



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

Muslims

Have Their Mother
Teresa Too!

Review of:

“Believing as
Ourselves”

**United Colours of
'Haj!**

What is Zamzam Water?

“KNOW THY PROPHET”
A FREE E-BOOK WITH THIS ISSUE!





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FREE ONLINE
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QUARTERLY
P.D.F. MAGAZINE



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.

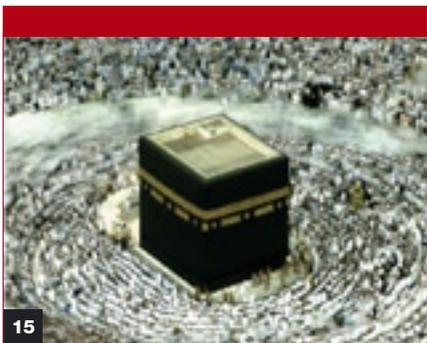
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Sarah WONDERS

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 you receive the answer to it. :)

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

Q. What is Zamzam water? I heard it has healing properties, is that really true?

A. Dear Sarah, Zamzam is a well in Makkah that sprang 4000 years ago when Ishmael the son of Abraham and Hagar pounded the ground with his feet out of thirst while his mother Hagar was running in the desert looking for water for her crying infant.

Allaah sent the Archangel Gabriel who let the water spring under the feet of Ishmael. And ever since, the water has been springing.

Scientifically, Zamzam water has some chemical properties and minerals that make it unique.



In 1983, the Journal of the New England Water Works Association published a paper stating that "A total of 34 elements have been found with calcium, magnesium, sodium, and chloride in the highest concentrations.

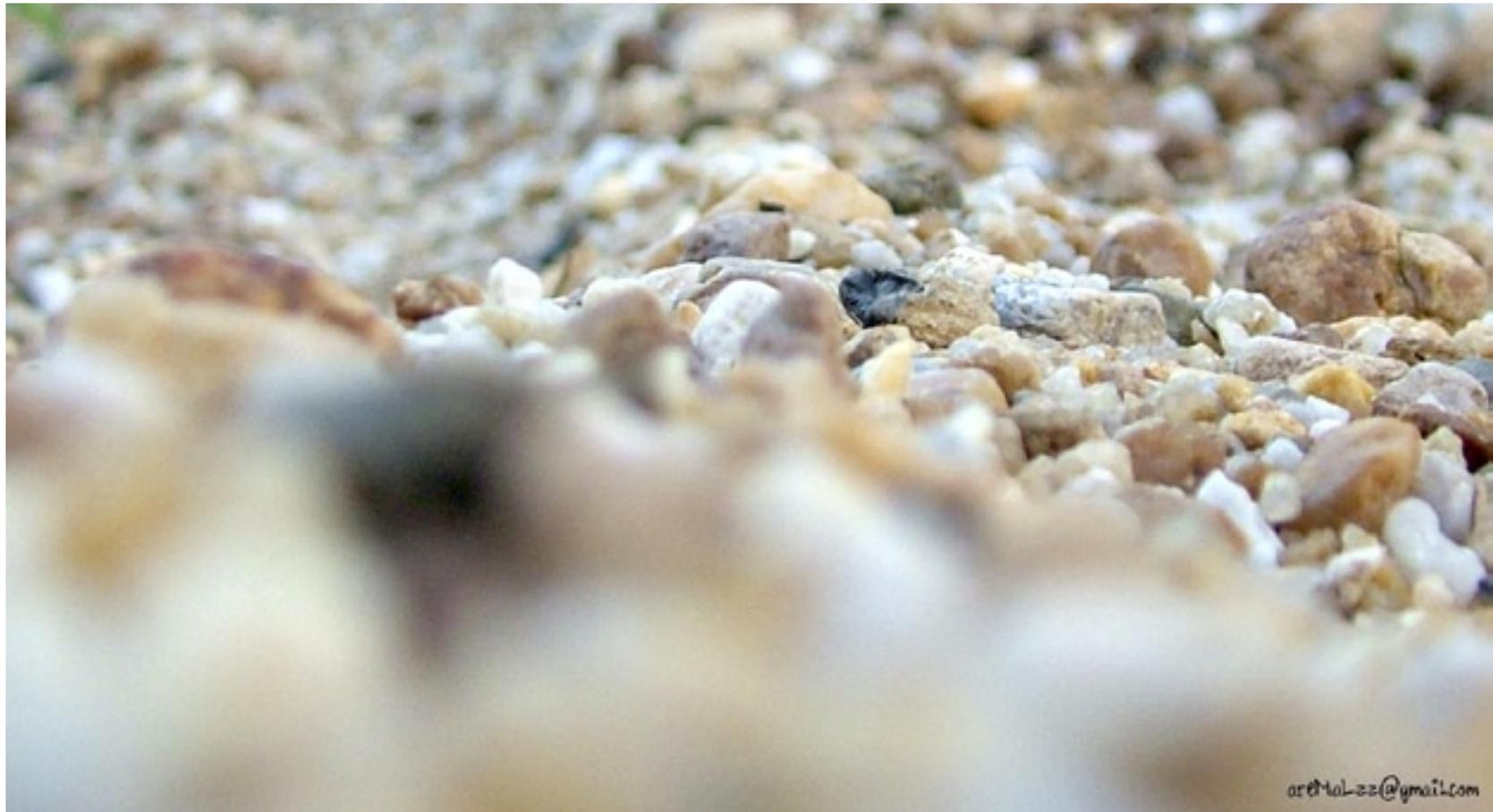
Hydrochemical study of Zamzam water indicates that it is a sodium chloride water and of meteoritic origin.

The four toxic elements arsenic, cadmium, lead, and selenium have been found below the danger level of human consumption."

Zamzam water is still water, but is very unique.

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) told the Muslims that Zamzam water is a food for those who seek food, and a remedy for those who seek remedy.

Yours in humanity,
I-MAG Team



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Pebbles

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PHOTO 
GreAt

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

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◀ Supplicators

Photo by
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Mohammed Babelli is an engineer by profession; art lover by choice.

He started photography at an early age covering summer camping vacations.

He has developed his photography techniques over the years through personal experience and also joining other photographers on photography sessions.

He has published a book on Mada'in Saleh (available through Amazon.com), and plans further photography books publications on other contemporary subjects. mohammed@babelli.com



◀ In All Languages

A 'Haaj ▶



Photos by
Ahmad Konash*
[A'hmad Konash]



ONE OF Righteous Deeds: 'Haj

By Harun Yahya* [Haroon Ya'hya]
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"Righteous deeds" (A'maal 'Saale'hah) are one of the key concepts of the 'Qura~n.

In Arabic, the word "righteousness" comprises the meanings of good, beneficial and right. In Arabic, the verb "to amend" (l'slaa'h) is also derived from the same root.

Consequently, in English, every type of beneficial and good work or action done for the good of religion is expressed by the word "righteous deed".

In terms of the 'Qur a~n, on the other hand, each act and all behaviour designed to seek the favour of Allaah is a "righteous deed".

The salvation of an individual is not attained only through faith; righteous deeds, the signs of sincere faith, also save the soul.

Saying "I believe" yet failing to comply with the commandments of religion does not lead man to salvation. In the 'Qur a~n Allaah states the following about this issue:

"Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe", and that they will not be tested? We tested those before them, and Allaah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false." [Chapter of Al'ankaboot: 2-3]

The way a believer does righteous deeds proves his mettle. His deeds indicate his perseverance, stability, determination and loyalty-in other words the depth of his faith.

In the 'Qur a~n Allaah informs us about the various kinds of righteous deeds. Communicating the message of Islaam to people, striving for the prosperity and the benefit of the all human kind, trying to

attain a better understanding of the 'Qur a~n, solving every kind of personal and social problems of the Muslims; all these are important righteous deeds.

The fundamental Islaamic forms of worship, such as saying prayers to Allaah, fasting, spending for the cause of Allaah, and the pilgrimage to Makkah are also among the important righteous deeds:

"Righteousness does not consist in whether you turn your faces towards the east or the west; what is righteous is to believe in Allaah and the last day, and the angels, and the Book, and the messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practise regular charity; to fulfil the

contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and in times of war. Such as do so are people of truth. Such are the Allaah-fearing." [Chapter of Alba'qarah: 2-177]

Yet there is another point that deserves mention: what makes an act a righteous deed is not its result but the "intention" behind it.

That is why for an act to be a righteous one, it should be done purely to seek the approval of Allaah.

This is what really distinguishes a "righteous deed" from "charity", a concept prevalent in the ignorant society.

A righteous deed is done to seek the approval of Allaah; on the other hand, the

concept of charity, in an ignorant society, is based on a spirit of social solidarity and/or a personal desire to make a reputation as a “charity lover.”

The verses below explain why the deeds of believers are by no means similar to alms-giving. “They perform (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil flies far and wide. And they feed, for the love of Allaah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive, (Saying) “We feed you for the sake of Allaah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks. We only fear a day of distressful wrath from our Lord.” [Chapter of Alinsaah: 7-10].

If any acts ostensibly complying with the definition of “righteous deeds” are not intended to seek the good pleasure of Allaah, they cease to be “righteous deeds.” This is simply because they are done to please other people.

This is, in terms of the ‘Qura~n, “associating partners with Allaah”, which is a great sin. In the following verse, Allaah explains how an act of worship done to attain not the approval of Allaah, but other people loses its value and becomes an ordinary act. “Woe to the worshippers, who are neglectful of their prayers; who only want to make a show of piety.” [Chapter of Almaa’oon: 4-6]

Similarly, spending, which is a righteous deed in the presence of Allaah, becomes an ordinary act if done to demonstrate one’s generosity in order to impress people. So does the pilgrimage to Makkah.

Allaah describes the difference between spending to gain His approval and to satisfy one’s own desires: “O you who believe! Do not cancel out your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury, - like those who spend their substance to be seen by others, believing neither in Allaah nor in the

last day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which there is little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it just a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with anything they have earned. And Allaah does not guide those who reject faith. Those who spend their substance, seeking to please Allaah and to strengthen their souls, are like a garden, high and fertile: heavy rain falls on it, and makes it yield a double harvest, and if it does not receive heavy rain, light moisture suffices it. Allaah sees well whatever you do.” [Chapter of Alba’qarah: 264-265]

Hence, the result of each deed always rests with Allaah. Each task should be done solely to please Him. A devoted believer who perform righteous deeds all throughout his life, carries out the regular prayers and makes the pilgrimage to Makkah will surely attain the gardens of heaven and will be rewarded most generously by Allaah in the hereafter.

*The author, under the pen-name Harun Yahya, has written more than 200 books which are published in 37 languages all over the world. Harun Yahya’s books appeal to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race and nationality, as they centre around one goal: to open the readers’ mind by presenting the signs of God’s eternal existence to them.

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www.harunyahya.com

Harun Yahya official bookstore:
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GradEdges

By
Ahmad Konash
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"ROUNDED"



© <http://www.burnblue.com/blog>

Idea

Imitate + Combine !

I don't know if anyone of you have ever seen really old black & white photos, where all the edges around the object are faded to black, or darker.

I tried to combine that effect, with the effect of a "graduated neutral density filter" which is an optical filter used to bring an overly bright part of a scene into the dynamic range of film or sensor (like the photo on the left).

I tried to combine both effects in one thing, this tip is totally experimental, and I would really appreciate if you out there show me some samples if it works :)



© <http://www.anniewarren.com.au>

Now if we have the same effect of this filter, all around, wouldn't that look nice? I think so. But you'll have to prove me wrong to say no. So, come on, let's do it.



Tools

- . A camera (S.L.R. or semi S.L.R.)
- . A toilet paper centre cylinder
- . A cutter
- . And some black paint

Steps

Again everyone, this is totally experimental. I guess I am trying to re-invent something here. Let's hope we end up making something sensible :)

- 1- Get your toilet cylinder.
- 2- Cut the top of it, approximately half of it. And make sure the edges of the cut side is a bit rough.
- 3- Colour the top side of it in black.
- 4- Hold the piece that you made against your lens, and make sure you have a protective filter before you do that.
- 5- The cylinder will act like a light tunnel, zoom in and out. Focus on different objects until you find the right catch, shoot it, and send it to us :)

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



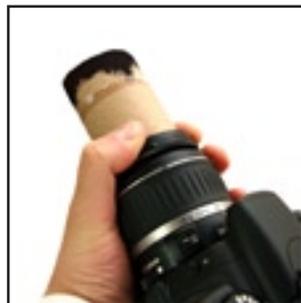
1



2.



3.



4.

Example

© Photographs by Ahmad Konash for i-mag.org





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"Connecting Muslims Worldwide"



Create a FREE Custom Profile



Write Blogs and Comments

Share Pictures with Friends



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“BELIEVING AS OURSELVES”

J. Lynn Jones

Reviewed by: Ibrahim Babelli [Ibraheem Baabally]

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I recall how awkward I felt when I saw Oum ‘Umar praying in the main prayer hall at the Purdue University’s Muslims Students Association (M.S.A.) mosque in West Lafayette, Indiana.

After all, isn’t congregational prayer required of men only? And shouldn’t women pray in their own separate hall away from men’s gawks, ogles, gazes, and stares?

For someone who grew up in Saudi Arabia, seeing a woman praying in the same prayer hall with men, albeit her taking a position clearly behind them, was bordering on perfidy.

