

In His name, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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*The Academy for Learning Islam (ALI) is
A non-profit registered charitable organization
Based in Richmond, BC, Canada
It aims at advancing religious
and educational values of Islam
According to the doctrines and tenets of
The Shi'â Ithnâ `Asharî school of thought*

1. Why this Report?

The Almighty Allah ﷻ asks His noble Messenger to encourage the believers to continue doing good deeds, for these will never remain unseen by others. He states in the Qur'ân: *And say: Work!, for Allah, His messenger and the believers will see your work* (9:105). We at the Academy for Learning Islam (ALI) are confident that our meager and humble efforts do not go unnoticed in the vigilant eyes of fellow believers. Therefore, somebody may inquire the wisdom of preparing and distributing this Report as it is both time consuming and costly to do so. We present to you the following three reasons behind the publication of this periodical Report. We hope you would find these useful and take some time to read and share your thoughts by writing to Director@academyofislam.com

i) The Academy runs on the financial and moral support of a number of Mu'minîn all over the world. These believers could have easily channeled their donations and contributions to a host of other projects and organizations. However, they decided to put their trust and faith in the religious and educational services provided by the Academy. Therefore, it is appropriate that we report regularly to these donors and well wishers on our progress.

ii) The Academy publishes its reports to coincide with gatherings of our community members so as to give it a maximum publicity. Our first report for the period August 2001 to July 2002 was ready just before the official opening of Az-Zahraa Islamic Center in Vancouver. The second report

covering activities from August 2002 to December 2002 was published in time to be distributed at Orlando Sports Festival and Youth conference. This report is being published for distribution during the official opening of Al-Ahad Islamic Center in Allentown, PA, USA. All our current and past reports are accessible on our site www.academyofIslam.com

iii) In order to prepare this periodical report, the administrators as well as the volunteers keep track of their activities and come up with valuable suggestions for improvement of their activities. This helps us to steer foreword different sections of our services and continue to grow.

2. Alhamdu lillah we have reached a milestone

On April 09, 2003 we began our course number **ALI 040**. By the end of April, four out of the planned eight sessions of this course (Qur'anic Arabic Level IV for gents) had been conducted; i.e. half of the course was over. Sustaining the interest of mu'minîn and mu'minât in a small community like Vancouver for forty consecutive courses is a great achievement. We are grateful to the Almighty for granting us this opportunity to fulfill the educational needs of the youths and adults of the followers of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. We thank all instructors, students, donors, volunteers and well wishers for their continued support and du`âs. We are now confident that with God's blessings the Academy will continue to grow and one day become a renown Islamic educational institution in North America. To celebrate reaching this significant point in our development, the Academy has announced a free course for young girls and women. The course **ALI 041** (Themes in

the Qur'ân, Sûratul Naml) will Inshaa Allah be conducted between May 16 to June 20, 2003 under the able teaching of Sr. Tahera Kassamali.

3. The Religious Director goes to Hajj

The last few months in the year 2002 were difficult as the Academy had to move to a new location and lost the support of a major financial and moral supporter. This put a lot of pressure on the shoulder of the Religious Director (RD) as he had to ensure that the move to other premises, and finding new supporters and donors should take place without major disruption to the academic and tabligh activities of the Academy. All praise belongs to the Almighty, this was achieved smoothly and the support for the Academy increased momentarily. Amongst this support, there included an offer to send the Religious Director on Hajj trip to "kill a number of birds with one stone." The Hajj trip, in the first half of February 2003, allowed Hasnain Kassamali, amongst other things, to: i) perform the annual pilgrimage, ii) thank the Almighty for His innumerable bounties to the Academy, iii) carry out tabligh activities and to talk to mu'minîn world wide about the objectives and activities of the Academy. So successful was this Hajj trip that one of Hajj caravan group has again invited Shaykh Kassamali to return to Hajj next year in order to assist and guide the pilgrims on matters related to Hajj rituals. May the Almighty accept the Hajj of all those who were His guest this year, and ease the ways for those who are intending to go to Hajj in future.

