

Ramadan

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Spiritual connection: Imam Syed Salman of Troy discusses the importance of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar characterized by dawn to dusk fasting.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN STROMBERG

finished," he recalled. "It was my dad's wish. And I feel very proud that I could do it."

Other community rituals at the mosque at 1830 W. Square Lake Road include weekend Ifar parties. Ifar is the daily breaking of the fast, which is done precisely at sunset by the one billion Muslims around the globe.

Each Friday during the holy month, Salman invites guest imams from surrounding communities to give the sermon before the afternoon prayers at the Oakland County mosque.

"It gives people a different perspective and joins the community together. That's what we believe...that all are equal in the sight of God," he said. "And we stand for prayers facing north-east toward Mecca. There's a feeling of unification because everyone is facing one point in the whole universe."

Though he works full time as an engineer for Chrysler Corp., Salman manages to free time to serve at Unity Center, which draws a constituency of 50 families of American, Arabic, Indian, Iraqi, Iranian, Pakistani and Syrian heritage. As the religious leader, he is responsible for the prayer and the ritual aspects at the mosque, for guiding the faithful and developing beneficial programs for them, for keeping the constituency open and for ensuring a spiritually uplifting

experience for all.

A native of India, Salman came to the United States to continue his studies at the University of Detroit and began serving as an imam in the city in 1971.

"The concern and care I feel for the community and for humanity brought me into this," said Salman, who resides in Troy with his wife, Mona, and their four daughters. "In Islam, there needs to be a balance between the world and the spiritual aspects of life."

Ramadan culminates with the sighting of the next new moon on January 30. After Morning Prayer, Muslims spend the day visiting family and friends and exchanging gifts in a post-Ramadan festival known as "Eid."

The term, Islam, means peace, purity, acceptance and commitment. The most important message of the faith, said Salman, "is peace and good will to all people."

"Coming to the United States has been a great experience for me and the biggest blessing is the openness and freedom we have here," added Salman, who visits Mecca every year. "The opportunity for intellectual growth, social growth and spiritual growth is unlimited. Hopefully the revival for the world will come from here."

Community Messenger features spiritual announcements from Oakland County religious institutions. Ten days before the desired publication date, please write: *Community Messenger, c/o Beliefs & Values Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Our fax number is (248) 644-1314.*

MULTI-MEDIA ART

The Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit, 6600 W. Maple Road at Drake, in West Bloomfield, is offering a free, multi-media art class for adults with developmental disabilities on the second and fourth Thursday of the month beginning Jan. 8. Participants will learn art appreciation and explore various media like watercolors and woodworking. For information, contact Amy at (248) 661-7737.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Church Women United Birmingham Area is holding its annual meeting at 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 9, at Holy Name Catholic Church, 648 Woodland at Harmon, Birmingham. Barbara Miller will speak on "Broad for the World." Coffee and fellowship begins at 9:30 a.m. Babysitting is available upon request. Call (248) 642-6493.

SHABBAT SCHMOOZE

Cong. B'nai Moshe, 6800 Drake Road, West Bloomfield, welcomes all youth in grades 7 through 12 to join the Shabbat Schmooze from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Jan. 10, for a little praying, a little learning, a little noshing, and a lot of schmoozing. The bi-monthly event features a guest schmoozer from the community to lead in a discussion involving anything from current events in Israel and the Diaspora to the portion of the week, its mean-

ing, how it relates to our daily lives or any topic participants want to schmooze about. Guest schmoozers include Seth Koreitz, Rabbi Michèle Faudem and Elhan Gilan. Schmooze will also be held on Jan. 24, and Feb. 7 and 28. For information, call (248) 788-3600.

PRESCHOOL STARTS

Troy-based Cong. Shir Tikvah begins its informal preschool playgroup for 3 and 4 year olds on Jan. 11. The more formal program beginning Feb. 8, consists of fun, informative classes where knowledge of Jewish holidays comes alive through stories, songs, art and prayer. To register, call (248) 619-9669.

HEBREW READING

Cong. B'nai Moshe, 6800 Drake Road, West Bloomfield, is launching an eight-part crash course in Total Beginner Hebrew Reading taught by education director Rita Abramson. The class is designed for adults with absolutely no Hebrew skills and is open to the community. Classes run from 6 to 9 p.m. on Mondays, beginning Jan. 12. Tuition is \$40 for members and \$55 for non-members. Students wishing to continue with Hebrew reading may apply to enter one of a number of ongoing, higher-level classes offered at the synagogue. To register, call Rita Abramson at (248) 788-3600 or e-mail to ritaa@bnaimoshe.org.