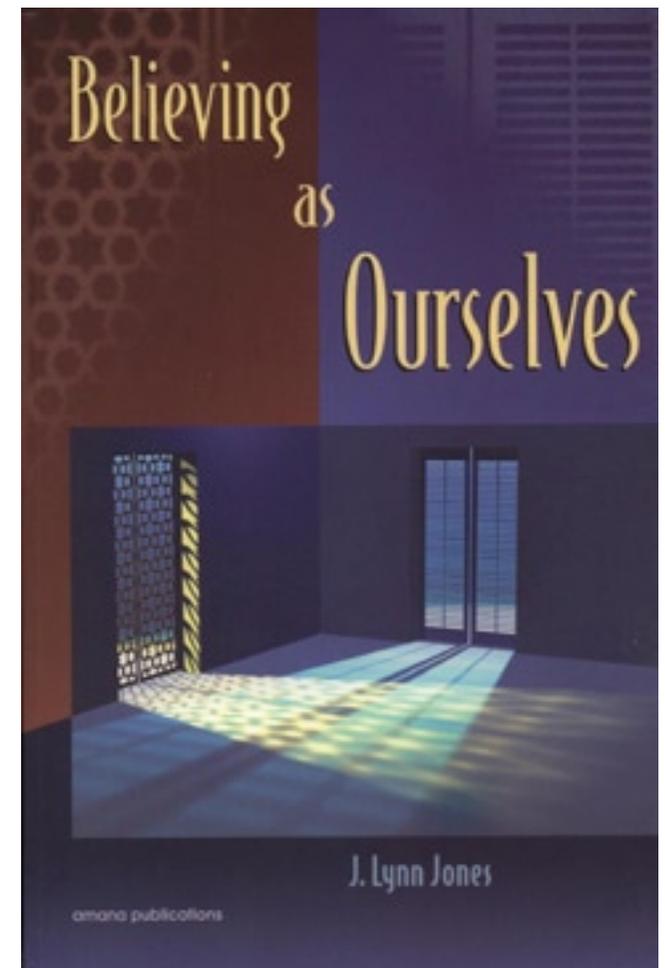
Indignation and denouncement ensued (mine were silent but others were not). Oum ‘Umar, however, would not be deterred. She kept on praying in the main hall, with men praying in the same hall, and in same time.

Not only that, but Oum ‘Umar was a full member of the M.S.A. and she voted in each board election, and

insisted on doing so despite the indignations and the denouncements. Wow. I did not know then whether that was courageous or foolish. Years later, I discovered that Oum ‘Umar was neither foolish nor alone. Most Muslim women, particularly new Muslim women, in the West either did what Oum ‘Umar did, or at least fought similar battles.

Many of them were scarred – emotionally – in that very same battle, or in others, and preferred to withdraw from the Muslim community, some gave up on the religion itself, some acquiesced, and very few stood their ground.

Jeffery Lang recounted in his book “Losing My Religion: A Call For Help” the sad story of an Arab man threatening new Muslim women in a mosque in the U.S. to bodily remove them from the mosque if they did not leave the men’s prayer hall, and how this very action resulted in the women reversing direction and renouncing Islaam.



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What is sad about this story, and similar ones where a new Muslim or a Muslim-wannabe is faced with a stubborn and irrational behaviour shoved in his/her face in the name of Islaam by individuals who are, generally, well-meaning but are either narrow-minded or simply ignorant, is that it hurts the most vulnerable; the ones who are most in need of help, true companionship, and compassion.

What is more lamentable, in my opinion, is that Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) never prevented women from praying in the same hall with men.

He, (P.B.U.H.), did not even order that a curtain or a partition of any sort be placed between the men's prayer area and the women's prayer area in his mosque. Neither the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) nor any of his successors, the Caliphs, separated men and women in distinct prayer halls.

So, either the contemporary Muslims are more pious than the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions, or that he, (P.B.U.H.), failed to warn his Oummah against this particular vice of men and women praying in the same hall; either explanation would be summarily rejected by any and every Muslim. Or – a more likely explanation – particular societal rules are being enforced under the guise of Islaam.

A courageous exposition of those and similar guises is eloquently written by J. Lynn (Jenny) Jones in her book "Believing as Ourselves", published by Amana Publications in 2002.

But lest you think, dear reader, that "Believing as Ourselves" is only about the said exposition, I shall quote to you from the author's own introduction: "We are the first of countless generations to embrace Islaam, and, like the earliest believers in Mecca, face prejudice, persecution, and pressures innumerable from our own societies, friends, and families. Unlike those kindred predecessors, however, we often find the waiting embrace of the Islaamic community less than welcoming. Instead of a haven of nurturing encouragement, where our faith should continue to grow and flourish, the reality of life among Muslims can be harsh, and the inevitable disappointment that results from that realization is bewildering as well as damaging."

It sounds like a cry for help, doesn't it?

Actually the book is not a cry for help. It is rather a help book for Muslims who have experienced, are experiencing, or who might experience what the author described if they are contemplating the decision of embracing Islaam.

The author explains that new Muslims try, in their drive to be as true

Muslims as can be, to emulate other native Muslims in every minute detail, irrespective of how trivial or important and whether it has an origin in Islaam or not, to the point that they let go of what made them embrace Islaam in the first place; their own identity. Having diagnosed what ails new Muslims, the author (I am here quoting Jeffery Lang from his introduction to the book): "... reaches out to them with practical, hard earned wisdom and carefully thought out advice on how they can overcome the many distractions and hardships, and reclaim that "initial determination, internal strength, and sense of authentic faith that was once theirs.""

Sister Jenny's tried remedy is, in her own words: "In order to experience Islaam as we once did, as pure, and as strong, we must bring ourselves back in the frame. We must step back in honest appraisal of the pitfalls and trapdoors of "Islaamic life," be willing to turn within rather than without, and we must, as Matthew Arnold wrote, "Resolve to be yourself; and know, he who finds himself, loses his misery.""

J. Lynn Jones is a writer and mother of two, She lives in a modest home under the shadow of a grove of giant cedar trees in suburban Washington state.

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United Colours of 'Hajj!

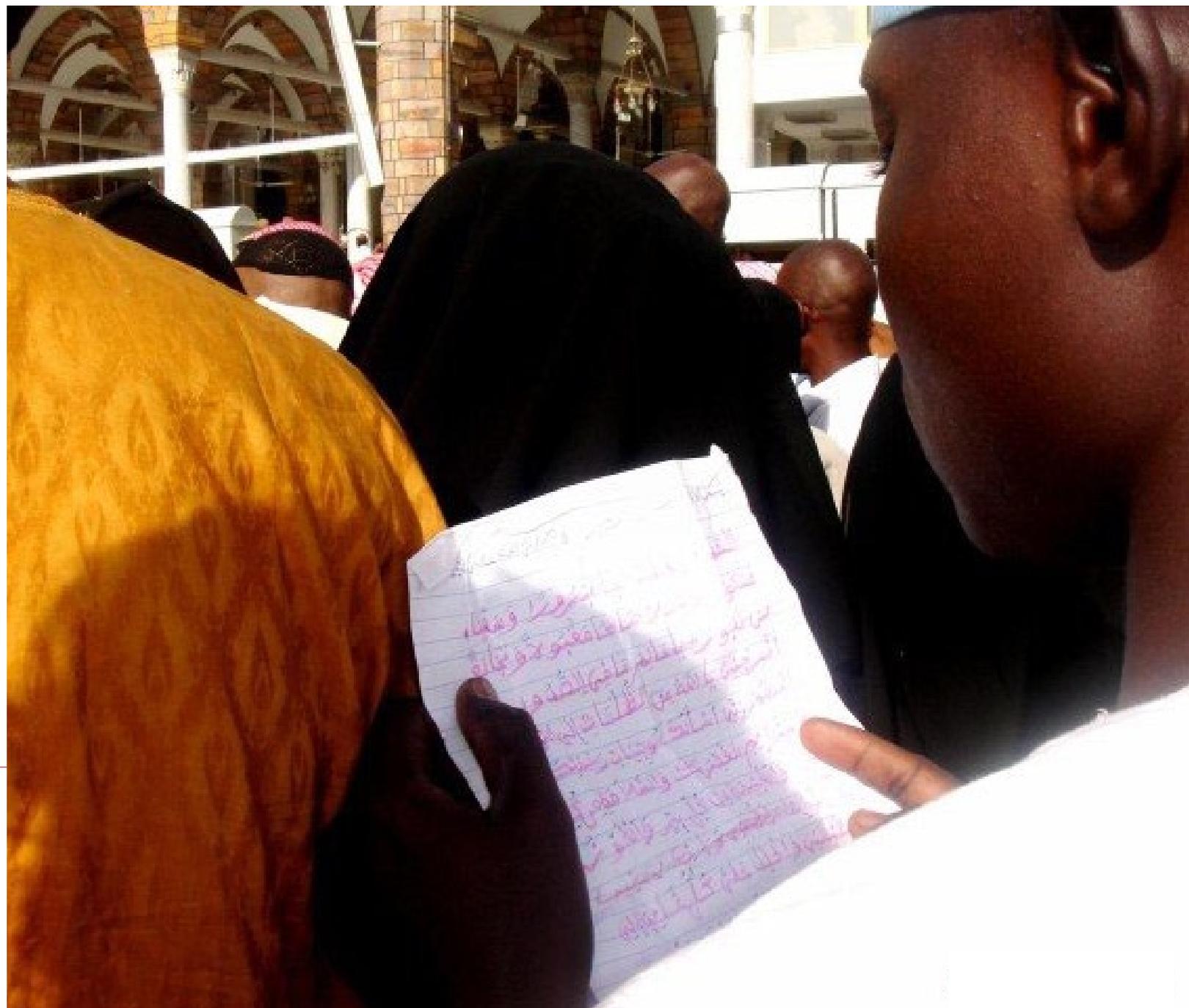
Study by and with Heart 

Photo by
Lina Malaika
[Leenah Malaikah]

Lina Malaika is currently studying graphics design at Dar Al-Hekma College in Jeddah, K.S.A. Having photography as one of her greatest passions in life, she plans to pursue her masters' in this field.

These photos were taken during her 'hajj this year in Makkah, 'Arafah, and Mina.

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◀ United Masses ▶

Photos by
Mohammed Babelli*
[Mu'hammad Baabilly]





Of All Races



Photo by
Lina Malaika
[Leenah Malaikah]



WHEN YOU LOOK at Me

By Suzy Fouad* [Soozi Fu-aad]
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What do you see when you look at me
 Do you see someone limited, or someone free

All some people can do is just look and stare
 Simply because they can't see my hair

Others think I am controlled and uneducated
 They think that I am limited and un-liberated

They are so thankful that they are not me
 Because they would like to remain "free"

Well free isn't exactly the word I would've used
 Describing women who are cheated on and abused

They think that I do not have opinions or voice
 They think that being hooded isn't my

choice
 They think that the hood makes me look caged
 That my husband or dad are totally outraged

All they can do is look at me in fear
 And in my eye there is a tear

Not because I have been stared at or made fun of
 But because people are ignoring the one up above

On the day of judgment they will be the fools
 Because they were too ashamed to play by their own rules

Maybe the guys won't think I am a cutie
 But at least I am filled with more inner beauty

See I have declined from being a guy's toy

Because I won't let myself be controlled by a boy
 Real men are able to appreciate my mind
 And aren't busy looking at my behind

Hooded girls are the ones really helping the Muslim cause
 The role that we play definitely deserves applause

I will be recognized because I am smart and bright
 And because some people are inspired by my sight

The smart ones are attracted by my tranquillity
 In the back of their mind they wish they were me

We have the strength to do what we think is right
 Even if it means putting up a life long fight

You see we are not controlled by a mini skirt and tight shirt
 We are given only respect, and never treated like dirt

So you see, we are the ones that are free and liberated
 We are not the ones that are sexually terrorized and violated

We are the ones that are free and pure
 We're free of STD's that have no cure

So when people ask you how you feel about the hood
 Just sum it up by saying "baby its all good ;) "

* Suzy Fouad was born and raised in the U.S.A. to Egyptian parents whose number one priority was nurturing a strong religious foundation in her. She came to realize that there would always be a weakness in this foundation without the hijab.

Despite being a hard decision socially, it was an easy one spiritually, so she finally started wearing the hijab at fourteen years old after much deliberation.

In an effort to sort through the emotions that occur when making such a commitment, she turned to poetry writing. She has since gotten married and become an elementary school teacher.

THE HISTORY and Islaamic Purification OF 'HAJ

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'Haj (pilgrimage) being a significant entity of the foundation of Islaam, it is important to understand its history in order to reflect on its value today.

Pilgrimage was established during the time of Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.). Allaah says in the 'Qura--n: "And remember when We showed Abraham the site of the [Sacred] House [saying]: Associate not anything [in worshipping] with Me and purify My House for those who circumambulate it [i.e. perform 'tawaaf] and those who stand up for prayer and those who bow down and make prostration [in prayer]." [Chapter of Al'haj: 26].

Just as Islaam revived many important rituals and concepts, pilgrimage's role was re-established to its correct context during the time of prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.).

Prior to the purification of 'haj by Islaam, its purpose and practice was led astray.

Unlike any other religion, Islaam is the only religion that managed to maintain its purity; hence it preserved its everlasting religious virtues.

The pre-Islaamic history of pilgrimage is one of the many examples that illustrate how Islaam preserved itself from the time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) until today.

This is one of the miraculous characteristics of this beautiful religion of truthfulness.

The Ka'abah is of eminence to Islaam and 'haj due to it being the first building dedicated to the sole worship of Allaah.

It was ordained by Allaah for prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) and his son, Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) to build it.

Allaah says in the 'Qura--n: "Lo! The first house (of worship) founded for mankind was that at Bakkah; a blessing and guidance for all people". [Chapter of A--l 'Imraan :96]. Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) was the first of mankind to initiate and practice 'haj.

To maintain organization for the circumambulation of the Ka'abah, Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) placed a stone on the eastern side of it marking the starting point.

It is interesting to note that Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) explained originally this stone was an illuminated white colour brought down from paradise but became a dull black colour metaphorically representing the sins of mankind. Hence, it is now referred to as the Black Stone.

On an annual basis, prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) would perform 'haj in Makkah. This practice was continued by his son Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) and followers until this day.

During Prophet Abraham's time, the people progressively developed and embraced Bid'ah, which in turn influenced pilgrimage to slowly drift away from its true essence.

Instead of 'haj being intended for the sake of Allaah, it became a display of tribal leaders flaunting their assets and possessions to gain power and prestige.

They had competitions over which tribes were more generous. Their munificence is presented by slaughtering scores of cattle, specifically camels, which was a representation of wealth and power. At the time, poetry was practised by those who were exalted and contests and shows were presented at the Ka'abah.

