



FREE ONLINE NON-PROFIT
QUARTERLY P.D.F. MAGAZINE

Issue Theme:
Who Was Mu'hammad?

Video Clip Inside!

To Take a Bullet
for Him

Giving Freedom of
Speech **a Bad Name**

New Section:
Questing Questions

Who Was
Mu'hammad?

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I-MAG is a free online non-profit quarterly magazine. The first issue of the magazine was published in February 2005; three more issue came on a monthly basis. A pause of three months followed for evaluating and renovating the magazine. I-MAG became a quarterly in the Fall (September) of 2005.

I-MAG is an acronym of Islaamic Magazine. I-MAG is pronounced in two syllables; "I" as in "eye" and "mag" as in the first three sounds of magazine.

I-MAG aims at presenting a fair and objective image of Islaam. Our magazine is not a dogmatic one, we believe in critique and critical thinking in hopes of presenting intellectual enlightenment in the areas that we cover while adhering to the code of ethics of journalism.

I-MAG sees itself not merely as an electronic publication but rather as an intellectual enlightenment project that plays a part in the social economy; an economy in which responsible and free (free of charge and free of partiality) information is the main merchandise.

I-MAG's slogan "Enlighten Your I" tells a lot about the magazine. "I" stands for Islaam, but it also refers to the first speaker pronoun since we hope that we all would enlighten our "I"s or ourselves. "I" also refers to the "eye" which the design of I-MAG for sure pleases.

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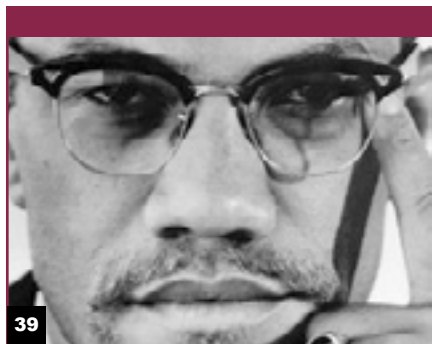
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



4 Sarah Wonders:
"In Shaa- Allaah": What Does It Mean?

5 Graph-Art:
Should We Get Angry?

6 Photo-Great:
"Sultan A'hmad Mosque"
Malaysian Mosque

8 Photo-Tips:
Party It!

10 Capita:
Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H)
In Others' Words

Occidental View:
11 . Giving "Freedom of Speech"
a Bad Name
13 . T.V. Images Don't Bring Change

15 Muslim Without Borders:
Beyond Boycott

Macrophone:

17 . To Take a Bullet for Him
19 . Finding a Breeze in Chaos
21 . In the Name of Miss Liberty:
Hunting the Bird of Freedom
25 . Where Have All the Morals
Gone?

Pinnacle:

26 . Evening of Enlightenment:
A "Crusade" on Ignorance!
28 . Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H)
Vedio Clip
29 . Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H):
Legacy of a Prophet

30 Non-Profit Organisations:
Muslim Professionals, UK

32 Insight
The High Morality of the Prohet
(P.B.U.H)

36 Obituaty
Sheikh Jaber

39 Fair View:
Islaam as a Pastoral in the Life of
Malcolm X

Lofty-Toons

In Depth:
45 . Islaamic Consciousness:
Nationalism or Anti-nationalism?
part 2

48 Letter to the Editor:
A Caricature of Academic
Freedom

Calligraphy

Questing Questions:
50 . Prophets & Messengers
51 . Mu'hammadans & Muslims

Sarah WONDERS

SARAH IS A NINE-YEAR-OLD GIRL WITH AN INQUISITIVE MIND. SHE HAS A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAAM. SHE ATTEMPTS TO SORT OUT THE MYTH FROM THE STEREOTYPE FROM THE TRUTH. WHEN IN DOUBT, SHE ASKS.

IN EACH ISSUE, WE WILL PUBLISH ONE OF SARAH'S QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAAM AND THE ANSWER TO IT.

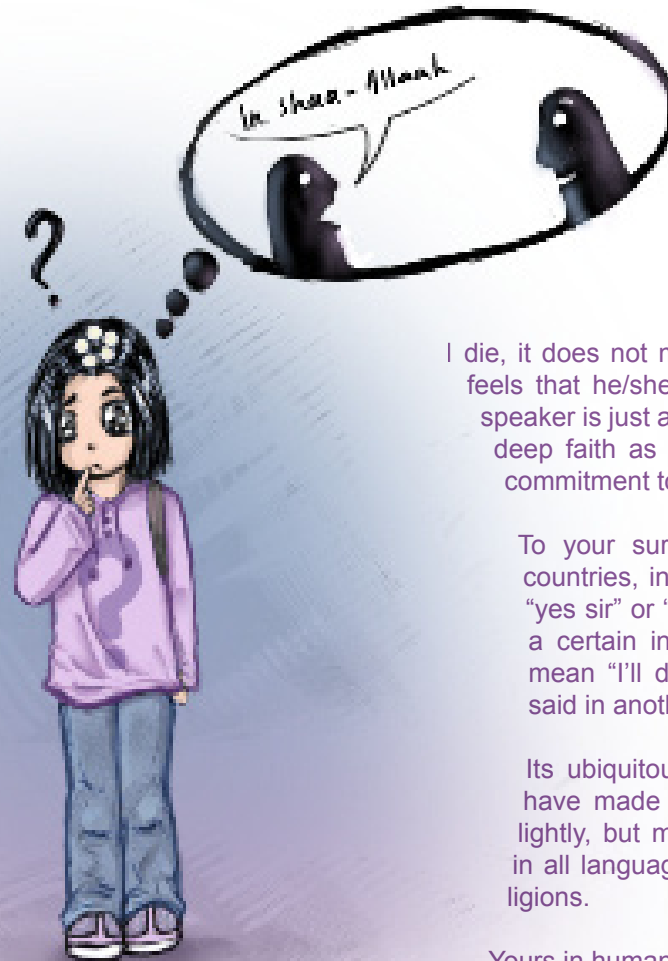
If you have any question about Islaam, do not hesitate to e-mail it to Sarah. She will make sure that we answer it! :)

Sarah's e-mail address is:
sarah@i-mag.org

Q. I frequently hear Muslims say "in shaa- Allaah." What does it mean? Is it a way to put someone off or eluding a responsibility?
Sarah

A. Dear Sarah,

"In shaa- Allaah" literally means "If Allaah wills." In contrast to what you think, in shaa- Allaah is a sort of pledge; the speaker when following his/her promise by in shaa- Allah, he/she means that "I'll totally ready to do it unless a God-brought barrier comes in my way." The frequent use of the phrase reveal the deep faith that no matter how well you plan, there is always a divine course of action that can intervene and you should take into consideration. Some people also use other variations of this such as "if Allaah kept us alive", which means I'll do it unless



I die, it does not mean that the person feels that he/she is going to die, the speaker is just acknowledging his/her deep faith as well as his/her deep commitment to the task.

To your surprise, in some Gulf countries, in shaa- Allaah means "yes sir" or "yes ma'am" if said in a certain intonation. It can also mean "I'll do it with pleasure" if said in another intonation.

Its ubiquitous appearance might have made some people take it lightly, but misuse I always there in all languages, cultures, and religions.

Yours in humanity,
I-MAG Team

GRAPH Art

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

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Should We Get Angry?

By

Ahmad Al-Amoodi

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Photo by
Ahmad Konash

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Sultan A'hmad Mosque

(The Blue Mosque)
Istanbul, Turkey
Summer 2005



archive:
http://www.lqta.com/gallery/categories.php?cat_id=26

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

konash@i-mag.org



Malaysian Mosque

Photo by

Ahmad Kamal Mat Zain

Kelantan, Malaysia
aremalzz@gmail.com

*This Picture was taken by Fuji
FinePix S7000 at Pasir Mas,
Kelantan, Malaysia at night.
ISO 200 1.5" and F2.8*



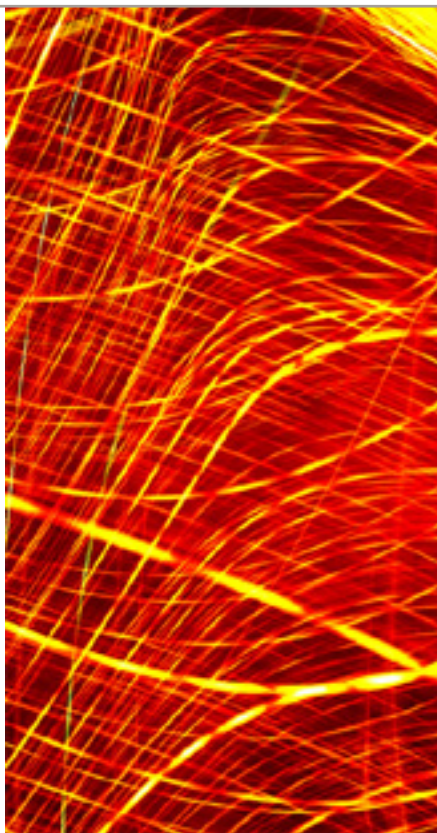
*This Photograph Won
I-MAG's Photography
Contest!*

*The photographer will
receive a collection
Islamic nasheeds (songs)*



Party It!

By
Ahmad Konash
konash@i-mag.org



© Photograph by konash, lqta.com

■ Idea

Capture the Light !

Knowing that a photograph is as simple as a piece of light captured on a film, we can then play around it generating a lot of creative, fun, and amazing things resulting a “party.” :)

[The concept of this “party” is all about long shutter speed; with movement. If you remember the “ghost” tip we covered in the previous issue, this is very close in principle to this one.]

■ Tools

- . A camera (S.L.R. - Semi S.L.R.)
- . An object/person
- . Different sources of light
- . and of course, darkness :)

■ Steps

First of all, this can be done in many ways, let your imagination work. We will present here one way of doing it. Understand the concept behind it, and share with us your experience, who knows.. maybe it'll end up published in "Photo-Great." :)

1. Set up your different sources of light.
2. Set the shutter speed to 2", or more.
3. Focus on different sources of light.
4. and shoot!
5. After you press the "shoot" button, start "partying"; get crazy, move your hands everywhere, go up and down, right and left.
And you'll get some nice shots!

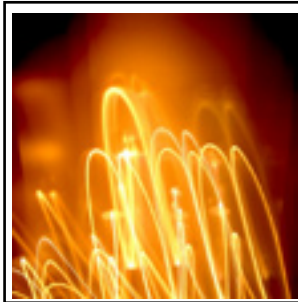
If you liked this issue's tip, please share your experiments with us. Send your works to:
konash@i-mag.org

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1.



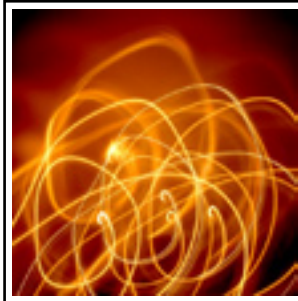
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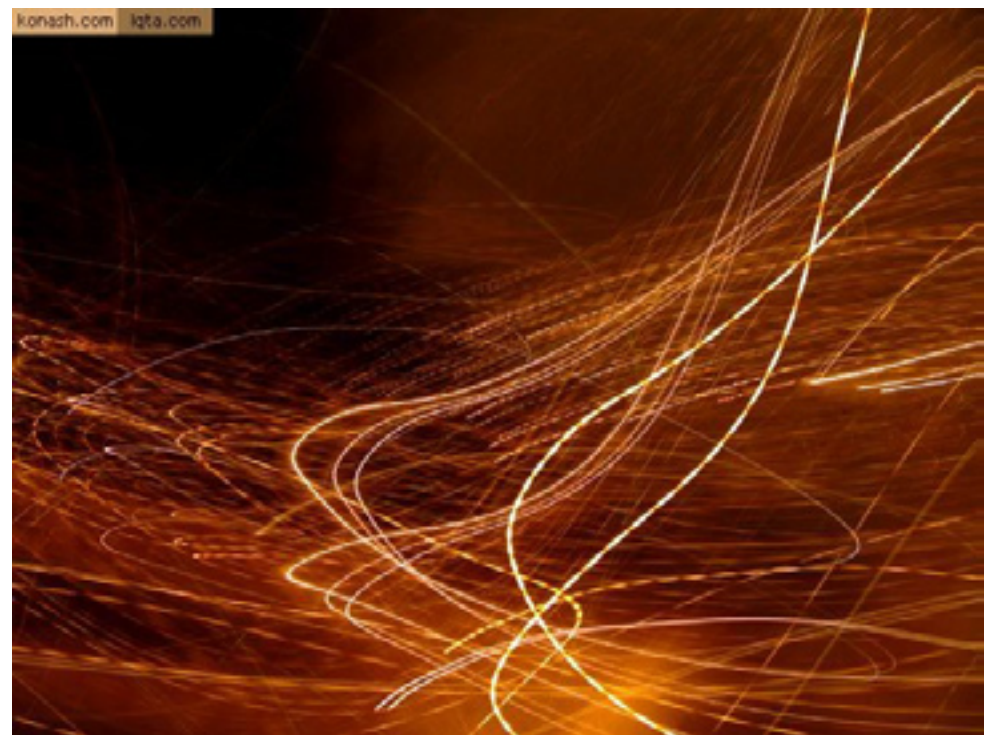
4.



]

■ Example

© Photograph by Ahmad Konash from Iqta.com



MU'HAMMAD

(P.B.U.H.)

In Others' Words

"I believe that if a man like him [Mu'hammad] were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Mu'hammad that it would."

George Bernard Shaw

"My choice of Mu'hammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level."

Michael H. Hart, The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History

"The verses talked about other Prophets as brothers preaching the same unifying script of mankind, showing every man and woman the way to Paradise. I saw the names of Jesus, of Moses, of Abraham, of Jacob, of Noah and of course, crucially, the name of this last messenger, the last Messenger of God, Mu'hammad."

Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens)

"Mu'hammed was not an apparent failure. He was a dazzling success, politically as well as spiritually, and Islam went from strength to strength to strength."

Karen Armstrong

"I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind...I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his

fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume [of the Prophet's biography], I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life."

Mahatma Gandhi, published in "Young India" 1924



Giving “FREEDOM OF SPEECH”

a Bad Name

By Edwin Anthony

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This Article Won I-MAG's Writing Contest!

The writer will receive a copy of Muhammad Asad's translation of the Holy 'Qura~n and a book by John Esposito



The Sanctity of the freedom of expression is validated by reason and is not a reason in itself to exercise it.

