

MWWWI Newsletter

The pen is mightier than the sword!



Iqraa! Read in the Name of your Lord!

Muslim Women Writers Workshop International Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

The Nurturing Pen

Ramadan 2007

EID KAREEM!!!

MWWWI sends greetings to our members and friends at this festive time of year.. We are happy to introduce the first issue of our MWWWI newsletter, InshaaAllah, you will find it useful and inspirational and will offer suggestions for improvement. We look forward to implementing them and seeing your contributions in future monthly issues.

Editor - MWWWI

WORKSHOP CERTIFICATES:

At MWWWI we strive to provide our members with the very best. We are currently in the process of launching our MWWWI International Workshop Certificate Program. We are a professional organization, and this is one more step in our growth to let the world know we are here. Each workshop will cost a dues paying member 5 Dhs (this fee is not to make money, it is to help defer costs from our sisters who work very hard:ie.supplies, phone, etc.). In turn, you will receive a Certificate of Participation. InshaaAllah, members will find these credentials of great benefit in the future! JCW



Yusef Islam Visits Sharjah

Zakia Iman Shahbaz

NO MOJO* AT THE MOJO Restaurant on Friday Oct. 5, 2007 at the Millennium Hotel when Yusef Islam welcomed an international crowd to a pre-iftar lecture about the true meaning of Ramadan. MWWWI members, Sarah Farlow, Huda Akalla, and Zakia Iman Shahbaz were invited to attend, Alhamdulillah! The Mojo restaurant offered a spectacular view of the cornice glistening from the setting sun's reflection. The ambience was calm, lacking the ego tripping sentiments of a celebrity at a gathering of admirers. Indeed, Yusef Islam had the demeanor of a soft-spoken sheikh dressed in a vest covered thobe, with sandals and hair streaked with grey. He began his speech explaining the true meaning of Ramadan. Indeed, this is the month Muslims do more salaat and rejoicing because it is the month during which the miracle of the Holy Qur'an was revealed. He added that Muslims strive to be more charitable at this time also.

For the audience that was predominately, non-Muslim, Br. Yusef explained his journey to Islam; how he almost died twice, the last time nearly drowning in the ocean. He called out for guidance and deliverance. Soon after, he was gifted with the Holy Qur'an. It was a translation that was not filled with explanations of the verses giving him a purer understanding of its true meaning.

continued on page 2

MWWW-Intl.org is now changed to MWWWI.com. We are in process of constructing the new website with a blog for easier communication among members and visitors. Insh'Allah, we will up and running next month.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1 Workshop Certificates

1 Yusef Islam

2 How was Their First Ramadan?

3 Poetry Corner

4 Member News

DO YOU KNOW? - What is: *Triple parallelism;*
Rhetorical abstraction?

CAN YOU: - Write a simple sonnet?
Name a Muslim woman poet?

He read an ayat that to him indicated why there are so many problems in the world today. It explains that Muslims may disagree and engage in discourse and eventually through mercy to one another agree to a resolution that leads to peace. But because mankind is not merciful to one another discord and strife continues.

He concluded his speech when the call for prayer began. For iftar we were rewarded with a delicious buffet. Then Br. Yusef made closing remarks and signed autographs. An additional delight were the gifts given to the guests; copies of his latest music CD -'An Other Cup; YUSEF,' produced by Jamal Productions, books about Islam, a copy of the Holy Qur'an, a small salaat rug and dates.



**mojo: the art or practice of casting magic or voodoo spells*

How Was Their First Ramadan?

By Maryam Ismail

So this is how Ramadan is in the Muslim world

The Turks say, "When you look for a house, look at the neighbors first." This is very true. I remember my lovely neighbors who were always ready with help, friendship, and their delicious dishes.

God says in the Quran, "Keep yourself with those who are devout in good deeds and worship" (Chapter of the Cave). This was what God planned for me when I first arrived in Turkey.

I had been what I call a "revolving door Muslim" for some years before I came to Istanbul. I would go through moments when I felt religious, fasting in Ramadan and praying, but then there were times when I felt that there was no use. When I first became a Muslim, there was so little information on what to do and many of those around me were as clueless as I was or they found following the rules of Islam inconvenient for the life that they were living in the United States, a country that at the time made few, if any, concessions for Muslims.

