

Barakah Bulletin



The new Barakah Masjid was purchased in December 2023 and paid in full. The masjid is currently being renovated and not yet open for prayers. Alhamdulillah, Barakah is fundraising to pay for said renovations. Learn more and donate at barakahchicago.org.

Upcoming Events

October 4: Fundraising Dinner

October 10: Brothers Knowledge Seeking

October 18: Sister's Bunna

October 24: Brothers Knowledge Seeking

November 1: Monthly Family Event

November 7: Brothers Knowledge Seeking

November 15: Sister's Bunna

November 21: Brothers Knowledge Seeking

Event Recap

July 19, 2025 & August 16, 2025: Summer Picnics

If there's one thing Barakah Chicago is known for, it's our unforgettable annual summer picnics. Over the years, these gatherings have brought endless joy to families across the community. From piñatas and fresh cotton candy to bouncy houses, face painting, and classic field games like tug-of-war, there's something for everyone. And who could forget the legendary water balloon battles, or the friendly soccer, basketball, and volleyball matches?

And then—there's the food. Every summer, Barakah fires up the grill to serve all the barbecue favorites: juicy burgers, sizzling hotdogs, sweet corn on the cob, and more. Families are also invited to bring their own dishes to share.

But beyond the fun and food, our picnics are all about connection. Whether it's through a quick game, a thoughtful conversation, or a peaceful stroll through the beautiful Viking Park, these moments bring us closer as a community.

This past summer, we were thrilled to partner with beytbun for a special treat: a pop-up drink cart offering everything from flavorful coffees to refreshing mocktails.

These are the memories that build lasting bonds. We look forward to many more summer picnics ahead, InshaAllah!



Islamic Reminder

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

“When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him.” (Muslim)

Don't forget: your deeds don't stop counting when you've passed. So start planting seeds that will continue to grow beyond your time.





Barakah Umm Ayman

the mother after my mother

When the founders of Barakah Chicago chose the name “Barakah,” it was with deep thought and intention, honoring Barakah Umm Ayman (RA)—also known as Barakah bint Thalabah. She holds a unique and noble place in Islamic history as the only person present with the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from birth to death. A second woman to accept Islam after Khadijah (RA), she was originally from Abyssinia and entered the Prophet’s household as a servant to his parents, Abdullah and Aminah.

Barakah (RA) supported Aminah through pregnancy, was the first to hold the newborn Muhammad (SAW), and became a lifelong caregiver. After Aminah’s death, she raised the young Prophet with love and devotion, remaining a steady maternal presence through the losses of his grandfather and other guardians.

Later, when the Prophet (SAW) married Khadijah (RA), he introduced Barakah (RA) as “my mother after my mother.” She married Ubaid ibn Zaid and bore her first son, Ayman. After being widowed, she returned to the Prophet’s home, embraced Islam without hesitation upon the first revelation, and raised her son in its light.

In response to the Prophet’s praise —“Whoever wishes to marry a woman of Paradise, let him marry Umm Ayman”—Zaid ibn Haritha (RA) married her. Their son, Usama ibn Zaid (RA), became known as “the beloved, son of the beloved.”

Despite her age, she migrated to Madinah and was given glad tidings of Paradise directly by the Prophet (SAW). She served in every battle, even defending him with a sword at the Battle of Uhud. Though once a slave of unknown lineage, Barakah Umm Ayman (RA) was honored by Allah and His Messenger with glad tidings of Paradise and serves as a timeless role model of love, devotion, and unwavering faith.

By: Noor ul Iman

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Let us know who you are and what you do:

My name is Manar Hamid and I am a mother of four. My family is from Eritrea but I was raised in Saudi Arabia. I am currently teaching art at an Islamic School here in Atlanta called Ilm Academy. I have always loved art, especially drawing and painting scenes from nature. In my free time I create artistic pieces and designs for our family business where we print designs on T-shirts, hoodies, and tote bags as well as sell digital copies of my paintings.

Tell us about one of your favorite art pieces and what it means to you:

This art piece is one of my absolute favorites, and it currently sits in the home of a beloved friend of mine. I wanted to capture the warmth of the Habesha coffee ceremony, a ceremony that gathers people around to drink small cups of coffee and snack on homemade baked goods and popcorn. The smell of burning incense and frankincense resin fills the front yard as people from the neighborhood slowly begin to gather and wait for the coffee beans to be grounded and brewed. Chatter fills the air as everyone settles down and passes around the foods they brought to share. The breeze and the afternoon sun set a very comforting mood and causes the people to sit together for hours, catching each other up on their personal lives while forming new connections with their neighbors.