The tribal leaders competed with each other to receive acknowledgements by the renowned poetic leaders. Their methodology of worship to Allaah became a disgrace.

The pilgrimage ritual of 'Tawaf (circumambulation of the Ka'abah) was lowered to a lustful event that lost all sense of religious spiritual value. There became a point when men and women circumambulated the Ka'abah without any clothing, in response to a ruling that cloths worn during this ritual must be purchased with money that was not tarnished by earnings from usury, prostitution, theft, murder, gambling, etc.

Any cloths worn by pilgrims had, in the eyes of the upholders of the law, to be free from any doubtful money, irrespective of how little that might have been.

This meant that there were scores of men and women who could not afford

'pure' outfits and had to carry out the circumambulation ritual fully naked.

In prayer they incorporated clapping, horn blowing, and whistling. Even people were begging for food throughout their journey to 'haj claiming they are practising piety and leaving their trust in Allaah.

The acclamation of monotheism was distorted to saying "No one is your partner except one who is permitted by you. You are his master and the master of what he possesses." The tribes began the assimilation of idol worshipping as part of the religion.

This marked the end of their monotheistic beliefs and officially categorized them as non-believers. By beginning with small Bid'ahs, the initial followers of Abraham set themselves up to becoming the enemies of Allaah.

Finally, two and a half thousand years later, Prophet Abraham's prayer asking Allaah: "Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall recite unto them your A~yaat (verses) and instruct them in the book and the Wisdom and sanctify them. Verily you are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise]." [Chapter of Alba'qarah: 129] was answered.

To the salvation of the misguided people, Allaah sent Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.).

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "Take your rites of 'haj from me alone". It took him

approximately 21 years to reiterate the proper religious practices and establish the authenticity of 'haj.

Allaah says in the 'Qura-n : "There is to be no lewdness nor wrangles during 'haj" [Chapter of Alba'qarah: 197]. This verse was declared in reference to the dishonourable acts of the pre-Islaamic era.

The intent in the action of each deed was restored to its solitary purpose of seeking utmost pleasure of Allaah.

Showing off during Pilgrimage deviates from the purpose of performing 'haj, which nullifies the deed altogether. Allaah says: "So mention the name of Allaah over these animals when they are drawn up in lines. Then, when they are drawn on their sides [after the slaughter], eat thereof and feed the beggar who does not ask, and the beggar who asks" [Chapter of Al'haj :36].

Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) assured idols were smashed and deviant practices were eliminated. Once again, monotheism became the theme of 'haj. This marked the revival of 'haj and the true and pure spirituality of the people.

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By Eman M. Shurbaji

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ARE WE REALLY A **MINORITY**?

Muslims in the West Are More Prevalent Than You Think

The term “minority” is thought-provoking and complex. What exactly is a minority? Do numbers or percentages contribute to a minority status? Or are minorities simply those at a disadvantage in a society?

Women in the West today are viewed as minorities. This is not due to sheer numbers, for women constitute more than half the population. Women are viewed as a minority simply because they have been at a disadvantage historically. They have faced much turmoil in the West with respect to attaining rights and privileges, and are at the forefront of challenging sexual and gender discrimination.

Muslims, too, are a minority in the West. In the U. S. we number at an estimated 2% of the population. Yet such numbers require careful consideration.

Bakersfield, California is a city that provides a good case study example. The city boasts diversity and is growing immensely. As one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, it attracts people from across the country and the world. This of course, includes Muslims.

Muslim women are easily seen throughout the Bakersfield area. It has become all too common to see women wearing head scarves while shopping or driving around. Muslim women are also seen in high school and college campuses, studying and hard at work.

At the local university, California State University, Bakersfield, Muslim students have been quoted as numbering over 200 individuals out of a total student population of about 6,000 students. There is an active Muslim Students’ Association, though usually no more than ten people show up to weekly meetings.

On Fridays, the number of Muslim men (and women) who show up for Friday prayer is miniscule; usually no more than five or six men are evident.

At the local mosque, the women’s area rarely reaches full capacity. This is true even on Fridays and during Rama’daan. For Ramad’aan If’taars, only a handful of women are seen in the mosque. And it always the same women one sees at the masjid.

Yet this is also true of the men. Approximately 10% of the Muslim male population frequently attends the mosque. A local Imaam recently commented that only 25% of Muslim men attend Friday prayers. Attending Friday prayers is an obligation upon all Muslim men!

When attending classes at the local university, I have seen so many Muslims enrolled in those classes. Many of the foreign exchange students come from Muslim countries.

I have met Muslims from literally every corner of the globe -I must constantly remind myself that the people of the Muslim Oummah vary in their features and skin tones. The young, fair Russian lady in one of my communications classes-- who was quite vocal and outspoken in class - I came to discover, was a Muslim.

The most popular math tutor in the tutoring centre, is also a Muslim. The chair of the Business and Accounting department, is a Muslim man; the very best math students are those of Indian background, and are coincidentally

Muslims; the star swimmer on the women’s swim team, a Muslim girl from Turkey!

You cannot tell if a person is a Muslim simply by looking at them. You cannot tell by their name, occupation, or socio-economic status. With the movement of Muslims across towns, cities, and countries; with the rise in the number of converts, one cannot make conclusions simply by “looking at someone.”

And yet many a time, I have met people who have Muslim ancestry. I have stumbled across people of Iranian or Turkish ancestry-a likely indication of Muslim decent-who are now Christians. I have met people with names such as “Aishah” and “Bilal” who are not Muslims, yet trace their lineage to Africa and the Caribbean.

Of course, there are also the children born to a parent or parents who are Muslim, yet know little about their religion. They don’t even know what Islaam is. Generation after generation, people can lose light of who they are and where they come from. People can also lose their faith.

The number of practising Muslims is surely the minority out of the total number of Muslims in the West. There are degrees of religiosity easily witnessed among Muslims here. Some will not eat pork but will drink; some see no harm in dating and pre-marital relations; some rarely venture into the mosque or attend Islaamic events.

Still others have little or no association with Muslims out of distrust or fear! There are plenty of Muslims-by-name who claim to be culturally Muslims, yet do not practice Islaam regularly in their lives.

Though the actual number of Muslims in the United States is definitive, there are definitely more than the estimated 10 million. Factors such as the slightly higher birthrate among Muslim women (especially Arabs) and conversions must also be considered.

One cannot simply go to the mosque, find a certain number of people there, and equate it with the number of Muslims in a city or town. The city of Bakersfield, for example, has many more Muslims than those who go regularly to the mosque.

The very meaning of the word "minority" is subtle and calls for attention. Though Muslims may be minorities numerically, our values transcends times and peoples. Our values -values such as honesty, loyalty, and integrity -are prized among the majority of all peoples.

The European Islaamic scholar Tariq Ramadan holds to the belief that Muslims should present Islaam as a universal message in the West.

He contends that Muslims should stop trying to hide their identities and take active roles in their communities. Only then will we be able to rise out of our presence as numerical minorities, and perhaps encourage others to join us in our faith.

Those who shunned or hid their religion can go back to the religion of their forefathers. And all others, despite their race or ethnic background; their previous religious convictions; their former lifestyles, can return to the religion of Fi'trah: the religion of Islaam.

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By Kais Gzara [كيس غزارا]
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MY 'HAJ

My own path towards Islaam

On the occasion of this past 'Haj season, I could not help but recall my own 'Haj experience, including my path towards Islaam.

I have come a long way, and after having explored the many dark and evil sides of temptation, greed, and ignorance, remaining absurdly blind and insensitive to the consequences of my actions; I finally came to realize I was wasting my life and hurting others, and I lost all respect for myself.

It is then, at a time the devil could have rightfully claimed to have taken control, having addicted myself to a lifestyle that knew no bounds and no taboos, after having adorned my actions before my own eyes and masked their true nature; it was then, and I cannot explain how or why, that an invisible hand pulled me out from the deepest and lowest reaches humanly possible, and brought me to

Saudi Arabia, on a job assignment.

Within weeks I felt a sudden urge to go to Makkah for 'Umrah, then 'Haj, then 'Umrah again, and again. And the intensity of that first moment I laid my eyes on the Ka'abah has not faded away since.

There is something so special, peaceful, and magnetic about the Ka'abah with people of all walks of life circling it and praying around it; people from the farthest reaches of the earth, a rainbow of people of all colour, race, culture, tongue, gender, and riches, showing humility, asking for forgiveness from the only One that forgives, and praying in unison, fearing the day we shall account for our actions.

I could not help but ask, why are they here, who told them to come here, what is it that made them embrace Islaam;

and realized the great achievement of Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.), the last messenger of Allaah, and how noble, charismatic, and truthful he must have been; and the intrinsic ever-lasting powerful and appealing call of the revealed 'Qura~n, to Islaam.

My 'Haj experience helped me realize it is never too late to get back on track, and I am now trying to become a better person using the 'Qura~n as my guide, after having also realized in retrospect, how much Islaam is distorted in the eyes of many other people, sometimes Muslim people as well:

Some people incorrectly think Islaam invites people to killing other innocent people, or that Islaam encourages poverty, or that Islaam encourages ignorance instead of developing science, or that it gives men the right to

mistreat women; and the more I tried to read the 'Qura~n and understand (not just read), the more I found out who we, the Muslims, really are.

After 'Haj, I started attending the Friday prayer, whereas in the past my reasoning was clouded by self-demeaning superstition, that led me to believe in the propaganda and falsehood that such Imaams preached hatred, violence, and ignorance.

Instead I was blessed to find myself listening and learning from some of the most noble, pure, and truthful people alive. They came prepared, exposed facts, kept things in balance, explained what Jihaad was really about, and demonstrated how the teachings of the Holy 'Qura~n are directly relevant to this 21st century and to everyday life.

Enemies of Islaam, who were at a time

my 'friends' when we shared a reckless existence, still try to test my faith and motives until today, by tempting me with premeditated and deliberate 'spontaneous kind and insincere' verbiage, and by fomenting and breeding doubt and scepticism.

They remain puzzled as to how a 'highly-educated', 'rational', and 'successful' person like myself, gifted with scientific prowess above average by existing standards, decided to change course and follow 'non-sense'.

But the truth is that nobody talked me into it, except for Allaah himself, and that I embraced Islaam with a most critical mind, and I can confidently tell you today that I have been unable to find any flaw, or absurdity, in the 'Qura~n and the religion of Islaam.

I have approached the matter from every scientific perspective available to me, and every single time my faith has been strengthened: This shall be the subject of future articles, whereby I intend to show rationally, that the 'Qura~n is indeed the word of Allaah, and that Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.), could

be none else than the messenger of Allaah.

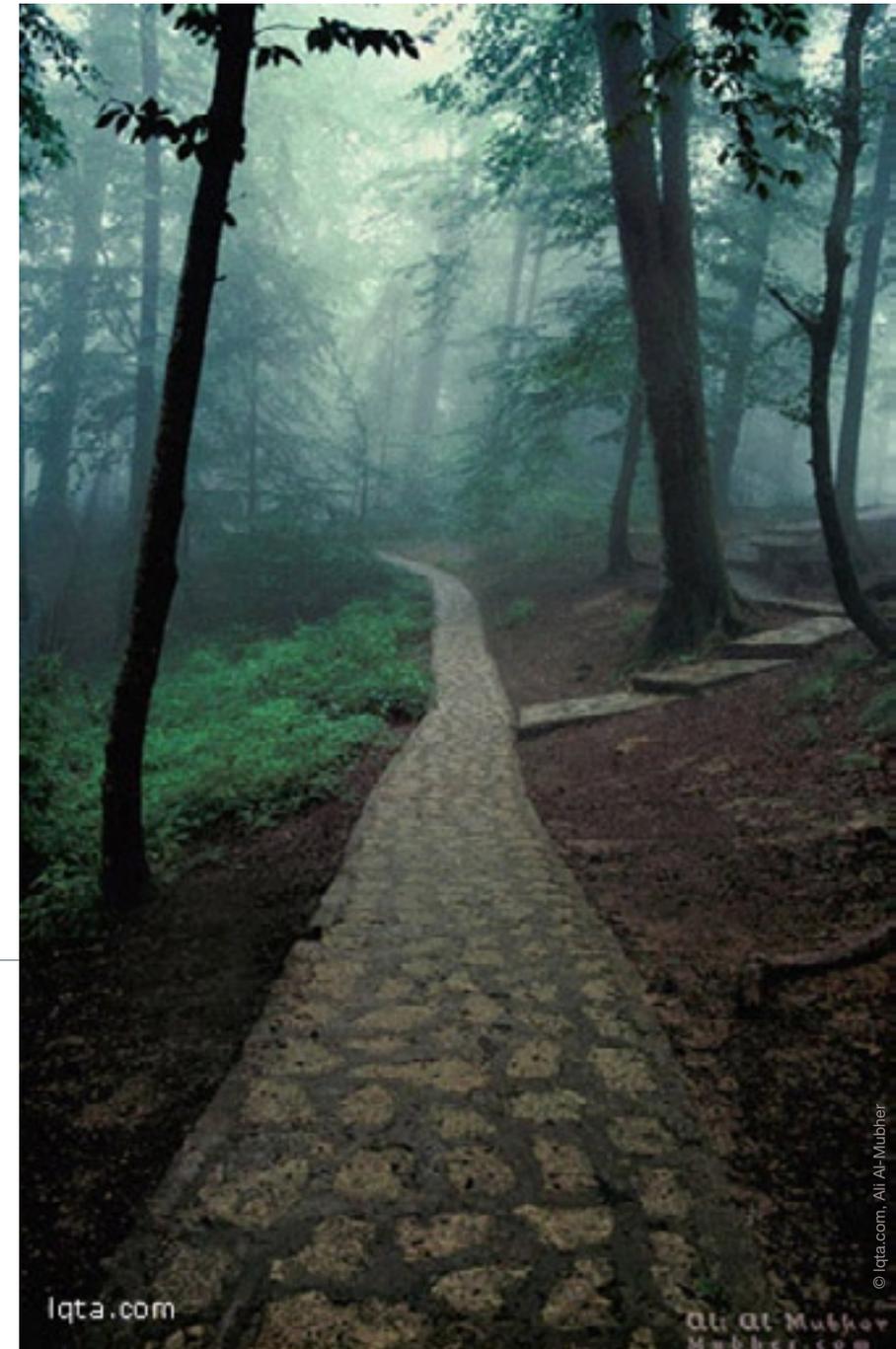
Call it a 'coincidence' or what you may, it nonetheless remains true, that I was guided to Islaam when I was precisely forty years-old, and that I have long since paused and reflected on Allaah's words from chapter of 'Ala'h'qaaf': [46:15-19]

NOW [among the best of the deeds which] We have enjoined upon man is goodness towards his parents. In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth; and her bearing him and his utter dependence on her took thirty months, and so, when he attains to full maturity and reaches forty years, he [that is righteous] prays: "O my Sustainer! Inspire me so that I may forever be grateful for those blessings of Thine with which Thou hast graced me and my parents, and that I may do what is right [in a manner] that will meet with Thy goodly acceptance; and grant me righteousness in my offspring [as well]. Verily, unto Thee have I turned in repentance: for, verily, I am of those who have surrendered themselves unto Thee!"

