



MUSLIM COMMUNITY CENTER  
- CHARLOTTE -

# Pearls

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# Hispanic Heritage Month

## Highlights of an interview with a community member, Javier Mencia

AbdulRazak (AR): Please tell us your name and your journey to Islam.

Javier (J): My name is Javier Mencia and my parents came from Honduras, but I grew up in Concord, Charlotte area. So I've been here for a while, since about 2005. The way I came to Islam was basically I grew up Christian, kind of grew up having to go to church on Sundays, and my mom told me I gotta go to church on Sundays.

But it was never really like it was serious. It was a cultural thing, more than a religious thing. So, you know, as I got a little older, I had a lot more questions, and I didn't have people around me to answer those questions. So a lot of them went unanswered. So I kind of at a certain age, I think around middle school, I decided I wasn't Christian anymore. kind of took up more of an atheist belief. And in that age you are curious about a bunch of stuff. So I got on to Eastern religions, like Taoism, Buddhism, and different philosophical ideas like stoicism and Nihilism and you know, all kinds of stuff.



And then lastly, got into Islam, went to Barnes and Noble to buy a bunch of books and got a Quran and it sat on my shelf for a few months. But one day, I picked it up and read the first verse and seeing the similarities with Christianity. But that made a lot more sense and, you know, researching a lot about Prophet Isa (PBUH), and how he is a prophet who has not died, which I never believed he was God; I believed he was a person to learn from as an example and I didn't really understand the concept of making a man of God. So that kind of resonated with me and then just more research and then probably my son, being born kind of opened my eyes and I started asking a lot more questions about life and that's a serious thing to happen. I believe when he (my son) was about one and a half I decided to come to MCC for the first time and took my Shahada two or three weeks after that.

So, it's been about two years now, early in the journey, but in sha Allah it's gonna be a lot more knowledge and fruit to come from from this journey.



AR: What would you say to someone who is struggling with their beliefs?

JM: I would say if you're struggling in your current belief you (are) already in a position to want to know more about your current beliefs. You are already put in a position where you will need to have some kind of justification because you don't want to blindly follow an ideology or religion or anything without having actual evidence or support to back that up. Because if you're going to live by something, you have to be willing to live by 100%. In Islam, you have to submit to Allah 100%. So I feel like even say when I was a Christian, I really didn't have any. You know, I was asking pastors questions and getting looked at like, I wasn't supposed to be asking questions.

***The full video recording of this interview will soon be uploaded on our  
YouTube channel: MCC Charlotte Media***



***From Javier at MCC, happy Hispanic Heritage Month. If you know anybody  
who's curious about Islam, please invite them. If you yourself are curious  
about Islam, we welcome you. We welcome anybody and we want you to learn  
as much as you can.***



## Islamic Character

# Be Like the Date Palm: Living Islam with a Purpose

Abdullah bin Umar (may God be pleased with him) reorted that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "There is a tree amongst trees, the leaves of which do not wither and that is like a Muslim; tell me what that (tree) can be?" The people began to think of the trees of the forest. Abdullah said, "I thought it could be the date palm tree, but I felt hesitant (to say it)." They (the companions) then asked, "Allah's Messenger, (kindly) tell us which it can be?" Thereupon he (PBUH) replied, "It is the date palm tree." Abdullah made a mention of that to his father, Umar ibn Al Khattab (ra), whereupon he said to Abdullah: "Had you said that it meant the date palm tree, this statement of yours (would have been dearer to me) than such and such things." Hadith no.133 (Bukhari and Muslim) This narration help us understand the qualities of the date palm tree that could be applied in our lives.

We as Muslims are instructed to gain beneficial knowledge regardless of our age and the stage of life that we are at.

**Haya' (modesty) is a virtue but it should not prevent us from attaining benefit, which is why Umar (ra) wished Abdullah had spoken up at the time.**

### **So, what are the parallels between the date palm and the Muslim?**

1. The date palm takes a very long time, 4-8 years, to grow and starts bearing fruits. During this time, its roots are nurtured to become firm enough and grow fruits for generations to come. As Muslims, we can use this process to understand how we need to nurture our spiritual selves. Time and patience are necessary to learn before we can turn knowledge into meaningful action. How much we have benefitted from our knowledge is externalized by our conduct with others and with our surroundings. Internally, however, Imam Malik ibn Anas (ra) explains, "Knowledge does not consist in narrating much. Knowledge is but a light which Allah places in the heart."





