



THE WORLD
FEDERATION
OF KSI-MC



**Madinah &
Babal-Ilm 2017**
REPORT

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As I look back at my trip to Iran, I am unable to accumulate words to describe what an amazing and spiritually uplifting experience it was! Throughout my time in Iran, I gained so much—ranging from vast knowledge and unforgettable memories to an inseparable connection between myself and Imam Ali Ridha (as) and his beloved sister Bibi Ma'sooma (as). As I landed in London I felt refreshed and like a different person, ready to look at situations in a different perspective; this is what the trip had taught me. London is my home, however I realised my heart belonged somewhere else... in the holy city of Mashhad

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Maryam Virani



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INTRODUCTION

PLACES VISITED ON THE TRIP



The summer of 2017 marked the 15th consecutive year of The World Federation's Madinah and Bab Al-Ilm Courses.

Every summer, participants from across the globe gather together in the Islamic Republic of Iran to perform Ziyarah, acquire knowledge, meet great personalities, have lots of fun, and make new friends!

The courses aim to enhance the educational and spiritual development

of young people who have completed, or are close to completing their Madrasah studies. Participants on the courses strengthen their attachment to their Islamic cultural and religious heritage and consequently deepen their understanding of religion and love for Allah (SWT).

PLANNING

As with previous years, planning for the 2017 courses began shortly after last year's finished! Many people applied but unfortunately limited places meant that they could not all be accepted. Mentors, just like the students who applied, were interviewed and chosen from different regions.

Before the courses began, mentors undertook a special training course in Qum.

THE TEAM



Shaykh Nadir Jaffer

Head of Madinah and Bab Courses



Shaykh Mohammed Ali Ismail

Spiritual Guide



Sister Laila Sheriff

Project Manager



Brother Mustafa Bhurani

Logistical Coordinator



Brother Mahdi Fadaee

Logistical Coordinator



Brother Qasim Gulamhusein

Mentor Trainer



Sister Fatimah Jessa Jaffer

Qum Office Volunteer and Mentor



Sister Asma Sultanali Rashid

Qum Office Volunteer



Brother Amin Afshar

Qum Office Volunteer



Brother Muhammad Ishaq Noori

Qum Office Volunteer

PARTICIPANTS FROM RESPECTIVE REGIONS



Council of European Jamaats Africa Federation United Arab Emirates

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 was an ideal location for the Academic Programme of the course

COURSE DETAILS



34

Bab al-Ilm participants
(Ages: 14-17 yrs)



6

Mentors

QUM

The bulk of the participants' learning took place in Qum. Being the heart of Shi'i learning, Qum was an ideal location for the Academic Programme of the course.

Lessons were geared towards enhancing the participants' practical understanding of Islam. Every morning, following a hearty breakfast, classes began at 10:00 am and finished at 1:00 pm. Separate classes were run for Madinah and Bab participants, girls and boys. Topics were based on the needs of each age range and on what the participants had informed the organisers beforehand about their areas of interest and the questions they had.



DATE

17 JULY -
06 AUG 2017



22

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



CLASS INSTRUCTORS

Brother Amin Afshar

Sister Hanna Daya

Shaykh Assad Dharsi

Shaykh Ali Hemani

Shaykh Mohammed Ali Ismail

Shaykh Tahir Ridha Jaffer

Shaykh Nadir Jaffer

Shaykh Muhammad Khalfan

Sayyid Ahmed Madani

Sister Raadhiya Batool Najafi

Sayyid Haider Naqvi

Sister Asma Sultanali



Shaykh Nadir Jaffer
addressing the girls on an
outdoor visit

TOPICS STUDIED

The participants not only benefitted from formal, interactive classes but also from many informal discussions that took place with the teachers and with high-ranking personalities they met in different places. The electrifying energy of the magnificent city of Qum enhanced their desire for knowledge. On some days, talks were given after Fajr Salat and Ziyarah at the Holy Shrine of Sayyida

Fatima al-Ma'suma (SA). The participants thoroughly enjoyed spending time with their teachers and having all their questions answered.

