

# MWWWI Newsletter

Muslim Women Writers Workshop-International Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4

The Nurturing Pen

Muharram 23, 1429 / Feb. 1, 2008

Assalaam Alaikum! MWWWI welcomes you our readers to the fourth issue of our newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you with suggestions and contributions about events and of your literary endeavors.



**IQRAA! READ IN THE NAME OF YOUR LORD!**

**THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD!**

## Six Steps to Publishing your book in 1429!

**MWWWI** encourages you to make 1429 (Islamic New Year began Muharram 1/ Jan. 10), the year you publish your book! Check out these steps and get going!

### Pick a target date for holding the first copy of your book in your hands

1. Staying focused on a specific date will help you remain productive. Set a date that you'll have to work to achieve, but don't make it unrealistic or unattainable. Many first-time authors pick dates with special significance, such as a birthday, professional meeting or speaking engagement.

### 2. Set a schedule to meet your goal

Once you pick your publication date, work backwards, putting dates on a calendar of when you need your manuscript completed and submitted. Also, include time for illustrations or editing, if needed.


### 3. Pay attention to the best time and place for you to write productively

Experienced writers say they've learned there are

*Continued on page 2*

## Ten Impediments to Seeking Knowledge by Dr. Saleh As Saleh

Make 1429 the year you overcome the obstacles keeping you from fulfilling your goals.

1. **Corrupt Intentions.** (The root of it all!)
2. **Love of fame** (loving to lead; this falls under intentions –hidden desires.)
3. **Negligence regarding circles of knowledge .** (You have to go to knowledge; not for it to come to you)
4. **Seeking excuses in having much to do.** (Being very busy. This is an impediment raised by Shaytan.)
5. **Negligence at seeking knowledge at an early age.**
6. **Turning away from seeking knowledge.** (Being busy following current events, politics, magazines, newspapers etc.,)
7. **Self purification.** (Sanctifying yourself. You love to be praised and are pleased in hearing yourself being praised. 3:188; 53:32; 12:55)
8. **Not acting upon knowledge.** (You must affirm and establish the knowledge. Four steps: 1. Ilm.; 2. Acting; 3. Call to it; 4. Patiently persevere the harm that may be inflicted on the person due to his calling. 65:2)
9. **Despair and belittling oneself.** (Do not belittle yourself when learning Qur'an due to weak memory and poor recitation, etc. This is a great cause against achievement. These are illnesses that can be cured. Good memory is achieved by avoiding sins.)
10. **False hopes and wishful thinking.** This is the capital of the bankrupt; a soldier of shaytan. You think there will come a time when you can learn. Don't postpone today's work until tomorrow.  [www.understand-slam.net](http://www.understand-slam.net); 14-Points of Benefit- Seeking knowledge-Impediments

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 [Six Steps to Publishing Your Book in 1429/2008!](#)
- 1 [Ten Impediments to Seeking Knowledge](#)
- 2 [Literary Contests for Independent Writers](#)
- 2 [How Writers Work: Anthony Trollope](#)
- 3-5 [The Poetry Corner: The Arabic Ghazal; The Persian Ghazal](#)
- 5-6 [Poems, Member News and UAE Events](#)
- 7 [Literary Events: Dubai; Jaipur; Press Release](#)

better times and settings for them to write. Just like athletes, certain conditions can put a writer in the “zone” where words flow freely. Once you’ve figured out where and when you do your best writing, commit to writing regularly in those conditions.


#### **4. Make yourself accountable to someone for finishing your book**

Choose someone who will help make sure you’re staying focused. It can be a friend, family member or someone familiar with book publishing. You may also be able to find another writer who also wants to complete their manuscript in 2008, and you can keep each other moving forward throughout the year.

#### **5. Create a marketing plan for your finished book**

The success of a book is often directly tied to successful planning. To maximize your sales potential, a successful marketing plan must be in place before your book launch. Develop a plan for how you’ll get the word out about your new book. Your own Web site, press releases, book signings and speaking engagements should all be considered.

