

ISSUE NO. 2  
MARCH 2005



# I-MAG

ELECTRONIC ISLAMIC MAGAZINE



## The Four Fallacies of **Hijabophobia**

## **The Express Train:** The New Face of

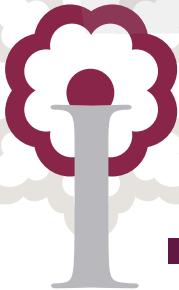
## Slave, Servant or **What?**

## "Life **Makers**" Comes Back Full of Life

**Plus:** Fair View, Occidental View, Soul Searchers, Macophone, Capita, Palestinian Dispatches, Life Makers, In Depth, Med-Aware, Graph-Art, Photo-Great, and Pinnacle

Islam's Acceptance of  
**Judaism and Christianity**

## ABOUT



# I-MAG

### About I-MAG:

I-MAG is a free online non-profit Islamic monthly magazine published by Nashiri E-Publishing House. I-MAG is an acronym of Islam Magazine. I-MAG is pronounced in two syllables; "I" as in "eye, and "mag" is in magazine.

I-MAG is edited by a team of talented youth from all around the Islamic world.

I-MAG is published in P.D.F. Format, which means it can be read on any operating system. Moreover, it can be read on your P.D.A. (Palmtop) or on some mobile phones which makes I-MAG your perfect companion for reading a staid content about Islam.

P.D.F. files resemble the look of a normal paper magazine which gives the reader a feeling of intimacy, I-MAG has a very creative eye-inviting design which makes reading a most enjoyable journey for the eye and the mind.

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I-MAG has a general scope, and is interested in publishing works in all the fields that are of concern to the Muslim, be he/she a layperson or a philosopher, a child or a grown-up.

The diverse content of the magazine also appeal to non-Muslims who will find an enriching content about Islam.

We are often asked why I-MAG is labelled Islamic and though publishes a very diversified content "which we do not expect from an Islamic magazine." The answer is simply that Islam is so diversified and touches every aspect of life to the point that left us with no choice but to diversify the content of I-MAG.

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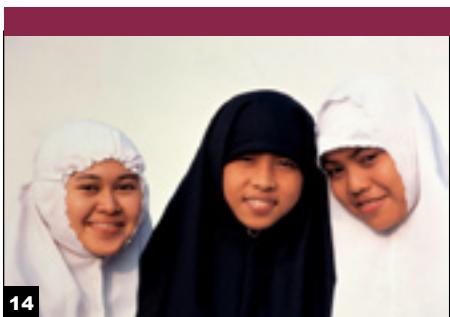
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# FEATURES OF THE NEW ISLAMIC DISCOURSE

(Part 2 of 4)



**By Dr. Abdelwahab Elmessiri\***

As for the bearers of the new Islamic discourse, the situation is quite different. Most of them had their intellectual formative years in the fifties and had their first encounter with modern Western civilisation in the sixties. That was the time when Western modernity had already entered the stage of crisis, and when many Western thinkers had begun to realise the dimension of this crisis and the impasse Western modernity had reached. (See Introduction to the Deconstruction of the Secular Discourse, 4 vols., Cairo, December 1997). The bearers of the new Islamic discourse realised, from the very beginning, the darker aspects of Western modernity. It had embroiled the entire world in two Western wars, called "world wars" because the whole world was dragged into the arena of conflict. In the time of "peace", the world was caught in a frenzied arms race. The

centralised nation-state, growing more authoritarian and stronger, expanded and reached the most private aspects of man's life, and, through its sophisticated security and educational apparatuses tried to "guide" its citizens! The media, another by-product of Western modernity, extensively invaded the private lives of citizens, accelerating the process of standardisation and escalating the consumerist fever. In the meantime, the pleasure sector became so powerful as to control people's dreams, selling them erotic utopias and downright pornography. The family as a social institution could not sustain the pressures and therefore divorce rates rocketed, reaching levels rarely witnessed before. The crisis of meaning, the epistemological crisis, anomie, alienation and reification became more pronounced. While the liberal capitalist project ceased to be the smashing success

story it used to be, the socialist experiment collapsed and lost any vestige of credibility. Anti-humanist intellectual trends such as Fascism, Nazism, Zionism and Structuralism emerged and reached a climax in post-modernist thought. By the mid-sixties, the critical Western discourse on modernity had crystallised and the works of the Frankfurt School thinkers had become widely available and popular. Many studies, critical of the age of the Enlightenment, were published. Writing about the standardisation that resulted from Western modernity and about its one-dimensional man, Herbert Marcuse sought to demonstrate the existence of a structural defect that lies at the very heart of modern Western civilisation in its totality, a defect that goes beyond the traditional division of this civilisation into a socialist and a capitalist camp. Many revisionist

historians, rewriting the history of modern Western civilisation, tried to underscore the enormity of the crimes committed against the peoples of Asia and Africa and of the colonial pillage of their lands. Many studies, radically critical of development theories, appeared during the same period. The New Left movement made a significant contribution in this regard. Thus, whether on the level of practise or on the level of theory, it was not difficult for the bearers of the new Islamic discourse, those who studied Western modernity in the middle of the twentieth century, to recognise many of its shortcomings and to see it in its totality. It was no longer possible for them to experience a naive infatuation of the type experienced by the intellectuals of the first generation. The Western modernity they knew, experienced and studied was, in many aspects, different from the Western modernity known, experienced and studied by the generation of the pioneers.

#### **Muslim Intellectuals:**

It should be pointed out that neither the new nor the old generation of Muslim intellectuals constructed their respective intellectual systems on the basis of the Islamic world-view exclusively. Their interaction with Western modernity was expectedly a very important formative factor. After all, this was a civilisation that acquired centrality by virtue of its economic and military accomplishments, put forward its own view of the world as if it were the view of all human beings at all times and in all places, conceived of its knowledge as a precise science applicable to all communities, and set the challenge that every one else had to respond to. Responses varied with the type of challenge and its intensity. The early reformists found many positive aspects in Western modernity. One may even go as far as suggesting that they were entranced by it. This is evident from Sheikh Muhammad Abdu's oft-quoted remark that "whereas in



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the West he found Muslims without Islam, in the East he found Islam without Muslims". He wanted to say that in the West, he found people who manifested in their very conduct the ideals of Islam even though they were not Muslims, whereas in the Muslim world he found people who believed in Islam, but their conduct belied their belief. Consequently, the issue for many of the bearers of the old Islamic discourse was basically how to reconcile Islam with Western modernity, and even how to make Islam catch up with it, and live up to its standards and values. This was the core of Muhammad Abdu's project, which predominated until the mid sixties of this century. Had the experience of Sheikh Muhammad Abdu with Western modernity been different, he would have hesitated long before making this remark and before proposing his project. The following incident may explain this point further. In 1830, Sheikh Rifa'ah AtTahtawi, whose infatuation with Western civilisation is a well-known affair, was in Paris. In that same year, the French cannons were pounding unsuspected Algerian towns and villages reducing them to rubble. Sheikh At-tahtawi could only see the

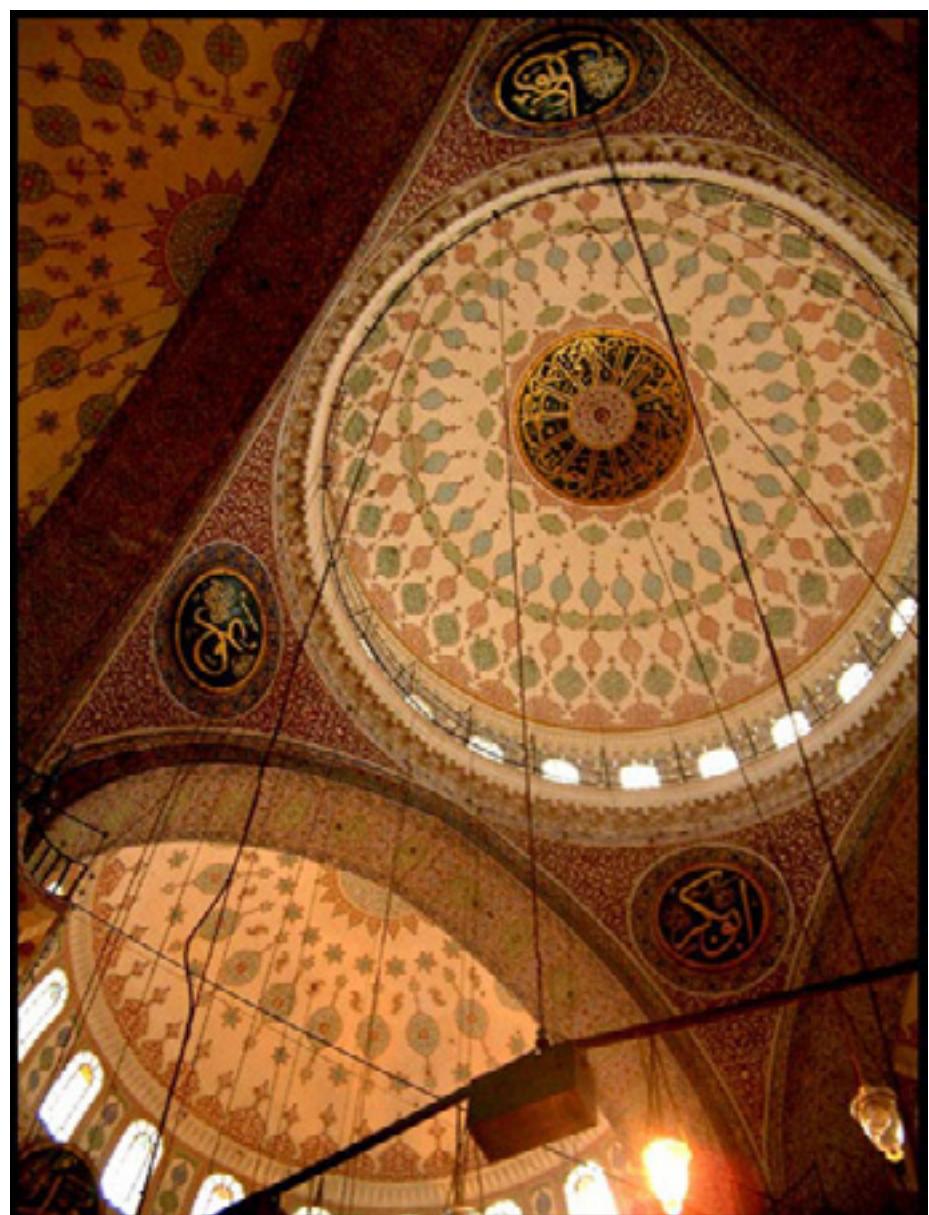
bright lights in Paris and could only hear the urbane and sophisticated rhythms of Western modernity. On the other hand, the Algerian sheikhs, who were subject to a brutal colonial attack using the most sophisticated technology available at the time, could only see the raging flames of fire and could only hear the racket of bombs. One of these sheikhs was once told that the French troops had actually come to Algeria so as to spread Western civilisation and modernity. His response was cryptic as it was significant: "But why have they brought all this gunpowder?" Like this Algerian sheikh, the bearers of the new Islamic discourse smelled the reek of gunpowder, saw the flames of fire, heard the racket of cannons and watched the hooves of colonial horses tread on everything. Then they saw the gunpowder becoming omnipresent, for it was transformed into all kinds of weapons of destruction and extermination: bombs, missiles, biological and nuclear weapons, etc. Huge budgets were allocated for the production or purchase of these weapons first by Western, then Eastern, Southern and Northern governments. In fact, the mass destruction weapons industry has grown to be the most important industry of our enlightened rational times, and homo sapiens, for the first time in his long history, allocates more funds for the production of weapons of destruction than for the production of food. The old Islamic discourse was neither unique nor isolated in its advocacy of Western modernity: it was, in a sense, part of the general outlook that prevailed in the third world since the beginning of this century. Efforts were directed at catching up with the West and at competing with it according to its own terms. The liberals called for the adoption of the modern Western outlook in its totality, "both its sweet and bitter aspects". The Marxists rebelled slightly and suggested that the peoples of the third world could enter the promised land of Western

modernity through the gates of Marxism and social justice. The Islamists, in their turn, imagined it would be possible to adopt the Western modern outlook or rather adapt Islam to it. It is interesting to note that all the trends and movements, religious or secular, irrespective of their ideological inclinations and social or ethnic backgrounds had turned the West into a silent and ultimate point of reference.

As a result of this attitude to Western modernity, the Islamic world-view retreated, its dimensions shrunk, and it lost its comprehensiveness. Instead of providing an Islamic frame of reference for Muslims in the modern age, the issue became how to "Islamise" certain aspects of Western modernity. The Islamisation process would, in most cases, take the form of "omitting" those aspects of Western modernity deemed haram (prohibited) by Islamic law, without any addition or innovation, underscoring those aspects of Western modernity deemed halal (permissible) by Islamic law, and searching for those aspects within the Islamic world-view analogous to some aspects found within Western modernity. This inevitably meant the eventual atrophy of those aspects of the Islamic world-view that have nothing analogous to them within the modern Western world-view. But ironically, those aspects constitute the very essence and source of the specificity of the Islamic world view.

### New Islamic Discourse

The bearers of the new Islamic discourse do not have the same fascination with Western modernity. Actually, a radical critique of Western modernity is one of their main points of departure. They too are neither unique nor isolated in their critique, for they do not differ from many of the thinkers and political movements in the third world at the present time who try to evolve new forms of modernity, nor



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from many important thinkers in the West who are critical of Western modernity. Marxism was a form of critique of modernity, out of which sprung the Frankfurt School, which further deepened the critique. Romantic literature, as indicated earlier, was also a protest against Western modernity. The protest of modernist literature, however, is even more profound and radical; it tries to represent the reified world of modernity, where the chain of

causality is either completely broken or becomes so hard that man becomes completely determined. The theatre of the absurd is part of this Western protest against the dead end Western modernity has landed mankind into. More recently, religious fundamentalism emerged as a populist extension of this intellectual trend. All of these trends, in one way or another, show an increasing, if implicit, realisation that Western modernity strips man of his

specificity and subverts his human essence.

The new Islamic discourse is only part of a wider global trend. The perception of the crisis of Western modernity has taken different forms in different parts of the world. In the Muslim world, the perception has taken an Islamic form.

Nevertheless, the critique of the new Islamic discourse of modernity is characteristically different from the other critiques. For one thing, it recognises and emphasises the inextricable ties between Western modernity and Western imperialism. Imperialism was after all our first encounter with modernity, and Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine is the last. Furthermore, unlike the Western critique of modernity, which is nihilistic and pessimistic, the Islamic critique is optimistic by virtue of the fact that it proposes a project for reform.

It could be said that even though there are many points of agreement and disagreement between the old and the new discourses, the attitude to Western modernity and the level of comprehensiveness of the Islamic paradigm, as indicated earlier, are the basic points of difference that could serve as a basis for classification. The main distinguishing features of each discourse spring from these two fundamental points and can be outlined as follows:

### **1. Rejecting Centrality and Universalism of the West:**

The bearers of the new Islamic discourse are neither apologetic nor self-defensive. They are not interested in expending much energy on the attempt to "improve" the image of Islam or to "justify" themselves, even though they are interested in sending "a message" to the world.

The bearers of the new discourse neither reject nor accept the West uncritically. Ironically, total rejection, just like total acceptance, presupposes the West as a silent point of reference. What the bearers

of the new Islamic discourse reject, in effect, are both the presumed centrality and universalism of the West, as well as its imperialism, which is closely linked to its claim of centrality. They reject the practises of spoilage, pillage and repression, that were perpetrated by Western colonialism in the past and that take at present new forms that are no less brutal than the previous ones. They also reject what they consider the negative aspects of Western modernity and fully realise its crisis.



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### **2. Objective Criticism:**

But despite their awareness of the crisis of Western modernity, and their realisation that there is no point in repeating the mistakes of others or proceeding along the same path that led to an impasse, the bearers of the new Islamic discourse do not resemble the Algerian sheikh who smelled the reek of gunpowder and saw nothing else in Western modernity. Indeed, they have read Eliot's Waste Land, Beckett's and Camus' absurdist plays, and Derrida's nihilist writings; and they know that the West constructed its material infrastructure through the process of pillage (which led to "imperialist" not "capitalist accumulation" as claimed). But they also know Western theories of architecture, how to use the computer, various management theories, and the broad horizons opened up by Western modernity. They know the advantages of this modernity just as they know its destructiveness. They also know that Western modernity has raised certain questions that

cannot go unanswered. They know that the Muslim mind is not a blank sheet and that the Islamic starting point cannot be a hypothetical zero point. Hence the necessity, and even the inevitability, of engaging and interacting with Western modernity, and of assimilating its achievements without adopting its value system. In short, the bearers of the new Islamic discourse do not see any justification for accepting Western modernity in its entirety. Instead, they stand on their Islamic ground and view Western modernity, opening up to it, simultaneously criticising and interacting with it. This is what can be referred to as "the interactive critical response", which is the very opposite of the "positive" unqualified acceptance or the "negative" unqualified rejection of Western modernity—two extreme points between which the old discourse oscillated.

The old Islamic discourse is an eclectic cumulative discourse that imported constituent elements of Western modernity, without realising their relation to the Western world view, and at the same time adopted other constituent elements of the Islamic religio-cultural formation, without realising their relation to the Islamic world view. Having isolated these Islamic and modern Western constituent elements, the bearers of the old discourse tried to "add" the one to the other, creating a concoction rather than a totality.

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*This article was translated from Arabic by Azzam Tamimi and is published in collaboration with www.elmessiri.com*



# ISLAM'S ACCEPTANCE of Judaism and Christianity

By **Harun Yahya\***

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**We** are living in an era in which the world is desperately in need of peace, friendship, and solidarity. The tensions and conflicts that so defined the twentieth century continue in this new century, and innocent people all around the world continue to suffer from them. Despite the urgent need for solidarity and cooperation, certain circles are inciting conflict, particularly conflict between the world's two greatest and deep-rooted civilisations. This issue needs to be scrutinised, as the war of civilisation that they envisage would have disastrous consequences for humanity. One of the best ways of preventing such a disaster is to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between these civilisations. This is not a hard task, as there are no fundamental differences between Islam and the Judeo-Christian Western world. To the contrary, there is much common ground between them. Considering the current situation and the nature of the world's problems, these shared values will make the cooperation necessary for solving

them possible. Today, ideological struggles continue to divide the world. However, Muslims are not at one pole and Jews and Christians are not at the opposing pole. In fact, one pole represents people who believe in God's existence and unity, and the other pole represents the unbelievers, who believe in such anti-religious ideologies as materialism and Darwinism. There is only one way to defeat the alliance of the various groups of unbelievers on an ideological level: eradicate the negative and destructive influences of anti-religious materialism and further the cause of a society dominated by morality, happiness, tranquillity, security, and prosperity. This will be done by forming an alliance of all conscientious people, namely, sincere Christians, along with religious Jews and Muslims, who will come together and unite in this common cause. There have been conflicts and disputes between members of these three religions in the past, but those were the result of the erroneous reasoning and evil motives of certain

states, nations, and individuals who pursued their own economic and political gain instead of the central beliefs of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. One of the common aims of these divinely revealed religions is to ensure the happiness, security, peace, and tranquillity of all people by opposing conflict. Therefore, this dialogue and alliance will be based on the sincere believers' quest for justice, peace, and support for all people. The resulting dialogue will not be restricted to meetings and conferences, but will cement an alliance between people who advocate common values, fight for the same cause, and seek permanent solutions to common problems. Muslims, Christians, and Jews have common principles of faith, worship, and moral values and face common dangers. Thus, the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) are called on to unite with Muslims as fellow believers opposed to atheism, anti-religiosity, and social as well as moral degeneration. All Jews, Christians, and Muslims who are

sincere, conscientious, tolerant, helpful, conciliatory, reasonable, virtuous, peaceful, and fair to recognise that we believe in the same God and strive to live and extend the reach of God's morality, should spread this virtue around the world.