Shaykh Mohammed Ali Ismail
addressing a group of boys

Mentor Training

Student's in class during lecture



SOME OF THE TOPICS DISCUSSED

- Introduction to Al-Saheefa Al-Sajjadiyya
- Prescriptions for Spiritual Wayfarers
- Practical Programme for Spiritual Development
- Strengthening our Connection with our Living Imam (AJFS)
- Contemplating on the Qur'an
- Islamic Anger Management
- Balance of Spiritual and Material Life
- Prophetic Medicine
- Ladies Jurisprudential Issues
- Qur'an Recitation
- Source and Purpose of Existence
- Existential Questions
- Philosophy of Ziyarah
- Practical Islamic Laws
- Hijab in Islam
- Pre-marital Questions
- Dealing with Islamophobia
- Faith and its Relation with Actions
- Islamic Theology
- Youth Issues

Masjid-e-Jamkaran



CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN QUM

After classes, there was plenty of time to soak in the sights of this historical city. One of the favorite places for all the students was Mount Khidhr (AS).

On some mornings, this mountain was visited in the early hours of the morning where amidst the first rays of sunshine, the participants benefitted from a thought-provoking reflection session on the summit. They revisited it again on



A replica of The Holy Ka'aba on the sets of 'Muhammad, The Messenger of God'

another evening, treading in the footsteps of some great personalities and watching the sunset over the city of Qum.

Visiting the Lady of Light in the city of knowledge, Qum, and listening to Dua-e-Tawassul in the presence of the beloved son of Zahra (SA) at the grand mosque of Jamkaran, frees one from the shackles of this world.

Ahsan Habib Mukhtarali, UK

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



This year, the participants had a very special treat! The World Federation hired out a famous cinema that was screening, for the first time with English subtitles, the incredible movie, 'Muhammad, The Messenger of God'. The following day, the participants were given a tour of the movie set, which included replicas of the cities of Makkah and Madinah as they were at the time of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). That day, everyone had goosebumps and they came away from the tour with a greater understanding of the life and times of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

ACTIVITIES & PLACES VISITED IN QUM

- | Holy Shrine of Sayyida Fatima al-Ma'suma (SA)
- | 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-Mubarraqa' (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
- | Cinema to watch the film 'Muhammad: The Messenger of God'
- | Set of the aforementioned film on the outskirts of Qum
- | Shopping
- | Masjid-e Musalla-ye Quds for Friday Prayers



A visit to the Ali Sadr Caves and Boating in Hamadan

HAMADAN

Hamadan is one of the most beautiful and oldest cities in Iran. Participants spent two days there, although it felt much less to them as they enjoyed the trip so much!



A visit to the National Museum of Hamadan

HAMADAN HIGHLIGHTS

- | Tomb of Avicenna
- | National Museum of Hamadan
- | Tomb of Baba Tahir Uryan
- | Telecabin ride and climbing to the top of the mountain
- | Horse riding
- | Waterfall - Ganjnameh Scriptures
- | Abbas Abad Hill
- | Ali-Sadr Water Cave and Boating

We had the opportunity to climb up to the highest point of Hamadan, and there we found a view like no other, again reminding me of the beauty of Allah's creation. It was a perfect place for self-reflection which I really enjoyed. Hamadan was definitely a place I will never forget and would love to return to one day

Ridhae Fatima Sheikh

TEHRAN

Before embarking on the next leg of the trip, the participants spent a day touring the capital city of Iran. It was an emotional yet enlightening day; they learnt about the trials and tribulations Iranians faced before the Revolution for practicing their religion. It really made them realise how much of a blessing it is for someone to be able to practice their religion freely in their country.



The dome is part of the complex of the Holy Shrine of Shah-Abdul Azim Haram; a descendant of the second Holy Imam (as)

TEHRAN HIGHLIGHTS

- | Mausoleum of Imam Khomeini (RA)
- | Behesht-e-Zahra (SA) Cemetery, Iran's largest cemetery, which is blessed with the bodies of many of the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war.
- | Savak Museum, the prison used by the former Shah's secret police to imprison and interrogate opponents of his regime before the Revolution.
- | Holy Shrine of Shah-Abdul Azim, a descendant of the second holy Imam (AS).



A visit to Behesht-e-Zahra (SA) Cemetery; Iran's largest cemetery

MASHHAD AL-MUQADDAS



After the excitement of the previous two weeks, the trip reached its climax in the holy city of Mashhad.

Here, participants were lucky enough to spend the birth anniversary of Imam al-Ridha (AS) in his own city!