It's funny how so many often use Turkey as an example of where Islam went wrong. Yet while others usually migrate to places like Egypt, Saudi Arabia or the Gulf states, I made a niyet, an intention, in my heart that I would give my Islam a final kick-start in Turkey. I was in Sultanahmet on a one-week tour when I heard the final call to return to God. I had been with the Oprah crowd,

which says that if you do x, y, and z, God will grant you anything you desire -- He was just waiting for your action so

he could react (May God protect me from such misguidance, now and forever). Anyway, I was just walking down the street and then, I heard it, "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, La illaha illallah" hit me like a rock, God is the Greatest, there is no other God besides God! From that moment on, I decided I would seek my fortune in the next world.

After a series of personal mishaps in the US, I decided that enough was enough. I started to make moves to see what I could do in Turkey. I found a newspaper on the plane on my way to Istanbul that had an ad for an institute that was looking for an English teacher. I called them and made an appointment. God is the best of planners. I met with the director of the institute, but still had other interviews. In the end, I chose Dilfem, an English institute. Even though I did not know anything about them, I found them warm and family-like. It was there, amongst those who I would later find striving in the way of Islam, that I had my first Ramadan.

Ramadan was a big event at the institute. On the first day, there was a big dinner to which staff and students' families were invited. I especially remember the boxes of biscuits that said Ramadan Mubarak on them. It was lovely. In the US Ramadan is often a solitary event. Not so here! In the middle of the night I heard a drum -- ddarabin, ddarrabin, ddarabin -- looked outside and saw a guy with a duff drum. Praise be to God!

The drummer rang my bell to ask for money for his service and I gladly gave him some. He was an alarm clock with no snooze button. You were guaranteed to wake up. I looked out my window and saw that others were getting ready for sahur, too. I was in the club, the ummah, of those who follow the traditions of Prophet Mohammed, peace and blessings be upon him.

We didn't know what to eat. We started out with all of the wrong things: salty pastırma, toast, scrambled eggs and a date milkshake. I guess the pastırma was the worst thing one could eat because it is very salty, but we loved it. I would get up and make the food while Ahmed, my son, would join me later. Sometimes we had enough time to have a leisurely meal and other times there were just a few minutes to eat some bread and drink the date milkshake.

Then it was off to school and work. At work the staff ate iftar together every evening. So this is how Ramadan is in the Muslim world. Wow! Afterwards we would

continued on page 3

pray together and then make the journey home to prepare for the night prayer and terawih. I remember that despite my years of claiming to be a Muslim, this was the beginning of my real Islamic education. In Turkey where practicing Islam seems so dangerous sometimes, was where my son Ahmed said, "I love it here, I feel proud to be a Muslim." my first Ramadan in Istanbul was really the first Ramadan in which I felt like a Muslim.

As for colleagues at dilmef, despite it being almost 10 years ago and having since moved away, we still chat now and then. they are brothers and sisters in Islam who helped me become a better Muslim. Praise be to God!



Her article in **Today's Zaman**/
13/10/2007(todayszaman.com)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Important MWWWI Meeting Dates!

Day: First Tuesday of the month.

Time: 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Dates: 2007 - Sept. 4, Oct. 2, Nov. 6, Dec. 4

2008 - Jan. 1, Feb. 5, Mar. 4, Apr. 1, May 6,

June 3, July 1

SPECIAL EVENTS: MWWWI NOVEMBER MEETING

PLACE – JAMEELA WATSON'S VILLA, SHARJAH – POT LUCK!

TIME – 11AM TO 1PM

DATE – NOVEMBER 6, 2007

Workshop: Presenter: Maryam Ismail

Topic: How to write an essay

Ta'lim: Servitude: Nadia Hakkou

Nanowrimo Month! Begins Nov. 1, 2007. Register at nanowrimo.com now!

2007 Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Doris Lessing, a British writer who became the 11th woman in its 106 year history and its oldest recipient ever at 88 yrs. Born in Iran, she grew up in South Africa, the daughter of British citizens. She left school and home at an early age, finally moving to England in 1949. There she began her career as a novelist, publishing *The Grass is Singing* in 1950. During the 1950s she worked on what was to become 5 novels in the *Children of Violence* series, and in 1962 she gained international notice for her novel *The Golden Notebook*.