4. The courses conducted from January to April 2003

The Academy for Learning Islam was basically established to give short courses to Madrasah graduates, teachers and other adults. A complete course includes 16 hours of classroom instructions (spread over 8 sessions of two hour each), reading and take away assignments (where required, for e.g. in the Qur'anic Arabic courses), and completing student survey forms. Presently the Academy designs its courses in the following three areas: the Holy Qur'ân and its language, Islamic History and Islamic Ethics and Social aspects. Some courses have fewer hours of instructions, depending on the material available and the length to which the students are willing to go. Course Numbers that has either 'a' or 'b' attached to them are either special courses or have less than 16 hours of instructions.

In our last report we talked briefly about **ALI 029b**, a portable course that was given in Edmonton. A detailed report on this course has been included elsewhere in this booklet. The following courses were conducted in the first four months of the year 2003.

ALI 030 Sîrah of Sayyida Fâtima Zahrâ عليها السلام. The course looked closely at the life history of Sayyida Fâtima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم, her contributions to Islam and lessons that can be derived from the holy personality. Some of the popular Sunni sources were also used to highlight the merits of Sayyida Fâtima عليها السلام.

ALI 031 Qur'anic Arabic Level IV for ladies. This is a continuation from Level III where students learn Qur'anic vocabulary, structuring of sentences and rules of grammar.

ALI 032 Qur'anic Arabic Level III for gents

ALI 033 Themes in Sûratul Baqarah, Part II, for ladies. Part I of this course was given on Friday mornings during the Holy Month of Ramadhan. The course proved popular with many ladies who have requested continuation of similar courses for many months to come. Some students feel spiritually good to spend their Friday mornings in learning and discussing about the Holy Qur'ân.

ALI 034a Sîrah of Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtabâ عليه السلام. This course has been postponed for future date as the instructor had to go for Hajj during the time the course had been scheduled. In lieu of this, one two hour presentation was done titled Preparation for Hajj 1423 discussing the spiritual and social benefits of Hajj to was given by Hasnain Kassamali. The session covered the following aspects: Spiritual benefits of Hajj; Social benefits of Hajj; Preparing oneself for the spiritual journey; A quick look at wajibaats of Umrah Tamattu` and Hajj Tamattu`; Holy places and ziyarats in Syria and Question and Answer session

ALI 035a Ilâhiyât in Nahjul Balâgha. This was conducted by Dr Sayyid Soleiman Panah, professor of Sociology at University of British Columbia. He introduced the students to some of the most essential aspects of the idea of God in Islam, designed around the first sermon of Mawlâ Imam Ali عليه السلام in *Nahjul Balâgha*. Even though the focus of the course was on Imam's sermon, repeated references to Qur'anic verses and Hadith from Ma'sûmîn عليهم السلام were made. The course proved interesting to people with different levels of knowledge.

Everyone- from those who like to deepen and support their faith in God to those who were skeptic and wanted to know if there is any truth in the religious belief in God- enjoyed the course. Dr Panah has kindly agreed to hold more courses at the Academy in the spring and summer of this year.

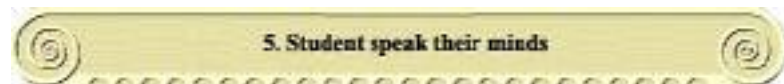
ALI 036 Qur'anic Arabic Level V for ladies

ALI 037 Themes in Sûratul Ahzâb for ladies. The course covered the following themes in the Sûrah: The Hypocrites, Greatness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, Wives of the Prophet ﷺ, the story of the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab, and the Knowledge of the Day of Judgment.

ALI 038a Understanding the Concepts of Azaa' for Imam al-Husayn ﷺ. The course tackled the following issues: history of mourning and weeping on the martyrs of Karbalâ, answering some of the frequently asked questions on Azaa'; why mourn Imam al-Husayn in a special way; is it Islamically appropriate to participate in Azaa'? Are the rituals of the Azaa' fundamental parts of our religion? Do the rituals help or inhibit the propagation of Islam?

