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- 2007

DRUZE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

The Voice of the Druze



AL FAJR - THE DAWN

الفجر
صوت الدروز

Premier



Edition

**Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash
Distinguished Druze**



بني معروف

يا آل معروف هذي ذمتي ويدي رهينة الود عن أبناء قحطانا
أنتم ملوك الوغي والبيض ناطقة وذي عمائمكم في ... الهول

تيجانا

*Our power as individuals
is multiplied when we
gather together as
families, teams, and
communities with
common goals.*

www.Druzeworldwide.com

*“I shall pass through this life but once. Any good therefore that
I can do, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it.
For I shall never pass this way again”*

The Voice of the Druze



AL FAJR - THE DAWN
 الفجر صوت الدروز

Warm Greetings

**Dear Fellow Druze,
 Greetings from Columbus, Ohio, USA.**

It is an honor for me to be able to issue the Premier Edition of the Druze Magazine – Al-Fajr (The Dawn), with the assistance of my partner & best friend, my loving wife Sarah. Along with the great support I received from the Druze community at large, many of whom enriched this first issue with their interesting, uplifting & heartfelt articles. Their volunteer spirit is a true testament to the Druze quality of giving.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Together we can make all the difference!! I am not a writer & am never going to be. We are all doing our best; everything comes from the heart for the love of you, our Society, which I am highly proud of.

This Magazine is to introduce all of us in North America to all our fellow Druze in Lebanon & around the World & most importantly to keep us all close & connected. Also to promote, encourage and inspire the amazing aspects that make us all uniquely Druze. Open up a channel for dialogue on

our culture and share our stories. What is relevant for us in the changing modern world?

*This is most especially important for the youth and the young, up and coming future professionals. The youth is currently straddling & embracing 2 worlds, and they are most welcome to contribute articles, thoughts & opinions. We encourage everyone to express their opinions openly, **see back page for contact information.***

We have all accomplished a lot and this is a great opportunity for everyone to share in the success and growth of our community. This Magazine also embraces the technology that connects us with an immediacy that makes it possible to communicate worldwide with a click of a button - **it is available for everyone on the internet.** The launch of this 1st edition has been eagerly anticipated by many in the community and will be published a few times a year.

Please feel free to forward to everyone on your mailing list.

Thank you again - God bless you & our Nation. Here we go....☞



Shauki Halime
 Editor in Chief

Meaning of the Druze Star

The five segmented star is the primary emblem of the Druze, each color represents a different universal principle.

Green is for "the mind", *'al-'akl*, which is necessary for understanding the truth.

Red is for "the soul", *'an-nafs*.

Yellow is for "the word", *'al-kalima*, which is

the purest form of expression of the truth, the mediator between the divine and the material.

Blue, *'as-sabik*, is for the mental power of the will, the realm of possibility.

White, *'al-tali*, is the realization of Blue, in which its power has been realized in the world of matter. ☞



Inside this issue:

Letter-ADS National President	4
ADS Man of the Year	5
Youth Perspective	6
International Report	7
Unity Thru Technology	9
ADS National Elections	10
Youth Views	11,12,14
Tawhid as I Understand	12
Lebanon & Druze Tolerance	13
ADS Mini-Convention - ARIZONA	17
Local Chapter Upcoming Events	19-25
International Chapter News	25, 28-30
Weddings & Engagements	31-33
Distinguished Druze –JOURBLATT	35-37
Poetry	9
Photo Memory's	8,16,18,26
Our Heritage Magazine	15
2008 ADS National Convention	27
Graduations	34
In Loving Memory	38
Contact Information	39

“Social gains are never handed out. They must be seized.”



ADS National President's Message

By Dr. Akram Bou-Ghannam, ADS National President



Has been actively involved with the ADS for many years. Was a driving force in getting the Druze Educational Curriculum developed and on the internet. He is an avid tennis player & currently resides in Florida with his wife and children.

To my beloved Druze,

Greetings and best wishes to all Druze brothers and sisters around the world. It is a great pleasure and an honor to address you – the children of 'Bani-Marouf'. Our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents have truly deserved this title of 'Bani-Marouf' because of their kind deeds, fine qualities, and honorable morals. These excellent human qualities and high moral values have become the distinguishing qualities of the Druze.

Our Tawheed faith is the source of these ideal qualities, and it is also the fort that protects our culture and heritage.

Without these moral values that we hold high, our sect would have lost its identity and shattered its ties. Stepping forward into the future, we the children of "Bani Maarouf", must be determined to hold on to our title, to protect the structure of our sect, and to be ready to add more glory to its glorious history.

Druze all over the world are facing serious challenges. In Lebanon and the Middle East politics and political maneuvers are driving hatred and division among the Druze. Druze immigrants all over the world are facing the challenge of losing their identity and culture. We need to be ready, and we must strengthen our resolve to be united and strong so that we can quickly lend a helping hand to fellow Druze all over the world, especially when they face crisis.

Having a united, loving, and strong community is the basis for overcoming all of our challenges and achieving our goals.

The American Druze Society (ADS), and similar Druze organizations in countries all over the world, should aim to be a role model of Druze unity. Having a united, loving, and strong community is the basis for overcoming all of our challenges and achieving our goals. We have wonderful Druze communities all over the world filled with caring, resourceful, and highly talented people. So, I urge you to get involved as much as you can. Give your beloved community a higher priority in your life. Encourage and motivate your children and friends to become members of Druze organizations like the ADS, and to volunteer and help out. Volunteers are the

backbone of our society.

Here in America, the ADS is focusing on our youth and their education. Our Youth are Our Future. Our vision is for the ADS to become a beacon that guides our youth and help them maintain their Druze identity. We want to instill in our youth the never-ending quest for

knowledge and understanding about their heritage. As the poet William Butler Yeats said "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

So, let's all help light the fire in our youth that drives their quest, throughout their lives, to learn and know more about our wonderful faith, heritage, and culture.

The ADS has published its educational curriculum at its educational web site at www.druze.com/education. Please visit this site, examine the content and share it with your children and friends, and give us your valuable input and feedback.

Finally, it gives me great pleasure to extend to you a special invitation to join our 62nd annual ADS National Convention that will take place June 29 to July 6th 2008. This great event will be held at the Marriott Harbor Beach Resort (www.marriottharborbeach.com/) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Please join us at this wonderful location, meet fellow Druze from all over the world, and enjoy the true Druze hospitality of our South Florida community. We will be honored to have you and look forward to seeing you at this wonderful event.

Armed with the fine qualities of Bani-Marouf, I am certain that we and our children can change the world and make it a better place for humanity.

Thank you, & may God bless you.☞

October 6, 2007

Dear Shauki,

I am pleased to announce that yesterday the **National Board voted unanimously to appoint you as the ADS Ambassador** to facilitate the communication among Druze throughout the world. Additionally, the board voted to officially recognize your Magazine as the voice of the ADS - a publication concerned with connecting Druze worldwide.

Please work with me and anyone else you choose from the National Board for publishing this very important Magazine. As you indicated to me that the first issue is almost complete.

Again, thank you very much for the great efforts you have spent for helping to keep our Druze community informed and connected. I, along with the National Board greatly appreciate your efforts.

Regards,

Akram

Dr. Akram Bou-Ghannam,
ADS National President

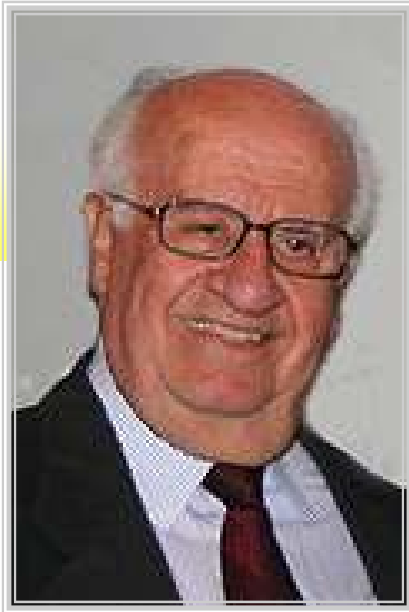




A Very Special Man of the Year

Dr. Anis Obeid!

By Shauki Halime



The Poet, Author, & Doctor.

This is Dr. Anis Obeid,

The Man of the Year & Every Year!

Congratulations Dr. Obeid on being this year's recipient of the **Man of the Year Award**. We had the pleasure to attend the Gala Dinner that was held in his Honor at this year's Annual ADS Druze Convention in Irvine, California this past July. It was a wonderful celebration that was a true tribute to an exceptional man.

His life would require many books to properly describe his accomplishments, to precisely characterize him and to eloquently praise him.

Dr. Anis Obeid was born and raised in Aley, Lebanon. Graduated with an MD degree from the AUB School of Medicine in 1957 & his post graduate training was done in the US. He quickly became Chief of Cardiology in 1975 and established the New York Heart Center in 1983 with 2 colleagues. He is a lifetime honorary member of the



American Medical Association along with numerous other professional organizations.

Dr. Obeid is also involved in many social and cultural organizations. In 1999 he published a book of poetry in Arabic, and in July 2006 published a book, *The Druze and Their Faith in Tawhid*, Syracuse University Press. He is a founding member and past chairman of the American Druze Foundation, and a

life long member of the American Druze Society. During this time he has also received recognition and numerous awards for distinguished service to his profession and community. Last but not least, he added to his long list of well deserved awards, the distinguished honor of **Man of the Year** from the American Druze Society.

Dr. Obeid currently resides in Syracuse, NY with his lovely wife, Nawal Najeeb Saab. Nawal has received her MS degree and is currently engaged in part time practice. She is also involved in many cultural activities. Their two sons also live in Syracuse; Omar is Attorney at Law & Kareem is building a career as a freelance sports reporter.

Thank you, Dr. Anis, for your sincere contributions and lifelong love & support of our Druze Society.

Congratulation again & God Bless you and keep you always in good health.

We all love you! ☺



Perspective on Growing Up Druze in America

By Dana Rawdah

Is currently pursuing her Masters Degree in Education and a teaching certification in English. at Texas State University in Texas, USA. She aspires to be a high school creative writing teacher, and hopes to have some of her poetry and children's books published.

Let me tell you a little about myself. I am a Lebanese American! My heart beats with Lebanon, but my minds expression is influenced by the United States of America. You see I came here when I was 7 years old, and like many of you, I grew up struggling with two cultures, two languages, two ways of viewing life and even more dramatically two different ways of living life.

I know for me living between these two worlds was not at all easy! I can remember at 8 not wanting to speak Arabic at home any longer, so I could "fit in" more with the American kids in my class. I also remember being 16 and starting to understand society more and being confused on why I had different rules, and different expectations from my parents.

It was so frustrating to watch my American friends go on dates, go to slumber parties, and stay out late. All the things that I was not allowed to do! On the other hand how amazing it was to have parents that really cared for me, that were generous and hospitable with my American friends in ways their families were not as generous and hospitable. I struggled with the appreciation and the frustration I felt for whom I was and for whom I was not. I remember feeling very alone, and unhappy at times, feeling almost as if being Druze was more of a burden than a blessing.

It was only when I went to Lebanon for summer breaks that I felt that I was more understood on things such as: culture, language, and religion, but on the opposite spectrum when I spent my summers in Lebanon as much as I felt

accepted in certain aspects, I still felt different... once again! Different from the people who lived in Libnen all of their lives, different from many of their views about life, their societal expectations and general values. I am Lebanese American, with neither a 100% Lebanese mentality nor a 100% American mentality. I am a mixture of both.

The first time I truly felt understood by both worlds is when I went to my first American Druze Society convention. It was in 1998 in Boca Raton, Florida. I remember meeting girls and guys like me!! More like me then any other girls and guys I had ever met. They were also struggling to find their balance, to find their stability. They were the ones that spoke Arabic with an American

reality of a women's place in the Arab society and did not need explanation from me to either validate or justify any misconceptions/truths.

After that experience I felt less alone. Even my faith in God changed because I could see how much he loved us and how blessed we are to have had the experiences in life that made us struggle, learn, and then find comfort in the realization that we are not alone... WE are united.

