



DUBAISUN

An Islamic Periodical Magazine - Issue No **15** September 2009



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Our Vision
A Moderate Islamic Culture



EDITORIAL

IACAD pays a great deal of attention to its development



On 18 October, Dubai will witness the opening of GITEX 2009, which is a very huge scientific event and considered one of the three biggest trading exhibitions in the world. The exhibition is full of technical and advertised surprises and important announcements for the innovative products and services. IACAD participates in this important event witnessing the tremendous progress of the country in various fields and the big paradigm shift in the field of electronic provided to the public. IACAD pays a great deal of attention to its development, in accordance to its strategic plan to enjoy the privacy of electronic advocacy and effective communication with the public in the various internal and external sectors. This occurs through receiving E-fatwas from around the world. Clients can access IACAD's webpage and they can find a tremendous collection of fatwas about all aspects of their daily life. The website also enables visitors to choose the category they find suitable. They can also search through keywords in order to find the information through the Fatwa archive. Giving is part of the cultural and social beliefs in Dubai, therefore, IACAD has added the names of the licensed charitable associations in Dubai, as well as their addresses and phone numbers. IACAD's website also includes the service of building mosques since it is the only licensed organization to locate the Qibla. IACAD also provides an E-service of complaints about mosques maintenance and cleanliness so prayers can inform IACAD of any issue that concerns mosques in order to achieve the highest level of mosques care. There are also the services of Islamic family advising. IACAD cares a great deal about the family because it is the foundation of each society. It provides services that would help the Muslim family to live in peace and happiness in confidentiality and it allows people to listen to the ideas and suggestions of professional scholars. These services are provided as part of Dubai E-government services, therefore we hope these services get more publicity.

Dr. Hamad Alshaibani

Director General of Dubai's Islamic Affairs & Charitable Activities Department

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Ambitious Performance developed by

**electronic
strategical
PLAN**

Best Arabic website in UAE is in a continuous development. The website offers services to customers and visitors across the globe.

Ambitious Performance developed by

electronic strategical PLAN

Interview By DubaiSun Magz. team: Bahaa Al Sunhoory & Ashraf Shibl



Director-General of the Department in an interview with Dubai Sun:

Best Arabic website in UAE is in a continuous development. The website offers services to customers and visitors across the globe.

The continuous increase of the number of customers and visitors by 50% in one year.

IACAD has prepared an ambitious strategic plan in order to develop its performance in all fields in order to have a leading role in the guidance and directions fields as well as the religious guidance and

charitable activities locally and regionally. IACAD works achieving its mission through spreading religious awareness and Islamic and national identity. This works through the sponsorship of mosques and caring for the Holy Quran, Islamic culture, the issuance of Fatwa, research and the development of charitable activities through excellent Human resources according to the latest technologies. IACAD uses the latest technologies in order to present the best services to the community through the vital role of the department of information technologies. In order to put the subject under the limelight, Dubai sun has interviewed Dr. Hamad Al

Shaibani, Director General of IACAD.

IACAD's website has recently witnessed a huge leap in significant development until it became one of the most developed websites in the Arab world. Can you define for us the reasons that caused it?

The obvious development that can be seen in all governmental departments in Dubai is outcome of Shaikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum's (Vice president of UAE, Ruler of Dubai, and prime minister) well developed and sharp vision. That occurred through his decision to found

We believe that the reason behind our development is proper Human resources

the Dubai E-Government. The objective behind this was to use technology in the perfect and most suitable way in order to provide E-services to UAE locals and expatriates through Dubai's different E-channels. This leads to delivering services with ease to all E-governments users and clients. The strategic importance behind this is to emphasize Dubai's reputation as a leader in the knowledge of economy. Dubai E-government works through

the coordination with Dubai governmental organizations.

What are the ways to preserve these achievements?

We believe that the reason behind our development is proper Human resources. IACAD has succeeded in attracting the best and most skilled employees. It worked hard to polish and develop their skills through training programs inside and outside the country. It also ensured providing them with a professional atmosphere that is filled with brotherly coordination to ensure the smoothness at working in the IT department in order to keep up with the achievements. We are on a continuous communication with the people in charge to ensure the development and providence of the E-services in the IT department. We also listen to their concerns and opinions in



order to ensure the smoothness that enables them to perform their works with professionalism and perfection.

Can you explain to us IACAD's important achievements in the field of technology?

IACAD has won the award of best Arabic website in UAE. This award was presented by UAE web awards. It was also ranked as the fourth website among Dubai government websites for 2008. During Ramadan, IACAD has designed a new web especially for the holy month and was visited by 6000 visitors who have benefited from the services of the website such as Ramadan Fatwas, prayer timings, religious advisory, activities and events presented to the audience, such as, the timings of lectures and symposiums. It also holds implements 14 programs for the employees of IACAD, visitors and clients. There was also an increase in the number of visitors of the website. The increase of the uses of the

E-services has increased to %50 compared to 2007. there was also a collaboration between IACAD and the Ministry of higher education and scientific research through using the services of family advisory and fatwas for the students studying abroad.

What is special about the services of IACAD compared to others?

IACAD provides services of a special nature because of the nature of its works in the field of guidance and religious awareness and the accompanying regulatory actions, such as providing fatwas, family advisory, prayer timings, maps of the locations of mosques in the Emirate of Dubai and services related to request permits for religious lessons and lectures, seminars.

IACAD has distinct participations at GITEX in the previous years. What about your participation this year?

there was also a collaboration between IACAD and the Ministry of higher education...

IACAD will participate in GITEX this year during the days of the exhibition that start on October 18. This is going to be IACAD's 8th participation and there is a plan to present new services and develop the old ones in order to have a look on everything that is new and innovative in the exhibition as well as exchange experiences and build bridges of communication with other organizations.



About The Genetics Centre



Briefly, what is the history of the Genetics Centre?

The Genetics Centre as we know it today was born in 1995, as a unique and an individual Genetic entity to serve the purposes of an all-in-one Genetics Laboratory, as it comprises of a Metabolic Genetics laboratory; a Molecular Genetics laboratory; and a Cytogenetics laboratory. It is the first and only such laboratory in the Middle East.

Humans began applying knowledge of genetics in prehistory



What is genetics?

Genetics is the science of genes, heredity, and the variation of organisms. Humans began applying knowledge of genetics in prehistory with the domestication and breeding of plants and animals. In modern research, genetics provides important tools in the investigation of the function of a particular gene, e.g. analysis of genetic interactions. Within organisms, genetic information generally is carried in chromosomes, where it is represented in the chemical structure of particular DNA molecules.

What is DNA?

DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, is the hereditary material in humans and almost all other organisms. Nearly every cell in a person's body has the same DNA. Most DNA is located in the cell nucleus (where it is called nuclear DNA), but a small amount of

DNA can also be found in the mitochondria

The information in DNA is stored as a code made up of four chemical bases: adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C), and thymine (T). Human DNA consists of about 3 billion bases, and more than 99 percent of those bases are the same in all people. The order, or sequence, of these bases determines the information available for building and maintaining an organism, similar to the way in which letters of the alphabet appear in a certain order to form words and sentences.

What is genomics?

is the study of complex sets of genes, how they are expressed in cells (what their level of activity is), and the role they play in biology. Another way to think about it is as a small network of genes and how they work together to influence the tumor's biology and behavior. The Human

Genome Project determined the sequence of chemical base pairs which make up DNA to identify approximately 25,000 genes of the human genome. As the study of genomics advances, the application of genomic information is expected to enhance the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of many different diseases, including cancer.

What is the Human Genome Project?

The Human Genome Project (HGP) was an international scientific research project with a primary aim to sequence all the human genome, and identify and map its 20000-30000 genes.

What is genetic engineering?

The use of various methods to manipulate the DNA (genetic material) of cells to change hereditary traits or produce biological products. The techniques include the use of

hybridomas (hybrids of rapidly multiplying cancer cells and of cells that make a desired antibody) to make monoclonal antibodies; gene splicing or recombinant DNA, in which the DNA of a desired gene is inserted into the DNA of a bacterium, which then reproduces itself, yielding more of the desired gene; and polymerase chain reaction, which makes perfect copies of DNA fragments and is used in DNA fingerprinting.

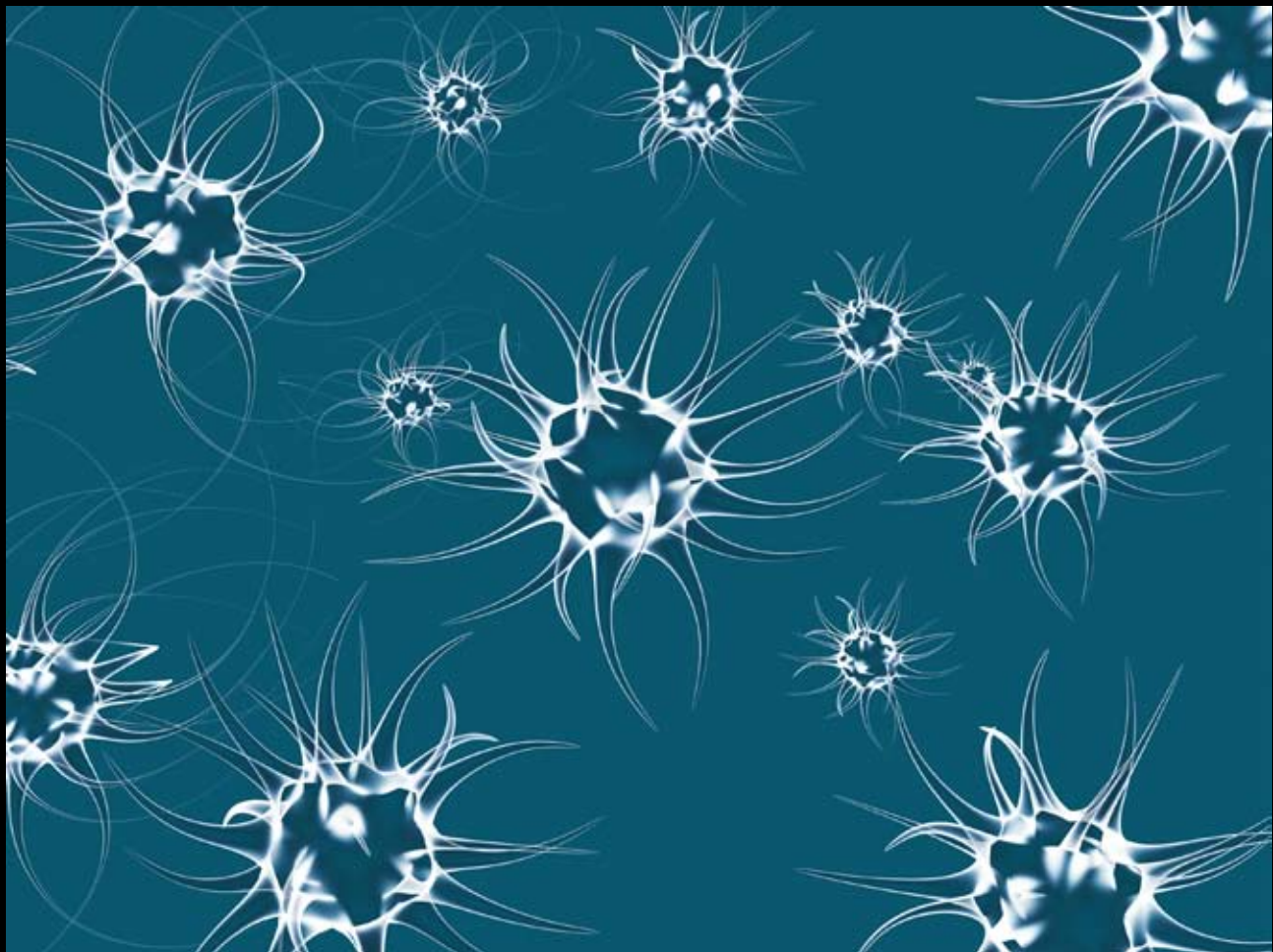
Genetically engineered products include bacteria designed to break down oil slicks and industrial waste products, drugs (human and bovine growth hormones, human insulin,

interferon), and plants that are resistant to diseases, insects, and herbicides, that yield fruits or vegetables with desired qualities, or that produce toxins that act as pesticides. Genetic engineering techniques have also been used in the direct genetic alteration of livestock and laboratory animals.

What is Gene Therapy?

The prime application of Genetic Engineering is towards the therapy of genetic illnesses by the replacement of diseased gene with healthy ones, and that is termed Gene Therapy. Nonetheless, this technology is still in its infancy, though

**Genetic
engineering
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genetic...**





A birth defect can affect almost any part of the body

awaiting a prosperous future.

How are genetic disorders inherited?

A baby inherits its genes from its parents, half from its mother and half from its father. Most genetic diseases are recessive in nature, which means that a faulty copy (allele) of a gene is inherited from both parents for the disease to express itself. Alternatively, if the genetic disease demonstrates dominant inheritance, a single diseased allele from either parent is enough for the disorder to manifest. Other modes of inheritance are complex by means of the genes dictating the potential for the onset of a particular illness, waiting to be triggered by some other external adverse factors (e.g. smoking). Examples of which are cancers.

What is a birth defect?

A birth defect is a problem that happens while the baby

is developing in the mother's body. Most birth defects happen during the first 3 months of pregnancy.

A birth defect may affect how the body looks, works, or both. It can be found before birth, at birth, or anytime after birth. Most defects are found within the first year of life. Some birth defects (such as cleft lip or clubfoot) are easy to see, but others (such as heart defects or hearing loss) are found using special tests (such as x-rays, CAT scans, or hearing tests). Birth defects can vary from mild to severe.

Some birth defects can cause the baby to die. Babies with birth defects may need surgery or other medical treatments, but, if they receive the help they need, these babies often lead full lives.

What are the most common birth defects?

One of every 33 babies is born with a birth defect. A birth defect can affect almost any part of the body. The well being of the child depends mostly on which organ or body part is involved and how much it is affected.

Many birth defects affect the heart. About 1 in every 100 to 200 babies is born with a heart defect. Heart defects make up about one-third to one-fourth of all birth defects. Some of these heart defects can be serious, and a few are very severe. In some places of the world, heart defects cause half of all deaths from birth defects in children less than 1 year of age.

Other common birth defects are

«neural tube defects,» which are defects of the spine (spinal bifida) and brain (anencephaly). They affect about 1 of 1,000 pregnancies. These defects can be serious and are often lives threatening. They happen less often than heart defects, but they cause many fetal and infant deaths.