ALI 039 Introduction to the Holy Qur'an – Part 1 for young boys. For unknown reasons, young boys of ages 13 to 19 did not show up for the course. The course will either be offered in future or redesigned to include boys and girls and perhaps some adults.

ALI 040 Qur'anic Arabic Level IV for gents



Students' comments and suggestions on:

a) How to promote the Azaa' for Imam al-Husayn?

“[In order] to encourage our youth it is necessary to have a segment of Azaa' in English.”

“Being more in depth about symbolism so there is no confusion [about] symbols that actually represent Karbalâ.”

b) Rituals of Azaa that need to be changed or discontinued

“Anything that entertains people rather than mourn”

“The cultural aspect (adding Indian or Hindu culture)”

c) Why should we continue to cry for the tragedy of Karbalâ?

“The utter poignancy of the events of Karbalâ were it to occur to even an enemy would evoke humanity to lament; that it happened to as righteous person as Husayn b. Ali (as) is unbearably grievous.”

“It is a unique way of tablîgh and it makes non-Shi'as think about Karbalâ and its role in progress of Islam

d) What did she learn in course on Themes from al-Ahzâb?

“How to ponder over the âyât of the Qur'an; relating verses with other verses in the Qur'an; and historical and present day interpretation to day to day life.”

e) The Activities of the Academy for Learning Islam

“Thank you so much for being in Vancouver. We, as a community would be lost without you'll and ALI.”



The first portable course by the Academy was offered during the Christmas 2002 holidays in Edmonton, Alberta by Shaykh Hasnain Kassamali. This six-session three-day course was held at the Edmonton Shi'â Ithnâ 'Asharî Centre and was attended by approximately 45 participants, women and men of all age groups.

Coordinated by Al-Haj Shaukat Moloo, the sessions were publicized and organized by three young Edmonton community members – Sabrina Dhalla and her husband Saleem Dhalla, and Mohamed Jamal.

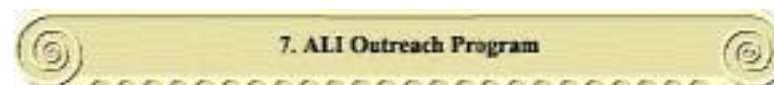
The subject covered included the history of the revelation and the compilation of the Holy Qur'ân, and the significance and the authenticity of *Sahîfa Sajjâdiyyah* with discussions on two specific du'âs. A session on the sanctity of family life in Islam and conflict resolution provided a new dimension and perspective to the balance we have to maintain when living in the west.

Edmonton was home away from home for Shaykh Hasnain, who had his first stint there as a Resident Âlim for almost 5 years. The appreciative and attentive audience were delighted to have him back and benefited from his added knowledge and insights. The session was interactive with questions and discussions. Almost all of the course survey responses were positive and many suggestions for improvement were made. The suggested improvements included a more in-depth study of the subject matter to a desire to have more varied subjects for future courses.

The coordinator, Al-Haj Shaukat Moloo, in his remarks at the conclusion of the course noted that there is a continued yearning in Edmonton for such courses. Through such gathering, he said, people of all ages can interact while sharing and acquiring knowledge. He noted that our communities in North America could benefit if portable courses were offered

at other locations. Edmonton was planning to organize another such session in the near future.

While in Edmonton, Shaykh Hasnain stayed as the guest of Al-Haj Ashraf Jaffer



The outreach program attempted to inform and educate the public about Hajj and its importance to Muslims. The aim was to target Schools and Public Libraries in order to get a good exposure to the younger sector of society.

Action taken: Libraries and some schools were contacted to inquire if the Academy could put up displays on Hajj and make presentations. Volunteers gathered at the Academy to make posters for the displays.

Libraries: The response received from the libraries was quite positive.

Richmond Public Library

a) Put up a window of display with posters and information on Hajj (provided by the Academy) for two weeks, from Feb 8th to Feb 24th. The display also included models of the places of Hajj made by children of Az-Zahra Montessori. Many people visited the display and sent positive comments.