#### **6. Plan an event to celebrate your book’s publication**

Writing a book can be one of the most enjoyable accomplishments of your life. Celebrate by throwing a launch party or scheduling a book signing at a local bookstore. This is more than a book—it’s part of your legacy. Take a few moments to celebrate your achievement and capitalize on the buzz you’ve created for your new book. *Ref. Authorhouse, Dec. 2007* 

### **How Writers Work:** Anthony Trollope, Author

Trollope the machine: Every day for years he woke in darkness and wrote from 5:30 A.M. to 8:30 A.M., with his watch in front of him. He required of himself two hundred and fifty words every quarter of an hour. If he finished one novel before eight-thirty, he took out a fresh piece of paper and started the next. The writing session was followed, for a long stretch of time, by a day job with the postal service. Plus, he said, he always hunted at least twice a week. Under this regimen, he produced forty-nine novels in thirty-five years! Having prospered so well, he urged his method on all writers: ‘Let their work be to them as is his common work to the common laborer. No gigantic efforts will then be necessary. He need tie no wet towels round his brow, nor sit for thirty hours at his desk without moving,—as men have sat, or said that they have sat.’

## **Literary Contests for Independent Writers**

These are contests specifically for self published books, independent publishers and their authors.

*Deadline: 5th of every month*

### **Writers' Forum Ongoing Short Story Competition**

Prizes range from a minimum 1st prize **£300**, 2nd prize **£150** and 3rd prize **£100** with an annual trophy and a check for **£1,000** for the best story of the year. The competition is open to all nationalities but entries must be in English

*Deadline: 15th of every month*

### **Writers' Forum Ongoing Poetry Competition**

Poets are invited to enter their unpublished poems for a competition to be held in each issue of Writers' Forum. There will be a first prize of **£100** and three runner-up prizes all published in the magazine

*Deadline: January 15, 2008*

### **2008 Eric Hoffer Award for Independent Books**

Two grand prizes are awarded **annually**: one for short prose (i.e. fiction and creative nonfiction) and one for independent books from small, micro, and academic presses, as well as self-published books. Prizes include a **\$500** award for short prose and a **\$1,500** award for best independent book. In addition to the two main grand prize awards, various other honors and distinctions are given for both prose and books.


*Deadline: April 1, 2008*

### **Allen Ginsberg Poetry Awards 2008**

A \$1,000 first prize and two runner-up prizes will be awarded for poetry. Up to five poems per person will be accepted for consideration with an entry fee that covers the cost to a subscription to *The Paterson Literary Review*. The winning poems and all honorable mention winners as well as editor's choice poems will be published in *The Paterson Literary Review*. Please see Web site for details.

*Deadline: July 31, 2008*

### **The National Best Books 2008 Awards**

Open to all books with an ISBN and published in 2008 (galley copies welcome). Late 2007 (June-December) titles are also eligible. Every entry receives an immediate one-month full-color listing on USABookNews.com which includes your color book cover, a brief paragraph about your title and a hyperlink to your website. All entries must be postmarked by July 31, 2008. 

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**“Writing is not hard, just get paper and pencil, sit down, and write as it occurs to you. The writing is easy—it’s the occurring that’s hard.”** **Stephen Leacock**

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*On pages 3-5 we will explore the ghazal poetry form that may Insha’Allah, inspire you to use it to write halal poems.*

# The Poetry Corner:

## The Arabic Ghazal

**What is a ghazal?** Pronounced 'guzzle,' it is an Arabic word that means, 'talking to with women.' I stumbled on this poem form when I was learning about the sonnet. Some people have compared the ghazal to the sonnet. Poems in the two genres are usually about the same length and share a basically romantic and introspective sensibility. Some have even said it has influenced the development of the sonnet. Imagine my surprise when I discovered its origins to date back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, antedating the sonnet by six hundred years!

From Arabic, it spread into a number of languages, notably Persian, Turkish and Urdu. Traditionally, men used the form to focus on romantic love and mysticism. Women used it in a limited fashion to write funeral poems. Today the ghazal modeled after the Persian style is thriving in modern poetry as well as in the popular media: movies, radio, television and recordings.