On the night of the Imam's birthday, which was a Thursday night, the participants were invited for a special dinner at the Holy Shrine. After this, they joined the huge gathering there for the recitation of Dua Kumail. This was recited under the open sky, which also gave them

the opportunity to see a firework display that had been organized especially for the occasion. Alhamdulillah, the groups were staying close enough to the Haram, and this enabled them to visit the Holy Shrine three times a day for prayers.

Tours of the Haram included visits to the graves of various scholars and historical monuments.

MEETING WITH AYATULLAH SAFI GULPAYGANI

The group also met with Grand Ayatullah Lutfullah Safi Gulpaygani, one of the most senior and prominent Maraji' in the world today. The Ayatullah told them how happy he was to see Muslim students from so many countries, and he talked of the virtue of studying and being the best in one's field. He also reminded them about the importance of Hijab and to maintain one's faith in their home countries.



Grand Ayatullah Lutfullah Safi Gulpaygani



The sport-cultural complex of the water park called Water Waves Land is considered as the largest indoor water park

WHILE IN MASHHAD..

...the participants had the chance to cool off and visit one of the biggest water parks in Iran. It was so large that despite spending seven hours there, they were still unable to try out all the slides!

NEYSHABUR

Shrine of Khwaja Aba Sult (RA) one of the closest companions of Imam Al-Ridha (AS)



Inside of the Shrine of Imamzadeh Mahrooq (RA)

The group took a bus from Mashhad to visit Neyshabur, which is most famous for being the place where the Eighth Holy Imam (AS) stopped to narrate 'The Golden Chain' Hadith. A shrine there commemorates the event; inside it is a stone on which the Imam is alleged to have stood. Next to the shrine is a spring from which the Imam is reported to have performed Wudhu'.

The participants also visited the shrine of Imamzadeh Mahruq, a descendant of the Fourth Holy Imam (AS), Imamzadeh Ibrahim, who descends from the progeny of the Seventh Holy Imam (AS), and the shrine of the close companion of Imam al-Ridha (AS), Khawaja Aba Salt.

CLOSING CEREMONY

At the closing ceremony, the boys, girls and mentors were given the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences of the previous three weeks. After spending every waking moment together and experiencing spiritual highs and lows, times of deep reflection and times of just good old fun, they felt like a family had been formed. Certificates and gifts were distributed and the spiritual guides, Shaykh Nadir Jaffer and Shaykh Mohammed Ali Ismail, provided everyone with final words of guidance to round off the successful educational and spiritual journey they had all just been on.



It was with heavy hearts that the farewell Ziyarat was recited in Mashhad. With sadness in their hearts, the group left for Tehran to begin the travels back to their home countries. A common theme during the airport farewell was that the bonds formed on this trip will last a lifetime. We pray to Almighty Allah (SWT) that the lessons will never leave the hearts of those lucky individuals who experienced such an incredible and fulfilling journey.

TESTIMONIALS

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We ventured into this journey full of resolutions, only to be amazed at what it had in store for us! We started off thirsty to learn more from this trip. Not only were many doors of knowledge opened before us but we felt our souls uplift as one big family! Being the guests of the Shining Sun (Imam Ridha (AS)) and his noble Sister (AS) was ONE exceptional experience and before we knew it our hearts were hooked by their love!! Time moved swiftly and physically we might call it an end. But, no! Instead, it's rather the beginning of a revolution of the hearts to continue forever!!

Siddiqa Anwarali,
Bab al-Ilm Participant -
AFED



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Globally, this project is very important because it helps us meet other followers of Ahlul Bayt and make long-lasting friendships with them. Therefore, I'm emphasising on the fact that this journey has just begun. The first step - getting to know each other - has been completed, and we as parents should encourage our children to keep those connections, with the mentors, teachers, and of course with their sisters (for the girls) and their brothers (for the boys). In that way, this won't be just a wonderful event but an actual reality which can be a trigger for making connections among Ahlul Bayt followers all around the world in the close future. We would like to thank, from the bottom of our hearts, the organisers, teachers, mentors, participants and parents for making this course so special and beautiful in every way possible.

Ertan Basarik,
Parent - Bosnia

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 (SA) 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 2017



THE WORLD
FEDERATION
OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHARI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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