

Organizers pleased with turnout at Sunday's meeting

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headdress shaped like a bomb, while another showed him saying that paradise was running short of virgins for suicide bombers.

It's considered blasphemous in the Islamic faith to depict in any way the messenger of God.

"Islam is under trial these days. It's open season for any attack," said Ashi. "This is not a freedom of the press issue, this is a pre-meditated malicious attack on the filter of our life."

But he condemned the Pakistani Muslim leader who offered a \$1-million reward to anyone willing to kill the cartoonists responsible for drawing the blasphemous images.

Anger boiled over the drawings when

avenues of redress over four months proved fruitless.

The Danish prime minister turned down a meeting with Islamic ambassadors last October and a judicial investigation launched in October 2005 folded by January 2006 because a public prosecutor stated that the newspaper didn't violate any discriminatory laws.

"To insult isn't freedom of expression, its discrimination and deliberate misinformation," said Mohamed Khattab, who's among the founders of the Halton Islamic Association.

"Muslims certainly have an appreciation for freedom of the press because we don't have that in our own countries, but these

cartoons served no benefit to the public but to enrage and ridicule something that is so dear to me as my faith," said Mira Khattab, a Muslim woman who has lived in Burlington for 30 years.

A flyer about the community faith meeting that circulated through Knox Presbyterian Church brought John McGibbon out to the seniors centre. "I think starting a dialogue between faiths is an important part of breaking down cultural misunderstandings."

Meeting organizers were pleased with Sunday night's turnout.

"We have to fight together against hatred and intolerance, which tries to tear us apart," said Siddiq Burney, vice-president of the

Halton Islamic Association.

He warned against labeling a whole population of believers when it's the actions of terrorists who distort the divine messages for their own justifications.

"Our faith is a peaceful one," said Burney who recalled the often quoted statement made by heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali as he observed the ruins where the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City once stood.

A reporter asked Ali, a devout Muslim, what he thought of the terrorists who caused such devastation sharing his faith. Ali is alleged to have replied, "How do you feel about Hitler (who is thought to have considered himself Christian) sharing yours?"

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