“...one of the founding principles of our E.U.rope is freedom of expression, including the right to criticise. It should be crystal clear to all that violence, intimidation, and the calls for boycotts or for restraints on the freedom of the press are completely unacceptable.”

- E.U. Justice Commissioner

Upon the release of what seemed to myself to be a most injudicious statement by the E.U. Justice Commissioner, I was led to wonder how the honourable “Justice” Commissioner would take it if newspapers across the E.U. were to republish the anti-Semitic “cartoons” that were in fashion in the 1930s in das Vaterland whilst purporting to be doing so in

respect of the Freedom of Speech, or, according to Reporters Without Borders, illustrating “an essential accomplishment of democracy.”

R.W.B. and the culturally Incorporated also tellingly overlook the most important fact in this episode which ought to be the basis upon which the cartoon, the intentions of the editors, and their claim that the freedom of speech allows them to proceed with impunity ought to be questioned - that the caricatures of Mu'hammad are a gross misrepresentation of Islaam and seek to equate and reduce Islaam to nothing more than a finishing school for transnational militants by linking the Prophet himself with their activities. In this “oversight”, one may not be blamed for alleging pervasive E.U.rocentrism or a subconscious and unstated disdain for Islaam and Muslims as a whole

as such stances will inevitably and predictably undermine the propensity to focus on this most important of all facts in this episode. The same applies to all those who deem this episode as an opportunity to speak up for the Freedom of Speech rather than focus on the fact that this is little more than a libelous attack, and thus, an abuse of the Freedom of Speech.

Whilst I will not deny the “artist” of the right to the dementia required to produce such cartoons, or to have it occupy a prominent place in the publication of some ultra right-wing periodical in the periphery of the media, its publication by more than 50 newspapers – many of them “mainstream” - across E.U.rope, is indeed objectionable. By doing so, they promote the notion that simple and thoughtless schoolyard-type

ridicule is an essential and indivisible component of the Freedom of Speech as much as systematic and analytical critique. The equation of both will only serve to promote the most base of the two amongst the masses when one takes on board the fact that such an approach requires little thought and yet has much more appeal than those “tiresome” and “long-winded” analyses written by “academics”. To give as much prominence in our mainstream newspapers to these malicious and misrepresentative caricatures alongside analyses and objective reports is akin to celebrating both as essential and equally laudatory parts of the Freedom of Speech. Even worse is that this implies the objectivity of these cartoons by its being forwarded by mainstream newspapers which are generally taken to be objective in their stance. The “artists” behind these cartoons

should have the right to scrawl away as they like, but to provide these thoughtless and malicious doodles prominence in the mainstream media is akin to forwarding these views as plausible and thus worthy of mass consumption.

As the Prophet Mu'hammad is a representative and conceptual catch-all of, and self-identificatory symbol for all Muslims, to depict him in such a fashion cannot but be interpreted as a slur on the entire Nation of Islaam [not to be confused with the U.S. based Nation of Islam]; a gross oversimplification of a highly complex religion/perspective; a reduction of the temporal guide of Muslims to nothing more than a psychotic with murder and mayhem on his mind, and by association, all adherents to the Way; and this being yet another mainstream, and all too western media effort to imply that Transnational Militancy finds its root in nothing other than Islaam, instead of, perhaps, the self-determination and self-preservation instincts being activated by the historical actions and inactions of the west. This is nothing short of malicious vilification of the kind that is reminiscent of representations of the Jews in popular publications and posters prior to the establishment of the 3rd Reich. No doubt the so-called champions of Free Speech surrounding Herr Hitler would have spewed similar justifications then as their allegedly enlightened and "mod-

ern" counterparts are now.

On the Use and Abuse of the Freedom of Speech

To all those who dissent on the basis that Free Speech must stand despite, I ask, why do you impose sanctions of any sort upon your children in their more self-centred or superficial of expressions? Why have any standard at all in schools in terms of the appropriateness of language and perspectival approach? Why award higher grades to systematic argument and critical profundity in universities as opposed to superficial and purely diatribal ones? Are these curbs on Free Speech? Are these not, in fact, efforts to curtail abuses of this right and a move calculated to realise its ideal form? Are these not attempts to encourage an internalisation of the customs and conventions, via various sanctions and accolades, that enable one to do the topic in question justice in view of the need to take on board all available facts in considering phenomena, and to do so for the good of all? If we think it appropriate to impose various sanctions on children due to the application of bad methodology, then we should not hesitate to do so when those in the guise of relatively superior maturity exhibit similar or worse deficiencies.

Those who choose to focus on how this is an inevitable and defensible outcome of the Freedom of Express-

sion, and, like Voltaire, "defend it to the death", are simply excusing the inexcusable simply because it is being expressed by someone who is adult in appearance, if not in thought. By doing so, they are ensuring that it will continue to be an inevitable and defensible outcome of the Freedom of Expression. They are fixated on the Freedom of Expression at the expense of considering the possibility that such a Freedom could possibly be abused to the point where it leads to the general diminution of the human collective's ability to express itself intelligently. This serves as the backdoor via which the sanctity of the Freedom of Expression is compromised by the psychological tendency of the current version of humanity to choose the path of least resistance - that is, to make the least effort in any activity prior to action, and in this case, engaging in the least amount of thought prior to making statements or considering them.

What we have witnessed in this episode, in effect, is not an illustration of the Freedom of Speech but its degenerative diminution. If left unchecked, the future generations, and those currently undergoing socialisation, will stand to become the perspectival victims and legacy of the small-mindedness of our times as illustrated by the E.U.uropean newspapers' vainglorious attempt to extol the virtues of their version of the Freedom of Speech by associating

it with its most base characteristic - thoughtless critique. If left unchecked, the former of the two - thoughtless - will become an essential component and qualification of the validity of the latter, whilst thoughtful and systematically pursued critique is left for those portions of the social experience that produces profit, or the academic periphery - not that this process hasn't already started or attained an accelerated momentum.

To do thus is to undo the standards that we strive to maintain in our educational centres and to imprudently deny the fact that the educational and social developmental experience is not confined solely to officially designated academic centres. Whilst I am all for the Freedom of Speech, to abuse via speech does little but detract us from the beautiful potentials of this Freedom. We ought not to equate taking on the hallowed via our Freedom of Speech with doing so in unhallowed and unsystematic ways. Rather than stoop to such misrepresentative caricaturing as witnessed in this episode, I would rather that the alleged "liberals" in the west take to inquiring after those aspects of Islaam that may perhaps have served as fuel to the ire of the transnational militants in tandem with a consideration of how their own actions and underlying attitudes may have supplied the logs to an otherwise non-volatile and illuminating fire.



By Robert Jensen*
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T.V.

IMAGES DON'T BRING CHANGE

For weeks after the racialized poverty of New Orleans was laid bare in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, people in the United States asked, "Could this be a turning point? Is this a moment when America might wake up to the inequality and racism in our own country?" The question itself -- posed most often by people living comfortably in the white middle class -- is an indication of just how deeply in denial the vast majority of privileged Americans are about these fundamental injustices, their role in perpetuating them, and how real change might come. We should be

collectively ashamed that the question is being asked in this form, for two simple reasons. First, it's true that the television coverage of the people who were the most vulnerable during the flight from Katrina and the aftermath -- largely poor and disproportionately black -- did shock many. As the evacuation proceeded, it was impossible to avoid noticing that who got out fairly easily and who got stuck -- who lived and who died -- was largely a function of race and class. But did we really need those images to know that the United States

has an inequality problem? In a country in which racialized disparities in wealth and well-being are readily evident to anyone who cares to pay attention, what does it say about us as a nation that we needed dramatic images on television to force us to confront the issue? Even a cursory scan of the data on such things as health (infant mortality is twice as high in the black as the white community) or employment (black unemployment is double that of whites, a gap that has actually widened in the past three decades) reveals that seri-

ous inequality persists despite the gains of the civil-rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. Even for the measures on which there has been some improvement -- for example, black-white poverty gap has narrowed somewhat in recent decades -- the underlying reality is grim; at the current rate it will take 150 years to reach parity on that poverty measure. Anyone who wants to know these things -- any white middle class person with a computer, for example -- can figure it out quickly. The data are not state secrets. More importantly, the cold data

come to life dramatically when one listens to the experiences of virtually everyone in non-white communities, not just in New Orleans but anywhere in the United States. Perhaps no term captures this more painfully that “driving while black,” a reference to the routine harassment through traffic stops that so many black people, especially black men who are so commonly seen as inherently criminal, endure at the hands of law enforcement. In Latino communities, it’s called “driving while brown.”

The data is clear. The testimony is clear. We shouldn’t need pictures. The fact that so many seemed to be shocked by the pictures is a sign not just of the society’s inequality, but of the routine complacency in the most privileged sectors of our society.

But the question of whether the aftermath of Katrina will “change America” is perhaps most objectionable for the way it allows those with the responsibility to help change society -- that is, those who benefit from the inequality -- to escape into emotions and speculation, rather than analysis and action.

Yes, dramatic and painful images of black people packed into a sports arena-turned-shelter have tweaked the consciences of many. But

tweaked consciences are notorious for lapsing back into complacency quickly when no political pressure is applied. Lots of well-off white people may have felt bad about what they saw in New Orleans, but such feelings are not morally admirable unless they lead to action that can change things. That means moving from an emotional reaction to a political analysis, and from speculation about whether things might change to a commitment to making things change.

Racism and racialized poverty in the United States are systemic and structural problems. They are not simply the result of confusion on the part of people in power; they are institutionalized. Progress comes when those systems, structures, and institutions change. That requires collective action, not individual fretting.

It’s true that the collective political project of overcoming racism is intertwined with the very personal struggle to overcome our complacency. It’s true that history can provide dramatic moments in which things can change quickly. But it is naïve -- to a degree that suggests purposeful ignorance -- to believe that a single emotionally charged experience such as viewing the images of racialized suffering in New

Orleans will have a long-term effect on systems, structures, or institutions.

In the United States we have been through this before. In 1991, all of America watched the videotape of the savage beating of Rodney King, a black man, by Los Angeles police officers. We watched and emoted. We asked the question: “Could this be a turning point? Is this a moment when America wakes up to the inequality in our own country?” Meanwhile, as we pondered that question in the 1990s, the United States intensified the racist criminal-justice practices that disproportionately target black and brown Americans. We built prisons to house the disproportionately black and brown inmates who would be casually tossed into jail to reassure the white affluent majority that things were safe. As a result, if current incarceration rates continue, one of three black males born today will be imprisoned at some point in their lifetimes.

So, it is self-indulgence to even ask the question whether an emotionally intense event such as the aftermath of Katrina will change U.S. society. The answer is painfully obvious: These events don’t create change. Progressive change comes when people commit to

take the risks necessary to push change.

The hand-wringing that the white affluent segment of the United States indulged in after the hurricane was a common way middle-class people deal with their sense of guilt when they are confronted by what they have largely chosen to ignore. But this problem is hardly unique to the United States. It happens in virtually every country in which some segment of the elite has convinced itself that the grotesque levels of inequality are acceptable.

**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>

BEYOND BOYCOTT:

Imitating the Prophet's Declination to the Angel-borne Offer

By Hayat Alyaqout [‘Hayaat Alyaa’qoot]
hayat@i-mag.org

“caricatures” because we want to undermine their economy. No, it is not about revenge. It is mainly due to the lack of mass media-based resources available to Muslims that boycott has become our means to attract the attention of people in those countries in order to convey a message to them: “what you did was wrong; we are boycotting you because we have been hurt.”

We are not doing this to rejoice over diminishing sales of, say, Danish dairy products, and if we ever think that this is why we are boycotting, then we must be completely deluded.

Boycott campaigns might prevent many other publications from republishing the “caricatures”, and

might even lead the publications that already published them to apologise. However, that would be a lame apology; an apology to curtail our anger and its consequences, an apology that stems out of intimidation not out of respect and understanding. This is not our mission as Muslims: Our mission is to enlighten people, not to bulldoze them.

Boycott should be merely a launching pad to a long-term far-reaching campaign to educate and enlighten people about Mu’hammad (P.B.U.H.). What happened was a symptom of lack of enlightenment (a.k.a. ignorance). Why blame them for defaming a person they do not know? Knowledge is a legitimate human right, so why have we relinquished our role in educating other peoples about this great man?

Painkillers will not undo this

ignorance; a long-term cognitive therapy is needed here. The only “copy” of Islaam the West knows, is a pirated and illegal copy, the copy disseminated by Osama Bin Laden and the likes. Again, how can we blame them for sneeringly defaming what they think the prophet of Ibn Laden? I am afraid that we are being unfair to the Westerners. Islaam is a great message, but its case is in the hands of bad lawyers; us, that is.

Deep in my heart, I feel that we might be held accountable in the Day of Judgment for what happened, not the Danish caricaturist! He did what he did because he was ignorant about our Prophet, and we – thanks to our passiveness and irrationality – are the reason people around the globe are ignorant about the Prophet.

The good news is that even though we stumbled and fell, we have fallen



© Photograph from sxc.hu

The domino effect is spreading, beginning with Denmark, passing by Norway, stopping at France, and finding its way to others countries that are expected to be infected with the “caricatures” virus.

I can not conceal my delight that almost every Muslim is enthusiastically taking part in the boycott campaigns, nor can I conceal my fear that a feeling of victory and sufficiency will engulf us and make us think that we did what we had to do, and this is the end of the story.

We are not boycotting countries in which elements of the media printed or reprinted the offensive

standing on our feet, and we should either use this opportunity or lose it. What I mean is that the character at the centre of this controversy , i.e., the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was a person of impeccable manners; even his worst foes acknowledged his greatness. So, would we ever find a better chance to introduce the real message of Islaam than presenting it through educating the peoples about the Prophet (P.B.U.H.)? Had the “caricatures” been about our mistakes with which we tarnish Islaam, we would have mutedly withdrew to within our shells, I daresay.

An agenda should be formulated to educate the world about the Prophet. Let us not indulge ourselves in the widespread naïve presumption that “boycott will force them to inquire and search to discover who this great man was.” The lack of even-minded material on Islaam is appalling, and if we leave it to their personal quests, it will backfire in our faces. Our agenda should include various media-based tools that are rational, even-handed, and professionally produced. We should speak the language of the West in addressing the West. We need to use our senses, enough with sensibility.