We are blessed with dual passports, dual mentalities, languages and cultures. We are blessed with two worlds that are different in both positive and negative ways.

We are the future and we have certain wisdom, a special gift that allows us to choose what we will take from both those worlds to improve our selves and our lives. Our religion is one that is not focused on the destination, but rather on the journey.

If you find that you relate to this article just know that you are Druze and no matter how alone you feel sometimes, you are not alone, but you are a part of something beautiful! I hope to meet more of you as the years pass, and I encourage all of you to embrace who you are and what you have to offer.

I also hope to see more of you at the ADS gatherings! Please do not make the mistake of judging the experience, before actually experiencing it. The only person you are depriving with that mentality is yourself.

Good luck and God Bless! ☹



accent, or only understood Arabic. The people who could find comic relief in certain beautiful yet humorous traditions that we have as Druze... as Arab. They were the boys I could talk to and my parents would not only approve of, but may even encourage the relationship. They were the girls that understood the





International Report



THE DRUZE IN VENEZUELA

By Anwar Souky Makarem

Anwar was born in Maracaibo, the second largest city, and located in Western Venezuela. His father was Asaad Souky from Choueifat and his mother is Samira Makarem from Ras ElMaten. Studied High School in Lebanon and graduated **Mechanical** Engineer in Venezuela. Completed many technical and managerial studies in USA, Holland and the U.K. Anwar worked in PDVSA the national oil co for 6 years and for more than 20 years has been working in a w-w American manufacturing company serving the oil and petrochemical industries.

Actually he lives in Caracas, and is the area manager for Venezuela and Colombia. Married to Ghada Salha, B.Sc. in computer science and have 2 children. Their daughter Grace is architecture, and their son Jalal is studying electronic

The first Lebanese immigrated to Venezuela in the late 19th century. Of the Druze faith were not until 1930. Brazil was the first south-American country to embrace the Druze immigrants, all from mount Lebanon. It was not until the 50s when the Druze from Jabel-elArab started to immigrate to Venezuela attracted by the booming economy. At the present the Druze account approximately 105,000 being 45% of the Lebanese and Syrian colony.

Although the majority has prospered only few of them returned to their motherland. Of the 165 deputies in Venezuelan congress (National Assembly) 5 are Druze, in a country dominantly Catholic. 3 are of Lebanese origin and 2 of Syrian origin. Of the 23 governors one is Druze: Tarek Saab whose parents are from Yanta (Rachaya area). Venezuela is a democratic republic that guarantees the free practice of all faiths; and all citizens are treated equally. The Druze are integrating more and more in the local society, and the inter-faith marriage is increasing.

The Lebanese community has established social centers and clubs in many towns in Venezuela, with the active and prominent participation of its Druze members. During 1983 Eid El Adha party in

Maracaibo a group decided to establish the Venezuelan Druze Cultural Society. The author is one of its 8 official founders.

Since then the SCDV celebrates an annual convention with program and activities very similar to the ADS Conventions. During the 80's the SCDV faced continuous antagonism from other Druzes in the Arab community, although it gave valuable aids to the Druzes in Lebanon during the civil war. Now SCDV enjoys the support of all the Arab community.

As the rest of the minorities, and because of the increasing marriages with the Christians the Druze are threatened to be melt into the Catholic society and abandon its traditions and heritage.

As the rest of the minorities, and because of the increasing marriages with the Christians the Druze are threatened to be melt into the Catholic society and abandon its traditions and heritage. The SCDV has been of great help in guiding the Druze youth to maintain the ancestors' traditions and encouraging the marriage between Druzes.

Few follow their fathers' economical activities in the commerce; and thousands are doctors, lawyers, engineers, economists, computer science or other professions. In Venezuela as in their motherland, the Druze conform a respectful community, indulged in serious and honest social activities.⌘



Great Memory's





Unity Thru Technology



**By Jihad Halibi, President,
Canadian Druze Society (CDS)
Toronto Chapter**

Currently resides in Toronto with his wife and family. He is actively involved in the Druze community, having spear-headed many initiatives including the recent successful Canadian Druze National Convention held in Toronto during May, 2007

Since the turn of the century, many Druze families emigrated from their beloved homelands to Western countries such as Canada and the United States. And as Druze, we integrated into mainstream society without much

shared and new friendships are made. Other sites have enabled us to learn more about Druze culture and history, thus enriching our own understanding of our Druze faith.

After doing a search for Druze

The internet has enabled us to unite globally and keep us informed of each others activities and successes.

difficulty.

We learned how to establish ourselves through education and business and in doing so, we have maintained our strong Druze beliefs. To sustain our culture, faith and identity, Druze families have united together and made every effort possible to unite in times of celebration and sorrow.

Nowadays, we have expanded our unity through technology. The internet has allowed us to reach out to our Druze brethren globally. Almost every home has a computer which is connected to the internet. It is quickly emerging as a new defining line in society.

Access to ideas and information transmitted electronically through the internet is essential for the economic development of communities, regions and people. There are newsgroups, online library services, and many other services. There are many Druze sites to visit which are very useful and entertaining. Such sites include chat rooms, where ideas are

sites, I was astonished to see how many Druze chapters have been established throughout the world and how easy it was to connect to a chapter in Nigeria, for instance. The internet has enabled us to unite globally and keep us informed of each others activities and successes. There is no doubt that the internet is a wondrous creation and used wisely will allow us to reach out to each other.

As wondrous as the internet is in uniting the Druze people together, nothing replaces the real meaning of unity as when we do meet face to face at our annual conventions, picnics and most important of all, in each others homes.

In our ever changing world, with hectic and fast paced schedules, always remember that the Druze family unity includes time that family members spend together. It means maintaining our Druze identity and togetherness, balancing family priorities with support for member needs and producing strong family bonds that include our Druze faith and culture. ☞

Moments of Poetry

Divine

By: Dr. Anis Obeid

At my finger tips I can almost touch
The Untouchable, and
Know the Unknowable
Moments of fleeting permanence
A glimpse of
Fleeting Infinity.

Oh my pen
What made stir?
With the inkwell parched
And long run dry!

Years of toil
Slavery of the flesh
Adulation of the mundane
The nose in the grind,
With blindfolds
The forest went unnoticed
In an ocean of twigs.
A maze of elusive goals
We call civilization.

And yet
Bit by surreptitious bit
Fades
The monstrous edifice of concrete
And steel
Into the irrelevance of
Vanished reality.

Only then, my pen
There becomes here
and then becomes now
Drawn not
By senses annulled
But feelings exalted.

And in fleeting moments
Intensely unbearable
Mortals witness in the mirror the face
Of the Divine.



ADS National Election Process Enhancements

By Bassam Joumblat

ADS National Board, Treasurer

He currently resides in California with his wife and children

American Druze Society members in the U.S. noticed a major change in the 2007 national elections. The ballots came from and were mailed back to a CPA firm. The selected CPA firm is a true independent party that ensured the integrity of the election process. After the national board-appointed membership committee reviewed and certified the membership list, the spreadsheet was sent to the CPA.

An exact number of blank ballots that corresponds to the number of members eligible to vote were also mailed to him. The CPA documented the starting and ending number of the ballots, verified there was no break in the sequence of numbers, and

stamped each ballot with his firm's stamp. He mailed out the ballots with return envelopes addressed to his firm. All the envelopes that he received from the membership remained unopened. After the election cut-off date, he hand-delivered the ballots in a sealed envelope to the election committee chairperson. He included with the ballots a certified statement documenting how many ballots he mailed, ballot starting and ending numbers, and the number of envelopes he received and delivered to the election committee.

The election committee chairperson opened the envelopes containing the ballots in the presence of four independent people who in turn tallied the votes. After the counting, the four individual sheets containing election results were compared for accuracy, with a pre-defined level of error tolerance.

The election was concluded and results were announced in the Business Meeting.

This process produced election results that were above suspicion. It closed gaps of internal control weaknesses that were wide open to abuse. Going forward, this will be the standard operating procedure for elections.

Change is never easy. It is counter to human nature. We all get comfortable with the status quo and identify with it. However, enhancements that are logical in nature, coupled with perseverance, always prevail in the end. This is how society progresses and improves. Our American Druze Society is progressing and improving.

This enhancement to the election process is only the beginning. ☾

D.O.C.O. - Druze Orphans & Charitable Organization

You Can Help Us: Give Now!

Druze Orphans and Charitable Organization (DOCO) is a non-for-profit (501) (c) (3) organization dedicated to support the various non-profit organizations that provide programs and services to the Druze community worldwide. Please join us as we extend a helping hand to those in need. You can make a difference in the lives and future of orphans, children, the elderly, education, scholarships for students, breast cancer screening, and other causes.

Now can you help us raise additional money just by GoodSearching.

What if our community earns a penny every time you search the Internet? *Well, now we can!* GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate.

We're really excited to find free way to raise money for good causes, and we hope you'll help spread the word!

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter as [my charity] "Druze Orphans and Charitable Organization" as the charity you want to support. Also, every time you shop online a percentage of the sale will go to our community. Go to goodshop.com More than 100 great stores including Target, Macy's, The Gap, Best Buy, Nordstrom, PetSmart, Staples and Wal*Mart have teamed up with GoodSearch to do just that.

Send us your email and address to mail you the Newsletter of the Druze Orphans and Charitable Organization. Let us join hands and help our brethren in need.

God bless you all.





YOUTH STRUGGLE WITH CONFLICT

By Hala and Rawand Abdul-Baki

Sisters Hala and Rawand Abdul-Baki have lived in Los Angeles, California for seven years and have been eager participants in the American Druze Society's Southern California Chapter. Hala, age 19, is a second year Dramatic Arts and Global Studies major at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She enjoys all forms of art and aspires to be a theatre director in the future. As for Rawand, age 17, she is a first year Business Administration major at the California State University, Northridge. She enjoys playing guitar in her spare time and hopes to one day be a successful entrepreneur.

Ask any child of a first generation Arab-American family what the toughest issue is that they face in life. You will likely discover that it is the issue of cultural and personal identity, a search for personal fulfillment that constantly leaves them at diverging roads. Our youth struggle with a conflict common to young adults of all walks of life, but it is the additional pressure of the cultural aspect that makes it all the more difficult for them.

The teenage years are notoriously tough, with the stress of school, work, and a changing social life. Throw in raging hormones and a sense of identity crisis, and you have the recipe for major drama. New experiences of this age, such as college and dating, for example, are truly life-changing. Young people become more open to new concepts and viewpoints that usually steer them away from the traditional norms to which they have been conditioned since childhood. This newfound world is a thrilling adventure to the youthful spirits but a source of great anxiety to the youths' parents, who hope to keep their children grounded in old ideals.

Generally, we all live under constant pressure from our parents and families to do well in life and to have pride in all that we accomplish. Also, we are frequently reminded that we must maintain our good morals and values per family and cultural traditions, to avoid being seduced by the

vices of amoral "American" culture. Many of us at this age are given very strict instructions and rules that keep us grounded and leave us with little room for personal choice or preference. This, of course, varies from family to family, but the concern is shared by all: The parents do not want their children to desert their heritage.

Meanwhile, these children are also faced with pressures from the society in which they live, the Western world. It is a society vastly different than that of our forefathers and one which will remain, in

The teenage years are notoriously tough, with the stress of school, work, and a changing social life.

essence, "foreign" to our parents. Yet we, the youth, consider it just as much ours as the traditional Middle Eastern culture we were brought up in. To us, this is the everyday world that we live in, in which to maintain a healthy lifestyle, we feel we must deviate slightly from the customs we are told to upkeep. This fast-paced world requires much emotional strength and personal responsibility of us, especially at the young adult stage, which in turn requires that we have our free will to test our good judgment. Society presents us with numerous good choices and unique opportunities that we, for our

advantage and success, should seize. Some of these new experiences might seem strange or risky to our parents, or maybe simply too unlike "us", and so we're encouraged to pass them up. Of course, the wisdom of parents should not be taken for granted, but the youth simply have to experience life for themselves, learn from their own mistakes. After all, the hi-tech environment we live in is unlike the one our parents grew up in, so we would like to explore these differences and make the most of our findings.