Burnaby Public Library

Put up displays on each of the four libraries in Burnaby. Each library was given two posters on Hajj explaining the rituals of Hajj and their significance.

Surrey Public Library

Strawberry Hill Library of the Surrey district put up a display on Hajj. They were given two posters by the Academy which included pictures and information about the Hajj rituals.

Schools: There was little response from schools and the Academy was thus not able to make presentations in schools. (This section of the report was prepared by Sr. Tahera Kassamali.)

8. The Youth Arm of the Academy (YA ALI)

The Youth Arm of ALI was initiated under the guidance of the Religious Director of the Academy in late 2002. The purpose of the Youth Arm is to carry out independent activities under the general goals of the Academy and assist the Academy in its activities. The goals of the Youth Arm include encouraging the pursuit of Islamic knowledge amongst the youths and assisting the youths in making a collective and positive impact in the society.

In past, the Youth Arm has organized an Islamic book readers group. Members of this group select an Islamic book for reading and usually meet on a weekly basis to discuss the pages read during the week. The books read include *Adabus Salaat* by Imam Khumayni (q.s.) and *The Rising of al-Husayn* by Shaykh Sham ad-Din. The group has also been fortunate to have two scholars during two of their sessions, namely Shaykh Saleem Bhimji and Shaykh Usama Abdulghani. The Youth Arm hopes to make these sessions a regular activity

throughout the year. About nine youths take part in the reading and discussing of Islamic books.

Currently the Youth Arm is engaged in creating an Internet Resource Centre (IRC), which is focused at assisting Madrasah teachers in preparing for their classes. The IRC will primarily be a database website which will contain links to Islamic websites and material on the internet, in an organized manner. The IRC will also provide an email and a support group throughout the year which will guide the teachers in finding Islamic resources on the internet. The Youth Arms also plans to have a guiding seminar to introduce the IRC to the teachers.

In the future the Youth Arm hopes to involve more youths in the activities carried out under the Academy. This includes the Qur'ân Tilawah Program (QTP) which was carried out successfully in the summer of 2002. Depending on our successes in Vancouver, the Youth Arm also hopes to assist communities and teachers outside British Columbia. May the Almighty give us the *tawfiq* to serve Him in a manner that is most pleasing to Him. (This section of the report was prepared by Br Murtaza Bachoo).

9. Seniors Desk of the WF temporarily at ALI

On Sha`bân 15, 1423, (October 22, 2002) the milâd of our present Imam, Hadhrat Mahdi ﷺ marked yet another momentous event in the history of the World Federation. It was on this day that *Seniors Desk*, a new branch of the World Federation was established in Vancouver, Canada. The pioneers of our global community called,

and the World Federation responded. In the Holy Qur'ân, the Almighty states: *"If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor."* (17:23). The Seniors Desk is committed to addressing the various needs of the elderly people in our community - the *pillars* of our society that represent courage, wisdom and tradition. Imam As-Sâdiq once said: *"The position of an old person among his people is like that of a position of a prophet amongst his nation."*

As the Seniors Desk was organizing itself and arranging the set up of its office space in Vancouver, it was apparent that we needed to have space immediately as to not delay the implementation of our goals and objectives and ambitious plan. We were fortunate to have the Academy for Learning Islam provide us with temporary space to start our work and were incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to work in close proximity with ALI. For approximately 3 months, ALI provided us with space and superb hospitality for which we will be eternally grateful.

As we reflected upon the goals and objectives of both the Seniors Desk as well as ALI, it became apparent that indeed there would be opportunity to work together on strategies that address the religious, spiritual and educational needs of our seniors. The philosophy of the Seniors Desk is to work closely with Regional Federations, Jamaats and other religious organizations to implement its strategic plan, goals and objectives. (This part of the report was prepared by Dr Akber Mithani of the Seniors Desk).

