

Article 63

**AN IRAQI SCHOLAR IN TOWN:
AN INTERVIEW WITH SHEIKH AL-QAYSI:**

BY

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May 20, 2010

Jumada Al – Akhir 6, 1431 H



[Question 1: Would you like to give the readers an idea about your qualifications, licenses and recent employment?](#)

- 2009/2010 Lecturer in the Sciences of the Quran in various Mosques (Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey and Richmond)

- 2003/2005 Member of the Fatwa Committee (Baghdad / Al-Karakh)
- 1991/2003 Member of the Religious Awareness and knowledge Committee (Attached to the Ministry of Religion in Baghdad and Al-Karakh)
- Published six books in the domain of Quran Readings and Recitations
- Bachelor of Law (which includes many topics of Islamic Sharia Laws)
- Holder of four International Licenses in Quran Readings (Qira'at), among which a License in the ten ways of recitation via Shattibiyah and another License via Dourrah.
- Holder of many Licenses in the Sciences of Hadeeth (study and narration)
- 1987/2005 Practiced as a Lawyer (attorney) in Baghdad (Iraq)
- Moved with my family to Canada in 2008

Question 2: What advice would you give to the Islamic community and Muslim families in Canada?

- These are some of the most important recommendations I would give to the Muslim community in Canada:
 - Keep regularly in touch with the Mosques and Islamic centres
 - Give your full and generous support to the Mosques and Islamic centers either financially or any other way you can.
 - Pray at the Masjid at least once a day (example: Isha Prayer) and try to attend most of the prayers during the weekend.
 - Make sure you don't miss Jumua prayer at the Masjid, as well as Eid Al-Adha and Eid Al-Fitr prayers.
 - Take good care of your family, and bring your wife and children consistently to attend the Masjid's activities.
 - Girls should attend the lectures at the Masjid with their mothers; and the boys with their fathers or older brothers.
 - It is highly recommended for non-Arabic speaking Muslims to learn Arabic in order to understand the Qur'an correctly and fully appreciate the depths of its meanings.
 - Arabic speaking Muslims have to attend Arabic lectures at least once a week, and try to speak Arabic in the Masjid and Islamic meetings because it is part of the rituals of Islam.

- Muslims should participate effectively and positively in the western society without completely melting into it. They have to keep their Islamic identity and abstain from what Allah has prohibited them from.

Question 3: Do you have any observations about the mosques and Islamic centers in Vancouver BC?

My observations could be summarized in the following points:

- I have noticed that the mosques aren't open for all five daily prayers, especially Fajr prayer.
- Islamic centers in Vancouver BC are small, very old and do not meet the necessary specifications and requirements for the Dawaa; apparently due to its weak financial condition. Therefore, we need a competent administrative committee to take care of different tasks regarding the improvement and expansion of Islamic centers in BC.
- There is no structured plan or approach in most of Islamic centers. Normally, there should be a prepared and organized agenda (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and seasonally activities). These activities should include lectures, competitions, meetings, camping ...etc. Moreover, there should be daily and weekly courses in different Islamic sciences particularly in Aqeedah (the Fundamentals of Islamic Creed), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), mainly the Jurisprudence of Worship and civil contracts; to help Muslims perform their religious duties correctly and protect them against committing forbidden actions (like usury). I suggest that the Islamic centre's agenda should be printed out and distributed among Muslims so that they can be informed about the centre's activities and therefore participate in realizing its objectives.

Question 4: What are your suggestions to improve mosques and Islamic centers?

I have the following suggestions:

- To build big and modern Islamic centers which really reflect the greatness of our religion
- These Islamic centers should include entertainment spaces where Muslim families can meet and provide educational and fun activities for youth. Furthermore, the centers should supply different sport activities including a swimming pool to hold separate sessions for men and women in order to help Muslims stay away from public mixed swimming pools.

- To provide accommodation for those in charge of the Islamic centers close to the centers in order to maintain their continuous presence.
- We need full-time devoted Muslims to take care of different duties and responsibilities at the Islamic centers such as leading daily prayers, conducting classes, making Dawa (teach and provide information about Islam for both non-Muslims and new-Muslims); and grant them a reasonable salary to make sure they are financially independent.
- Build accommodations close to the Masjid for the Imam, the lecturer and the administrative assistants to facilitate their continuous presence and availability.
- Encourage them with good salaries and facilities to make sure they are completely devoted to their great mission.
- Create an organism to control and organize mosques and Islamic centers. The organism would reward and acknowledge good performance, and correct negligence and incompetence in order to establish an excellent reputation and maintain high standards in those religious institutions.
- Open the door to the Muslim communities to participate and contribute effectively in improving the mosques and Islamic centers.
- Create suggestions and complaints boxes, and keep an open mind to constructive criticism which should always be welcomed.