We Muslims love and respect Prophets Moses P.B.U.H and Jesus P.B.U.H, know that they are loved and dear people in God's presence, and believe in all His Prophets. Furthermore, we respect Jewish and Christian beliefs, values, and traditions, since God commands us to invite the People of the Book to "unite on a common premise": "Say: 'O People of the Book! Come to a proposition that is the same for us and you—that we should worship none but God, not associate any partners with Him, and not take one another as lords besides God.' If they turn away, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'" (T.M.Q\*, 3:64)

Muslims are people who believe in the Qur'an revealed to Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) as well as in the earlier divinely revealed books: the Pages of Abraham P.B.U.H, the Torah revealed to Moses P.B.U.H, the Book of Psalms revealed to David P.B.U.H, and the Bible revealed to Jesus P.B.U.H. However, over time these books were tampered with and therefore contain both accurate (e.g. belief in God, virtue, the Day of Judgment, and the rejection of idolatry), and inaccurate information. Some of the verses read:

"He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what was there before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel" (T.M.Q, 3:3-4).

"We sent down the Torah containing guidance and light, and the Prophets who had submitted themselves gave judgment by it for the Jews, as did their scholars and their rabbis, by what they had been allowed to preserve of God's Book, to which they were witnesses. (T.M.Q, 5:44)

God states that the People of the Book are believers as thus:

"They are not all the same. There is a community among the People of the Book who are upright. They recite God's Signs throughout the night, and they prostrate. They believe in God and the Last Day, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the righteous. You will not be denied the reward for any good thing you do. God knows those who guard against evil." (T.M.Q, 3:113-15)

"Among the People of the Book are some who believe in God and in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down to them, and who are humble before God. They do not sell God's Signs for a paltry price. Such people will have their reward with their Lord. And God is swift at reckoning." (T.M.Q, 3:199)

Therefore, a Muslim's attitude toward the People of the Book reflects the probable existence of genuinely faithful people among them. Only God knows the hearts of people, and He reveals that some Jews and Christians have earned His good pleasure.

God reveals that He has created a way and a method for all nations. Throughout history, He has sent Prophets to people to inform them of His laws, commands, and prohibitions. Essentially, all Prophets have invited their nations to believe in and worship God and to abide by the limits He has established for humanity. In other words, all true religions in their original state are based on the principles of not associating others with Him and of working to win His good pleasure, compassion, and Paradise. All nations are expected to follow God's will without fail and to do good deeds in order to earn His reward: "We have appointed a law and a practise for every one of you. Had God willed, He would have made you a single community, but He wanted to test you regarding what



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has come to you. So, compete with each other in doing good. Every one of you will return to God, and He will inform you regarding the things about which you differed" (T.M.Q, 5:48).

\*T.M.Q: the meaning of the Holy Qur'an.

*The author, under the pen-name Harun Yahya, has written more than 200 books which are published in 37 languages all over the world. Harun Yahya is well known as an author who has written many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues, including very important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, the invalidity of their claims and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and bloody ideologies. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race and nationality, as they centre around one goal: to open the readers' mind by presenting the signs of God's eternal existence to them.*

Harun Yahya Website:  
[www.harunyahya.com](http://www.harunyahya.com)  
 Harun Yahya official bookstore:  
[www.bookglobal.net](http://www.bookglobal.net)

# “Hijacking Catastrophe”

## FILLS A VOID LEFT BY JOURNALISTS’ FAILURES

I’m a former full-time journalist turned journalism professor. I continue to commit occasional acts of journalism, and I retain a deep affection for, and commitment to, the craft and its ideals. That’s why it pains me to say this: The performance of the U.S. corporate commercial news media after 9/11 has been the most profound and dangerous failure of journalism in my lifetime. That’s the bad news. The good news is that the void is being filled by other institutions, including the Media Education Foundation with its new documentary, “Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear & the Selling of American Empire.” That performance of journalists in the run-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq was so abysmal that the country’s top two daily newspapers, the Washington Post and New York Times, eventually were forced to engage in a bit of self-criticism, albeit shallow and inadequate. The U.S. news media’s willingness to serve as a largely uncritical conduit for the lies, half-truths, and distortions the Bush administration used

to create the pretext for war showed how easily journalists can become de facto agents of a state propaganda campaign, which in this case mobilised public support for an illegal war.

But the lies that led to the Iraq War are only part of a bigger story, the most important story of the past three years: The Bush administration’s manipulation of the tragedy of 9/11 to extend and intensify the longstanding U.S. project of empire building (and the complicity of most Democrats in that endeavour).

No publication or network in the mainstream of U.S. journalism has offered an independent, critical analysis of that project. Only a few journalists, mostly on the margins, have even dared to take a crack at it. The best consistent work has been in the foreign press or the alternative media in the United States.

This also has been the year of the political documentary, and “Hijacking Catastrophe” is the best film in this genre to date.

(Full disclosure: I was one of the people interviewed for “Hijacking

Catastrophe,” and I also have appeared in two other MEF films. I agreed to participate in these projects because, after years of using MEF videos in the classroom, I have come to respect the quality of the work and the integrity of its staff.)

Until this year, MEF had focused primarily on media criticism; its videos examined the effect of mass media on U.S. politics and culture. MEF primarily took as its task the job of explaining the failures of journalists, not doing the work of journalists. With “Hijacking Catastrophe,” directors Sut Jhally and Jeremy Earp also take up that task, covering the tremendously important story of the current phase of the U.S. empire that journalists have let slip through their fingers.

The film concentrates on two major topics: The neoconservative agenda for U.S. domination of the world, which was created long before 9/11, and the selling of that agenda to the U.S. public after 9/11.

The first story goes back to the early 1990s and the end of the



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Cold War, when policy planners such as Paul Wolfowitz (current deputy secretary of defence) were devising a more aggressive foreign policy and military posture to allow the United States to capitalise on the collapse of the Soviet Union and to dominate the globe in ways that had not previously been possible. At the time, the plans were considered so extreme that the first Bush administration reined in these ideological fanatics; the U.S. empire could go forward but not in such radical form.

During the remainder of the 1990s, these neoconservative planners chafed at what they saw as an insufficiently aggressive approach to expansion of the empire in the Clinton administration. The Project for the New American Century, a neoconservative think tank, was created as a vehicle for promoting this ideology, which was able to take centre stage with the George W. Bush administration.

Resistance to such an aggressive and dangerous project remained, however, and the project still had to be sold to the U.S. public. The attacks of 9/11 created the political climate which made that possible.

The second story told by "Hijacking Catastrophe" is how the Bush administration -- again, with the Democrats either helping or standing aside, and the news media playing a compliant lapdog role -- devised and executed a propaganda campaign to ratchet up and manipulate the public's fear of terrorism to justify first an illegal, immoral, and counterproductive invasion of Afghanistan (designed to solidify U.S. control in Central Asia) and then an even more blatantly illegal and disastrous invasion of Iraq (designed to solidify U.S. control of the Middle East).



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Reviews in the Washington Post and New York Times both acknowledged that the film offers a "cogent, concise and engaging" argument and makes a "convincing case" (the case, perhaps, that journalists from those papers should have been reporting all along). Both reviews also note that Jhally's and Earp's presentation of "the facts without any funny business" marks "Hijacking Catastrophe" as a film different from "Fahrenheit 9/11," one that is "more sober, yet no less sobering" than Michael Moore's movie.

These repeated failures of journalists to hold the powerful accountable should be a subject of serious discussion not just within the profession but for all of us. If journalists don't provide a

truly independent source of news and instead routinely subordinate themselves to power -- especially in times of war and national crisis -- it's difficult to imagine how citizens can adequately inform themselves so that they can participate in the political arena in a meaningful way.

But when journalism fails, it's possible for other institutions to take on some of the news media's obligations. That doesn't mean MEF or groups like it can replace existing journalistic institutions on their own. Nor does it mean that Jhally and Earp are holding themselves out to the public as journalists, in the same way that so-called "objective" journalists do. Instead, films such as "Hijacking Catastrophe" provide information and analysis, coming from a political orientation (critical, dissident, progressive -- historically, the hallmarks of great journalism) that is up front. The question isn't whether the people who made the film and appear in it have a politics -- of course they do, just as mainstream journalists and mainstream journalism's institutions do. The question is whether the information presented is accurate, the judgments made are honest, and the conclusions reached are compelling. On those criteria, "Hijacking Catastrophe" is one of the best pieces of journalism of recent years.

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*For details on "Hijacking Catastrophe," go to <http://hijackingcatastrophe.org/>*  
*For information on other MEF documentaries, go to <http://mef.tv/>*

*Robert Jensen is a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin, a founding member of the Nowar Collective, and a member of the board of the Third Coast Activist Resource Centre. He is the author of "Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim Our Humanity." His website: <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rjensen/home.htm>*



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# Chatting My Way to Islam

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By **Marie\***

**M**y name is Marie and this is my story of how I found my creator.

I was on a net chat program, where I would go to music rooms, trivia rooms, and friendship rooms and just have a laugh with the other "roomies".

On one particular evening, as I was merrily chatting in one such room, I received a pm (private message). It was from a young Palestinian man. He began to tell me about life in Palestine, life under occupation, things he had personally witnessed happen to many of his friends and family. I am ashamed to say, I knew very little of the plight of Palestinians at this time, and the things he told me was a shocking eye opener for me.

As weeks turned into months, I got to know more of this young man. He was at that

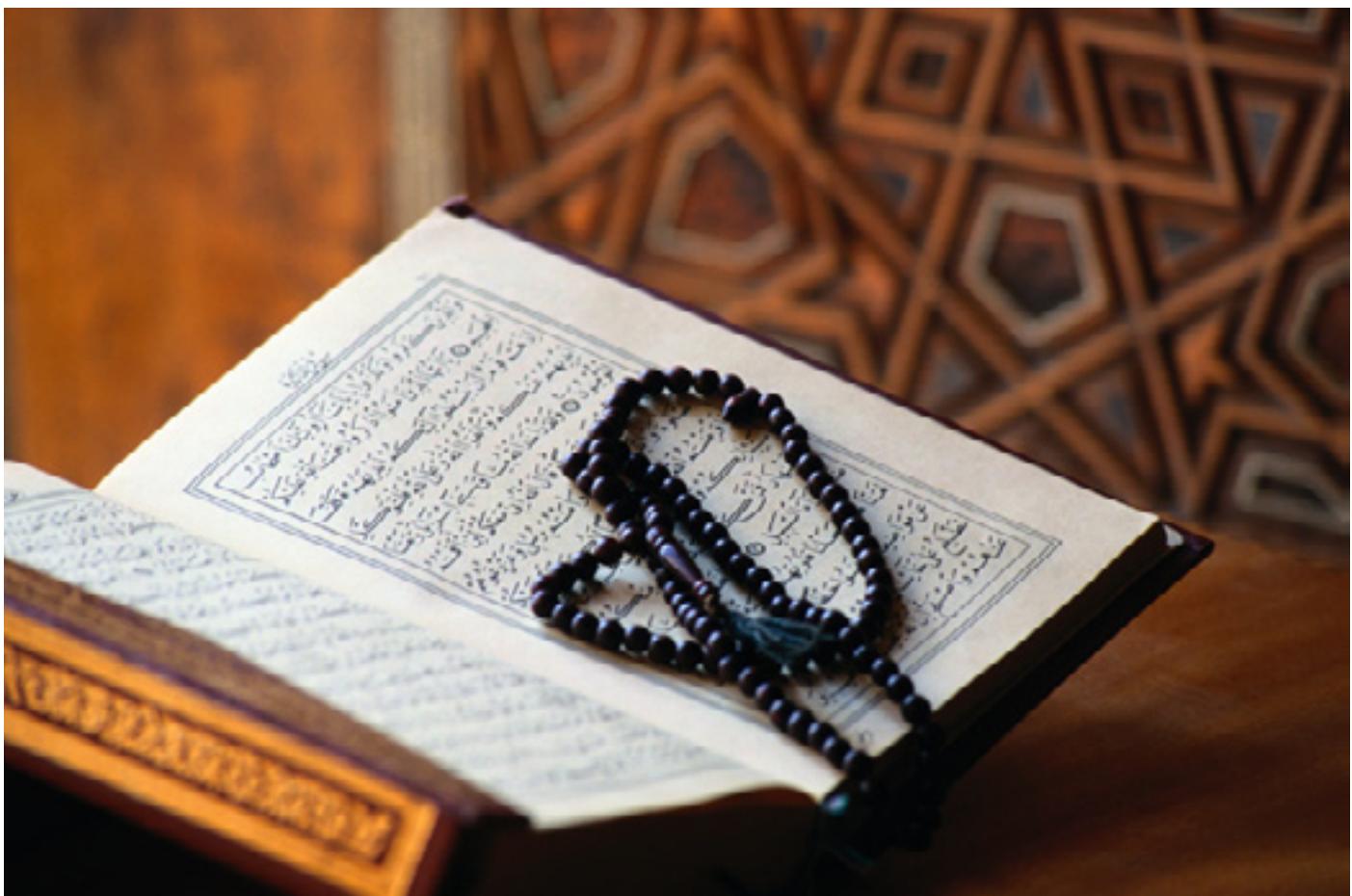
time, 19 years old; just over one year older than my own son. He was trying to study at university, but it was hard for him to even be allowed past the check points some days, and he missed many important classes. Many times he had me in tears from the things he told me of, being at the funeral of friends he had grown up with, seeing his neighbours' homes flattened by bulldozers, seeing their land being stolen from under their feet.

Through all he had seen and experienced, he would always say "alhamdulilah", "masha' Allah", and "insha'Allah". I asked him of these words, what did they mean? For the sake of Allah, if Allah wills and so on. He still had love for God? He still had faith that his "Allah" loved him and was with him.

This had a huge impact on

me. Here was a young man, the same age group as my own son, yet their life experiences were a million miles apart. I knew I had to find out more of this "Allah". So I began to look for Islamic rooms instead of music rooms, and I found a room which welcomed me and allowed me to ask questions and patiently took the time to give me answers. I listened to lectures, and learned of Tawheed, the oneness of my Creator Allah Almighty. I heard stories of the life of the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H and all he endured with dignity, patience and love for Allah Almighty. I began to read the Qur'an and slowly, week by week, month by month, it began to make perfect sense to me. I had found the purpose of my existence. I had finally found my Creator, Allahu Akbar.

This happened to me nearly three years ago, and I said



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the Shahadah on the evening of Eid two years ago in an Islamic chat room. I still attend these rooms, and I still learn so much from the brothers and sisters who are there. I have even been taught how to recite fluently in Arabic and fully understand many Surahs of the Qur'an and insha'Allah this continues in a daily class.

I also renewed my Shahadah at my city Masjid and said it again for my imam, "La illaha illa Allah wa ashaddo ana Muhammadan rasul Allah". There is no other god but Allah Almighty and Muhammad P.B.U.H is the final messenger of Allah Almighty.

Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!  
Allahu Akbar! (Allah is greater than anyone and anything else).

I truly love my deen, and for the sake of Allah Almighty I love each and every one of my brothers and sisters in Islam.

May Allah Almighty continue to grant us the patience to learn our deen and strengthen our iman (faith), Ameen.

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*Marie originally wrote her revert story on the [Daralislamlive.com](http://Daralislamlive.com) forum in the 'New to Islam' section. Marie is from Scotland, U.K., where she lives with her family. After raising her sons, she began to study at Aberdeen College and gained an HNC in Social Sciences.*

**Have you been searching for your soul and found it? E-mail your story to: [editor@i-mag.org](mailto:editor@i-mag.org)**



# Hijab Scrutinised

(Part 1 of 4)

## THE FOUR FALLACIES OF HIJABOPHOBIA

**Hayat Alyaqout**

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In this series, Hayat Alyaqout scrutinises the hijab and touches upon several themes such as the religious authenticity of the hijab, the overlap between the hijab as a religious practise and the hijab as a social practise, how men have their own hijab too, and the philosophy of the hijab in relation to the social notion of beauty. In the first part, she talks about the four main challenges raised against the authenticity of hijab in Islam and refutes them.

### Some Boringly Repeated Statements:

1- "Only the wives of the Prophet – peace be upon him - were required to don the hijab";

2- "Donning the hijab means that a woman covers her bosom as stated in the Qur'an; covering the head was a social practise that dates back to ancient civilisations";

3- "The hijab was a means to discern between free women and enslaved ones. Slavery has been

abolished and there is thus no need to wear it";

4- "The hijab is a spiritual state; it has nothing to do with clothing. Why don't you people let us breathe?"

Are you bored with these statements that keep recurring every now and then? What is even more boring and aggrieving is the mindset that produces them; a mindset that reads the religious text partially and selectively. This way of thinking is not different than taking scissors and cutting pages of the Holy Qur'an in order to reach to a pre-determined aspired conclusion.

The first command in the Holy Qur'an is "Iqra!" or "Read!" So let's try to fair-mindedly read about the hijab since there is no other way to get rid of this hijabophobia-generated fears and fallacies save by enlightened discourse.

### Surviving the Mess of Terms

The terms can be intriguing;

there is hijab, khimar, veil, head-scarf and many others. Hijab is the commonplace term although it is not the most precise one. Hijab and khimar are two Arabic words that both mean concealing; hijab implies a complete covering, while khimar is more precise and refers to the cloth the women of Arabia used to cover their heads with. Although the Qur'an commands only the wives of the Prophet to put a complete "hijab" between them and between non-mahrams\*, and commands the rest of Muslim women to pull down their khimars (head covers) to cover their bosoms too and not only their heads, the term hijab is now the de facto term and is used generically.

I should stress here that the hijab is not merely a way of dressing as some people think, it also incorporates a code of behaviour. Hijab requires that a balance is stricken between the inward and the outward as will be explained in the last article of this series.