The Arabic ghazal is distinct from the Persian and Urdu ghazal. There are two indispensable elements of a classical Arabic ghazal: 'Arud (meter) and qafiyah (line rhyme). There are many metrical series or *bahr* to select from and they define an Arabic long line (*bayt*) which is comprised of two balanced hemistiches. (//)

### The following rules can be applied to approximate the Arabic meter in verse:

1. The poet has option to write in long lines (**traditional**) or couplets.
2. All the lines of a single Arabic poem must share the same meter.
3. The length of a verse's hemistich should be no shorter than a *trimeter* and no longer than a *heptameter*.
4. Be adventurous. The essence of the Arabic form is in the bayt's pronounced, exciting and long metrical rhythms.

**The rules for the end rhyme (Qaafiyah):** 1 The rhyme must be the same for each line of the poem. 2. Full rhyme, microrhyme, or other form of slant rhyme may be used. 3. It is common and desirable (not mandatory) that the opening line's first hemistich also takes the rhyme. 4. Repeating the same rhyming word in successive lines of the poem should be strictly avoided except when there is an overriding stylistic justification for it 5. Radical enjambment (the running of the thought) between verses

Trimeter: verse of 3 measures or feet; heptameter: verse of 7 measures or feet.

//Continued this page next column

depending on the syntax of the rhyming words is the exception not the rule!

*"These rules seem rigid but they are as important to a poet aspiring to write in the 'pure' form of an Arabic ghazal as the sher and radif are to a poet writing in the 'pure' form of a Persian ghazal.*

### Example of traditional long line with qaafiyah: Accentual-syllabic long lines

How thrilling to receive such a token// of honor from one whose good name is oft spoken-

Whose victuals are not so much crabbed as they're lobstered,// no carapace curled back concealing what's hidden,

But stretched out quite plainly, obscuring no blemish// and shedding no shell in a manner unbidden;

So florid and fleshy, they're justly applauded// the taste and good prepping that leave tongues quite smitten.

Unclawed and bedeviled, the tails are more succulent,// chopped off the living, and tasting like chicken.

### Free style long lines:

Staring down an Arabian road, a dusty,// hot and dry Arabian thoroughfare-

Sandy desert, sterile pale brown, no// tree or greenery discernable anywhere-

I can see ahead on the asphalt a// piece of paper catching the morning glare.

Perched on top I see quite distinctly a// mottled frog, contentedly sitting there.

But the frog reveals itself for a leaf, the// sort of leaf you find in its dark wooded lair

Of late autumn on the ground in frosty// northern forests, sitting in mists so rare,

Tossing through the chill morning breeze as an //earthy, cool humidity fills the air.

### Syllabic long lines

How you're degrading me. If you're out to vex me// then beware, for relentlessly I will be----

Likewise I will be--bent on despairing of you,// and with equal or sicker fervency.

Truly had you been me—a perverse and twisted// and malignant take on myself admittedly.

You would have been far worse in your fabulous rage,// but too difficult to shove aside callously.

*Arabic poetry uses a different form of rhyme than English poetry. The poems only need end in the same syllable or even letter to call it a rhyme.*

Continued on page 4

### *The long line is what matters to the Arabs.*

They only approach the hemistich (/) as a verse only when and if they feel like it. By contrast using couplets and stanzas with a break between them is how the Persians adapted the ghazal. Much of what is written about the ghazal in English is modeled after the Persian ghazal.



## *The Persian Ghazal:*

gained prominence in the thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries thanks to such Persian poets as Rumi and Hafiz. In the eighteenth-century, the ghazal was used by poets writing in Urdu, a mix of the medieval languages of Northern India, including Persian. Among these poets, Ghalib is the recognized master. Other languages that adopted the ghazal include Hindi, Pashto, Turkish, and Hebrew. The German poet and philosopher Goethe experimented with the form, as did the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. Indian musicians such as Ravi Shankar and Begum Akhtar popularized the ghazal in the English-speaking world during the 1960s. However, it was the poet **Agha Shahid Ali** who introduced it, in its classical form, to Americans.