* Kais graduated from Ecole Polytechnique (France) and Princeton University (U.S.A.), and later travelled the world working for the oil industry (Italy, France, Libya, Angola, Texas, United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Qatar).

This provided Kais with a 'window' on the world, and a unique insight into this animal called 'man'. His curiosity led him to broaden his problem-solving capabilities, to comprehend human behaviour and dark side(s).

Kais truly embraced Islam only late 2002, partly following a self-assessment and a private search for the truth, and partly waking to an inner clock (probably much like what 'born-again Christians' experience). Today he still enjoys reading the 'Qura~n with a critical mind, using his academic background to challenge its contents and grow his faith.



'HAJ:

Enlighten
Your Spirit

By **Hicham Maged** [Hishaam Majid]

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Pilgrimage is one of the oldest liturgies that humans perform with the aim to achieve salvation.

In Islaam, pilgrimage is known as 'Haj, and it follows on the footsteps of Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) (Ibraheem in Arabic), which he proclaimed according to the revelation from Allaah Almighty.

Conceptual and linguistic meanings of 'Haj
Islaamic creed known as 'Aqeedah is based on a fundamental belief called Taw'heed which is the equivalent term for monotheism. Taw'heed literally means: there's no one to worship but Allaah Almighty.

In Arabic, the word Allaah is the term that describes The Creator of this universe; it proclaims the oneness of God who deserves to be worshipped alone

Furthermore, it is a well-known term among both Arabs of other religions, such as Jews and Christians; and not only among Muslims.

Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) and all Prophets/Messengers of Allaah Almighty to mankind came with this universal message based on the fundamental constitution; the Oneness of the Creator. Thus, the term "Islaam" means literally submission to Allaah Almighty. Consistently, the term "Muslim" is linguistically used to describe the one

who submits and surrenders himself/herself to the will of Allaah Almighty and worships Allaah Almighty alone. It is not restricted to the followers of Prophet Mu'hamad (P.B.U.H.) .

Origination and Degradation of 'Haj
Allaah Almighty inspired Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) with the revelation to preach for worshipping one God, hence the Taw'heed.

Together with his son, Prophet Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) (Isma'eel in Arabic), he laid down the foundations of Ka'bah and erected thereafter the First House of Worship of Allaah Almighty on Earth.

Arabs are the descendants of Prophet Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) whereas Jews are the descendants of Prophet Isaac (P.B.U.H.) (Is'haa'q in Arabic), who was Prophet Isma'eel's half-brother. However, as the centuries passed, people began to forget the commands and reverted back to idolatry.

Several centuries later, degradation was introduced for the first time by some Arab merchant named 'Amr ibn Lu'hay. When he travelled outside Arabia to Syria for his work, he found people worshipping statues, same as the time before Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) received the revelation from Allaah Almighty. When he returned back to Makkah, he brought back with him idols and placed them in the sacred place of Ka'bah for worship.

Taw'heed suffered further and idolatry gained ground as time passed. Upon the dawn of the seventh century C.E., the Ka'bah was encircled by about 360 statues in addition to other notable idols founded throughout Arabia, such as Allaah, Al'uzzah, and Manaat.

Consistently, immoral acts defiled the scared rites with corrupted add-ons such as, drinking wine, circumambulating naked around Ka'bah and finally adultery.

Commemorating 'Haj

Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) found himself in the same situation of his great-great-grand-father, Prophet Abraham. (P.B.U.H.); born and raised in a pagan community where idols used to be sculpted everywhere and sold by his tribe, 'Quraysh, for worship.

As a very mindful man, he couldn't accept that such sculpted statues -by the hands of people- can be responsible for creating this universe; rather, there must be an almighty power capable of creating the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the darkness and the light, and the four seasons.

He kept on rejecting such worship and used to seek the truth according to the Abrahamic religion till at the age of 40 years, when Allaah Almighty inspired him with the revelation. He was chosen to be the Seal of the Prophets to preach for worshipping One God, hence again Taw'heed.

After liberating Makkah, Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) purified the Ka'bah from the statues in addition to the main idols. Furthermore, he - under revelation from Allaah Almighty - restored the rites of the Abrahamic religion; the pure origin. This was the divine acceptance of the supplications made by Prophet Abraham

(P.B.U.H.) to Allaah Almighty after he finished building the Ka'bah. This supplication is mentioned in the Holy 'Qura--n, chapter of Alba'qarah, verse 129:

“Our Lord! And raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and shall make them grow. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Mighty, Wise.”

Rites in 'Haj and daily Muslims life

I do believe that the rites of 'Haj have many symbolic meanings. I shall try to explain some of them briefly for 'Haj and normal/daily Muslims life.

1. l'hraam: Muslims leave their wealthy life just to obey the orders of Allaah Almighty by performing pilgrimage to Makkaah. Thus in the normal life, they are called to change their life if it contradicts with Allaah Almighty orders and heed the ones that fulfil such orders. This is called Hijrah.

Consistently, wearing this simple dress (white one) highlights the unity of Muslims, and their equality in front of the Creator.

2. Talbiyah: During 'Haj, Muslims are called to say “Labbayk Allaahum Labbayk” which means “Here I am, O God, at Thy Command!” Talbiyah is the answer for the call that Allaah Almighty instructed Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) to say, when He ordered him to proclaim the 'Haj to people. It is the full submission to the Almighty. Thus in their daily life, they are called to answer the orders of Allaah whenever they hear and wherever they are.

3. 'Tawaaf: Muslims are required to circumambulate around the Ka'bah seven times counter clockwise during 'Haj. Consistently, the commands of Allaah

Almighty should always be at the centre of Muslim daily life.

Furthermore, scientific research proved that almost everything in the Universe circles around a main centre; starting from Galaxies, passing by Earth that circles around the sun and ending with protons circling around the nucleus within the atom.

They all act within this circular movement in the same anti-clockwise direction Muslims follow in 'Haj which symbolises the unity with Nature.

4. Sa'y: Muslims walk to and fro between the hillocks of Al'safa and Almarwah during 'Haj, not only to remember Hagar's frantic search for water for the baby Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) but also to declare submission for the will of Allaah Almighty if they faced hard times in their daily life. They are called to make this journey to overcome problems and not to fall into desperation.

5. Standing upon 'Arafaat: This is the most important of the rites: where more than 2.5 million people from different nations and colours stand upon 'Arafaat, asking Allaah Almighty the forgiveness. It's something near to the Judgement Day. In their normal life, they should always remember that there is a hereafter succeeds the Judgement day.

6. Throwing Pebbles: Muslims are called to stone the devil by throwing seven pebbles at a statue representing the devil. Thus in their normal life, they are called to fight, as much as they can, his calls that attempt to pull them back to the dark way of evil.

7. U'd'hiyah: Muslims are called to finish 'Haj by scarifying an animal during the

day celebrated as 'eed Ala'dhaa. This is the symbolic sacrifice in place of Prophet Ishmael (P.B.U.H.), and in the normal life, it should be done by scarifying things that might make us happy on the short run but contradicts the orders of Allaah Almighty even if people don't like this act.

Conceptual values of 'Haj

Rites of 'Haj in Islaam are not only performed to commemorate Abraham's religion, but also to help Muslims fulfil their universal mission for urbanising Earth as the viceroy of Allaah Almighty on Earth.

'Haj is not just the fifth pillar of Islaam, rather it is a comprehensive worship that collects the other four; it contains Shahadah (testimony to the Oneness of God), prayers, fasting and Zakaah (mandatory alms), either physically or financially. That is why Allaah Almighty mandated that only Muslim men and women, who are financially and physically able, to perform 'Haj at least once during the lifetime.

Furthermore, it truly explains a fundamental -and misinterpreted- term of Jihaad. In the Islaamic 'A'qeedah, Jihaad literally means fight against the evil. 'Haj is one of the ways to perform it.

Quotes

“All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white except by piety and good action.”

-- Part of Prophet Mu'hammad's Farewell Sermon which he (P.B.U.H.) orated during his Farewell 'Haj on the ninth of 'Thul'Hijja, in the tenth year of Hi'jraah /632 A.D.

Simply Hajj

By **Nadia Ali*** [Naadiyah 'Aly]
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"And 'Haj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that humankind owes to Allaah, those who can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence);" (Chapter of A-l 'Imraan: 97)

'Haj certainly is a journey of a life-time; it takes Muslims on a pilgrimage to Makkah (in Saudi Arabia) where barren deserts and red mountain ranges form part of the historic birthplace of Islaam.

Given as the fifth pillar of Islaam, the Pilgrimage ('Haj) to Makkah formally begins on the eighth day of Th>oo Al'hijjah (a lunar calendar month) and lasts for five days. It is required for every Muslim to perform it at least once in his/her lifetime given that they have the ability to do so.

To Begin the 'Haj

To perform 'Haj, pilgrims enter a state of holiness known as l'hraam by performing 'Gusl (special bath) which signifies the state of purity for the mind, body and soul. They then change into clothing that reflects this state and to show that all are equal before Allaah.

Women usually wear long gowns (either white or black) with 'Hijaab while men must wear clothes that are not tailored. Men wear a two-piece set of white towel/cloth that they wrap around their upper and lower body. Now both men and women are ready to formally

commence the 'Haj. For 'Haj, both time and place are of paramount importance. Commencing the 'Haj must be initiated with the declaration of Niyyah (private intention) of performing the 'Haj.

Traditionally, 'Gusl, Niyyah and changing to l'hraam attire take place at the Mi'qaat (an assigned place for officially declaring pilgrim status).

The pilgrim, however, is at liberty in declaring the "'Haj any time and anywhere prior to arriving at the Mee'qaat.

Day One: 8th of Thoo Al'hijjah

Pilgrims travel to Mina where they camp and prepare for the next day by praying and supplicating.

Day Two: 9th of Thoo Al'hijjah

Pilgrims make their way to 'Arafaat where millions of Muslims spend the day glorifying Allaah, repeat supplication, repent and ask for forgiveness.

After sunset, pilgrims head to Muzdalifah where they spend the night outdoors under the stars, continue their pious deed, and prepare for the next day by collecting pebbles to stone the devil. After dawn they return to Mina.

Day Three: 10th of Thoo Al'hijjah

Back in Mina it is the day of sacrifice, and

known worldwide as 'Eed Ala'd'ha. The streets of Mina have decorated camels offering rides on this auspicious day.

All pilgrims must pelt the largest Jamrah (stone edifice), which symbolizes the devil, seven times. This stoning is a ritual commemorating Abraham's fight against the devil and it is symbolic of getting rid of bad thoughts, or evil deeds.

Male pilgrims either have their heads completely shaved or shorten the hair, whereas women trim their hair only.

Next, pilgrims go to Maakah where they perform 'Tawaaf Al-iffaa'dah by circumambulating the Ka'bah seven times, pray two rak'aahs and perform Sa'y. The pilgrimage status can no be annulled, and men are allowed to don normal cloths. At the conclusion of Sa'y, pilgrims return to Mina.

Day Four: 11th of Thoo Al'hijjah

Pilgrims return to the Jamaraat (plural of Jamrah) area where they have to pelt the each Jamrah seven times. Most now leave Mina before sunset to go to hotels in Makkah for the last day of the 'Haj.

Day Five: 11th of Thoo Al'hijjah

All that remains to do now is perform the farewell 'Tawaaf, which is the final act of 'Haj that precedes departure from Makkah.



The men are now known as a 'Haj, and woman are known as 'Haajah, which are the Arabic word for a male pilgrim and a female pilgrim, respectively.

These are the steps every pilgrim must make to perform the 'Haj. It confirms their commitment towards Allaah Almighty and willingness to abandon material goods, for the sake of His service.

Fast Facts

- The World Factbook 2006 estimates that 1.3 billion people are Muslims
- According to the Ministry of 'Haj More than 2.5 million pilgrims are expected at the 'Haj 1428/2008
- 'Haj for 1428/2008 is expected to be around 18th - 23rd December.

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF IBRAHEEM:

Sustaining the benefits of 'Haj

By Aisha Stacey*

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Although there are more than 1.2 billion Muslims in the world today, only a very small percentage of us will be blessed with the ability to perform 'Haj.

Once we have left the tranquil confines of Al'haram and resumed our busy and often stressful lives, the closeness we felt to Allaah and the unity of Muslims that is palpable during 'Haj may have unfortunately quickly become a warm but distant memory.

In lives that are beset by trials and tribulations we are apt to become easily enmeshed in worldly concerns and stresses.

In today's chaotic world, sustaining the benefits of 'Haj may seem almost unattainable, but sustainment is, in fact, possible.

The total fulfilment that comes from being close to Allaah and the great joy and sense of belonging that comes from being a part of the great pilgrimage are feelings that are sustainable.

Stress is the most common ailment

facing medical science today.

It has been implicated in diseases and ailments ranging from coronary heart disease and hypertension to headaches, insomnia and obesity. In a modern world where stress often leads people to seek the advice of psychologists, can 'Qura-n and Sunnah form the basis of a psychology that relies on more than scientific precepts and empirical evidence?