Birth defects of the lip and roof of the mouth are also common. These birth defects, known as «orofacial clefts,» include cleft lip, cleft palate, and combined cleft lip and cleft palate. Cleft lip is more common than cleft palate. In many places of the world, orofacial clefts affect about 1 in 700 to 1,000 babies.

What is the role of a Genetic Counsellor?

The Genetic Counsellor checks the medical history of the family in question, noting the pattern of inheritance of a particular genetic disease, and the probability of its inheritance amongst the offspring.

What role do you play in the organisation of and/or participation in awareness campaigns and educational activities for the families?

What is CDC doing to help prevent genetic defects?

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (or CDC) is a global agency to protect public health and safety. The CDC focuses its attention on developing and applying disease prevention and control especially infectious diseases, environmental health,

occupational safety and health, health promotion, prevention and education activities designed to improve the health of the people.

What role do you play in the organisation of and/or participation in awareness campaigns and educational activities for the families?

In collaboration with the Thalassemi Center and various 10/06/2009 societies, we provide regular awareness programs, genetic counseling, workshops, seminars and various other educational activities to promote awareness amongst various categories of public in the country

Of the rare genetic conditions globally what percentage of which was diagnosed at the Genetics Centre?

Genetics Center so far has diagnosed over 100 different types of genetic disorders , out of which almost 30% have been reported for the first time in the region. Additionally, in terms of hemoglobinopathies heterogeneity, the Center has the highest numbers of mutations in the world; over 54 types.

Did the Genetics Centre discover any novel mutations?

Yes, and this belongs to the globin gene disorder which was discovered and has been published in an international Journal.

What research is being done at the Genetics Centre?

The Center has taken up several clinical and fundamental researches in various disciplines of genetics including hemoglobinopathies, metabolic disorders, congenital malformations and the findings have been published in different reputed international journals,.

Is the Genetics Centre part of International seminars and conferences?

The Center has been awarded the prestigious award of the best medical institute in the arab world for the Year 2006. It is also recognized as a referral Center for hemoglobinopathies by WHS and has collaboration with various international Centers

Has the Genetics Centre published scientific papers?

Accumulatively, the scientist in the Center have published and presented over 100 scientific and research papers in most reputed journals and international conferences

What would you say are the achievements of the Genetics Centre to date?

1. Prestigious award of Sheikh Hamdan Award for the best Medical Center in 2206
2. Outstanding recognition by WHO as a referral Center
3. Discovery of novel mutations and new cases at the regional level
4. Provision of prenatal diagnosis for various diseases for the first



They should be encouraged to come forward and seek counseling

time in the region

5. Act as a referral Center for diagnosis of genetic diseases for the entire region

What message would you like to convey to the public?

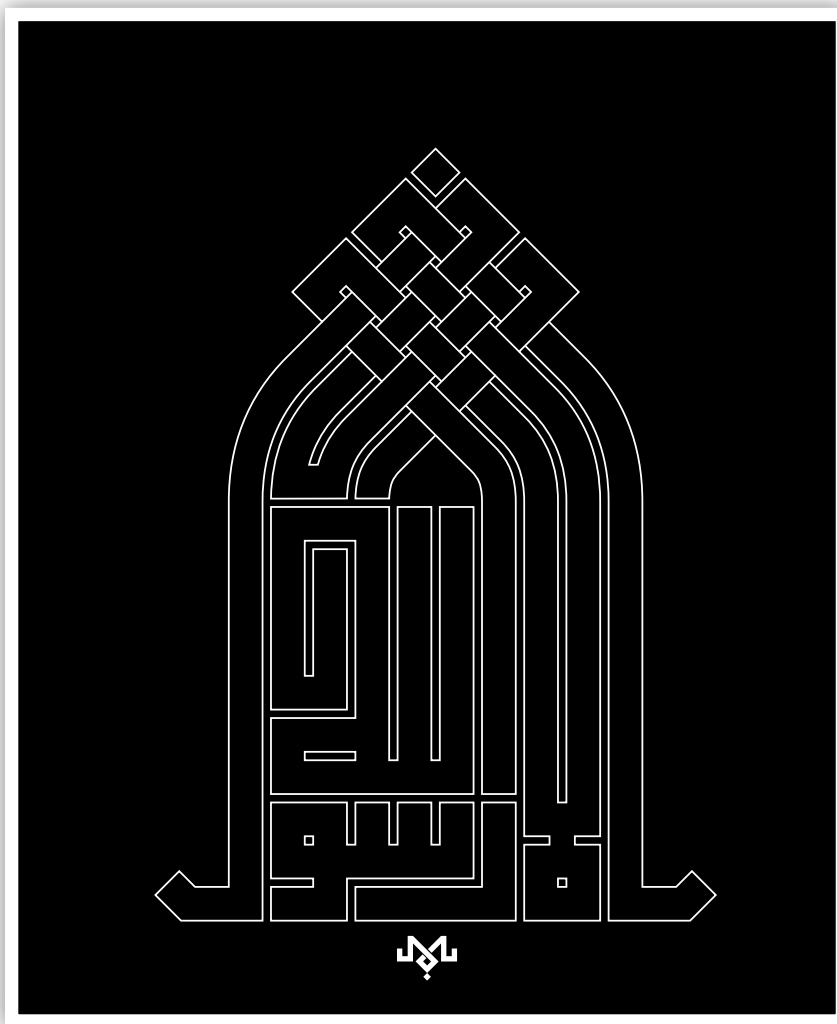
Public should be encouraged through various means of education and collaborative works with concerned authorities to learn more about genetic diseases and their implications in their family planning. They should be encouraged to come forward and seek counseling in cases of consanguineous marriages or history of specific types of genetic diseases

كوفي

SCRIPT

has it all

Calligrapher
Mohamed Redha Belal



✓ In Islamic and Arabic cultures, calligraphy became highly respected as an art the art of writing



While many religions have made use of figural images to convey their core convictions, Islam has instead used the shapes and sizes of words or letters. Because Islamic leaders saw in figural arts a possible implication of idolatry, Islam's early theocracy looked to the artistry of calligraphy for religious expression. In Islamic and Arabic cultures, calligraphy became highly respected as

an art -- the art of writing. In a nutshell, Arabic calligraphy is not merely an art form but involves divine and moral representations from which calligraphy acquires its sublime reputation.

DUBAI caught up with calligrapher Mohamed Redha Helal, a creative artist with a sui generis touch that has enabled his works to feature high at all the global and regional exhibitions he participated in. He has a special penchant for Kufi script, preferring it to all other calligraphic styles.

Describe your first experience with Arabic Calligraphy.

I have been familiar with Arabic calligraphy since my early school years, namely starting from Grade One and more accurately during my first mathematics lessons. I used to virtually draw the Arabic letters rather than just writing them down like my classmates used to do. And nevertheless I started out my career as a painter not as a calligrapher. When I started learning the rudiments of calligraphy, I was doing like outlining the letters, and hence I have been preferring

I deal with this script style as much accurately as I do any thing else in life

the Kufi style more than any other calligraphic styles till now. Needles to say that Kufi script is that kind of calligraphic styles that is rather drawn than written, and thus most of those calligraphers who master this kind of scripts were painters before turning to be calligraphers.

How do you use the Kufi script?

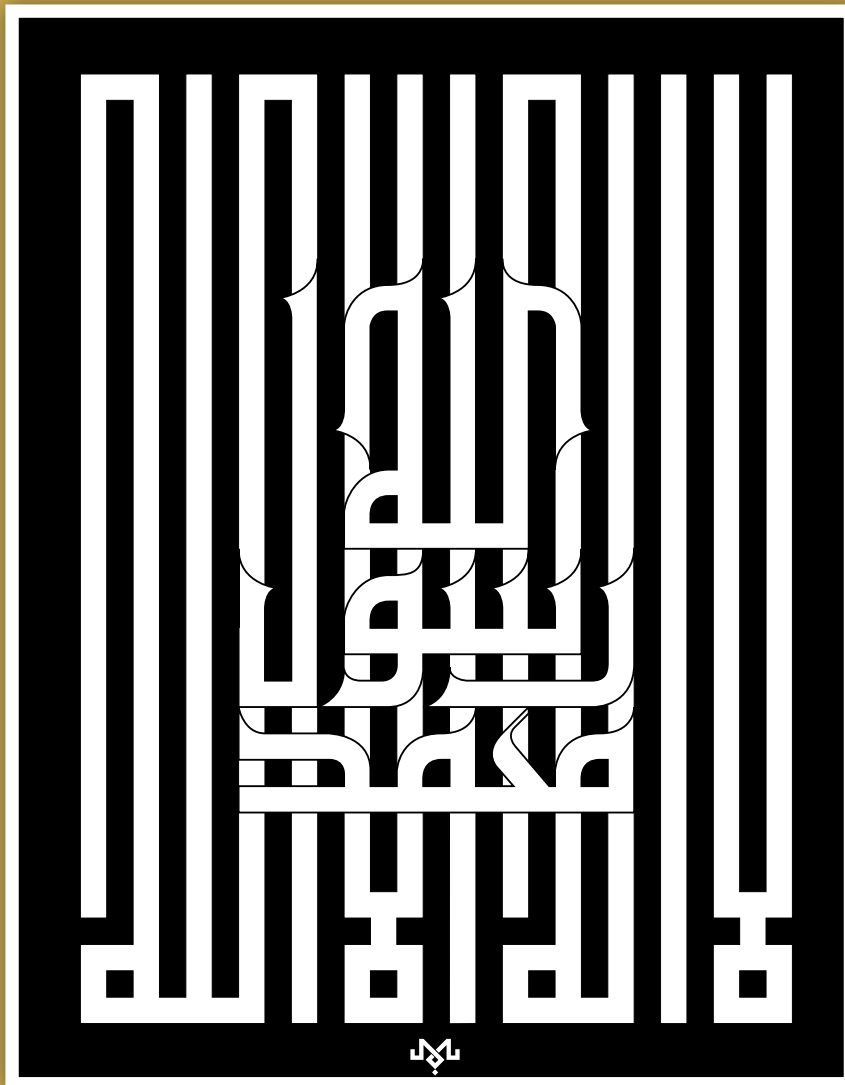
Kufi was the dominant priestly script in early times. It was created after the establishment of the two Muslim cities of Basrah and Kufah in the second

decade of the Islamic era (8th century A.D.). The script has specific proportional measurements, along with pronounced angularity and squareness. It became known as al-Khat al-Kufi (Kufi script).

Kufi script had a profound effect on all Islamic calligraphy. In contrast to its low verticals, Kufi has horizontal lines that are extended. The script is considerably wider than it is high. This gives it a certain dynamic momentum. The script often is chosen for use on oblong surfaces. With its glorious Handasi (geometrical) construction, Kufi could be adapted to any space and material -- from silk squares to the architectural monuments left by Timur at Samarqand.

Because Kufi script was not subjected to strict rules, calligraphers employing it had virtually a free hand in the conception and execution of its ornamental forms.

As for me, I deal with this script style as much accurately as I do any thing else in life. My paintings usually start with scrambled lines on a white paper at my desk, at home or any place else. Usually while moving aimlessly with my brush pen (qalam), I get the idea. I then set out to draw so patiently and repeat my drawing for second, third and even tenth times until I get a satisfactory outcome. I then move the final form onto a transparent paper, using accurate geometrical tools before hanging the painting onto a prominent place at home for some days during which I try to spot the weakness points therein. Having located



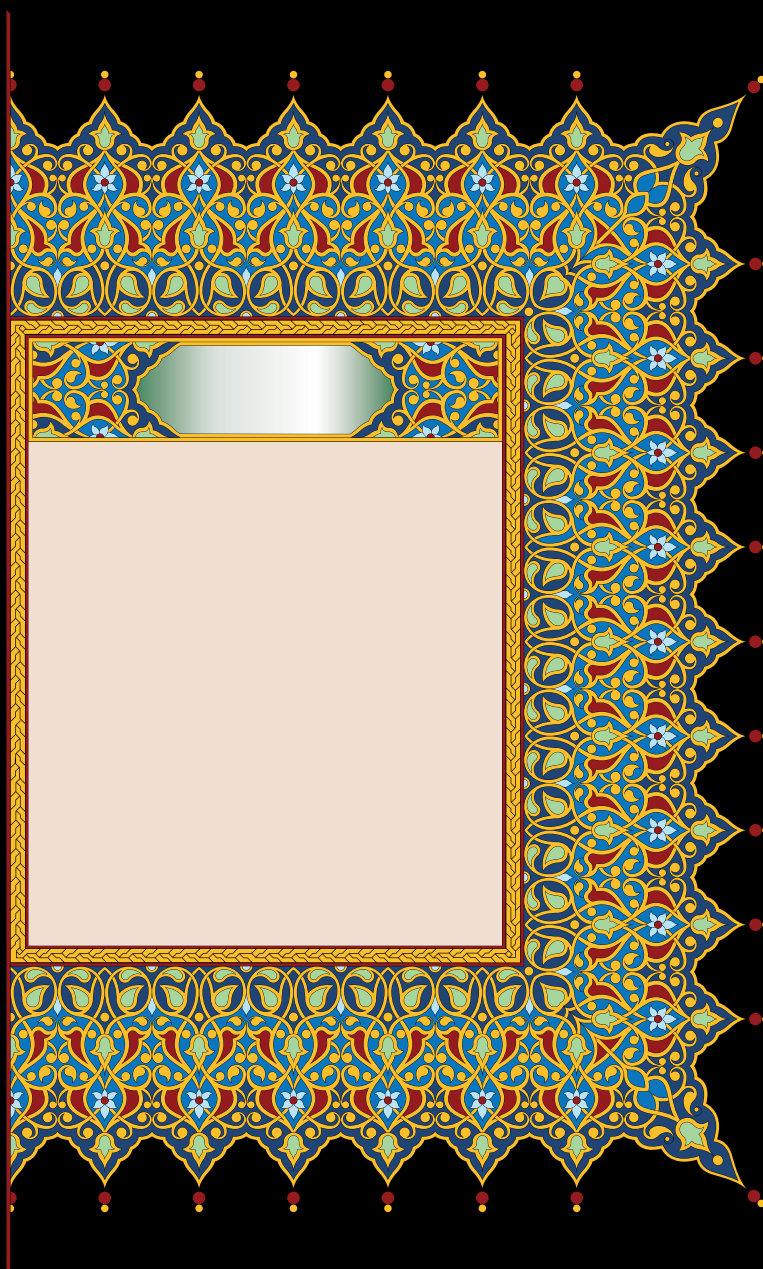
the foibles, if any, I try to modify them until I verify it's in the best possible form. Then comes the final stage which is inking and colouring. It happens many a time that after being over with a painting, I tear it apart if I felt the final output is not satisfactory at least for me or if it carries no significance in people's eyes. Producing a beautiful painting is not enough, as what most matters is making up a painting that evokes contemplation on the part of the viewers.