### **The Persian Ghazal is:**

1. **Sher** = A poem of two lines with five to fifteen couplets. Each sher is a poem in itself, detachable and quotable.
2. **Beher** = is the meter. Both lines of the sher must be the same meter.
3. **Radif** = the 2<sup>nd</sup> line of all the shers MUST end with the same words. The scheme of rhyme and refrain occurs in both lines of the first couplet and then only in the second line of every succeeding couplet.
4. **Qaafiyah** = is the rhyming pattern which all the words *before* radif MUST have.
5. **Matla** = the first sher MUST have radif in both its lines. This sher is called the 'matla' of the ghazal.
6. **Maqta** = the poet usually has an alias or **his name** in the last sher, in the first, second or third person. (Signature couplet)

### **Examples:**

**Ghazal of the Better-Unbegun by Heather McHugh**

'-----' – **Cioran (unsuitable quote)**

**Too volatile am I? Too voluble? Too much a word-person? I blame the soup: I'm a, primordially**

**stirred person.**

**Two pronouns and a vehicle was Icarus with wings. The apparatus of his selves made an absurd person.**

**The sound I make is sympathy's; sad dogs are tied afar. But howling I become an ever more un-**

**heard person.**

**I need a hundred more of you to make a livelihood. The mirror's not convincing—that at best in-**

**ferred person.**

**As time's revealing gets revolting, I start looking out. Look in and what you see is one unholy**

**blurred person.**


**The only cure for birth one doesn't love to contemplate. Better to be an unsung song, an unoc-**

**curred person.**

**McHugh, you'll be the death of me---each self and second studied! Addressing you like this, I'm halfway to the**

**third person.** 


The German Romantics were interested in ghazals. Schlegel and Goethe wrote them. August, Graf Von Platen (1796-1835), published a collection, *Ghaselen* in 1821. Here is a couplet (**matla**) from one of his ghazals, with an English translation by Edwin Morgan.

Du bist der wahre Weise mir,  
Dein Auge lispelt's leise mir;  
*Truest of sages are you to me,*  
*Your eye speaks softly true to me* 

Dr. Kulkarni's English ghazals show how the form can look in English. Here is the opening **matla** and closing **maqta** couplets of one of his ghazals:

I hate to think of the day that gives me pain at night  
But I still recall the Sun that used to rain at night.

.....

Not only have but live all your dreams dear 'Friend'  
Did **Kekule** not observe the snakes in chain at night? 

## Even the Rain by Agha Shahid Ali

What will suffice for a true love knot? Even the rain?  
But he has bought grief's lottery, bought even the rain.

"Our glasses/ wanting this world" "Can you remember?"  
Anyone! "when we thought/ the poets taught" even the rain?

After we died-- *That was it!* God left us in the dark.  
And we forgot the dark, we forgot even the rain.

Of this pear-shaped orange's perfumed twist, I will say:  
Extract vermouth from the bergamot, even, the rain.

How did the enemy love you –with earth? air? and fire?  
He held just one thing back till he got even: the rain.

This is God's site for a new house of executions?  
You swear by the Bible, Despot, even the rain?


After the bones-those flowers- this was found in the urn:  
The lost river, ashes from the ghat, even the rain.

What was I to prophesy if not the end of the world?  
A salt pillar for the lonely lot, even the rain.

How the air raged, desperate, streaming the earth with flames-  
To help burn down my house, Fire sought even the rain.

He would raze the mountains, he would level the waves,  
he would, to smooth his epic plot, even the rain.

New York belongs at daybreak to only me, just me-  
to make this claim Memory's brought even the rain.

They've found the knife that killed you, but whose prints are these|?  
No one has such small hands, **Shahid**, not even the rain. 

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**Ali compared each ghazal to a "stone (pearl) from a necklace," which should continue to "shine in that vivid isolation."**

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## The Dust

I smelled the dust, Choking and Persistent.

I saw it, Rising and Falling again.

Stirring under the feet and billowing asunder.

A Veil is cast between the Living and the Dead.

All Roads will lead to this Dusty Place or Another.

Covered in Dust.

A final covering that shall not be lifted,

Until the final call.

So rush to your good deeds and beg your fellow man for forgiveness.

