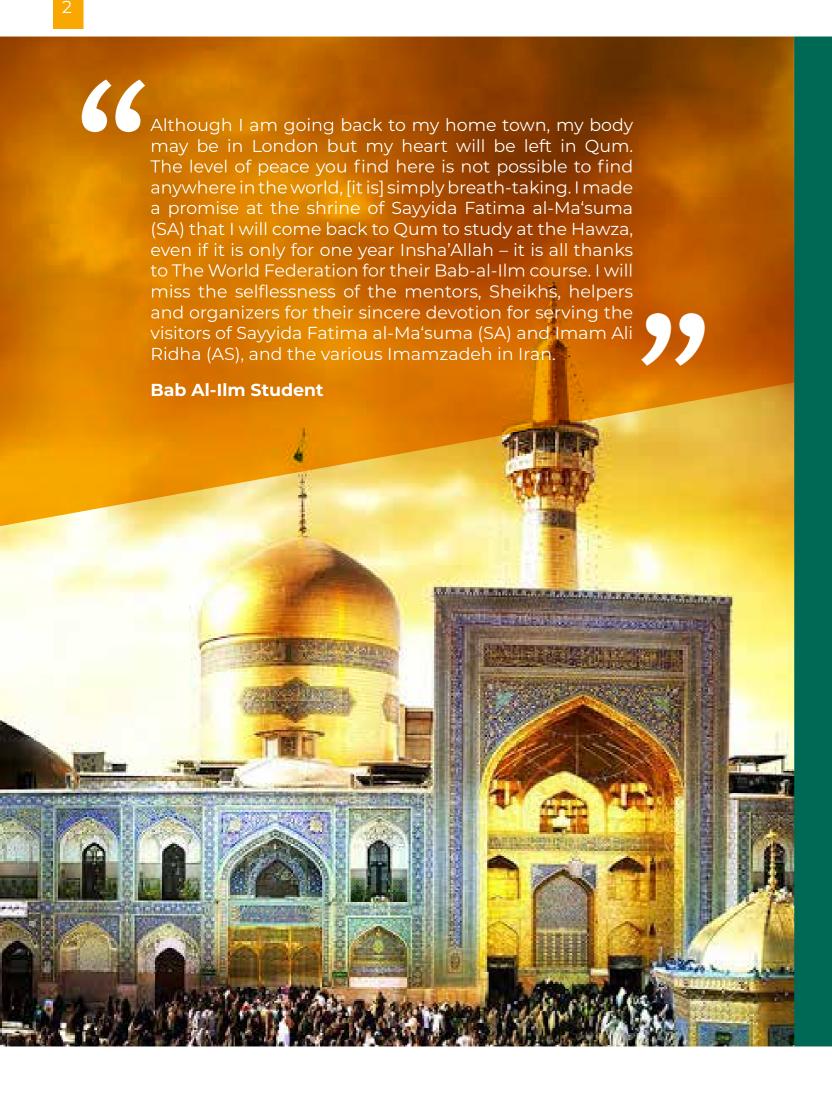


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INTRODUCTION

PLACES VISITED ON THE TRIP



The summer of 2018 marked the 16th consecutive year of The World Federation's flagship Madinah and Bab Al-Ilm Course.

Every summer, participants from across the globe gather together to embark on this three-week course in the Islamic Republic of Iran to acquire knowledge, gain spiritual enlightenment while performing Ziyarah, meet great personalities and make lots of lifelong friendships whilst having fun!

The course aims to enhance the educational and spiritual development of young people who have completed, or are close to completing their essential Madrasah studies – Madinah and Bab respectively. The course provides a platform for participants to reside as

honoured guests and students in the Holy Lands of Qum and Mashhad, learning about the central tenets of religion and building a deep connection to Allah (swt) and the 14 Masumeen.

Participants strengthen their attachment to their Islamic religious and cultural heritage with the various places that are visited, hence deepening their understanding of Shi'a Islam. Furthermore, the schedule and activities catered for on the course aim to inculcate certain skills within the participants that will aid them in every aspect of their lives.

PLANNING

As with all previous years, planning for the 2018 course began shortly after last year's has concluded! Several people applied from all over the world, but unfortunately limited places meant that they could not all be accepted and therefore were chosen on the basis of interview and time of application.

Mentors, just like the participants, underwent a similar process and upon acceptance, were required to undertake a specialist training course in Qum led by Shaykh Abbas Ismail – four days prior to the arrivals of the participants – to develop essential mentorship skills such as active listening, MBTI personality training, acquiring forbearance, logistics coordination and of course bonding with each other.