How has your cultural identity impacted or inspired your work?

Growing up, I was always surrounded by nature's beauty. Whether it was the palm tree at our front yard or the clips of waterfalls on TV, I have always internalized that beauty and felt the need to channel it into my work. As I practiced that more often, I began to experiment by mixing that with cultural scenes from my childhood. I was able to visit Asmara, the capital city of Eritrea, as a child with my family. I saw how seamlessly the culture blended with the nature scene over there. People were one with nature, and you could see its beauty wherever you went. I feel like that experience keeps inspiring my work when I get stuck on a piece and I feel like it's missing. I think about the connection that our cultural traditions have with nature and then try my best to channel that into my artworks.

Manar's Gallery



Follow Manar on Instagram @manars.gallery

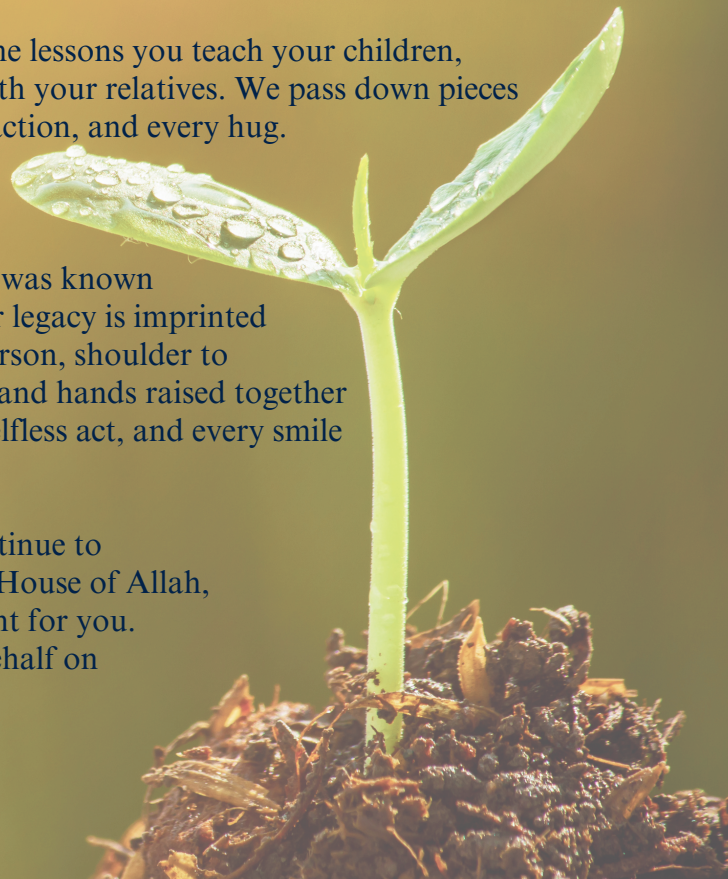
OPINION EDITORIAL

Your legacy begins in your home. In the lessons you teach your children, resolving conflicts with your siblings, and spending time with your relatives. We pass down pieces of our story, our faith, and our heart in every word, every action, and every hug.

But your legacy is not limited to your home. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was known as a gentle and playful man to all children in his neighborhood, not just to his own. He was known as a peacemaker amongst tribes, not just in his family. Your legacy is imprinted within your community; every plate you pass to another person, shoulder to shoulder in prayer, synchronized laughter in conversation, and hands raised together during Witr prayer. Every shared moment of faith, every selfless act, and every smile at Barakah is carried with you to the next world.

Now, you have the opportunity to plant seeds that will continue to grow beyond your time. By supporting the opening of this House of Allah, you are guaranteeing that future prayers and duas will count for you. Your involvement in this community will testify on your behalf on Yawm Al-Qiyamah, and your Ummah will know you for how you've shown up.

By: Nadia Usman



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Hanan Mohamed, J.D.



Connect with Hanan on LinkedIn!
www.linkedin.com/in/hanansmn

Where did you get your undergraduate & law degrees??

I received my undergraduate degree from Occidental College in 2018 and graduated from Loyola University Chicago's School of Law earlier this year in May 2025.

What field of law do you want to specialize in and why?

I'm most interested in Labor and Employment (L&E) law for both personal and practical reasons. I am drawn to this field because of the stability that it provides - it's one of the areas of the law that's more resistant to recessions and economic downturns. Most importantly, L&E is a field of law that doesn't tend to have conflicts with my faith.

What inspired you to choose law?

