

## Dr. Asim Ashique



Profiled by: Abdulaziz Mian.

**AA: What can you tell me about yourself?**

**Asim:** My name is Mohammed Asim Ashique, son of Mohammed and Shamim Ashique. I am the eldest of four children. I was born in Liverpool, England in 1967. We moved to Canada in 1969. I am married to Kabsha and we have three amazing children Asiyah (7), Ibrahim (6) and Aliya (3).

I am a pain and physical injury specialist in Chiropractic Orthopaedics. I did a BSc. (Hon) in Genetics from U of M (1989) and an MSc. in Human Genetics from the Department of Medicine, U of M (1993). I went to Toronto for Chiropractic college, graduating in 1998. I have since specialized in Orthopaedics and am one of only 25 Canadian chiropractors with that designation. I have a successful practice in downtown Winnipeg, with six people working under me.

**AA: You pretty much grew up here. How did you see your community when growing up?**

**Asim:** I am an indigenous Canadian Muslim. I saw first-hand all of the stages of evolution we went through as our community grew from almost zero to where we are now. If people think its hard dealing with the “terrorist” label now, they should have tried being the only Muslim kid in their high school in the early eighties. We had no organized voice in Canadian society to speak for us at that time and many misconceptions about Islam. Alhamdulillah, our community has come a long way! I remember writing an article for our high school newspaper in 1984 to help clear up those wrong ideas people had. I was a budding activist at 16.

**AA: It must have been hard growing up without lots of Muslims friends. How did you cope with that situation?**

**Asim:** I am a student of Sheikh Mohamed Sanad. He is my teacher, mentor and friend. My son is named after him. He did his PhD at U of M in electromagnetic waves (satellite engineering) in the eighties. His father was the Dean of the department of Usool-Al-Fiqh at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Sheikh Sanad broke all academic records while he was at U of M and is currently one of the top communication satellite designers in the world. He invented the antenna-free phone that many of us use today. He not only taught me Islam but also how to think. It’s something many of us take for granted.

I was taught that „ilm and „ibadaat are important, but Islam is not about sitting in your home and praying. It was instilled in me that the biggest mission we have is to be ambassadors for Islam, to make dawa; and that the best way to do that is to become exceptionally successful in our academic and professional pursuits. Sheikh Sanad would say “if you are average or a failure in your life, people will look at your religion and blame Islam for your failure. They

will say „see, he is wasting his time praying”. If you become a role model and an example through your achievements, people will want to know what makes you exceptional and they will see your religion as a driving force. They will be naturally attracted to Islam.” Simple concept isn’t it? People love to be like winners!

**AA: What is your involvement in the community?**

**Asim:** I must have been involved in the Muslim community in one form or another since my teens. It’s an obligation. I

served as secretary, vice-president and president of MSA in the eighties. I also served time as the Canada East zone and West zone rep for MSA. I have been the regional director of the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) for about 5 years. I served on the national board of CIC as a director for 3 years. My term ended in December, 2005.

I was a trustee with the Manitoba Islamic Association for 3 years (2001-2004). When I became involved, it had taken MIA over ten years to raise about \$200,000 and people had no hope of ever having the \$1.7 million we needed for our new mosque. People in the community told us we were wasting our time on the project and that it would never be built. In these three years we went from this to having over \$1 million, starting the project, and moving it to a state of substantial completion. This happened through Allah's help and many committed volunteers in our community, especially Br. Syed Haseebuddin and Dr. Munir Pirzada.

***AA. You have a long history with this community. What is your message for this community?***

***Asim:*** Our community has many challenges. Most of them, I believe, are psychological in nature. We need to develop an identity. We need a higher collective self-esteem. We should have more confidence in ourselves and in our potential. Our standards should be much higher and we should learn to deal with the feelings of inadequacy that result if we fall short sometimes; rather than dropping our standards to meet our emotional and intellectual limitations. We need to adopt a proactive, long-term pattern of management rather than a short term, reactive method. We're in need of a plan.

Perhaps most of all, we need powerful strategic planners who possess the foresight to map out our community's future; and we need doers to complement them and implement the plan. I liken community activities to a football team. We need four things (1) strong players, (2) assignment of duties (positions) based upon skill and experience, (3) a well thought-out playbook or game plan, and (4) a team of coaches who can lead us through to the championship game. We have too many star quarterbacks sitting on the bench because the third-stringers want playing time!

Finally, I think that as Muslims we are at a tremendous advantage. We may not realize it but we have an edge. We should see ourselves as possessing the potential to do great things in our lives, individually and as a community. Think big. Without a dream, there can be no dream come true!