Islaam can form the basis of a truly comprehensive psychology; one that recognizes the Fi'trah [the innate needs] of human nature and presupposes that man is inherently good and searching for the tranquillity that comes with true submission to Allaah.

So how do we keep the stress and uncertainty of this Dunya from overwhelming us and still retain the benefits of a 'Haj Mabroor (accepted 'Haj)?

One way is to reflect on the journey of Prophet Ibraheem and his wife Hajar.

'Haj, often referred to as following

on the footsteps of Ibraheem and his total submission to Allaah, along with the unquestioning trust (Tawakkul) of Hajar, is a beacon of light and a source of guidance for us all.

When Prophet Ibraheem, his wife Hajar and newborn son Isma'eel travelled to what is today Makkah, it was a dead valley: There was no cultivation and no water; it was a desert. Prophet Ibraheem left his family there. He left with them some water and few dates and walked away. Hajar followed him and asked three times if he was going to leave them in such a desolate place. He didn't answer.

Hajar then asked him: "Has Allaah ordered you to do so?" When Hajar heard that the answer was yes, she replied "then He will not forsake us".

When the hassles and stresses of life threaten to engulf us it is befitting to take a moment to reflect on the Tawakkul of Hajar. She was alone in the desert with a new born baby, few dates and a small amount of water.

Imagine the turmoil that must have been going through her mind. We know that she was desperate when

she ran back and forth between the hills of Marwah and 'Safa in search of travellers or wayfarers. But Hajar had total trust and Ibraheem's behaviour reflected only true submission.

In modern psychological terms it could be said that both Prophet Ibraheem and Hajar had achieved self actualisation.

Self actualisation refers to the development and fulfilment of one's unique human potential. It is a theory in the humanistic branch of psychology that emphasises the capacity for human growth and an innate desire to satisfy a variety of needs.

Abraham Maslow developed what he called a hierarchy of needs. At the base of the pyramid are the physiological needs – food, water, sleep.

Level two of the pyramid moves on to safety and security – shelter. The third level takes into account social needs; belongingness and the need to be affiliated with and accepted by others.

According to Maslow only when the

bottom needs have been fulfilled can we advance to the higher levels.

Next in the hierarchy comes the need for personal growth, self esteem and acquiring the skills and knowledge to reach self actualization, the highest level.

The level at which we actually perceive reality and have moments of great joy, satisfaction and tranquillity.

After Prophet Ibraheem had left his family and reached a place from where they could no longer see him, he turned around, faced the place that would be the Ka'bah and made Du'aa- to Allaah.

“O our Lord I have made some of my off spring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House, in order O our Lord that they may perform 'Salaah, so fill some hearts among men with love towards them and provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks.” Chapter of Ibraheem [14:37]

At this time; at this most crucial point in the life of his family Prophet Ibraheem inverted Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The first thing he asked for was that his family be able to establish the 'Salaah (prayer). His first desire was that they feel connected to Allaah and take refuge in the tranquillity that is characterised by submission to Him.

He then asked for the people to love them, he wanted to secure their social needs so that they had a sense of belongingness.

Lastly he asked for food, for sustenance and even then he connected it to 'Ibaadah. “...and provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks.” Chapter of Ibraheem [14:37]

As human beings we would assume that to survive we must first satisfy physiological needs but this is not the case.

According to the Fitrah, the first need that must be satisfied is our need for Allaah. After that in accordance with the natural laws of a universe created by the One God all our needs will be fulfilled.

Ibraheem knew that, and Hajar knew that. All the Prophets of Allaah can be said to have achieved self actualisation.

Allaah created us and He knows absolutely everything about us, He knows what is good for us and what is bad. “...it may be that you dislike a thing that is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.” Chapter of Alba'qarah [2:216]

To have complete and unwavering faith in our Creator and know with full certainty that our purpose in life is to worship Allaah is true self actualisation.

Psychology is able to give us a glimpse into the truth about ourselves, as researchers, scientists and academics discover the full beauty and truth of what Allaah has created.

Modern medicine and science are gifts from Allaah for the benefit of humankind but they will always be limited and fallible.

If we are able think of 'Qura~n as a psychological text book a cure will always be possible because the words of Allaah beseech us to live our lives in the most natural way, in submission to His will.

In the year 2007 the world is a chaotic place in which we often deceive ourselves into thinking there is no time to reflect and draw closer to Allaah.

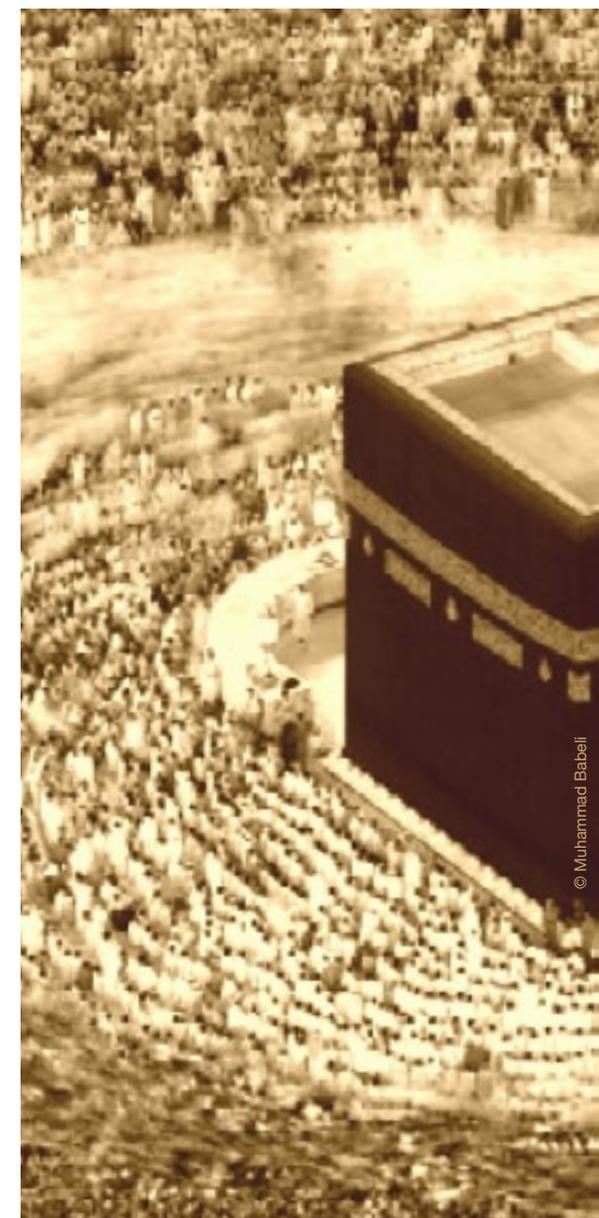
To achieve self actualisation, to be the best that we are able to be and feel at peace we must acknowledge our true Fi'trah.

True peace and tranquillity comes only from submission to Allaah.

When we find ourselves in circumstances beyond our control, when despair and psychological torment are overwhelming us, the only way out is to acknowledge that the circumstances are truly beyond our control and in the hands of Our Creator and Sustainer: Allaah Almighty.

That closeness we felt to Allaah during the 'Haj is achievable even away from Al'haram. The change that can occur after an accepted 'Haj is definitely sustainable.

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I-MAG

OTHERS

Allaah
Islaam
Mu'hammad
'Hijaab
'Qura~n
Madeenah
Makkah
In Shaa- Allaah
Oummah
'Hadeeth

Allah
Islam
Mohamad
Hijab
Qur'an
Madinah
Mecca
Insha'Allah
Ummah
Hadith

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Muslims have their Mother Teresa Too!

Alsumait rescues Africa through Development

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RANA, A THEN PH.D. STUDENT AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY, ONCE SAID TO I-MAG'S COPYEDITOR IBRAHIM BABELLI "YOU MUSLIMS HAVE NO MOTHER TERESA." BABELLI ANSWERED "THAT'S RIGHT. WE HAVE ABDULRAHMAN ALSUMAIT ['ABD ALRA'HMAAN AL'SUMAI'T] INSTEAD."

THE KUWAITI DOCTOR WHO QUIT A BRIGHT CAREER IN MEDICINE IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 1980S TO HELP AFRICANS TO HELP THEMSELVES IS CONSIDERED A ROLE MODEL AMONGST MANY MUSLIM. ALSUMAIT WHO IS NOW 60 YEARS OLD AND DIABETIC WON SEVERAL PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS, AND WHAT DID HE DO WITH THE MONEY? DONATED IT TO AFRICA OF COURSE, FOR BENEVOLENCE IS BOTH HIS MISSION AND PASSION.

Tell us about the beginnings: How did you learn of Africa's need for relief work?

Allaah willed that I visit the Republic of Malawi in 1980; a sub-Sahara African country, which was known earlier as Nyasaland. Islaam was introduced to Nyasaland about 500 years ago and more than two thirds of the population became Muslim. However, the number of Muslims dwindled steadily until they became about 17% of the population by 1980, and the overwhelming majority of the remaining Muslims knew hardly anything about Islaam. Thereafter, we decided to establish the 'Malawi Muslim Agency', which became the 'Africa Muslim Agency' and finally the 'Direct Aid Society'.

Was your first African trip to Malawi? And what was the purpose of that trip?

Yes, indeed it was. The purpose of the trip was to oversee the launch of a charitable project.

How did your family cope with your continuous travel?

From day one, I tried to make my family involved with charitable work. When they became intimately aware and involved, they did not mind my continuous and lengthy travel, and they used to join me several times during the year in Africa

But the fact that I used to spend about ten months per year in Africa, not one shot but dispersed throughout the year, resulted in estrangement of members of my family, particularly the very young ones, who could not recognise me when I would return home.

Thereafter, I decided to have all my children spend the entire summers with me in Africa without enrolling them in any specific program; they just came with me wherever I went: We travelled on foot, dwelled through deserts and slept in the

jungle. Their love for Africa grew with every trip they made to the point that my youngest daughters requested from her fiancé, as an unwritten betrothal condition, that they go together to Africa, which he agreed to.

Do you stay in Madagascar when you go to Africa?

I used to make Madagascar my abode in Africa. For the time being, however, I am heading to Kenya for, probably, a year, and then move on to another country.

Tell us about the organisational structure of the Direct Aid Society. How many people does it employ in Africa and in Kuwait?

In Kuwait, our work force is made up of sixty employees only. In Africa, however, and due to the large number of schools we operate, we have about four thousand employees.

Do you have a process installed for financial control and accounting?

We have installed in place a rigorous seven-tier accounting system. The first tier is field accounting, which takes care of overseeing the financial aspects of our projects, since we carry out the work ourselves and do not rely on agents or representatives.

Each field accountant is responsible for bookkeeping and controlling money that is sent from us and forwarded to beneficiaries, in addition to filing monthly reports. Monthly reports are sent to segment managers who oversee expenditures, and who then forward the reports to the department of control and field accounting.

The reports are inspected for irregularities by this department using previous years reports and field reports from inspectors.

The controlled reports are then forwarded to the general accounting department, which prepares a detailed report about each and every one of our offices in Africa and sends out the reports to our offices there.

Then there is internal and external auditing, in addition to the special accounting office that reports to the chairman of the board.

We heard of one accountant whom you put to the test but he did not change his stance. Pray tell us about this story.

Once, an auditor who works in the second tier of our accounting system called me to report an expenditure that I made and did not fall under the category of approved expenses.

The money he was referring to was about a quarter of dollar and was used to mend

my shoes when I was in Sudan. I feigned indignation when he insisted that I should repay this expenditure, irrespective of my position as the chairman of the board.

He did not flinch, even when I made him come to my office and threatened him and tried to bully him. His argument was simple: The regulations stipulate an authorisation from the board for expenditures that are not prescribed; it is



not the amount that matters.

I was so pleased with his integrity, even when faced with threats from the chairman of the board, that I hugged and thanked him, and gave him – from my private funds – a one month salary bonus.

Earlier this year, you were awarded the prestigious Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid

Al Maktoum Award for Medical Sciences. Pray tell us about this award.

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid AlMaktoum [‘Hamdaan Bin Raashid Almaktoom], the Minister of Finance and Industry in the United Arab Emirates, established an award eight years ago to honour individuals, universities, establishments and research centres all over the world for their outstanding

achievements in the field of medicine, with particular emphasis on genetic research.

This year’s award was the give for the first time to charitable organisations based within the United Arab Emirates or international that work on providing aid and relief to needy areas. Direct Aid Society was the first recipient of this prestigious award among international

relief organisations, and the Human Appeal International, based in Ajman, was the first national society to receive the award.

In how many African countries does the Direct Aid Society operate?

We currently operate in thirty two countries. Each country has its own office with dedicated staff overseeing administrative, financial and contractual aspects of our work there.

Which countries are you giving priority to in opening new offices?

At this stage, we have suspended the opening of any new office in light of the unusual circumstances that befell charitable work throughout the Muslim world. But we remain active through our existing offices.

Please tell us about the achievements of the Direct Aid Society so far.

More than six thousand and five hundred shallow wells were sunk to provide clean water for African villages. We have now more than one hundred and thirty eight hospitals and clinics that received over four million patients.

We also established eight hundred and forty schools that house about half a million students, in addition to colleges and universities in Zanzibar, Kenya and Somalia. We are supporting more than fifteen thousand orphans throughout our operational bases, and may of those orphans have already graduated as physicians, engineers and academicians.

How do you prioritise your charitable work?

Our strategy focused, since the start, on education. I believe that only through education can impoverished nations escape the vicious cycle they have been stuck in.

You opined during an interview broadcasted through Al-Jazeera that Zakaah (mandatory alms) may be used in relief efforts of all types.



Direct Aid In Action

Do you still hold this opinion?

I used to argue that if Muslims did indeed pay Zakaah no Muslim would stay poor. Now, I believe that Zakaah on stocks being traded at Gulf counties stock markets would be sufficient to alleviate poverty throughout the world; Muslim and otherwise.

