

## **Sr. Zubaida Musaddiq**

Interviewed by: Abdulaziz Mian.

Living in North America is much different from living in a Muslim country. We take many things for granted when living in a Muslim country. Living here, we have to pull together as a community and establish institutes for the well-being of our future generations. In order to have a strong future, we need strong participation from many dedicated community members. I am honored to introduce a long-standing member of this community, Sr. Zubaida Musaddiq.

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

**ZM:** I was born in Hyderabad, India. I am the youngest of six children in my family. Alhamdulillah, I am blessed with a very loving and caring family. My neighborhood in Hyderabad was 98% Muslim. I was involved in community work at a very young age. At age six, I would go door to door to inform our neighbors about the upcoming halaqas. As a young girl, I played and enjoyed many sports and by the Grace of Allah, I won many prizes. We had a Girl's Club in our neighborhood. I was organizing various sports events for younger kids. I completed high school. I studied Science for two years then I was married and moved to Winnipeg. I have three children, daughter Shireen and two sons, Shiraz and Shahzad. Now, I am focusing on learning Quran with meaning and Tafseer.

### ***AA: What did your experience when you arrived in Winnipeg?***

**ZM:** I came to Winnipeg in 1979 because my husband was living here. As you can image, the Muslim community was small at the time. Initially, I did not get involved in community work because our kids were small and my husband was regularly away due to his job. As my kids started to grow, I started to get involved in various community events.

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

**ZM:** First, I want to thank Allah (SWT) for giving me the opportunity and good health to be able to contribute to this community. Secondly, I want to thank my husband for his cooperation. It would have been very difficult to help without support from my family. Lastly, I want to thank my good friend Dr. Sabiha Haseeb and her family. Their encouragement gave me the strength, and I started to help in various activities. This involvement brought back my childhood memories when I was helping in our neighborhood and that made me feel good.

I began by helping out in the fundraising dinners and bake sales. I volunteered in Al-Hijra when it started and continued working for a number of years. Later, I started to teach at the weekend Islamic school. Initially, I was teaching adult classes but for past seven years, I have been teaching level one kids. Alhamdulillah, I helped in MYC/MSA dinners, youth camp, day camps, youth halaqas, ladies nights, Eid dinners, Bazaars and washing bodies. I pray to Allah to give me the strength to do more work for the community. Currently, our latest fundraising project is a catering service. A number of the Winnipeg sisters making special ethnic dishes provide this service.

### ***AA: What are your views about the Muslim community in Winnipeg?***

**ZM:** It is I feel that today the women in the community are more involved, and are taking a more active role. They are contributing many ways by raising Islamic awareness and funds for our new centre. The community is realizing it is not up to the executive or few people on various committees. Everybody has to play a role and do his or her part. With this collective effort, our progress will be very slow. Every little bit of help counts. Today, there are many more Muslims in the community with different backgrounds and there is no reason to stand back and watch.

### ***AA: What are some of the issues facing Muslims in Winnipeg? As a community what is our biggest challenge?***

**ZM:** The

My views on the MIA's plans for the New Centre are that we need designated areas for the women to be able to meet for halaqas. We need to conduct workshops for body washing for ladies. Our biggest challenge is to get more people involved. I am surprised to see the same sisters are washing bodies despite having hundreds of new families. I am not sure what it would take for people to get involved and help. Washing bodies is not difficult. You need one

person who knows the procedure and four other people helping with the process. Our other challenge is to have counseling programs and have conflict resolution so we can deal with small conflicts. These small issues are turning into larger issues and people are turning away from each other.

We should focus on uniting all the different groups of Muslims instead of causing divisions over small matters. We need to stop criticizing others and try to better ourselves and strengthen our community as a whole.

***AA. You are a successful businessperson. What is your message for the community especially for the new immigrants?***

**ZM:** There have been many new immigrants in Winnipeg in last three years. Alhamdulillah, our Muslim community has grown substantially. My advice to our community is that we should welcome the new immigrants and try to get them involved in all sorts of events and gatherings. New immigrants should also join MIA in different volunteer capacities. This should strengthen our unity. Since many of the new comers have young children, it will be easy for them to integrate with our community. Inshallah, one day they will be tomorrow's leaders.