2. Date palm trees do not need a forest in which to grow. They are resourceful in and of themselves. Allah (swt) has given each and every one of us endless potential, and we should never underestimate what we can achieve with this. Whether we are at the mosque, school, or work, or with our neighbors, friends or family, there is always an opportunity to help support those around us.

3. We do not grow when things are easy; we grow when we face challenges. The date palm tree grows in hot climates with harsh conditions. Nevertheless, it is still able to bring benefits to everything around it, from its nutritious fruits to its comforting shade. The believer embodies this idea of benefit. The believer is versatile, and (s)he will keep giving no matter what environment (s)he is in. Therefore, like a date palm, a Muslim should thrive and be a fountain of benefit to society, even in the most difficult of environments and conditions.

4. The date palm has a purpose, just like the Muslim. We should take this prophetic guidance to help motivate us to achieve excellence in our daily affairs in our communities. By volunteering, giving charity, serving others, and upholding good ties with everyone we meet, we will eventually bring nourishment and fulfillment to our own lives and to society. Just like dates, we are society's super food.

Source: Sara Chaudhry, Virtual Mosque

# How NOT to Be Broke as a Muslim

(Part 3)

Last month's article was about intention and how it is the most important aspect in creating wealth.

The question that always arises: I got my intentions right but I'm still not wealthy. why is that?

First and foremost, intention is NOT in wanting something. Intention is in doing something.

Intention as much as it is a heart act, it is also physical act. Let me give you an example:

If you are used to do fasting every Monday and you got sick, and was not able to do your regular fasting, you will get rewarded for the fasting because you had the intention of doing and would have done it but faced with an obstacle that prevented you from it. So, the reward is there as long as your intention is

Can you answer these questions honestly?

I once wrote down every negative thought that came to my mind and I was surprised by the negativity I was carrying within me. It takes courage and transparency to acknowledge whether you have the courage and transparency.

Now you know the second principle of creating wealth after intention: admitting where you are and if you have a problem.

Next month I will tell you about principle#3.

Talk next month.!

Dr. Mo

## **How is this related to creating wealth?**

The relation is: what are you doing daily that is bringing you closer to being wealthy?

What are the habits that you're indulging in that bring you closer to be wealthy?

What are the thoughts that you are carrying around in your own head?

How is your self-talk and what do you tell yourself about yourself?

What do you read and listen to regularly?

Share your article or artwork with MCC's Pearls





# Community Highlights:

## **The Nakba: Understanding 75 years of catastrophe in Palestine.**

On Tuesday, 9/12/2023 Johnson C Smith University teamed up with American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) and sponsored the event “The Nakba: Understanding 75 Years of Catastrophe in Palestine”.

The panelists included Obaida Mohammad, President of the Charlotte, NC chapter of AMP, as well as Dr. Ilise Cohen, scholar-activist on Israel/Palestine; Dr. Zachary Foster, lead product manager at Academic.edu and a historian of Palestine; and Ayah Ziyahda, AMP Advocacy Director. The panel was moderated by Dr. Rodney Sadler, associate professor of Bible and director of the Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation at Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary.



If you came to the event thank you for your attendance. If you were unable to attend, here are some important points that were discussed:

- The goal of the event was to raise awareness that the Israel-Palestine conflict is not a religious conflict but a political one.
  - Many in the U.S. are uncritically pro-Israel because they aren't aware of Palestinian suffering. The only way to change that is by helping them to become aware.
  - Education about the topic of Palestine is crucial for all of us as Muslims not just due to the importance of Palestine from the religious standpoint but also it is our duty to help stop the tyranny against anyone who needs help.
- A few important action items:
    - Talking to our state representatives is crucial since the US provides billions of dollars of unconditional foreign aid to Israel every year.
    - Boycotting the Zionist supporters is another important action that might seem small but has proven effective.
    - Join AJP action in Washington D.C. on 10/23 and 10/24. It is the largest lobbying event for Palestine in the US. Use the promo code: NC10 for a discounted rate. After this event you will be trained to advocate for Palestine in the congress.



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