Would you shed some light on the stages you have been through until you have mastered this type of art?

Like any other calligraphers, the first stage was the love of this art and getting acquainted with its schools and leading figures and their masterpieces. Having assimilated this, I get into the stage of tasting the good works and sorting them out, i.e. a stage of critical analysis on the personal level. Then comes a stage where I try to copy and emulate famous calligraphers. When I was just a painter, I was preferring the Kufi style, neglecting all other scripts. I was totally focusing on Al Khat Al Kufi, perhaps because there were no prominent figures specializing on this kind of art on the local and international arenas. In addition, Kufi script has limitless potential and it's closely linked to Islamic Ornament, and both of them are closely connected to the art of drawing. Then comes the phase of producing a simple classic Kufi painting. Finally, and more precisely during the past 10 years, came the stage where I've found myself completely aligned toward Kufi geometrical

compositions that depend on the concept of circular geometrical calligraphic integration which was initiated last century by Turkish artist Amin Paireen. To tell the truth, I've adopted this concept without knowing that it had already been adopted by another artist. But during my readings, I discovered that the technique, although was not completely the same, was adopted by another calligrapher before me.

Kufi script has limitless potential and it's closely linked to Islamic Ornament



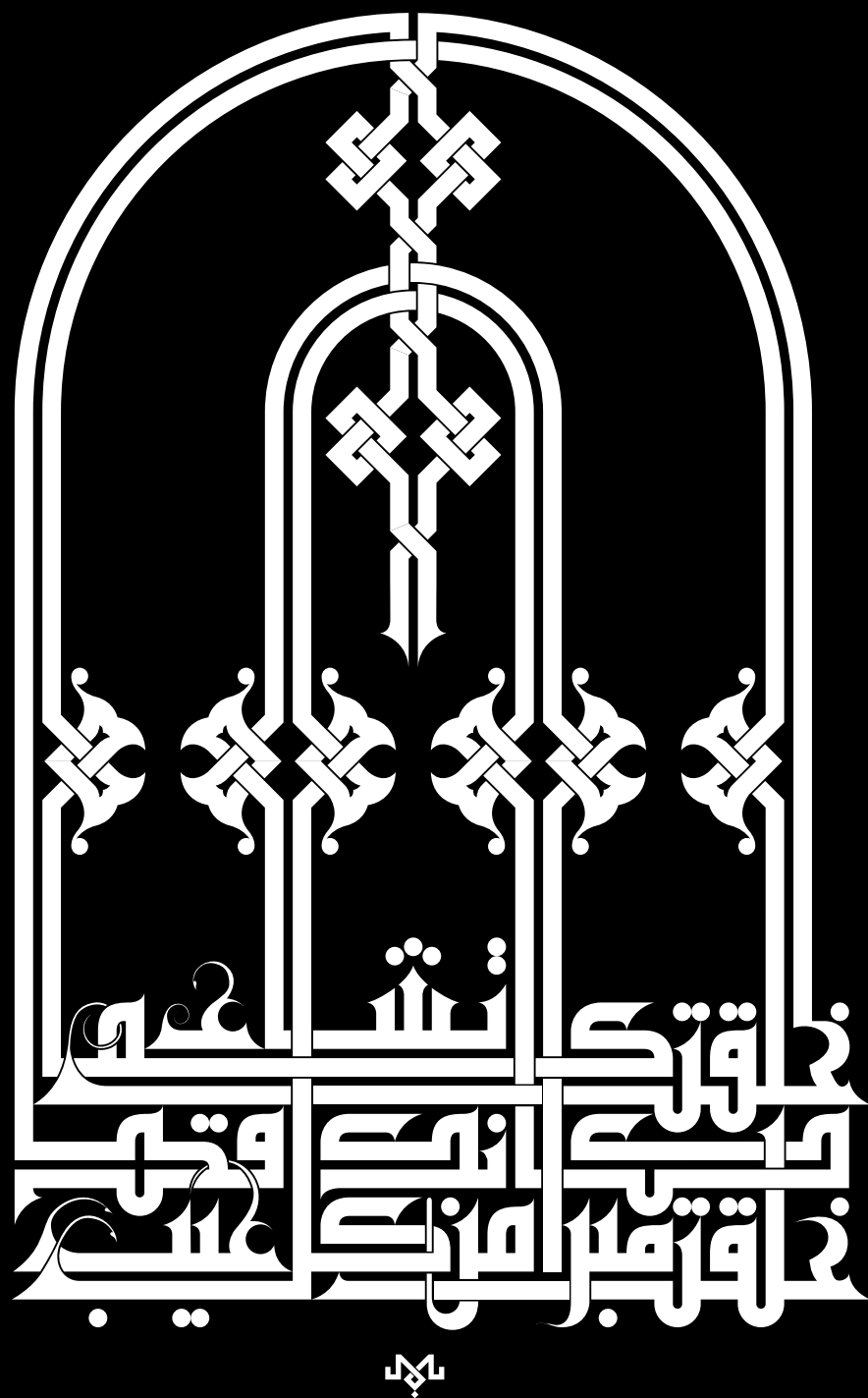



I know very well my target

How can you rate yourself among other calligraphers?

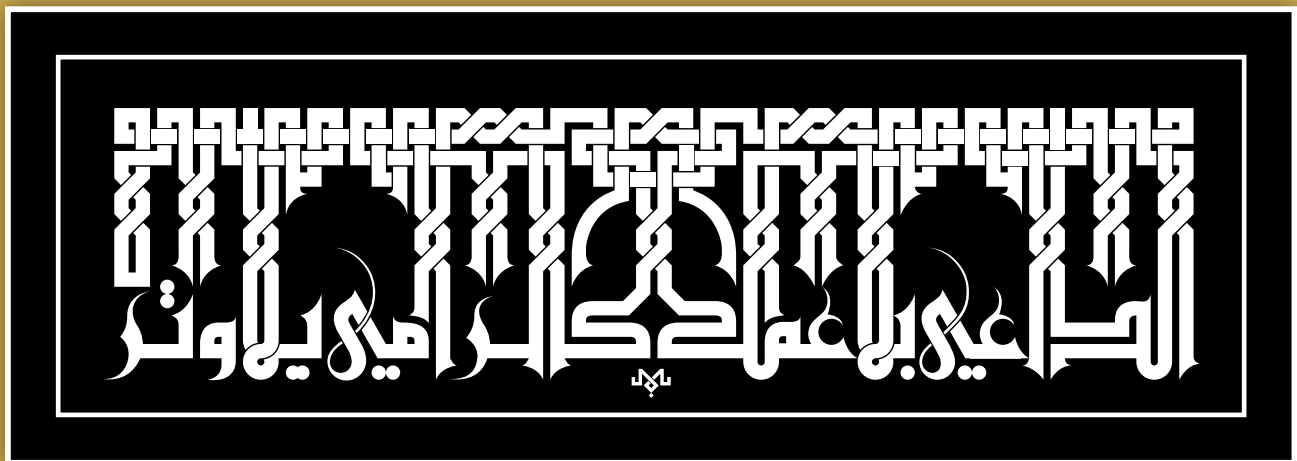
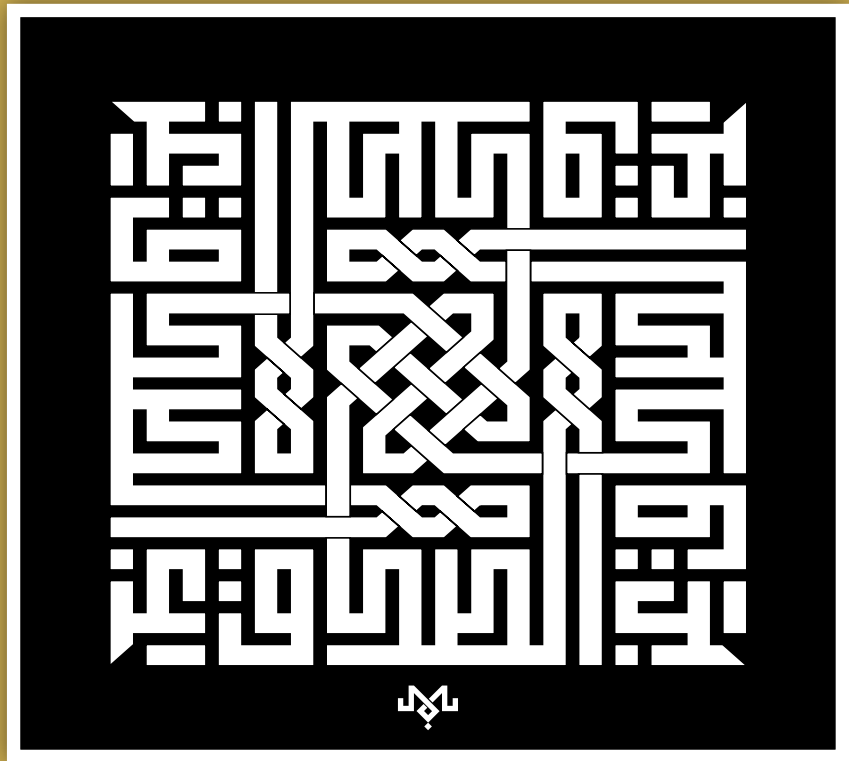
I am a calligrapher dealing with only one style of calligraphy which is the Kufi script. I have managed to go long way in this kind of art and I know very well my target. I don't care about people's positive or negative

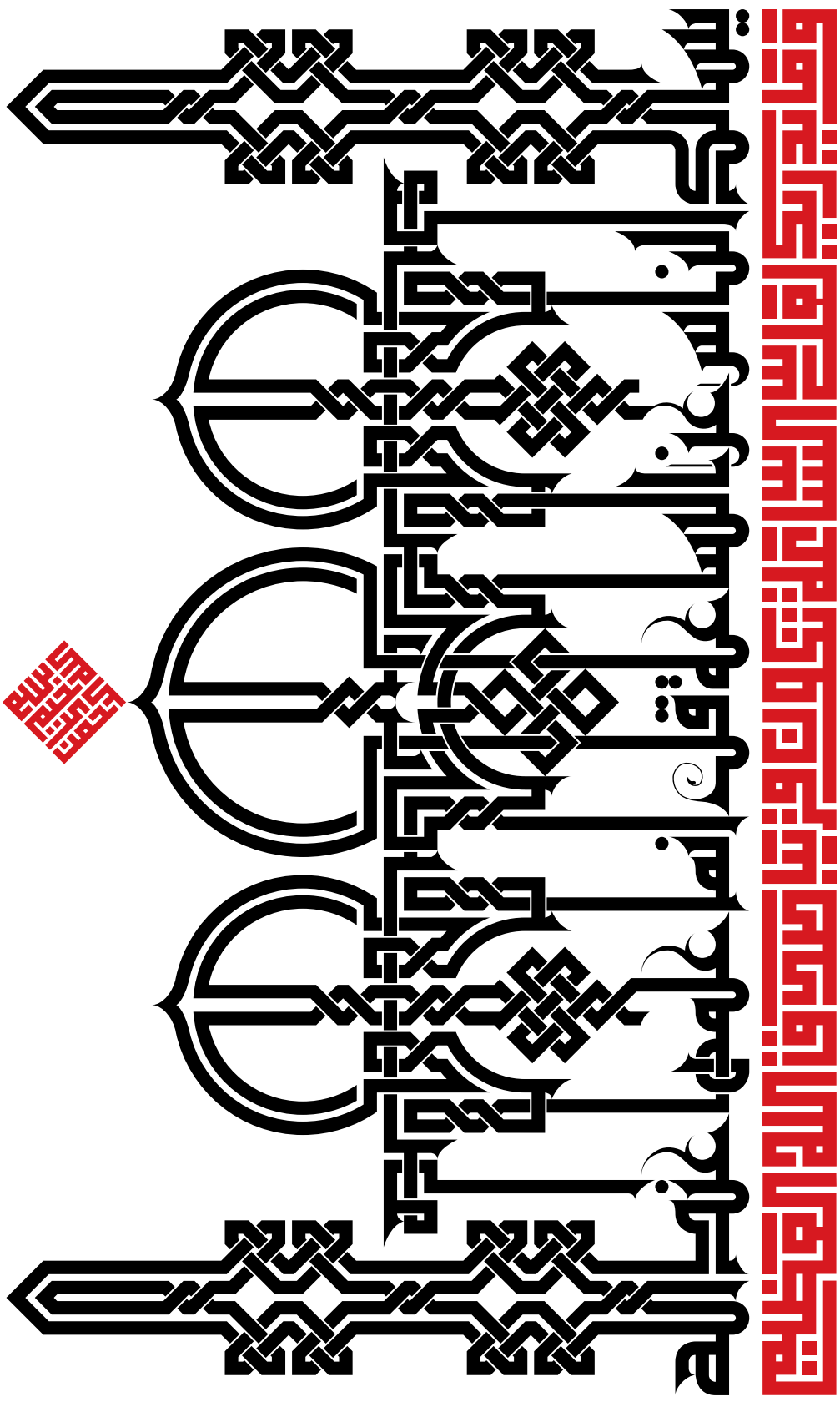
remarks about me. I am also not interested in getting famous; I have been in this domain for 30 years now and but for being here in this generous country, UAE, and but for the great support I am receiving Mr. Mohamed Al Murr, I would have been relegated into oblivion long ago. This is despite the fact that I participated in




**I would
have been
relegated into
oblivion long
ago**

most of the calligraphy activities and exhibitions held regionally and internationally and got many awards and certificates of merit, the most important of which was the Award of the Calligraphy International Competition organized by the Research Centre for Islamic History and Art in Istanbul on Kufi script.





Rain of Design



By: Harun Yahya - he is world renowned writer & author of scientific miracle - www.harunyahya.com

Rain is indeed one of the most important factors for the permanence of life on earth. It is a prerequisite for the continuation of activity in a region. Rain, which carries great importance for all living things, including human beings, is mentioned in various verses of the Qur'an, where substantial information is given about the formation of rain, its proportion and effects. This information, which never could have been known by the people of the time, shows us that the Qur'an is the word of God.