One must admit that it is simply that stage in life, that spirit, that attitude, which makes us so willing to try what's different, so willing to change. Call it experimentation, call it youthful insanity, call it what you like; just don't suppress it. And the results? Mature and open-minded youth who have the support and guidance of their families through this tough age take the best of both worlds, enrich their personality and widen their horizons. This fulfills them and makes them more well-rounded adults and all the wiser in the end. Some, though, might find fulfillment in one and not the other, choosing to immerse completely in Western culture or to reject it in favor of tradition.

Either way, the search for identity is a personal quest. To each his own, as they say; but the hope remains that the youth maintain that pride and respect for the culture and the people that no doubt helped shape their character and their future. ☾



My First ADS National Convention



By Sanaa Sanjad

Resides in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Her education includes; Business Administration, Marketing and more recently EchoCardiography. Currently am employed as a Corporate Trainer across Canada in the Optical industry.

I had a great time at my first ADS convention in Irvine, California. It was an unparalleled opportunity for me to enjoy meeting Druze from all over the world. Considering there are only 1 million Druze worldwide out of a world population of 6.6 billion, it was special that so many of us all had a chance to socialize and mingle. What made it so unique for me was that I was not sharing this religious belief all alone like most days, but rather with a group of people who historically share similar ground.

I think we all recognize the 5 colored star as green (universal mind), red (universal soul), yellow (truth/world), blue (Antagonist/Cause) and White (the protagonist/effect) however, most of us who grew up in the United States or Canada are mostly limited to only this bit of knowledge alone about the Druze religion.

ADS Society's contribution to our culture and religion by being the organization largely responsible for hosting these conventions for over 60 yrs.

I have also gained a great appreciation for the ADS Society's contribution to our culture and religion by being the organization largely responsible for hosting these conventions for over 60 yrs. The mission statement of the convention is important to consider and reflect upon as follows:

The ADS mission is "to create a balance of teaching, meeting and greeting" and everything I have been made aware of to date seems to indicate that this organization has successfully accomplished this lofty goal.

It was nice to see my family members mix with and get reacquainted with their friends from a long time ago. Some of these special relationships go back to a time when they were all in high school together and now they meet many years later along their grown

up children. What a wonderful way to reconnect and share their life experiences.

Although I didn't get a chance to fully discover all aspects of the Convention since most of our time was spent touring L.A. with various family members, **I have also come to realize that individuals seem to mingle mostly with their own group and it would be great if they also opened up to the opportunity to move beyond their safety zone by mingling and meeting new Druze colleagues.**

At future Conventions, I would love to see a more proactive approach towards the teaching of the religion in a manner that would draw more youth to want to learn about this special religion. In some ways, many of the "new age" spiritual beliefs widely revered today, have already been imbedded in our Druze religion for many years.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the ADS community for their continued support and their organized and planned approach to the Convention. It is so important that we have the continued opportunity for Druze people of all ages and corners of the globe to meet to continuously explore our connections and grow and strengthen our society. Given that some of us will never have any other opportunity to gather in large numbers, since many live in remote areas where we are most often separated among 194 countries, it indeed is a magical opportunity to share common history and culture.

I will forever remember these special events and look forward to many years of continued connections spanning generations to come. ☸

TAWHID AS I UNDERSTAND IT



By: Dr. Abdallah E. Najjar
Atlanta, Georgia

I believe in one God, unborn, uncreated, and beyond my comprehension.

I believe in all the prophets of God who were infused with the spirit. But all of whom were conceived and born in the usual way.

I believe that we all suffer under tyrants, hypocrites or circumstances and get crucified, die and are buried.

I believe that the resurrecting spirit reappears again to continue its journey.

I believe in this Holy Spirit as I do in a Universal mind, a faith that transcends tradition.

I also believe in the forgiveness of sins and the resurrecting power of the soul over death.

I understand deep within my soul that eternal life is life in harmony with the true order of things

A spiritual eco-system that is a life in God, for we are of God and unto God we return.





LEBANON & DRUZE TOLERANCE

By Moustafa F. Moukarim

Attends & participates in numerous ADS functions. As a speaker & presenter of the Druze Religion, his uncomplicated way of explaining is always enjoyed & well received, as he makes it easy for the youth to understand. Mr. Moukarim is considered our Sheik in North America. He & his wife currently reside in Texas.

God blessed us with LEBANON the best country in the world, at least that is what we think and believe. We may be prejudice, but, after all this is our country, and we can savor it as much as we want. Every summer I travel with my family to

Protestant Christian Missionaries started coming to Lebanon most religious groups rejected them. The Druze welcomed them and gave them free land, and facilitated their stay. These are historic facts that cannot be disputed.

cused Mr. Oliver of being a British spy and sentenced him to death by hanging. The Druze in Raselmetn stood up to Jamal Pasha, they protected Mr. Oliver and forced Jamal Pasha to withdraw his hanging instruction. Mr. Oliver was considered a guest in our land, and we are taught to honor and protect our guests.



Lebanon and we spend about three months there. With family, friends, and beautiful weather around us time flies so quickly.

The people of Lebanon have been suffering for so many years, yet they appreciate their country and cherish it. Many of them had to immigrate to far away lands, and neighboring countries to earn their living. Most of them dream of coming back home, and they do. Some fear that many would leave and never come back, that has not been the case. The majority do come back to visit every year, and many would like to settle down in Lebanon once the situation improves. Many invest their life savings in Lebanon because they have confidence in it.

We pray to God that the Lebanese different factions would for once forget their differences and join hands and unite with each other to live together as Lebanese. Love and respect should control their religious differences and lead them to peace and harmony, after all, that is what all religions preach, love and respect.

Throughout history the Muwahidoun Druze in Lebanon have always been so accommodating to others. For instance, during the Nineteenth Century when the

The American University in Beirut got the land at "Jell El Bahr", free from Druze families. The present estimated value of this property is over Four Billion US Dollars. The same happened in many Druze cities and villages, such as, Brummana, Shimlan, Obay, Raselmetn, Ain Anoub, and many others. Our records show that none of the Druze population in these cities converted to the Protestant Christian Faith.

In the mid 1950s I attended the Oliver Institution School in Raselmetn, which was established in the late Nineteenth Century by Mr. Oliver, a Quaker Missionary, who was welcomed by the people of Raselmetn, mostly Druze, who provided him freely with all his needs and requirements. I remember that our first daily session at school was bible studies. We, the Druze, excelled in the biblical knowledge, yet none of us converted to the Christian Faith. We never felt threatened.

Our elders ordered us to be polite, and respectful, and instructed us to learn what was presented to us as long as it does not contradict our Arab, and Lebanese Nationalities. They taught us to be tolerant of other Faiths.

The Druze also protected those Missionaries from the wrath of the Turkish Empire who did not want such Missionaries in the lands they control. In early 1900s, Jamal Pasha, the Turkish tyrant Governor of Lebanon ac-

After all we do not forget that Sultan Pasha El Atrash, a Druze leader, who later in 1925 became the Leader of the Syrian Revolution. He led the Druze in a revolt against the French Forces

when they arrested a man called Adham Khanjar. Adham was a Shi'aa refugee from South

Lebanon who took refuge in the Sultan's residence in the city of Qurayya in Jabal El Druze, Syria. That started what became later a National Revolution by the Syrian and Lebanese people against the French occupier.

As Druze, we do not have much, we have Lebanon, which we love. To us we have no other alternative but to protect its sovereignty and independence. We have always stood by Lebanon and protected it as much as we could. With limited resources and small population, we did a very good job protecting Lebanon and keeping it free from the control of any individual group.

Love and respect should control their religious differences and lead them to peace and harmony, after all, that is what all religions preach, love and respect.



I ask all the Lebanese people of all religions to unite and save Lebanon from the conspiracies of the envious. We are all one people in Lebanon - we are all Lebanese. We all have the same habits and culture. Let us stick to the theory of love and live together in peace and harmony as one people.

God bless Lebanon. ☹





Youth Values Druze Tradition's

By Nadeem Harfouch

Resides in Rochester Hills, Michigan A Junior at Michigan State University, Majoring in Business-Prelaw



Recently, Druze from all across the globe came together for the 2007 ADS National Convention in Irvine, California. It was the first National Convention I had attended since I was a young kid, and the experience I had there was phenomenal. The organized program was exceptional, and was executed very



well in correlation to the number of attendees.

Having so many Druze in one place was wonderful. It was great seeing people my age relating to one another, and socializing. Long lasting friendships were built quickly, and interpersonal communication was common by the third or fourth night. Conversations

Having so many Druze in one place was wonderful.

about life and personal experiences as a



Druze in the US were frequent, and many had stories to share. What does it mean to be Druze in the eyes of today's generation? What makes us so unique? Who are our ancestors? Frequent dialogues, along with seminars like the ones headed by Sheikh Jihad Aljarmani and Dr. Rabea Abu-Fakhr helped answer these questions, along with many others that the youth and adults had.

The convention provides anyone who attends with enough resources to adequately learn about the Tawhid Religion. It is easy to get your questions answered by some of the more knowledgeable guests that are present. For example, Sheikh Moustafa Makarem is always a familiar face during events, and he has never been hesitant to talk or answer questions in person. More importantly, you can gain knowledge



from reading.

Throughout the convention many published texts are available for purchase. Education is the leading role of the convention. We should be constantly innovating new ways to attract the youth to seminars and teaching the next generation of American Druze our traditions and moral values.

As a dispersed community

throughout the states, the convention serves as an important function bringing us together and expanding our unity. The atmosphere is great and the sense of belonging is radiant on the faces. The place is always buzzing with many people having side conversations, individual or group chats, many laughs and a joyful time.

Believe me, this was a great experience for me. I left feeling more connected with my heritage and myself. I encourage every Druze to pay a visit to the convention next year, or even experience the mini-convention in Arizona this November.



In conclusion, the convention is a high-class event. When I say high-class, I am not separating rich from poor. I simply mean that there are ethics, values, traditions and etiquette that must be maintained when we are together. The traditions and standards that our parents and elders set before us must be carried on. This event is ours to preserve, and we must continue progress in making it better.

It is an American Druze tradition and it is our duty and responsibility to: protect ourselves, protect each other, and protect the future of our community.

As young people we need to be aware of what we have. Continue enjoying the events, keep having fun, and keep it high class. Do not lose face of who we are – a proud and united American Druze Society. ☸





ADS - Our Heritage Magazine



To Our Druze Family,

The Heritage Magazine is part of the American Druze Society's Communication Committee. Its main objective is to link our accomplished ADS community members with each other. The ADS community has a wealth of knowledge, experience in numerous fields, and rich in its Bani-Maarouf heritage. Our goal is to connect & inform all our members with timely cultural topics for all age groups.

Our mission & goal can be summarized as follows:

- ★ To serve the ADS community by providing information
- ★ To act as a channel in linking our members
- ★ To strengthen the bond between the National Board, Chapter Presidents, and the Membership
- ★ To reflect our Society's commitment and dedication to the preservation of our culture and heritage

The Heritage Magazine can facilitate the connecting of our members with each other by the simple sharing of their stories, their successes, their philanthropic ideals, their wisdom and personal experiences. As immigrants, our forefathers faced the challenges of a new homeland, of adversity, and of a language barrier. However, their pioneer spirits and Druze faith empowered them to face all challenges with a determination to succeed and to become good role models for their descendants as they founded our ADS. As American Druze, we need to continue to emulate our elders in dedicating quality time for our families, in working toward causes larger than ourselves, and in perpetuating our interconnectedness. Our Heritage Magazine intends to touch our readers with similar commitment to preserving our unique culture.

Our Heritage Magazine invites all our ADS members to consider participating in preserving our history and culture through submitting an entry of interest or on an area of expertise to the email addresses listed below for its next edition no later than November 30, 2007.

The ADS Heritage Magazine's Publishing Team will review all submissions for publishing approval. Please be advised that the ADS Communication Committee has the right to revise, edit, accept, or decline all contributions. All accepted submissions would be acknowledged in writing to the original author(s) via email.