When the Prophet climbed some sixty kilometres on foot to visit Taa-if (a mountainous resort to the east

of Makkah) to present the message of Islaam to its people, they refused to listen to him and stoned him to force him out of their city. When he despondently left Taa-if, he was so bruised from the walk and the harsh treatment that his feet were bleeding. When the archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) descended accompanied by the angel custodian of mountains, Jibreel communicated to the Prophet that Allaah had given him, Mu'hammad, the choice of punishing the people of Taa-if by squashing them in between the two mountain that surround their city. The Prophet declined the offer and said that he hopes that some of their offspring would worship Allaah one day.

The angel empowered the Prophet to revenge, but Prophet Mu'hammad was even more angelic than the angel. That is a lesson of compassion we all need to learn.

The stoners of Taa-if were much worse than the perpetrators of the defaming “caricatures.” The stoners refused to listen; yet their offspring are now Muslims. Europeans have had no one to compassionately convey the message of Islaam to them and, if necessary, be patient if they choose to stone him/her, in hopes that their offspring might listen to the message.

Let us imitate the Prophet.



© Photograph from www.middle-east-online.com



For HIM to Take a Bullet

Back in 1993, when I was sharing an apartment with John during the school year, he suggested that I see the newly released movie “Dave” starring Kevin Kline and Sigourney Weaver. The storyline of the movie was about an affable car salesman with uncanny resemblance to the U.S. President who finds himself forced to replace the real President in an attempt by the White House staff to avoid a potentially explosive scandal.

I found the movie slightly amusing, but there was one scene, actually two, that I always remember. Dave, the imposter in the movie, had the following conversation with Duane, the secret service agent:

Dave: You know, I’ve always wondered about you guys. You know, about how you’re trained to take a bullet for the president?

Duane: What about it?

Dave: Is that really true? I mean, would you let yourself be killed to save his life?

Duane: Certainly.

Dave: So, now that means you’d get killed for me too.

By Ibrahim Babelli [Ibraaheem Baabilly]

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Duane did not answer this question immediately, but it was so obvious that he felt its heaviness. Later on towards the end of the movie when Duane discovered the real character of Dave he finally answered the question:

Duane: I would have taken a bullet for you.

I wondered then about whom would I take a bullet for. Several years later, I was having coffee in the office of Rumaih (my colleague and good friend) when he and I discussed this topic again: Who would I/he take a bullet for? We both agreed that this person must be someone whom we hold dear, whose life we regard as more important than our own lives, and for whom we would sacrifice anything, including our own lives. Our fathers were identified as ones for whom we would take bullets, for example. But I would not take a bullet for Rumaih's father and he would not take a bullet for my father.

I had not thought about this topic for a while.

Recently, however, the violent

reaction of many Muslims to the offensive portrayal of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in cartoons published by a Danish daily newspaper, reminded me of this issue. Many Muslims lost their lives in violent protests that turned deadly in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya.

Several of my non-Muslim colleagues did not understand why would Muslims be so angry with those cartoons, and why would they go so far as to sacrifice their own lives. And I immediately remembered what Duane said to Dave at the end of the movie: I would have taken a bullet for you.

Muslims are taking bullets for the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). That was my answer.

'Umar Ibn Alkhattaab told the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) once: "O Allah's Apostle! You are dearer to me than everything except my own self." The Prophet said, "No, by Him in Whose Hand my soul is, (you will not have complete faith) till I am dearer to you than your own self." Then 'Umar said to him [having reflected upon the matter], "However,

now, by Allaah, you are dearer to me than my own self." The Prophet said, "Now, O 'Umar, (now you are a believer)." [Albu'kary: Book of Oaths and Vows]

I cannot be absolutely certain of the exact mental arguments that 'Umar entertained before he gave his final answer, but I am almost sure that he asked himself the following question: "Would I take a fatal blow to save the Prophet?" And his entire self, mind and soul, answered emphatically: "YES".

The companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) held him dearer to themselves, to the point that they would rather suffer the most horrible deaths than wish upon the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) the slightest pain. When 'Kubayb, a companion of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was captured and was about to be executed, his executioners asked him: "Would you want Mu'hammed to be in your lieu?" He answered them: "I would suffer being hacked to death to spare the Prophet a thorn prick in his home." He, 'Kubayb, was hacked to death, but did not waver in his love for the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

Muslims may differ on a lot of things, but they would all agree on one thing, namely, their absolute and unwavering love of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Muslims cannot take a bullet for the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) now, since no bullet can hit him physically in his grave, but they would take bullets for his sake anytime to protect his sanctity from anything that might tarnish it.

Is this an extreme reaction to a trivial offence? After all, derogatory and outright offensive cartoons are commonplace these days. But nobody reacts the same way Muslims do when their Prophet (P.B.U.H.) is offensively portrayed in cartoons.

The reason is that no offense is trivial in the eyes of Muslims when it is directed to Prophet Mu'hammed (P.B.U.H.). Muslims would take bullets willingly to protect the sanctity of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), for his sanctity is much more valuable to them than the life of the U.S. President to his secret service agent.

I would take a bullet for him.

Finding a BREEZE in CHAOS

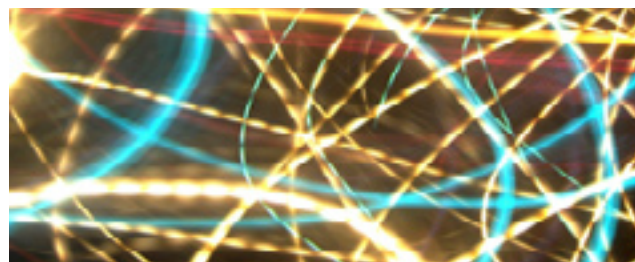
By Rym Aoudia

[Reem Awdee']

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This Article Won I-MAG's Writing Contest!

The writer will receive a copy of Muhammad Asad's translation of the Holy 'Qura-n and a book by John Esposito



© Photograph from sxc.hu

We all have the right to make our voices heard. Practicing this is a basic human right that all people, from childhood and onwards, should enjoy. It is our freedom of speech. Yet freedom of speech has at times caused chaos when it was detached from a sense of social responsibility. In light of the Danish anti-Prophet cartoons and in describing them as freedom of speech, a wave of chaos hit our shores.

Freedom of speech has become a magical phrase. It has been used to cast its power and justify certain situations. While some see freedom of speech as a tool to bring justice and truth forward, others see it as a tool for any type of expression and even those that are purposely offensive. Freedom of speech would then be regarded as unconditional and absolute, but others would disagree and as John Stuart Mill said, "The liberty of the individual must be thus far

limited: he must not make himself a nuisance for other people."

Under the banner of freedom of speech, hatred and racism were given room. If such offensive characteristics found a home in such a glorious concept, then it's time for a reality check to limit this chaos.

The idea of a limitless freedom of speech is a myth. Everyone puts a limit to this freedom, but where the limit is put differs depending

on people's values and morals.

The values and morals in Islaam place certain limits on the definition of freedom of speech for the goodwill of society. Respecting each other is an important value in Islaam. When Islaam, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), or Allaah is mocked, Muslims cannot digest that as freedom of speech because it is regarded as disrespect to our beliefs and the same applies to mocking other religions. By setting these limits, Islaam does not belittle the value of freedom of speech but elevates its status by giving it a useful role in society.

Islaam sees freedom of speech as a tool to bring justice and truth forward. Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) said, "Whoever among you sees something which is munkar (hateful or evil in Islaam) should change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; if he is unable to do even this, then by his heart – and that is the weakest kind of faith." (Muslim. Reported on the authority of Abu Sa'eed Al'kudry.)

This 'hadeeth by the Prophet

(P.B.U.H.) shows that taking action and speaking up for what is right is a necessary task. The least preferred method is remaining silent, by the heart, which indicates that freedom of speech is advocated in Islaam. It is the freedom to speak up against what is wrong in hope of changing it, and not the freedom to insult for the sake of insulting.

The concept of freedom of speech as a tool for justice is also emphasized in the following 'Qur a~nic verse, "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allaah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allaah can protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allaah is well-acquainted with all that you do." (Chapter of Annissaa- :135)

The anti-Prophet cartoons were justified as freedom of speech, and this proves how magical the phrase can be and particularly how magical it is in hiding the depth of the issue at hand. It seems as if talk about freedom of speech was

made to distract us from reality. The cartoons in reality are about prejudice and racism and these should not be tolerated or lightly passed as a form of freedom. This was a deliberate offence on Islaam and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). It is also at a time when the Muslim's situation is sensitive with feelings of Islamophobia.

However, amid this frenzy, we Muslims should pause to reflect on our situation. The cartoons offended many of us, and to look at ourselves critically seems difficult at this point. Nevertheless, some of the reactions only helped illustrate the violent stereotypes related to Muslims as depicted in some of the cartoons. Yes, we're humans and it is human to err and to get emotional, but we should always examine our actions. We do want to portray the accurate image of Islaam to the West, but we should do this first and foremost for our oummah because that is what Islaam calls for. Times can get tough, but to endure such situations, we should find the breeze in this chaos, that silver lining in the cloud.

Finding a breeze amid the chaos

is what we need. This breeze is found by realizing how this incident united many Muslims as they expressed their love for Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.). People are expressing themselves in honour of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and reflecting more on his great character. This breeze is also found by reminding ourselves that there are voices in the West and worldwide that preach mutual respect, understanding, and communication. This should therefore be taken as an opportunity to talk about the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), to explain what Islaam is, and to reach an understanding.

We will define our true Muslim identity by applying it to our lives and expressing it to others. Yes, there are people out there who will listen and we should define ourselves by ourselves.

On the power of defining, from The Second Sin, the American psychiatrist Thomas Szasz wrote, "In the animal kingdom, the rule is: eat or be eaten. In the human kingdom: define or be defined...he who first seizes the word imposes reality on the other; he who defines thereby dominates and lives;

and he who is defined is subjugated and may be killed."

Islaam also calls for people to know one another and it is a universal religion that embraces all races. Allaah says in the 'Qura~n, what can be translated as, "We have made you into nations and tribes that ye may know one another." (Chapter of Al'hujuraat:13).

We each have our faults, but we are here to know one another, to see beauty in our diversity, and to become aware of our similarities, not to despise each other. And as long as there's chaos in the world, we will continue to stand up against injustice and find within it the much-needed breeze that will help us make it through.

Rym Aoudia is a writer and translator from Algeria who lives in Oman. She is a member of the Islamic Writer's Alliance (IWA), a member of Dar Al-Tarjama (DAT), and the Founder and Director of Atfaluna Project for Children's Literature and Culture (www.atfaluna.tk)

By Hicham Maged [Hishaam Maajid]

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IN THE NAME OF MISS LIBERTY: Hunting the Bird of FREEDOM

This is the first article in a series titled "*In the name of Miss Liberty*" which seeks to highlight various issues humanity face today regarding the case of Liberty. I shall start with the case of *freedom of speech*.

1. Brief Chronology

On September 30th, 2005, a Danish newspaper called *Jyllands-Posten* - which represents the right wing in Denmark - published 12 cartoons illustrating Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) in offensive and insulting ways.

The 12 cartoons were submitted to the newspaper following an invitation from *Flemming Rose* - the magazine's cultural editor - to a group of illustrators in order to illustrate Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.), and were

published within an article about self-censorship and freedom of speech, describing - criticising - the difficulty that faced *Kaare Bluitken* - a Danish writer - on finding artists to illustrate his educational children's book about Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.)

On October 9th, leaders of the Muslim minority in Denmark - who represent about 3.7% of the total population - demanded an apology from the newspaper, but there was no response.

Later, the ambassadors of 11 Arab and Islamic countries in Denmark tried to resolve this issue with the Danish government by sending a letter to *Anders Fogh Rasmussen* -the Danish Prime Minister- dated on October 12th, but he refused to meet them and sent a written reply - on October 21st - mentioning that he can't do nothing as this will violate freedom of speech in Denmark.

This was another point that served to heighten the crisis. The Islaamic world began to know about this issue, and demonstrations started everywhere: from the Middle East, passing by Africa, Asia and ending within Europe itself.

Muslims protested against those insulting cartoons, calling the Danish people to apologise. Neither the Danish newspaper nor the Danish government listened to reasonable calls, and therefore a popular - not governmental - call for boycotting Danish goods started to materialize throughout many Islaamic nations worldwide as of January 26th, 2006.

Such boycott - accompanied by the demonstrations - started in the Middle East at first, and then quickly spread to other countries within the predominantly Islaamic world as a spontaneous reaction from Muslims towards insulting their symbol, Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.). Some violent actions took place, however, like torching the Danish embassy in Syria and the Danish consulate in Lebanon on February 4th and 5th, respectively.

On January 30th, Jyllands-Posten

published a statement of apology to Muslims. The same statement of apology was re-published again on February 10th, but the majority of Muslims did not accept it because the magazine didn't apologise for the insulting cartoons; rather they apologised for making Muslims feel angry. The English version of this apology read as follows:
"On 30 September last year, Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten published 12 different cartoonists' idea of what the Prophet Mohammed might have looked like. The initiative was taken as part of an ongoing public debate on freedom of expression, a freedom much cherished in Denmark.

In our opinion, the 12 drawings were sober. They were not intended to be offensive, nor were they at variance with Danish law, but they have indisputably offended many Muslims for which we apologize."

More than 60 major European newspapers re-published those cartoons - after this crisis began - in order to support Jyllands-Posten, hiding behind freedom of speech, while some other Middle Eastern newspapers re-published them too. This cartoon row led to a crisis

between the Western and Islaamic worlds - including the Arab one - and has not stopped by the time this article was written.

2. Freedom: as a whole package

First of all, I want to start with defining the word Freedom. Away from any formal definitions, I see freedom as a bird; such a bird needs two wings plus a medium to fly, and a final destination to reach. Therefore, freedom itself is not the goal; rather it is the only right path to reach such destination. In the light of this concept, terms can be easily defined as follows:

- * The two wings are *sense* and *responsibility*;
- * The medium is the *freewill* of people; and
- * The destination is the *welfare of the humankind*.

Only when communities - individuals, governments and organisations - understand this wide meaning, real freedom will take place among the whole community, and will guide it to the destination of the productivity by all means; either intellectually or physically. In parallel, it will guide such community to establish strong bonds with other communities worldwide for the welfare of

humankind.

3. The Matrix of Irresponsibility

This crisis revealed that humanity - in the 21st century - still has mentalities that don't understand the previously mentioned wide concept of freedom.

Such mentalities try to deal with issues from their own perspective, even if their acts caused serious problems or affected the freedom of the others.

