closed Views of Islam, The Historical Context, "Fundamentalism"; Islam Seen as Inferior; Islam Seen as an Enemy not as a Partner, Perceptions of Islam as a Threat, Muslims seen as

Manipulative - not sincere; Discrimination against Muslims Defended Rather than Challenged; Anti Muslim Discourse seen as Natural - not Problematic; Consequences and Connections; and Fundamentalism in Christianity. Here is just a small portion...

...The word 'Islamophobia' has been coined because there is a new reality, which needs naming. Anti-Muslim prejudice has grown so considerably and so rapidly in recent years that a new item in the vocabulary is needed so that it can be identified and acted against. In a similar way there was a time in European history when a new word, anti-Semitism, was needed and coined to highlight the growing dangers of anti-Jewish hostility. The coining of a new word, and with it the identification of a growing danger did not in that instance prevent eventual tragedy. By the same token, the mere use of the new word 'Islamophobia' will not in itself prevent tragic conflict and misuse. But, we believe, it can play a valuable part in the attempt of correcting perceptions and improving relationships.



It is not phobic or prejudiced, of course, to disagree with or to disapprove of Muslim beliefs, laws or practices. Followers of other world faiths disagree with Muslims on points of theology and religious practice. In a liberal democracy it is inevitable and healthy that people will criticise and condemn, sometimes robustly, opinions and practices with which they disagree. It is legitimate to criticise policies and practices of Muslim states and regimes, for example, especially when their governments do not subscribe to internationally recognised human rights...

6 - The Atrocities in Gujarat

Issue number 6 was based on the Hostilities in India . This was an twelve page issue that was published in July 2002 (Rabbi al-awwal 1423 AH). The topics covered were:-

Hostility In India, A Very Odd Democracy, BJP's Failure to Protect Citizens, Vajaypee's Hostile Remarks, Ethnic Cleansing in the EU, British High Commision's Secret Report on Gujarat Violence, Kill Cut and loot the Muslims, We Have no Orders to Save You, Thousands Fill Relief Camps, The Survivors Speak, Mass Burials, Traumatic Effect on The Children, The Destruction of Mosques and Holy Muslim Shrines, Why the Trouble Began, Isolation of Muslims And Christians; and the VHP's Economic War on Muslims. Here we reproduce a small example....

...A European Union investigation into India's worst race riots in a decade has concluded that the violence was not spontaneous but a pre-planned policy involving state ministers to "purge" Muslims and destroy their economy.

The report provides one of the most damning indictments yet on the Gujarat riots, which have killed almost 900 people, mostly Muslims, in a matter of weeks. One EU source said the report pointed to "ethnic cleansing" of Muslims in the State and that there was clear evidence of complicity by State Ministers. The report has been submitted to the 15 EU Governments who will decide what action to take and how to raise their concerns at the next EU-India summit in Delhi. "Gujarat is one of the items on the summit agenda. I imagine we will express concern about everything in our report, including evidence of a purge," said the EU source. "If that fails to yield a dialogue, further measures will have to be considered", he said.

Some western diplomats described events in Gujarat as "genocide" for the first time. While the EU report stopped short of using that word, it clearly implied there was a policy of "ethnic cleansing". "The pattern of violence suggests the purpose was to purge Muslims from Hindu and mixed Hindu/Muslim areas," said a copy of the final draft seen by the "Financial Times". "Muslim businesses were systematically targeted and destroyed." On the role of BJP State Officials in Gujarat, the report states: "Ministers took active part in the violence, senior police officers were instructed not to intervene".....AS YET (END OF SEPTEMBER 2003) NO ONE HAS BEEN HELD ACCOUNTABLE!

7 - Islamophobia Part Two

Issue 7 was based on Islamophobia. This was a twelve page issue that was published in January 2003 (Sharwwal 1423 AH). This was the second of a two part in depth investigation into Islamophobia the topics covered were:-

Media Portrayals of Muslims; Bearers of Bad News; Why Do Muslims Face a Stiffer Test of Nationality; Western Hatred is Increasing; Islamic Graffiti Found after FBI Search; Islamophobia in The EU; Muslims Told to Speak Dutch in Mosques; Airline Pilot Compares Women in Hijab to "Shameful Whores"; Muslim Graves Desecrated in Argentina; "Islam is Stupid"; Attacks on Welsh Muslims; Muslim Leader attacked in Belfast; Islamophobic Attacks in The UK; Here is an example from the articles...

...People who "look Muslim", have been the main victims of anti-Islamic sentiment in Europe since the September 11th attacks, a European racism body said on 23/05/2002. However, in a study entitled "Islamophobia in the EU", it said the attacks on New York and Washington had served mainly to ignite prejudices, which had smouldered for years. "September 11th has in some cases merely acted as a detonator of feelings that we have failed to adequately address," Bob Purkiss, chairman of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), told a news conference. "If it is right for Europe to give a lead where there is ethnic tension elsewhere in the world, then it is imperative that it puts its own house in order if it is to be listened to," he said, presenting the study....