Time is surely fading, as the flower petals brown and fall to the Earth.

So Shall We.

Covered in Dust.

J.O.Y. 11/7/2007 

## Funny English!

### Spell Checker Poem

Eye halve a spell chequer  
It came with my pea sea  
It plainly marques four my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write,  
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid  
It nose bee fore to long,  
And eye can put the err or rite  
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it-  
I am shore your pleased two no  
Its let her perfect awl the weigh  
My chequer tolled me sew.

-Sauce Unknown 

## Member News:

**Fatima** - gave birth to Hassan. He's 5.5lbs and 47 cm. She is so thankful to Allah that both of them are fine now. She thanks you so much for all your prayers

**Azizah** – gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl!

**Sara** - has returned from America and thanks you for your prayers.

**Nabila** – Her job is sending her to a series of Saturday workshops that will improve her graphic skills. She will return to *MWWWI* after three months.

**Maryam** – Is vacationing in Turkey! She will be gone for three weeks.

**Huda** – is moving! (to another place in Sharjah)

**Zakia** – is pushing forward with a new publishing date for her book, 'A Trophy for Bilal.'

**Jameela** – is beginning a new semester in her quest for a degree in creative writing.

**Nadia** – has officially moved to Morocco. Insh'Allah, she will continue to contribute to *MWWWI* (newsletter and folio) and visit us from time to time.

**Hakimah** – is working very hard and wants us to keep her in our prayers.

## Calendar of Events

Important *MWWWI* Meeting Dates!

Day: First Tuesday and Saturday of the month.

Time: Tues.: 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Sat.: 12:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Dates: Feb. 2, and 5; Mar. 4 and 8; Apr. 1 and 5;

May 3 and 6; June 3 and 7; July 1 and 5..

## SPECIAL EVENTS: MWWWI FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: Sat. Feb. 2, 2008; Time: 12:00 to 2:00 P.M.

Venue: Luna Rossa Restaurant at Qanat Al Qasbah. Directions: [www.qaq.ae](http://www.qaq.ae)

**Workshop:** Presenter: Zakia Iman Shahbaz

Topic: Point of View

(Tues. Feb. 5, at Zakia's bayt; same topic as above.)

## *MWWWI* Annual Folio, 1429!

Don't forget our annual folio! The time has come for *MWWWI* members to begin writing or selecting from your writings what you want to submit to be published in the folio. All material, short stories, essays, poems, etc., are welcome!

**Contact:** Zakia: [ummfaiza@yahoo.com](mailto:ummfaiza@yahoo.com);

Nabila: [nabila.usman@gmail.com](mailto:nabila.usman@gmail.com)

## Events:

### Arts of Islam: Must See!

January 23 to April 22

Emirates Palace - Abu Dhabi


For the first time in the Middle East, the Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC) has brought some of the *world's finest Islamic art to the UAE capital*. Over 500 works of art from the renowned Nasser D.Khalili Collection comprising some 20,000 works are on display at the Emirates Palace. The largest and most comprehensive in the world, it presents both the religious and secular arts of Islam, encompassing the entire history of Islamic art. The objects on display explore the development of this rich heritage from its beginnings in the early 7th century to the early 20th and cover a geographic span extending from China in the east to Spain in the west, and from the Central Asian steppes in the north to Africa in the south.

One of the reasons, Professor Khalili, assembled the Khalili Collection is to promote a greater understanding between people of different cultures and faiths and to increase awareness of the rich contributions of Islamic cultures.

## Dubai Shopping Festival

January 24, 2008 to February 24 2008

Dubai

DSF welcomes visitors to a new season – "The Fifth Season". Visitors to Dubai can bask in a fifth season that will be the best among them all. Complete with the finest possible entertainment and shopping opportunities, DSF visitors will be treated to a period of non-stop festivities for 32 days from January 24 to February 24, 2008. 

## *MWWWI* Workshop Certificates

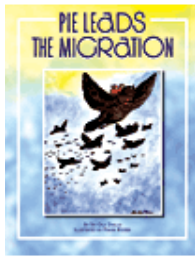
*MWWWI* has certificates for those who have participated in our workshops for the years 2007-2008. They are available for 5dhs at each meeting..