How do you assess African acceptance to your mission? And with the widespread activities of missionary Christians, is their any change in African attitude towards your efforts?

Some Africans, like any other people, accept our presence and help, whereas others don't. We neither force our beliefs upon them nor do we take advantage of their needs to impose any system or set of rituals or morals upon them.

Africa is beleaguered with troubles and military conflicts throughout. Do you fear for your life?

I was shot at many times, and an anti-personnel land mine exploded beneath our feet during the civil war in Mozambique. I was in Somalia during the civil war in that country during the period of 1991 to 1992, and was shot at repeatedly. I also received many death threats throughout the years we have been working in Africa. But danger is a part of our mission, and we do not complain.

Do you provide relief aid to Muslims only, or do you include non-Muslims in your efforts? And is it true that you cooperate with Christian organisations?

The laws of Islaam, as dictated our Prophet, mandate that we do not discriminate in helping people, irrespective of their religion. Not only that, but the mandate covers non-humans as well, for the Prophet (P.B.U.H) related the story of a



Direct Aid In Action

prostitute who was absolved of all her sins because she saved a dog who was about to die from thirst. We always cooperate with Christian organisations, and with priests, for the common good. We maintain cordial relationships with many other non-Muslim societies as well.

Following 9/11 and the vicious attack on Islaamic charity work, how was the Direct Aid Society affected?

We are an Islaamic society that faced backlash similar to the backlash that faced all other Islaamic societies after 9/11.

For example, our teachers and preachers have been expelled from many places. Nowadays, if any ruler or a politician wishes to get rid of anyone, under whatever pretence, it suffices to invoke the terrorism accusation; the accused is always guilty under those circumstances and the accuser is not obliged to provide the proof.

The Direct Aid Society aims to develop rather than provide relief and/or aid. When did you start providing relief efforts?

Providing relief was not our goal when we started our work in 1980, but one cannot stand around watching when people are dying of hunger; what is earmarked for development could very well be used for relief. Our goal has always been to help the development of the places where we work.

What is your happiest recollection from your work in Africa?

My happiest recollection is of the orphan Zaynab Qara when she graduated from medical school and was ranked on top of her graduating class throughout all of Kenya. This was the same Zaynab that I first met when she was nine-years old

walking barefoot and wearing rags and not covering her head, which went against the tradition of her non-Muslim tribe.

And the saddest?

The saddest recollection is holding a dying infant in my hands, and this happened quite often. I try to control my emotions and conceal them, but later I would hide away and cry like a baby.

Would you like to say something to our readership?

I sincerely hope that our brethren in humanity would learn, first hand, our culture and civilisation to learn the truth about us, and not to stop at what our enemies say about us. Once the true knowledge has surfaced, then let our brethren in humanity judge our work for what it really stand for.

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The Four Fundamentalisms And the Threat to SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

(Part 1 of 2)

By Robert Jensen*

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The most important words anyone said to me in the weeks immediately after September 11, 2001, came from my friend James Koplin.

While acknowledging the significance of that day, he said, simply: "I was in a profound state of grief about the world before 9/11, and nothing that happened on that day has significantly changed what the world looks like to me."

Because Jim is a bit older and considerably smarter than I, it took me some time to catch up to him, but eventually I recognized his insight.

He was warning me that even we lefties - trained to keep an eye on systems and structures of power rather than obsessing about individual politicians and single events - were missing the point if we accepted the conventional wisdom that 9/11 "changed everything," as the saying went then.

He was right, and today I want to talk about four fundamentalisms loose in the world and the long-term crisis to which they point.

Before we head there, a note on the short-term crisis: I have been involved in U.S. organizing against the so-called "war on terror," which has provided cover for the attempts to expand and deepen U.S. control over the strategically crucial resources of Central Asia and the Middle East, part of a global strategy that the Bush administration openly acknowledges is aimed at unchallengeable U.S. domination of the world.

For U.S. planners, that "world" includes not only the land and seas - and, of course, the resources beneath them - but space above as well.

It is our world to arrange and dispose of as they see fit, in support of our "blessed lifestyle." Other nations can have a place in that world as long as they are willing to assume the role that the United States determines appropriate. The vision of U.S. policymakers is of a world very ordered, by them.

This description of U.S. policy is no caricature. Anyone who doubts my summary can simply read the National Security Strategy document released in

2002 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2002/> and the 2006 update <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/>, and review post-World War II U.S. history <http://www.zmag.org/CrisesCurEvts/interventions.htm>.

Read and review, but only if you don't mind waking up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat of fear. But as scary as these paranoid, power-mad policymakers' delusions may be, Jim was talking about a feeling beyond that fear - a grief that is much broader and goes much deeper.

Opposing the war-of-the-moment - and going beyond that to challenge the whole imperial project - is important. But also important is the work of thinking through the nature of the larger forces that leave us in this grief-stricken position.

We need to go beyond Bush. We should recognize the seriousness of the threat that this particular gang of thieves and thugs poses and resist their policies, but not mistake them for the core of the problem.

Fundamentalisms

One way to come to terms with these forces is to understand the United States as a society in the grip of four fundamentalisms. In ascending order of threat, I identify these fundamentalisms as religious, national, economic, and technological.

All share some similar characteristics, while each poses a particular threat to sustainable democracy and sustainable life on the planet. Each needs separate analysis and strategies for resistance.

Let's start by defining fundamentalism. The term has a specific meaning in Protestant history (an early 20th century movement to promote "The Fundamentals"), but I want to use it in a more general fashion to describe any intellectual/political/theological position that asserts an absolute certainty in the truth and/or righteousness of a belief system.

Such fundamentalism leads to an inclination to want to marginalise, or in some cases eliminate, alternative ways to understand and organize the world

After all, what's the point of engaging in honest dialogue with those who believe in heretical systems that are so clearly wrong or even evil?

In this sense, fundamentalism is an extreme form of hubris, a delusional overconfidence not only in one's beliefs but in the ability of humans to know much of anything definitively.

In the way I use the term, fundamentalism isn't unique to religious people but is instead a feature of a certain approach to the world, rooted in the mistaking of very limited knowledge for wisdom.

The antidote to fundamentalism is humility, that recognition of just how contingent our knowledge about the world is.

We need to adopt what sustainable agriculture researcher Wes Jackson calls "an ignorance-based worldview," <http://www.landinstitute.org/vnews/display.v/ART/2004/10/03/42c0db19e37f4> an approach to world that acknowledges that what we don't know dwarfs what we do know about a complex world.

Acknowledging our basic ignorance does not mean we should revel in stupidity, but rather should spur us to recognize that we have an obligation to act intelligently on the basis not only of what we know but what we don't know.

When properly understood, I think such humility is implicit in traditional/indigenous systems and also the key lesson to be taken from the Enlightenment and modern science (a contentious claim, perhaps, given the way in which modern science tends to overreach).

The Enlightenment insight, however, is not

that human reason can know everything, but that we can give up attempts to know everything and be satisfied with knowing what we can know. That is, we can be content in making it up as we go along, cautiously. One of the tragedies of the modern world is that too few have learned that lesson.

Fundamentalists, no matter what the specific belief system, believe in their ability to know a lot. That is why it can be so easy for fundamentalists to move from one totalizing belief system to another.

For example, I have a faculty colleague who shifted from being a dogmatic communist to a dogmatic right-wing evangelical Christian.

When people hear of his conversion they often express amazement, though to me it always seemed easy to understand -- he went from one fundamentalism to another. What matters is not so much the content but the shape of the belief system. Such systems should worry us.

That said, not all fundamentalisms pose the same danger to democracy and sustainability. So, let's go through the four I have identified: religious, national, economic, and technological.

Religion and Nation

The fundamentalism that attracts the most attention is religious. In the United States, the predominant form is Christian. Elsewhere in the world, Islaamic, Jewish, and Hindu fundamentalisms are attractive to some significant portion of populations, either spread across a Diaspora or concentrated in one region, or both.

Given all the attention focused on religious fundamentalism, I'll assume everyone has

at least a passing acquaintance with the phenomenon and is aware of its threats.

But religious fundamentalism is not necessarily the most serious fundamentalist threat loose in the world today.

Certainly much evil has been done in the world in the name of religion, especially the fundamentalist varieties, and we can expect more in the future. But, moving up the list, we also can see clearly the problems posed by national fundamentalism.

Nationalism poses a threat everywhere but should especially concern us in the United States, where the capacity for destruction in the hands of the most powerful state in the history of the world is exacerbated by a pathological hyper-patriotism that tends to suppress internal criticism and leave many unable to hear critique from outside.

In other writing (Chapter 3 of *Citizens of the Empire* <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0872864324/thirdcoastact-20/002-3901788-0263217>)

I have outlined in some detail an argument that patriotism is intellectually and morally bankrupt. Here, let me simply point out that because a nation-state is an abstraction (lines on a map, not a naturally occurring object), assertions of patriotism (defined as love of or loyalty to a nation-state) raise a simple question: To what we are pledging our love and loyalty? How is that abstraction made real?

I conclude that all the possible answers are indefensible and that instead of pledging allegiance to a nation, we should acknowledge and celebrate our connections to real people in our lives

while also declaring a commitment to universal principles, but reject offering commitment to arbitrary political units that in the modern era have been the vehicle for such barbarism and brutality.

That critique applies across the board, but because of our power and peculiar history, a rejection of national fundamentalism is most crucial in the United States. The dominant conception of that history is captured in the phrase "the city upon a hill," the notion that the United States came into the world as the first democracy, a beacon to the world.

In addition to setting the example, as soon as it had the capacity to project its power around the world, the United States claimed to be the vehicle for bringing democracy to that world.

These are particularly odd claims for a nation that owes its very existence to one of the most successful genocides in recorded history, the near-complete extermination of indigenous peoples to secure the land and resource base for the United States.

Odder still when one looks at the U.S. practice of African slavery that propelled the United States into the industrial world, and considers the enduring apartheid system - once formal and now informal - that arose from it.

And odd-to-the-point-of-bizarre in the context of imperial America's behaviour in the world since it emerged as the lone superpower and made central to its foreign policy in the post-WWII era attacks on any challenge in the Third World to U.S. dominance.

While all the empires that have committed great crimes -- the British, French, Belgians, Japanese, Russians and then the Soviets -- have justified their exploitation of others by the alleged benefits it brought to the people being exploited, there is no power so convinced of its own benevolence as the United States.

The culture is delusional in its commitment to this mythology, which is why today one can find on the other side of the world peasant farmers with no formal education who understand better the nature of U.S. power than many faculty members at elite U.S. universities.

This national fundamentalism rooted in the assumption of the benevolence of U.S. foreign and military policy works to trump critical inquiry.

As long as a significant component of the U.S. public – and virtually the entire elite – accept this national fundamentalism, the world is at risk.

Economics

Economic fundamentalism, synonymous these days with market fundamentalism, presents another grave threat. After fall of the Soviet system, the naturalness of capitalism is now taken to be beyond question.

The dominant assumption about corporate capitalism in the United States is not simply that it is the best among competing economic systems, but that it is the only sane and rational way to organize an economy in the contemporary world.

In capitalism,
 (1) property, including capital assets, is owned and controlled by private persons;
 (2) people sell their labour for money

wages, and, (3) goods and services are allocated by markets.

In contemporary market fundamentalism, also referred to as neoliberalism, it's assumed that most extensive use of markets possible will unleash maximal competition, resulting in the greatest good - and all this is inherently just, no matter what the results.

The reigning ideology of so-called "free trade" seeks to impose this neoliberalism everywhere on the globe.

In this fundamentalism, it is an article of faith that the "invisible hand" of the market always provides the preferred result, no matter how awful the consequences may be for real people.

A corresponding tenet of the market fundamentalist view is that the government should not interfere in any of this; the appropriate role of government, we are told, is to stay out of the economy.

This is probably the most ridiculous aspect of the ideology, for the obvious reason that it is the government that establishes the rules for the system (currency, contract law, etc.) and decides whether the wealth accumulated under previous sets of rules should be allowed to remain in the hands of those who accumulated it (typically in ways immoral, illegal, or both;

We should recall the quip that behind every great fortune is a great crime) or be redistributed. To argue that government should stay out of the economy merely obscures the obvious fact that without the government - that is, without rules established through some kind of collective action - there would be no economy.

The government can't stay out because it's in from the ground floor, and assertions that government intervention into markets is inherently illegitimate are just silly.

Adding to the absurdity of all this is the hypocrisy of the market fundamentalists, who are quick to call on government to bail them out when things go sour (in recent U.S. history, the savings-and-loan and auto industries are the most outrageous examples).

And then there's the reality of how some government programs - most notably the military and space departments - act as conduits for the transfer of public money to private corporations under the guise of "national defense" and the "exploration of space."

And then there's the problem of market failure - the inability of private markets to provide some goods or provide other goods at the most desirable levels - of which economists are well aware. In other words, economic fundamentalism - the worship of markets combined with steadfast denial about how the system actually operates - leads to a world in which not only are facts irrelevant to the debate, but people learn to ignore their own experience.

On the facts: There is a widening gap between rich and poor, both worldwide and within most nations. According to U.N. statistics, about a quarter of the world's population lives on less than \$1 a day and nearly half live on less than \$2.

The 2005 U.N. Report on the World Social Situation, aptly titled "The Inequality Predicament," stresses: "Ignoring inequality in the pursuit of development is perilous.

Focusing exclusively on economic growth and income generation as a development strategy is ineffective, as it leads to the accumulation of wealth by a few and deepens the poverty of many; such an approach does not acknowledge the intergenerational transmission of poverty." <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/media%2005/>

That's where the data lead. But I want to highlight the power of this fundamentalism by reminding us of a common acronym: TGIF.

Everyone in the United States knows what that means: "Thank God it's Friday." The majority of Americans don't just know what TGIF stands for, they feel it in their bones. That's a way of saying that a majority of Americans do work they generally do not like and do not believe is really worth doing.

That's a way of saying that we have an economy in which most people spend at least a third of their lives doing things they don't want to do and don't believe are valuable. We are told this is a way of organizing an economy that is natural.

