

## MIN-ALAQ: A SOCIAL/SUPPORT GROUP FOR GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL MUSLIMS

The expression *Min-Alaq* is derived from the Quranic chapter *al-Iqraa'*, which was the first verse revealed to the Prophet of Islam. The verse reads as follows:

"Read! In the name of thy Lord who created,  
Who created humanity from a clot of blood (*Min-Alaq*),  
Read! And thy Lord is most Bountiful-  
Who taught (the use of) the Pen  
Taught humanity that which it knew not!"

The verse does two things; it emphasises not only the importance of knowledge and learning in Islam, but it reduces the whole of humanity to a single common denominator.

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Growing up as a part of a minority has its fair share of challenges -including discrimination and alienation - regardless of which minority it is.

This is certainly true if you are a Muslim in Canada belonging to a largely new Canadian community of less than 400,000 individuals scattered across the largest country in the world, and encompassing over 80 different ethnic, racial and cultural groups. The fact that Islam and its adherents are stigmatized by many often compounds those challenges.

For those Canadian Muslims that are gay, lesbian or bisexual, the issues of discrimination and alienation are compounded as these individuals are a minority within a minority, and are more often than not scorned by their birth community because of their sexual orientation.

Throughout North America groups have formed to address the social and spiritual needs of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals from a variety of specific faith traditions.

Despite the size of the Muslim community in North America in general, and in Metro Toronto (with an estimated community of 200,000) in particular, there are no associations or groups to give gay, lesbian and bisexual Muslims support in reconciling and coming to terms with their sexual orientation and their faith, or even a means of socializing.

Potentially the first such group (anywhere?), *Min-Alaq* hopes to do just that. Simply put, *Min-Alaq* hopes to create and foster a supportive and understanding environment for gay, lesbian and bisexual Muslims and their friends.

*Min-Alaq* is open to all gays, lesbians and bisexuals of Muslim origin, regardless of sect, race or national origin, and their friends and supporters.

If you are interested in being part of *Min-Alaq*, or simply want to know more, please come to the first meeting of *Min-Alaq* on Wednesday, September 30, 1992 at 8 p.m. at the 519 Community Centre - 519 Church Street.

*Min-Alaq* can be contacted at: (416) 925-9872 (XTRA) Extension 2109