Below is an analysis of the above-mentioned fallacies:

## 1

### **Misinformation vs. Malignance Theory?**

*"Only the wives of the Prophet P.B.U.H. were required to don the hijab";*

There is either a great deal of misinformation or a great deal of malignance in this statement. In the matter of wearing the hijab, both the Qur'an and the sunnah (hadeeths\*) address Muslim women in general. This is evident in these two verses of the Qur'an:

*"And say to the believing women that they should lower some of their gaze [when necessary] and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty except what (must ordinarily) that appear of it; that they should draw their khimars [covers] over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers ... and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden zeenah [beauty or ornaments.] And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss." (T.M.Q, 24:31)*

*"O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast down their clothes over them, at least by this they would be recognised [as chaste] and not molested. And Allah is Ever-For-giving, Most Merciful." (T.M.Q, 33:59)*

The same notion is affirmed in the sunnah too. It is narrated that Asmaa' the daughter of Abu Bakr - may Allah be pleased with them both - came before the Prophet in a thin dress that showed her body, the Prophet then evaded looking at her and said, "O Asmaa'! When a woman reaches puberty, she is not supposed to show any part of her body except this and these" and then he pointed to his face and his hands.

Since Asmaa' was not a wife of the Prophet P.B.U.H. and since the above-mentioned verses of the Qur'an address the believing women in general, I'm afraid I have no choice but to assume that the theory of malignance is valid.

## 2

### **Completing Customs vs. Complying with Them**

*"Donning the hijab means that that a woman covers her bosom as stated in the Qur'an; covering the head was a social practise that dates back to ancient civilisations."*

Taking into consideration the cultural and environmental circumstances is a must for a sound understanding; the desert climate has always necessitated that both men and women cover their heads to avoid sunstrokes and other undesirable effects of the severe climate.

This practise can be noticed in all desert areas and only in Arabia, and it is an undeniable fact that any anthropologist can confirm. We should notice however that Allah Almighty commanded the Muslim women to draw their

head covers to cover their bosoms too and did not command them to cover their bosoms only. In the period of ignorance (the period that preceded Islam) women used to show the upper part of their bosoms as a compensation for their lost attractiveness due to their environmentally forced covering of the heads. Actually a woman in that period would take a piece of cloth, cover her head with it and tie it at the back of her neck, exhibiting her neck and bosom and covering only the part of her skull that is sensitive to the sun. There was thus no need to tell them to cover their heads for covering the head was the status quo then, and had Allah told the believing women "cover your heads" they could have all apostatised! The real Creator should know that they all – for climatic necessities - cover their heads and thus does not need to ask them to do something they all already do.

The Qur'an then tells them that covering the head is not enough and that it should be extended to include the bosom and normally the neck. Women also used to shorten their dresses as not to get dirty with the desert sands, and that's why the Qur'an commanded the Muslim women to



cast down their garments or make them longer.

Logically speaking, what can be more attractive in a woman more than her hair? A statistical look at the number of beauty salons in the world and the profits of hair product manufacturers all over history tells us that the hair is a thing a woman brags with and attracts the attention with the most. Now can Allah command the believing women to cover the upper part of their bosoms and allow them to uncover a more attractive part of their bodies? Or I should say the most attractive part. Allah even forbids women from attracting the attention to their hidden or potential "zeenah" or beauty (a thing discussed in detail in the last article of this series), let alone allowing them to explicitly show the most alluring part of their bodies.

The hijab is thus a perfecting addition to what societies practised rather than being an extension to social and historical practises as some suggest.

## 3

### Enslaved Mentalities

*"The hijab was a means to discern between free women and enslaved ones. Slavery has been abolished and there is thus no need to wear it";*

Fortunately enough, there is no "text" neither from the Qur'an nor from the hadeeths that corroborates this claim. Fortunately enough too, logic refutes it; had Allah wanted to discern enslaved women from free ones (although there is no logical reason for that), would He burden the free (the majority) or the slave (the minority) of the trouble of cover-

ing herself?

Some argue that the verse "at least by this they would be recognised [as chaste] and not molested" means that the hijab was to protect free women from molestation. This opinion is simply catastrophic, because it claims that Islam does not mind that enslaved women are molested! The meaning of the verse is totally different; the phrase "at least" is very significant because it tells us that the least benefit of the hijab is that everybody would know that they are Muslims and are chaste. It's a value-added benefit economically speaking. Not being molested is the minimum that hijab grants women and is not the only reason. More details on the philosophy of hijab will come later in this series.

## 4

### Puffed Illogicality

*"The hijab is a spiritual state; it has nothing to do with clothing. Why don't you people let us breathe?"*

If we follow that paradigm of thinking, then there is no need to pray or fast. Deeds are louder than words, and Allah asked us to demonstrate our love and obedience to him intrinsically and extrinsically. Embracing a religion is a free yet a difficult choice. Let us all breathe, but please let us all make sure that when we breathe we do not puff subjectivity and illogicality.

### In the Next Issues:

**Part 2:** The Social Hijab: The Slaves of Allah, and the Slaves of the Society;

**Part 3:** Men's Hijab: Justice Not Equality;

**Part 4:** The Beauty of Hijab in Concealing "Beauty."

\*A **mahram** is the husband plus any male that a woman can not marry. Mahrams are mostly very close relatives such as the father, brothers, uncles and some others, and it is thus normally unlikely that there will be sexual attraction between a woman and one of her mahrams. A woman thus does not have to be wear the hijab in their presence although demureness is required.

\***Sunnah** means the tradition of the Prophet, it is used synonymously with hadeeths.

\* **Hadeeth** in Arabic means speech, yet hadeeth is used generically to mean anything the Prophet P.B.U.H. said, did, or approved of. The verbal culture of Arabs resulted that hadeeth was used as an umbrella term.



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# Slave, Servant OR WHAT?



**Ibrahim Babelli**

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**I**t was during the summer of 1985 when I discovered how difficult it was to translate words, whose simplicity I used to take for granted.

I was studying French language at the Faculté des Lettres in Nice that summer, along with many other students from all around the world. In particular, I remember a Hungarian couple with whom I used to spend many hours –after school– playing table tennis or talking about my religion. They were simply curious to learn, without prejudice and without any malice. One of the simplest and most fundamental questions they asked me was: “What is the meaning of ‘Abd (عبد) in the word Abdullah?”

My immediate answer was “esclave”, which means slave in French. I saw the repulsion in their faces, which forced me to look immediately for another meaning to convey

what has seemed to me to be so simple all this time. I remember myself uttering “adorant” (when in fact what I meant to say was “adorateur” but my French was not good enough to properly articulate the meaning). I had to rely thereafter on Aadel (a law doctorate student from Egypt) to help me translate religious concepts and ideas, for I feared that I might convey the wrong meaning.

I remember looking up the meaning of ‘Abd (عبد) in dictionaries and Qur'an translations after returning home. What I found in English translations (to which I shall limit my discussion here) was either slave or servant. I did not like either one, for reasons to be discussed below. When, however, I had to choose between the two terms either to translate an article or to explain something, I always chose servant over slave.

My lack of enthusiasm

towards using either of these two words does not reflect any lack of clarity in my mind as to what does ‘Abd (عبد) mean in Arabic in the context of Abdullah, or what connotations the use of this word in this context reflects. Classical Arabic lexical dictionaries state that the morpheme ‘A-B-D (أ-ب-د) is a word that describes a relationship between God and man, as well as between man and man. The plural of the former is ‘Ibaad (عبداد), whereas the plural of the latter is ‘Abeed (عبديد). The same morpheme ‘A-B-D is the root that makes up the word ‘Ibaadah (عباده) (worship), ‘Aabed (عبد) (worshipper), ‘Mo-abbad (معبد) (paved, as in paved road), and ‘Abadeed (عابدين) (many scattered horses). The context of the word ‘Abd is what determines its exact meaning when it is used in the singular form. Whenever one of its derivatives or one of its plural forms is used, there is but one meaning and one connotation for the form used.

The Arabic word ‘Abd, therefore, denotes a very special relationship when it is used in its singular form in connection with one of the Glorious Names of Allah, such as Abdullah and Abdurrahman, etc. I am not certain that any of the two words used in English translations is capable of encompassing this special relationship. Another aspect that troubles me whenever any of these two words are used is the fact that both words have connotations that are not befitting this special relationship between God and His ‘Ibaad (for lack of a better word).

Referring to some very well known English translations of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad, for example, in his "The Message of the Qur'an" used servant to translate 'Abd throughout his translation. Another translation, which was revised and edited by Saheeh International, also uses the word servant throughout the volume.

The translation endorsed by King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, which is based on the very famous translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, uses servant throughout the translation, with very few exceptions. In these exceptions, the connotation of the word 'Abd is translated as per the context. Examples of these exceptions are the



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translation of 'Abd as votary in [96:10], and as devotee in [34:9].

In their "Interpretation of the meanings of the Noble Qur'an", Khan and Al-Hilali use the word slave throughout the text. M.M. Pickthal in his "The meaning of the Glorious Qur'an" also uses the word slave to translate 'Abd.

Jeffrey Lang also chooses the word slave when he translates the word 'Abd in his book "Even Angels Ask". He writes: "The Islamic term for worship is 'ibaadah. It is derived from the same root as 'abd, the Arabic word for "slave," and Muslims quite proudly refer to themselves as "slaves of Allah.'" He then addresses the instinctive resentment felt by those who might not be used to this way of describing

the relationship between a believer and his God. But he explains thereafter: "In fact, from the point of view of Islam, all creatures, whether or not they are aware of it, are already slaves of God in the sense that they all serve His ultimate purposes and can accomplish only what He allows them to accomplish... To worship a creation is, to the Muslim, utterly irrational and self-abasing, but to be the slave of God is a Muslim's highest honor and lifelong goal."

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word "salve" as follows: "One who is the property, and entirely subject to, another person, whether by capture, purchase, or birth; a servant completely divested of freedom and personal rights." There are several

other definitions given in this dictionary, of which two are noteworthy. A figurative definition is quoted as: "One who is completely under the domination of, or subject to, a specific influence." And a transferred sense of the definition of the word slave is: "One who submits in a servile manner to the authority or dictation of another or others; a submissive or devoted servant."

As for the word "servant", the Oxford English Dictionary gives the following definition: "A person of either sex who is under obligation to work for the benefit of a superior, and to obey his (or her) command." Another definition is given by: "A personal or domestic attendant; one whose duty is to wait upon his master or mistress, or do certain work in his or her household." And in a wider sense, the dictionary gives the following definition: "One who is under the obligation to render certain services to, and to obey the orders of, a person or a body of persons, especially in return for wages or salary." Yet another definition in a transferred use is: "A professed lover; one who is devoted to the service of a lady."

This word was used in contexts with religious signification quite often. The dictionary quotes the use of this word in several English

texts dating back as far as the fourteenth century AD. The title 'Servant of the servants of God', for example, was given to Pope Gregory the Great circa 1386. The word was used in connection with the devil ("Devils servant", circa 1340), Christ ("To reward His true servants" circa 1380), and the Lord ("Servant to the Lord" circa 1655).

One definition of servant crosses paths with the word slave, in a most interesting way. The dictionary says that the word "servant": "In the 14th and 15th centuries often used to render the Latin *servus* slave. In all the Bible translations from Wyclif [circa 1388] to the Revised Version of 1880-4, the word very often represents the Hebrew עבד (ébed) or the Greek δουλος, which correspond to slave, though this term to Israelitish conditions would perhaps be misleading."

An objection I have to the use of the word "slave" to translate 'Abd is based on three arguments. Firstly, humans are born free, except in situations where both father and mother of the born child are slaves. This is the exception, especially after abolishing slavery, and the general rule is that humans are born free. Our relationship with God, in us being His 'Ibaad, does not provide for a choice of either or. We cannot choose not to be His 'Ibaad.

He says in the Qur'an: "There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a 'Abd" [19:93].

Secondly, a slave may be freed, which has the connotation of his status being changed from one of lowliness to one of pride and self-esteem. In addition to the fact that we cannot change our status from not being 'Abd; our relationship with God is the source of our pride and self-esteem when we are His 'Ibaad, not the opposite.

Thirdly, a man who owns female slaves owns their bodies and he may choose to have an intimate relationship with one of them, hence the term slave-mothers. The mere fact that the word 'salve' may have such a connotation is as good reason as any not to use it to translate the word 'Abd, whenever this word is used in connection with one of the Glorious Names of Allah.

The word "servant" gives the connotation that the one who is being served is benefiting from this service. Allah does not benefit from our service, nor does He need it. If we serve Him, it is to our own benefit only, and this does not fit well with the concept of servant.

Another objection I have to the use of the word "servant" to translate 'Abd is the issue

of loyalty. A servant is loyal to the person he serves, but once his services are no more required or needed, he looks for another master to serve. This change of loyalty with change of masters does not reflect the inseparable nature of 'Abd to Allah.

It would not be fair, however, just to object to the use of terms that have been used for such a long time and by respected scholars, without suggesting an alternative. I have reflected on this matter for a very long time. And I came up with one suggestion, which may very well not be a better alternative, but at least may kindle a small fire of discussion over this subject, in order to do it justice.

I suggest translating the word 'Abd, whenever it is used in connection with the Glorious Names of Allah or in religious contexts, with the word "submitter."

My rationale for this suggestion is based on several arguments. First and foremost, the word carries no negative connotations, as far as I can tell. Another aspect of this word that makes it suitable for this usage is that a Muslim, by definition, is one who submits to Allah. A Muslim's submission to Allah has to be complete and all-encompassing.

The Qur'anic verse cited above [19:93] shows that everyone in the heavens and earth will submit to Allah. This meaning is further corroborated by verse [13:15] in which Allah says: "And to Allah prostrates whoever is within the heavens and the earth, willingly or by compulsion ..." Muhammad Asad comments on this verse by saying: "The expression *yasjud* (يَسْجُد) ("prostrates himself" or "prostrate themselves") is a metonym for complete submission to His will..."

When a believer submits willingly and consciously to Allah, he deserves the honour of being 'Abdullah, or Submitter to Allah. When, on the other hand, a person rejects this special relationship between himself and Allah, he still submits to the will of Allah manifested in the "...natural laws decreed by Him with regard to everything that exists," according to Muhammad Asad. The unbeliever's submission, however, will not be honoured by the title 'Abdullah, for to submit to Allah consciously is the "...Muslim's highest honour and lifelong goal," to quote Jeffrey Lang.

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**A** few years ago, if you mentioned the word “da’wah”, the first image that would usually appear in our minds was that of an old man wearing traditional Islamic clothes, speaking standard, formal Arabic, and preaching his, sometimes, complex way into the minds and hearts of thousands of Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Language is indeed arbitrary, as the meaning of the word “da’wah” has changed in the minds of millions of Muslims worldwide, since more and more youth have become involved in the da’wah field.

Instead, rushing images of young preachers in suits, preaching an easy-to-understand-and-implement religion, surge into our minds. This all began a few years ago when the emergence of a “new look” for Islamic da’wah representatives grew to its peak. And there seems to be no end to this mountainous peak of spiritual and practical methods of preaching from

# The Express Train: THE NEW FACE OF DA’WAH

By Marwah El-Azhary

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educated and intellectual youth who want to express their love and understanding of Islam.

Consequently, the old man has been replaced with a younger looking man or, for that matter, woman. The traditional clothes have been replaced with suits or modern outfits, and the formal Arabic has been replaced by colloquial Arabic or a foreign language.

What started this trend? Perhaps the Palestinian Intifada encouraged this wave of young “modern” preachers to come into full force. Perhaps other catastrophes occurring in the Muslim world signalled a wake-up call for idle Muslim youth worldwide. Whatever the reasons for this renaissance, it is evident that it has come into full swing, encouraging whoever is in its way to join the express train to revive the Islamic spirit

and improve ourselves and those around us; a destination all those on the train plan to reach.

Surely, the media is a key player in what is termed “the new look” in the da’wah field. Not long ago Islamic satellite channels were established, broadcasting their Islamic content to viewers worldwide. Perhaps it was only a matter of time till this renaissance occurred. As the years turned, those channels promoted more and more “new look” preachers.

For instance, 12 years ago the Arabic satellite channel Iqraa’ began its mission to broadcast “the teachings of Islam into the homes and hearts of Arabs worldwide”. The shows consisted of traditional men, rarely women, talking about, and preaching Islam in Arabic; the very image that was illustrated above, comes into mind.

12 years later, the shows consist, mainly, of programs presented by women and men, in different languages (although Arabic remains the main language used). These presenters do not necessarily hold a university degree in an Islamic discipline from a prestigious university, such as Alazhar. They are ordinary Muslims, representing millions of ordinary Muslims worldwide, and discussing issues that are important to the public at large. Perhaps those millions of ordinary Muslims finally felt that they were being talked to on the same level and not preached down to as in earlier times. The shows evolved to contain entertainment, dramas, and cartoons for children, Islamic songs, discussion shows hosted by celebrities and programs on all aspects of life with an Islamic theme. Perhaps this style of new preaching encouraged people to take up the same position in their society and tell fellow Muslim brothers and sisters of the knowledge they had learned. In those 12 years, communication and technology progressed to a new level too, giving millions the opportunity to listen to digital Islamic files on the Internet, rather than the classical Islamic tapes that are difficult to find in some countries.

As a matter of fact, this renaissance was just

too exciting for me not to join; indeed I am a proud passenger of the da'wah express train calling all those idle (and busy) thumbs to come on board.

Looking at my surroundings, I notice that most on the train are volunteering to use their skills to benefit others. This fact creates such a proud and immense feeling of satisfaction; that our youth are good-doers. This is like the feeling of the cool breeze coming from the train's window: a breeze that is not a destructive hurricane, harmful to everything in its way. It is rather a breeze that makes the skin glow; that cultivates the lands of the world and gives comfort to wounded souls.

These passengers are professionals in their respective fields, intellectuals in their study, and pursuers of success and ultimate reformation. They are not only young members of society but mature ones too, seeking to make a better world for the present and future generations. Groups of them strive together, working on different projects to bring their goals and objectives into something later generations will call an accomplishment, sheer will and determination, an act of heroism; all pivoting around the Qur'an, the last message from God to mankind.

Surely these passengers face bumpy, shaky, uncertain trials on their express train, but even the Prophets and those who believed them faced trials: so why should we not expect a few delays? Patience and perseverance is written all over the faces of those on the train, and those who are not patient have sadly cut their journey short.

It was in the year 2001 when I joined the express train. I did not have extensive knowledge on Islam, but I knew Arabic and English well enough to translate influential Islamic material.

I remember clearly the images of Islam in the media being tarnished post 9/11; I remember the upsetting looks I would get from strangers in the street because of my distinct symbol of Islam, the Hijab. I remember listening to conversations that classmates at my university in England would have about how terrible Islam must be to teach people to blow themselves up and destroy buildings.