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Medicinal Uses of HONEY

By **Doha Babeli*** [‘Du’ha Baabally]

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For more than three thousand years, honey has been used to treat a variety of ailments through topical and oral application.

Assyrian relics, for examples, show that honey was used as a medicine, and similar medical usage was reported in ancient Egyptian annals, which stated that honey aids the healing process of wounds and in treating abdominal and urinal ailments, in addition to its use for ophthalmologic application.

Ancient Chinese medicine prescribed the usage of honey for treating smallpox patients. Honey was applied to affected skin to accelerate the healing of erupted pustules and help reducing scarring.

The ancient practice of medicine in India included honey for treating cataracts. The famous Hippocrates used to treat wounds

with honey, and prescribed it for strep throats, coughing, and to dry up phlegm.

Muslims expanded the usage of honey in medicine, guided by the revelation in the ‘Qura~n:

“And your Lord inspired the bee saying: “Take your habitations in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (men) erect. Then, eat of all fruits, and follow the ways of your Lord made easy (for you).” There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for mankind. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think.” (chapter of Anna’hl: 68-69)

And by the following Hadeeths (sayings) of the Prophet (P.B.U.H):

“Healing is in three things: A gulp of honey, cupping, and branding with fire (cauterising).” But I forbid my followers

to use (cauterisation) branding with fire.” (Albu’kaary: Volume 7, Book 71, Number 584)

“Use the two remedies, namely, honey and ‘Qura~n.” (Ibn Maajah: Volume 3, Book 31, Number 3443)

“A man came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and said: “My brother has some abdominal trouble.” The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said to him “Let him drink honey.” The man came for the second time and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said to him, ‘Let him drink honey.” He came for the third time and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, “Let him drink honey.” He returned again and said, “I have done that ‘ The Prophet (P.B.U.H) then said, “Allaah has said the truth, but your brother’s abdomen has told a lie. Let him drink honey.” So he made him drink honey and he was cured.” (Albu’kaary: Volume 7, Book 71, Number 588)

The medical benefit of honey was ascertained by science, which identified many of the healing effects of honey.

Composition of Honey

Honey is a mixture of sugars and other compounds. With respect to carbohydrates, honey is mainly fructose

(about 38.5%) and glucose (about 31.0%). The remaining carbohydrates include maltose, sucrose, and other complex carbohydrates.

In addition, honey contains a wide array of vitamins, such as vitamin B6, thiamine, niacin, riboflavin, and pantothenic acid. Essential minerals including calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, and zinc as well as several different amino acids have been identified in honey.

Honey also contains several compounds which function as antioxidants. Known antioxidant compounds in honey are chrysin, pinobanksin, vitamin C, catalase, and pinocembrin. Unlike most other sweeteners, honey contains small amounts of a wide array of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and antioxidants.

The specific composition of any batch of honey will depend largely on the mix of flowers consumed by the bees that produced the honey.

Honey has a density of about 1.5 kg/litre (50% denser than water) or 12.5 pounds per US gallon.

Typical Honey Analysis:

- Fructose: 38%
- Glucose: 31%
- Sucrose: 1%
- Water: 17%
- Other sugars: 9% (maltose, melezitose)
- Ash: 0.17%

The analysis of the sugar content of honey is used for detecting adulteration.

Medicinal Uses of Honey

Honey is an essential and attractive nutrient for many factors, both nutritional and medicinal. Honey is:

- Gentle on the digestive system;
- Largely made up of simple sugar, which is quickly digested;
- Not harmful to the kidneys at all;
- Calming to the nervous system without side effects;
- Of agreeable taste to most.

Honey's medicinal usage is in both prevention and treatment, such as in:

Honey is known to have some significant nutraceutical effects (or positive long-term health effects resulting from honey's consumption). In addition to its primary carbohydrate content, honey often contains polyphenols, which can act as antioxidants, which prevent oxidative stress to cells throughout the body. Antioxidants in honey have even been implicated in reducing the damage done to the colon in colitis.

Furthermore, some studies suggest that honey may be effective in increasing the populations of probiotic bacteria in the gut, which may help strengthen the immune system, improve digestion, lower cholesterol and prevent colon cancer.

Honey is used to treat burns, cankers and skin ulcers because it acts as an antiseptic/antibacterial agent. The pH of

honey is commonly between 3.2 and 4.5. This relatively acidic pH level prevents the growth of many bacteria. Honey also helps in scar tissue reduction by regulating collagen production via slowing down hydrogen peroxide release at the wound.

Hydrogen peroxide in honey is activated by dilution with body fluids. As a result, hydrogen peroxide is released slowly and acts as an antiseptic. Unlike medical hydrogen peroxide, this slow release does not cause damage to surrounding tissues. Honey aids in the treatment and prevention of gangrene in diabetic feet when used topically.

Another medical use for honey is in the prevention and treatment of the dental cavity, particularly for malodour. Honey is hygroscopic and antiseptic, and is rich with fluoride; an excellent combination for oral hygiene.

Honey is also used in the treatment of conjunctivitis, in addition to several other corneal maladies.

Honey is a potent medicine for stomach ulcer and diarrhoea, when used under medical supervision.

The osmotic effect in honey makes it suitable for the treatment of enuresis (involuntary bed-wetting) for children above the age of five, particularly at night or when the child is playing outdoors

The affected child swallows a spoonful of honey, either in the morning or before going to sleep, depending on the child's condition.

Due to its osmotic effect, honey absorbs significant amount of water and retains it for a long time. And since honey poses no

health risks to children (with the exception of juvenile diabetics) and is generally likeable, it is an ideal treatment for enuresis. For best results, however, honey must be administered to the child after having emptied his/her bladder prior to going to bed, or before leaving home in the morning. Honey may also help adults and the elderly whose need to visit the water cabinet may interrupt their sleep repeatedly. A spoonful of honey before going to bed, on an empty bladder, helps significantly. Diabetic patients must be careful with honey consumption, however.

The osmotic and antiseptic effects of honey make it an ideal treatment for sore sufferers of pharyngitis and laryngitis.

Honey is an essential ingredient in skin care products, both for beauty treatments and face masks and in medical applications such as the treatment of acne and abscesses.

The regular application of honey every three days, with other ingredients, to the face delays the appearance of wrinkles. A mixture of honey and olive oil has been successfully used to rejuvenate the hair by providing nutrients for hair bulbs via massaging the scalp with this concoction.

For a long time, honey has been used to treat a variety of ailments without fully understanding the medicinal effects of it.

Folk medicine, however, relied – successfully – on honey for the treatment of many a disease, by applying and observing and documenting.

Recent and ongoing modern research and techniques are shedding new light on the efficacy of honey for treating various maladies, including some bacterium strains that have developed complete resistance to penicillin and any of its derivatives.

This medicinal effect of honey is best described by Allaah in the 'Qura'n: "There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for mankind. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think." [chapter of Anna'hl: 69]

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Prior to joining King Fahd Medical City in Riyadh, Dr. Babelli worked at King Khaled University Hospital in Riyadh for seventeen years. She is a medical consultant for several publications, both paper and electronic. She is the author of several medical books (in Arabic), including: A Comprehensive Medical Encyclopaedia, Facts on Diabetes, Children Safety Seat, Osteoporosis, Natural Beauty, and Autogenic Therapy.

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The White Moon **Rose Over Us**

By
Ahmad Konash

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By **Abdelwahab Elmessiri** [‘Abd Alwahaab Almiseery]

Uncovering the context

The importance of national dialogue, in the absence of which we lapse into a conflict that depletes all energy, cannot be overemphasised; hence calls for change, for reform of the constitution, for new parties to be established, for emergency laws to be annulled so all political trends can participate in the democratic process without fear and without attempting either to retain power for life.

I also wish to express admiration for Minister of Culture Farouk Hosni [Faaroo’q Hunsny].

I am aware of the efforts expended by his ministry to restore Ancient Egyptian, Coptic and Islaamic monuments, and to safeguard antiquities from theft.

Like him, and like many from my generation, I know little about jurisprudential opinion on the issue of

the ‘hijaab. Referring to jurisprudential opinion is not a matter of asserting anyone’s monopoly over jurisprudence but a matter of rigour, the importance of which, as a literary critic, I am well aware.

In my field, without rigour, meaning knowledge of different approaches, theories and techniques of criticism, opinions can be no more than amateur impressionism.

And if the need for rigour is such in literary criticism, then how much more so when it comes to religious jurisprudence?

Hence I sought the opinion of a friend, not a man of religion but better informed on such issues than me, about the issue of the ‘hijaab. Islaamic juridical tradition, he said, asserts that “when a woman reaches the age of menstruation the only parts of her body that might be

revealed are her face and palms. This view is generally supported by the following 'Qura~nic injunction: 'And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be mindful of their chastity, and not to display their charms [in public] beyond what may [decently] be apparent thereof; hence, let them draw their head coverings over their bosoms. And let them not display [more of] their charms to any but their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons ... " (Annoor: 31). There are other 'Qura~nic verses (Ala'hzaab: 33 and 59) that are in keeping with the above injunctions.

"These verses", my friend continued, "refer to the values of modesty and decency as opposed to the arrogant physical flaunting of the pagan era, which reduces woman to her body, and underscores her physical attractiveness [sex appeal in modern parlance], thereby cancelling out her humanness, her personality, as well as her social role as a mother and a wife."

As the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood suggested, everyone knows that the 'hijaab is an Islaamic obligation, yet the issue has taken on exaggerated proportions. Egypt, he went on, has bigger and more pressing issues to address, such as poverty, corruption and tyranny.

Given that the minister, like me, is not well-versed in religious matters I fully believe him when he says he was not passing a religious judgment.

In which framework, then, are we understand his statement? I think I may not be off the mark when I claim he was passing a cultural judgement.

Analysis of contemporary Egyptian discourse tells us that "backwardness" and "regression" -precisely like nah'dah, "renaissance", and istinaarah, "enlightenment"- are non-religious terms that belong to a social and cultural framework. This is the context within which we should discuss the statement.

Those who describe the 'hijaab as a symptom of backwardness, the minister

takes precedence over the individual no matter the degree of creativity of which the latter is capable. The individual belongs to society and not the other way round. Yet some radical intellectuals rush headlong to embrace the call for absolute artistic freedom without grasping its anti-human philosophical import.

Those who defend freedom of

one, designations that originate from a definition of secularism as the separation between religion and state.

This is a crude view of the world and of human nature, an intricate, complex thing. The religious is interwoven with the political, the economic and the psychological.

When a Palestinian freedom fighter attacks an Israeli settlement are his motives religious, or are they political, economic and social? The answer is that his motives are complex. He is impelled by a combination of things.

Those who separate religion from other aspects of life believe its appearance in public life is a symptom of backwardness. Their frame of reference is the Western secular, as well as the so-called Arab nah'dah, project.

Think of the ill-fated proposal to celebrate the bicentennial of the French Expedition to Egypt - i.e., the invasion of Egypt by the military forces of the French Revolution - considered by some the starting point of advancement towards Western enlightenment:

the promoters of the celebration did not seem to realise that the French Expedition to Egypt was the beginning of the Western colonisation of our country that continues to try and undermine our heritage and exploit us for its own benefit.

They overlooked the two revolutions against the French sparked from Alazhar, just as they overlooked Sulaymaan Al'halaby, who assassinated Kléber, who had taken over from Napoleon as commander of the French occupation forces, and the Azhar scholars who refused to collaborate with the occupiers.

THEY SPEAK OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF CREATIVITY AS ABSOLUTES, WIELDING THEM IN THE FACE OF ANYONE WHO OBJECTS TO ANY OPINION. SOCIETY, HOWEVER, IS A COMPLEX ENTITY, WITH A CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS OWN THAT TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER THE INDIVIDUAL NO MATTER THE DEGREE OF CREATIVITY OF WHICH THE LATTER IS CAPABLE.

being one of them, weigh their words carefully.

They speak of the freedom of expression and of creativity as absolutes, wielding them in the face of anyone who objects to any opinion.

Society, however, is a complex entity, with a consciousness of its own that

expression and construe art as an absolute withhold the designation of absolute from religion and moral values. They conceive of religion as a private matter, isolated from the world of politics, economics and sociology.

Hence, when a given phenomenon is addressed, it is treated as either a religious phenomenon or a non-religious

They isolate the occupation from its historical and social context; when a scholar does that, he or she can impose any interpretation on the phenomenon under study.

Thus they turned French Expedition into a sign of advancement and the resistance, it only follows, into a sign of backwardness, which is not too different from the West's referring nowadays to the Palestinian resistance as "terrorism", and designating 'Hizb Allaah, 'Hamaas and Jihaad as "terrorist organisations".

The promoters of this discourse do something similar when they turn the 'hijaab into a symbol of backwardness.

They isolate it from its social, historical and human context, having derived the signifiers of advancement and backwardness from a Western model.

But are things that simple? Take, for example, a non-veiled young woman who frequents the Gezira Club, where she plays tennis in shorts and swims in a bathing suit, goes dancing at discotheques, is fluent in a foreign language and speaks Arabic pidginised with English or French.

She indulges in consumerism on a grand scale and knows nothing of the real Egypt, the Egypt of the poor, the struggling and the wretched.

She does not participate in any political movement. Is such a young woman more advanced than a veiled one who lives in the true Egypt, amid its people, aware of their concerns, one who is politically active, contributes to building the nation and does not indulge in the rampant consumerism that has Egyptian

society in its grip?

Whenever I revisit Damanhour, my hometown, I find civil society there active, indeed thriving. Many of those who are in charge of N.G.O.s, some of which are undeclared, are veiled young women.

I am familiar with the work of one of these N.G.O.s which specialises in providing dialysis equipment for kidney failure patients.

The veiled girls who run the N.G.O. obtain funds for their project from the prosperous and also from relatives resident in the U.S.

Who, then, is more advanced, the unveiled young woman or these veiled young women?

The religious is interwoven with the political, economic, social and historical, and the veil must be considered in this context. While many consider it a religious obligation we must not forget that it has also become a social convention. Every society has its own dress code, a language of costume defined by society and not by individuals.