## Contributions:

Contribute to *MWWWI* Newsletter: Islamic information, poetry, short stories, book reviews and literary events are welcome. Submit to contact addresses or call Zakia: 050 285 3808;

## Pie Leads the Migration by

Tito Ola Diallo



I am proud to announce the publication of this book by my cousin (Sis. Muhammad). A first book, she is currently working on a book of poetry.


The story is about a young, ambitious redwing named Pie,

She dreams of leading the flock in the great Migration one day. But because of the ancient custom of allowing only the strongest males to lead Pie doesn't stand a chance or does she? Will Pie's strong determination and courage be enough to withstand both the forces of nature and foe as she faces severe hardships during the journey while holding fast to her dream of leading the migration one day?

ISBN13: 978-1-4257-7563-6 (Picture Book)

ISBN: 1-4257-7563-2 (Picture Book); Pages: 34

Subject: JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Birds/ Action & Adventure / General / Book Format: Portrait 8.5 x 11; Reading Level: 4 – 5; Age Level: 7 – 11

This book is not Islamic fiction but it is halal. (Decent, no offensive language or material to Muslims sensibilities). The cost is \$21.99 US. Xlibris .com; Contact: titioladiallo.com 

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**“Don't get it right, just get it written.” James Thurber**

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## Jaipur Literary Festival Welcomes Fatima Bhutto

Thrust into the limelight of international politics since her aunt's assassination last month, Fatima Bhutto said that her most valuable contribution was as a grassroots activist and writer, rather than following her family into politics. A packed hall at the festival listened intently as she reminisced about her childhood. Her first collection of poetry published in Pakistan in her father's honor, *Whispers of the Desert*, was in homage to her roots.

The author said she was happy as a writer and although she writes in English, which has little following in Pakistan, newspapers in Pakistan had started publishing Urdu and Sindhi translations of her pieces.

IANS- Khaleej Times, 1/25/08 


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**“There are certain things you can say through words that you are not allowed to say through politics.” Fatima Bhutto**

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## Word into Art: Must See The Beauty of Written Arabic

**Special Exhibition - February 2 to April 30  
Dubai International Finance Centre**


The exhibition celebrates the creativity of Middle Eastern artists by focusing on the way writing has been used in modern art. A collaboration between the British Museum and Dubai, its exposure in the UAE follows a very successful run at the British Museum in May, 2006. The exhibition is divided into four sections: Sacred Script, Literature and Art, Deconstructing the Word, and Identity, History and Politics. A fully illustrated book to accompany the exhibition will be available. 

### Press Release:

## The Status of Jesus in Islaam

by Dr. Rabee' Ibn Haadee Al-Madkhalee

AL-IBAANAH BOOK PUBLISHING:  
NEW PUBLICATION (JANUARY 2008)  
Completely Revised and Updated; Paperback, 6x9 in.  
48 pages; ISBN: 0-9814757-0-1

In this brief treatise, the author sets out to clarify Islam's true position towards Jesus. The correct belief regarding Jesus as confirmed in the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's teachings is that he was no more than a prophet and messenger of God sent with the same message to worship God alone and avoid false deities. It is the same message which Muhammad brought to his people after him. We hope that this short treatise will serve as an invitation to Christians to reflect on the beauty and simplicity of Islam. The author, Dr. Al-Madkhalee is one of the well-known scholars of Saudi Arabia. A former graduate and professor at the renowned Islamic University of Madeenah, he has authored numerous books and treatises about Islam which clarify misconceptions and false notions. 

## Dubai Based Author Debuts: 'Are Women Human?'

*Durresshahwar Jafri's much awaited book of fiction, 'Are Women Human?' is a collection of short stories, illustrating the diverse roles of women in today's society. A prominent member of the Pakistani community in the UAE since 1978, Jafri read excerpts to a delighted crowd at The Palace, Old Town on Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2008. She spent the rest of the evening dedicating her book.*

*Veteran social worker and author Maryam Beynam who presented a workshop for MWWWI in 2006, was also present.* 