Now, let us examine the information given in the Qur'an about rain.

The Proportion of Rain

In the eleventh verse of Surat az-Zukhruf, rain is defined as water sent down in «due measure». The verse is as follows:

{He sends down (from time to time) water from the sky in due measure, and We raise to life therewith a land that is dead. Even so will you be raised (from the dead)} (43: 11)

This «measure» mentioned in the verse has to do with a couple of characteristics of rain. First of all, the amount of rain that falls on the earth is always the same. It is estimated that in one second, 16 million tons of water evaporate from the earth. This number is equal to the amount of water that drops on the earth in one second. This means that

water continuously circulates in a balanced cycle according to a «measure».

Another measure related with rain is about its falling speed. The minimum altitude of rain clouds is 1,200 meters. When dropped from this height, an object having the same weight and size as a rain drop, would continuously accelerate and fall on the ground with a speed of 558 km/h. Certainly, any object that hits the ground with that speed would cause great damage. If rain happened to fall in the same way, all harvested lands would be destroyed, residential areas, houses, and cars would be damaged, and people would not be able to walk around without taking extra precautions. What is more, these calculations are made just for clouds at a height of 1,200 meters; there are also rain clouds at altitudes of 10,000 meters. A raindrop falling from such a height could normally reach a very destructive speed.

But this is not how it works; no matter from what height they fall, the average speed of raindrops is only 8-10 km/h when they reach the ground. The reason for this is the special form they take. This special form increases the friction effect of the atmosphere and prevents acceleration when the raindrops reach a certain speed «limit». (Today parachutes are designed by using this technique.)

This is not all about the



The formation of rain takes place in three stages

was invented, was it possible to discover the stages by which rain is formed.

The formation of rain takes place in three stages. First, the «raw material» of rain rises up into the air. Later clouds are formed. Finally, raindrops appear.

These stages were clearly defined in the Qur'an centuries ago where precise information is given about the formation of rain:

{It is God Who sends the Winds, and they raise the Clouds: then does He spread them in the sky as He wills, and break them into fragments, until you see rain-drops issue from the midst

thereof: then when He has made them reach such of his servants as He wills, behold, they do rejoice!} (30: 48)

Now, let us look at the three stages mentioned in the verse:

1st Stage: {It is God Who sends the winds...}

Countless air bubbles formed by the foaming in the oceans continuously burst and cause water particles to be ejected towards the sky. These particles, which are rich in salt, are then carried away by winds and move upwards in the atmosphere. These particles, which are called aerosols, form clouds by collecting around themselves the water vapor, which again ascends from the seas, as tiny drops by a mechanism called «water trap».

2nd Stage: {...and they raise the Clouds: then does He spread them in the sky as He wills, and break them into fragments...}

The clouds form from the water vapor that condenses around the salt crystals or the dust particles in the air. Because the water drops in these are very small (with a diameter between 0.01 and 0.02 mm), the clouds are suspended in the air and they spread in the sky. Thus, the sky is covered with clouds.

3rd Stage: {...until you see rain-drops issue from the midst thereof}

Water particles that surround salt crystals and dust particles thicken and form raindrops. So the drops, which become heavier than air, depart from the clouds and start

to fall on the ground as rain.

Every stage in the formation of rain is told in the verses of the Qur'an. Furthermore, these stages are explained in the right sequence. Just as with many other natural phenomena in the world, it is again the Qur'an that provides the most correct explanation about this phenomenon, and more, it has announced these facts to people centuries before they were discovered by science.

Life Given to a Dead Land

In the Qur'an, many verses call our attention to a particular

function of rain, which is {giving life to a dead land}:

{We send down pure water from the sky. That with it We may give life to a dead land, and slake the thirst of many beings We have created, beasts as well as humans} (25: 48- 49)

In addition to furnishing the earth with water, which is an inevitable need of living beings, rain also has a fertilization effect.

Raindrops that reach the clouds after being evaporated from the seas, contain certain substances {that will give life} to a dead land. These «life-giving» drops are called «surface tension drops».

**Qur'an that
provides the
most correct
explanation
about this
phenomenon**





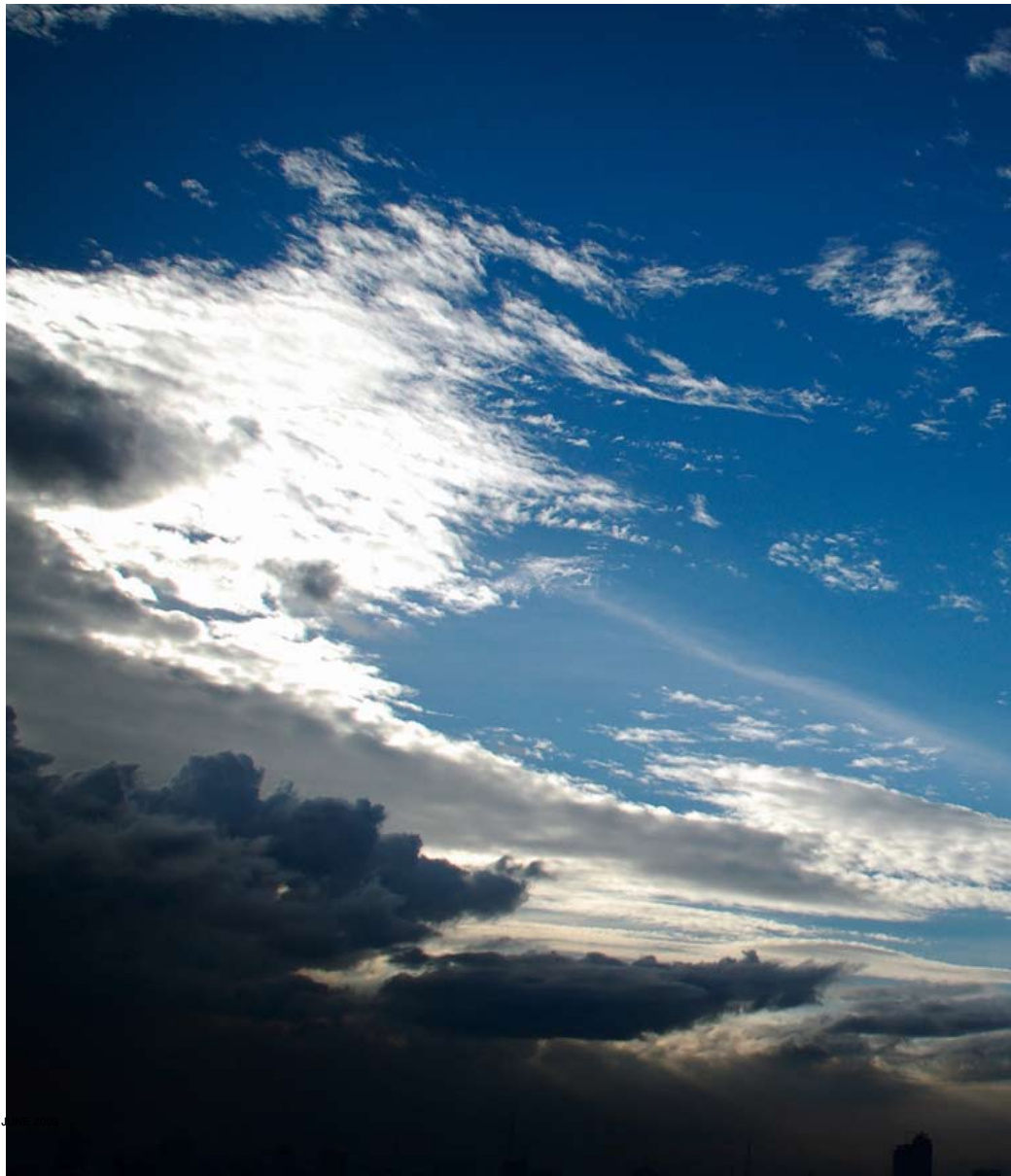
drops are lifted up into the sky by the winds and after awhile they drop on the ground inside the raindrops. Seeds and plants on the earth find numerous metallic salts and elements essential for their growth here in these raindrops. This event is revealed in another verse of the Qur'an:

{And We send down from the sky rain laden with blessing, and We produce therewith gardens and grain for harvests} (50: 9)

Salts that fall with rain are small examples of certain elements (calcium, magnesium, potassium, etc.) used for increasing fertility. The heavy

Some of these leftovers select and collect within themselves...

Surface tension drops form on the top level of the sea surface, which is called the «micro layer» by biologists. In this layer, which is thinner than one tenth of a millimeter, there are many organic leftovers caused by the pollution of microscopic algae and zooplankton. Some of these leftovers select and collect within themselves some elements that are very rare in seawater, such as phosphorus, magnesium, potassium and some heavy metals like copper, zinc, cobalt and lead. These «fertilizer»-laden



metals found in these types of aerosols are other elements that increase fertility in the development and production of plants.

A barren land can be furnished with all the essential elements for plants in a 100-year period just with these fertilizers dropped with the rain. Forests also develop and are fed with the help of these sea-based aerosols. In this way, 150 million tons of fertilizer falls on the total land surface every year. If there were no natural fertilization like this, there would be very little vegetation on the earth, and the ecological

balance would be impaired.

What is more interesting is that this truth, which could only be discovered by modern science, was revealed by God in the Qur'an centuries ago.

Harun Yahya is the author, who writes under the pen name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Harun Yahya is well known as an author



who has written very important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, the invalidity of their claims and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and bloody ideologies. Some of the books of the author have been translated into English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Albanian, Arabic, Polish, Russian, Bosnian, Indonesian, Turkish, Tatar, Urdu and Malay and published in the countries concerned. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race and nationality, as they center around one goal: to open the readers' mind by presenting the sign's of God's eternal existence to them.



What ^{your} child ^{from} Wants you ?



Parents always think about what they want from their children and these conversations always take place between them and their friends and relatives. On the other hand, none of them asked what their children want from them. This question might sound odd and forgotten, but it is a very important question. It leads us to form positive relationships with our children, which defines our relationship with them in the future.

There are things our children want from us. They are as following:

To respect their ideas, opinions, sayings, discussions and do not underestimate them no matter how insignificant they seem.

To keep their secrets and make

them feel that the conversations between us are private, especially if they consider the issues confidential and never spread the word between friends and relatives. This way, they will always turn to us.

Never get bored from listening to their problems and daily issues.

To always understand that they are humans and humans always make mistakes. No matter how big or small their mistakes are, we must understand that they are endless.

To always be good listeners and be there for them during hard times.

We must help them feel that we understand their feelings, emotions and opinions.

We must be the first people they turn to during their problems. Allow them to sense our ability to help them and stand by their side.

Always be honest and keep our promises.

Make them feel important.

We must always make them feel that they are our priority regardless of the concerns in life.

Fun and joking **must be** part of our relationship with them.

We must not keep reminding them of our favors over and over again so it doesn't become a broken record.

Accept them for who they are and never make fun of their looks or complexion or disabilities.

Make them feel our love for them.

Mention their skills and gifts and teach them to be the best they could.

Parents **should never** fight in front of their children and never ask them to judge.

We must be leaders and properly teach, train and guide our children. Children do not like being left doing everything they like. They like feeling that we are the adults and we guide them to do the right thing.

We must make them feel protected.

Use decent words with them and others. Avoid insulting words.

Accept them for who they are and try to change their bad qualities without them noticing. Never keep repeating their bad qualities out of anger.

Accept their mental abilities and try to develop them according to their abilities and energy. Never ask them to do things they cannot do.

Never compare them to their friends and relatives.

Never insult them or abuse them.

Talk to them in an acceptable way.

Teach them how to do things and never do them instead.

To be compatible in our words and our actions.

Know the technological developments and the knowledge revolution.

Be convinced of their skills and abilities.

Share their concerns and ask about their hobbies.


Form good relationships with their friends.

Share their pain and happiness.

Let's give ourselves a chance to reflect on the question we first asked What your child wants from you. We must research the things that might bring us closer to our children. Just give ourselves chance experimentation. Our children deserve a try.



1 000 Years of Islam in Britain



Many of us hold the perception that the Muslim communities of Britain were the result of post-war mass migration, and to some extent this is true. But among the talks during the Islam Awareness Week—an annual week of activities aimed at encouraging knowledge and understanding of Islam across the United Kingdom by engaging local communities—was «1000 years of Islam in Britain» by Mohammad Siddique Seddon of the Islamic Foundation.

Imagine that, a thousand years of Islam in Britain! Well, while this statement needs to be nuanced, it is, however, clear that there has been an Islamic influence in this country for more than a millennium, a heritage that belongs not only to myself as a second generation British Pakistani Muslim, but also to the «native» English who can trace their genealogy on the island back for generations.

The first hint of Islamic influence that the speaker referred to was that felt under the leadership of King Offa of Mercia, a wealthy Anglo-Saxon king who ruled until the end of the 8th century CE. He is perhaps more famously known for commissioning Offa's dyke, a massive wall built to separate England from Wales, compared by many to the building of the pyramids in terms of the resources employed.

King Offa commissioned a gold coin using the Islamic gold standard. On the one side it reads «There is no deity but God, without partners.» On the other, one way up it reads «Offa Rex» (King Offa). When rotated 180 degrees, it reads «Muhammad

is the Messenger of God.» There are a number of theories about the coins: the need to align with one of the two Muslim authorities of his time and to facilitate business with Muslim traders. However, the one that I am partial to is the need to pay the Pope his dues—a process perhaps best illustrated in the Robin Hood movies. Having accepted the need to pay tribute, King Offa did so willingly but with tongue in cheek by marking the coins with the testimony of the belief in one God, quite contrary to the Trinitarian belief of Christianity of which the Pope was the supreme authority. Then again, perhaps he even accepted Islam. Whatever the hypothesis, what cannot be denied is the minting of a coin bearing the mark of one of the most powerful English kings and the Muslim testimony of faith.

At the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries, we find another anomaly: the Ballycotton Cross. Found on the south coast of Ireland, it is a brooch in the shape of a symmetrical cross at the center of which sits a glass bead that reads «In the name of Allah.» It is assumed to be a decorative Celtic brooch that leaves many questions unanswered: Who made it? To whom did it belong? How did it get there? What influence was the owner under to have worn something which conflicted so staunchly with the ideology of Christian belief?