THE **TEAM**



Sayyid Shabbar

Manager of WF Qum Office / Head of Madinah and Bab Courses



Sister Naajia Jaffery

Organising Team



Shaykh

Spiritual Guide



Sister Zahra Merchant

Project Manager



Shaykh Abbas Ismail

Mentor Trainer



Brother Mahdi Fadaee

Logistical Coordinator



Brother Mustafa Bhurani

Logistical Coordinator



Sister Asma Sultanali Rashid

Qum Office



Brother Zishan Somji

Qum Office



Sister Rubina Premji

Qum Office Volunteer



Brother Mohammad Ishaq Nuri

)um Office Volunteer



Sister Fatimah Farah Jessa

fice



Sister Zahra Jaffer Ismail

UK/Ethiopia



Sister Ridhae Fatima Sheikh

JK



Sister Naba Hussain

Sweden



Brother Zafar Hussain Ladha

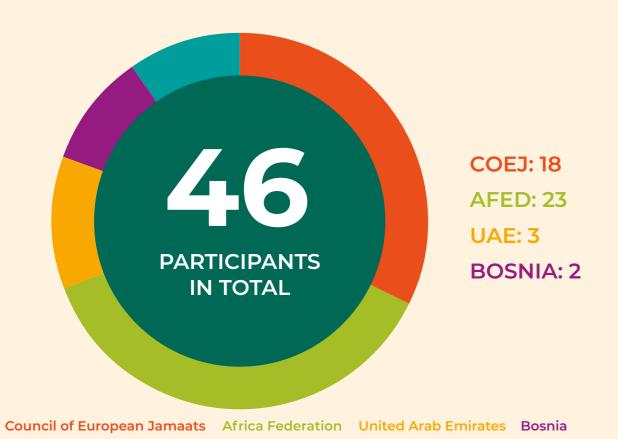
HK/Iran



Brother Muhammad Hussain Daya

Tanzania

PARTICIPANTS FROM RESPECTIVE REGIONS



VENUES

The first two weeks of the courses were spent in the holy city of Qum, the centre of Shi'i learning. Boys stayed close to the Holy Shrine of Sayyida Fatima al-Ma'suma (SA) at the Dar al-Zahra (SA) centre, while girls were accommodated in the renowned Jami'a al-Zahra (SA) seminary. With its gorgeous grounds, indoor swimming and sports complex, convenience store, canteen, and on-

campus classrooms, Jami'a al-Zahra (SA) provided the girls with a real feel of what it is like to live on a modern Hawza campus in Qum!

The participants spent the final week of the course in the holy city of Mashhad, where they participated in the celebrations for the birth anniversary of the blessed Eighth Imam, Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha (AS).

QUM

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COURSE DETAILS

Bab al-IIm participants Ages: 14-17 yrs



Mentors



DATE

21 JULY -



18

Madinah al-IIm participants (Ages: 18-24 yrs)

The bulk of the participants' learning and residence took place in Qum. This extraordinary city is home to the shrine of Sayyida Fatima al-Ma'suma (sa) – daughter of the 7th Imam (as) and sister to Imam Ridha (as). Being the heart of Shi'i scholarship and the site of the shrine of Sayyida Fatima al-Ma'suma (sa), this was the ideal location for the educational enrichment of the course.

Participants were given the opportunity to benefit from the tranquillity that encompasses the holy sanctuary like none other in the world, and to be in the presence of the thousands of scholars and seminaries that are present in this city. The presence of such a revered personality and the atmosphere of knowledge gives rise to an aura of peace and spiritual enlightenment that cannot be found elsewhere. It is narrated in ahadith literature that one of the eight doors of Heaven is figuratively reserved for the inhabitants of Oum.

The sisters – as in previous years – stayed at the world-renowned Jami'at al-Zahra, the largest centre of Shi'a learning in the world for women. The Seminary boasts a serene and beautiful dorm and campus consisting of a sports centre, library, recreational space and more. The brothers resided at the newly established Dar al-Zahra 2 building adjacent to the main Dar al-Zahra, WF Qum Office.