I wonder how an editor-in-chief, and cultural editor of a widely read newspaper in a civilised country didn't try to read something real about Islaam before criticising it, or publishing illustrative cartoons about its symbol. The newspaper just concentrated on extremists Muslims who don't represent Islaam. I also wonder how a book author didn't read something real about Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) before trying to introduce him for Danish kids. I finally wonder how some people do not understand the wide concept of freedom; it is very scary how they hide behind Miss Liberty and act - in the name of her - in such irresponsible ways. Poor Miss Liberty!

Maybe some westerns are not

aware that Islaam decries any kind of threats towards any human being; Muslim or otherwise. Therefore what had been illustrated in those cartoons did not represent the real Islaamic faith and, consequently, is regarded a racist view of Muslims. In parallel, torching the European embassies - by some angry protesters - is not accepted from true Islaamic values. That's why Alqaeda acts are not welcomed among the majority of Muslims, as violence never solves a problem.

On the other hand, maybe some westerns are not aware also that Islaam - as a lifestyle not only religion for 1.5 billion Muslims - had granted freedom - by all means - for all people who live within the state, no matter the colour of their skins, their races, and wither they are Muslims or Not. Furthermore, freedom of speech is an integral part of this freedom package; therefore it is granted in Islaam according to the wide vision of freedom I explained above.

For that matter, I do believe that no one should be persecuted for his opinion as much as it respects the freedom of others. This was clearly mentioned in the

articles 19 & 20 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the Article 10 of the *European Convention on Human Rights* which applies to all means of expressing opinion like books, articles, cartoons, plays, websites/ blogs...etc.

This is the core of Islaam, which Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) came with - as the last messenger from Allaah Almighty to Mankind. I don't believe in generalising therefore I'm not afraid to say that some Muslims didn't understand those basic facts themselves; however this is not the fault of Islaam or the majority of Muslims as I mentioned before [4th issue.]

4. Mix and Match

On the other hand, I want to highlight a basic fact, which we forgot through this controversy. People - whoever they are - are bound to act either rightly or wrongly, therefore, criticising their acts is not bad; it is another healthy sign for freedom of speech as long as it respects the people themselves, and aims for the welfare of the community. This applies to all people, from all races and religions.

However when it comes to the prophets - all prophets - limits should be placed. Prophets are not normal people whose actions are subject to our criticism. They are the messengers of Allaah Almighty to humankind, and Islaam ordered Muslims to believe and respect all of.

This is why Islaam rejects any kind of criticism for any and all prophets by any mean, in addition to its prohibition of portraying their images by any mean. This is a basic fact of the Islaamic faith that should be understood by the western people.

In light of this simple fact, I don't agree with the some voices which compare publishing those insulting cartoons to publishing cartoons about Holocaust. The two cases are completely different, as we are talking here about prophets. This doesn't mean I deny the holocaust, simply because no one can deny such genocide against innocent people - both Jewish and others.

On the other hand, I don't see cartooning Holocaust as freedom of speech, simply because this was genocide against innocent humans. Here we see another wrong idea

from Felmming Rose when he stated that he might re-print Iranian cartoons of the Holocaust, and therefore he was sent on leave February 10th. Even if he returns back: sorry sir, you've missed the whole point.

Another point: If those Jyllands-Posten insulting cartoons were criticising normal Muslims - in this unacceptable and insulting way - the majority of Muslims would felt angry as this is not the real image of Islaam, so what about insulting Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) himself, who is considered the most important symbol of Islaam in parallel with Holy 'Qur a~n?!

Furthermore, it's not our problem that westerns criticise Jesus on a daily bias - as the magazine mentioned in its apology - or that they are secular communities. They are free to choose whatever they like, however freedom doesn't mean that you apply your own values to other civilisations.

That's why Muslims felt angry, insulted and started boycotting because you - Flemming Rose and your magazine - didn't try to understand those basic facts before publishing your article and

cartoons.

5. A Call for Solution

As the crisis expanded, I believe that a package of reasonable and serious actions should be taken in order to reach a solution:

A. The U.N. Role: In a previous article - in the 6th issue of I-MAG - I suggested that the U.N. should take an effective role in the welfare of Humanity, as this was the main goal of establishing this organisation. For that matter, not only Articles 19 & 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must be clearly defined but also international laws should be legislated and enacted to prosecute anyone who insults any prophets and other religious symbols, not only prosecuting those who deny the Holocaust.

B. People's Role: Beside those laws, people - whether individuals, governments or organisations - must totally understand the wide concept of freedom as mentioned early in this article. It's a matter of finding the meeting points as I'd previously mentioned [I-MAG's 6th issue.]

C. Civilisations' Role: Another basic fact which I think everyone

knows well is that people are not thinking the same way because they come from diverse and different cultures. However I do believe that nations should sustain each other, not only cooperate with each other.

Therefore I don't agree with *Samuel Huntington's* theory about *The Clash of Civilisations* which he introduced in 1993. I don't agree about the concept of clashing because Islaam came with a global message of urbanising Earth. Such urbanisation will never take place unless civilisations start to find effective ways to sustain relations with each other for the welfare of humankind.

This principle of cooperation and sustainability was clearly mentioned in the Holy 'Qura~n: *"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made `you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allaah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allaah is Knower, Aware."* [The Holy 'Qura~n, the chapter of Al'hujuraat: 13]. It was successfully applied during the Islaamic civilisation when Europeans were living in the darkness of Middle

Ages. However civilisations rise and fall as we know.

Today we are living within the Western Civilisation, which we - Muslims - don't have problem with on contrary to what some people think; we do respect the others, and don't force anyone to join Islaam. The issue, therefore, is the attempt to apply Western values to our societies. Every civilisation has its own values that must be respected.

In parallel, who said that civilisation is only the technology? Civilisation is a complete package which contains morals, cooperation, and understanding each other. Without this package, humanity will face dark future, and will face worse actions in the future, but only if we didn't find a better way to communicate and interact.

D. Humankind: We are in need of real efforts from people - Muslims and Westerns - who still care about humankind to overcome this crisis. It's very sad that we are still facing problems of misunderstanding in the 21st century. Muslims want to guarantee that this will not take place in the future, because

insulting our prophet (P.B.U.H.) or our 'Qura~n is unacceptable no matter what.

Anyway, George Bernard Shaw stated; *"Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it."* I totally agree with him and want to add: when someone makes real apology for a fault he made, he is really civilised, even if he doesn't read or write. Finally, what I'm pretty and truly sure of: the world after September 30th, 2005, will never become again like the day before. I wish to see it changing for the better of humankind, not the contrary.

Quotes:

"The arrow belongs not to the archer when it has once left the bow; the word no longer belongs to the speaker when it has once passed his lips."
Heinrich Heine

"The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."
Albert Einstein

Where HAVE All the Morals GONE?

By Jinan Shbat [Jinaan Shabt]
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As Muslims, we are extremely blessed to have an example to help guide us in our daily lives, and that is the example of our beloved Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.). Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) was a man of utmost character. He was kind, gentle, understanding, yet at the same time, people did not take advantage of him because he was respectful, considerate, and tolerant.

It is important to understand before this article proceeds that I am not suggesting that we abandon our everyday duties as Muslims such as prayer and fasting in order to focus on reaching the level of morality that our Prophet (P.B.U.H.) displayed. We need to find the balance between actions and character, and only then will we be able to fully comprehend the elite character status of what a

true believer must possess. Some people came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) once and asked him, "Amongst the servants of God, who is the dearest to Him?" The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) replied, "The one who has the best moral character." (Ibn 'Hibban) Another 'hadeeth stated that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was asked, "Which Muslim has the perfect faith?" to which he replied, "One who has the best moral character."

Reading these 'hadeeths brings about a much-needed question nowadays, when the Muslims in this world have used the name of Islaam to avenge and justify their anger. Looking back at the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), ask yourselves, would he have reacted in the way many are reacting today? Burning down embassies, burning flags, and attacking people? No, he wouldn't have. Would he have started a contest for the best cartoon poking fun at the Holocaust to

avenge the publishing of cartoons depicting him in a negative light? No, he wouldn't have. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) always believed in approaching someone with love and kindness, and felt that it was more effective than retaliating with hate.

It is so easy to get angry and wreak havoc on the world, but it takes a real Muslim to hold that anger inside, and channel it towards something greater. "Kill them with kindness" is a saying, and it couldn't be more right. The world was watching all Muslims to see their reaction to the cartoons, and what did we do? We gave them what they wanted. We fell into the trap, and allowed them to justify the wrongs they did. I am in no way saying that these cartoons were justified by any means; that newspaper was wrong for publishing it. However, in order for the rest of the world to take us seriously, and believe that we

truly are a peaceful religion, we have to maintain our dignity and work together to create effective, alternate solutions. Hurting people and having people die in protests do not make us look peaceful, no matter what excuse we have.

We need to remember our beloved Prophet (P.B.U.H.) at all times. It seems that we have lost interest in what is right, and work for our own selfish everyday life needs. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) is the best example for all Muslims. Working on perfecting our character will help eliminate all the negative images of us. We won't even have to try. As we better ourselves, we better those around us, and the world will see that. As a favourite quote of mine states, "Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives." Once we change the way we think, the rest will just fall into place.

Evening of Enlightenment:

A “CRUSADE” ON IGNORANCE!

An evening of enlightenment was organised on February 22nd, 2006 jointly by the Journalistic Club of the national union of Kuwait students and I-MAG Magazine.

The evening was an attempt to shed light on the life of the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (P.B.U.H.). A documentary titled “Mu’hammad: A Legacy of a Prophet” was screened. Further more, a premiere of Ahmad Alhajry’s video clip (Muhammad P.B.U.H) with English subtitle produced by Gulf Media was screened to the audience and was also dispatched via Bluetooth for free to the attendants mobile phones towards the end of the evening. John (Yahya) Edrer from AWARE Center then gave a speech and comments on the topic.

The aim of the event was “to exercise a legitimate human right, that is understanding and enlightenment... we are here to launch -and please don’t take it literally- a crusade on ignorance!” the organisers said.

For extended coverage:
www.i-mag.org/light





MU'HAMMAD (P.B.U.H)

The heart abounds with love and yearning.
Craving and longing over the Beloved and the Chosen [Prophet].

Our hearts verily throb [in love] for the Messenger.
And once the heart throbs, deeds heed.

Neither he who reveals his passion is an exaggerator.
Nay! Nor he who is consumed by love is an extravagant.

Verily, the loving [believer] follows whom he loves.
And once he beholds a trace of his beloved, he follows.

Our hands are extended to the guidance of Mu'hammad,
and promptly embraced what he came with.

He is the beloved, and we love whomever he loved.
With honesty, neither with extravagance nor with affectation.

We all hasten to drink from his [pure] source,
while casting aside whatever contradicts [his teachings].

We pass the love of our Prophet on to the posterity.
As he came to us with mercy and compassion.

O my beloved, O Messenger of Allah.
The heart is filled with your love. O Messenger of Allaah.
You are the beloved, O Mu'hammad.

Performed & composed by: Ahmad Alhaajiry
Lyrcis by: Hamad Almeer
Directed by: Abdulah Alhamad
Executive Producer: Gulf Media
Translated into English by: I-MAG Team

VIDEO CLIP!

IN COOPERATION WITH GULF MEDIA
PRODUCTION, I-MAG PRESENTS TO ITS
READERS AN **ENGLISH SUBTITLED VERSION OF**
"MU'HAMMAD (P.B.U.H.)" VIDEO CLIP.

Special Thanks to:

Abdullah Alhamad the director of
the video clip, and **Ali Alqenai** from
www.fanateq.com

TO WATCH THE VIDEO CLIP:
www.i-mag.org/clip



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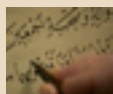
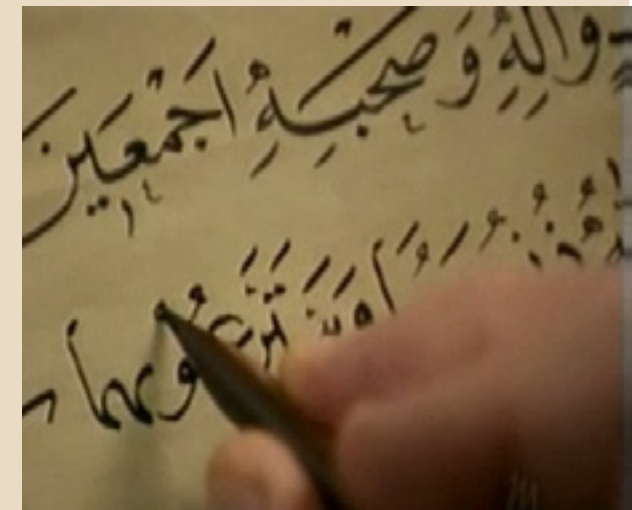
MU'HAMMAD: LEGACY OF A PROPHET

"Mu'hammad: Legacy of a Prophet" is the name of a documentary produced by the P.B.S. and it is a documentary that lives up to its name. The documentary recounts the life of Prophet Muhammad, yet it goes beyond the historical narrative to depicting Prophet

Mu'hammad's legacy in action. This is achieved by interviewing several American Muslims (a nurse, a fire-fighter, a congressional assistant, and imaam, a calligrapher, and an immigrant) and through them the legacy of the Prophet is reborn in every sphere of life.

A transcript of the documentary is available for free at:
http://www.pbs.org/muhammad/transcripts/muhammad_script.pdf

Submit your original article for publication and win an original D.V.D. copy of the documentary. E-mail: contests@i-mag.org





An organisation set up three years ago by a socially conscience individual is seeing his efforts go from strength to strength. Hanif Rehman, from Dewsbury set up Muslim Professionals UK (MPUK), in 2002. It is a network of professionals and community organisations that work together to benefit the community. What started off initially as a small service offering advice to immediate friends and family on personal development to help with C.V. and career advice has now mushroomed into an organisation that holds over a thousand members, has links with various networks.

The organisation raises awareness of key employment issues and helps to develop its members through workshops, seminars, lectures and

cultural activities. For example, by offering mentoring services to young people Hanif believes it helps them realise their career ambitions and reach their full potential in life. Those who are already qualified and working in industry can also contribute by working with MPUK and will find it enormously gratifying and rewarding and knowing their involvement will be making a huge difference.

Hanif says: "There are organisations like this in America, Europe in fact all over the world, where professionals get together to volunteer their skills and knowledge for the greater good of the community." The idea was born three years ago following his graduation from University. "I felt the need to put something back into the community," says Hanif. "I

believe we can only give so much in charity financially. By giving others practical help, my knowledge, time and experiences can also be charity." Work that the organisation has carried out in the past and currently does so:

> Organised Seminars

A number of seminars have been conducted with the main aim of these being to develop MPUK members. Many of these seminars focus on key issues that are faced by organisation members, for example: Leadership at work, management and self development.