Two centuries later, the younger brother of the famed Richard the Lion Heart, King John, is reported to have undertaken an unusual diplomatic move. After having quarreled with the Pope, he was excommunicated. Further

King Offa commissioned a gold coin using the Islamic gold standard

struggles with the land barons led him to send an emissary to the Muslim ruler of Spain, Muhammad An-Nasr, in which he offered to accept Islam. King John was willing to submit himself and his kingdom to the rule of Islam under one condition: that An-Nasr would send an army of Muslim soldiers to help him in his battles against the land barons. After much deliberation An-Nasr declined, but imagine how different life would have been had he accepted King John's offer.

During this same period, the late 12th century, a famous monk and Knight Templar, Robert of St. Albans, traveled to Jerusalem with the Crusaders. Intending to recapture the city from the Muslim «savages,» what he found instead was the honorable values and rich heritage of Islamic civilization. This appeal not only led him to accept Islam but to marry the granddaughter of the

In terms of social dynamics, the 17th century saw intensified trade with the East...

famous Salah Ad-Din Al-Ayyubi (Saladin).

A few centuries later we find John Ward, a famous pirate, who lived in the late 16th century. This is a period when the Islamic civilization was at the height of its abundance of knowledge and wealth, with cities such as Baghdad and Damascus conjuring up the same grand associations as London, New York, and Paris do today. Algiers was no exception. An account reads how a British ambassador

to Algeria, William Lithgow, visited the British convert to Islam John Ward and was shocked to see that the apostate had a higher standard of living than he himself! Records also show that there were about 15,000 converts who were living in Algiers at the time.

In the 17th century we find Dr. Henry Stubbe, a theologian who mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and who authored a text entitled *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mohametism and a Vindication of His Religion From the Calumnies of the Christians*. Imprisoned for heresy, Dr. Stubbe attempted to publish his book three times, but failed. The text, which was eventually published in the 19th century, intended to expose that the core teachings of Islam were not dissimilar to the post-reformation Unitarian Christian beliefs.

In the same period we also read of Joseph Pitts, a sailor from Exeter captured by Algerian pirates who was taken to Algiers and sold as a slave. His slave master was kind enough to teach him Islam. Having been convinced of its truth, Pitts

accepted Islam and was set free. His former slave master furthermore paid for him to go on pilgrimage to Makkah. Pitts documented his experience in a book entitled *A Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of Mohametism*, which is the first recorded Hajj carried out by an Englishman.

In terms of social dynamics, the 17th century saw intensified trade with the East and the introduction of coffee by Muslim traders, which fueled the Starbucks of that century with more than 350 coffee houses in London alone by 1650 CE. These coffee houses created a sober environment, a center for business dealings, contrasting the public houses attended in the evenings where people would go for entertainment.

Between the 19th and 20th centuries we come across the story of Abdullah William Henry Quilliam, reportedly the first Englishman to reach the town of Wazan, located in the Sahara Desert. He accepted Islam when traveling in Morocco in 1889 and later studied Islam at the



University of Fez. He was famed for establishing a mosque, a publishing house, a library, a debating society, a school, and even an orphanage in Liverpool named the Medina Children's Home.

We also find, at the beginning of the 20th century, the story of Robert Rashid Stanley who, born in Cardiff to wealthy tea traders, was engaged in Turkish-British trade relations. Twice the mayor of Staylbridge, he was profiled in *The Crescent*-a weekly record of Islam in England that can be found at the British Library-in April 1907. Robert's great-great grandson is also a Muslim.

Finally, there is Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, who was educated at Harrow-one of England's leading private schools-and traveled the world extensively. He accepted Islam in 1917, studied Arabic, and became the imam at the first purpose-built mosque in England, based in Woking, approximately 30 minutes by car from central London. He is perhaps more famously known for having produced an English translation

of the Quran, entitled *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran*, in 1928.

While the accounts above are by no means comprehensive, they do shed light on a heritage that many of us living in the United Kingdom are oblivious of. Perhaps with time, and a greater deal of research, we can learn more about the interaction between the Muslim world and Britain. One thing is certain: I attended the talk hoping to find some answers to the questions raised by the program, only to leave the lecture hall with even more questions that I hope to answer one day.

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Perhaps with time, and a greater deal of research, we can learn more about the interaction between the Muslim world and Britain



International Museum of Muslim Cultures

Okolo Rashid: The Woman Behind the Museum

By: Taha Ghayyur - Writer specialize in cultural arts in mississippi university



Okolo Rashid, who has helped launch the International Museum of Muslim Cultures (IMMC) in Jackson, Mississippi, US, was recently featured in *The Face Behind the Veil: The Extraordinary Lives of Muslim Women in America*, written by Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Donna Gehrke-White.

A master of public policy and administration by education, Rashid spent more than 20 years in inner-city community development, organization, and historic preservation prior to establishing the museum.

A revert to Islam for 30 years, she has been a vocal and articulate advocate of social justice, multiculturalism, and anti-racism all her life. As I interviewed her, I was taken aback by her dynamism and positive energy.

The Idea

Taha Ghayyur: Why did you choose to establish this museum?

Okolo Rashid: The idea started back in November 2000. I was watching TV one morning and came across a promo of «The Majesty of Spain» exhibit, which was the third in a series of biannual international exhibits hosted by Jackson's Mississippi Arts Pavilion. It was expected to attract half a million visitors.

I was thrilled and began to look for components in the exhibit that would highlight the Muslim or Moorish Era in Spain. Interestingly, the exhibit only focused on history of Spain 1700 CE onward, skipping the whole story of Muslim contribution to Spain



and European Renaissance. This inspired me to feature an exhibit on Islam's presence and contribution in Spain.

Ghayyur: With whom did you discuss the idea of the museum?

Rashid: The first person I discussed this idea with was Emad Al-Turk, who was at that time the Chairman of the Economic Development Team and a board member of our local mosque, Masjid Muhammad. He immediately got excited and started working on the plan.

Even though the majority of the mosque's board agreed to support and fund this groundbreaking project, they thought it was a «good idea» that would take a while to transform into something concrete. The mosque's community support was significant to bringing the project to its fruition: It contributed two thirds of the initial funding required.

From Dream to Action

Ghayyur: How did you accomplish such a daunting project in such a short period of time?

Rashid: Yes, time was the biggest challenge initially. «The Majesty of Spain» was set to open March

I was thrilled and began to look for components in the exhibit that would highlight the Muslim


2001. We wanted to run our exhibit concurrently with theirs. We opened a month later, on April 15. We thought it was important to use this as an opportunity to introduce the local residents and international visitors to the city of Jackson, Mississippi, US, to Muslim Spain. We had five months only to do everything!

However, just at the time we went through a major strategic planning session and had restructured our board at the local mosque, Jackson's first. What started off as an all-black institution, Masjid Muhammad now includes people of various ethnic backgrounds on its board.

Had it not been for the contribution and work of this diverse group, including new immigrant and indigenous Muslims in Jackson, we would not have forged ahead.

It is this dynamic relationship and right mix of expertise that everyone brought full-heartedly to the building of this museum




**a project
that would
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We call it
a Miracle
Project**

that did wonders. This is how, with Allah's blessing and help, we were able to establish this museum in five months, a project that would normally take two years to complete. We call it a Miracle Project.

Ghayyur: How has this museum contributed to enlightening the masses about the Muslim faith, history, and culture?

Rashid: First, the most important impact this museum as a venue had is its user-friendliness. The fact that it is not as «preachy» as a mosque makes the museum setting less intimidating.

People find a museum more

educational and entertaining. There is no fear of «indoctrination.» This makes a museum one of the most powerful tools to deliver your messages to the masses. You won't get thousands of non-Muslims in a mosque. This is why Muslims need to realize the importance of this museum.

Second, we have reached out to multitudes of people through the public educational system and universities. We have conducted workshops and training programs for teachers. Moreover, we are developing curriculum modules, based on our exhibits, to incorporate in public schools' history curriculums.

Obstacles

Ghayyur: Being a female and the cofounder and executive director of the first Muslim museum in America, what types of reactions did you receive from the community? Was it supportive?

Rashid: In the mainstream community, there were two types of reactions: First, I received more respect and encouragement; second, people were, and still are, surprised to see a vocal female Muslim pioneering such a project, because of our image in the West.

In the Muslim community, the reaction was quite interesting. I quickly discovered that if you go along with the stereotypes associated with women and their role in the traditional Muslim community, you will be ignored. But if you are assertive, coming from a background of civil rights, black nationalistic movement, and Islamic activism as I am, Muslim men are more receptive. I realized that Muslim women have to do things differently and should be confident.

Ghayyur: What kinds of challenges did you face in the Muslim community?

Rashid: Funding is an ongoing challenge. Muslims are ever-ready to write a check for a mosque or a school, but to get them to donate to a museum is difficult. Being a female in a leadership position is, of course, another issue. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to make Muslims see the museum as a tool of outreach

(da`wah) and education. Like other minorities in this country, Muslims do not consider a museum an immediate priority.

The Legacy of Timbuktu

Ghayyur: How do you get Muslims excited and galvanize them to visit the museum?

Rashid: Starting from November 2006, IMMC will launch an exhibit titled «The Legacy of Timbuktu: Wonders of the Written Word,» which will reveal to the public that a sophisticated, literate culture flourished in the City of Timbuktu, Mali, of West Africa, beginning in the 14th century.

Ghayyur: What motivated you to do an exhibit on Timbuktu?

Rashid: What got us started came from a larger vision for an exhibit on Africa and its contribution to America through the transatlantic slave trade. When we began talking about it to the sponsors, they advised that this subject was

too broad to cover in one exhibit.

Just around that time, we heard about the rediscovery of ancient manuscripts in Timbuktu, Mali. Coincidentally soon after, the Timbuktu Education Foundation contacted us about a trip they were organizing to Mali. My husband, Sababu Rashid, and I got excited and visited the place in January 2004.

It was indeed a moving and deeply spiritual trip for us. We visited the three famous ancient mosques: Sankore Masjid, Djinguereber Masjid (built by Mansa Musa and the largest mosque in Timbuktu,) and Sidi Yahya Masjid.

The highlight was our trip to the Ahmed Baba Centre, where we had the opportunity to see the recently rediscovered manuscripts. It certainly was like a revelation, as described by a historian. We had the honor of meeting Abdel Kader Haidara, the owner of some 9,000 manuscripts. Now he is also our partner in the Timbuktu Exhibit.





The visitors to the Timbuktu Exhibit will realize that Timbuktu...

It is amazing to see these manuscripts so beautifully bound in leather with calligraphy and illustrations painted on them. About one million manuscripts were hidden in Mali for over 500 years. It is Allah's will that they

survived, partly due to the arid environment.

Ghayyur: What opportunities does this discovery of manuscripts present for global educational reform?

Rashid: This is an excellent question. It is an amazing opportunity to tell the religious, political, social, and economic history of Africa to the world. Prior to the rediscovery of manuscripts, people thought Africa had no literacy and that it had a simple oral tradition. As a team of 25 scholars and historians study the newly uncovered global legacy of literacy in Africa, they believe it is enough evidence to rewrite the history of Africa. This discovery will allow us to look at the Muslim accomplishments in African history.

Take the concept of «global peace» as an example. In the manuscripts, there is a large body of knowledge developed around conflict resolution and mediation. This study will impact our global discourse on peace and justice. Through the writings of «scholars of peace» five centuries ago, we can learn from and adopt their unique model for local and global peace-keeping.

The Exhibit and African Culture

Ghayyur: What stereotypes against the enslaved Africans and their cultures does this exhibit dispel?

Rashid:

1. It will definitely illuminate that many Africans brought to America were very

accomplished and educated individuals. They were not brought to be «civilized.»

2. It will show that Muslim Africans were the first cultural group to bring a revealed religion to America.
3. The visitors to the Timbuktu Exhibit will realize that Timbuktu was not just another place of learning. It was the place for education at the time. The fact that the book trade was the most profitable business in Timbuktu shows how much the residents of this city valued literacy and scholarship.
4. Africans in Timbuktu were at the forefront of global Islamic knowledge industry at the time. They developed generations of local scholars who wrote books about nearly everything. These books were then bound and exported. It was a great socioeconomic model of the publication industry.

Ghayyur: What is the response to this groundbreaking exhibit from the African-American community, especially those who are descendants of enslaved Africans?

Rashid: The exhibit's impact is so, so phenomenal. We have two major higher education institutions from Mississippi on board as sponsors. One of them is Tougaloo College (one of the high-ranking colleges in America.) It is known as the cradle of the civil rights movement in Mississippi. We also have Jackson State University as an official sponsor. These partnerships speak

to the educational value of the manuscripts.

Moreover, this exhibit may serve as a «missing link» between mainstream African-Americans and Islam. It will allow African-Americans to look at Islam and Muslims not as strangers anymore. This is the link that has been missing from our black and African studies in universities all this time.

Ghayyur: The fact that the forefathers of African-Americans were educated, socially established, and Muslims, helps to shed light on Islamic activism in this country and the African-Americans' struggle for freedom and social and economic justice. What lesson can be deducted activism-wise today?

Rashid: It gives us a renewed vision about our role in North America. If we continue to build on the rich legacy of our African forefathers, we cannot consider ourselves foreigners in America. A Caucasian professor from our scholar's team, from Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi, US, calls it «American history.»

It is interesting to note that a few enslaved Africans, such as Lamin Kebe, was quoted in an American educational journal. He was acknowledged as an authority in education because of his scholarship and experience as a teacher back in Africa.

Also, there is new research that points to the fact that there is a Muslim root to American blues. Academic scholars have made a connection to the Muslim call to prayer (Adhan) and the

blues music tradition. These new developments clearly position African-American Muslims in America and its history.

Ghayyur: Does the Timbuktu Exhibit tell us something about West Africa's role and influence during the Golden Age of Islam? And why do Muslims need to educate themselves about African history?

Rashid: Another very good question. Muslims have a lot to learn from Africa.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of prejudice against Africans in the Muslim community. Muslims are as ignorant about African culture and history as any fellow non-Muslim. The major reason for this prejudice in the Muslim community is colonialism. Colonialists were able to promote an idea of Africans being uncivilized and uneducated at a global level. Muslims were directly affected by this propaganda.

New studies and sources are showing that Muslims in Timbuktu were the models of theology development and were pioneers in tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and global peace-keeping. The Muslim world needs these ideals today.

Ibn Battuta, one of the most famous Muslim travelers, relates the following about his travels in West Africa:

1. West Africa was one of the safest places in the Muslim world.
2. If something was lost or forgotten somewhere, the owner would not have to worry

about someone stealing it.

3. Men and women related to each other in a way he didn't see in other parts of the Muslim world.
4. Women were more independent than elsewhere.