Thank you in advance for considering writing a submission in the ADS Our Heritage Magazine and for all your volunteer efforts!

Sincerely,
ADS Our Heritage Magazine Publishing Team

Mrs. S. Shauki Halime
Editor-in-chief

Contributing Editors:
Mrs. Diana Boudiab
Ms. Sirene Abouchakra

A word from the ADS National President: Dr. Akram Bou-Ghannam

I start my term as president of the American Druze Society with a tremendous sense of pride and optimism. How can I not be proud when I have a team of dedicated, highly talented, selfless individuals serving on the ADS national board? I would like to recognize our national board members: (they are in alphabetical order):

Mrs. Ramona Al-Ali; Mrs. Diana Boudiab; Mrs. Donna Chehayeb, Mr. Bassam Joumblat (board member and ADS national treasurer); Mr. Walid Khodor; Dr. Rima Muaakssa; Mr. Khaled Shaban (our newly elected vice president); and Dr. Ramzi Yehia. This board will also include and utilize the valuable experience of our past president Mr. Emad Abou-Elhosn.



Great Memory's





ADS Arizona Chapter

Mini-Convention 2007

November 21 - 25, 2007

**Held At: JW Marriott Resort and Spa
The Camelback Inn of Scottsdale, Arizona**

Hotel: \$109 / Night
Ask for ADS-American Druze Society Guaranteed Rate
Must Register before Nov 1 for this rate
After Nov 1 Rate will increase to \$300 to 500 / night

Convention Registration: \$150 - 160 / Person

(see Website for details)

Food, Entertainment, and Education.

Seating is limited. Register early and get discounted rates.

Visit us and experience the warmth of Arizona in November. We have a fun-filled program complete for body and spirit. Come meet other Druze people, make friends and develop relationships at a beautiful and relaxing resort.

Participate in unique optional events including:
Youth outing & Zajal Party.

- Register for the events.
- Reserve your room in the Resort.
- Purchase your ticket to fly to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport.
- Visit the Super shuttle site to print discount coupons.



Registration & Info : www.ADSArizona.org Phone: (480) 664-7461; Fax: 480-275-2061

Resort: www.camelbackinn.com; 888-236-2427; 480-948-1700

Shuttle: www.supershuttle.com; 800-258-3826; 602-244-9000

Phoenix: www.visitphoenix.com

Scottsdale: www.scottsdaleaz.gov

Airline tickets online or call our Sponsoring Travel Agent: Shafik Obeid: (559) 431-7440

Sponsorship Opportunities: Support our young ADS Chapter and our mini-convention by becoming a Convention Sponsor or specific event Sponsor. Receive packages, Plaques, Booklet Ads, and Special announcements and publication recognitions. See Sponsorship forms for details.



Great Memory's



Left to right: Fadia; Khaled, ADS V-P; Akram, ADS President; Nada



Salman, Zeina, Raji - Michigan



Dr. Anis Obeid, Mr. Muneer Zaineldeen, Mr. Saed Obeid - Irvine National Convention



Schedule of Upcoming Events By Date & Location

Oct 7 - ADS Picnic

★ Washington, DC

Oct 11-14 - National Convention

★ Sao Paulo - Brazil

Oct 28 - Halloween Party

★ Boston

Nov 3 - Memorial - Dr. Ghaleb Maher

★ Boston

Nov 21-25 - Mini-Convention

★ Arizona

Early Dec - Eid Al Adha

- ★ Houston
- ★ Washington, DC
- ★ Ottawa, CANADA
- ★ Michigan

Dec 22 - Eid Al Adha Dinner Party

- ★ Oklahoma
- ★ Northern California
- ★ Montreal, CANADA

Dec 31 - New Years Celebration

- ★ Houston
- ★ Northern California
- ★ South California
- ★ Washington, DC
- ★ Ottawa, CANADA
- ★ Michigan
- ★ Montreal, CANADA

Mark your Calendars for these Exciting Future Major Events

January 25 - 28, 2008

★ Australia 3rd Annual Youth Big Druze Weekend

May 16 - 19, 2008

★ Canadian Druze Convention 08
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

June 29 - July 6, 2008

★ 62nd ADS National Convention
Fort Lauderdale, Florida





USA - ADS CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

BOSTON, MASS

Khaled Ghanem, President
 Email: dghanem@radview.com



We are going to be sending out regular newsletters on our Boston Chapter Activities. We hope that this newsletter and the future letters will strengthen the bridge between the Boston community and the rest of the ADS communities. It will include monthly updates on current activities and information about our community events. Please feel free to contact Khaled Ghanem for any update or questions that you would like to share with the community and we will gladly consider them. Email directly to Khaled Ghanem.

Current & Upcoming Activities

The Boston chapter would like to invite you to its upcoming Halloween party which will take place on Sunday October 28, 2007 at 1pm. (All are encouraged to wear costumes). The details of the party will follow soon. For information please contact Khaled Ghanem.



Previously Held Functions

2006—Adha Party—see photo at Right

Memorial For Dr. Ghaleb Maher

For many years, the late Dr. Ghaleb Maher's presence in our midst was a corner stone. His absence is a loss acutely felt whenever our scattered community gathers. *"Someone sits in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."* Dr. Maher planted a social tree that we hold dear today. At this time of the anniversary of his passing we pause and remember a loving husband and father, a caring friend, an accomplished scientist, a successful businessman, and a community leader. It is Dr. Maher's contributions and lasting legacy.

Please join us for a memorial for Dr. Maher on: Saturday November 3, 2007 from 3PM - 5PM

ARIZONA

Dr. Hatem Sleem, President
 Email: TimSleem@Yahoo.com

Current & Upcoming Activities

- ★ We started the year with the Annual fund-raising charity event on Sunday, March 11 in Chandler for the benefits of the Secondary Schooling for Orphans (SSO).
- ★ We had a Mother's Day picnic on Sunday, May 13 in Scottsdale.
- ★ On May 27, the Chapter celebrated the end of school year with graduation party for Heba Rayes and Regina Aridi, who received Educational Achievement Awards from the ADS Arizona Chapter.
- ★ Rabi Abifaraj also graduated from Middle School with high GPA.
- ★ Father's day picnic on Sunday, June 17 in Canyon Lakes Park.



Graduation Party and Educational Awards

- ★ We are hosting the Mini-Convention in Phoenix, Arizona during Thanksgiving Holiday - November 21 - 25, 2007.



Left to right: Bassam Abi-Faraj (ADS National Board member), Naji Nassereddine (Treasurer), Mehdi Zebian (Vice President), Rayya Abi-Faraj (Secretary), Mirna Nassereddine (Youth Committee Chair), Dr. Hatem Sleem (President), and Randa Aridi (Information Committee Chair)



HOUSTON, TEXAS

Souheil Samir Ghaoui, President
Email: adschapter@houston.rr.com



The ADS Houston Chapter has been hard at work to accomplish its goals of bringing the community together and enhancing its livelihood. We have held two free picnics and invited community members and friends to join us. We also had our annual ADHA celebration last December. I am glad to report our success at bringing everyone closer together.

The board has also been working tirelessly to develop new programs aimed at helping our community grow and evolve. Among them is the Scholarship Program (The Power of Hope). It is designed to aid our college students reach their educational goals in spite of the financial challenges that may face them. The Benefit that was held on May 5th 2007 is the foundation the program will build on. We have faith, great hope, and unconditional love for the children of our community. We shall strive towards a successful fund that would allow us to push away from mediocrity and align us more closely with excellence.



The ADS Houston Chapter will make a donation to a different charitable Druze organization overseas every year. In 2007, the ADS Houston chapter has matched the funds raised by The Helping Hands to a total sum of 5,000 USD. This amount has been sent to Ain WaZein Hospital Elderly Care Center to be used for the benefit of the elderly residents at the hospital.

Other programs are also in the works and are soon to be realized, including the purchase of burial lots, teaching Arabic to community kids and an assistance program for Druze arriving from abroad. The ultimate goal is to acquire an ADS Houston Druze Center.

We are also in the planning stages for the following events: a picnic in Fall '07, the ADHA celebration early in December 2007 and our famous, fun-packed 2007 New Year's Eve party.

NORTH CAROLINA

Walid Shaban, President
Phone: (704)905-2197 Email: ADScharlotte@yahoo.com



The North Carolina Chapter was founded over 16 years ago for the Charlotte community and the surrounding areas. Though we are considered a small chapter because of our size, we are especially proud of our unity and successful projects.

An example of such a project is our weekly Arabic School. Every Sunday, the ladies of the Chapter work diligently with our children of all ages, teaching them to read and write Arabic. Our program is unique because the ladies have created their own books and lessons, specially tailored for our children. Our students not only study language, they learn about our history and religion. Also, at the Sunday Arabic School, we have monthly activities for the children to enjoy, usually celebrating a holiday.

Another activity our chapter is proud of is our participation in the International Festival at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. For the past 9 years, Lebanon has been represented by the colorful display of artifacts, delicious home-made food, and a traditional dancing performance. Lebanon's booth is one of the most popular at the

festival for our distinguished cooking and presentations. We sell a variety of Lebanese cuisine including tabouleh, falafel, lahme, and hummus. We generate a handsome profit from the food sold. Our youth also actively participate in this yearly festival, performing dabkeh in the cultural showcase and walk in the Parade of nations, garbed in traditional dress.

The success of this activity can not be measured by any sum of money; the pride embedded in our children for their participation in such an event and their representation of our heritage with friends and strangers is priceless. The dedication and commitment of our community, whether in the cooking and preparation or participation in events is evidence of our members' resolve to flourish and build a foundation for the future generations of Druze in our area.

Current & Upcoming Activities

- ★ International Festival @UNC Charlotte on September 28th 2007
- ★ New Years Party @ Hilton Executive Hotel, Charlotte, NC - Dec 31st 2007

For anyone considering a visit to the Carolinas, be sure to look us up. We will be glad to provide help and information. Please contact myself or anyone listed below.

Mazen AbouChackra @ (704)309-1714 or Mouin Zeitouni @ (704)533-2061.





NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Marwan Aboudiab, President
 Email: adschapter@houston.rr.com



Dedicated to serve the local community, to increase our chapter memberships and establish a path forward to future NC ADS projects that will serve the needs of the local chapter.

Current & Upcoming Activities

- ★ Exploring to purchase numerous cemetery slots for servicing our local community. Our long term goal is to purchase a land or structure to be used for Northern California ADS community center.
- ★ Planning Eid Al Adha Dinner Party for Dec 22nd, 2007 at Illusions Fayrouz Restaurant in Palo Alto



Marwan Aboudiab on Left
 Naim Abu Daka on Right

Previously Held Functions

Our summer picnic was held on Aug 26th 2007 at William Land Park Sacramento, California. In addition to a beautiful weather and great attendance of 32 families, a contest for Best Tasting "Kaek" was awarded to Mrs Wafaa Hamadeh of Sacramento and Backgammon tournament championship awarded to Mr. Naim Abu Daka. Trophies and prizes were distributed to the winners.



ADS future generation is taking a break from a full day of fun where they have enjoyed the jump house and nearby Thunderland park



ADS ladies gathered for a photo shot at the picnic.

SOUTH CALIFORNIA

Rima Joumblat, President
 Email: adsscc@yahoo.com



Cultural Luncheon - September 30/07

The Southern California Ladies Auxiliary and Board are hosting a Cultural Luncheon on September 30, 2007 at the ADS Center. Lunch is going to be held outdoors under tented areas, featuring fresh, cook to order Zatar and Cheese, Manakeeh as well as Falafel. Other great traditional foods will also be served such as Foul, Sahlab, Hummus, labnie and much more.

- ★ Live music and a dabkih group will perform at the Luncheon.
- ★ Bring your Hubble Bubble, Mateh and backgammon.

ADS New Year's Eve Party

Southern California Annual New Year's Eve Party is going to be held on December 31, 2007 at the luxurious four star Hyatt Regency Hotel in Irvine, California. It will be an amazing, fun filled night among family and friends. It will feature great food, live music, dabkih and a belly dancer.