8 - Bullying

Issue 8 was based on Bullying. This was an eight page issue that was published in April 2003 (Saffar 1424 AH). This was a comprehensive study of a very serious subject and articles covered:

Extent of the Problem, Advice to Pupils and Parents, Body Language, Taking time off School, How to approach the School, Problems on the School Bus, Moving Your Child to Another School, Education at Home, Legal Action, Racist Bullying, What Can Schools Do, Consequences of Bullying. Here is a selection...

...Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. A comprehensive intervention plan that involves



all students, parents, and school staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment. The work which schools do to tackle bullying can also be effective in reducing racism, Islamophobia and other related issues. Children can learn skills, such as assertiveness and compassion; they can acquire knowledge about relationships, rights and responsibilities; and they can develop values such as openness and respecting differences. However, this learning will only be effective if the context in which it can be used is specifically discussed. With regard to knowledge, they may not realise that some words that are in common use are perceived as being racist by black or Asian pupils unless this is openly discussed in the classroom...

9 - Genetically Modified Foods

Issue 9 was based on Genetically Modified food. This was a 4 page issue and was published in May 2003 (Rabbi-al-Awwal 1424 AH). The topics covered were:

Islam and the Environment, GM Foods, Herbicide Resistant Crops, Pesticide Producing Crops, Cross-Pollination and Superweeds, America Angered by European Curbs on GM, GM Foods & World Hunger. Here is a (modified) taste...

...Scientists can now create plants that nature itself has never produced. These are plants that are resistant to chemicals that kill weeds (herbicides), plants that produce chemicals to kill insects (pesticides) and plants that last longer after harvesting. The methods used to produce these crops involve changing, or modifying, material with

in the crops, called genes. Genes are contained in the cells of all living things. They guide how living things are made and how they function. The production of Genetically Modified food is causing a huge row. Its creators believe that GM Crops are the future of agriculture, and that they will be healthier and more productive than other crops...

10 - Women, Equality and Islam

Issue 10 was based on the social standing of women in Islam. This was a 4 page issue that was published in June 2003 (Jumada-al-Ula 1424 AH). The topics covered were:

Status of Women in Islam, Hijab - Suppression or Liberation, Women Equal to Men, The Veil or Burq'a, Marriage in Islam, Children; and Equality and the Law. Here is a sample of this newsletter...

...Islam should be viewed as a religion that has immensely improved the status of women and has granted them many rights that the modern world has recognised only this century. Islam still has so much to offer today's woman: dignity, respect, and protection in all aspects and all stages of her life from birth until death. This is in addition to the recognition, the balance, and means for the fulfilment of all her spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional needs. No wonder most of those who choose to become Muslims in a country like Britain are women.



In the U.S. women converts to Islam outnumber male converts 4 to 1 (*The Times*, Nov. 18, 1993). Ambassador Herman Eilts, in a testimony in front of the committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress on June 24th, 1985, said, "*The Muslim community of the globe today is in the neighbourhood of one billion. That is an impressive figure. But what to me is equally impressive is that Islam today is the fastest growing monotheistic religion. This is something we have to take into account. Something is right about Islam. It is attracting a good many people.*"



11 - Honey

Issue 11 was based on the medicinal and therapeutic properties of Honey. This was a 4 page issue that was published in August 2003 (Rajjab 1424 AH). The topics covered were:-

Honey the Antibiotic of the Future?, Let Him Drink Honey, Honey Is Good For Teeth!, Honeybee Pollen. Royal Jelly; and Bee Venom. Here is a small excerpt...

...Honey is now known for its antibiotic, antioxidant and antiviral capabilities. In fact, honey contains an enzyme that produces hydrogen peroxide, which is believed to be the main reason for its anti-microbial activity. Honey is also used for sore throats, colds, heartburn, fever, blisters, cuts, acne, skin disorders, ulcers, stomach inflammations and cataracts... and its flavour excites the appetite (*The National Honey Board*). While the healing properties of honey may be news to modern science, Prophet Mohammad (*PBUH*) commented on its value 1400 years ago. "*Honey is a remedy for every illness and the Qur'an is a remedy for all illnesses of the mind, therefore I (The Prophet) recommend to you both remedies the Qur'an and honey*" (*Bukhari*).

In the Holy Qur'an the *Surah "The Bee"*, also speaks of the importance of bees in Islam. *Surah 16*, verse 69 describes a drink of various colours produced from the bellies of bees, which is full of healing properties for mankind. Many people interpret this "drink" to mean honey, however, bees also produce another healing drink in their bodies - Bee Venom. This is a complex mixture used by the bees to protect their hives against predators...

A final word from the Editorial Team

We hope you have all enjoyed reading our articles and will continue to read *The YEM Volume 2* editions. We would like to thank each of the young people who participated in producing the first volume:-

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