Muslims' Role

Ghayyur: What can Muslims do to support and spread the word about this unique exhibit?

Rashid: The most significant support would be: Come and see the exhibit yourselves! Regardless of where you live in America or in the world, make an effort to visit us. The educational and enlightening experience of the museum, coupled with the warmth of Jackson city and its people, will definitely make your visit a memorable one. Also, please continue to contribute financially. We are still in the fundraising mode.

Ghayyur: How do you see the future of IMMC?

Rashid: We would like to continue doing our exhibits, teachers' trainings, and public forums, hopefully at greater frequency and at a larger scale. For instance, we are working with the Mississippi State Department of Education toward adopting the exhibits' curriculums and toward being extended nationally.

We aim to launch four more exhibits on different Muslim cultures over the next eight years.

In what ways can Islamic studies be defined

& what are the different possible academic approaches towards the subject?"

This paper explores the course content and teaching of Islamic studies at the tertiary level in the United Kingdom and contends that in order for a true appreciation for what the subject has to offer, universities must re-examine the importance of core content in compliance with the "discipline" and avoid serving numerous other interests to the detriment of the subject.

At the outset, it should be stated that no clear definition of what constitutes Islamic studies exists. Ata'ullah Siddiqui (2007: p. 8) states,

"There are those who see

Arabic language as the core of Islamic Studies, and who do not consider anthropological and ethnographic study of Muslim societies as a necessary or proper part of the Islamic Studies syllabus. There are others who believe that the teaching of Arabic and textual analysis does not address the issues facing Muslims in contemporary societies in different parts of the world."

Thus there are numerous considerations to be taken into account when setting an agenda for the tuition of Islamic studies in any institution of higher education. My opinion is that

the desired effect of serving multiple considerations, however, will be accomplished as a bi-product of "doing the right thing" and teaching the subject as it deserves to be covered in the early stages of any programme of study. Furthermore, the Author suggests that it is important to harmonise the imbalance which exists between the need for core subject specialists and the near absence of Islamic scholars employed within higher education in the United Kingdom.

The past two centuries have demonstrated that the teaching and content of Islamic studies courses in universities in the



United Kingdom have been largely framed around serving the national interest. At the outset, the desired outcome of Islamic studies was, as Tariq Ramadan (2007) states, the optimisation of "colonial management." This external consideration was later added to with the development of an internal consideration, that of domestic affairs. This was as a consequence of the migration of Muslim populations to the United Kingdom in the second half of the Twentieth century, followed by the emergence of 'home-grown terrorism,' with second generation British Muslims at its centre, in the early years of the new millennium. Thus, to facilitate learning of the emerging diaspora of interdependent Islamic-related issues, the study of the theology of Islam has been encroached upon by

sociology, anthropology, gender studies, economics and political science, to such an extent, that the subject is today barely recognisable as an independent discipline.

This historical view is supported by four published reports throughout the Twentieth century, which demonstrated a clear trend of Islamic studies in Britain being moulded to serve the national interest. The Reay Report in 1909 considered Islamic studies as a rite of passage for those intending to work in the Islamic world, particularly in the military or diplomatic arenas; the Scarborough Report published two years after the end of the Second World War, shifting focus, with a view that Islamic studies was now a necessary

 **This historical view is supported by four published reports throughout the Twentieth century**

Many students look to the humanities as a stepping stone into the teaching profession

tool for the maintenance of influence in (the now) former British colonies; the Hayter Report published in 1961, recognising that these former colonies were now largely independent, and, as such, the study of Islam should be concerned with internal, domestic considerations pertinent to the subject; and, the Parker Report, which addressed commercial and diplomatic issues in relation to Islamic studies, when it was published in 1986 (Ata'ullah Siddiqui, 2007: p. 5).

The way forward is thus the development of a framework where central theological core exists which redefines the discipline of Islamic studies, contextualised within modern, multicultural Britain. The foundations of this core curriculum are study of the Qur'an, Hadith, Sunnah, Seerah, Fiqh and the Arabic language.

This view is supported by Wheeler in his book "Teaching Islam", in which he opens with a chapter titled "What Can't Be Left Out: The Essentials of Teaching Islam as a Religion." His discourse on early undergraduate studies challenges conventional teaching pedagogy, arguing for a tailored, 'customer (student) – centred' approach, where the tuition (not necessarily the content) must be driven by the circumstances encountered. He states,

"I have taught the "Introduction to Islam" course three different ways at four different institutions. This variety is, in part, due to my continuing attempts to experiment with different approaches. It is also due to the different circumstances in which I taught the courses, ranging from a small class of five students to over 100 students, from small liberal arts colleges to large universities, from students with no background in Islam, to large classes where more than 75 percent of the students come from Muslim backgrounds. Because of this, it is important to stress that, although I have tried to choose examples which worked well in my particular circumstances, similar approaches might not work well in other settings." (Brannon Wheeler, 2003: p. 4)

Furthermore, Wheeler determined the content of his courses based on availability and accessibility of materials to undergraduate students, given that many useful texts were not translated, poorly translated or out of print.

Once the foundational knowledge is established,

students can then go on to explore elective specialisations at the upper undergraduate and postgraduate levels. For example, the subsequent civilisation which emerged from the prophetic tradition up to the demise of the caliphate under Turkish rule in the early Twentieth century could then be examined. These would thus include theological subject matter, such as Tafsir, as well as diversify into the study of British multiculturalism, geo-political, social, economic and other issues mentioned earlier. Other noteworthy areas mentioned in Wheeler's book include the teaching of Sufism, women in Islam, the use of information technology in the study of Islamic civilisation, 21st century Islam and Islam in America (Wheeler being an American academic).

A number of broader issues are achieved with this approach. For example, one such broader objective is that it must be marketable and attractive to potential students in order for sustainability of the discipline of Islamic studies within universities. This is in agreement with Siddiqui's (2007) argument put to the British government that by adopting an approach where theology is central, taught by Muslim scholars, courses would clearly be more attractive to Muslim students wishing to learn the principles and practice of their faith.

Furthermore, non-Muslims would develop an interest and their knowledge in the subject matter. A further objective, to serve the local community, would also be enhanced as closer ties would be consequently developed

between the university and the surrounding Muslim communities as a consequence of greater Muslim participation within the academic field. The discipline of Islamic studies also needs to consider enhancing graduate job opportunities. Many students look to the humanities as a stepping stone into the teaching profession, employment in government, such as diplomatic services, social work and so on. Islamic Studies should facilitate this.

Ramadan also raises the issue of teaching staff in Islamic studies. He states,

"No less important is the question of the professors and instructors themselves: while it is generally accepted that Jews, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists (even though they may be practicing believers) can approach their field of study in an objective manner, everything seems to indicate that the same is not possible for Muslim faculty

members, whose objectivity is cast into doubt (especially if they are practising Muslims), or who may be implicitly invited to defend theses perceived in the West as "pro-western." (Tariq Ramadan, 2007: pp. 6-7)

The implication seems to indicate a level of bias against Muslim teachers of Islamic studies when compared to other disciplines dealing with religion. Though the benefits of teachers of religion being members of that religion are self evident, the major downside is really one of objectivity and critique of one's own religion. As for the issue of comparative bias against Islamic scholars teaching their own religion, in comparison to scholars of other religions who, Ramadan implies, have that right, no objective evaluation of the validity of the hypothesis has been presented. However, what Ramadan implies, is that there is seemingly no objection to the teaching of religious studies by adherents to the same faith,

Though the benefits of teachers of religion being members of that religion are self evident


with the exception of Muslims teaching Islam. If the hypothesis were true, this is very worrying and would need re-examination and rectification.



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Rights of People with Special Needs in Islam



According to the report of the International Labor Organization (ILO) of the year 2000, number of those who suffer disabilities either mentally or physically are estimated at more than 610 million persons; about 10% of total number of world population. The report expects a wide increase of such percentage in the following years. This is due to a notable increase in percentage of environmental pollution, accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, recurrent wars, continuous price flare up, in addition to spread of poverty, backwardness concerning medical care, especially in the poor and underdeveloped countries.

This means that tenth of people living on earth are people with special needs, who need special care and attention concerning upbringing and education. They are in dire need for special institutions to care for them. Such institutions could be easily found in the rich countries. Yet, they do rarely exist in other countries which are poor and underdeveloped.

Actually, deformities do occur due to road accidents, can happen within the battle fields, at work or even at home. Deformities could also occur owing to several causes like excessive use of alcohol, drugs, medicaments, exposure to radiation, poison, medical faults during childbirth, premature labor, diseases that may afflict the fetus or the mother during pregnancy or might happen due to genetic causes. Most dangerous of all, is the deformation caused as a result of illegal sexual affairs.

Disabilities can take many forms. They can be mental, sensual (audio or visual), physical; concerning health, psychological (in the form of behavioral, communicational disorders, retardation or in any other forms)

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him once said:

«When Allah, Exalted be He, created Adam, He, the Almighty wiped his back, so all people came out, and Allah presented them before Adam..., Adam saw among them the strong, the weak, the rich, the poor, the healthy and afflicted. He said: O Allah! Why have not you made them equal? He, the Almighty said: «So that I would be praised for My favors.» (Narrated by Abu Yaaly in his Masnad 6377 (contains authentic Prophetic Sayings) In another version: «... then He presented them before Adam and He, the Almighty said: «O Adam! this is your progeny, and among them were the mutilated, the leprous, the blind and other kinds of affliction, so Adam said : O Allah why have you done so with my progeny? Allah, Exalted be He said: «So that people would praise My favors.»

Hence, Allah the Creator, the All- Wise and the All-Knowing, has predestined that the offspring of Adam should include the able-bodied, the handicapped, the healthy and the ill, those who have sound senses and those who have sense disabilities. In such way, the able-bodied would perceive health as a bounty and praise Allah, Exalted be He, for such bounty and on seeing those afflicted, they would sympathize



This means that tenth of people living on earth are people with special needs

with them, try to come close to Allah by taking good care of the disabled, being charitable and benevolent towards them, as they are the creation of Allah. «And people are the dependants of Allah and the most favored by Allah are the ones who frequently help His dependants.» (Hadith)

Let's read what Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him said concerning that : «Whoever saw an afflicted person and said: Praise be to Allah who have protected me against what He has afflicted you with and have greatly honored me over many of his creation, he will be safeguarded against such affliction as long as he lives. (Mentioned by At-Termizi 343331 and Al Baghawi 1337) In another version: «He will not Heahjtgr.» i.e. Allah will not make the handicapped person hear such invocation of the healthy one to save his pride and feelings from being injured.

It was mentioned that Attaa Ibn

Islam states that helping and taking good care of the handicapped and disabled is a collective duty...

Abi Rabah said: Ibn Abbass told me: «Would I show you a woman among people of Paradise? I said: Yes. He said: Such black woman came to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and said I suffer epileptic fits and during such fits, the clothes over my body uncovers, so invoke Allah, Exalted be He, for me. The Prophet (pbuh) said: If you want to keep patient, you will be rewarded by entering paradise but if you wish I can pray for you. The woman said: I will be patient, but my body uncovers?! So invoke Allah for me so that my body becomes not uncovered. So he (pbuh) invoked Allah.» (Narrated by Al Bukhari: 5652)

Imams Ahmed (13338:4) At-Termizi (3578) and Ibn Maja (1385) mentioned on the authority of Othman Ibn Hanif that «A blind man came to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and said: Invoke Allah so that my eyes will be cured. The Prophet (pbuh) said: «If you

wish I will invoke Allah for you or else keep patient and it is better for you.» The blind man said: So invoke Him. So the Prophet (pbuh) taught the man few words to supplicate Allah by. So Allah cured his eyes.»

Firstly: Some of the Rights of People with Special Needs in Islam

(A) The Right of Care and Qualification:

Islam states that helping and taking good care of the handicapped and disabled is a collective duty incumbent upon the Muslim community; meaning that few people can act for the whole community in carrying out the duty. Hence, the community will not be guilty. However, if no one carried the collective duty, the whole community will be guilty. Concerning that point, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: «Whoever relieves the distress of a believer, Allah will relieve his distress in the Hereafter, whoever eases the difficulty of one indebted, Allah will ease his life in this World and in the Hereafter and whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim brother (from being known to others), Allah will conceal his faults in this World and in the Hereafter and Allah is the helper of the servant as long as the servant helps his Muslim brother...»

1. «The Most loved ones by Allah, Exalted be He, are those who are the most helper to others, and the good deed most loved by Allah is to bring happiness to a Muslim brother,

relieve his distress, pay his debts or satisfy his hunger and I would love accomplishing a task for a Muslim brother rather than entering into a month seclusion in the Mosque...»

«The Muslim is the brother of a Muslim, he does not oppress nor betray him and whoever seeks helping his Muslim brother, Allah will be in his help, whoever relieves distress of a Muslim, Allah will relieve his distress in the Day of Resurrection and whoever conceals faults of a Muslim (from being known to others), Allah will conceal his faults in the Hereafter.» (Narrated by At-Termizi)

2. «Muslims are equal concerning their blood sanctity, the lowest of them can guarantee their protection and they act as one hand against their enemies. (narrated by Imam Ahmed)
3. Muslims with each other are like the bricks of building neatly interwoven and attached to each other (narrated by Al Bukhari)
4. «Whoever does not show mercy to others, will not have mercy.» (narrated by Al Bukhari)

(B) The Right of being respected:

Believers should not deal with the handicapped and the disabled sarcastically, should not mock them or put them in low esteem. Allah Exalted be He says in the Holy Qur'an: «O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another

group, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it to insult one's brother after having Faith [i.e. to call your Muslim brother (a faithful believer) as: «O sinner» or «O wicked»]. And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed Zalimn (wrong-doers, etc.). (Surat Al-Hujurat (The Dwellings): 11)

It was narrated that a group of people mocked Abdullah Ibn Massoud while ascending a tree for having very thin legs. On the authority of Um Moussa that she said I heard Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) saying: When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ordered Ibn Massoud to ascend a tree to bring him something, the Companions of the Prophet kept looking at Ibn Massoud's legs while he was ascending and laughed on seeing his legs to be very tiny and slim. Upon that, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: «You laugh at him! Verily the legs of Abdullah are much more heavier in the scale of deeds of the Hereafter than the mount of Uhud (a very huge mountain)». (Narrated by Ahmed)

(C) The Right of Intensive Care:

The right of receiving Intensive care concerning the medical, psychological, educational, social, economical aspects... etc. providing the disabled with integral programs regardless of the degree of disability. Such Care is embodied in some services, full medical and non-

medical programs. That which help the disabled develop their skills to great extents, while having accurate diagnoses for each case, separately. That is what we call qualification. Such qualification is achieved inside special institutions, schools, centers for the handicapped or at governmental and non-governmental educational organizations.