Due to the overwhelming request from our community, we've negotiated hard with the hotel to keep our party going until 2:45 am. On the other hand our little ones will be served finger-licking food especially created for our tweens, little ones and toddlers. They will also enjoy a full entertainment program, in addition to babysitting for toddlers.

The ADS is proud to announce that we are in the process of establishing a website for the Southern California chapter, and our goal is to have it up and running at the end of October, 2007, where you can book, pay, and choose your table on-line.

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail us at adsscc@yahoo.com.



WASHINGTON, DC

Salim Zayton, President



Current & Upcoming Activities

- ★ The ADS Washington Chapter is planning a dinner celebration for the community in the fall that will include all Lebanese from all faiths to join us in celebration of our Lebanese heritage.
- ★ An Arabic School to teach our children the language of our forefathers is in the planning stages and will be implemented in the near future by the ADS Washington Chapter.
- ★ A New Year's Eve celebration is planned in the Washington area by our Chapter that will include all American Lebanese. The festivities will be held at the Westin Hotel in Tyson's Corner, Virginia.
- ★ More activities for our children and youth are in the planning stages and will be introduced shortly to the community.
- ★ Eid al Adha Celebration is also in the planning stages.
- ★ Additional activities and festivities are in the planning stages.



Previously Held Functions

- ★ The ADS Washington Chapter began its mandate with a Picnic celebration on July 29, 2007 that helped bring the community together. More than 250 of our Druze brethren joined this great celebration.



**WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND OUR
2007 second ADS Picnic
Sunday, October 7, 2007 - 12:00 p.m.
Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield, VA
\$15 Family - \$5 Single
Join us for our second ADS picnic as we gather for the last time
this summer for some fun and catching up with friends and
family members over great barbecue meal.**



OKLAHOMA

Ameen Halabi, President



Dear Shauki

Many of our members attended this year's National Convention in California. It was a great experience. Along with the functions and the festivities we were always surrounded by family and friends. It was the first convention for most, but it will certainly not be the last.

We are a relatively new chapter with a dream of owning our ADS home in the near future. We will have our Eid Al Adha party on Saturday, December 22nd. We will have music, food, dance and presents for all the kids. During the 10 days preceding the Eid we will get together almost every night, as we used to do back home, and read about our religion and recite shaar.

We bought a burial plot few months ago and we will be buying another one soon.

Sarah Ahmadih will be graduating this fall from Oklahoma University with a BS in education. Congratulations in advance.

We welcome anyone whose is passing through Oklahoma to stop by and visit. The ADS is our main family under which we are all united. We share the same social, cultural and spiritual believes. I take it upon myself as we all should do, to bring in every Druze to the ADS. No one should be left out.

Mr. Shauki Halime is doing a great favor to all of us by producing this Magazine that will be available to all Druze.

Thank you brother Shauki.





DALLAS, TEXAS

Ramsey Kaedbey, President

A lifetime member and an elected National Board member for many years, focusing to keep unity among all the ADS chapters as well as giving his foremost attention to the youth, the young Druze professionals & the Faith.



Dear Shauki,

Thank you for your interest and work for the American Druze Society as well as for the Druze community around the world.

The ADS of North Texas Chapter has been a pioneer in bringing the community together as well as pioneer in setting up the stage for the society as a whole for a long time. A position which led the chapter to be awarded the Best ADS Chapter in the USA for many years.

This July the North Texas Druze community elected a new board to succeed in a tradition of success. The New Board is made up of big hearted volunteers, adding more board members shortly to fill in for needed committees. A great group of dedicated & honorable Druze with big hearts, whom have given along with their wives and families a lot to the community; either through their shared vision, education, & positions in the society or through their great sense of belonging.



The first community function for the new board was a great community picnic held in a perfect park in the city of South Lake. The picnic was fully catered where all enjoyed BB-Q, potato salad, honey beans and all the trimmings. And to top it off a great display of tasty peach and apple cobblers by Dickey's. There were more than 65 members who attended with past board members, presidents and vice presidents.

The attendee's listened to the social plans layout proposed by the new board inviting everyone to take part and bring in their ideas and proposals. Community ventures and proposed functions not limited to the Eid-al-Adha and New Year's and including a great call for prayer by the honorable Mr. Samah Helal, gathering the kids and the community before the serving of the dinner.

Thank you Shauki for your follow up and interest.
God Be With You and Kindest Regards

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Raja Hatoum, President



Dear Shauki,

Central Florida chapter has been active to keep our community united. Recently we have had a very successful Mother's day picnic as well as Labor Day picnic. Also, some our community members arranged a deep see fishing trip.

However, on labor day a new board members as well as new president were elected. The New Central Florida Chapter president is Raja K. Hatoum as well as the new board members are the following: Lamia Mosrie, Rouaida Hamze, Merwan Mosrie, Aref Aboulhosn, Omar El Mazry, Mrs. Mayada Alfeikih and Merwan Naime. Also, we are encouraging other the

The first board member meeting for new members will be held on September 29th 2007 in Orlando Florida. There will be a new agenda for the new board members such arranging picnics and parties for the upcoming holidays such thanksgiving, New years Party and other activities, also, Aid-Al-Adha el-Mubark celebration party.



We are going to have a Halloween picnic on the West Coast on Oct 28, 2007.

Thank you, for your time and for your volunteering and keep up the great work.

Thanks again.
Raja Hatoum





MICHIGAN

Khalil Harfouch, President

I was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1962. I completed my high school education in Lebanon before moving to the United States in 1982. I am married to Labiba Radwan for twenty years and have three children – Nadeem, Tarek and Fatin. I served two terms as a Vice President of the ADS Michigan Chapter and three times as a Board Member.

2007 has been an exciting year of the ADS Michigan Chapter. We began the year with an impressive membership drive that resulted in an unprecedented number of paid ADS members and a newly elected board in May. The entire community has been very supportive of the new board. We have had three extremely successful summer picnics this year. The atmosphere was great and everyone had lots of fun especially our youth.

We are very delighted and encouraged by this good start and many events and programs are currently in the making for the coming year. Our plans include an upcoming general meeting and Halloween party in October. We are also putting together an exciting program for an Eid Al-Adha and New Years Party in December. Plans are also underway to host the Michigan Youth Mini Convention in November 2008 in addition to other events and activities under discussion.

Many other organizational activities are in the planning stages. We have already completed the initial phase of updating our chapter web site (www.druze.org) and more member collaboration features are in progress. We have also begun the process of forming various committees to help us improve our operations.

The committees will focus on improving our finances, and our cultural, social and educational programs. They will work closely with the Michigan Board in the areas of fund raising, membership drives, youth education and event planning. In addition, we are actively participating in many discussions with members of the ADS National Board on a number of important initiatives in order to fulfill ADS goals and mission.

SOUTH FLORIDA

Alex Makled, President

The 2007 summer season is history, vacations are behind us, and our kids are back to school. Our Chapter official program for the rest of the year looks like this:

Current & Upcoming Activities

- ★ Labor Day Picnic on September 2nd (Palm Beach Area)
- ★ Thanksgiving gathering (Miami Area)
- ★ Eid-Aladha celebration (Broward Area)
- ★ Miami Dolphins game outing (at the stadium)

Labor Day PICNIC Sunday Sept 2nd:

The park and the entertainment package for the kids was reserved well in advance, many of our community members enjoyed a day on in the park and on the water with family and friends.

The following food was enjoyed, tabouli, fatouch, macaroni and cheese, potato salads, vegetables, fruits, pizzas, hummus, baba ghanouj, olives, pickles, chips, many Desserts, Chicken, Meat, Lasagna, Rice, Kibbe, Fish.

As always, please call (561-301-3281 or 561-966-1414) me if I can be of any assistance.





VIRGINIA

**Khalid Shaben, ADS National Vice-President
& Virginia Community Activist**

Richmond, Virginia is a community of 130 Druze families, which recently purchased an ADS Community Center located at 750 Courthouse Road in Richmond, Virginia. We have held numerous activities there as follows:

- ★ August – Cultural Night at the ADS Center that included traditional food, with everyone dressing in customary Lebanese folklore costumes.
- ★ September – Casino Night at the ADS Center
- ★ September 7 – Arabic School started its fall season, with 31 students learning at Levels 1 – 4. Heba Abu Hamzee, is our Education Chair & Arabic Instructor.
- ★ September – Sports Day was a whole day event held at the ADS Center, including Volleyball, Ping Pong, Fussball, Basketball & Backgammon.
- ★ The Community Center is open every Sunday for the entire Community to interact with each other and we organize a variety of different activities for all age groups.

Elections were recently held to elect a new board and president of the chapter. We will receive the names and post them in the next issue.



AUSTRALIA

Big Druze Weekend 2008

Chris Basheer, YDPSA Committee Member Australia

The YDPSA with the support of the South Australian Druze Community are proud to host Big Druze Weekend 2008 (BDW 08) in Adelaide, South Australia.



The BDW 08 is a Youth Convention aimed at bringing together Druze Youth from all over Australia and the world. This is the 3rd annual youth convention to be held in Australia, attracting national and international delegates and guests. It was hosted by Melbourne in 2006 and most recently by Sydney in 2007. This event is open to young Druze between 18 - 40 years of age.

BDW gives the opportunity for young Druze to come together to celebrate their faith and heritage, meet new friends, catch up with old ones, and essentially have fun in a relaxed atmosphere with people just like themselves.

BDW 08 will commence on Friday 25th January and conclude on Monday 28th January 2008. All accommodation, intra-state transport and events are organized for all attendees by the YDPSA. This will provide a safe and convenient environment for our brethren. Packages and a detailed itinerary is outlined below.

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact the YDPSA on 04105 DRUZE (04105 37893) or via email at sa@druze.org.au.

We look forward to you joining us for a memorable BDW in Adelaide 2008!!





Great Memory's





2008 ADS National Convention Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Held At: Marriott's Harbor Beach Resort & Spa

More Details to follow...

Website: www.marriottharborbeach.com

Dates: June 29 to July 6, 2008

Resort Highlights

Discover a luxurious beach resort featuring exquisite decor, superb accommodations, and legendary recreation. Secluded on 16 spectacular acres of private oceanfront property with a tropical ambiance, this Fort Lauderdale beach resort offers an irresistible list of indulgent pastimes, as well as close proximity to the area's top attractions. Located near Beach Promenade, Las Olas Boulevard, and Sawgrass Mills Mall. Experience tranquility, wellness, and rejuvenation at the 20,000 sq. ft. luxury spa overlooking the Atlantic Ocean listed in "*100 Best Spas of the World.*" With **seven** restaurants and lounges, this Florida spa resort provides a variety of dining options, including 3030 Ocean, serving award winning seafood creations and live jazz music. Enjoy an abundance of recreation amenities, such as countless water sports, an 8,000 sq. ft. pool, **private beach cabanas**, and **daily children's activities**. Secluded Florida beach resort offers a tropical setting with 16 acres of private oceanfront property.

The preparations are in full force for welcoming everybody to this magnificent 62nd National Convention at a fabulous resort and enjoy the true Druze hospitality of the South Florida Chapter. Mark your calendars for this years exciting & fun filled Convention. More information will be sent out soon.

Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

Regards,
Shauki Halime

Gazebo on Private Beach



Pool-one of many



Private Beach Cabanas





CANADIAN CHAPTERS ACTIVITIES



TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

Walid Elawar, Honorary President

*Former President of the Toronto Chapter, and a cornerstone of the community
Very Active with the current board and longstanding member.*

To my fellow Druze,

With Eid Al-Adha fast approaching, I wish you and yours all the health, wealth, and happiness, hoping that we will always be united in facing the challenges confronting us all over the world or back home. The challenges are many, and to overcome them we must have commitments morally, intellectually, financially, and spiritually.