Then I remembered the things I had learned as I grew up about the peaceful true Islam that millions of Muslims believe in and who practise the teachings of the Prophet that, even in war, forbids demolishing any place of worship, cutting down trees, killing women, children or priests. I recalled all the

teachings I knew of, which reminded me of the beauty of Islam that was not being represented in the media. All I saw in the media were misconceptions and lies. Just as stated earlier, this was definitely a wake up call. I had to do something locally and internationally to enlighten the public at large that what was being said about Islam in the media was far from the truth. I could not stand by and watch the express train of opportunity pass by.

I hopped on board, taking my writing, translation and any other reformation skills with me. I sat at my canvas and willed that I would re-paint the true image of Islam with my hands and all the hands that would join me in rebuilding the truth. The passengers on the express train do not claim to be experts on Islam, yet they have the skills and the desire to spread its true image. Each carriage on the train carries and calls different people with different qualifications and experiences, and four years later my carriage, a web site called Daralislamlive.com, calls for people with creative skills to hop on board. From web designers to graphic designers to flash designers; from translators to editors to writers; from doctors to professors at universities; from housewives to students; volunteers eager to join the express train jumped in, all sharing the common goal of

spreading the true meaning of Islam. And passengers on the train do not restrict themselves to one carriage; I for one am always on a quest to venture into other carriages and join in with the propagation of Islam.

Indeed this new wave of preaching will not drown the express train. Rather, it will aid it in becoming like Noah's ark, a symbol of strength and determination to do good, reform the earth and abstain from evil. Although many achievements have occurred in the da'wah realm, more is on its way, as the express train attracts more people worldwide to join its noble cause. These passengers will not rest until they reach their destination. I for one will not rest until we reach our destination, which is giving the opportunity for everyone to understand the true meaning of Islam, living in a peaceful world whose societal members do good and forbid evil, and ultimately joining with my sisters and brothers, hand in hand, in a strong chain of Muslims leading each other, and millions of others like us, to Paradise.

Indeed language is arbitrary, so we will try to change the negative meaning people have in their minds about Islam and show them the express train's window of opportunity. We will encourage them to realise

the meaning of Islam that preaches words such as love, success and reformation. We will remember the words of the Prophet, "... by Allah if they put the sun in my right hand, and the moon in my left hand in order for me to leave this matter (Islam), I will not until Allah makes it victorious or I die trying."

The Prophet was the captain of the express train. So we will give him the helm to lead us on to success and become victorious in our noble cause, or at least try until our time on this planet is up. We will aid the steam spouted from the express train to signal to others and let them know about Islam.

We will change the meanings of many words, ultimately altering the false images that many have about Islam, and create a peaceful earth once again. Indeed this is the goal of all those dedicated to da'wah, who are continuously joining the express train.

1-Da'wah: Inviting others to Islam.

2-Iqraa quote from:  
[ourjerusalem.com](http://ourjerusalem.com)

# ISLAM AS A Lifestyle

**By Hicham Maged**

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Hicham Maged reports on how Islam is more than a religion but a way of life for millions of Muslims.

A person is recognised as a Muslim by birth, naturally following his parent's religion. A person is also recognised as a Muslim on their ID card, under the 'Religion' section. Having said this, have we, as Muslims, ever taken a moment to pause and ask ourselves what this word, 'Muslim', means?

This article aims to summarise the conceptual meaning of Islam. To do so, we must step into a time machine and turn the clock back to a million years ago when Allah (S.W.T) created man to be a viceroy on earth. This implies that man has an explicit mission: to urbanize the earth.

"And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood,

while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not" (T.M.Q, 2:30).

In order to complete this mission, man must walk through two parallel routes, just like a train does to reach its destination:

1. Worshiping Allah (S.W.T) via personal acts, such as performing the fundamental acts of worship in Islam: praying, fasting, supplicating to Allah, giving charity to the poor and performing Hajj.

2. Working for the community via reforming the earth, with professions such as Architects, Engineers, Doctors, Lawyers, Artists, Scientists, Sheikhs and so on.

Contributing such work in parallel, man can fulfill his mission. Thus he benefits himself and those around him, i.e. the Ummah, by successfully completing these two routes. His life and the work completed during it

becomes a record, a C.V, to validate or certify his entrance to Paradise, in the new life after death. This is the core of Islam, which in fact makes it a lifestyle and not only a religion.

This ideology was very clear to our ancestors, and thus they established the vivid and rich Islamic civilisation between the 7th – 15th centuries. This civilisation had great accomplishments. It manipulated past civilisations (e.g. Greek and Roman civilisations), transferred and added records in every field of life such as Science, Medicine, Chemistry, Astronomy, Geography, Architecture, etc. This made a good foundation for the Western civilisation to be established later on in the renaissance.

So simply, according to these historical facts, Islam considers life as an opportunity to produce the many fruits of success and also gives mankind the

maximum freedom to use the tools of every era, in order to fulfill the mission of urbanising and reforming the earth.

To continue, it is very clear what things are Halal and Haram in Islam. Everything is Halal except with the exemption of a few things, and this is for one purpose:

- To save our minds and souls (i.e. to succeed in our mission by abstaining from prohibitions and remaining focused on completing our mission).

“Say: My Lord forbiddeth only indecencies, such of them as are apparent and such as are within, and sin and wrongful oppression, and that ye associate with Allah that for which no warrant hath been revealed, and that ye tell concerning Allah that which ye know not” (T.M.Q: 7:32).

Of course religious scholars have a great role in clarifying the details of such a subject, whereas the above point is just a general comment.

Every era has its tools to use to urbanise the earth and everything is allowed to be used according to the way it matches with the goal of creation. For instance, the following equation can be used to emphasise this point:

- If using such a tool to succeed to fulfill this

goal = ✓ Halal.

- If using such a tool failed to fulfill this goal = ✗ Haram.

So Science, Technology, etc, are tools, and the issue of Halal and Haram is defined in light of how we use these tools.

The question which arises after this short introduction is why are we falling behind in our mission, even though we have such a great system like Islam?

It is a difficult question, however it is obvious that we as Muslims could miss our goal by entering a maze of useless arguments about the issues of Halal and Haram, rather than using our energy and concentration to fulfill our mission.

Recalling Shakespeare’s famous question, “To be or not to be”, we as Muslims must choose “to be”, i.e. we must choose to maintain our role to reform the earth and improve mankind. No matter how small a role may be, we must strive to attain perfection in everything we do.

Therefore, we must change ourselves first, so that Allah (S.W.T) can help us. This is according to His universal law of change, which states:

“Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts” (T.M.Q 13:11).

Finally, it is certainly time to stop subjecting our souls and minds in things which are not related to Islam, as Islam gives us the maximum freedom to do everything, so we must not take advantage of our free will.

Simply, we can conclude that Islam is rather a “call for life” not a “call for death”.



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1 **S.W.T** is an abbreviation of the Arabic term Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala, used when referring to Allah. In English it translates to mean Glory be to Allah.

2 **Viceroy**: This term means Khalifah in Arabic.

3 **T.M.Q** is an abbreviation of ‘The Meanings of the Qur'an’.

4 **Sheikh**: A religious scholar in Islam.

5 **Ummah**: The Muslim community, nation, or people.

6 **Halal**: Permissible.

7 **Haram**: Prohibited.

# THE NUMERICAL VALUES OF LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET AND THE Numerical Miracle

By Bassam Jarrar \*

noon@p-ol.com

**The** Arabic alphabet comprises ٢٩ letters. However, in the Abecedarian alphabet there are ٢٨ because there is considered to be no difference between Hamza and Alif. What concerns us about this Abecedarian order is the link between it and the Jum'mal numerical values of the letters (the NVL) mentioned in the previous chapter. As mentioned above the system is common to both Hebrew and Arabic but the Hebrew and Abecedarian Arabic systems only coincide up to the letter ت. After that, Arabic has the extra letters ظ, خ, ذ, ض, ئ which can be combined in the mnemonic (though meaningless) phrase thakhath dathagh.

It is not easy to trace the origin of the Abecedarian order and the calculation associated with it in Semitic languages. This is because views on it have diverged in such a way that it is difficult to decide which is correct or to even make a choice between them. The Jewish clergy use it extensively, Muslims have used it in historical dating, Sufis have overused it, and fortune-tellers, magicians and sorcerers have used it too. Thus, although the calculation may

have had a religious basis, it has been later distorted, altered and abused.

The Abecedarian order in North Africa differs slightly from the well-known order which is used in the East. In mnemonic

form the latter consists of the following letters: Abjad Hawaz Huttı Kalamun Saa'fas qurishat thakhath Dathagh. Each letter has a numerical value as shown in the table below:

أ	ب	ج	د	ه	و	ز	ح	ط	ي
١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩	١٠
ك	ل	م	ن	س	ع	ف	ص	ق	
٢٠	٣٠	٤٠	٥٠	٦٠	٧٠	٨٠	٩٠	١٠٠	
ر	ش	ت	ث	خ	ذ	ض	ظ	غ	
٢٠٠	٣٠٠	٤٠٠	٥٠٠	٦٠٠	٧٠٠	٨٠٠	٩٠٠	١٠٠٠	

In the Jum'mal (the NVL) it is noticed that there is no difference between the numerical values of Alif and Hamza, because it refers to the Abecedarian, rather than the Alphabetical, letters. This calculation has been used for various purposes – Muslims have used it to date battles, deaths, buildings, etc, as mentioned above.

#### Examples of use

When Sultan Barquq, a Burji Mamluk, died, a phrase was coined indicating the date of his

death. This phrase was في المشمش (fil-mishmish). [It means, literally: "In the apricot (season)" which is very short, so the implication in current usage at least is of transience]. It seems that they chose a humorous phrase, but also the numerical values of the phrase are  $٣٠+٤٠+٣٠+١+١+٨+٣٠+٤٠+٠$ . The total is ٨٠١, and thus Sultan Barquq died in ٨٠١ AH.

Another example is, when a poet called Dalenjawi died, his friend eulogized him in general

verses and at the end dated his death with the phrase مات الشعر بعده (maat a-sha'oru ba'da) which means: "Poetry died after him." This came after the words "I dated..." which indicated the point at which to begin counting – i.e. after "dated". Thus, the date of Dalenjawi's death is:  $+2+200+70+300+30+1+400+1+4+1123=5+4+7\cdot AH$ .

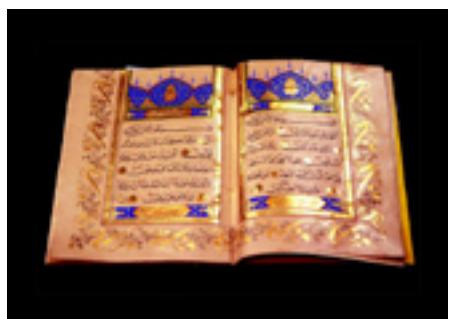
It is clear that this use of calculation in chronology is thus not objectionable from a religious viewpoint because it is a matter of convention and is thus permissible. However, the misuse of this system in the areas of fortune telling, magic and sorcery has created negative associations with a system that is not intrinsically negative.

Muhammad Ben Omar Nuwawi Al-Jawi, an interpreter, Sufi and Shafi'i jurist, migrated to Makka and died there in the year ١٢١٦ AH. He produced many works, one of which is a two-volume interpretation of the Qur'an in which he said in the introduction: "I have titled this book to confirm to its date" مراح لبید لکشف معنی قرآن – مجد. It is clear from these words that he chose a title to conform to the Jum'mal system to show the date he began writing his book (١٣٠٤ AH). I have cited this particular example to give evidence of a Muslim scholar's attitude towards the question of the Jum'mal system and to show that nothing was found to be wrong in using such a system, even for a book on Qur'anic interpretation. We have used it for generations so why don't we reconsider using it again since we have found it to be beneficial. Another famous Qur'anic commentator, Baidawi, says in his interpretation of the opening of Surat Al-Baqara

that the Prophet (PBUH) was approached by the Jews and he recited to them the opening of Al-Baqara. They calculated the numerical values of the letters of the opening and said: "How can we enjoin a religion that will last only seventy-one years?" The Prophet (PBUH) smiled. They said: "Is there anything else?" He said: المَرْءُ الْمُصْرِفُ and they replied that he had confused them and they know longer knew which Faith to follow. Baidawi comments on this Hadith by saying: "His reciting to them in this order and his confirmation of their inference..." Thus, Baidawi considers that the Apostle (PBH) confirmed their inference. In Shihab's commentary on Baidawi's interpretation he says: "This Hadith was verified by Bukhari in his history and by Ibn Jarir through Ibn Issac Al-Kalbi... Its chain of narrators is weak." Thus we cannot rely on Baidawi's conclusion, though on the other hand the Prophet never said anything that denied that Jum'mal had a religious basis. What matters is that there is neither evidence for denial nor confirmation. Although we must be careful not to assume that we are building on absolutely solid foundations we find that confirmation is more likely in the light of this weak Hadith. We can prove by induction that the Qur'an has kept some secrets in certain words and clauses and therefore, we assume that the Qur'an has used this linguistic convention of the Semitic languages. After all, the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic! Since language suggests meanings there is no reason to prevent it from suggesting numerical values. The question is: How can we know that a

certain phrase in the Qur'an carries such a numerical secret? Our answer to this is that this has to be proven either through Islamic legal methods or by reasoning. The reader will find that our approach to this question is new and has nothing to do with the Sufis or others, whether they did the right thing or erred and deviated. We are satisfied that the reader will be convinced by the examples of the Jum'mal system that we will give that are based only on induction and not hearsay.

The following are examples that open the door for a new direction in Jum'mal, examples that simply involve calculation based on Qur'anic vocabulary. It should be pointed out that in our research we are dealing with the Qur'anic script called Ottoman script, which is regarded by the majority of scholars as a revelation (Tawqifi) in itself, because it was supervised by the Prophet as revealed to him.



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**Bassam Jarrar** is the director of Noon Centre For Qur'anic Studies and Researches. For more information on Noon Centre, check page --- of this issue of I-MAG.

In the next Issues of I-MAG:  
Read the full book:  
"First Signs of Numerical Miracles In the Holy Qur'an" by Bassam Jarrar

## SECRETS OF CREATION:

# How Plants Protect Themselves

By / Ali A. Naser \*



### Foreword

The fire, the wind, the frost, and the caterpillars are all terrible enemies of the forest, but there are other enemies who are not less dangerous. Most trees are not afraid of them!

We know that the animals defend themselves by kicking,



© Photograph by Sayal, from: lqta.com



Picture 2

butting, biting, scratching, or even running away! But plants are a different matter; they can not bite or run away. An enemy can come right up to a tree and it won't even budge. That is all true, but strange as it may seem, plants have ways of protecting themselves, and they can put up quite a good defence.

If we bear in mind that plants do not possess any way to think, to decide and to act, then we should think that God the Almighty, who gave the plants their ability to defend themselves.

### Struggle with the wind

On sandy slopes you may see pines that look as though they



Picture 1



Picture 3

have come out of a fairy-tale. The powerful trees seem to be lifting high their snag-like legs all ready to run or dance to the whistling of the wind.

In reality the pines have no wish to dance at all. The restless wind blows the sand from under their roots, while the trees dig deeper and deeper into the ground in their urge to survive. The tops of the roots are bared, that is why they give the impression of being on stilts. They can stand that way for many years defying the wind.

Everybody is familiar with the maize, and most people are interested in the crops and not in the roots, though these are curious things well worth inspecting.

Maize has a tall and thick stalk, broad long leaves and heavy cobs, and appears top - heavy. But it does not fall even in a severe wind because it has additional roots that come out on the surface. Like props, they support the stalk in windy weather.

The banian- tree that grows in India is a gigantic relation of our indoor ficus. Tourists take one tree for a whole grove because it has so many trunks – up to a thousand sometimes. These trunks are quite unusual.

The banian tree has heavy branches that need support, which is why it has aerial roots growing on its branches. Little by little, they grow

long and reach the ground. As the years go by, these supporting roots thicken and then it becomes difficult to distinguish them from the main trunk that gets lost in their midst. That is how one tree produces a whole grove. So now even a hurricane will do no harm to the heavy crown of the banian-tree.

In the humid tropical jungles of Africa, America and Asia there are some remarkable slender trees. Their trunks rise to the sky like light columns and there is a wide-spread crown on top.



Picture 4

The trees look like umbrellas with very long handles. If the trunks were shorter and the crowns lower, it would be easier for them to stand up to the wind.



Picture 5

To all appearances the only way for them to save

themselves is to grow deeper roots.

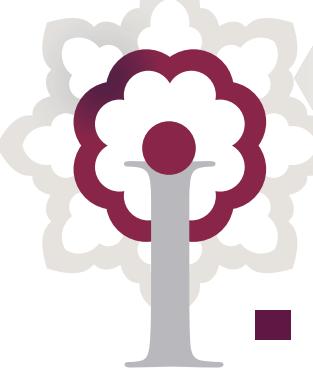
These umbrella-like trees are adapted to their surroundings. They have huge supports that run in all directions from the lower part of the trunk. They look very much like broad planks with the edge pressed against the trunk and the opposite edge pressed firmly into the ground. For that they are called buttress-like roots. They rise to about six meters up the trunk and stretch several meters away from its base.

#### References:

- Picture 1: [The Ceiba Tree/ tikalpark.com/trees](http://tikalpark.com/trees).  
 Picture 2-3: [cag.ics.mit.edu](http://cag.ics.mit.edu)  
 Picture 4-5: [Ceiba Roots: elenas-vieques.com/ceiba](http://elenas-vieques.com/ceiba)

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*He is a short story writer; he translates, writes, and publishes novels, short stories and scientific researches from Bulgarian language and English.*



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# Walid Batrawi:

THAT'S WHY THERE  
WILL BE NO INTERNET  
MEDIA IN MANY ARAB  
COUNTRIES!

Interviewed by **Hasan Hamarsha**

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*Since the year 1991, Walid Batrawi has been working as a Palestinian journalist for various media establishments, including Palestinian and International media organisations.*

*In a major interview, Hasan Hamarsha sets to discover more about the views of the Journalist Walid Batrawi.*

## How do you define Walid Batrawi?

I won an international prize in the year 1999 for an article that I wrote, about the corruption of the Palestinian media. This prize is called the "Natali Prize for Journalism". It is from the European Commission and the International Federation for Journalists.

## Which mass medium do you prefer to work with?

The journalist is a journalist, therefore I believe that they should not specialise in one field. However many people disagree and see that a journalist should specialise in a specific field.

Having said this, I engage in various fields of journalism. I take part in broadcasting for television and

radio. In the past, I was involved in television productions for ABC Australia and the BBC. I also work for different radio organisations and write a lot. Therefore, I believe that you have to have extensive skills to be a successfully qualified journalist.

## Which mass medium do you prefer to work with mostly?

It depends on my mood, actually. I love radio and I love to write, however television is also a very tempting field that I would love to work for. Personally my favourite is radio, for various reasons. Radio is an influential tool that people listen

**"The journalist is a journalist, therefore I believe that they should not specialise in one field."**

to. Comparing radio with television, sometimes the appearance of a television show may distract the audience from the main story. For instance, if the actor is beautiful or ugly or if terribly dressed, these factors may distract the audience.