(D) The Right of having slight religious duties determined according to the capacity of each case. Like canceling the duty of fighting in the cause of Allah, for the disabled. Concerning this issue, Allah, Exalted be He, says: «No blame or sin is there upon the blind, nor is there blame or sin upon the lame, nor is there blame or sin upon the sick (that they go not for fighting). And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad pbuh), He will admit him to Gardens beneath which rivers flow (Paradise); and whosoever turns back, He will punish him with a painful torment. (Surat Al-Fath (The Victory): 17)

Actually, believers used to feel shy on entering the houses of their relatives while having the handicapped with them. They sought being charitable and generous to the handicapped by accompanying them in their visits. So Allah revealed the following verse: Allah says: «There is no restriction on the blind, nor any restriction on the lame, nor any restriction on the sick, nor on yourselves, if you eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of

The right of receiving Intensive care concerning the medical, psychological, educational, social, economical aspects.

your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your father's brothers, or the houses of your father's sisters, or the houses of your mother's brothers, or the houses of your mother's sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold keys, or (from the house) of a friend. No sin on you whether you eat together or apart. But when you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allah As-Salamu' Alaikum - peace be on you) blessed and good. Thus Allah makes clear the Ayat (these Verses or your religious symbols and signs) to you that you may understand. (Surat An-Nur (The Light): 61)

(E) The Right for a Humane and Brotherly treatment: Islam stipulates that Allah, the Almighty is the Creator of everything and that all human beings have the same father and mother i.e. Adam and Eve (peace be upon them) as Allah, Exalted be He says:

«Such is Allah, your Lord! None

has the right to be worshipped but He, the Creator of all things. So worship Him alone, and He is the trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian over all things.

1. «Say (O Muhammad pbuh): «Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?» Say: «(It is) Allah.» Say: «Have you then taken (for worship) Auliya' (protectors) other than Him, such as have no power either for benefit or for harm to themselves?» Say: «Is the blind equal to the one who sees? Or darkness equal to light? Or do they assign to Allah partners who created the like of His creation, so that the creation (which they made and His creation) seemed alike to them?» Say: «Allah is the Creator of all things; and He is the One, the Irresistible.» (Surat Ar-Ra'd (The Thunder):16)
2. «Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Disposer of affairs, Guardian over all things.» (Az-Zumar)
3. «That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). How then are you turning away (from Allah, by worshipping others instead of Him)? (Surat Ghafir (The Forgiver):62)
4. «O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwa' (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely,

Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.» (Surat An-Nisa' (The Women): 1)

5. «It is He Who has created you from a single person (Adam), and has given you a place of residing (on the earth or in your mother's wombs) and a place of storage [in the earth (in your graves) or in your father's loins]. Indeed, We have explained in detail Our revelations (this Qur'an) for people who understand.» (Surat Al -An'am (The Cattale):98)
6. «It is He Who has created you from a single person (Adam), and (then) He has created from him his wife [Hawwa' (Eve)], in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her. When he (a polytheist from Adam's offspring - as stated by Ibn Kathir in his Tafsir) had sexual relation with her (the polytheist's wife), she became pregnant and she carried it about lightly. Then when it became heavy, they both invoked Allah, their Lord (saying): «If You give us a Salih (good in every aspect) child, we shall indeed be among the grateful.» (Surat Al-A'raf (The Heights): 189)

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) stressed on the above mentioned meaning in his Saying: «All of you have been created from Adam and Adam has been created from dust.» Also «...there is no human being who does already exist or will exist, till the Day of Judgment but encompassed in Allah's knowledge». (narrated in the Six Major collections of Hadith)

The handicapped right that healthy ones should endure him as Allah, Exalted be He, has created both the healthy and the afflicted and that Allah, the Almighty has created everything and give it its due proportion.

1. Allah says: «He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Who has begotten no son (children or offspring) and for Whom there is no partner in the dominion. He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements.» (Surat Al-Furqan(The Criterion): 2)
2. «Allah has created every moving (living) creature from water. Of them there are some that creep on their bellies, and some that walk on two legs, and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Verily Allah is Able to do all things.» (Surat An-Nur (The Light): 45)
3. «Allah is He Who created you in (a state of) weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength gave (you) weakness and grey hair. He creates what He wills. And it is He Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful (i.e. Able to do all things). (Surat Ar-Rm (The Romans): 54)
4. «To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills. Or He bestows both males and females, and He renders barren whom He wills. Verily, He is the All-

Knower and is Able to do all things. (Surat Ash-Shura (The Consultation): 49-50)

5. «Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the dominion; and He is Able to do all things.» (Surat Al-Mulk (Dominion): 1)
6. «There is no blame on the Prophet (pbuh) in that which Allah has made legal for him. That has been Allah's Way with those who have passed away of (the Prophets of) old. And the Command of Allah is a decree determined.» (Surat Al-Ahzab (The Confederates):38)
7. «Verily, We have created all things with Qadar (Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees Al-Lauh Al-Mahfz).» (Surat Al-Qamar (The Moon):49)

From the above, we can conclude that every single thing that occurs in the universe is preordained by Allah, it happens according to His will and according to a Divine Wisdom, even that which we consider afflictions like deformities, genetic diseases, accidents that cause disabilities, epidemic diseases, wars, violent winds, earthquakes, volcanoes and others.

All such afflictions send a clear message to mankind : that people should feel how great to enjoy good health which entails that they should be grateful to Allah, as being healthy and secure is a precious bounty from Allah towards His servants. A wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings, and learn how by his own thought to derive benefit

from his illnesses. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said: «Whoever lived secure in his place, healthy in his body, had his daily earnings, it is as if he possessed the whole world.»

(F) We should have a better understanding as regarding cases of affliction. Affliction from Allah could be one of three: a punishment to the disobedient and evil-doers, a trial for the righteous, a valuable lesson for the survivors. And people will not get benefits from afflictions unless they could perceive the wisdom behind it.

Concerning the believers, the righteous and the pious, affliction acts as a trial to test their patience and whether or not they would face such affliction from Allah, with concession and satisfaction towards Allah's fate and predestination. If so, they will be rewarded with an ample reward in this life and in the Hereafter.

Allah, Exalted be He, created people and He is the All-Knower, He knows what is best for them. That's why people should not meet Allah's fate with objection as Allah has comprehensive knowledge; he knows what happens and what will happen, He is the All-Knower, the Just, the Merciful, the Forgiver. Putting in mind that human beings' knowledge is so restricted, people might consider that enjoying good health, a sound body, being secure, having abundance of provisions are unquestionable and taken for granted. Hence, they should consider afflictions, deformation, diseases, wars,


**Muhammad
p.b.u.h
once said:
«Whoever
lived secure
in his place,
healthy in
his body,
had his daily
earnings...**

starvation and others of the like, matters that sound the alarming bells from time to time to remind man that worldly life is too short no matter how long man lives and that the Hereafter is the eternal abode.

Actually, people get benefits from such afflictions; as people whom Allah has favored with healthy bodies and protected against affliction would feel grateful towards Allah and sympathetic towards the disabled. They would spare no effort to keep the rights of the afflicted ones, take the initiatives to give the disabled a helping hand and console them. So Allah tries survivors of a certain affliction «Who is the best as regarding his deeds» and tries the afflicted persons «Who is the best as regarding holding patient towards affliction.»

Do NOT kill yourselves

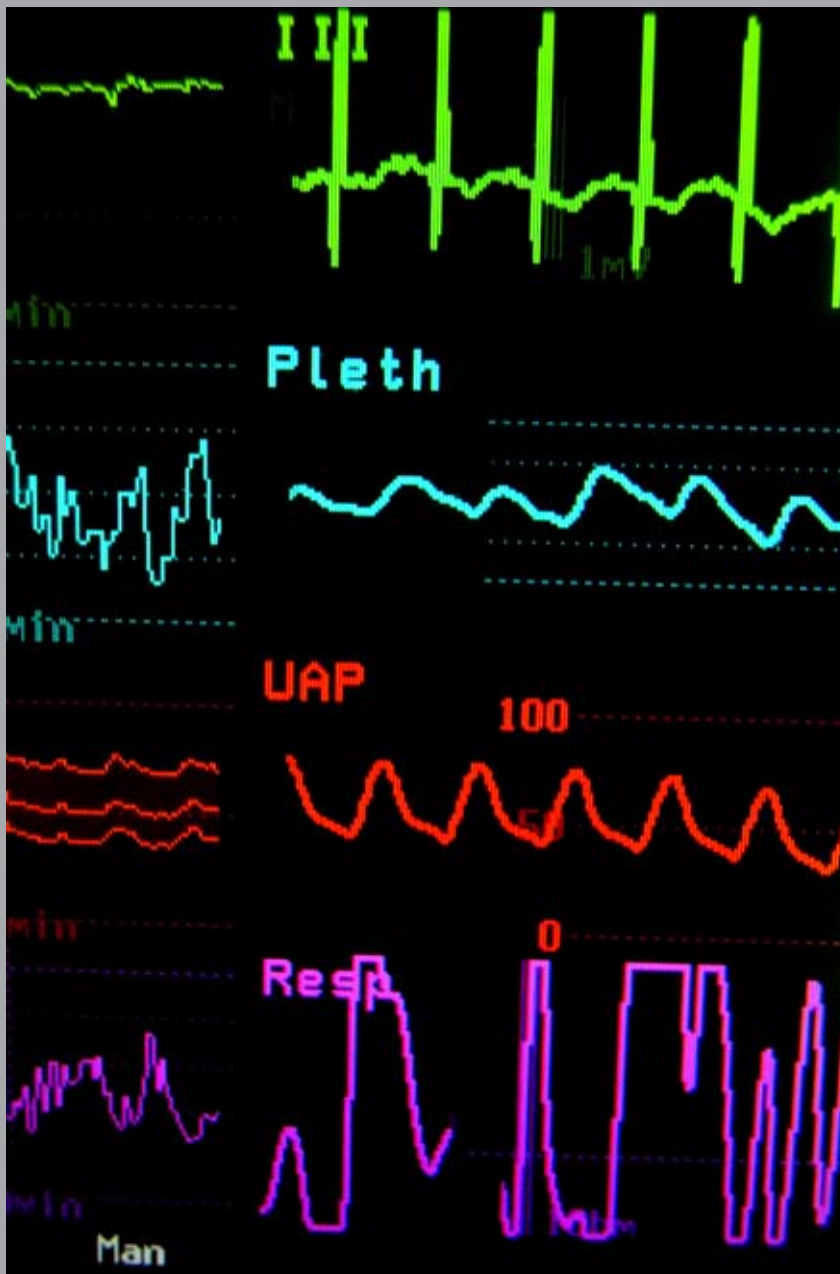
for verily Allah has been to you most
Merciful Euthanasia flies in the face of all religious codes



person - unless The Shari'ah went into great detail in defining the conditions where taking life is permissible whether in war or in peace (as an item of the criminal law), with rigorous prerequisites and precautions to minimize that event.

The question that erupts in this respect is: Is there a right to suicide?

Not in Islam. Since we did not create ourselves we do not own our bodies. We are entrusted with them for care, nurture and safe keeping.



Take not life
which Allah
made sacred
otherwise than
in the course
of justice

will forever keep sipping that poison in hell. Whoever jumps off a mountain and kills himself will forever keep falling down in the depths of hell." [Hadith]

The Shari'a (Islamic Law) listed and specified the indications for taking life (i.e. the exceptions to the general rule of sanctity of human life), and they do not include mercy killing or make allowance for it.

Human life is a value to be respected unconditionally, irrespective of other circumstances. The concept of a life not worthy of living does not exist in Islam. Justification of taking life to escape suffering is not acceptable in Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (salAllahu alayhi wasalam) taught: "There was a man in older times who had an infliction that taxed his patience, so he took a knife, cut his wrist and

God is the owner and giver of life and His rights in giving and in taking are not to be violated. Attempting to kill oneself is a crime in Islam as well as a grave sin. The Qur'an says:

"Do not kill (or destroy) yourselves, for verily Allah has been to you most Merciful"

[surah an-Nisa; 4:29].

To warn against suicide prophet Muhammad (salAllahu alayhi wasalam) said:

"Whoever kills himself with an iron instrument will be carrying it forever in hell. Whoever takes poison and kills himself

bled to death. Upon this God said: My subject hastened his end, I deny him paradise." [Sahih al-Bukhari 8:603]

During one of the military campaigns one of the Muslims was killed and the companions of the prophet (salAllahu alayhi wasalam) kept praising his gallantry and efficiency in fighting, but, to their surprise, the Prophet commented, "His lot is hell." Upon inquiry, the companions (radiAllahu anhum) found out that the man had been seriously injured so he supported the handle of his sword on the ground and plunged his chest onto its tip, committing suicide.

The Islamic Code of Medical

Ethics endorsed by the First International Conference on Islamic Medicine (Islamic Organization of Medical Sciences, Kuwait, 1981, p.65) includes: "Mercy killing, like suicide, finds no support except in the atheistic way of thinking that believes that our life on this earth is followed by void. The claim of killing for painful hopeless illness is also refuted, for there is no human pain that cannot be largely conquered by medication or by suitable neurosurgery..."

There is still another dimension to the question of pain and suffering. Patience and endurance are highly regarded and highly rewarded values in Islam.

**Upon this
God said:
My subject
hastened his
end, I deny
him paradise**

"Those who patiently preserve will truly receive a reward without measure" [39:10].

"And bear in patience whatever (ill) maybe fall you: this, behold, is something to set one's heart upon" [31:17].

Prophet Muhammad taught "When the believer is afflicted with pain, even that of a prick of a thorn or more, God forgives his sins, and his wrongdoings are discarded as a tree sheds off its leaves." [Sahih al-Bukari]

When means of preventing or alleviating pain fall short, this spiritual dimension can be very effectively called upon to support the patient who believes that accepting and standing unavoidable pain will be to his/her credit in the hereafter, the real and enduring life. To a person who does not believe in a hereafter this might sound like nonsense, but to one who



does, euthanasia is certainly nonsense.