> Professional & Personal Development





One of the key aims of the organisation is the continuous development of the members and MPUK carry this out via a mentoring and coaching scheme. It offers a great way to help others and provides self-development opportunities as well as providing a forum for like-minded individuals to share experiences, interests and aspirations. MPUK will also offer the first Muslim Development workshop on the 16th, 17th and 18th of June 2006. Further information about the workshop will be posted soon on the MPUK website.

> Networking Events

MPUK helps members build up contacts in the professional and social context. The majority of the members find that they cannot take part in social events where they go against the princi-

ples of their faith. MPUK is able to provide a wholesome avenue where members can participate fully in the exchange of knowledge, skills, information and experience without compromising their values and faith.

> Charity & Social Events

MPUK is also active in raising money for charity by organising events and setting up emergency appeals where necessary. MPUK worked with Doctors World Wide to highlight the impact of the Asian Tsunami to working with other network partners managed to raise over £21,000 for the Kashmir relief fund.

> Act as a voice for people's faith and dispel misconceptions and improve diversity

The network allows a forum for members and non members, the government, employers and employees of any U.K. organisation to share their concerns and learn about Islam. MPUK strongly supports the government's recent regulation outlawing discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. MPUK also has a monthly newsletter that covers that above aspect and a website discussion board that allows its members to contribute to topics and learn from each other.

> Future Aims

The organisation wishes to grow

in size and have a reasonable representation or links with other like-minded community groups and individuals up and down the U.K. The organisation is very eager especially to hear from those residents and organisations where a relationship can be formed by working together to provide a platform where MPUK can successfully grow and help others in the community.

Hanif feels the work provides a greater good than just to the individual: "Every youngster who goes on to have achieve something, who becomes a doctor or accountant or lawyer will immediately benefit himself, then obviously his family and over time the local community, as his professional services will be put back into the community and he will automatically become a role model for others. Success today will bring success for future generations." Muslim Professionals UK, despites it name is not exclusive to Muslims. At its heart the organisation is broadly based around Muslim values but as Hanif stresses: "Our organisation is open to people of all faiths and no faith, everybody is welcome."

> For further information

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or call Hanif Rehman: founder of Muslim Professionals U.K. on 07970590749



By Harun Yahya* [Haroon Ya'hya]
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THE HIGH MORALITY OF the Prophet (P.B.U.H.)

As a verse of the 'Qur a~n reveals, "... Mu'hammad is the Messenger of Allaah and the Final Seal of the Prophets." (Surat ala'hzaab: 40), the Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) was sent to mankind as the last prophet. He was a living example of the sublime morality of Allaah's last revelation. He was a friend of Allaah and inspired humanity by his nearness to Him. He was His representative, noble in His eyes, and a friend to all believers.

As Allaah has revealed in another verse, "We will impose a weighty Word upon you..." (Surat almuzzammil: 5), he charged His last prophet, Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) with a heavy responsibility. Due to the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) strong faith in Allaah, he fulfilled that

responsibility in the best possible way, called mankind to the path of Allaah and Islaam, and illuminated the way for all believers.

Although we have never seen the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), we can still do our very best to come to know his exemplary behaviour, his sayings and the pleasing morality he displayed, by means of the verses of the 'Qur a~n and the A'haadith (the sayings and teachings of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.)). We can try to be like him, in order to be close to him in the hereafter. People today, and the young in particular, take many individuals as role models, imitate the way they behave, speak and dress, and try to be like them. Yet, since the great majority of these people are not on the right road

themselves, they lack proper morality and attitudes. It is therefore a serious responsibility to lead people to the truth and the best morality and behaviour. A Muslim needs to try to emulate the behaviour and the morality of the Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.). Allaah confirms that in a verse:

You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allaah, for all who put their hope in Allaah and the Last Day and remember Allaah much. (Surat ala'hzaab: 21)

Those Muslims who follow the way of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) need to be foremost in their morality and behaviour, and to invite others to adopt that same morality. As the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) words, viz. "The most perfect believer in respect of faith is he who is best of them in manner,.." make it clear, morality is one the most important components of true faith. It is therefore an important religious duty

to learn about and practice the very best examples of it. The Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) trust in Allaah: An example to all people

Those situations the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was involved in, as they are related in the 'Qur a~n, demonstrate his resignation, and submission to Allaah. For instance, the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) words when he and his friend were hiding in a cave after leaving Makkah are one of the finest examples of that submission. The 'Qur a~n says:

If you do not help him, Allaah did help him when those who disbelieved drove him out and there were two of them in the Cave. He said to his companion, "Do not be despondent, Allaah is with us." Then Allaah sent down His serenity upon him and reinforced him with troops you could not see. He made the word of those who disbelieved undermost. It is the word of Allaah which is uppermost.

Allaah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawbah: 40)

Whatever the situation might have been, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) always submitted to Allaah, in the knowledge that there was beauty and goodness in all that He created. These words of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to his people as related in the 'Qura~n are a telling instance of that submission:

If good happens to you it galls them. If a mishap occurs to you, they say, "We made our preparations in advance," and they turn away rejoicing. Say: "Nothing can happen to us except what Allaah has ordained for us. He is Our Master. It is in Allaah that the believers should put their trust." (Surat at-Tawbah: 50-51)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.), by his submission to Allaah, was an example to all Muslims, and he warned that people would never have the power to alter anything that came from Allaah:

"... When you ask for anything ask it from Allaah, and if you seek help seek it from Allaah. Know that if the people were to unite to do you some benefit they could benefit you only with what Allaah had recorded for you, and that if they were to unite to do you some injury they could injure you only with what Allaah had recorded for you. The pens are withdrawn and the pages are dry."

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) ever only sought to please Allaah, expecting nothing in return from others

One of the fundamental tenets of Islaam is that a person must found his whole

life on the love and fear of Allaah, and carry out all his obligations solely to win the good will and mercy of Allaah and to attain His Paradise. In one verse, Allaah tells believers: "Say: 'My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allaah alone, the Lord of all the worlds.'" (Surat alan'aam: 162)

In the following verse, believers are told to live their religion solely for Allaah, and not for any other purpose: "Except those who repent and put things right and hold fast to Allaah and dedicate their religion to Allaah alone, they are with the believers. Allaah will give the believers an immense reward." (Surat an-Nisaa: 146) Anyone who holds fast to Allaah, knows that there is no other god than Allaah, lives his life solely to gain His good pleasure, and never, ever abandons his faith in Him, shows he has true faith.

No sincere believer tries to gain the love, good will, praise of anyone other than Allaah in his actions and religious duties. The finest examples of such sincere believers are the Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) and other prophets (peace be upon them all).

The patience exhibited by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in the face of difficulty

Throughout the period of his mission, the Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) experienced all manner of difficulty. Deniers and polytheists, from among his own people, insulted him most terribly, even calling him a magician or a madman. Others wanted to kill him and even schemed to do so. Despite all that, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) tried to teach people

of all backgrounds and cultures about the 'Qura~n, and therefore about proper morality and good behaviour.

As is revealed in the verses of the 'Qura~n, some people had not the slightest idea of the basics of good manners, for which reason it never entered their minds that they might appal someone who possessed superior morality. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) displayed the greatest patience in these circumstances, turning to Allaah and asking for His help in all situations and encouraging believers to patience and submission. In the 'Qura~n, Allaah advises the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to be patient despite the words of unbelievers:

So be patient in the face of what they say and glorify your Lord with praise before the rising of the sun and before it sets. (Surah 'Qaaf: 39)

Do not be grieved by what they say. All might belongs to Allaah. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. (Surah Yunus: 65)

Believers must remember the kind of things Allaah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) was patient for, and take him as a model when dealing with their own difficulties. Those who despair at the slightest problem, who are unable to bear the smallest objection, who stop preaching the religion of Allaah, or who lose hope when their business dealings go wrong, must be aware that such behavior is incompatible with Allaah's holy book and the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Believers must always be patient, take Allaah as their helper and

give thanks to Him, adopt the superior morality of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), and hope for the mercy, compassion and Paradise of our Lord.

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was always tolerant of those around him

Throughout his life, he showed an interest in each and every one, warned them about their mistakes and failings, and tried to educate them in all matters, from cleanliness to matters of faith. That compassionate, tolerant, understanding and patient attitude of his was the means by which many peoples' hearts warmed to Islaam and developed a genuine love for the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Allaah describes this pleasing attitude adopted by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) towards those around him in the 'Qura~n:

It is a mercy from Allaah that you were gentle with them. If you had been rough or hard of heart, they would have scattered from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them... (Surah Al 'Imraan: 159)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) never pressured those around him to accept the religion, nor imposed conditions on them. Instead he always used the pleasantest ways to tell them about it. He always supported the community of the faithful with his strong conscience, and was a benefactor to them at all times. On account of these traits, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) is described in many verses as "your companion." (Surah Saba: 46: Surat an-Najm: 2, Surat at-Takweer: 22).

Those believers who were able to

comprehend the conscientiousness of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) regarded him as closer to them than all others, and humbled themselves towards him. In one verse, Allaah states:

The Prophet has closer ties to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers... (Surat ala'hzaab: 6)

Imam Ghazaali, the great Islaamic scholar, summed up the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) treatment of those around him in light of the information found in the A'haadith:

"... Everyone thought that the Prophet honoured him more. Whoever came to him could see his face... He used to call his companions by their titles with honour and he used to give one title to whoever had no title... He was very affectionate and kind in dealing with the people... Nobody could speak loudly in his assembly."

The Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) human love, kind thoughts and compassion, which turned those around him to true religion and warmed their hearts to faith, is that superior morality which all Muslims should seek to reproduce.

The exemplary justice of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.)

In the 'Qura~n, Allaah commands believers to "Be upholders of justice, bearing witness for Allaah alone, even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether they are rich or poor, Allaah is well able to look after them. Do not follow your own desires and deviate from the truth..." (Surat an-Nisaa-: 135). With the

rules he imposed on Muslims, his just and tolerant attitude towards those of other religions, languages, races and tribes, and his way of not discriminating between rich and poor, but treating everybody equally, Allaah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) is a great example to all of mankind.

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) abided by Allaah's commands, even with such difficult people, and never made any concessions in his implementation of justice. He became an example for all times with the words, "My Lord has commanded justice..." (Surat ala'raaf: 29).

During the time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), Christians, Jews and pagans were all treated equally. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) abided by the verse "There is no compulsion where the religion is concerned..." (Surat alba'qarah: 256), explaining the true religion to everyone, but leaving them free to make up their own minds. The noble attitude of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), being in total harmony with the morality of the 'Qura~n, should be taken as an example of how members of different religions today should be treated. During his final sermon, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) called on Muslims in these terms:

"There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab; nor for white over the black nor for the black over the white except in piety. Verily the noblest among you is he who is the most pious."

In our day, the only solution to the fighting and conflict going on all over

the world is to adopt the morality of the 'Qura~n, and, like the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), never to depart from the path of justice, making no distinction between different religions, languages, or races.

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was a bearer of glad tidings

In the verse "O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness, and a bringer of good news and a warner" (Surat ala'hzaab: 45), Allaah describes the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) always warned people against the sufferings to be experienced in Hell, and told them of the desirable future that awaited the good in this world, and of the infinite life of the Paradise in the hereafter. This characteristic of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) is revealed in the 'Qura~n thus:

We have sent you with the Truth, bringing good news and giving warning. Do not ask about the inhabitants of the Blazing Fire. (Surat alba'qarah: 119)

Those who take the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) as a model and abide by his Sunnah must, like him, give people the same glad tidings and warn them. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) himself described how such people ought to behave:

"Make things easy for the people, and do not make it difficult for them, and make them calm (with glad tidings) and do not repulse (them)."

Giving welcome news increases believers' enthusiasm and morale, and encourages them to be more determined

and persevering in their labours in the way of Allaah. Someone who hopes to be rewarded with Paradise will of course have a very different attitude and state of mind than someone who regards those labours as monotonous, or carries them out of habit or a sense of obligation. That is why Allaah has commanded His Messenger (P.B.U.H.) to: "Spur on the believers." (Surat an-Nisaa-: 84)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) relieved Muslims of difficulties

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) lifted burdens from the faithful, and was a guide to them in tasks that they failed to understand properly, which, otherwise, had been too difficult. People are easily prone to making their lives difficult, and to imposing rules upon themselves, by which they falsely believe they have solved their problems. This particular human characteristic is one of the reasons why the religion has been distorted through the years. Many societies have dreamed up rules that did not actually exist in the religion, and then made themselves and others believe that they would only be truly god-fearing when they adhered to them. One of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) most important qualities was the way he lifted such burdens that people had imposed on themselves. Allaah speaks of that quality of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in a verse:

Those who follow the Messenger, the Ummi [illiterate], whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, commanding them to do right and forbidding them to do wrong, permitting them good things and prohibiting

them bad things, relieving them of their heavy loads and the chains which were around them. Those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are successful. (Surat ala'raaf: 157)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was most considerate and compassionate towards the faithful

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was a compassionate man, full of love and understanding. He took an interest in the physical and spiritual problems of his friends, relatives and all those around him, and took all appropriate measures to ensure their health, security and happiness. He took them under his wing, and always bore in mind their lot in the hereafter by encouraging them to remain godly. These features of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), that are an example for all of humanity, are revealed in verses:

A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering is distressing to him; he is deeply concerned for you; he is gentle and merciful to the believers. (Surat attawbah: 128)

The faithful, who were taught by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), and abided by the verses of the 'Qura~n, behaved compassionately even towards prisoners of war. Verses speak of this, too:

They give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives: "We feed you only out of desire for the sake of Allaah. We do not want any repayment from you or any thanks. Truly we fear

from our Lord a glowering, calamitous Day." (Surat alinsaan: 8-10)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reminded his companions to be compassionate, and was the greatest model for them in that regard:

"Those who have mercy will receive the mercy of the Most Merciful. Have mercy on those who are on earth, the One in heavens will have mercy on you."

The importance the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) attributed to cleanliness

As well as their purity of heart and morality, Muslims are also known for the cleanliness of their bodies, clothes, homes and the food they eat. A Muslim's hair, hands, face and body must always be clean. His clothes must always be clean, neat and well cared for. The places where he works or lives must always be clean, tidy, sweet smelling and be a relaxing atmosphere. Once again, it is the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who is the best example of this characteristic of Muslims. The Prophet also advises the faithful to be clean in one of the A'haadith:

"Surely, Islaam is pure, therefore be pure, because he can never enter Paradise who is not pure."