CLASS **INSTRUCTORS**

Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ismail

Shaykh Ali Hemani

Shaykh Maddahi

Shaykh Qanawaati

Sayyid Naqawi

Sayyid Samer Al-Hakim

Brother Shiraz Agha

Brother Zahir Davdani

Sister Hannah Daya

Sister Maryam Naghdali

Sister Naajiya Jaffery

Sister Raziya Najafi

Sister Salma Khalfan

Sister Zahra Davdani

A Special welcome ceremony at Jamiah al-Zahra (s) for sisters only



Opening Ceremony

Sisters session with Sister

Sajida Daya at the Haram



Mentor Training

with Shaykh

Abbas Ismail





Contemplating on Lessons from The Holy Qur'an

Islamic and Prophetic Medicine

Role Models and Mahdaviyyah
(Strengthening our Connection with our Living Imam)

Prescriptions for Spiritual Wayfarers – Spiritual Development

Islamic Theology (Aqa'id)

Islamic and Iranian History (Tareekh)

Jurisprudence (Fiqh) and Practical Laws (Ahkam)

Participants not only benefitted from formal, interactive classes but also from many informal discussions that took place with the teachers and highly esteemed personalities they met in different places. The electrifying energy of the magnificent city of Qum enhanced their desire for seeking knowledge, where participants were eager to see the dawn of every day to start their classes after a hearty breakfast!

Lessons were geared towards enhancing participants' practical understanding of Islam, implementing theoretical underpinnings and jurisprudence to every day lived realities. Separate classes were run for girls and boys, as well as Madinah and Bab participants – with the topics based on the needs of each age range and on what the participants had informed the organisers beforehand about their areas of interest and questions they wished to pose on the course.



Group discussion with Sayyi

Reciting Dua at the top of Mount Khidhr (AS)

CULTURAL

ACTIVITIES IN QUM

Around classes, there was plenty of time to soak in the sights of this magnificent city. Participants visited the Haram nearly every day during their stay in Qum, except for the nights that were spent in Jamkaran. The majority of the cultural activities took place in the late afternoon so the students had time to rest after their morning classes, and more importantly to avoid the worst of

Masjid-e-Jamkaran





Among the favourite destinations for all the students was Mount Khidr (as), on the outskirts of the city overlooking Jamkaran. Participants ascended the mountain at twilight for an early morning reflection session, where amidst the first rays of sunshine, they were enlightened with a thought-provoking talk on the veracity of this life.

This was reflective of all the cultural places that were visited, where short talks regarding the significance of the place, its history and details of relevant personalities were given by scholars and instructors.

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It was a special night as this sanctuary of peace had become a spiritual rendéz-vous for crowds of people. The elaborate mosaic inscriptions on the domes were decorated by lights, and dhikr rose in the humid air as we recited Dua-e-Tawassul. It was such a heartfelt moment as I yearned to rekindle my relationship with our Imam

Zahra Ismail, Stanmore, UK



The lights that shimmered upon the shrine spread a blanket of tranquillity in our hearts.

Mahek Nanji, Nairobi, Kenya & Zainab Kermali, Toronto, Canada

Holy Shrine of Sayyida Fatima al Ma'suma (SA)





ACTIVITIES & PLACES VISITED IN QUM

 Holy Shrine of Sayyida Fatima al-Ma'suma (SA) - including exclusive
 Haram tours and visiting the graves of prominent scholars buried in and around the Haram

Masjid-e Jamkaran

Mount Khidhr (AS)

Bait al-Noor (The House of Light), The house in which Sayyida Ma'suma (SA) stayed before she passed away.

Hadhrat Musa al-Mubarqa' (son of Imam al-Jawad (AS)) and the Forty Stars

Library of the Late Ayatullah Sayyid Shahab al-Din Mar'ashi al-Najafi (RA)

Ansariyan Publications Book Shop

Shaykhan Graveyard

House of Imam Khomeini (RA)

Tour of Haram and the graves of Maraji' and other prominent scholars buried inside the Holy Shrine

Mulla Sadra's House in Kahak

Gulzar e Shohada Graveyard - Burial Place for Martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war

Celebrating the birth of Imam Ridha (as) at Dar al-Zahra

Swimming for girls at Jami'at al-Zahra's own Sports Complex and for boys at a Sports Centre

Meeting prominent personalities and scholars

At the grave of Ayatullah Sayyid Shahab al-Din Mar'ashi al-Najafi (RA)

A visit to the Ali Sadr Caves and Boating in Hamadan

HAMADAN **HIGHLIGHTS**

Tomb of Avicenna (Ibn Sina) - One of the greatest physicians, astronomers and philosophers of the Islamic Golden Age

Boating inside the Ali Sadr Caves world's largest water cave

Tele-cabin ride to the top of Ganjnameh Mountain & Horse-riding

Abshar Waterfall at Ganjnameh Scriptures

National Museum of Hamadan

Tomb of Baba Tahir - revered Persian

Absorbing the cultural relishes of Iran, such as special saffron drinks in clay mugs and the traditional dish of Dizi

HAMADAN

Hamadan is one of the most beautiful and oldest Iranian cities, with its significant historical and cultural sites. Participants spent two days there, yet it felt much less as the trip was jam-packed with adventures!