POETRY CORNER

THE CREATION

From it grows many things:

Flowers of every color pouring across the landscape,

White Jasmine and Red Roses,

And buttercups nodding back and forth in the wind

Honeysuckles sweet to the taste,

Our earth is colored by many hue and values:

The white sands of New Mexico,

The red clays of Carolina,

The black minerals of Michigan,

And the yellow sediments of the Hwang Ho River in China,

Just like our faces.

Some faces are darker and some are lighter in color.

But do they emit light.

It is not a light which can be defined by race or nationality.

It is light shining from the inside.

A sparkle in the eye which cannot be destroyed;

A heart that is happy with its Creator.

A mouth that utters Alhamdulillah in defeat;

Allah-u-Akbar in victory,

Subhan-Allah at all creations,

Mash-Allah in admiration

A face that does not degrade with its conditions of this worldly life

The face which knows this life is a test and is concerned in which hand he will receive his book.

When there are no more good deeds to be collected.

No more apologies to be made.

Only a few questions to be answered:

Who is your God?

Who is your Prophet?

What is your Religion?

Continued on page 4

Often cited as a heroic figure to feminists, Lessing has continued to write novels, graphic novels, librettos and essays, including works influenced by science fiction and Sufi mysticism.



Member News:

Zakia: Resting after visit to family in US and wonderful trip to Egypt with her two grandsons.

Nabila: Continuing to work on the MWWWI newsletter and website.

Maryam: Working on her anthology!

Jameela: In school working towards her Masters in Creative Writing!

Sara: Returning to her original love: writing poetry. Also, she is leaving for an extended stay in the states due to illness of her father.

Nadia: Moving to Dubai; will do a short ta'llim each meeting

Aishah: Preparing for a trip to the states.

Huda: Ch-ch-Changes!

Azizah: A much needed rest!

Nasrah: Working on the completion of her first novel, 'Yateemah'!

Hakimah: Working hard and wants to contribute her writing in the future.

Fatimah: She left the UAE for her home country, the Philippines

Zakia's book: 'A Trophy for Bilal,' is in the process of being published; will be ready next month InshaaAllah!



Invite sisters to our meetings!

MWWWI Membership:

Director: Maryam Ismail

Secretary: Zakia Iman Shahbaz

Financial Director: Nadia Hakkou

Resource (Workshop) Director: Aisha Hanif

Web Director: Nabila Usman

Publicity Director: Not filled

At Large Members:

Sara Farlow

Fatimah Tomayo

Nasrah Rose

Huda Alkalla

Azizah Marghani

Hakimah Hussein

Contacts:

ummfaiza@yahoo.com nabila.usman@gmail.com

QUOTES:

In the writing process, the more the story cooks, the better.
The brain works for you even when you are at rest. I find dreams particularly useful. I myself think a great deal before I go to sleep and the details sometimes unfold in the dream.

You can only learn to be a better writer by actually writing.
I don't know much about creative writing programs. But they're not telling the truth if they don't teach, **one**, that writing is hard work and, **two**, that you have to give up a great deal of life, your personal life, to be a writer. **Both quotes: - Doris Lessing**

Reading is inspiring, pickup a book and let the ideas flow. – J.C. Watson

HELPFUL LINKS:

Webster's has a great dictionary/thesaurus unlike Cambridge dictionary they give u all the words at no cost.

<http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/searchbox.asp>

CONTEST:

Deadline: 5th of every month

Writers Forum (www.writers-forum.com)

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

FUNNY BAD ENGLISH!

Infosys, Bangalore: An employee applied for leave as follows:

Since I have to go to my village to sell my land along with my wife, please sanction me one-week leave.

From H.A.L. Administration dept:

"As my mother-in-law has expired and I am only one responsible for it, please grant me 10 days leave."

Actual letter written for application of leave:

"My wife is suffering from sickness and as I am her only husband at home I may be granted leave".

Letter writing: "I am in well here and hope you are also in the same well."

"Dear Sir: with reference to the above, please refer to my below.. ,"