10. Other activities of the Academy

Lectures and presentations: For the first 12 days of Muharram 1424, the RD, Hasnain Kassamali was invited to recite majâlis at the Islamic Shi'â Ithnâ Asharî Association of Ottawa. Whilst in Ottawa, he conducted a Question & Answer session for Arab youths on Karbalâ and Âshûrâ, and conducted a presentation at Husayn Day organized by the Pakistani Association at Ottawa University on Sunday, March 16, 2003.

The commitments of the current temporary Resident Âlim (Janab Shafiq Hudda) of Az-Zahraa Islamic Center take him out of Vancouver on a number of occasions. Consequently, the RD of the Academy leads the Friday prayer program at the center. During this reporting period Sh. Kassamali conducted Friday prayers for about 6 times.

On April 6, 2003 Shaykh Usama Abdulghani, who was visiting Vancouver from Qum, kindly agreed to spend two hours talking the role of students in preparing for the appearance of the Imam al-Mahdi and answering host of questions on Islamic education and spirituality.

On April 12, 2003 the RD conducted a religious tour of Az-Zahraa Islamic center for 22 youths from the Ismâ'îli Community Madrasah, talked to them about the philosophy of Salât and answered their questions.

From April 19 to 22, the RD was invited to recite majâlis at the Islamic Shi'â Ithnâ Asharî Association of Edmonton during the Fortieth (*arba`een*) of the martyrs of Karbalâ.

Family counseling and marriage solemnization: A number of Mu'minîn prefer having their marriage be solemnized by the RD at the Academy. This service has continue throughout the period, including rendering family counseling, providing free literature to the new converts and responding to their personal questions, and pronouncing of Shar'î divorces.

Publications and Distribution of free literature: *FAQ on Muharram and Imam al-Husayn* ﷺ was prepared for the first ever procession (julus) of Mu'minîn on the occasion of Muharram in Vancouver. 10 copies of Sûrah Yâsîn with meanings and Tajwîd rules highlighted in different colors were sent gratis to Islamic Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Kitchener. Also, two cartons of the book *A Code of Practice for Muslims Living in the West* from Imam Ali Foundation were distributed locally and 15 copies sent to Fath al-Mubin Publications in Kitchener. A copy of *Islamic Reference CD, version 6* was gifted to all donors and contributors to the Academy during the year 2002. We are thankful to Br Abbas Muljiani from Oman for preparing this valuable CD and to Br Hasan Keshvani for copying and packaging the CDs for distribution.

Representation on behalf of the Academy: On February 23, 2003 the RD attended the second anniversary celebration of the launching of a local paper *The Miracle*. The RD used the opportunity to briefly inform Ms. Christie Clark, the Minister of Education for British Columbia about the activities of the Academy. Our last report to December 2002 was distributed to the participants at the forum.



The revenue of the Academy comes from a number of sources. These include voluntary donations from individuals, regular contributions from organizations, course fees, donations for services rendered and collections in tabligh box kept at the Academy. Voluntary donations and regular contributions still constitute the major portion of our revenue. We would like to recognize their generosity by remembering them in this report.

Between January and April 2003 we have received donations in cash and kind for \$100.00 and over, from the following: Haji Abbas Kanji (Boston), Haji Abdel Karim Alahmad (UAE), Haji Abdul Hamid (Dr) Kanji (Chicago), Haji AbdulHussain (Dr) Nathani (Minnesota), Haji Akber (Dr) Mithani, Al Khoei Center (New York), Haji Asif (Dr) Tejani, Haji Chawki Nouredine, Haji Fida Rashid (Dares salaam), Haji Habib Dhalla (Edmonton), Haji Hassanali Fazal, Haji Hassanali N Dewji, Haji Husein Jamal (Edmonton), Haji Hussein Bhojani, Islamic Education Board of the World Federation (London), Islamic Humanitarian Services (Kitchener), Haji Javaid (Syd) Naqvi (Edmonton), Sr. Mansura Alidina (Edmonton), Haji Mohamed (Dr) Hirji (Edmonton), Haji Mohamed Dhalla (Edmonton), Haji Mojtaba Amini (Blaine), Haji Murtaza H Dato (London), Haji Mousaa (Syd) Nouredine, Sadiq Dharamshi, Haji Salim Dhalla (Edmonton), Scan Copy Inc. (Edmonton), Haji Shabir (Dr) Kanji (Chicago), Haji Sameer Tejani (Seattle), Sr. Shakila (Dr) Mithani Kara, Haji Shaukat Moloo (Edmonton), Haji Zuhair Ebrahim (Orlando), and Haji Zulfikar Ladak (Orlando).