Even with this age of technological advances, we seem to have a problem communicating our message and obtaining the changes that our communities deserve and need. Such communications should start:

- ★ **With our members**
- ★ **With our chapters**
- ★ **With our national boards**
- ★ **With our global organizations**
- ★ **With our holy and spiritual representatives in Lebanon and elsewhere**

How amazing it would be if we could have a website that connects all these ideas together to serve Druze issues, far away from politics and personal egos. We have great potential, knowledge, and expertise to get this huge project done if we can muster the will and determination to do so.

Dear Shauki and Sarah,

I wholeheartedly congratulate you for embarking on such a huge first step, trying to link all our communities together. What you are doing is desperately needed, and I hope that it will develop and lead to bigger and greater organizational steps in the future and we will be with you and help you every step of the way. May God bless your courageous efforts.

As to our chapter in Toronto, we are extremely active on all fronts with our community activities, relationships with the different levels of governments and their officials, and very active and interactive with all Lebanese and Arab organizations and community groups to the point that you could say **"We are leading the Arab community in Toronto"**.

Our most important project for this year is to "pay off the mortgage on the Druze House", and to accomplish that we are having a major draw on 6 great prizes and selling only 500 tickets at \$100 per ticket. Anyone that would like to support this initiative can get into touch with me and we will be very grateful.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Shauki & Sarah and wish you both the best of luck, and look forward to receiving this great Magazine.

These are the monthly scheduled functions for this year:

April 22, 2007	Breakfast at the Druze House
May 18–21, 2007	National Convention - Toronto
June 17, 2007	Father's Day Picnic
July 22, 2007	Kingston Picnic for Toronto/Ottawa/Montreal Chapters
Aug 26, 2007	Picnic in Markham
Sept 23, 2007	Breakfast and huge booksale at the Druze House
Oct 27, 2007	Fundraising Dinner
Nov 24, 2007	Talent night and Independence Day Party
Dec 31, 2007	Eid Aladha/New Year's Eve party



Kingston Picnic - Left to Right: Walid Elawar (Toronto), Kamal Bou Rass (Montreal), Bashar Bou-Diab (Ottawa), Jihad Halibi (Toronto), Shauki Halime (Columbus, Ohio), Kamal Harb (Ottawa)





OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA

Bashar Bou-Diab, President

Dear Mr. Halime,

It gives us great pleasure and distinguished honor to present to our brothers and sisters in the Druze communities in North America the successes achieved by our Canadian Druze Society of Ontario (CDSO) – Ottawa Chapter in the past 4 months.

★ **Father's Day BBQ, Jun 17th**

Organized to celebrate Father's Day, this event attracted over 110 of our community members, held at Vincent Massey Park. Here is a sample of pictures taken at the event. More pictures can be viewed at http://www.druze.ca/event_june17_2007.html.



★ **Kingston Picnic (Ottawa, Toronto & Montreal Chapters), Jul 22nd**

Organized to bring together the communities from the three major neighboring cities, this event was held in the City of Kingston. Here is a sample of pictures taken at the event. More pictures can be viewed at http://www.druze.ca/event_july22_2007.html.



★ **Youth paintball event, Aug 5th**

Organized to allow our youth to enjoy a day filled with adventure, activity, good company and a pizza lunch! This event was held at Commando Paintball in Navan, ON.

★ **Voyageur Picnic (Ottawa & Montreal Chapters), Aug 19th**

Organized to bring together the communities from Ottawa and Montreal, this event was held in the City of Voyageur. All who attended enjoyed a day of hiking, fishing, swimming and canoeing.



★ **Memorial services for Naife Shams & Sheikh Mounir Talhouk**

Two memorial services were supported by our Chapter in the memories of Neife Shams El-Eid (<http://www.druze.ca/neifeShams.html>) and Sheikh Mounir Talhouk (<http://www.druze.ca/mounirTalhouk.html>).

★ **Monthly religious gatherings (upcoming)**

These events will be organized, once a month, tentatively starting in the month of October 2007. They will consist of readings and teachings from sages from the Druze Community in Canada. Stay tuned, more details to come later.

★ **Adha Party (upcoming)**

This event will have a religiously pious tone in order to celebrate the Eid-Al-Adha. More details to come later.

★ **New Year's Party (upcoming)**

This event will be organized during the holidays in order to celebrate the upcoming New Year. More details to come later.

If you need any information, further details or to refer anyone to us, please contact us at reachus@druze.ca or visit our website at <http://www.druze.ca>.

Sincerely,
Yara Harb,
CDSO-Ottawa Chapter Secretary





MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

Nader Abou-Chacra, President

Current & Upcoming Activities

- ★ Eid Al Adha: 23 December 2007
- ★ New Years Eve Party
- ★ [Canadian Druze 2008 Convention from 16 to 19 May 2008](#): Druze from the States and all over the world are welcome. Stay tuned for details. A dedicated web site will soon be created.

Coming soon

Montreal Druze web site : www.druzequebec.com
Druze newsletter for the all Canadian Druze



EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA

Imad Chehayeb, President

Current & Upcoming Activities

- ★ In May 2007, a new board was elected.
- ★ Committees were established in which at least two members are to be chosen from outside the board. Those committees will work on certain projects of interest and present them to the board for implementation.
- ★ Preparation of the requirements to hire a full time manager for the Hall.
- ★ Our Social Sunday: Every 1st Sunday of every month, a social get together at the Hall over brunch (Manakish ala Sag), with different activities and games for all ages. Drop by and enjoy. Sunday Sept 2nd we will host a discussion for the youth on the Tawheed faith.
- ★ Our annual picnic on Aug. 19 was a great success, Thanks to the volunteers, donors and all the participants that made it so. We had over 200 people, it was held in Victoria Park. BBQ Burgers and Hot Dogs were served. Your feed back on the picnic is welcome.
- ★ Computer courses: A cad course starting on Sept 12.
- ★ Courses for English and Arabic Classes and other computer classes are being planned to start soon.



Edmonton Druze Center



- ★ Scholarship program for University students is in the design stage. any suggestions or help would be appreciated.
- ★ Looking forward to our annual Gala evening on Dec. 24 / 07. A social party for the whole family to enjoy. We need volunteers to organize this event and make it another success.
- ★ Eid "Al Adha" function will be around the middle of Dec. Date to be confirmed.
- ★ Religious gatherings are held every Thursday evening. Discuss and learn about our Tawhid faith.





Weddings & Engagements

Ramsey Kaedbey & Jihan Malaeb - Dallas, Texas



On November 19th 2006 a beautiful and blessed wedding joined Ramsey and Jihan, two of the honorable Druze families, the Kaedbey's of Ain-Anoub and the Malaeb's of Baysour.

Ramsey Kaedbey a business man and Realtor from Dallas USA, married Jihan Malaeb an attorney and first woman elected to the Baysour Municipal Council. The wedding was celebrated in two joyful ceremonies one in Baysour for family and friends and one in Beirut at the Heliopolitan Safir Hotel, which included lots of family members, friends and honorable dignitaries, Mabrouk.

Ronnie Jaber & Naomi Yehia - Toronto, Canada



It was our honor & pleasure to introduce this lovely couple to each other at the 2006 ADS National Druze Convention in Boston.

Ronnie & Naomi were married in a beautiful ceremony in Toronto on August 31, 2007.

Mr. & Mrs. Youssef Yehia and Mr. & Mrs. Zeid Jaber are the proud parents.

*Congratulations & wishing them a happy & prosperous life together.
Shauki & Sarah Halime*





Mazen Abou Hamdan & Nibal Monther - Michigan



Mazen, The son of Awad and Samar Abou Hamdan & Nibal, The daughter of Zuheir and Aida Monther were married on June 3, 2007.

They celebrated their wedding at the Choice Center Terrace Simkanieh Elshouf. Both of them are from Gharifeh Elshouf. They currently reside in Westland, Michigan.

Congratulations & with many good wishes for a joyous life together.



Adnan Hamdan & Hilda Ghosn - Lebanon

عين عنوب البساتين عاليه

Adnan Hamdan & Hilda Ghosn where married on June 3, 2007 in a beautiful ceremony in Ain Anoub, Lebanon.

On this special Occasion It's the perfect time to say Health & Happiness to you, Both today & every day!

Congratulations!





Youssif Ghosn & Dargen Malaeb - Lebanon



*Youssif Ghosn & Dargen Malaeb
were engaged on Sept 1, 2007
in Baysour, Lebanon.*

*We know you've always wanted to find
Someone who's really right for you
And now you've found that special one!
We wish the best for both of you!*

Congratulations on your engagement!

Masom Hamadgh & Racha Alamgh - Ohio



*Mr. & Mrs. Faris & Sonia Alameh
celebrated the
Engagement of their beloved
Daughter - Racha Alameh
to
Masom Hamadeh
the beloved son of
Mr. and Mrs. Samir & Randa Hamadeh
on
Saturday, the 18th of August 2007*

*We had the pleasure to attend
& celebrate the Engagement
of the lovely couple.
Wishing them the best future together.
Congratulations!*

Shauki & Sarah Halime





Graduations

Layal Nawfal

She resides in Southern California, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Hamad Nawfal, graduated with a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of California, Irvine in June 2007. Layal previously earned an undergraduate degree in Environmental Analysis & Design. She has begun her career in community development with a position at a local city.



Sirene Abou-Chakra

I received a B.A in English and Political Science from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I graduated on April 28th, 2007.

Sirene was born in Beirut, Lebanon and moved to Dearborn, Michigan with her family when she was 2 years old. She has been extremely involved in the Arab community in both Dearborn, and then at her alma mater, the University of Michigan. She started an outreach organization called Doors of Opportunity that encourages Arab American youth to apply and attend the University of Michigan and other competitive universities. She has currently moved to Mountain View, California where she works for Google Inc. Go Blue!

Sally Aboul-Hosn

Sally, daughter of Walid and Raghida Aboul-Hosn of Long Beach, California graduated in Spring 2007 from the University of California, Irvine. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Economics with an emphasis in Middle East Studies.

Samer Aboul-Hosn

Samer, son of Walid and Raghida Aboul-Hosn of Long Beach, CA graduated in Spring 2007 from Long Beach Polytechnic High School in Spring 2007. He will be attending the University of California, Santa Cruz this fall.



Distinguished Druze



ومنصور وناصر وهؤلاء توفوا جميعاً في الثورات التي قامت ضد الفرنسيين.

المعركة الأولى

ونجد في المذكرات التي كتبها الراحل توثيقاً لتاريخ الرجل النضالي ومنها موجز عن إحدى المعارك مع العثمانيين، والتي جرت في الأول من تشرين الأول أكتوبر عام 1910م معركة ضارية حضرها بنفسه وكان هو والده مع المشاة، وجاء فيها أن الثوار استبسلوا في هذه المعركة وكبدوا الأتراك خسائر فادحة في الرجال، ودارت معركة أخرى في هضبة قنوات ومفعلة، وأحكم الطوق على الجيش العثماني وفقد من عناصره ما يربو على خمسمائة من مشاته وفرسانه.

الثورة العربية

وفي إحدى المذكرات روي القائد الراحل أنه بعد فترة وجيزة من دخول

حكايات سلطان باشا الأطرش.. قائد الثورة السورية الكبرى

إن كنت أنا ثائراً فأنت أبو الثوار نستمد منك الحكمة والشجاعة ونري فيك رمزاً نخجل من أخطائنا أمامه كلمة قالها جمال عبد الناصر لسلطان باشا الأطرش

كثيرة هي الدراسات والأبحاث والكتب التي نشرت حول الثورة السورية الكبرى، وسيرة قائدها سلطان باشا الأطرش، ومن كل تلك الأبحاث لم تكن هناك وثيقة أكثر مصداقية من تلك المذكرات التي كتبها سلطان باشا الأطرش قائد الثورة السورية الكبرى قبل رحيله، والتي دأب علي الاحتفاظ بها، وقد نشرت في إحدى الدوريات الأسبوعية عام 1975

وتقديم هذه المذكرات في هذا الوقت هو نوع من سدّ ثغرة واسعة في البحث بهذا الموضوع الخطير والهام الذي لا يمس تاريخنا فحسب وإنما يمس كل تاريخ العالم في اللحمة الثورية، وهذه المذكرات بريئة من أي غايات ومصالح أنية تتعلق بحسابات ضيقة. وهو الرجل الذي حافظ علي تاريخه الثوري نظيفاً نزيهاً من أي مطامح سياسية خاصة.