Whereas in radio, the audience draw their own image according to their own imagination, and this is what I like about radio.

## Which mass medium allows you to freely express yourself?

The Internet of course. This is because it has no regulations or censorship. Sometimes I post articles, which do not appear in local Palestinian newspapers, on the internet. The internet is a combination of all the mediums and tools of the media.

## How do you evaluate the role of internet-based journalism?

It is very important. I think that without the internet the media in general would be behind. It provides a very good medium for audio, video, photography and text. The media conversion is very important. It is also very hard to regulate and censor material placed on the internet; an issue that is very important in Arab countries. In western society they call it regulations because it is not censorship. However in the Arab world it is called censorship, and because of the power of the internet,



© Jenna Isaacson photo

you won't find the internet media in many Arab countries.

### **“Palestinian media is freer than other Arab media.”**

#### **Can internet based journalism cause a threat to traditional journalism?**

No. I think that people tend to form the habit of going out everyday to buy a newspaper. People like to read text and not everyone uses the internet. Sometimes it is cheaper to buy a newspaper. You can keep the newspaper and re-read it whenever you want. In contrast, you can't look at the internet while lying in bed or while eating. I don't think that internet based journalism will take over traditional printed journalism. I think it is completing it.

#### **What are the roles of the media in the Arab world?**

I think the main role is that there is

a lack of freedom in the Arab media. This includes satellite channels that we believe are liberal television stations. I believe that there are many constraints facing them, either intentionally or unintentionally. For example, Al-Jazeera is a very liberal and outspoken news channel; however, I don't believe that it is free. The minds and thoughts of people are not free. For instance, if we look at the Arab-Israeli conflict, we see that Al-Jazeera is a very biased, pro Palestinian sympathiser, which is not a role that applies to the CNN, for example. So I don't believe that there is such a thing as a free media. Free media does not mean how many stations we have; rather it means how free we are. It is the quality; it is how free we are able to report on different issues.

In the Arab world, I would say that the most liberal area is Lebanon. For example, I watch Newsat TV, not well-known to many people, but it has fantastic investigative reporting from Lebanon that tackles

the issues of the people. Maybe it is not important for me, a person who lives in Palestine, to know about the electricity problems or corruption in Lebanon. But for those living there, it is very important.

#### **Is it possible to have a completely objective and biased free media?**

This is a very controversial question. We are talking about human beings and the human being is never completely objective. You have to be biased towards something, toward yourself or your community. Therefore, I don't believe there would ever be a completely objective and biased free media. However there are methods that we, as journalists, can use to try to distance ourselves from a story. For example, if I'm going to report about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict I can't, as a Palestinian, be completely objective. However, I can be unbiased; I can tell the story of the Palestinians and the story of the Israelis and show both sides of the

coin. Here I play towards objectivity, but frankly, I can't say that I could be completely objective.

### **In the Arab world, do the media have an influence on politics?**

No, because we have never witnessed, in any Arab country, a government collapsing as a result of the media provoking or reporting on the country's corruption.

**Batrawi's role models are John Simpson from the BBC and Ted Coppel in the US.**

### **Do you think there is a competition between Arab journalists and the media?**

It depends. I think that there is a huge competition because of the satellite channels but this should not affect the quality of journalism. Competition is important and breaking the news on time is very important, but it is also vital to be accurate.

An example is when Al-Jazeera reported a story on the assassination attempt on Abu Mazen but they did not double check the story.

### **Do the Arab media imitate each other?**

Yes. When the news channel Al-Arabia was launched, it was a clone of Al-Jazeera with a different flavour. They try to imitate and compete, and this leaves some channels with a kind of creativity.

The huge number of Arabic satellite channels could perhaps lead to information overload in the minds of the audience and cause a rise for infotainment. How do you evaluate this?

I think we have a video clip overload, which is part of the media.

We can't deny that one of the roles of the media is entertainment. Sometimes I feel that we are fed up with what we receive from the media. We are saturated with news, we only think of what is going on in the world and so on. It's not that we think the media has not played a great role in exposing different issues. If there was no media, we wouldn't know about the recent Tsunami for example. The media is changing the world into a small village, but at the same time it is making people nervous because sometimes we feel hopeless when watching the catastrophes occurring in the world.

### **Do western media, which broadcasts their news in the Arabic language, such as the BBC or the Voice of America or Sawa; have an affect on the Arab audience?**

I think that the BBC Arabic Service, something I listen to, has a huge number of audiences in the Arab world and it has an affect. Sawa is a bit different, since it is new and it's like a spokes-agency for the US government. Nevertheless, people watch foreign language channels, such as the CNN, ABC and the BBC in English.

### **Do you think that the Palestinian media is more or less freer than other Arab media?**

I think it is freer. This goes back to the history of the Palestinians; they have lived in their continuous struggle and they were very critical of Arafat, even when he was alive. Maybe this didn't appear in the media, but it did in the streets of Palestine.

If I told you that Arafat did so and so, I'm not going to be arrested immediately. However in other Arab countries, you find intelligence services all over the place and you discover that you can't trust anyone. At least in Palestine people know each other. Nowadays it is very

easy to call a Palestinian minister, which never happens in other Arab countries. You can meet a minister in Palestine and shake hands with him. This is because many of the Palestinian leaders were initially very popular and very public; they were members of parties or teachers at universities and schools. This is how the media gets their power in Palestinian areas.

### **Who are your role models on a national, Arabic and international level?**

On a national level, my role model is myself. On an international level there are many names, but one of the names I love is John Simpson from the BBC. There is also Ted Coppel in the US who is one of the best journalists. On an Arabic level I'm not sure, maybe some Egyptian journalists.

**"I think stereotypes will always exist."**

### **Do we have stereotypes in the Arab media about the west?**

Yes we do. Among the stereotypes are that they are faithless and that they are all against Islam. There are also myths and stereotypes about their family ties. I have lived in the US and I know that there are some very strong family ties. I think stereotypes will always exist.

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Walid Batrawi's articles are available on:  
[http://www.amin.org/pages/walid\\_batrawi/eindex.html](http://www.amin.org/pages/walid_batrawi/eindex.html)

# Media Quotes to Ponder

**“Writing to a magazine that had published his obituary: I've just read that I am dead. Don't forget to delete me from your list of subscribers.”**

Rudyard Kipling

**“It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous.”**

Robert Benchley

**“Television? The word is half Greek, half Latin. No good can come of it.”**

C.P. Scott

**“Television: A medium. So called because it is neither rare nor well done.”**

Ernie Kovacs

**“Television is simultaneously blamed, often by the same people, for worsening the world and for being powerless to change it.”**

Clive James

**“Editor: one who sorts the wheat from the chaff and prints the chaff.”**

Adlai Stevenson

**“Journalism: a profession whose business it is to explain to others what it personally does not understand.”**

Lord Northcliffe

# IS ISRAEL A REAL DEMOCRACY?

**Israel** likes to define itself as the only democracy in the Middle East. Democracy means a plurality of views, of voices and of positions; the fact is that Israel is an exclusive racist Jewish state with little interest in real democracy. The last thing that the Zionist government thinks of is civil rights for Palestinians. There's a racial discrimination of Israel against Arabs. Arabs are treated as second or third class citizens. Today, there are 220,000 displaced Palestinians in Israel banned from returning to their homes. In Israel's much praised "democracy", the law discriminates against more than one million Arabs living in pre-1967 border in all walks of life, simply, because they aren't Jewish.

Israel took a heavy blow recently by two United Nations separate reports: the first by Amnesty International into Israeli military policies in the occupied territories, and the second by a United Nations watchdog monitoring Israel's commitment to human rights.

Subsequently, both reports were followed by two Israeli reports: the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) annual report, which pointed to serious discrimination against Israel's Arab citizens. This discrimination includes obligatory "amendments" in the designation of "nationality" in the identity cards of immigrants whose Jewishness is suspect in the ministry's eyes and the cancellation of citizenship for Israeli Arab women who marry residents of the territories; and the "Israel Democracy Survey" last month also put Israel close to bottom of 32 countries in terms of the value of democratic participation. The survey concluded that Israel is basically a democracy in form more than in substance, and that it has yet to internalize fully the concept of democracy.

The results showed that more than 53

percent of the Jewish population of Israel is opposed to full equal rights for Palestinian citizens and more than 57 percent want Arabs transferred out of the country. Currently, just 77 percent of Jews in the country agree that democracy is the best system.

The Amnesty's report concludes that it is "deeply concerned by the continuing differences in treatment between Jews and non-Jews" and notes that Israeli law "does not enshrine the general principles of equality and non-discrimination". It lists many aspects of Israeli life in which the rights of Palestinians and the country's one million Arab citizens are being violated in favor of the Jewish population.

The other report Israel has been dreading is from the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). The committee monitors land, economic and educational rights. Although it is critical of Israel's performance on a whole raft of human rights tests, including policies towards women and foreign workers, it reserves its harshest rebuffs for the treatment of Palestinians and the country's Arab population.

The CESCR was apparently unimpressed: its final report includes a list of sharp criticisms of Israeli policies towards Palestinian populations on both sides of the Green Line, the pre-1967 border.

The CESCR expressed grave concern about "the deplorable living conditions of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, who -- as a result of the continuing occupation and subsequent measures of closures, extended curfews, roadblocks and security checkpoints -- suffer from the impairment of their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the Covenant, in particular access to work, land, water, health care, educa-



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tion and food".

On the issue of Israel's Arab citizens, the CESCR finds 10 areas of major concern. These include Israel's continuing policy of excluding Arab citizens from almost all state land, more than 93 per cent of Israeli territory. "It notes -- despite claims to the contrary made by the Israeli delegation -- that a precedent-setting Supreme Court judgment allowing one family, the Kaadans, to move into a Jewish community has still to be enforced three years later."

Uri Avneri stated in Haaretz Daily that the Jewish National Fund (JNF) is used as an instrument of the Israeli Jewish community against the Israeli Arab community. It has become an instrument for institutionalized discrimination. It holds 13% of all the land in Israel. Its statutes explicitly prohibit the sale or rental of land to non-Jews. "This means that every Jew in the world, living anywhere from Timbuktu to Kamchatka, can get land from the JNF, without even coming to Israel, while an Arab citizen of Israel,

whose forefathers have lived here for hundreds – or even thousands - of years, cannot acquire a house or an apartment on its land. In this situation, 20% of the citizens of Israel are denied the right to buy a home in large parts of the country, while this right is enjoyed by Jews living in Brooklyn and Odessa."

The State of Israel transferred to the JNF millions of dunums of land expropriated from Arabs – those who had remained in the country but were absent on a given day from their villages, as well as Arabs who became citizens of Israel. It is important to keep this in mind, since it disproves the big lie that hovers over the whole debate: "that the JNF land was bought with the money of the Jewish people. The greater part of the present JNF land was not bought at all, but conquered in war and transferred to the JNF." In the five decades since Israel took over the land of the Palestinian refugees and rejected their right to return, it has confiscated more than two-thirds of the land of its Palestinian citizens. Similarly, on land rights, Adalah's figures, the legal centre for the Arab minority in Israel, showed that Arab municipalities in the Galilee controlled just 16 per cent of the land despite accounting for 72 per cent of the population. In the Negev, Arab councils had just fewer than two per cent of the land despite comprising a quarter of the population. Furthermore, in the past year more than 100 Bedouin homes had been demolished and 3,000 acres of crops destroyed.

The treatment of the Bedouin population, particularly those living in "unrecognised villages", without proper provision of schools, health care, water, electricity or sanitation. The committee observes that the Bedouin "continue to be subjected on a regular basis to land confiscations, house demolitions, fines for building 'illegally', destruction of agricultural crops, fields and trees, and systematic harassment and persecution by the Green Patrol [an Israeli paramilitary police force] in order to force Bedouins to resettle in "townships".

The CESCR says the transfer of the Bedouin population from their villages into concentration townships is being carried out without consulting the vil-

lagers and they are being offered "inadequate" compensation. Instead the committee urges that Israel to "recognise all existing Bedouin villages, their property rights and their right to basic services, in particular water".

Also the same report noted "the continuing lower-standard of living of Israeli Arabs as a result, inter-alia, of higher unemployment rates, restricted access to and participation in trade unions, lack of access to housing, water, electricity, health care and a lower level of education".

Adalah also presented information showing that 45 of the 46 communities with the highest unemployment in Israel are Arab and that poverty rates among Arab families were up to three times greater than Jewish families. There is a concern about "the persisting inequality in wages of Jews and Arabs in Israel, as well as the severe under-representation of the Arab sector in civil service and universities".

The Amnesty International in a report published 13 July 2004 has called upon Israeli government to repeal the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law on family unification which bars Israelis married to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza from living with their spouses in Israel, and forces families to either live apart or leave the country altogether.

Similarly, Adalah reported that "there was blatant discrimination in education rights, with Arab students faring worse in terms of dropout, matriculation and university-entry rates. Although 90 per cent of Jewish three and four-year-olds attended kindergarten, only 50 per cent of Arab children did. Arab schools also received a small fraction of the truant officers, psychologists and education counsellors needed to address such problems."

Discrimination continues to reign in many fields. In the last few months alone, the following facts happened to come to light:

- The Israeli army has decided to demolish a whole Palestinian Al-Mintar quarter (74 houses) in Jerusalem.
- According to Israel's Haaretz daily, the latest decision, adopted by the cabinet of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in July 2004, affects thousands of private owners and relies on

Israel's Absentee Property Law, which the newly-created Jewish state issued in 1950. The (Israeli) decision will affect much more than half the Palestinian property in Jerusalem.

- The Treasury Ministry is pondering how to pay allowances to big Jewish families, without paying them to big Arab families.
- The Ministry of Education confirmed what until now has been an open secret: that the appointment of every teacher and principal in an Arab school in Israel is subject to the approval of the General Security Service (Shin-Bet).

These policies are inspired by both right-wing (Likud Party) and left wing (Labor Party). Moreover, the fact is that most of discriminatory policies came into being when the Zionist left was in control, and continue now with the support of the left-wing (Labor Party) whose representatives serve in the Sharon government.

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- Amnesty International, covering events from January – December 2003
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# ALAQSA INTIFADA AND THE MEDIA

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**During** Alaqsa Intifada, which started on September 29, 2000, both the Palestinians and the Israelis were very aware of the media power. Thus, there was a competition between the two on this field. This competition negatively affected the media and their coverage. Instead of enhancing the media, this competition moved the media from being a fourth state to be a fourth branch for government.

The Israeli government tried to silence the Palestinian and International media and prevent them from covering Alaqsa Intifada. Also, since the beginning of Alaqsa Intifada, the Israeli news media has largely supported the Israeli military and government without serving as an objective venue for accurate reporting. This press pictured the situation as if Israel was in a state of emergency, or a state of war, and represents the Israelis as victims of the Palestinian terror. "Never have the media been so influential in determining the course of war as during Alaqsa Intifada...Israel has already poured hundreds of millions of dollars into what in Hebrew is called Hasabara, or information for the outside world (hence, propaganda)...Because so many powerful people in the media and publishing business are strong supporters to Israel, the task is made vastly easier" (Said, 2001). \*

This strategy succeeded in forming a different picture in the minds of western people. A statistic carried out by the Glasgow University Media Group contains a study of 300 young people. 79 percent did not know that it was the Israelis who were occupying the territories. Only 9 percent knew that it was the Israelis who were occupying the territories and that the settlers were Israelis. 10 percent

believed that the Palestinians were occupying the territories and that the settlers were Palestinians (Philo et al., 2003).

The attacks against the Palestinian media organizations started less than one month after the beginning of the Alaqsa Intifada. On October 11, 2000, the Israeli army used helicopter missiles to destroy the Palestinian TV transmission dishes and the radio transmission tower in Ramallah. In fact, this early stage of Alaqsa Intifada produced a very powerful image for the Palestinians. One example being the dramatic pictures of Mohammad al-Durrah being shot and killed as he and his father attempted to shield them from the crossfire.

Furthermore, on January 19, 2002 the Israeli army bombarded the building of the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation. In March and April 2002 the Israeli army re-occupied all Palestinian controlled cities and occupied the headquarters of several media centers and private TV stations, damaging the premises and equipment. In Ramallah for example, after arresting the stations' staff, the Israeli armed forces took over and started to broadcast pornographic material from the TV stations.

Throughout this Intifada, the Israeli army followed a strategy to shoot on the journalists and media crews before committing crimes against the Palestinians protesters; that is in order to prevent them from covering or catching photos of the crime. In fact, these acts caused the death of at least 10 Journalists and 100 injuries. In addition to that, the Israeli Government Press Office has allegedly prepared what it calls a 'Black List' of Palestinian media workers.

Another strategy used by the Israeli



© Photograph by Nickwinch from <http://sxc.hu>

government to silence the press was through closing the Palestinian areas in the face of the media, declare it as a military closed area, and push journalists away from the events areas by force and destroying their cameras. Regarding this, Almanar TV correspondent in Gaza, Imad Eid says: "the Israelis succeed in preventing us from covering the events. As when they closed the checkpoints and nobody, even the journalists, can reach to the event place. These events, even if they are covered by words that it is not enough, because we rely on the power of visuals". To the foreign journalists, there is a warning for them when they first arrive to the Israeli airport, that if they tried to enter the Palestinian territories their lives would be in great risk. The Israeli advice, of course, is that you don't have to go there, and if you do, you will be the only one responsible for your life and personal safety. This causes hesitation among the foreign journalists from going to the Palestinian territories.

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\* Philo, Greg, Glimour, Alison, Glimour, Maureen, Rust, Sussana, Gaskell, Etta and West, Lucy (2003), 'The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: TV News and the Public Understanding', in Thussu, Daya and Freedman, Des (Eds.), *War and the Media*, pp. 133-161. Sage.

# Arrival to School is a Distressful Hardship

## A NIGHTMARE THAT DISTURBS THE CHILDREN OF ABU DEES

**With** the rigorous continuous construction of the Wall, Reem Abu Snenah, a blind ten year old girl, has currently resolved to stop attending Helen Killer School for Blind Students in Jerusalem.

Reem, who lives in Alezariah, started attending Helen Killer School at the age of six. The journey to school was hard from the mere beginning, Reem confesses. However, she had never imagined that such a journey would escalate in difficulty, to the extent that it would break her will and ability to continue to go.

Just a few months ago, her arrival to school used to take no more than fifteen minutes by car. Now life for Reem has become grimmer, as the journey to school has become one of humiliation and torture; a journey caused by the blindness of the international world.

Now Reem has to wake up extra early to go to school, escorted by a family member. She can no longer go by car. With the help of her escort, she first has to climb the Wall located in an area called Alshhiyah. On the other side of the Wall, another person waits to help her climb down.