This code determines what is to be revealed or concealed of the body, and the appropriate attire for given occasions. Was there any girl who had the guts to reveal her stomach, whether in the East or the West, a decade ago?

And is there anyone who would now dare object to this style of dress?

The complaint made by some women that they find themselves obliged to

wear the veil because of "religious" pressure may be valid; they should bear in mind, though, that whereas these pressures may originally have been religious in nature they have now acquired the dimension of custom, which is what makes for the social pressure.

The 'hijaab is an expression of adhering to one's identity, as well as a form of resistance to imperialism.

There is an economic aspect to 'hijaab, which is undoubtedly a rejection of the consumerist model. When my wife and I returned from a sojourn in the US in 1979, the Open Door policy had overtaken Egypt.

Our combined monthly salary was approximately LE180. When my wife went to buy a handbag and a pair of shoes, she found they cost LE150.

Her comment was that girls now had only two solutions in face of inflation: either they could resort to the Thai solution (prostitution) or 'hijaab ; she predicted they would opt for the latter.

Although she identified the economic dimension of 'hijaab, she did not reduce the phenomenon to it.

Egyptian women chose the Islaamic solution because Islaam is the frame of

reference of this society (as a system of belief for Muslims and as a civilisation for both Muslims and non-Muslims). It is this frame of reference that protected the country from colonial and consumerist infiltration.

To reduce the 'hijaab to its religious dimension and isolate it from social dimensions reveals the analytical shortcomings of those who turn it into a symptom of backwardness.

When I was a young boy in Damanhour I was dazzled by the neon lights of Cairo and would count how many new neon signs I could spot in my town as a sign of advancement.

When I grew up I realised, of course, how reductive and naïve my criterion was.

As St Paul the Apostle says in his first epistle to the Corinthians "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13: 11).

Why then should we not mature and dispense with reductive criteria, contemplating our reality with eyes not glazed over by foreign fogs that blind us from perceiving the rich, complex truth in all its interwoven material and non-material dimensions?

* Abdelwahab Elmessiri is an Arab thinker and writer. He has a Ph.D. in English and comparative literature from Rutgers University, U.S.A. He published scores of books and articles. Amongst which is "The Encyclopaedia of Jews, Judaism, and Zionism" which has eight volumes and is a result of 25 years research and critical inquiry with a team of 30 researchers.

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BRIDGES FOUNDATION:

PEACE MAKING THROUGH EDUCATION

Religion has always been taken as a ground to initiate wars throughout the history of humanity, so why Allaah Almighty (God) created us in different races?

Fadel Soliman [Faa'dil Sulaymaan], the former Imaam of the American University at Washington DC, the former host of "the Islaamic Show" in Channel 30 at the American TV, and the former host of "let the 'Qur a-n speak" at the American radio, explains this diversity from the Holy 'Qura-n which states:

"Oh, mankind! We created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other."

Diversity, then, is a blessing that people are abusing by attacking the home and land of each other.

Goals and Objectives

Bridges Foundation was established to bridge people from different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds throughout inter-faith and inter-cultural activities.

We believe that educating each other about our differences is the best way to interconnect people, increase their tolerance towards each other and facilitate



peace making process all over the world.

Logo and Slogan

The logo clearly refers to the goals and objectives of the foundation. It consists of five persons joining hands; the black headed is an African, the blue is European, the green is an Australian, the red is an American and the yellow is an Asian. These are the colours of the Olympic rings. Furthermore it reflects our slogan: "Peace

Making through Education".

Bridges Team

It is composed of several working groups that are linked dynamically to each other. Those groups are subdivided into the following:

- 1. Board of Trustees:** Dr. Jamal Badawi, Dr. Murad Wilfried Hofmann, Abdul Wahid Pedersen, Waleed K. Basyouni and Dr. Zaghlool Elnaggar.
- 2. Director:** Fadel Soliman is a member of the "Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research of the 'Qura-n and Sunnah". He is an expert presenter of Islaam, having lectured about Islaam in the U.S.A. and other countries throughout the world.
- 3. Presenters:** Ahmed Saad, Rasha Yusuf, Iman Taher, Mazyad Al-Khadledy (English), Mohammed Gad-ALLAH (German), Khadijah Machadow (Portuguese), abd Issa Chao (Chinese)

Methodology

Bridges Foundation has the following two divisions:

- **Public Presenters for Peace (PPP):** a group of certified presenters who are specialised in presenting the true values of Islaam to non-Muslims, in all languages, through several power point presentations

that deal with many sensitive issues like Jihaad, the Status of Women in Islaam, Human Rights, and the Veil (Muslim women's outfit). These presentations were presented to thousands of people in the United States and Europe correcting many misconceptions about these topics.

- **International Institute for Training Presenters (IITP):** an institute that trains Muslims on how to present Islaam to non-Muslims appropriately, answer the questions raised, and handle the misconceptions they have about Islaam, all with honesty and professionalism. The training is acquired through a 15-hour workshop after which each attendant receives an attendance certificate.

Our programs have had strong impact in the past in different places, such as the Department of Defence, the Department of Correction, many universities, high schools and churches in USA, the book fair of Frankfurt during the Arab league, and many other events.

Bridges Workshops

Bridges Foundation organises workshops - categorised under the IITP programme - which help you to give presentations with strong impact, increase your confidence in your own ability to make presentations, and use your specific abilities to make

great presentations about Islaam, answer difficult questions and refute misconceptions.

The syllabus is divided into three main levels:

Level 1: Presentation Skills, Islaamic Beliefs, Rituals and Concepts

- a. Presentation skills and Public speaking skills;
- b. Presenting Islaamic Beliefs;
- c. Presenting Islaamic Rituals;
- d. Introducing Islaamic concepts.

Level 2: How to answer, How to refute

- a. Basics of answering questions of non Muslims;
- b. Refuting misconceptions Prophet Mu'hammad;
- c. Refuting misconceptions Women;
- d. Refuting general misconceptions.

Level 3: Practical Training and Coaching in the field

- A two sessions' practical training:
- a. Practice presenting Islaam;
- b. Coaching in the field.

Being organised in Cairo, Alexandria and Dubai with more than 3,500 trainers, those workshops fulfil the needs for majority of Muslims; either being tour guide in Islaamic countries, workers in international companies, students in international universities and others who interacts with non-Muslims.

The Danish Cartoons Controversy

In an attempt to narrow the gaps between Muslim and non-Muslim journalists and intellectuals after the Danish Cartoon Crisis, Bridges Foundation and Royal Danish Food Industries held an event Under the patronage of his eminence, Dr. 'Ali Gom'ah, the Grand Mufti of Egypt

which took place on March 27th, 2006 at the Copenhagen Marriott Hotel.

The program included a delicious dinner, entertainment, keynote speakers, open discussion and dialogue and cultural presentation about Islaamic concepts.

- **Keynote Speakers:** Rune Engelbreth Larsen and AbdulWahid Pedersen.
- **Presentation:** "The Fog is Lifting" by Fadel Soliman.
- **Entertainment and Dinner:** Omar Marzouk from FBI (Funny Business Inc.), performed in both Danish and English. During the event, Bridges Foundation introduced the 1st Danish Journalist who was a martyr of Mussolini's fascism, named Knud Holmboe.



Evaluation had been applied at the end of the event which showed that 55% of the Danish Journalists in attendance had changed their mind towards gaining more respect for Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) had increased.

The Fog is Lifting

Islaam seems like a mystery for many people around the world especially after 9/11 which resulted in making people more eager to find an educational, interesting and comprehensive documentary about Islaam. They, however, could hardly come across one that fits all.

"The Fog is Lifting" is the main title for a series of documentaries about Islaam. They are subdivided into 3 parts:

- **Part I:** Islaam In Brief (which covers topics like Meaning of Islaam, Does God exist?, Freedom of Religion, Original Goodness, The Purpose of Life, The Six Main Beliefs in Islaam and The Five Main Deeds of Muslims.)
- **Part II:** Islaam: a religion of peace or a religion of war?
- **Part III:** Islaam and Women.

The documentaries will be produced in 14 different languages in the subtitles and are presented by Fadel Soliman, Aesha Nawaz and Suhaib Webb.

Quotes

"Submission, Purity and Peace; the Islaamic meaning of the word Islaam

carries those three meanings."

"The word Muslim in the Arabic language doesn't mean literally a follower of Prophet Mu'hammad, it means someone who submits himself to the will of God and worship God alone."

- Fadel Soliman, director of Bridges Foundation and Workshop's presenter.

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Imagine this: You are at work, in the shops, on a bus. You overhear strangers maligning someone you don't know. What do you do? Nothing?

Or this: You are at work, in the shops, on a bus. You overhear strangers maligning someone you cherish; your mother, your father, your husband, your wife. What do you do? Defend them? Set the record straight and demand an apology, even at the risk of causing a scene?

Why is that? Because, we want 'respect'? Because right or wrong, no-one talks that way about our family? Or is it because we know what was said is untrue; and the truth about them is what causes us to love them and risk anything to defend them?

Or how about this: You are at work, in the shops, on a bus. You overhear strangers maligning the Prophet Mu'hammad (ﷺ). What do you do?

Directly and indirectly, our Prophet (ﷺ) is maligned everyday; at work, in the shops, as well as on the bus. He is maligned by the media, by politicians, by strangers, by family even; but how do we react when he is the target of these lies and distortions? Do we react angrily or simply keep quiet?

Sadly, we do both. We do so because he is a stranger to us. We claim to love him but our behaviour belies our words. We have little or no idea who he was, what he stood for, what he taught, or how he reacted when the same things happened to him, so how can our love be true?

The first Muslims were attracted to Islaam because they were attracted to the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ). They grew up with him, they knew everything about him, and because they knew him, they loved him, gave up everything for him,

and modeled their lives on his. Imagine this: You are at work, in the shops, on a bus. You overhear strangers maligning someone you don't know. What do you do? Nothing?

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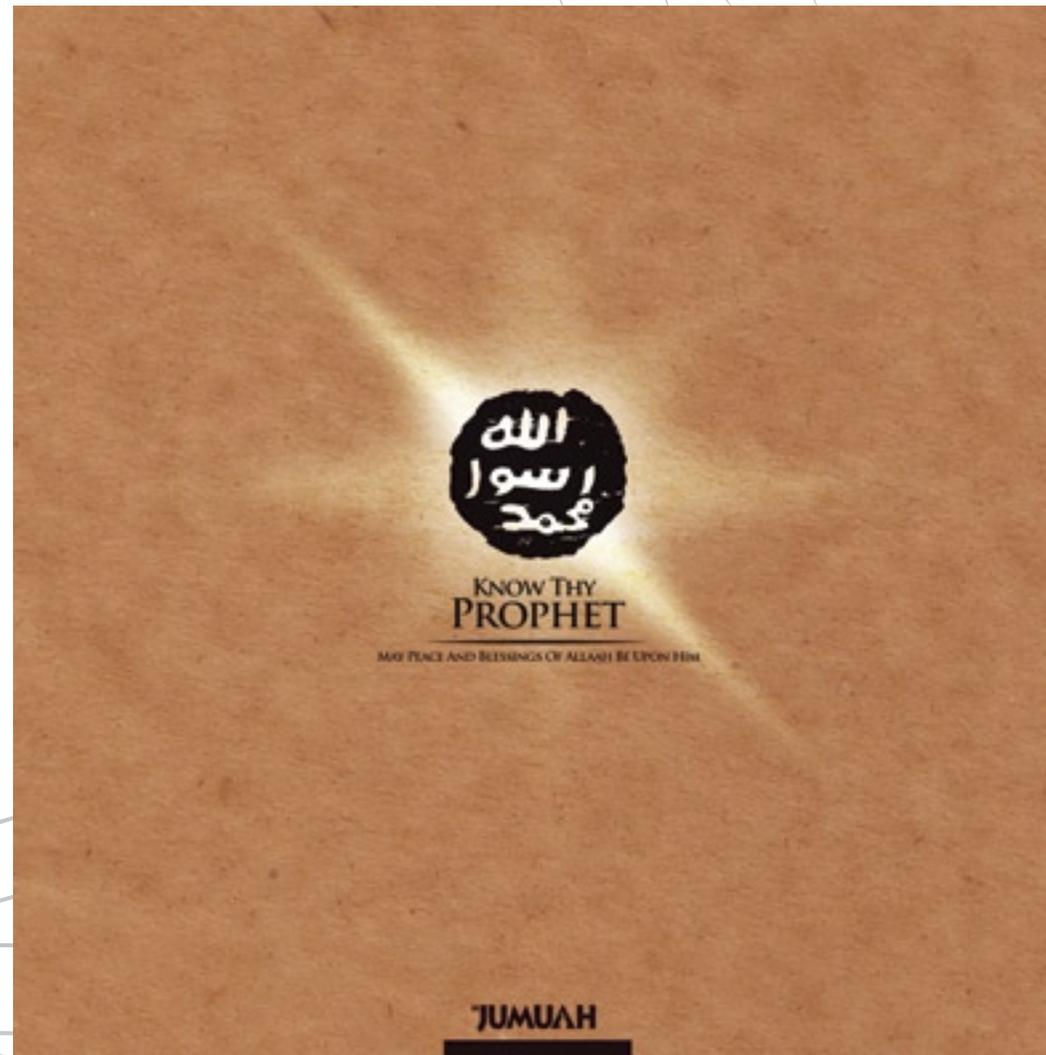
knew everything about him, and because they knew him, they loved him, gave up everything for him, and modeled their lives on his.

If we claim to love the Prophet Mu'hammad (ﷺ), then we ought to know him too. Perhaps, once we come to know him better, we will love him more than our mothers and fathers, our husbands and wives. Perhaps we will love him more than ourselves – and if we do, then we will truly believe.

And that, dear brothers and sisters, is what this book is all about.

It's a book about Mu'hammad, the Prophet of Islaam (ﷺ). It's about his character, morals, compassion, forbearance, patience, love... It's to help us to know him, and to love him.

First comes knowledge, and then comes love.



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³ (ﷺ) means: May Allaah exalt his mention. Alternate translation is: Peace be upon him