INTRO TO JUDAISM

Rabbi Arnie Slutsky of Cong. Shir Tikvah in Troy is teaching a 10-week Introduction to Judaism class beginning Jan. 12. The class is open to anyone approaching Judaism for the first time or anyone interested in a refresher course taught at the adult level. Class size is limited.

To register, call (248) 619-9669.

TORAH CLASS

Cong. B'nai Moshe, 6800 Drake Road, West Bloomfield, is offering an eight-part class on how to read Torah taught by Cantor Earl Beris. The series meets from 8 to 9 p.m. on Mondays beginning Jan. 12. All are welcome. Tuition is \$40 for members and \$55 for non-members. Phonetic Hebrew reading ability is a prerequisite. For information, call Cantor Beris at (248) 788-0600 or e-mail cantor@bnaimoshe.org.

CHODUN TO SPEAK

The Temple Shir Shalom Sisterhood, 3999 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, is hosting guest speaker Cheryl Chodun at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 13, at its monthly meeting. A graduate of Detroit's Wayne State University, Chodun has won two Emmy Awards in her career and has been named outstanding woman on-air in both radio and television. Chodun will speak on news reporting and answer questions about breaking news stories and how they are covered. Guests are welcome. For information, contact the TSS Sisterhood at (248) 737-8700.

LEAP OF FAITH

Stepping Stones, the singles group at First United Methodist Church, 1589 W. Maple Road, Birmingham, is hosting an evening with internationally known speaker Philip E. Johnson at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 13. Johnson will present a provocative, entertaining and creative program, "A Leap of Faith Into 1998!" An ordained clergyman and licensed mediator in both the United States and Canada, Johnson is a recognized expert in dispute resolution. He will address the hopes

and expectations we all have for the New Year. For information, call the Rev. Melody Hurley at (248) 646-6407, ext. 3142.

ADULT ED BEGINS

Wednesday night adult education classes begin on Jan. 14, at Temple Shir Shalom, 3999 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield.

Introduction to Judaism meets from 7 to 8 p.m. The six-week class is a beginner's guide to Judaism with a basic overview of Jewish history, holidays, festivals, life cycle events and the concept of understanding the differences between Jewish sects. The instructors are Rabbi Michael Moskowitz and Daniel Schwartz. Tuition is \$50 and there's a \$50 book fee.

Hands-On Judaism meets from 8 to 9 p.m. with instructor Judi Simon. Traditions and time honored Jewish recipes will be featured. Tuition is \$45. Prayer Hebrew meets from 8 to 9 p.m. with Rabbi Michael Moskowitz. Tuition is \$50 and there is a \$16 book fee. For information, call (248) 737-8700.

IMPACT OF AIDS

The University of Life program at First United Methodist Church, 1589 W. Maple, Birmingham, is holding a film seminar and panel discussion of the highly acclaimed movie, "Philadelphia," from 7:30 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 14. The program will explore the human side of the AIDS tragedy. Prepared remarks of the three panelists focus on the role of family, friends, and support systems of people suffering from AIDS. Dr. William Ritter, senior pastor, will lead the seminar. For information, call Bruce Hayden at (248) 646-6407, ext. 3125.

Local high school students study in Israel for 4 months

Five local high school students participated in an exchange program in Israel from Sept. 3 to Dec. 29.

The five students (two from Congregation Shir Tikvah in Troy and three from Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Township) were among 30 students from around

the United States selected to participate in the Eisendrath International Exchange Program through the National Federation of Temple Youth. This program included a four-month intensive course of study with high school-level classes at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem.

During their stay at Hebrew Union College, the students lived on campus but they also had the chance to spend four weeks living with host families throughout Israel.

The local participants were: Jeremy Jutkowitz, Troy; Ben Turbow, Rochester Hills (both of

whom are members of Congregation Shir Tikvah); Jennifer Soble, Minda Patt and Lynn Iskovitz (all of whom reside in Bloomfield Hills, and are members of Temple Beth El); Jeremy, Ben and Jennifer were making return visits to Israel since they had participated in the 1996 Teen Mission.

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