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was always considerate and courteous

Some of those who surrounded the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) were less than well mannered and cultured. It can be seen from a number of verses that they could not understand how thoughtless they

were and that their behaviour could make others uncomfortable. For instance, verses speak of people entering houses by the back instead of the front, arriving when the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was dining, or else taking up his time by talking for a long time. The Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.), on the other hand, was very thoughtful, courteous, patient and civilized, and treated such people nevertheless with the greatest tolerance. Also, in the most pleasant manner, he warned those around him against behaviour that would make others uncomfortable, and thus won their sympathy, teaching them through patience and perseverance. That comportment made him an excellent example for all believers.

Because of his being both a Messenger of Allaah and a head of state, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was in constant contact with people from all walks of life, from the wealthy leaders of states and tribes to poor, defenceless women and orphans. He was able to communicate with and win the hearts of people whose social status, ways of life and customs were very different from one another, and he exhibited understanding, patience and a desirable attitude.

Anas Ibn Maalik, who was raised in the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) household and served him for many years, spoke of his matchless kindness:

"When Allaah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) shook hands with anyone he did not withdraw his hands till the other man withdrew his. Similarly, he did not turn away his face from anyone till that man turned his face to the other side. And he

was never seen to put forward his knees in front of one with whom he was sitting."

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) taught thousands of people during his life, and was a means by which those who knew nothing of religion and morality came to be morally superior, well behaved, thoughtful and self-sacrificing. Even after his death, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) is still teaching by means of his words, attitudes and behaviour, and is a most noble guide and teacher.

i Sunan Abo Daawood, Book 40, Number 4665
ii Tirmith>y 'Hadeeth

iii Imaam 'Gazzaly's l'hyaa- 'uloom Addeen, The Book of Religious Learnings, Islaamic Book Service, New Delhi, 2001, Volume II, p.240

iv Prophet Mu'hammad's Last Sermon (<http://www.stanford.edu/~jamila/Sermon.html>)

v 'Sa'hee'h Albu'kaary, Volume 8, Number 146

vi Tirmith>y 'Hadeeth

vii A'hmad 'diyaa' Addeen Alkamushkhanaawy, Ramuz Ala'haadeeth, vol.1, 96/2

viii Maulana Mu'hammad Manzoor No'maany, Ma'aarif Al'hadeeth, (Meaning and Message of the Traditions), Darul – Ishaat Publications, Karachi, Volume 4, p.334

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Sheikh Jaber

A MAN WITH A RARE BLEND OF QUALITIES
GENEROSITY, MODESTY AND WISDOM

By **Rima Mneimneh** [Reemah Munayminah]

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The late Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmed Al-Sabah [Jaabir Ala'hmad Al'sabaa'h], who passed away on January 15, 2006 was a man of rare qualities. The entire nation wholeheartedly mourned him, and his absence will be missed at all levels in Kuwait forever, the country he had dedicated his life to serve sincerely in times of need and abundance. He was an extraordinary man with a vision and a mission. Listening and reading about his achievements in the media - during the mourning days after the shocking news of his departure - by

experts who had worked closely with him, had awakened the eyes of the Kuwaitis and the world at large to a fact that the Emir was a man of a special calibre, an extraordinary figure.

He was not only a ruler but a genuine compassionate father who cared for every citizen as if he were his own son or daughter. How many citizens in this world could address their leaders by that name and call them that? I guess very few. His love and compassion for Kuwait and the people of Kuwait were exem-

plary, unique and quite rare. Many would argue that the incredible influx of wealth from petrodollars that the country had made all the difference, and there was no need to struggle to get projects of development in progress. That is not true at all. Many countries in the world enjoy larger oil revenues by far, have massive populations that would create a real effective workforce if educated and enlightened, larger lands, countries with vast civilisations deep-rooted in history, greater fortunes, highly-educated

citizens, yet this small country was able to engrave its name with pride and assurance in the world scene at political, economic and social levels.

The late Emir had humble education, and no wealth early on. When his nation was destined to become one of the wealthiest nations in the world, that new status did not blur his vision and did not deter his determination and strong belief in God and his people to pursue his plans to secure brighter and secure future for the people he was en-



trusted to rule. Driven by a strong will, armoured with a belief in God Almighty and inspired by the holy book of 'Qura~n, (a book laden with remarkable humanitarian values), with complete honesty with himself and in his people, with the genuine humility of a believer in God, the late Emir was able to practice genuine human kindness and spread it amongst his people. He loved us and we loved him back, not only in words but also in deeds, without false pretences. Thanks to this great leader who had a rare blend of qualities: generosity, modesty and wisdom; who had left a country, after a reign of thirty years, with well established institutions and doctrines ensuring many comforts to its citizens in all fields and at all ages.

We all love him and respect him and will always cherish his memory as long as we will live. He was part of our lives. We could sense his concern for our daily needs as ordinary human beings. The basic needs for Kuwaitis are well guarded: housing, education, hospitalization and old age. The simple formula of what human decency in this life is all about. Simple words that require hard work and genuine selfless dedication that leaders like the late Jaber Al-Ahmed were endowed with. His relentless struggle in all circles regionally and worldwide when the

invasion of our beloved country Kuwait occurred on the black of Thursday August 2nd, 1990. He, with his wisdom and patience, and with all the nation supporting him and believing in his genuine intentions had led the way back to safety marking the re-birth of a war-stricken land. His efforts and strong belief in the abilities of his people to rebuild the country never wavered.

Truly he was a rare man of rare qualities. Leaders must be chosen to be like that, and better. Democracy, the power of people as it stands for, or Al-Shoura, allow the people to choose and elect rulers like his calibre and even better. Of course, the oil revenues had helped enormously and the legislations or opposing opinions had hampered the progress of execution of laws in many instances, but with sincere intentions and a talent to rule with compassion, he had utilised the oil revenues or surpluses to finance long-sighted plans that would ensure security and decent lives for his people.

Such wise and fair rulers should be studied to discover how they have secured their people's dignity and stability at all levels at all times: in times of need and times of abundance. I strongly believe, even without the oil revenues such wise

leaders who love their countries would have found ways - even with limited resources - to secure decent and stable lives for their people.

I hope that the myriad of achievements and the qualities this leader had, which enabled him to lead his country, would be documented and made available to Kuwaitis and readers from all around the world. The leader who has brought the name of a small land to the lime-light, and had it recognised and respected by the wealthiest and the greatest powers in the world in the twentieth century - the age of greed, selfishness and materialistic interests - must be indeed a phenomenon worth examining and recording.

He was indeed a unique man. The most vicious and malicious men of the world would only bow with respect to this humble man, who with few words, but with outstanding vision and innumerable remarkable deeds, gave a global recognition to a small country called ... Kuwait.

May God Almighty bestow His mercy upon our late Emir and rest his soul in peace: His name will be engraved in our hearts and in the hearts of our children as the man who loved his country unconditionally.

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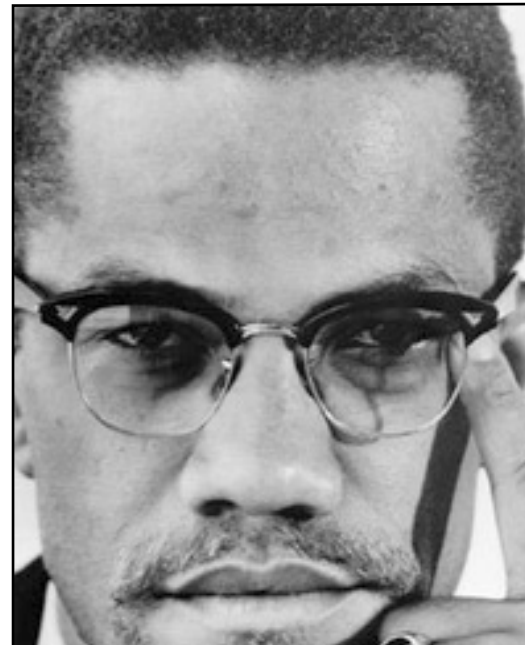
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ISLAAM as a Pastoral in the Life of Malcolm X



By Abdelwahab Elmessiri

[‘Abd Alwahaab Almiseery]



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The Autobiography of Malcolm X is a hymn of praise to the soul of man, which can survive in the face of the most corrupting circumstances. This heroic achievement is possible because man is always capable of dreaming of a world of pastoral innocence and of maintaining a measure of spiritual purity even after becoming the most cynical of all cynics.

The pastoral, whether in the Thousand and One Nights or in ancient Rome, is an ideal character-

ized by simplicity and purity, and is considered superior to the norm or statistical average predominant in a sophisticated culture. The pastoral ideal is used by the revolutionary or visionary writer to undercut and expose a complex yet stagnant status quo. He may not believe that such an ideal actually exists; yet he believes in the possibility of vision and its superiority over fact and reality. In this sense the pastoral mode is as inevitable as history and revolution.

Islaam, for Malcolm, was such a

pastoral. It provided him with an idealistic or visionary frame of reference that liberated him from the racist assumptions of his society of which he was the victim, and to which he must subscribe. But why did I choose the term “pastoral” to describe the Islaamic-Arab world Malcolm personally saw, and the Islaamic beliefs he eventually embraced? Arabia and Cairo, after all, do exist, and Islaamic culture is indeed devoid of racial tensions. This is admittedly true, but the Arab world is not exactly the paradise

Malcolm saw. Malcolm did not see the seamy side of the Islaamic-Arab world because he was dealing with totalities. He discovered that as far as he, the Afro-American, was concerned, the Arab-Islaamic world as a totality did not stunt human potentialities. That is why he could abstract his pastoral ideal from this Muslim world. White Protestant America for him was devoid of such human idealistic possibilities. He found it totally destructive.

The Islaamic-Arab world, in spite of all its historical tensions, provided Malcolm with a pastoral vision of a world morally superior to America, at least insofar as human and racial relationships are concerned. By returning to America to realize his new vision through social action, Malcolm showed that he belonged to the tradition of historical revolutionaries who want to alter reality, not by transcending or breaking away from it, but by reshaping it according to their vision of the “good life.”

The structure of the Autobiography as a whole could be seen as the development of Malcolm from being a practical, soulless hustler to becoming a visionary who discovers, through the help of an Islaamic,

pastoral norm, “idealistic tendencies” in himself. The Autobiography begins with a reference to the pregnancy of Malcolm’s mother: a clear symbol of fertility and new life. The father, a preacher of a form of Black Nationalism, is also an emblem of a new national birth. Yet the very second line of the Autobiography tells of the hooded Ku Klux Klan riders who surrounded Malcolm’s house in the night and taunted his father. The very fact that Malcolm survived and that he wrote his Autobiography is a testimony that map, by refusing to sell his soul to the devil of race and materialism, and by maintaining a belief in the superiority of the possible over the actual, can achieve salvation.

At Jaahiliyyah: The Pre-Is-laamic Phase

Everything in Malcolm’s society conspired against him and his humanity. Once the father died, the welfare people moved in to convert Malcolm’s little community into fragmented economic units. They looked at the members of the family “as numbers and as a case in their book, not at human beings” (p. 22)! Later in life, Malcolm was once more literally converted to a number when

he was sent to jail. His number became a part of him, “stencilled on his brain” (p. 152). Malcolm discovered that the conversion of men into numbers is a cultural necessity for America, because while this country can solve the problem of sending man into outer space, it cannot deal with human beings (p. 268).

If the relationship is between object and other objects, rather than between a man and other human beings, manipulation replaces social responsibility and love. Everyone preys on everyone else. The early part of the Autobiography tells of lust replacing love (p. 121), of white and black men exploiting white and black prostitutes, and vice versa. It also tells of the legion of gamblers who preferred doing nothing to real human struggle. In their heart of hearts, they discovered that human labour, “slave” they called it, did not really pay in exploitative, manipulative, capitalist America. In the capitalist gospel it says, do unto others, before they do unto you.

The most manipulative of all the characters was the hustler. Malcolm noticed that the ghetto hustler, a product of white racism, had no inner restraints whatsoever be-

cause, in order to survive, he was “out there constantly preying upon others, probing for any human weakness like a ferret” (p. 311). The hustler, in competitive white America, could never trust anyone (p. 87), and had to keep on the go, shoving and pushing.

Reduced to the status of a hustler, a gambler, or even an object, man loses what distinguishes him as a human being. In the Autobiography, the many references to man as an animal serve to dramatize the reductive brutality of white society. Malcolm found that white people considered him, at first, a pet canary (p. 26). Later he became, for them, a fine colt, a pedigreed pet (p. 27), and a pink poodle (p. 30). This useless pet became a mere parasite (p. 75), only to become a vulture in Chapter Six.

But not for a moment did Malcolm surrender his innocence, for he knew all along that he became a vulture through living in “this competitive, materialistic, dog-eat-dog white man’s world” (p. 267). Malcolm, with his sharp analytical mind, discovered that this awareness made the ghetto hustler a potential revolutionary. Seeing himself as a

victim rather than a victimizer, the hustler had “less respect for the white power structure than any other Negro in North America” (p. 311). As a matter of fact, Malcolm implicitly suggests that the moral standards of the community of hustlers are in a sense superior to those of white Protestant America. The relationship between Shorty and Malcolm is characterized by a certain warmth totally absent in the rest of the world of dollarism. For one thing, the hustlers form a community. For another, their code of ethics is consistent because it applies to both blacks and whites - an ethical height yet to be reached by these United States.

Bashaa-er Al-Ba’th or the Emergence of the Pastoral

If even the hustlers of the Autobiography kept their souls, the mass of people showed a remarkable cultural stamina. They did not only survive, but they also had visions in a world of crass materialism. It is ultimately the capacity to have visions of a world of pastoral beauty that saved Malcolm.

The first reference in the Autobiography to any visions of salvation

is made in the first few pages of the first chapter. Malcolm remembered very well his father's favourite sermon: "That little black train is a-comin' . . . an' you better get all your business right!" (p. 4). The images used show the stubbornness of the black man in America. He converts the most mundane of activities, business, and the least poetical of objects, a train, into spiritual symbols. Malcolm also remembered his father invoking the myth of an African Adam "driven out of the Garden into the caves of Europe" and using the cleansing metaphor of the coming storm to describe Africa's redemption (p. 6). No wonder, with this capacity to resist entrapment in mere matter, that the Negroes, when in church, "threw their souls and bodies wholly into worship" (p. 35). White America did not obliterate their souls the way it did to their white brethren, who, as Malcolm observed, "Just sat and worshiped with words" (p. 35) - a sad sight indeed!