بزياره للمنزل الذي عاش فيه القائد الراحل سلطان باشا الأطرش واستطلاع المذكرات التي كتبها بخط يده، والحديث إلي بعض أقربائه وكان التحقيق التالي:

النشأة

ولد سلطان باشا الأطرش في الخامس من آذار مارس عام 1891م في بلدة القريا، من والدين ينتميان إلي الأسرة الطرشانية وهو كبير أخوته الثلاثة علي ومصطفي وزيد وأختيه سمية ونعائم، والده ذوقان بن مصطفى بن إسماعيل الثاني وأمه شبيخة بنت منصور بنت إسماعيل الثاني، القرية التي نشأ فيها ذات أرض سهلية يقسمها الطريق المار فيها إلي قسمين متميزين، قسم شرقي تسوده مناظر موحشة كونه خال من الأشجار وكثرة الحجارة البازلتية المتركمة فيه، وقسم غربي سهوله منبسطة وتربته بركانية حمراء.

في الخامسة من عمره اصطحبه والده لمقابلة القائد العثماني ممدوح باشا، وذلك أثناء الجولة التي كان يقوم بها في المقرن القبلي المنطقة الجنوبية من الجبل للقبض علي زعماء الدروز وقادة الرأي فيها، ونفهم مع عائلاتهم إلي خارج بلاد الشام، وكان والده وعمه فايز من جملة المنفيين علي أثر تلك المقابلة، غير أن جدته زمرد تمكنت من ترحيلهم تحت جنح الظلام إلي قرية العناة في أقصى الجنوب، حيث نزل مع والدته وخالته مرة زوجة عمه فايز في بيت الشيخ أبي صلاح حسين الصفدي، ولما استؤنف القتال ضد الحملة العثمانية اضطر الأهالي في المقرنين القبلي والشرقي إلي ترحيل نسايتهم وأطفالهم إلي البادية الشرقية، فانتقلت بهم جدته إلي المكان المعروف بالعبد وأولاده الواقع بين منطقتي الحرة والحماد، حيث أمضوا فصل الشتاء بكامله وكان في جملة الفرسان الذين تولوا حمايتهم في الترحيل والإقامة في تلك المنطقة الجرداء الموحشة صالح الحلبي وهلال العطواني، وقبل أن يتم سوجه إلي الجندية تزوج من ابنة عمه فايز وتدعي غازية ولكنها توفيت بعد فترة ولم يزرزق منها أطفالاً، وبعد عودته من الجندية العام 1912 تزوج من ابنة الشيخ إبراهيم أبو فخر من بلدة نجران وتدعي تركية، رزق منها جميع أولاده الذكور طلال وفواز ويوسف

Distinguished Druze

علي بسطاء الدروز والمعتدلين منهم، فأقنعوهم بالتزام الهدوء والسكينة بادئ الأمر ثم زينوا لهم قيام دولة تعمل لصالحهم وتحميهم من اضطهاد الآخرين لهم واستغلالهم وتوطد دعائم حريتهم واستقلالهم، ولم يكن ذلك إلا زيفاً وخديعة من أجل الثقة بالمستعمر الفرنسي، وبعد أن ازداد بطش الفرنسيين بالمسلمين والأبرياء ازدادت المقاومة وكبرت الثورة، وسارت من قرية متان إلى قرية ملح بقيادة سلطان الأطرش، فاستقبلهم عند أول القرية علي الملحم وخليل الباسط حيث أبلغوا أن سرية من الحرس السيار تعدادها نحو مئة خيال موجودة في القرية، فلم تمض دقائق من دخولهم حتى خرج رجال القرية ونسأؤهم لاستقبالهم والبيرق يخفق بألوانه الجذابة فوق حامله شهاب غزالي، ومن هذه القرية بعث رسائل إلى كل جبل العرب فحدثت معركة الكفر ومعركة المزرعة وكانت من أعنف المعارك ضد الاستعمار، أعقبها فشل حملة الثورة لتحرير دمشق.

الثورة السورية الكبرى

وعن بدايات الثورة السورية ضد الانتداب الفرنسي روي الراحل أن نطاق التأييد للثورة اتسع وكانت معركة المسيفرة غير الموفقة، وبعد هذه المعركة أقيم مؤتمر ريمة الفخور الذي عقد في أوائل أيلول سبتمبر العام 1925، وتجلت في هذا المؤتمر الوحدة الوطنية بين جميع السوريين بأوضح معانيها، ومن أهم مقرراته تسمية سلطان باشا الأطرش قائداً للثورة السورية الكبرى ضد الاحتلال الفرنسي.

ومن أهم المعارك التي حدثت معركة المسيفرة في 17 أيلول سبتمبر عام 1925، دخل الجنرال غاملان علي أعقابها السويدياء ثم انسحب منها بعد معركة ضارية. وما لبثت أن امتدت رقعة المعارك التي خاضها الثوار بقيادة سلطان باشا الأطرش، من الزحف علي دمشق ومن الثورة الأولى العام 1922 إلى عهد القمع ضد الأهالي من قبل الفرنسيين، وهذه من أهم الأحداث التي مهدت لثورة 1925 وقيام الثورة السورية الكبرى.

وصية سلطان باشا الأطرش

بعد جلاء الفرنسيين عن سوريا كتب سلطان باشا الأطرش وصيته التي نصت علي ما يلي: (إخواني وأبنائي العرب عزمت وأنا في أيامي الأخيرة أنتظر الموت الحق أن أخاطبكم مودعاً وموصياً لقد أولتني هذه الأمة قيادة الثورة السورية الكبرى ضد الاحتلال الفرنسي الغادر، فممت بأمانة القيادة وطلبت الشهادة وأديت الأمانة. انطلقت الثورة من الجبل الأشم جبل العرب لتشمل وتعم وكان شعارها الدين لله والوطن للجميع وأعتقد أنها حققت لكم عزة وفخاراً وللاستعمار ذلاً وانكساراً. وصيتي لكم إخوتي وأبنائي العرب هي أن أمامكم طريقاً طويلاً ومشاق شديدة تحتاج إلي جهاد وقوة إيمانكم وتراص صوفكم هي سبيلكم لرد كيد الأعداء وطرد الغاصبين وتحرير الأرض، واعلموا أن الحفاظ علي الاستقلال أمانة في أعناقكم بعد أن مات من أجله العديد من الشهداء وسال للوصول إليه الكثير من الدماء. واعلموا أن وحدة العرب هي المنعة والقوة وأنها حلم الأجيال وطريق الخلاص واعلموا أن ما أخذ بالسيف فيالسيف يؤخذ، وأن الإيمان أقوى من كل سلاح والإيمان يشد بالصبر ويحفظ بالعدل ويعزز باليقين ويقوي بالجهاد.. وهو أقوى من كل سلاح وأن كأس الحنظل بالعز أشهي من ماء الحياة مع الذل، عودوا إلي

تركيا إلي جانب الألمان في الحرب العالمية الأولى عيّن أحمد جمال باشا قائداً عاماً للقوات العثمانية في بلاد الشام وحاكماً عسكرياً عليها، فراح يكثر من حشد الجيوش في البلاد ويستغل ظروف الحرب لإعلان الأحكام العرفية والتشدد في جباية الضرائب وسوق الشبان علي نطاق واسع للخدمة العسكرية.

ووفقاً للمذكرة فإن جمال باشا كشف عن مكنونات نفسه وراح يعمل علي تنفيذ سياسة الاتحاديين بنقل الفرق العربية من الجيش الرابع إلي خارج بلاد الشام وإحلال الفرق العثمانية محلها، رغم ذلك لم يستطع التقرب من الزعماء الدروز واستمالتهم لصفه.

وجاء أيضاً أن الاستخبارات الفرنسية أرسلت كتاباً إلي سلطان الأطرش فتأمله وعرضه علي متعب بيك وحسين باشا، وجاء فيه أن سوريا ستكون تحت الانتداب الفرنسي، فأرسل كتاباً مؤرخاً في 24 أيلول سبتمبر 1918 إلي البعثة الموجودة في القدس يعلمهم بأن الدروز دائماً بجانب الحلفاء ودون استثناء. وقبل أن يصل الجيش الفيصلي إلي درعا كان سلطان قد أنهى اتصالاته بمعظم القرى الموالية للثورة، فشجذ هم أنصاره ليكونوا علي أهبة الاستعداد للسير بهم في مقدمة الجيش الفيصلي إلي دمشق، غير أن احتمالات الحرب الأهلية كانت تزداد يوماً بعد يوم في سائر أنحاء البلاد بسبب نشاط الأتراك المستمر في مختلف مناطقه ونواحيه وبذلمهم الأموال الطائلة ونشرهم الدعايات المظلمة ضد الثورة العربية وتعذيبهم بالسكان، وسرعان ما جاء الفرج في رسالة تلقاها الأطرش من الأمير فيصل يقول له فيها جملة قصيرة أخي سلطان الملقب درعا غدا فاستنفر علي الفور أنصاره الذين لبوا الدعوة مشاة وفرساناً وأقبلوا تحت بيارقهم الخفاقة كالسيل الجارف، ولكنه احتفظ بنحو 500 فارس وطلب من المشاة أن يعودوا إلي قراهم وينتظروا منه علماً إذا دعت الضرورة وجودهم في جبهة القتال.

وعن مجريات حملة الثوار علي الاحتلال التركي في سوريا، روي أن الحملة سارت نحو بصري التي استسلمت حاميتها دون مقاومة تذكر، واستولي الجيش علي الأسلحة والذخائر ومستودعات الحبوب فوزعها القائد علي الأهالي الذين انضموا إليه تعويضاً لهم عما صادرته السلطة العثمانية، ثم توجهت الحملة إلي الشيخ مسكين دون أن تعرج علي درعا التي أوشكت أن تسقط بيد الجيش العربي، فالتقت بفريق من رجال حملة الجبل واتجهوا بقيادة الشريف ناصر وطاردوا القوات العثمانية والألمانية حتي آخر جندي.

كان سلطان الأطرش في القرية عندما وردت إليه أخبار تقدم القوات الفرنسية نحو دمشق، فدعا إلي اجتماع في بلدته لبحث الموقف الراهن، قبل أن يقرر التأهب للدفاع عن استقلال البلاد والذود عن حياض الوطن، ولم تمض فترة طويلة حتي اكتملت الحشود وسارت علي رأس حملة من المشاة والفرسان وصل تعدادها إلي نحو ثلاثة آلاف مقاتل باتجاه الشمال، وكانت بداية الثورة.

الانتداب الفرنسي

وعن الانتداب الفرنسي ذكر الراحل أن المؤيدين للانتداب استغلوا ذلك في الجبل وتدهور الوضع السياسي العام في البلاد إثر انهيار حكم الأمير فيصل فازداد نشاطهم في مختلف الأوساط والمناطق وتمكنوا من التأثير



Distinguished Druze

الأسير، فحمل بندقيته وهزها نحو ذلك الضابط يريد أن يفرغ رصاصها فيه، فنهض سلطان باشا والغضب يقطر من عينيه وصرخ علي ذلك الشخص وهو يصوب البندقية نحوه ويقول إن خرجت رصاصة واحدة سأجعلك أشلاء.. فالأسير ضيف الله).

بقيت هذه الكلمة تعلق كل الأيدولوجيات والمفاهيم والقيم العسكرية وكأنها درس عالمي لكل المعارك والحروب التي خاضتها البشرية من طروادة والإسبارطيين وصولاً إلي حروب شارون في الأراضي الفلسطينية المحتلة.