Since I was a kid, I've always liked to argue and defend people- especially my sister Nura. My dad would always push back, "What are you, her attorney?". When I started college, however, I put the idea of law school out of my mind when I realized the cost - I felt that it was unattainable for me. But in 2020, when the pandemic hit, and I was working at the Mayor's Office in Los Angeles, I saw firsthand the value of the attorneys I worked with and I decided that I wanted to have the type of knowledge that allows people to rely on my expertise in times of crisis. From then, I decided to pursue law school.

How has your identity as a Muslim shaped your academic journey?

Even before starting law school, I decided that I'd only go through with it if there was a path that was made halal for me. The entire process required me to have immense trust in Allah (swt). I wanted to be able to pay my way through school and not have to rely on interest-based loans, which is how law school typically is paid for. That decision really guided which schools I applied to. Loyola Chicago gave me the largest scholarship, and they also offered a part-time program. So, I decided I could work full-time to pay for my costs while attending classes through the part-time program. Of course, this made my law school experience longer and so much harder, but I knew it would be worth it in this dunya and the akhirah inshAllah.

How did you do it? Did you experience FOMO (fear of missing out)?

I 100% experienced FOMO. The last four years were probably the hardest of my life. The toughest were the first two years when I was taking my doctrinal courses—students get cold-called during class and are tested on very dense material. I experienced a huge learning curve when it came to figuring out what study methods worked best for me. I also found myself becoming a bit resentful of my peers who were living the "fun law student life" because they seemed to have it much easier than I did.

What is one favorite memory from law school?

I really liked oral arguments; they were high-pressure and exhilarating, especially compared to legal writing. I felt like I thrived in oral arguments. The way it works is that you have an issue that you're arguing, and you prepare a brief for the judge and the other side. You stand before the panel of judges, they look at your brief and the arguments you've brought, and they ask you rapid-fire questions, requiring you to defend your position on the spot. It's meant to test your practical skills in defending your clients and arguments. I loved it because it really puts you in "attorney mode" and challenges your ability to adapt.

What legacy do you hope to leave behind as a lawyer?

My thoughts around career have changed in the last couple years. I have always been very career-oriented and ambitious. More recently, that's slightly changed. Now, the goal is to get in, be as successful as possible and get out as quickly as I can. I don't want my entire life to be consumed by legal practice; I want to do good work and make enough money to live comfortably, but I don't seek a lavish life at the cost of working more hours than I need to. In terms of legacy, I've considered eventually starting my own law firm, as I could pass that on to future generations. This is especially important as business ownership is not as common among Black and Habesha Muslim communities, so I'd like to set an example and give back to the community in that way.

Tell us something about you that is not on your resume.

My 20s have been so transformative for me, and that has required a lot of intentionality. I'm the type of person who likes making goals at the beginning of every year. For 2025, one of my goals was to face my fears. I started taking boxing classes at my gym, I took a Generative AI course through work, and started public speaking more. I put myself in situations that make me uncomfortable because the feeling on the other side is so empowering. I've loved every year of my 20s because of how much I've learned and grown. Another thing that can't be seen on my resume is how much my family has helped me and how difficult pursuing my education would've been without them. I lived at my parents' house throughout law school, so I didn't have to worry about paying for rent or utilities; I could prioritize paying for tuition. My mom and sister would always make delicious, healthy meals, so I didn't have to worry about cooking for myself. My dad would put gas in my car on Friday nights and he'd wake up early to warm up my car for me because I'd have to be on the road at 7 AM the next morning for my commute into the city for class. Despite my busy schedule, I always had time for hobbies and personal tasks, purely because I had people help me with all the "little" things, making my life so much easier. I'll just say that my law degree was only made possible by Allah (swt) and through the immense support of my family.

What message would you like to give young Muslims who also want to pursue a career in law?

I would love to see more young people, specifically Habesha and Black Muslims, enter the legal field because there is definitely a gap in the field. If you feel like you have a calling towards law, don't let any fears or worries set you back from pursuing your interests. Use all the resources available to you and network as much as you can—even with people who don't look like you. Law programs offer significant merit-based scholarships, and since I waited three years between finishing undergrad and starting law school, I had meaningful work experience that I believe helped me get the scholarship that I did. Stay up to date with the legal field because things are always changing. And lastly, always strive to be the change you want to see. I have had many mentors myself, so it's essential that I pay it forward. I'm always available to talk to anyone who's interested in the legal field and offer any advice from my experiences.

"I put myself in situations that make me uncomfortable because the feeling on the other side is so *empowering*."