12. Annual accounts since the inception of ALI

A number of well wishers have suggested that our accounts should be included in the periodical reports. We are pleased to include the financial statements of the Academy for Learning Islam for the last two years. The accounts were prepared based on underlying records by Haji Shaukat Moloo, CA of Edmonton. We pray to the Almighty to reward him and his family for his voluntary contribution.

STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSE FOR YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2001 & DECEMBER 31, 2002.

	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>
REVENUE		
Donations	74,336	20,250
	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>
EXPENSES		
Amortization	1,947	409
Insurance	100	0
Internet	534	269
Miscellaneous	443	159
Office expenses	2,332	807
Public Education	3,844	583
Rent and Utilities	12,706	3,922
Salaries & Course Instruction	53,895	20,058
Telephone	601	379
Traveling	<u>2,274</u>	<u>1,681</u>
	78,676	28,267
	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>
Excess of Expenses over Income	(4,340)	(8,017)

		<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>
BALANCE SHEET AS AT			
Cash		8,916	11,028
Prepaid Expenses		500	0
Security Deposit		761	0
Capital Assets	3	4,314	955
		-----	-----
		14,311	11,983
		<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>
Qardh Hasanah	4	19,500	20,000
Creditors	5	7,167	
Net Assets	6	(12,356)	(8,017)
		-----	-----
		14,311	11,983
		<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2001 AND DECEMBER 31, 2002**

Note 1 Authority and Status

The Academy of Learning Islam (the “Academy”) started its activities on January 1, 2001 as a not-for-profit organization to advance and teach the religious tenets, history and practices of Islam, according to the Shi’â Ithnâ 'Asharî school of thought. The Academy maintains a religious school of instruction for children, youths and adults and also provides counseling services and Islamic outreach programs to people experiencing religious and social problems.

The Academy became a Registered Charity within the meaning of the Income Tax Act of Canada on June 14, 2002 and therefore is exempt from payment of income taxes.

Note 2 Significant Accounting Policies and Reporting Practices

(a) The Association follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions.

(b) Capital Assets

Capital assets acquisitions are recorded at cost, except donate assets which are recorded at fair market value.

Amortization is recorded at the following annual rates without residual values:

Furniture and equipment 30% declining balance

(c) Donated Services

The work of the Academy is dependent upon the voluntary services of many volunteers. Since many of the services are not normally purchased by the Academy and because of the difficulty in determining fair value, donated services are not recognized in these financial statements.

Note 3 Capital Assets

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
Balance brought forward	955	
Furniture & fixtures purchased	5,126	1,364

Amortization	<u>(1,947)</u>	<u>(409)</u>
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Balance	<u>\$4,134</u>	<u>\$955</u>
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Note 4 Qardh Hasanah (Goodly loan)

Qardh payable includes an interest free loan received from Islamic Humanitarian Services, a charitable organization in Canada.

Note 5 Creditors

Creditors comprise unpaid costs relating to the operations of the Academy and include \$6,000 payable to an Islamic Centre for rental of premises.

Note 6 Net Assets

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
Invested in capital assets	4,134	955
Unrestricted deficit	<u>(16,480)</u>	<u>(8,972)</u>
Balance	<u>(12,356)</u>	<u>(8,017)</u>

Note 7 Cash Flow Statement

A Statement of Cash Flow has not be prepared as, in the opinion of the Directors, it would not add any further value to the understandability of these financial statements.

Note 8 Approval of Financial Statements

These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by a voluntary Board of the Academy.