One of the highlights of the Hamadan trip was the the top of the mountain where we could view the contemplate on the wonder

Anonymous; Madinah Student

TEHRAN

Before embarking on the much-awaited next leg of the trip to Mashhad, participants spent a day touring the capital city of Tehran. It was an emotional yet enlightening visit; participants immersed themselves in learning about the tribulations Iranians faced before the Revolution in practicing their faith and how the Revolution was such an unpredicted success.



Khomeini (RA)

TEHRAN HIGHLIGHTS

Mausoleum of Shah-Abdul Azim (ra), companion of Imam al-Jawad (AS), in the ancient city of Rey on the outskirts of Tehran

Various Imamzadeh (descendants of Imam)

Behesht-e-Zahra (sa) Cemetery - Iran's largest cemetery which is blessed with the bodies of several martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war

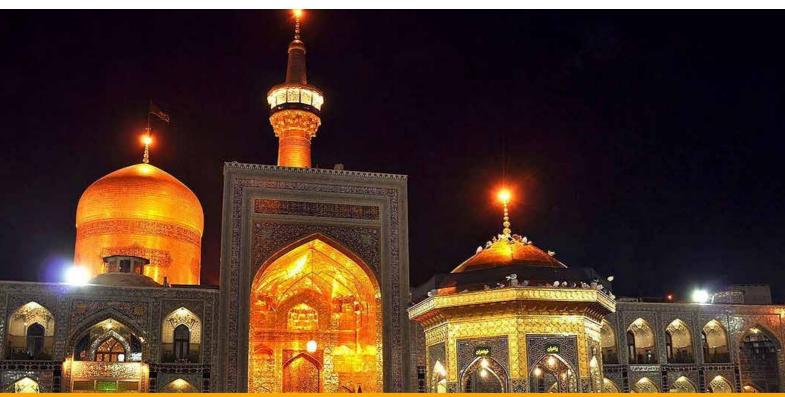
Holy Defence Museum



telecabin ride and view from amazing sight of the city and and majesty of God's creation.

Entrance to the Holy Defence Museum

MASHHAD **AL-MUQADDAS**



The central focus in Mashhad was of course the Ziyarah of the one affectionately known as the Sultan of Khorasan, nonetheless participants also took part in fun-filled activities as well as cultural visits. Some of the activities included a visit to Mashhad's Stone Park where they enjoyed an exciting dinner, a visit to one of the biggest waterparks in Iran, as well as a shopping trip to the mall to purchase gifts and mementos for participants' families back home.



Dinner at Stone Mountain Park

After the exhilaration of the previous two weeks, participants were eager to make the final leg and climax of the journey towards the 8th Holy Imam Ali al-Ridha (AS) in Mashhad.

The group were lucky to have spent the days of Dahw al-Ardh in Mashhad, as well as the 23rd of Dhul-Qa'dah – which, according to some sources, is the martyrdom anniversary of the Imam. Participants were also blessed with the invitation to enjoy dinner in the Haram of the Imam (AS) on one of the nights – not everyone gets this opportunity, where some Iranians have been waiting for more than 10 years!

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Alhamdulillah, I am thanking Allah (swt) for giving us the opportunity to see this day. Surely it has been a great day. The first thing we did when we woke up in the morning was to go to the haram of Imam Ridha (as). We could see the golden dome shining so beautifully, instilling in us humility and sincerity to Allah (swt).

Sabrina Kautipe, Tanzania



Inside the Museum of Imam Ali Ridha (AS

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It was Fajr time and we were sitting in the Haram of Imam Ridha (as), right opposite the dome. What a lovely and peaceful way to start the day. At around 10am, we were all rushing to get ready for an amazing day ahead. We had two options - either the waterpark or the shopping mall. Majority of the group decided to go to the waterpark, whilst others went to the mall. After this, we had one of the best pizzas ever (which felt really good after having some amazing KFC yesterday!). We later went on a tour of a haunted house where we screamed our lungs out. Then, we ended the day with a beautiful recitation of Du'a Tawassul in the Haram. A fantastic day well lived, Alhamdulillah.

Madiha Enayat, AFED

MEETING WITH **AYATOLLAHS**

ani ats

Ayatollah Hadavi Tehrani addressing the students

Whilst in Mashhad, the camp were fortunate to meet two prominent Shi'a clerics.

AYATOLLAH HADAVI TEHRANI

Apart from specialising in seminary studies, Ayatollah Hadavi Tehrani has a degree in electrical engineering. He is fluent in English, Persian and Arabic and knows French and German to a great extent. His knowledge of English and computing has enabled him to take the prerogative of being active on the internet to answer questions on Islamic issues.