Reem points out that climbing the Wall is a tremendously difficult, confusing and humiliating experience for a blind person. It is the ultimate physical vulnerability of a blind on the noose. Unfortunately this is not the end. The final entry to the school is connected with the emergence of Israeli soldiers around the school area.

If it happens that the soldiers are there, Reem hides until they leave. However, she is not the only one waiting for them to leave. A taxi driver usually waits to take her to the school if she succeeds to climb the other side of the Wall. The driver unfortunately does not wait for long, assuming that Reem did not succeed in her journey.

Discovering that the taxi has left, Reem is forced to roam the streets on her own, searching for someone to help her look for another taxi that would take her to the Aldahia area close to her school. When arriving, the driver helps her cross the road to enter the school. By then she is exhausted, devastated from tiredness, and mostly thinking of the daunting journey home.

For Reem, the trip to school is a trip to Hell. She has mentally accepted to climb the Wall, but to find herself screaming and asking for help because she is blind, that was more than what she could imagine. One day, while trying to cross over the Wall, the Israeli soldiers started shooting bullets and tear gas. Blind, alone and terrified, Reem was paralysed; all she could do was screaming for help.

Recalling the terrible experience, Reem says: "One day, my brother accompanied me to the Wall where I was almost going to cross it. Suddenly, the soldiers started shooting and everyone started to run away. Among those was my terrified brother, who ran away. I was paralysed, not knowing where to go or what to do. I started



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screaming for help, saying that I am blind. For the first time, I felt my weakness and my need for shelter and support. One man helped me cross the Wall. I finally arrived at the school, determined not to return to the school again."

Reem is not the only student to suffer. Many of her sighted peers suffer as well. The Wall, like a giant, hinders the sight of the school, the yard, and the houses.

Mohammed Jaffal, a 15 year old from the Wadi Aljoze area in eastern Jerusalem, studies in the Arabic Institution School. He states: "The way to school used to take ten minutes and cost one sheqals, instead of two. Today, instead of waking at 6:30am, I have to wake up at 5am. People stand in rows, waiting for their turn to cross the Wall. We are regularly prevented from entering, as the soldiers start shooting to scare us to run away, while they laugh at the amusing scene."

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Nasser Eid is a Palestinian journalist. He has a B.A. in Journalism from Birzeit University. He is an editor for many magazines that focus on children issues and is the editor of Agareed Magazine for children. He has been working at the Palestinian Child Information Centre since November 2002.

# "LIFE MAKERS"

## Comes Back Full of Life

AMR KHALED AND  
THE YOUTH JOIN  
FORCES FOR A  
**NEW  
RENAISSANCE**

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## Amr Khaled

is an Egyptian auditor, currently resides between Lebanon and the U.K. He has a B.A. in commerce, a diploma in Islamic studies and is presently a PhD candidate at the University of Wales, U.K.

**Amr Khaled**, a name that instantly brings to the mind the picturesque imagery of a modern-day preacher with the aim to reform the spiritual and practical lives of all those who devotedly watch his shows. Only 38, Khaled has already made a significant contribution to the da'wah field via influential programs such as "The Beloved Companions", "Ramadan Nights" and "Until They Change Themselves." These shows are widely acclaimed with dedicated audiences, eager to feed their souls with Islamic information in an easy-to-understand, eloquent and humble manner such as Khaled's. This new style of preaching became a phenomenon, encouraging Khaled to integrate the spiritual and practical world of Islam in his discourse. 2004 was the year Khaled presented the show "Life Makers" which aims to practically reform the nation. Currently in stage 3 of the show, Khaled aims to accelerate the passionate drive of the youth,

and all those who have initiativelly contributed, including people from other religions, to urbanise their society via projects that will make a difference in their lives and the world as a whole. Khaled's shows inspires the viewers to recognise that a Muslim is not a person who just worships Allah and hopes for the best, a Muslim is a person who submits to Allah through spiritual acts of worship and simultaneously reforms the earth; the practical mission of all humans since the days of Adam.

to enthuse them with positivness and direct them towards developing their societies instead of being directed towards crime or terrorism."

### "Life Makers" Objectives:

- 1- Seeking to instigate a revival that would participate in propelling the world towards advancement and prosperity;
- 2- Seeking to bring about a new generation with an active and an effective role in the development of the society;
- 3- Seeking to replace the state of despair and depression, that has taken hold of the youth, with a state of hope and optimism about a better future.

### When Life is Made Not Just Lived!

Life Makers is a TV show that sees itself as a project dedicated to development. Life Makets "does not ally itself to any religious, political or factional institution" according to amrkhaled.net. "It seeks to achieve a total revitalisation in all the aspects of life, through installing the values of success into the souls of the participants. It seeks



## THE THIRD STAGE OF "LIFE MAKERS" REVIVAL PROJECT STARTED ON FEBRUARY 22ND 2005

WATCH "LIFE MAKERS" ON **TUESDAYS, 6:00 P.M. GMT** ON IQRAA' TV CHANNEL

DOWNLOAD "LIFE MAKERS" BROCHURE THAT HAS ALL THE DETAILS ABOUT THE IDEA OF THE REVIVAL PROGRAM AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND STAGE:

[http://www.amrkhaled.net/downloads/3rdstage/lifemakers\\_brochure\\_en.zip](http://www.amrkhaled.net/downloads/3rdstage/lifemakers_brochure_en.zip)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
<http://www.amrkhaled.net>



# Hadeer

## YOUTH SHOUT IN ACTIONS

Hadeer is an Arabic word that refers to the strong sound water currents produce. Inspired by Amr Khaled's TV show "Life Makers", Hadeer came to voice the concerns and ambitions of the Muslim youth. Hicham Maged reports the story of their success.

**Hicham Maged**

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Sometimes, we find ourselves in a situation where our voice can't reach people to tell them the truth, and then what shall we do? We simply shout aloud and cheer in actions rather than words!

From this simple fact, Hadeer Organisation was initially established in Beirut, Lebanon. The story began 5 years ago in January 2000; when a group of young Muslims had joined forces together in order to clarify the distorted image about Islam in most Western and Arab outlets.

They were aware of the media's influence and how it shapes the public's opinion. Thus they set a goal to change this image by providing the real image about Islam.

In Arabic, Hadeer means "loud voice". It's used to describe the voice of waves. So simply, Hadeer Association is not shouting aloud for the sake of anger, rather it's shouting out in a loud voice – or Hadeer – to explain who Muslims are in a professional and dynamic way, by using a very effective tool in the 21st Century, which is the media.

Complementary, the logo had to reflect a specific message: "to deliver messages using media tools in a peaceful way".

In order to achieve this target, Pigeons had been introduced because they were used as the first media tool to send messages. The idea of the two pigeons across each other was a way to reflect the two way communication that they rely on to achieve this target.

Hadeer is a non-profit media organisation (N.P.O.), where all members, males and females, work together on a volunteer basis, creating strong bonds between members to raise a big family

spirit.

The profits collected from any project with fundraising & donations are used to finance and execute future potential projects. Hadeer is an independent organisation which is neither an "Islamic organisation" nor affiliated to any political/religious group.

To framework its mission, Hadeer had listed the following objectives:



**Hadeer members with "Yallah Shabab" TV show presenters**

Clear out misconceptions about Islam.  
Promote an unbiased image of Islam in the media.

Provide a proud Islamic Identity.  
Create the right environment for new comers to Islam.  
Create Media awareness.  
Create new modern, non-classical designs in our projects, the "Hadeer Style".  
Send indirect messages in all projects via Mainstreams Media.  
Provide parent/child educational awareness.  
Surely these objectives have a target audience who have no age/religion restriction, yet preferably the uprising generation, who have one or more of the following criteria:

They don't have interest/knowledge in Islam.

They have misconceptions about Islam.  
They can't find the right environment.  
Since the media is the clue to unlock the closed doors, Hadeer focused on using Media Mainstreams; for that matter we can find that their projects have 4 main themes (Physical and Virtual):

- I. Productions: (Music, Video Clip, TV & Documentary).
- II. Publications: (Books, Cards, Calendars & Gadgets).
- III. Events: (Mosques, Basketball Tournament, Iftar & Joint Venture Events).
- IV. The Internet: (Hadeer.com).

Each of these 4 themes aims to fulfil Hadeer's missions and objectives, mentioned earlier.

So if you find your image - as a Muslim - wrongly understood, then you should shout out loud! When you feel you can do something positive to your community, then you should shout out loud! If you want to shout out loud in a dynamic way, just look for Hadeer.



**Video clips produced by Hadeer**



### Contact Hadeer:

Hadeer Organisation  
P.O. Box 114-5051  
Beirut – Lebanon (Headquarter)  
[www.hadeer.com](http://www.hadeer.com)

# Balance and Imbalance

## IN THE EQUATION ON “DIFFERENTIATION – CONTINUITY” BETWEEN CIVILISATIONS

“Following Scientific revolutions, and through an unexpected transfer, scientists are now facing a different science”. This is the conclusion reached by Thomas S. Khun in his theory on the structure of scientific revolution... in the case of technological revolutions however, the whole world is exposed to a gradual change, and the rate of change depends on the nature of the technologies of impact ad their interaction with the elements of the social environment.”



By **Hussein Maaloum\***

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### A Universal Civilisation... Or Civilisational Specificities?

To test the truth of the above mentioned saying and to obtain information on the requirements of the current “revolution”, as compared with social requirements, we must carefully examine the question of “civilisation” and the “culture” and “civil” questions connected with it. Many questions arise in this context: “What is Civilisation?” What is its relation to culture? What are its social indicators? Does it belong to all mankind or to every specific society? Then, which greatly matters, how the interactions and effects of the elements of human development can be traced, since these elements are embodied in the following trilogy: mankind (societies and their intra and inter relations), space (geography), and time (history)?

No agreement has been reached on the meaning of such words as “civilisation” and “culture”, or on the differences between them, for they are often used as synonyms in history books, and we can say that there certainly seems to be a general assumption that there is no need to define “civilisation” since it, in itself, pertains to all mankind. Hence, the great confusion that we are witnessing today between words.

This deliberate confusion between culture and civilisation, which is

defined as sheer material progress, aims among other things, at getting the world accustomed to the idea that there is just one kind of civilisation, the civilisation of “production”, while providing other historic connotations for the word, so as to do away with any differentiation between culture and civilisation, as nothing in the history of the word “civilisation” could justify an attempt to distinguish between the two.

In fact, the “civilisation of production” is greatly indebted to the West. However, when did the United States, Great Britain and France come into being? When did the regions making up Germany and those making up Italy come into being? The “West”, in its contemporary form, only achieved this phase of the “civilisation of production” because it inherited the rich expertise and scientific heritage – accumulated and perfected over centuries – from peoples, who were annihilated in time (the Sumerians and the Phoenicians), and others who survived in space (Persians and Arabs).

From this point of view, we can say that attributing “civilisation” to one nation, or to some specific nation (specifically Western), while asserting that the other nation and people must acquire it, is a falsification of history and reality. This is an inhuman

monopoly which excludes the rest of the human race and is nothing in reality, but a refutation of civilisation because it empties it of its content. As to the deliberate confusion, on the other hand, between civilisation and culture, it goes back to the seventies of the 19th century, when Edward Burnett Taylor provided us in the introduction of his book: “Primitive culture, 1871”, with his famous definition, which points out that culture (or civilisation), in its broad ethnographic sense, is a sum that comprises knowledge, beliefs art ethics, laws, traditions, and all the other capacities and customs, that a human being acquires by being a member of a given society. Taylor’s definition, although it makes no distinction between culture and civilisation, was that most widely accepted one so far. Many authors tacitly or outspokenly rely on this definition, inasmuch as the answer to the question, “What is Civilisation?” has become difficult to find.

### So, how can we solve this problem?

Let us say that civilisation is not made up of outside the human race and everything else, such as the heritage (intellectual or artistic), and structures (material ones), are the vestiges, signs and symbols of man’s

civilisation. And, while every generation in every society leaves "traces", which make up a civilisation and tells its history, civilisation remains a "set of traditions" which is useless and impossible to count.

It is useless to count them, because these traditions differ and sometimes contradict each other from one society to the other, and it might therefore be useless, albeit possible, to count them, beyond the scope of one specific society. Furthermore, they cannot be counted because they are innumerable. The maximum we can say is that they are behavioural rules, that distinguish between good and bad, in dealing with things and people, and in the whole life of things and people, including religions, creeds, laws, customs, literature, values, the aesthetic criteria of art, literature, music, architecture and social criteria, that specify for all societies what should be man's stands, attitudes and behaviour, and what he should expect of others, while interpreting, justifying and beautifying these criteria.

Thus, as we seek to find out, "What is Civilisation?", we can progress towards formulating its definition or concept, and let us clearly point out that the definition of "civilisation" will not result from a competition over the use of words, but from an essential need to know about this social phenomenon, that is the subject of all serious discussions about the future, especially as we stand on the first years of the 21st century, or rather a new millennium, and in the framework of the scientific and technical revolution that the world is witnessing in the field of communication and informatics.

It is usually said that men have a double relation with nature and with society that research usually concentrates on one or both of these two poles. However, we believe that this saying is limited and requires to be completed by adding men's interactions within nature and within society, by time, because they generate yields (agricultural production, industrial production, tools of production and transport, systems, doctrines, beliefs, customs, ethics,

etc) that are encompassed and surpassed, and that come to be part of nature and society thanks to human creativity.

Therefore, to look at men within nature, within society and within time, is to "look" at what is called the past or history or the "circumstances" that contain nature, society and man himself, and what has resulted from the interaction of all these elements throughout the past and therefore cannot be cancelled any more.

### **At all events, what does all of this have to do with "civilisation"?**

The relation is clear, observation without knowledge is enough for us to know that the interaction of people with other people and with nature produces a "material" yield (agricultural production, industrial production, production tools, constructions, etc) and the interaction of people "in society" produces a "moral/social" yield (ideas, principles, systems, values, traditions, arts, etc).

Therefore, to look at the yield resulting from man's interaction with nature and with other men in society, is to "look" at what is called "civilisation". For if we add to this, the stability of people in a specific territory, and homogeneous language and unified territory that this (stability) signifies, as well as the fact that nature is embodied in a specific plot of land that is distinct from and not distinguished over others, this specification world means that the yield produced by people's interaction with their own and among themselves, will be differentiated in its "material" (civil), or its "spiritual" (cultural), content from others, and therefore at the "civilisation" level.

Civilisation, then, is the "knowledge content, material and spiritual, generated by men's interactions with nature and with other men within a specific society, in a specific amount of time." It is therefore part of the personality of every generation in every society. Consequently, every person from every generation carries over his "civilisation" from the past, "develops it argumentatively" and transfers it to the next generation.

One of the specifications of culture, hence, is that it is passed over from one generation to the next, through language (which plays a basic role in this transfer), in what is called the "continuity of generation".

No wonder then, that every society has its specific "civilisation", for this is the specificity that some people call "civilisational specificity". So that we hurry on to say: the fact that a certain group of people represents a society with distinct "civilisational specificity" does not mean that this society is not part of the general development of humanity. In fact, the existence of "civilisational differences" does not mean that one "civilisation" should be isolated from the "civilisations" of other nations, and neither does it mean that the civilisation of this society should not flow into the "civilisational" deposit into which the "civilisations" of the other societies flow. And this human (civilisational) deposit contains the sum of the residues of numerous civilisations, and it is understood that the civilisation of any society would be enriched by interacting with the civilisational specificities of other societies, in what may be termed "Civilisation Interaction", or more precisely, "Civilisational Continuity".

We are facing, here, a "theoretical puzzle" related to the relation between the two extremes of civilisational "differences" and "continuity", as two characteristic aspects of the movement of societies from the civilisational point of view.

### **READ IN THE NEXT ISSUES:**

- The Civilisation "Differences – Continuity" Equation.
- Civilisation and Technology, and the Struggle of Informatics.

\* Hussein Maaloum is an Egyptian researcher and writer. He is the editor-in-chief of the "African Strategic Report", which is published biennially by the Arab Development Institute. Maaloum has published several books and researches in the fields of political thought, political economy and international relations.

# THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE (2)

Continuing from the last issue, this article will discuss the history of medicine.

## The Ayurveda of India:

Ayurvedic medicine is another system that is thought to have developed earlier than medicine in the West. Like Chinese medicine, it has greatly remained the same throughout its history. It too views health as a balance between a person and the environment, and it is a historical system that has taken climate, work, eating habitat and emotions into account.

The theory of Ayurvedic medicine concedes forces around the human body and gives them the name "five elements" which are earth, air, fire, water and the life force which is known as "prana".

Because many Indians are vegetarian, Ayurvedic medicine mainly consists of plant remedies. Liquorice, ginger, pomegranate, myrrh, garlic and aloe are among the herbs used in Ayurvedic medicine.

## Greek Medicine:

In the 5th century B.C., Ancient Greece had the theory that life was based on the four elements; earth, air, fire and water.

It was also believed that these four forces were represented in the human body as black bile, blood, yellow bile and phlegm.

Hippocrates (460-370 BC), who is still referred to as the father of medicine, presented around 300 remedies, including many that are still used today, such as chamomile, cassia, garlic and cinnamon.

Treatment was adjusted to the

individuals and involved diet, massage, water therapy and rest. Even the best Greek physicians had little knowledge about how the remedies worked, but they watched their patients' progress and tried to build their skills.

## Medicine in the Roman Period:

Romans mixed medicine with magic and religion, and they based their medicine on the Hippocratic treatment.

Romans discovered the early type of aspirin, which is white willow; they would prescribe it for pain. They also discovered many poison antidotes.

## Medicine in Islam:

While Europe was in the dark ages, Islamic Arabia was in the golden ages. For 1200 years after the decline of Rome, it was the Muslim Empire that kept Greek medicine alive. The Arabs added remedies such as camphor, musk, nux vomica and borax.

The Arabs based the roles of public and personal hygiene in the prevention of disease. The resulting Greco-Islamic medicine was described in an encyclopaedia, "The Canon Medicine" written by Ibn Sina in the 11th century.

Med-Aware by  
**Radwa Samir**  
radwa@nashiri.net

# HOME REMEDIES

## Tonic to calm nerves:

1oz (25gm) hops  
1oz (25gm) lavender flower  
1oz (25gm) palm leaves  
1oz (25gm) primrose

## Instructions:

Add 1 teaspoonful of the mixture to 1/2 cup of boiling water. Take twice daily without sugar.

## Herbal remedy for headaches and sickness:

1oz (25gm) betony  
1oz (25gm) rosemary  
1oz (25gm) sage  
1oz (25gm) peppermint  
1oz (25gm) marjoram

## Instructions:

Mix these ingredients and boil for 30 minutes in 2 litres of water. Remove

from heat and leave to stand until cool and clear. Take one cup three times daily.



# AromaTHERAPY (PART1)

While writing this article I'm enjoying the fragrance of musk, which comes out of a traditional Indian fragrance cone. This fragrance positively elevates your mood.