But it was through music and dance that the Afro-American could transcend his agony and achieve specific selfhood and identity. In the Autobiography, Malcolm joyfully asserts that his long-suppressed African instincts broke through when

he was dancing (p. 57). References to Afro-American music and songs are just too many to enumerate. But they stand as some kind of emblem of the triumph of the Afro-American soul and its desire to reach the skies. (The music and the dance are in sharp contrast to the animal imagery which points to the voraciousness of the white man's culture and its desire to reduce and fetter the Afro-American.) Nowhere is this emblematic significance of music made clearer than in Chapter Five, when a reefer-smoking Negro, hearing Lionel Hampton's "Flyin' Home," believed he could fly and actually jumped from the second balcony, breaking his leg. Both the incident of the temporary "spiritual liberation" and its tragic aftermath were immortalized in another Afro-American song: Earl Hines' hit tune "Second Balcony Jump" (p.74). Malcolm was detached enough to see the futility and moral inadequacy of this kind of flying, but he was also compassionate enough to see its beauty. Later in life, Malcolm himself would fly like the "boy Icarus," but with wings given to him by Allaah and the religion of Islaam (p. 287).

The music and the other redeeming

elements in the world of the Afro-American preserved his soul and saved him from being crushed by the racist ethics of white America. Though they all implied a degree of rejection of the stagnant status quo, they never liberated the Afro-American completely because they did not provide him with a new total vision which could serve as a total critique of American culture. Islaam, a total ethical system, was for Malcolm both the total critique and the pastoral ideal.

Islaam

The process of conversion to Islaam began with small ritualistic steps such as the refusal to eat pork in prison (p. 156) and the ablution (p. 193). Yet it ended with the revolutionary adoption of a new system of values.

While still in jail, Malcolm was introduced to the version of Islaam advocated by Elijah Muhammad's group. He embraced it and felt its moral superiority. But Malcolm went beyond the group's moral assumptions because of their failure to reject America's ethical values completely. Although the Black Muslim's creed did undoubtedly contribute to

Malcolm's liberation and redemption, it was, like the other pastoral elements in his pre-Islaamic life, morally and psychologically inadequate. For this reason let us move on directly to discuss Malcolm's conversion to "orthodox" Islaam, demonstrating in the course of the discussion the ways in which he transcended the beliefs of the Elijah Muhammad group.

Malcolm showed an intuitive understanding of Islaam and its God. Many Americans have studied Islaam before, but they were satisfied with their culture and its underlying assumptions, while Malcolm was undergoing a moral crisis and dreaming of a better world. That is why after hundred of years of theological studies and European missionaries, no Westerner as yet has captured the essence of the Islaamic God the way Malcolm did. Malcolm, for instance, discovered the egalitarianism and universalism of Allaah. The Christian God is universal, yet Malcolm knew that He was appropriated by a Western culture that gave Him specific colours and definite cultural attributes. A Harvard seminary student, lecturing on the Christian religion, grew very evasive and embarrassed when Malcolm told

him about the real colour of Jesus and St. Paul (p.190). Allaah, on the other hand, remains free from human prejudices and false distinctions. He is the God of all people, in all places, and of all colours. Malcolm reached this conclusion not through theological ratiocination, but through personal experience. In the Islaamic-Arab world, people insisted on seeing him as an American. Isn't that his nationality, after all? The Egyptian pilot, whose complexion was darker than Malcolm's, invited him to the cockpit as an "American Muslim" (p. 324), not as a Black Muslim. A Persian Muslim in Malcolm's compartment greeted him saying, "Amer . . . American" (p. 329). The astonishment was complete and the realization of the nature of the Islaamic God became final when Dr. Azzam, who "would have been called a white man," did not act white in the least (p. 331). To his utter dismay, Malcolm discovered that he was the only one who was colour-conscious. This new outlook signalled the beginning of his total liberation from American values. Malcolm, in a very significant passage, which begins with a reference to the morning, tells us about his reappraisal of the term "white," and his heroic leap from racist

judgments to ethical evaluations (p. 333). The term "white man" loses its racial content because he saw people with white complexions who were genuinely brotherly. He so thoroughly exorcised the devil of racism that when he noticed that people who looked alike stayed together, he could see it not as racial segregation but as a voluntary action of people who simply have something in common with each other (p. 344).

This personal interaction with Muslims enabled him to grasp the revolutionary implications of the Islaamic concept of the Oneness of God. Whites standing in front of the One God ceased to be mere whites and became full human beings (p. 360). He, an Afro-American, also stood before the "Creator of All" and also felt like a complete human being (p. 365). He could achieve this completeness because to accept the Oneness of God means to accept the Oneness of Man (P. 341). Consistent and generous as ever, Malcolm embraced the logical conclusion of his new Islaamic position; later in life he rejected the pseudo-Islaamic myth of the white man being the devil.

In the Christian world, people have to have images and icons to be able to see their gods. In the Islaamic tradition, God can never be represented nor is He ever incarnated in any human or superhuman form. The Muslim prophet is also the Iconoclast, the breaker of statues and images. The reasons are not hard to discover. To paint an image of God is to impose a human limitation or prejudice on Him. The Islaamic God is universalistic and prefers to remain this way. Malcolm showed his remarkable acumen in his rejection of the elaborate mythical scheme, Protestant in origin, devised by the Black Muslims (p. 368). They believe that God was incarnated in the person of a half-white, half-black man named Mr. W. Fard. The whole idea of incarnation, which has many anti-humanistic and antidemocratic implications, is totally alien to the spirit of Islaam. Malcolm grasped this fact, and pointed out the dangers of deifying the human. He believed in Elijah Muhammad as a leader not in the ordinary human sense but also "as a divine leader." In Makkah, on the hilltop, and in the presence of the One and the Unique he realized how very dangerous it is to believe in the "divinely guided" and "protected" person (p. 365).

Nowhere in his Autobiography does he talk about the form of Allaah or His personal attributes.

One and Unique He is, but He is never alien to the human self. The Islaamic God refused to endow his prophet with supernatural powers which could contravene natural processes. Mu'hammad stubbornly refused to yield to the temptations of becoming an ordinary, supernatural prophet, and remained a man living among men. If the messenger of Allaah, a casual speaker with Him, is an ordinary human being, then anyone can speak to Allaah. Allaah tells Mu'hammad in the 'Qura~n that if people asked the prophet about Him, they should know that Allaah is near, and that He will answer all their prayers. Malcolm was almost echoing the 'Qura~n when he said, "Allaah always gives you signs, when you are with Him, that He is with you" (p. 319). It is this humane God whom Malcolm had in mind whenever he reiterated the sentence "I knew Allaah was near" which runs like a refrain throughout the Autobiography, especially in Chapter Seventeen.

The Muslim prophet was not only a messenger of God, but also a politi-

cal leader of Arabia. He did not only offer a new vision of life, but he also fought for the liberation of slaves. That is why Bilaal, one of his first converts, was at once a religious follower and fighter for freedom. In short, the separation between a religious and ethical ideal, on the one hand, and social and political practice, on the other, is not a Muslim phenomenon. The Imaam in Islaamic culture still plays the role of the minister and the leader of the community, and his Friday sermon is still both religious and political. The Islaamic view of social action as being inseparable from ethical and religious beliefs was not lost upon Malcolm. It seems to me that this is the single most important point that caused Malcolm to break away from the Black Muslims. Moving among the Afro-American masses, he discovered that the Nation of Islam could be a significant force only when it is "engaged in more action" in the overall struggle of the masses (p. 289). When his efforts at reorienting the Nation of Islam to social action failed, he decided to build his own organization which would carry into practice what the Nation of Islam preached (p. 315). He was too much of a Muslim to be a mere priest; he could not help being a

social activist, like the messenger of Allaah.

One final characteristic of the Islaamic ideal which Malcolm perceived and fully appreciated is its communitarianism. The Islaamic Sabbath is on Friday, Yawm Aljumu'ah, or the day of the community. Allaah in the 'Qura~n says that His hand is always with the community rather than with the individual. In his first encounter with Muslims, Malcolm immediately felt "the atmosphere of warmth and friendliness" (p. 321). Coming from a racist, competitive society it was almost like stepping "out of a prison" (p. 321). People loved him, and accepted him "as a brother" (p. 322); and they offered him their food and even their beds. An Egyptian wife, incapable of seeing competitiveness as the sole motivation of man's behaviour, innocently asks, "Why are people in the world starving when America has so much surplus food?" (p. 322). He who comes from a capitalist, sophisticated society knows better: In America they let the surplus rot, according to the most advanced technological methods, of course! Islaamic communitarianism makes social action an inevitable outgrowth of moral

consciousness. Malcolm embraced the communitarian ideal and the ideal of social action. His life after his actual conversion to Islaam testifies to this fact.

Though he left a part of himself in the Holy City of Makkah, and though he took away with him a part of Makkah (p. 349), he refused to degenerate into any form of escapism or desire to "return." He went back to his people to fight with them for their rights. The separatism of the early nationalist groups was rejected in favour of a more sophisticated concept of return to Africa. The "return," from that point on, came to mean a philosophical and cultural "return," rather than a purely physical one. The physical going back to America, however, was as important as the psychological return to Africa. This dual "return" reveals Malcolm's commitment to his community and his desire to bring salvation to it. It also reveals his insistence on his dual, complex identity as an African and as an American. He was no mad prophet who wanted to break all historical and human limits.

Having accepted the Islaamic ethical ideal, and having exorcised the ghost of white Protestant America,

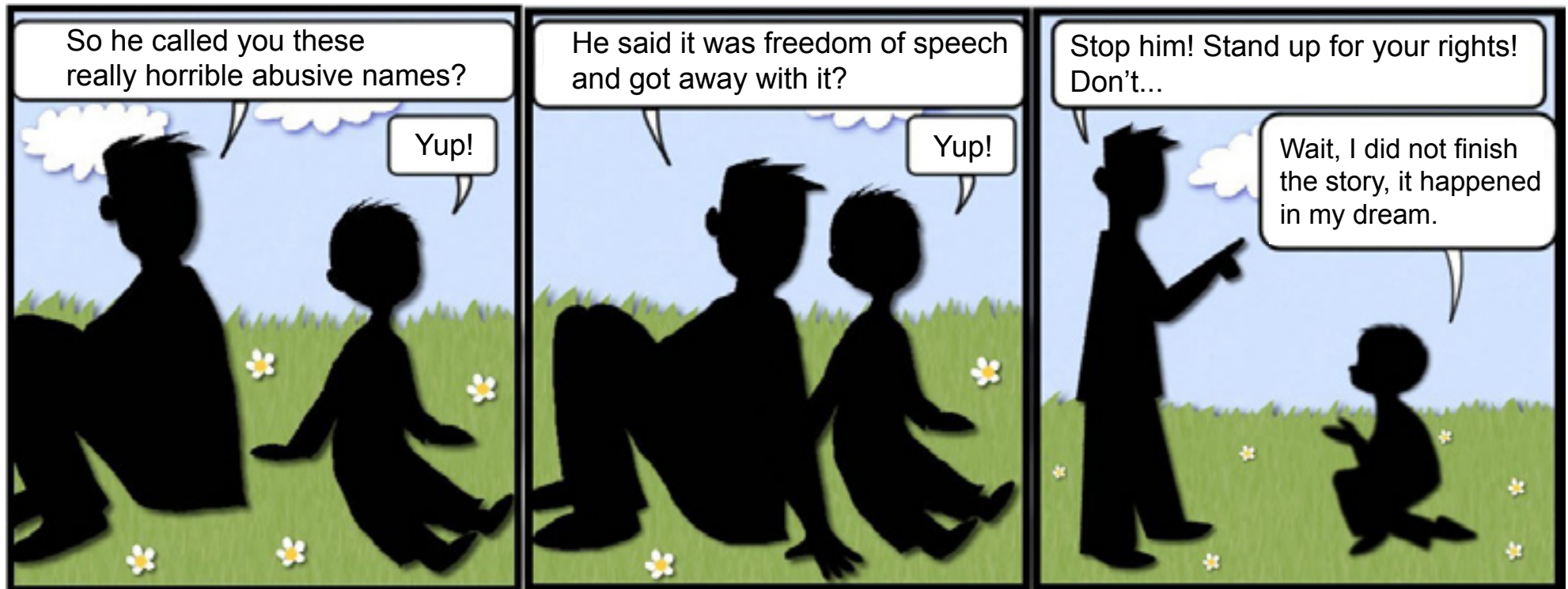
the new man Malcolm could now discover himself and his real and beautiful soul. The Autobiography reaches its climax when liberated Malcolm, in his new pastoral world, in the Holy City of Makkah, discovers "idealistic tendencies" (p. 333) in him. This is a far cry from the pink poodle, the vulture, and the hustler white America wanted him to be. The Autobiography is indeed a hymn of praise for the soul of man, which can endure and even triumph.

All references are to page numbers in The Autobiography of Malcolm X with the assistance of Alex Haley (New York: Grove Press, 1966).

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Islaamic Consciousness: NATIONALISM or ANTI-NATIONALISM?

(Part 2 of 2)

By Edwin Anthony

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“Terrorism”

That is why, for instance, there is a propensity to view the violence perpetrated by Transnational Militants simply as “terrorism” – which indicates a focus on its methods and effects – rather than transnationalism – which is a corollary of, and reaction to, the illogicality of the nation-state given the current advanced state of technology. The masses, in other words, do not possess the necessary concepts or the mindset to produce words that describe the phenomena in a cause-effect manner contextualised within a broad historical milieu because the nation-state is viewed as the only body from which any phenomena can come about or can have any meaning. Hence, “military

action” is assumed when it comes from a nation-state but it is “terror” when it does not come from a state. Thus, logically, all actions not being forwarded by a state are seen to be borne of psychosis or cultural deficiencies. It has no “cause” because it does not have the “body” of a state which is perceived to be the first amongst causes in the nation-based geopolitical system. That is why the phenomenon of “transnationalism” is reduced to nothing more than what it makes us feel – terror.