After the participants prayed Dhuhrain behind him, the Ayatollah gave a lecture in English and advised them on the importance of youth and finding accurate answers to questions we may have, as well as the dangers of trying to answer issues without acquiring sufficient knowledge and information. He emphasised on the fact that knowledge should be

taught and shared with others. He also emphasised on the importance of being steadfast in your faith whilst living in non-Muslim countries. The lecture ended with a brief guestion and answer session.

AVATOLI AH DEV SHAHDI

This Ayatollah played an important role in the Islamic Revolution and has served as Minister of Intelligence as well as Chief Prosecutor. He was appointed representative for Hajj affairs to Ayatollah Khamenei and is the dean of the Dar Al Hadith Scientific Cultural Institute. The famous book of Mizan al-Hikmah, which is a collection of some of the narrations of the Ahlul-Bayt (as), was compiled in this institution under his guidance. Participants had the opportunity to visit this institute and view the different works compiled there as well as having the chance to purchase some of the works on display.

NEYSHAPUR

Participants also had the opportunity to visit the city of Neyshapur, situated in a fertile plain at the foothills of the Binalud Mountains near Mashhad. This city is famous for numerous reasons – one of the most commonly known being that it is the site of the world's most prominent turquoise mines.

Furthermore, it is the location with the 8th Imam (as) stopped on his way to Khorasan to deliver the famous "Golden Chain" narration, in which he mentions belief in Imamate to be one of the fundamental conditions of faith. The city also holds a shrine with the imprint of the Imam's footsteps; the shrine also has a spring of water,



At the shrine of Lady Shatita (SA)



Shrine with the imprint of Imam Ridha (AS) footsteps

which is said to have emerged when the Imam wished to perform wudhu. Participants had the opportunity to visit this site and bring some of the blessed water back home.

The camp also visited the shrine of Imamzadeh "Mahruq", which literally means "the burnt one". This is in reference to the death of this individual from the progeny of the Ahlul-Bayt (as), who was burnt by the Abbasids. Also visited was the shrine of Lady Shatita, one of the virtuous ladies of the Ahlul-Bayt (as) and whom the 7th Imam (as) recited the funeral prayers for, Khaja Aba Salt – a famous companion of the 8th Imam (as) – as well as another shrine of an Imamzadeh from the progeny of the 7th Imam (as).

CLOSING **CEREMONY**

The closing ceremony took place in the Foreign Pilgrims Department of the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali al-Ridha (as), which lent it a special sentiment. This was used as an opportunity for the participants to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences of the previous three weeks as well as display their gratitude to the organisers and mentors. After having spent every walking and talking moment together and experiencing spiritual highs, this was also a time for deep reflection on how a 'family' was formed amongst all the participants and how there was a collective effort in reaching the goals and objectives of the course. Certificates and gifts were distributed and participants were blessed with a few closing remarks given by the spiritual guides and scholars to round off the successful educational and spiritual journey they had just been on. Furthermore, feedback was taken from the participants about how they felt about every aspect of the course and ways we could improve it for future years.





Whoever recognises themselves has recognised their Lord - this journey is the start to me truly recognising my Lord

Zohafatema M Hemraj; Bab Al-Ilm Participant Middle East

I have never seen anything as beautiful as the haram (shrine) and it was so emotional. I could feel the attachment with Bibi and some kind of peace that I can't really express Fatuma Mussa Bugu; Madinah Participant - AFED

I came here with a lot of questions for which I was seeking answers, and in return I got such amazing answers that I fell in love with my religion

Anonymous; Bab Al-Ilm Participant

TESTIMONIALS



If everyone represents a colour through their personality, then as a group we come together as white light from this prism. We have become a tight-knit group, and I am very fortunate to have found so many sisters to share this fruitful experience with

Zahra Ismail Madinah Participant - COEJ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise belongs to Allah (swt), Lord of the worlds. We thank Him for giving us the opportunity to once again organise and run this course under the guardianship of Imam al-Ridha (AS) and his holy sister Sayyida Fatima al-Ma'suma (sa).

The World Federation Islamic Education Team would like to thank the Regional Federations, teachers, volunteers, mentors, and everyone else who helped make this course a great success. We are highly appreciative of their commitment and support.

We also extend our gratitude to the participants and their parents; they too were fundamental to the success of this course.

May Allah (swt) enable us to acquire His pleasure and to serve Him even more in future years.

The World Federation Islamic Education Team October 2018



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