In the pharmaceutical world there is a branch which is based on the use of aromatic plants and fragrances as remedies. It is known as "aromatherapy".

Aromatherapy has been popular since ancient Roman times. The word "aromatherapy" is divided into two words; "aroma" which means fragrance and "therapy" which means a remedy or a way to relieve physical symptoms.

The ancient Romans put their hands on many fragrances that could relieve stress and aid in relaxation. For example, they used lavender baths for relaxation. In aromatherapy, we use essential oils.

## What Does "Essential Oils" Mean?

Any aromatic plant has essential oils. As essential oils are the natural fragrance of aromatic plants, these scents are manufactured by the plants themselves and held in their tissues, only to be released when touched or by the heat of the sun. Of all the plants on earth, only about one percent contains essential oils.

## Top Advice for Using Essential Oils:

There are several simple ways to use essential oils in aromatherapy, including baths, inhalation and massage.

### Top Tip: A 20-Minute Bath

- To relieve stress and tension, run a bath to a comfortable temperature.
- Take one essential oil and sprinkle a maximum of four drops. Alternatively, combine two essential oils and sprinkle three drops each onto the surface of the water.
- Agitate the water gently to disperse the oils before getting in.
- If you have dry or sensitive skin, you can dilute the essential oil in 20 ml of full cream milk.
- A simple relaxation combination is three drops of lavender and sandalwood.

### Top Tip: 15-20 Minute Inhalation

This method helps to relieve colds, flu or sinus problems.

- You need a large bowl, just over half full of nearly boiling hot water.
- Sprinkle two drops each of eucalyptus and tea tree onto the surface.
- Wrap your head with a towel and inhale the aromatic steam for 15-20 minutes.
- Warning: remove your glasses or contact lenses so they don't steam up or irritate the eyes.

### Top Tip: Vaporise Your Room

Vaporisers gently heat up to evaporate the essential oil and disperse its fragrance into a room. You can buy a ceramic burner with tea light candles or one of the many electric models available. Note: You should follow the manufacturer's guidelines when using the oil.

- Take one essential oil and use four drops or combine two oils and use three drops each to scent the room in two hours.
- You can use tea tree and lemon essential oils to remove unpleasant odours, or choose your favourite aroma to create an environment that suits your mood.

### Top Tip: Treat Yourself with a Massage

- When using essential oils for massage, they need to be diluted in carrier oil. Carrier oil can be grape seed oil, almond oil or jojoba oil.
- We can use 20 ml of carrier oil with 10 ml of essential oils as a massage.
- The mixture should be stored in a clean glass bottle. Shake the bottle well before use. Your blend may last for a maximum of four weeks.



## Try Aromatherapy Yourself!

I will present to you some plants easily found which can be used in aromatherapy. Try it yourself and see the amazing results of aromatherapy.

### Turmeric (root) Curcuma Longal

#### Plant Profile:

Turmeric is a plant that looks very much like ginger, with tall shoots and abundant elegant leaves. It is a member of the same botanical family. The higher aromatic roots are bright yellow. The roots are cleaned and sun dried before being grounded as a spice or distilled for the oil. India and Indonesia are the main producers.

#### Safety Information:

No issues.

#### Fragrance Profile:

It has a dry, musty, and vegetable like aroma; sweet and spicy as it evaporates.

#### Main Use:

- Soothes and eases backache and muscle pain.
- Improves circulation.
- Tones and improves digestion.
- Eases stomach cramps and constipation.
- Very stabilising and grounding to overwrought emotions.
- Energises the body.

#### Suggested Blends:

- For aches and pains add four drops of turmeric, four drops of ginger and two drops of vetiver to 20 ml of carrier oil and massage it gently to the effected area.
- Cramps and indigestion can be eased by blending four drops of turmeric, two drops of lemongrass and four drops of ginger in 20 ml of carrier oil. Massage the blend on the abdomen.

- For emotional tension, add one drop of turmeric, two drops of neroli and two drops of ginger to a warm bath. Bathe for 20 minutes.

### Sandalwood (wood) Santalum Album

#### Plant Profile:

The best quality sandalwood comes from the Mysore region in India, near Bangalore. It takes 30 years for the wood to mature to its full aromatic potential. The wood is used in distillation of sandalwood oil. It is also powdered for making incense sticks and cosmetics.

#### Safety Information:

No issues.

#### Fragrance Profile:

This beautiful oil should be thick and a pale golden colour, with a subtle aroma at first, deepening to a rich, woody, spicy, sweet fragrance as it evaporates.

#### Main Uses:

- Eases tight chesty coughs, colds, and sore throats.
- Soothes dry chapped skin and improves the texture of all skin types.
- Eases depression, anxiety and feelings of panic.

#### Suggested Blends:

For coughs, add three drops of sandalwood, three drops of cedar wood and four drops of lemon to 20 ml of carrier oil and massage gently over the chest area.

For skin care, blend six drops of sandalwood, two drops of patchouli and two drops of rose in 20 ml of jojoba oil. Massage it to the face

in the evening.

To ease anxiety or depression, add three drops of sandalwood and two drops of orange to a warm bath and bathe for 20 minutes. Add the same oils to 10 ml of carrier oil and massage into the skin afterwards.

### Peppermint (leaf) Mentha Piperita

#### Plant Profile:

It is a tall vigorous mint with a very invasive habit; ask any gardener. It spreads rapidly through a tough root system. The square erect stem supports deep green aromatic leaves.

Peppermint essential oil mostly comes from the USA, where it is used to flavour toothpaste and chewing gum.

#### Safety Information:

If your skin is sensitive, use half the stated drops of peppermint in any blend due to the menthol contained in the oil which can act as an irritant.

#### Fragrance Profile:

Pungent, fresh, zesty and minty aroma with a sweet note later.

#### Main Uses:

- Eases stomach cramps, indigestion, constipation and nausea.
- Helps in muscular aches and pains, eases headaches and migraines.



- Also clears the head and improves concentration.

#### **Suggested Blends:**

Indigestion symptoms can be helped by massaging the abdomen with two drops of peppermint, four drops of ginger and four drops of cardamom in 20 ml of carrier oil.

For aches and pains, massage daily with two drops of peppermint, four drops of rosemary and four drops of black pepper in 20 ml of carrier oil.

To ease headache, add two drops of peppermint and three drops of lavender to 20 ml of carrier oil and massage the forehead and neck.

To clear the mind, vaporise two drops of peppermint and three drops of lemon.

#### **Geranium *Pelargonium Graveoles***

##### **Plant Profile:**

A leaf of this plant contains hairs. Rubbing the surface hair releases a strong rosy aroma onto your fingers. The germanium grows like a shrub, up to 1 meter high, and has pinkish flowers. The essential oil has a powerful floral aroma. We can find it in Egypt, China and India.

##### **Safety Information:**

No issues.

##### **Main Uses:**

- Soothes cracked and inflamed skin, eczema, dermatitis and acne.
- Eases premenstrual symptoms, such as:
- Lack of energy and fluid retention.
- Soothes mood swings.
- Helps to balance hormonally related emotional upsets.

#### **Suggested Blends:**

For skin problems add three drops of germanium, three drops of sandalwood and four drops of lavender to 20 ml of carrier oil and apply it to the area as needed.

To ease premenstrual symptoms, try adding three drops of germanium and three drops of petitgrain to a warm bath.

In the next issue, we will know more about aromatherapy and plants used in it.

# GREEN PHARMACY

Welcome again to the green pharmacy, I hope you enjoy using the amazing plants present around you as remedies.

#### **Dandelion *Traxacum Officinalis***

The leaves of this common weed are one of the most effective and useful diuretics known, helps in oedema and water retention, especially that of premenstrual.

The leaves and roots are bitters which stimulate digestion and help those who suffer from indigestion.

The roots are useful as a liver tonic and help to increase bile flow, which is essential for digestion, especially for a fatty diet.

Herbalists use dandelion root to help the liver recover from diseases like jaundice, hepatitis, and cirrhosis and also to help in the recovery of warts.

##### **How to Use:**

The leaves can be eaten fresh from the garden or dried and made in standard infusion.

The roots should be harvested in fall, chopped finely and taken as standard decoction, or roasted to be used like coffee beans; it will be free from caffeine of course.

#### **Ginger *Zingiber Officinal***

Ginger has a proven record of relieving travel sickness and morning sickness in pregnancy. It also stimulates circulation of the feet and hand which is helpful in

cases like varicose ulcer. It is also good for colds and sore throats.

A small amount of ginger in foods stimulates digestion and helps as anti flatulence.

##### **How to Use:**

Fresh ginger root is best taken as a standard infusion. If fresh root is not available, use powder ginger root, add 1 1/2 teaspoons to 600 ml of water.

#### **Thyme *Thymus Species***

Thyme from the garden or the spice rake has been a useful respiratory and stomach remedy. Its volatile oil contains a strong antimicrobial, thymol, which helps in the lungs, throat, and stomach.

It can be used to relieve the common cold and its effective expectorant helps clear the lungs. This is aided by its ability to relax spasm that narrows the small airways in the lungs.

Thyme also helps in killing intestine worms. In addition, the volatile oil in thyme passes into the kidney where it helps disinfect the urine and the bladder in conditions like cysts. The herb is also effective against fungal infection and can also be used as a mouthwash for mouth thrush. It can also be used as vaginal douche in case of thrush.

##### **How to Use:**

As a standard infusion or tincture, it can be prepared using fresh or dried leaves or even the whole dried herb. Note: the dried herb is only good for one year.

# HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S MILKY TEETH?

By **Dr. Mira Bosso\***

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## **Some Facts You Need to Know About Baby's Teeth:**

\*Children's teeth "also called milky or deciduous teeth" are the primary teeth that start to appear in your baby's mouth as early as 5 months of age.

\*They start to form and develop long before birth.

\*By the age of 3 years, all of the twenty primary teeth are present in the mouth.

\*They all vary in their order of appearance, pace and time of loss.

\*The first permanent tooth appears around 6 years of age.

\*The last primary tooth is to be lost usually around 12-13 years old.

\*The age between 6 and 12 years is called the "mixed dentition stage" when some of both primary and permanent teeth coexist in the mouth.

## **Their Importance:**

These milky teeth serve the logical functions of mastication (chewing), speech (pronunciation) and appearance (how we look in front of others), same as their permanent successors.

But another major function only the primary teeth has, and parents seem not to see or well-estimate, is their importance as guiders of the future permanent teeth to their right positions in the mouth and to their proper alignment in the oral cavity.

To enable your children's teeth to do their functions, play their roles and fulfill their destinies, they have to be kept healthy and clean as possible through their full serving time.

yes, because each deciduous tooth has a nearly specific time called "Shedding

Time" on which it will be normally lost from your child's mouth.

Losing a milky tooth so early before its time jeopardizes the eruption "gradual appearance" of the permanent tooth beneath it, which is supposed to come up in the same space of lost primary one, as this space tends to be closed by the migration "movement" of the neighboring primary teeth into this same space, thereafter disturbing the eruption and arrangement of the permanent ones.

Leading later on life, to the painful, very expensive and very long orthodontic treatments to rearrange the permanent teeth using braces, for instance.

With this knowledge, parents' awareness to protect a child's primary teeth arises through:  
 1) Daily home care and good oral hygiene habits passing them to the child.  
 2) Regular check ups to the children's dental clinic.



© Photograph by Jynmeier from http://sxc.hu

### **Q.s & A.s on How to Take Care of Your Child's Teeth:**

**Q:** When should I start caring for my child's teeth and how?

-Good dental hygiene habits should start before the first tooth shows up.

-Wipe your baby's gums with a damp soft cloth after feeding. It will prevent bacteria from building up in the mouth.

-When his baby teeth begin to erupt, use a small-sized, soft tooth brush twice a day.

-Once the child reaches the pre-school age ,you can start using fluoride tooth-paste. Don't cover the brush with tooth paste, only a pea-sized amount is just right amount. Young children tend to swallow most of the tooth paste. Swallowing too much fluoride could cause them permanent stains on their teeth.

**Q:** Does diet affect my child's teeth?

-Healthy eating habits lead to healthy teeth.  
-The less sweet, starchy and sticky food, the better. These kinds tend to stay longer and ad-

here to the teeth surfaces causing decay.

-Fruits and vegetables are better as snack meals. They will help teeth growth.

**Q:** What is "baby-bottle" tooth decay?

-When your baby goes to bed with a bottle of milk or juice, he is more likely to have tooth decay.

-That's because the sugar in the milk or the juice stays in contact with the teeth during the night for a long time, during which the washing effect of saliva normally decreases, thus inviting decay rapidly to the teeth.

## Tips to Avoid Baby-bottle Tooth Decay:

- \*Put your child to bed with a bottle of plain water, not milk or juice.
- \*Stop nursing when your child is asleep or has stopped sucking on the bottle.
- \*Try not to let your child walk around using a bottle of milk or juice as a pacifier.
- \*Start to teach your child to drink from a cup at about 6 months of age. Plan to stop using a bottle by 12 to 14 months at the latest.
- \*Don't dip your child's pacifier in honey or sugar.

## Q: Does teething make the baby sick?

- No, it doesn't.
- When teeth are coming up, your child might feel a little sore.
- You could rub the gum gently with your finger to relieve your child.
- Let your child chew on a teething ring or a pacifier, he/she will like it.

## Q: Is thumb sucking bad for my child?

- Normally the baby likes to suck his thumb or the pacifier.
- This habit tends to usually decrease and stop around the age of four, and no harm is done at that level.
- If this habit continues with the child over 4 years of age, the dentist must watch for any problem if present.
- Start worrying if it stays till 5 and 6 years of age, that's when the first permanent tooth erupts.

## Q: When should I start taking my child to the dentist?

- The ADA, American Dental Association, recommends parents to start taking their child to the dentist around his/her first

birthday.

- A pediatric dentist "pedodontist" is specialized to treat children.
- He will be able to identify any early problem and deal with it.
- The pedodontist will give you ideas about the best diet and oral hygiene instructions you ought to follow with your child.
- Early visits establishes the good habit of regular dental check-ups.
- Your pedodontist is able to recognise any early decay or caries "the black monster the eats up the tooth" and remove it, or even prevent it from forming, by the aid of new materials, techniques and therapies that have changed the face of dentistry nowadays and made your dental clinic visit more enjoyable, convenient, satisfactory and less painful for both the patient and the dentist.

## **Here are some of the preventive measures and treatments your child could receive in a dental clinic:**

### Fissure Sealant:

A preventive material used to seal "cover" the fissures and grooves on the masticating "chewing" surfaces of the primary and young permanent teeth, because they are the most susceptible areas for caries and decay. This sealant makes these surfaces easier for cleaning and brushing.

### Topical Fluoride Application:

Fluoride, proved to be the most effective chemical substance in reducing the occurrence of dental caries.

It could be applied topically hindering a tooth surface smooth and more resistant to caries.

### Dental Cavity Fillings Like:

Glass ionomers, compomers and composites which are used to fill the cavities made after removing the decay. They are all tooth-colored materials resembling the natural color of the tooth.

### Stainless-steel Crowns:

They are ready made metal crowns used incase the primary tooth was badly destructed and weakened by the loss of a great amount of its structure. These crowns protect the tooth against any further breakage.

### Space Maintainers:

Incase a primary tooth was massively decayed and couldn't be saved, that it was removed too early, a simple device called the space maintainer is customized to keep the gap and prevent it from being closed by the neighboring teeth. It is used until it is the time for the permanent tooth below to erupt.



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\* Dr. Mira Bosso is a Syrian dentist based in Kuwait. She graduated with honors from 6th of October University in Egypt.

# GRAPH Art

If you have any nice designs that you would like to share with us, please contact:

konash@nashiri.net

By  
**Sa7el**

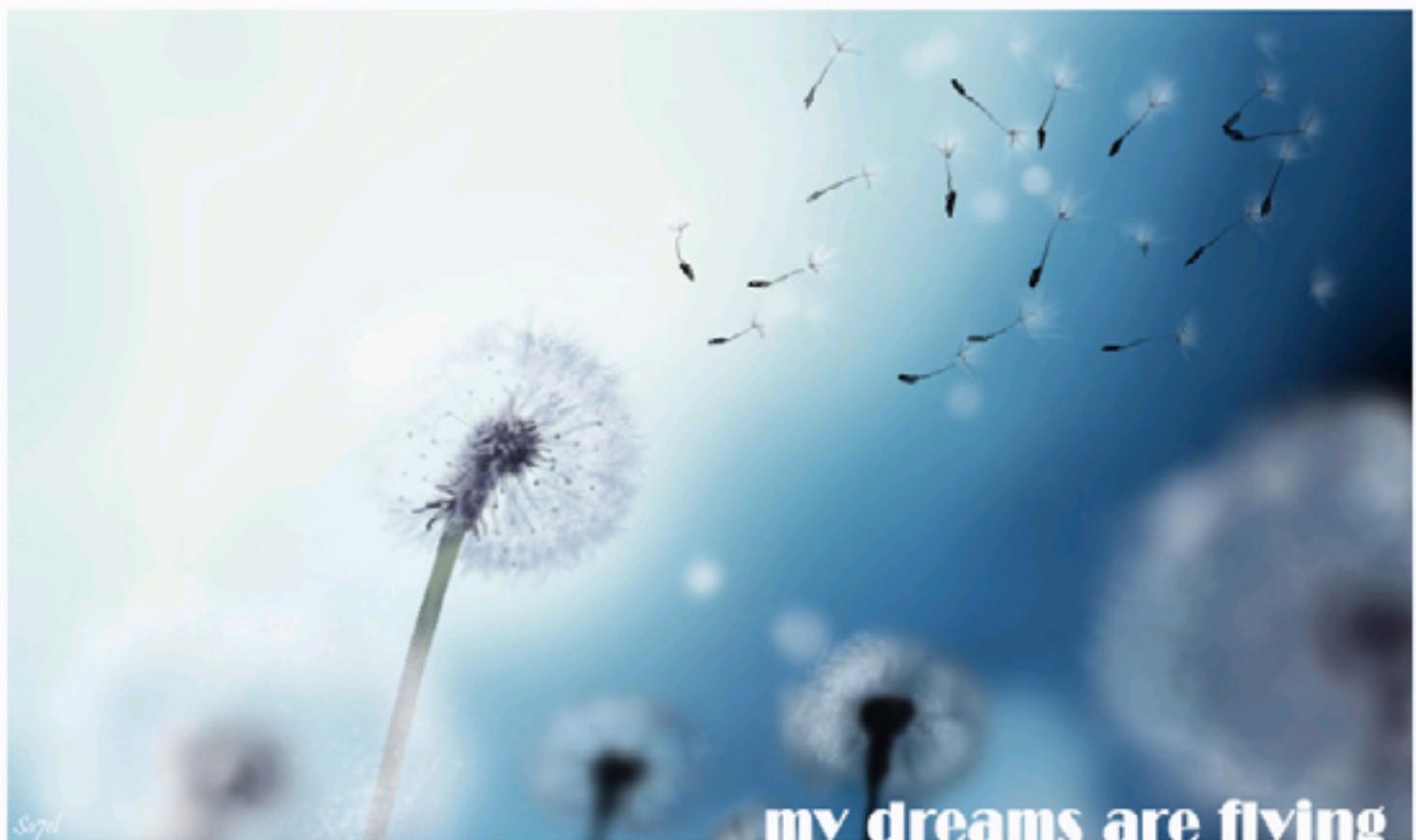
"nick name, meaning: shoar"

sim\_2009@hotmail.com

*"a photoshop drawing"*

Sa7el is a medical student studying at the Faculty of Medicine and Health sciences in the United Arab Emirates University. She has interest in photography and Graphic painting. samples of her works are at:

[www.lqta.com](http://www.lqta.com)  
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Photo by  
**Majed S.I. Ali**

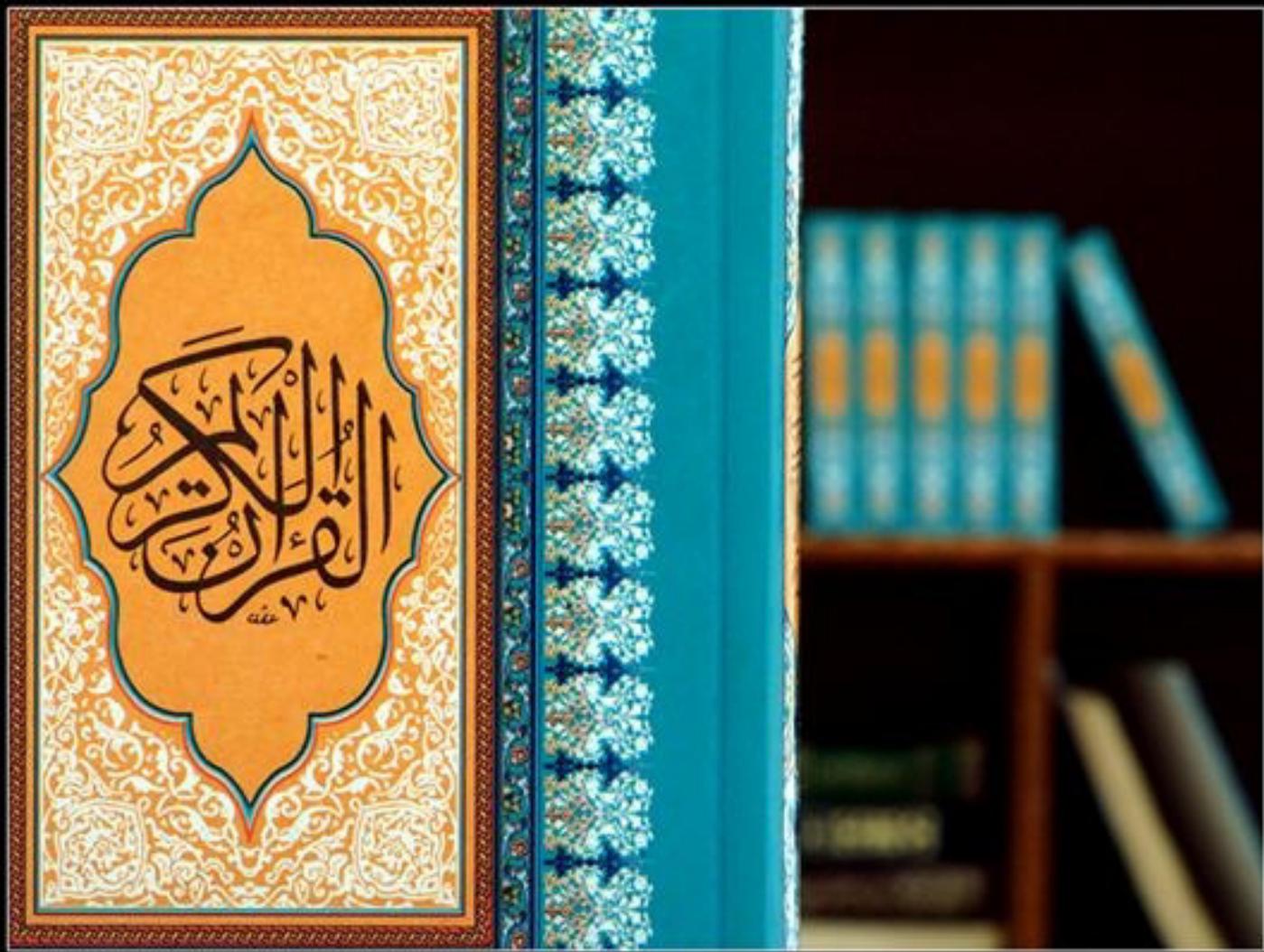
Majed is a 25 years old Computer  
Engineer from Kuwait, He is married and  
has a baby girl "Shaikha".  
He has special interest in Photography,  
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**"Zahra"** is one of my works that represents the beauty of life and it gives an amazing expression about how small things can grow and become wonderful things that draw smiles on our lips.

Shaikha 2005

Photo by  
**Shaikha**

Shaikha is 20 years old. she is a student of "Media and Communication" at Zayed University in Abu Dhabi. she is studying news and new media. she like photography and designing because they help her to express her feeling through translating it into photographs.

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# NOON CENTRE FOR QUR'ANIC STUDIES AND RESEARCHES:

## A Deeper Look in the Holy Qur'an

The marvels of the Holy Qur'an never cease. The Holy Qur'an is God's words the meanings and miracles thereof never exhaust being the eternal intellectual miracle. Whenever man gives rise to doubts, the Holy Qur'an presents the manifest proof.

Whereas the ancient Muslim scholars talked about the rhetorical miracles of the Holy Qur'an, the contemporary ones talk about other aspects of the miracles such as the legislative, historical, scientific and mathematical miracles. Such aspects and others made the efforts of the Muslim of today in presenting the proof

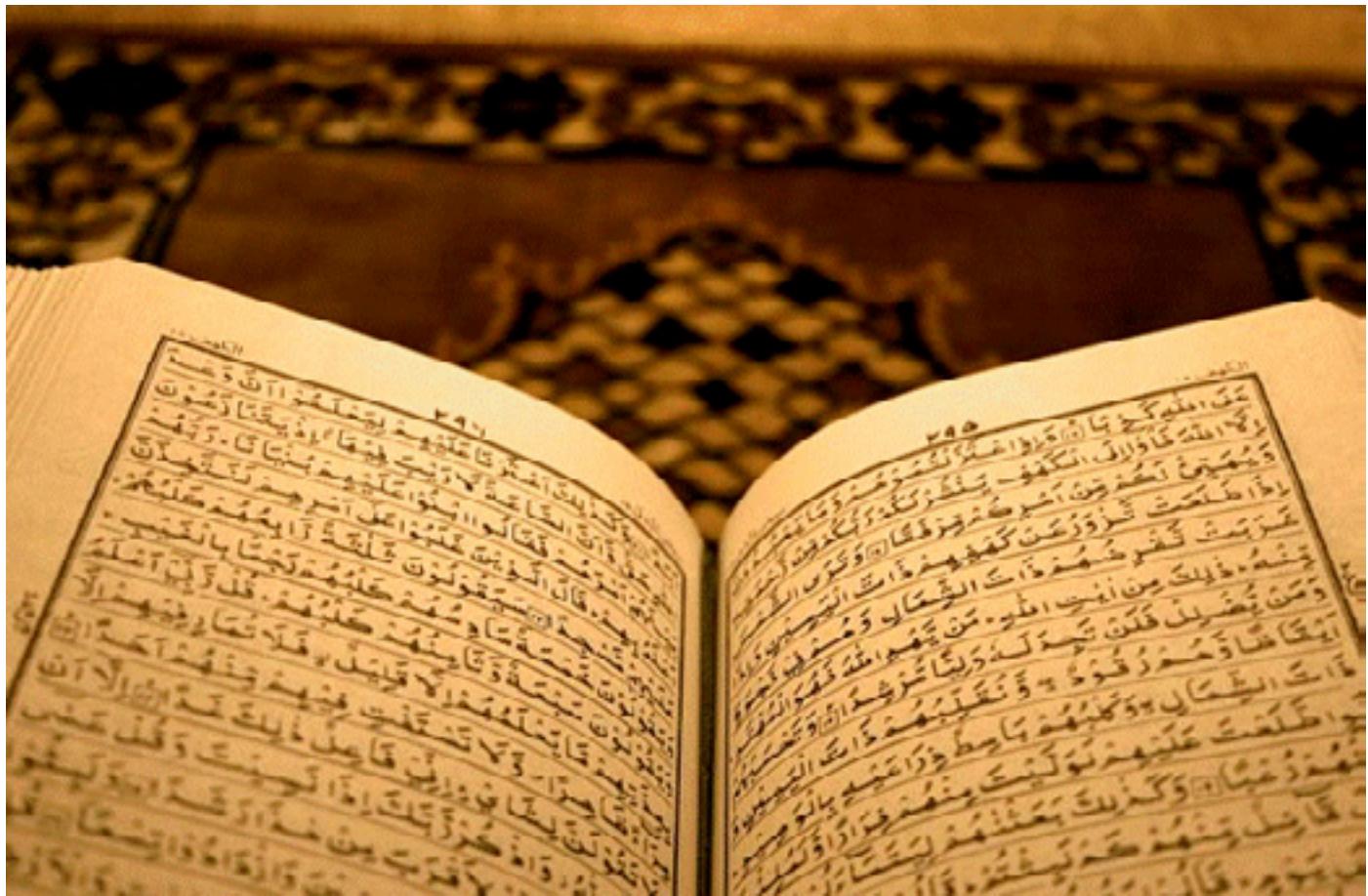
easier. The mathematical miracle, for instance, can easily abolish the false allegations of the orientalists as well as the doubt generators.

Nowadays, we can irrefutably prove through the mathematical inimitability that the Holy Qur'an neither increased nor decreased by any single letter. We can also prove that the ottoman calligraphy of the Holy Qur'an is divine inspiration i.e. dictated by revelation to the prophet P.B.U.H. This also applies to the order of the chapters (surahs) of the Holy Qur'an. More importantly is that fact proves, especially to the Arabs

the prophecy of Mohammed P.B.U.H, because mathematics are facts easily understood by all peoples irrespective of their languages.

The individual efforts alone fell short of proving the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an. The issue is far beyond the capability of one centre or more.

However, there should be an initiative or a first step. Hence, there came the idea of establishing Noon Centre for the Qur'anic Researches and Studies. No matter what so modest the outset was, it is hoped, by Allah's help and blessings, this centre will



© Photograph by Amoor from <http://sxc.hu>

be the pioneer in Palestine and the area.

### **The Centre's Objectives:**

**A. Following-up and developing the Miraculous Studies Particularly the Mathematical Miracles;**  
 Every messenger of God should have evidence in support of his message. There is no place for any evidence other than the miracle. The miracles of the messengers of God were tangible and consequently enough as a proof at their times. All Allah's messages, which preceded Islam, were limited in time and place. When the common and comprehensive message of Allah was revealed, the miracle had to be intellectual so that it would be able to give the proof at any time even after the departure of Prophet Mohammed P.B.U.H.

The intellectual miracle goes up along with the promotion of human perception and what man receives there from is proportionate to his understanding. There is no doubt that people nowadays are more capable to evaluate the intellectual miracle and they have better faculty for judgment and scrutiny.

Based on the above, we notice that researches in the Qur'anic inimitability are still below the required standard and far beyond the capabilities of contemporary man. Today, we can drink from the spring of this everlasting marvel.

**B. Following-up the Studied Related to the Society and their Promotion;**  
 The Holy Qur'an is in the first place, a book of guidance. Human race has never known throughout history such a book, which could bring about a great nation as the Holy Qur'an did. Moreover, the effectiveness and impact are in progress. It is beyond doubt that the contemporary publications to this effect are plentiful; but we aspire to present studies that conform to the requirements of the forthcoming period. Noon also hopes for taking part in rectifying the track of the contemporary researches and studies as some studies are not free

from false or intended or not intended deviations.

### *C. Following up the studies in Qur'anic sciences especially the Qur'anic exegesis;*

Qur'anic sciences include, interalia, many issues related to the Holy Qur'an such as History, compiling the Holy Qur'an, its ottoman calligraphy, recitations and the date of interpretation. There are other researches associated with the Islamic jurisprudence such as abrogation and inference. The Noon Centre is looking forward to present new and useful studies in this respect. Now, we can enrich this science through the mathematical miracles outcome.

### *D. Communication and Cooperation with Scholars and Researchers and Stimulating the Spirit of Research.*

Some recession in the intellectual and scientific activities predominates the Holy Land. This is attributed to many factors among which is the continued emigration of the scientific minds as well as the historical struggle emanating from the fact that Palestine is a safeguarding land. Today, we can overcome these challenges by assembling the scattered scientific capabilities and the creation of a helpful and motivating atmosphere. This will, consequently enable us to create an intellectual and effective establishment, which constitutes inspiration to the Palestinian people, and communicates with its sister

establishments in the Islamic world. There is no doubt that the achievement of this target will much help in realizing, by Allah's will, the other objectives.

### **Means to Achieve Objectives:**

1. Establishing a library that includes all material related to the Qur'anic studies and researches whether for reading, listening, or calculation in order to be an easy term of reference and handy for the learners and the researchers in the centre and the vicinity.
2. Publishing the studies and researches brought out by the Centre in various available publishing means for the benefit of others and to give the scholars the chance to criticize and give their observations thereat; thus, the Centre will be able to undertake the necessary development and enrichment.
3. Organizing workshops, seminars, lectures and conferences.
4. Cooperation with the universities and colleges specialized in the Qur'anic studies for the sake of activating the performance and the publicity of benefit.

### **Supervision :**

Work at the Centre is over sighted by a ten-member board of trustees. The board appoints the director of the Centre along with the administrative body.



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# The Day the World Lost

## RAFEEQ ALHAREERY

By  
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MARWAH EL-AZHARY REPORTS ON RAFEEQ ALHAREERY, AN EXAMPLE OF A SUCCESSFUL MUSLIM PIONEER.



**Monday** 14th February marked the day the world woke up to shocking news: Rafeeq Alhareery, former Prime Minister of Lebanon, was killed in a massive explosion, causing destruction to the busy city centre of Beirut, Lebanon.

Newspapers and TV News Stations immediately began to broadcast the ghastly scenes of Alhareery and 16 other victim's last encounter with the world. The scenes echoed into our minds, as the news finally began to sink in; the world had indeed lost a great man.

It is clear that Rafeeq Alhareery was admired and loved by his compatriots, and was highly respected all around the world. The pictures of Alhareery's funeral, with the mourners holding the Lebanese flag high, made it clear that Alhareery was the symbol of the country he loved and

worked diligently for its betterment for more than two decades. This emphasised the tragedy of his death and encouraged the public to reflect on Alhareery's life and achievements, who he was, how did he live his life, and what were the reasons of his success.

Alhareery was born in 1944 to a father who was a Sunni Muslim farmer and greengrocer from the southern city of Sidon, Lebanon. Alhareery majored in accountancy student at Beirut Arab University in the early 1960's, and in 1965 he interrupted his studies, reportedly because he could not afford the tuition fees, and moved to Saudi Arabia in search of employment. There he was to become one of the leading businessmen in the region. On his ascending road to success, he worked as a mathematics teacher in Jeddah and then as an auditor for an engineering firm.

In 1969 he established his own subcontracting firm, CICONEST, which played an important role in the major construction efforts of Saudi Arabia, following the oil boom in the early 1970's. His company went on to take both private and government contracts, such as building hospitals, schools, offices, palaces and hotels. In the 1970's Alhareery's firm bought the French construction company Oger, which became Saudi Oger. Without a doubt, this was the starting point of one of the largest business empires in the Arab world, and Alhareery became a Saudi citizen. Alhareery left his country to seek a better opportunity in another country, but he did not forget his homeland, Lebanon. He returned to Lebanon to implement the success, skills and knowledge he had gained in Saudi Arabia.

In 1979, he established the Islamic Institute of Higher Education in his town of birth, Sidon, giving back a generous contribution, which he felt he owed to the town that sowed him the seeds of success.

During the same year, 'Al Alhareery Foundation' was established with the main mission of securing post graduate education for Lebanese students who could not attend Lebanese universities at the time of the Lebanese civil war, and whose parents could not afford to send them abroad to study. Alhareery financed the university education of about 33,000 students inside and outside Lebanon, with more than 850 of those students receiving Ph.D. degrees. The only condition that was stipulated, in the contract the student signed to receive the Alhareery scholarship, was that he/she should return to Lebanon upon graduation to help rebuild the country. Alhareery wanted, through his unmatched generosity, to give the Lebanese students what he was deprived of back when he was a student at Beirut Arab University.

1982 saw Alhareery donate 12 million dollars to the Lebanese victims of the Israeli occupation, and helped clean up the streets of Beirut with his own money. He also used his personal money to finance the Taef National Reconciliation Accords in 1989 which put an end to the civil war in Lebanon. Almost a decade later, Alhareery sponsored the first national construction plan to redevelop Beirut's commercial centre.

It was obvious that Alhareery was on a mission to rebuild Lebanon's infrastructure following the devastating 1975-1990 civil war that dashed the country's hopes and dreams. He went on to become the biggest shareholder in the joint-stock company Solidare that sent bulldozers to resurrect central Beirut after Lebanon's 15 years of civil war.

To continue enumerating what has Alhareery given back to Lebanon would require volumes. This sum-



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mary, while it does not do him justice, it clearly shows what type of man he was.

A successful Muslim Arab entrepreneur, Alhareery had been described as one of the world's 100 richest people, and his business empire extended to cover a network of banks in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, as well as insurance and broadcasting companies, light industry, and other sectors.

These achievements were not enough to satisfy the thirst Alhareery had to rebuild Lebanon. Becoming a Member of the Council of Ministers and a Member of the Parliament, Alhareery successfully became Prime Minister of Lebanon at the age of 48 in the year 1992. He remained committed, generous and successful, putting all his energy into the ideology of reformation, until his last breath. Alhareery, a five-time prime minister, a billionaire, and a self-made businessman, was laid to rest at Beirut's Mohammad Ala-

min mosque, built after the war by money from Alhareery himself. Alhareery was a successful Muslim, Arab, and Lebanese man. Those three aspects of his personality were inseparable. The main drive behind his success was his solid determination to live his life to his fullest potential to benefit the society around him. It's only sad that some of us have only realised his achievements after the day the world lost this great man.

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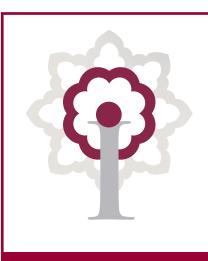
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