This is not unlike the “terror” one feels upon being confronted with objects moving by itself. A cup being carried across the table by a person is not worth a raised eyebrow. But a

cup doing so seemingly according to its own volition is a cause for much fear and terror. It cannot move across the table simply because it has no body that we recognise to be a body to argue for the legitimacy and naturalness of the cup’s movement. That is exactly how the idea of the “terrorist” can gain as much conceptual currency as it has to-date. It has no legitimate “body” or “state” that can legitimise the existence of a militant wing of a transnational consciousness that is yet to materialise. We must not forget that “terrorism” was always perceived as such whether it was violence directed at the civilian, military installations or political ones. This is a strong indicator of the conceptual basis and biases upon which much of the world uses the word “terrorist” and its other derivatives in an authoritative fashion.

The best way to understand the idea of Transnational Militancy is to appreciate, not its methods or motives, but what it is an unconscious reaction to. That is, a reaction against the inability of the contiguous nation-state to represent a people who are spread across the whole globe. Of course, the first step that ought to be taken is to term this phenomenon in a way that would contextualize it within a geopolitical and historical stage and not use highly egocentric words like “terror” and “terrorist”.

We must remember that there was a time when “Empire” was seen as the only logical and natural state of existence. At that time, the “nationalists” would inevitably have been thought of as “terrorists” or “savages” despite many amongst them using the same methods and means as the “legitimate” armies of the Empire. Now, of course, we see them as nationalists. These “terrorists” are Transnationalists in their being a logical reaction to the nation-based global framework that expects people to feel familial affinity on the basis of contiguous space. And like the proponents of the naturalness of the Empires of old, our perception of these militants as nothing more than psychotic “terrorists” emerging from a “dysfunctional” ideology or faith is derived from our belief that the nation-state is the only logical state of existence. It is the only familial form within which one is supposed to form a familial bond. It is the only form from which one can act militarily, politically and institutionally - Just like a human body being a prerequisite for life, thought and action. Well, this could perhaps be argued to be “natural”, provided real-time technology, a technology that enables me to feel familial sentiments with another on the other side of the globe did not exist. The absence of this technology in the past had enabled me to only feel familial sentiments with a fellow villager or a citizen. With migration, globalisation, and real-time

technology, a “fellow villager” is just a click away. “Cultural space” – a conscientious counterpart of physical space – is “folded” and “patriotic” feelings can be garnered with a browser, a click of a remote or the “send” button in mobile device. The myopia induced by the previous state of technology disabled enough to enable nationalism whilst our real-time transnational vision of today disables the national monopoly over our senses.

As the Muslims, unlike many other forms of familial consciousness such as the Proletarian or Christian ones, had never been dismembered by the borders of the nation-state. They had, in effect, remained in stasis across separate nation-states over the ages and maintained intravenously by the observance of a similar faith that denied, from its outset, the state any monopoly over human consciousness. This was achieved by Mu’hammad supposedly “failing” to bequeath his religious role to a state which basically meant that society was to be the end and not the means for the glorification of the state. If he had done so, it would just legitimise any stat’s claim over the religious conscience of its “citizenry” which would in turn demolish the universality as the heart of Islaam.

All that was required was the aforementioned advances, a historically definable Western “other” and

continuous compromising of the Islaamic “family’s” interests by this “other” for it to ossify and produce a militant wing. This is not unlike the military wing formed by the now “United States of America” in the initial phase of the now-legitimised “American” Revolution. Loyalties were then called upon on the basis of shared physical space. There it was against “Empire”; here it is against the “nationalism”. However, it is unfortunate that these Transnationalists do not know, as mentioned, what they are a reaction to. That is why these Transnational Muslims are seeking for a nation-state of their own.

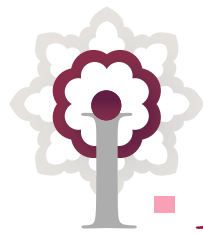
Sum

Consciousness is not a phenomenon existing apart from social realities. It is a psychological state that is expressed and ordered institutionally and experienced via the adaptation of culture to these circumstances. These in turn envelope humanity paradigmatically and supplies notions and concepts of reality. What is natural and legitimate; what is true and what is false; what are liabilities and assets; what are natural and legitimate goals and aspirations; what can be considered as natural and legitimate means and methods; arise from and dynamically interact with Consciousness. It is here that “bodies” such as nation-states can be formed, and it is here that the potential for conflict arises in the event illegitimate or unnatural

“bodies” are formed. I say “unnatural” because the state’s boundaries ought to coincide with the extent to which a sense of unity can be facilitated. With real-time technology, the state’s boundaries must coincide with the locality of the furthest individual who identifies with a culture. In a globalised village, this can only mean the entirety of the globe.

For instance, the UN is an institution produced by the Relations of Consciousness as expressed in the idea of the nation-state. These provide infrastructural support to enable the globally nation-centred consciousness to express itself within and between national selves. Where consciousness transcends the nation-state, as witnessed in Islaamic Transnationalism, it will necessarily strain against, amongst others, the infrastructural status quo as existing institutions will not have been created to accommodate it. It will be rendered voiceless and formless though it might comprise members more numerous than most recognised states or many of them put together. Such consciousness naturally, given the human propensity to feel aggrieved when those considered to be “our own” are made to suffer, evolves into insurgence when its grievances can find no podium as significant as the ones created for and by the previous Relations of Consciousness. Thus, contrary to the views of some quarters, what we are now facing is

a period in history, not of the “Clash of Civilisations”, but of the “Clash of Consciousness”. It is a clash between two civilisations with a different conception of cultural space. Religion, or Islaam, is incidental to this phenomenon, though, if this is illogically handled via “wars on terror”, it may increasingly serve to define it in religious and cultural terms. Islaam is not the cause of the scourge of “terrorism” but rather the means through which underlying propensities towards self-preservation and self-determination on the basis of familial loyalties is articulated. When the contradiction between the antiquated national variant of the Relations of Consciousness – founded upon previous technology – and the emerging Relations of Consciousness – a corollary of new “real-time” technology – are removed, such a conflict will suffer significant cessation. However, the effectiveness of such a solution will be increasingly compromised if we do not realise this soon enough. People are defined not only by what they are or what they are a reaction to, but also by ongoing circumstances that continuously determine what they become and what they will be a reaction to. In every step of our counteraction of a problem, the application of a flawed solution will result in the evolution of the problem into forms that we will not be able to solve with solutions that would be most effective at an earlier stage.



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I-MAG: Enlighten Your "I"

By Richard Seymour

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A Caricature of Academic Freedom

NASSER AMIN AND THE REALITY OF FREE EXPRESSION FOR EUROPE'S MUSLIMS

Axiomatically, leading academic institutions involve intense and varied debate over a variety of topics, and some of that debate ranges over territory that mainstream conversation often misses. The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), a prestigious higher learning institution in the centre of London, would appear to have a defender of free and open discussion in head Colin Bundy. In the last month, the Director and Principal has openly defended the right of an apologist for the Uzbekistan regime, Shirin Akiner, to speak at SOAS, rejecting calls for reconsideration by former British ambassador the dictatorship, Craig Murray.

He previously overturned a ban imposed by the Student Union on the attendance of Israeli embassy counsellor Roey Gilad: the students have an anti-racist policy, and consider Zionism to be in practise a form of racism. Bundy has expounded an heroic Voltairean dedication to free speech in defence of these actions. Yet, one glaring exception renders the rule absurd: the treatment of a student named Nasser Amin. Amin had written an article for a student magazine arguing that Palestinians had the right to use force against Israel's occupation. Instantly, this issue was used alongside a clutch of others by some right-wingers and pro-Zionist students who insisted that SOAS

was guilty of anti-Semitism. The broadsheets in the UK were joined in coverage of this claim by American far right website FrontPage magazine and Campus Watch, the former run by David Horowitz and the latter by Daniel Pipes, an anti-Muslim bigot. Gavin Gross, the SOAS student who had been most involved in pressing these claims, was given a glowing interview by FrontPage in which he dragged Amin's name through the mud. David Winnick MP raised the possibility in parliament that Amin should be charged with incitement to racial hatred. Finally, Bundy succumbed to the pressure and issued Amin with a formal reprimand, without even informing him of it or why he was being reprimanded.

Professors Richard Falk and Ted Honderich have referred in the past to a right to violence – Honderich has gone further, suggesting that on the basis of present realities, the Palestinians are entitled to their terror. Professor Michael Neumann uses similar arguments to Amin. These are public intellectuals, and so are in some position to defend themselves. Amin, by contrast, is a student. He is almost entirely defenceless. As a Muslim, he belongs to a community that is subject to calumny and extraordinary scrutiny of its every word and gesture. His academic freedom was sacrificed to the exigencies of an urgent politi-

cal struggle by defenders of Israel to curtail the scope of anti-Zionism on campus. Some staff at SOAS spoke out on Amin's behalf, including his tutor Dr Mark Laffey, who said "It is part of the job description of an academic institution that you are willing to give offence. Our job is to seek out the truth, no matter how uncomfortable or unpleasant for various groups or interests." Another member of staff, John Game, circulated an open letter condemning Bundy for giving in to such pressure. The Islamic Human Rights Commission said a word or two on Amin's behalf, demanding that Bundy explain why the reprimand was issued without Amin being given the chance to defend himself, and also demanding that the reprimand be retracted.

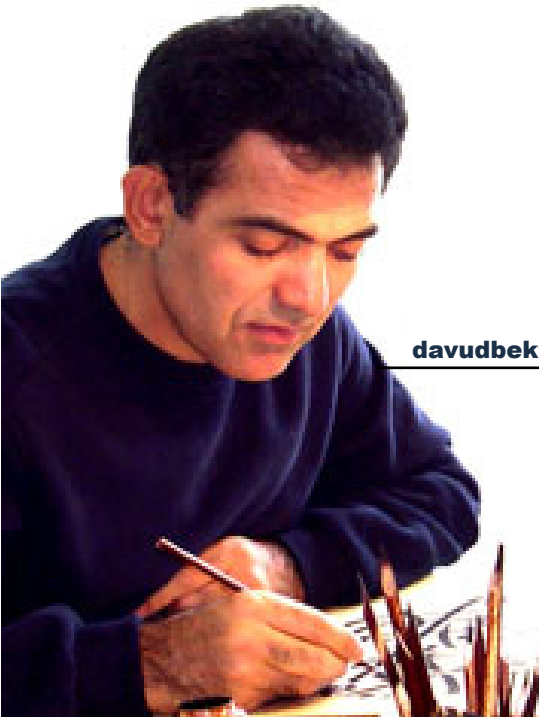
Yet, Bundy's impressive dedication to free expression continues to elude him on this issue. Answer came there none, and Amin still has an official reprimand to remind him of just what commonplace argument he may not articulate in mixed company. He also has an MP who'd like to see him face jail for up to seven years. And he has American rightists accusing him of "Jew-hatred" for the benefit of audiences whom he may never address. Amin, for his part, feels that the article was "selectively misquoted" by the media and that he has been misused for political purposes. Further, just when he hoped the college would

defend him from "Islamophobia, bullying, racism, harassment and slander", they instead acceded to the bullying, slapped him down and made him a scapegoat on their website.

This is not an isolated story. Campus Watch has been behind the hounding of a number of pro-Palestinian academics in the United States, including Professors Joel Beinin and Rashid Khalidi. The website has a page inviting students to tell on teachers who are insufficiently supportive of Israel. It attacked a professor named Joseph Massad who was falsely accused of bullying pro-Israeli students. In part, this is happening because the issues surrounding Israel-Palestine are becoming more urgent, while at the same time a decades-long pro-Israel consensus is eroding. There is also a vast gulf between what is academically known about the Israel-Palestine conflict and the picture generally presented in the media. This has produced a climate in which pro-Zionists and right-wingers feel compelled to try and rein in academic discourse. The treatment of Nasser Amin is a small introduction to that trend, one which began in America and is gathering pace in the UK. So the story is, if you like, about all students and their right to argue points of view that are controversial in mainstream discourse.

DAVUD BEKTAŞ

is a Turkish calligrapher who won several national and international prizes and participated in more than 15 exhibitions worldwide. He was born in the village Akoluk near Adana in 1963 and has a degree in law from Istanbul University. He took calligraphy lessons with several calligraphers such as Yusuf Ergun Erzincani and Hasan Celebi. Bektaş has a deep interest in the thuluth script but is now also exploring the avenues of other scripts, such as the 'tali'q and the deewaany scripts. Bektaş teaches Islaamic calligraphy classes in Istanbul.



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“NO GOD BUT ALLAAH AND MU’HAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAAH” IN
THULUTH SCRIPT BY DAVUD BEKTAŞ

PROPHETS & MESSENGERS

What is the difference between a prophet and a messenger, and was Mu'hammad a prophet or a messenger?

A prophet (nabbiy in Arabic) is a person who is chosen to receive words from Allaah. A Messenger (ra-sool in Arabic) also receives words from Allaah, but he is also required to convey these words to his people, in other words, these words become a public message he undertakes. Therefore, every messenger is a prophet, but not vice versa. Mu'hammad was a messenger and subsequently also a prophet in the same time.

An issue that is worth noticing here is that the concept of prophecy in the West is not the same as in Islaam. Mohamed Zakariya [Mu'hammad Zakariyya], a Muslim calligrapher says, "When we think of prophecy, we come from a tradition in America where we think of Charl-

ton Heston, you know, the great big beard and the winds always blowing. And he's, wearing raggedy clothes, and they're ranting people ...and raving. In the Islamic view, a prophet isn't this kind of person at all."

The number of prophets and messenger Allaah sent to mankind is not exactly known, but amongst the prophets and messengers mentioned in the Holy 'Qura~n are: Adam (A~dam) who is the father of prophets, Abraham (Ib-raheem) Noah (Noo'h), Jacob (ya"qoob), Joseph (Yoosuf), Jonah (Yoonus), John (Ya'hya), Solomon (Sulaymaan), David (Daawood), Mosses (Moosa), Jesus ('Eesa) , and Mu'hammad, the seal of prophets and messengers. **I**




MU'HAMMADANS & MUSLIMS

What does the name Mu'hammad mean? And are Mu'hammadans equivalent to Muslims?

The name Mu'hammad means praised one, and it also means a person with many good manners. The germination in the name (the double m) reflects that the quality is eminent.

Despite the deep respect and the unprecedented love Muslims have for Prophet Mu'hammad, Muslims are not comfortable being called Mu'ammadans; they consider him only a Prophet, not a God. They follow the message God sent him

with, so they prefer to be named after the message itself. Prophet Mu'hammad himself warned his followers of deifying him.

When mentioning his name, Muslims always say, "peace be upon him" or "peace and blessing of Allaah be upon him to show their deep love for him. In a nutshell, "our reverence is to God. And our reference is to [Muhammad]" as Najah Bazzy, an American Muslim says. 





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