العزوف عن السياسة

ذات يوم وقيل وفاته بسنتين سُئل سلطان الأطرش عن أسباب عزوفه عن الشأن السياسي بعد الاستقلال، فصمت برهة ثم تنهد وقال أربع كلمات تترك سامعها في حيرة واحتمالات دون جواب قاطع رحم الله زمان الثورة، فهل كان يقصد أن التاريخ ليس للبيع أم أن ثلة السياسيين الذين جاؤوا من بعده وحلوا مكانه في ذلك الوقت لم يكونوا بحجم المسؤولية الوطنية الملقاة عليهم، أم أنه فعلاً رجل معارك وغارات ومخطط حربي وقائد عسكري ولا علاقة له بحكمة السياسيين ودهانهم.

كان سلطان الأطرش من الرجال القلائل علي مستوى العالم الذين حافظوا علي هويتهم ونزاهتهم الثورية، معظم القادة الثوريين الذين حلوا مكانه بعد انتصار حركة التحرر الوطنية أسأؤوا بقصد أو بغير قصد لمطامحهم ونوابهم الأولي حين خاضوا غمار معركة التحرر الوطني.. الجزائر وثورة المليون شهيد مثلاً تحولت السلطة بعد انتصار الثورة إلي غنيمة بين أيدي رجال حرقوا حركة التحرر الوطني عن مغزاها البعيد الذي يعانق العدالة الاجتماعية ومنعة الوطن والازدهار الاقتصادي، وعلي مستوي العالم لن نجد إلا قلة من القادة استطاعوا أن يحافظوا علي نزاهة مراميمهم بعد الاستقلال، ومن هؤلاء نجد المهاتما غاندي، ونهرو في الهند، وشارل ديغول بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية وتحرير فرنسا، وتشاي غيفارا في أمريكا اللاتينية الذي رفض المناصب السياسية وغادر كوبا إلي بوليفيا للكفاح ضد الطغاة، ونجد سعد زغلول في مصر، ونيلسون مانديلا في إفريقيا.. هؤلاء القلة قادوا حركات تحرر وطني ولم يلوثوا تاريخهم بمكاسب مادية أو إيديولوجية ضيقة.

الأمر المؤكد هو أن سلطان الأطرش لم يطرح نفسه بعد الاستقلال كسياسي أو بالأحرى لم يدخل تاريخه ونفسه فيما يسمى بالتجريب السياسي، اكتفي بهذا المجد وانكفأ في بيته ليظل أباً روحياً لكل زعماء وقادة المنطقة يزورونه بين الحين والآخر، يسألونه عن رأيه في الواقع الحالي ويستمعون لأرائه المستمدة من غبار معارك التحرير وقيمه ومفاهيمه.

في أول زيارة قام بها جمال عبد الناصر لسلطان الأطرش في بيته، فوجئ بهذه البساطة التي يعيشها هذا الرجل في منزله المبني من الحجر الروماني القديم والمضافة المفروشة بالسجاد اليدوي ورائحة القهوة تمتزج برائحة الخبز العربي، والخير والحقيقة، فقال عبدالناصر بعد أن التقاه إن كنت أنا ثائراً فأنت أبو الثوار نستمد منك الحكمة والشجاعة ونري فيك رمزاً نخجل من أخطائنا أمامه

تاريخكم الحافل بالبطولات الزاخر بالأمجاد.. إنني لم أر أقوى تأثيراً في النفوس من قراءة التاريخ لتنبية الشعور وإيقاظ الهمم لاستنهاض الشعوب لتظفر بحريتها وتحقق وحدتها وعزتها وكرامتها وترفع أعلام النصر واعلموا أن التقوي لله والحب للأرض وأن الحق منتصر وأن الشرف بالحفاظ علي الخلق والإبداع وإتقان العمل والاعتزاز بالحرية والفخر بالكرامة، وأن النهوض بالعلم والعمل، وأن الأمن بالعدل، وأن القوة بالتعاون. مُنحت عمراً من الرحيم أمانة قضيته جهاداً وأمضيته زهداً ثبتني وهداني وأعاني بأقوال أسأله المغفرة، وبه المستعان أما ما خلفته من رزق ومال فهو جهد فلاح متواضع تحكمه قواعد الشريعة السمحاء).

روايات عن الراحل والثورة

ومن الروايات التي قصها علي الراية أحد أبناء بلدة الراحل قرياً قصة تقول أنه عندما توفي سلطان باشا الأطرش كان هناك رجل في الستين من عمره يعاني من شلل في رجله اليسري بحيث كان يمشي علي عكاز بدائية تتعبه أكثر مما تريحه، وكانت السيارات قد أغلقت الطريق لكثرتة قبل الوصول إلي مكان تايين الراحل الكبير بثلاثة كيلو مترات خرج ذلك الرجل من السيارة مثله مثل الجموع الغفيرة التي تزاحمت لتلقي النظرة الأخيرة علي ذلك الرجل العملاق الذي تمدد في النهاية في تابوته الخشبي تاركاً وراءه معارك المجد والرجولة. مسافة ثلاثة كيلو مترات قطعها هذا العاجز علي عكازه البدائي مثله مثل الشباب الذين كانوا يتزاحمون للوصول إلي النعش قال ذلك العاجز وهو ينظر إلي وجه الراحل وبصوت مرتفع إلي أين غادرتنا فقد أصبحنا بفقدك يتامي

ويروي أن سلطان باشا الأطرش سُئل ذات يوم: من قاتل من بني معروف في الثورة يا باشا؟ فقال كل الجبل قاتل فرنسا. وسُئل من قاتل من سوريا في الثورة يا باشا فقال كل سوريا قاتلت فرنسا. وسُئل ألم يكن هناك عملاء سوريون مع فرنسا؟ قال نعم كان هناك عملاء إلا أنهم ليسوا سوريين.

يقول سعيد الأطرش أحد أقارب الراحل لالراية: (هناك من تحدث بأن الثوار كانوا يقتلون الأسري الفرنسيين وهذا ادعاء.. ومني الحقيقة: ليس هناك أصدق من عفوية تلك الثورة وشرف مراميتها وسيوفها المؤمنة بالحق والإنسانية رجال يحملون في صدورهم رقة الطفل وعفويته).

ويضيف (معركة المزرعة بدأت في رقة الصخر ذاك المثلث الذي شرب الكثير من دماء المعتدين بين ثلاث قري سميع، والدور، وقراصة، واستطاع الثوار آنذاك أسر 80 ضابطاً و 80 جندياً فرنسياً، حين هاجموا مؤخرة الجيش المتقدم نحو المزرعة، والشيوخ سميع آنذاك كان المجاهد الشيخ أبو حسين علي نصر الذي اقتاد الأسري إلي مضافته والأسري آنذاك كانوا عرباً من المغرب وكانوا يرددون الله محمد وكانوا ضيوفاً عنده وكان يضمد جراح المصابين منهم ويهدئ من روعهم ويقول لهم أنتم في بيت أهلكم).

ويروي سعيد الأطرش أن (أحد الضباط الأسري نهض وخرج إلي العلية أمام المضافة وراح ينظر إلي الثوار بمنظار كان يحمله، وهو يعجب من قدرتهم علي تحقيق مثل هذا الانتصار، وأسر هذا العدد من الجنود، وفي هذا الوقت قدم السلطان مرحباً بأسراه الفرنسيين وحين طال مكوث الضباط في العلية وهو يتابع بمنظاره تلك التضاريس والجروف الصخرية، شعر أحد أبناء عم الشيخ سميع بالريبة مما يفعله الضابط



In Loving Memory

Farida Anis Jaber

*passed away on August 13, 2007
May god bless her soul and
our deepest sympathy's to her family.*

بالرضى والتسليم لمشينة الله وبمزيد الاسى انتقلت الى
رحمته تعالى المأسوف عليها الغالية السيدة الفاضلة

فريدة انيس جابر

ارملة المرحوم الدكتور كميل الرئيس

والدها المرحوم المحامي انيس جابر

والدتها المرحومة حليلة يوسف شيا

اولادها الدكتور سامر الرئيس زوجته هبه زهير جابر

الاستاذة سامرة الرئيس زوجها المهندس حسام الجوهرى

المهندس المقدم زاهر الرئيس زوجته رولى حسيب الرئيس

الدكتور بدري الرئيس زوجته هبه اكرم شهيب

اشقاؤها المرحوم المحامي شكيب جابر

المهندس ملحم جابر

المهندس الطيار رياض جابر

الاستاذ منصور جابر

المهندس زهير جابر

المحامي حافظ جابر

اسلافها المرحوم جميل الرئيس

الاستاذ فؤاد الرئيس

الدكتور عادل الرئيس

الشيخة جمال الرئيس (ام رجا شهيب)

المحامية آمال الرئيس

لكم من بعدها طيب البقاء

آل الرئيس وجابر وشهيب وشيا والجوهرى.

Nemr Gene Abou-Hamdan

*"Big and Strong and Full of
Faith"*

Nemr Gene Abou-Hamdan passed from this life into the next on August 26, 2007, exactly one year and one month to the day that his mama, Joy, passed away. He is survived by his baba (father) Ali Nemr Abou-Hamdan; his 16 year-old brother Neal; his eight year-old sister, Michelle; and step mother Najah and step brothers; also, grandparents, Joyce and Gene Reagan; Teta (Grandmother), Inam Abou-Hamdan in Lebanon; aunt Laurie Reagan-Andrews; and cousins, Dana and Jordan, all of Austin. In addition he leaves many great aunts, uncles with extended families and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins in Lebanon to cherish his memory.



Nemr was born June 5, 1990. He gave his family so much joy through his short life – words fail in expressing how much we loved our bright and shining star. His mother and father gave him so much love; Nemr's mama started teaching him when he was still in the womb, as she did with Neal and Michelle. As he was growing up his baba taught him the meaning of true strength and showed by example the value of having goals and working hard. Nemr and his brother Neal were best friends and could talk for hours about music, games, school – or just "stuff". Michelle's big brother played with her, watched over her; he also joked and giggled right along with her. Nemr is leaving emptiness in their lives that only god can fill.

Nemr was a lanky six foot tall, handsome 17 year-old with curly black hair, a beautiful smile and laughing eyes. He was full to the top with so much knowledge that we had to listen very closely; however, some of the time it still zapped over our heads. He enjoyed researching and reading, but was down to earth. Nemr was a student at Bowie High School and would have graduated in spring 2008. He loved music of all genres. He played the cello, bass guitar, and piano.

"In my ongoing attempt to shape myself as a better person, I wish to obtain three things; The Eyes of an artist, the mind of a philosopher, and the hands of a scientist."

Nemr G. Abou-Hamdan

May god bless his soul, Alah yerhamo and may god give the strength to his family.

ENNA LILLAH WA ENNA ELIEHE RAAJEOUN





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وقد حققنا نجاحاً كبيراً بذلك
بمشيئة الله وبتشجيعكم.
مع الف شكر
حفظ الله طائفة الموحدين الدروز حول العالم

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شكراً.

What we are about ...

This complimentary Druze Magazine is a non-political communication vehicle for the Druze community worldwide. It is our pleasure to be part of globally connecting our diverse Druze societies with one another.

With our common roots we have flourished & now reside in every country around the world. In an effort to keep our uniqueness & traditions in a fast paced and changing world; we need to maintain a method to transcend the requests for conformity.

We have the ability to share our unique culture & customs in a very accessible cyber world while maintaining

the efforts required to preserve those elements which have defined our past, & bring it's relevance & significance to our future generations.

This magazine is an attempt to stem the tide and assist with the evolution of our culture, as the world will surely dilute us if we are unable to define ourselves in a manner that will uphold our unique destiny into the 21st century.

We are at **The Dawn (Al-Fajr)** of our time to make a difference and create an identifiable culture that will be impossible for anyone to extinguish. **We want to hear from everyone on their ideas and thoughts.**

We have the widest Druze network available & the magazine is posted on the www.DruzeWorldwide.com website for it to be accessible around the globe for all to read & enjoy. It is also supported through social media websites such as Druze Worldwide Group on Facebook and others.

Everyone is welcome to submit an article or opinion for publication consideration. All ages are included & encouraged. We reserve the right to review, edit, accept or decline articles as well as revise for clarity, content & space.

Until the very exciting next issue, wishing the best to everyone!!

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