Then comes the money factor. There is no disagreement that the financial cost of maintaining the incurably ill and the senile is a growing concern, so much so that some groups have gone beyond the concept of the "right to die" to that of the "duty to die". They claim that when the human machine has outlived its productive span its maintenance is an unacceptable burden on the productive stratum of society, and it should be disposed of, and rather abruptly than allowing it to deteriorate gradually..

This logic is completely alien to Islam. Values take priority over prices. The care for the weak, old and helpless is a value in itself for which people are willing to sacrifice time, effort and money, and this starts, naturally with one's own parents

"Your Lord decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt but address them in terms of honor. And lower to them the wing of humility out of compassion, and say: my Lord, bestow on them Your mercy even as they cherished me in childhood" [17: 25-25].

Because such caring is a virtue ordained and rewarded by Allah in this world and in the hereafter, the believers



don't take it as a debit but as an investment. In a materialistic dollar-centric community this logic is meaningless, but not so in the value-oriented God heeding community of the faithful.

When individual means cannot cover the needed care, it becomes, according to Islam, the collective responsibility of society, and financial priorities are reshuffled so that values take priority over pleasures, and people derive more pleasure from heeding values than from pursuing other pleasantries. A prerequisite of course is a complete moral and spiritual re-orientation of a society that does not hold to these premises.

**✓ Your Lord
decreed that
you worship
none but Him,
and that you
be kind to
your parents**



✓ The patient should receive every possible psychological support

In an Islamic setting, the question of euthanasia usually does not arise, and if it does, it is dismissed as religiously unlawful. The patient should receive every possible psychological support and compassion from family and friends, including the patient's spiritual (religious) resources. The doctor also participates in this, as well, and provides the therapeutic measures for the relief of pain. A dilemma arises when the dose of the pain killer necessary to

alleviate pain approximates or overlaps with the lethal dose that might bring about the patient's death.

Ingenuity on the part of the doctor is called upon to avoid this situation, but from a religious point of view the critical issue is the doctor's intention: is it to kill or to alleviate? Intention is beyond verification by the law but according to Islam it cannot escape the ever watchful eye of God Who according to the

Qur'an "knows the treachery of the eyes, and all that hearts conceal" [40:19].

Sins that do not full fill the criteria of a legal crime are beyond the domain of the judge but remain answerable to Allah

The Islamic Code of Medical Ethics [1981 p.67], states:

"In his/her defense of life, however, the Doctor is well advised to realize his limit and not transgress it. If it is scientifically certain that life cannot be restored, then it is futile to diligently keep the patient in a vegetative state by heroic means or to preserve the patient by deep freezing or other artificial methods. It is the process of life that the doctor aims to maintain and not the process of dying. In any case, the doctor shall not take a positive measure to terminate the patient's life".

The seeking of medical treatment from illness

is mandatory in Islam, according to two sayings of the prophet (salAllahu alayhi wasalam):

"Seek treatment/cure, subjects of God, for to every illness God has made a cure", and "Your body has a right on you."

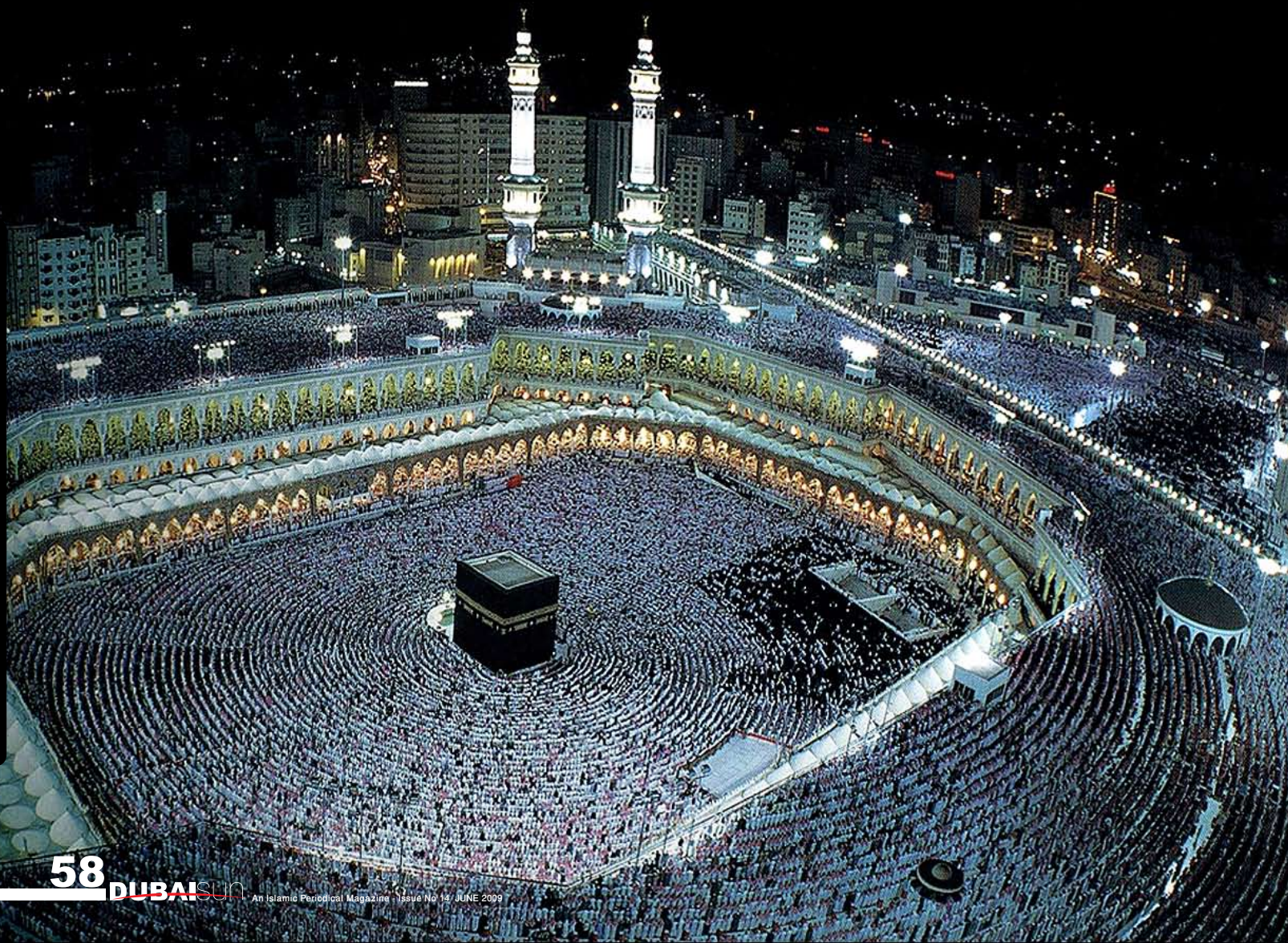
But when the treatment holds no promise it ceases to be mandatory. This applies both to surgical and/or pharmaceutical measures, and, according to a majority of scholars, to artificial animation equipment. Ordinary life needs which are the right of every living person and which are not categorized as "treatment" are regarded differently. These include food and drink and ordinary nursing care, and they are not to be withheld as long as the patient lives.

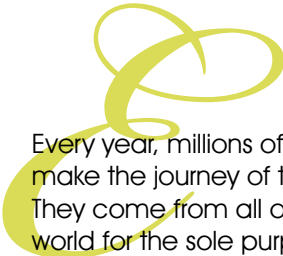
The seeking of medical treatment from illness is mandatory in Islam



Millions Muslims share spiritual journey of Hajj

by: Enas Mahsen - Reporter & writer - Ettihad News paper





Every year, millions of Muslims make the journey of their lifetime. They come from all over the world for the sole purpose of fulfilling one of Allaah's greatest commandments to mankind – the Hajj. Abu Hurayrah narrated that "The Prophet was asked, 'Which is the best deed?' He (PBUH) said: 'To believe in Allaah and His Messenger.' He was then asked, 'Which is the next (good deed)?' He (PBUH) said: 'To participate in Jihaad in Allaah's cause.' He was then asked, 'Which is the next?' He (PBUH) said: 'To perform an accepted Hajj.'" [Al-Bukhaari] For over 1400 years, believers have been making Hajj to the House of Allaah in Makkah. It is an obligation for each and every Muslim to perform Hajj at least once in his/her lifetime if he is physically and financially able.

Due to the importance of Hajj, preparations for it should not be taken lightly. Besides planning the actual logistics of the trip, the Muslim needs to prepare Islamically, physically, mentally, and~ financially for this great act of worship. Islamically, one of the most important preparations for this journey is acquiring the necessary knowledge for performing the rituals of Hajj and 'Umrah correctly and in accordance to the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). This means studying and learning about Islam, acquiring a high degree of Eemaan (faith) in order to deal with the emotional and physical demands of Hajj, and learning correctly the actual religious rituals and requirements from the beginning to the end of Hajj and 'Umrah. Studying and learning about the Hajj can be accomplished in a

variety of fashions, from reading books on the subject or using computer programs which utilize a multimedia format, to actually taking classes offered by Islamic centers on the rituals of Hajj and 'Umrah. Furthermore, many travel groups that specialize in Hajj and 'Umrah trips offer Hajj preparation classes as well as scholars and students of knowledge that help those going for Hajj perform the rituals of Hajj and 'Umrah correctly.

In addition, it is important to mention that spiritually preparing for Hajj and 'Umrah is also a lesson on how to follow the footsteps of the Prophet (PBUH) who taught the Companions– a lesson that can be transformed into other acts of worship. Preparing for Hajj is a spiritual experience with a period of self-reflection and a lesson in piety and humility. The pilgrim must focus on his sole intention of performing Hajj. That it is solely for the pleasure of Allaah and in accordance to His Commandment regarding this act of worship. The believer also needs to resolve any conflicts or differences between him and others and seek forgiveness for any acts of transgression. This stage of preparation should take place long before the actual departure for Hajj.

Other preparations that should be planned long before the actual trip are financial in nature. Simply, going to Hajj costs money. Furthermore the pilgrim must pay off any old debts (this includes any type of loans), household bills, and leave enough money to pay any living expenses likely that other members of his family not making Hajj might need. Finally

The pilgrim must focus on his sole intention of performing Hajj

it is important to complete one's will (wasiyyah) before departing on Hajj.

Another important step in preparing for Hajj is the need to prepare physically for the event. Not only is Hajj a spiritual event, it also requires a lot of physical stamina from the participant. Hajj is not a picnic! Completing the rites of Hajj includes a lot of walking, mixing with many people, living in high temperatures (during summer), and exerting a great deal of effort. Another important step in preparing physically for Hajj is to make sure you are medically fit for the trip. Individuals with chronic health issues need to see their primary care physician in order to discuss any medical risks that need to be addressed prior to their Hajj experience.

Another recommendation is that these individuals also travel with a healthy caretaker in case any problems might arise during the actual Hajj. In addition, pilgrims must have the necessary vaccinations required by the

the pilgrim must plan and make actual logistic decisions regarding his/her journey

Saudi Government for cholera and meningococcal meningitis. Because of these issues, it is also important to emphasize that one should complete Hajj and 'Umrah as soon as one is able to both physically and financially. Some people wait until they are old to go for Hajj. This is wrong and makes Hajj more difficult than necessary for the participant and in many cases for his traveling companions. Performing Hajj as soon as possible corresponds to the Hadeeth narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbaas (PBUH) who said: "The Prophet (PBUH) said: 'He who intended to perform Hajj should hasten to do so.'" [Abu Daawood]

The last pre-logistic preparation centers on preparing mentally for Hajj. This includes learning and accepting that the Hajj experience includes frustration, intense desert heat (during summer), and various differences in culture and food. The pilgrim can expect to stand in long lines, be shoved and pushed by others while completing the necessary rituals, and be in an uncomfortable close proximity to members of the opposite sex.

One purpose of Hajj is for the individual to be tested. The individual will be tested on physical, emotional, and spiritual levels.

After preparing oneself internally and financially for one of the most important events in the life of a Muslim, the pilgrim must plan and make actual logistic decisions regarding his/her journey. While one can always make the trip by himself or with a small group of individuals close to him, in this modern day this is not always the best choice. It is not uncommon for hotels to be fully booked for at least one year in advance. Furthermore, unless one starts searching very early, it is also hard to find airline reservations and available flights to Saudi Arabia during the Hajj season and during Ramadhaan for 'Umrah. Because of these challenges in planning, many individuals opt to join a travel group that specializes in Hajj and 'Umrah tours. Since not all tour groups are equal and provide the same quality service, there are a number of items to look for in choosing the right tour group.

The first thing to look for in a group is the price of the trip. Most groups offer a variety of price packages that depend on a variety of factors. These factors include the type of hotel, number of people per room, use of private transportation, and whether or not food is included within the package. Hajj is not the time to go cheap. Since Muslims within the West are generally accustomed to a certain degree of comfort, some Western Muslims would find less expensive accommodations unacceptable and uncomfortable. For

example, during Hajj some hotels accommodate up to 15 people per room sharing a single communal bathroom. Furthermore, many Western Muslims are used to a certain degree of cleanness in their hotel rooms and eating establishments that is not found in all hotels and restaurants. Another factor to consider is the distance of the hotel accommodations from the Haram (the Sacred Area). As a rule of thumb, if the price is too cheap, so is probably the quality of the package. In other words, the cheaper in price of the package, the higher the probability of encountering problems during your Hajj, which in turn, can make for a more difficult Hajj experience.

Another thing to look for is the number of years of experience of the tour operator. Generally, experienced operators are the best since they are able to handle any problems that can and will probably occur during Hajj or 'Umrah. Also it is important to make sure that an experienced leader from the tour group accompanies the group for Hajj, since it is not uncommon to lose members of your group sometimes for hours or even days. Other problems that often occur include lost or stolen belongings and money, illnesses that require medical attention, and the death of a group member. It is important for the pilgrim to understand that their Hajj will not be problem free. Problems arise frequently and an experienced tour operator is needed to handle the situation. When looking for a tour operator, it is important to ask how they handle problems. If the potential tour operator tells you that you

will have a problem free Hajj, continue searching for a better program.

Researching the business strength of your potential tour group is another important step in choosing a tour group. Generally, it is better to choose groups that have offices or contacts within Saudi Arabia. These contacts can make a Hajj experience run more smoothly in a number of areas which include helping facilitate and streamline the customs process in Jeddah (which can take between 8 to 20 hours) to providing private ground transportation and buses for the pilgrims. One thing that is highly recommended is to look

for a company which offers its own private tour buses. This is especially important since the pilgrim can literally expect to wait for hours for public transportation.

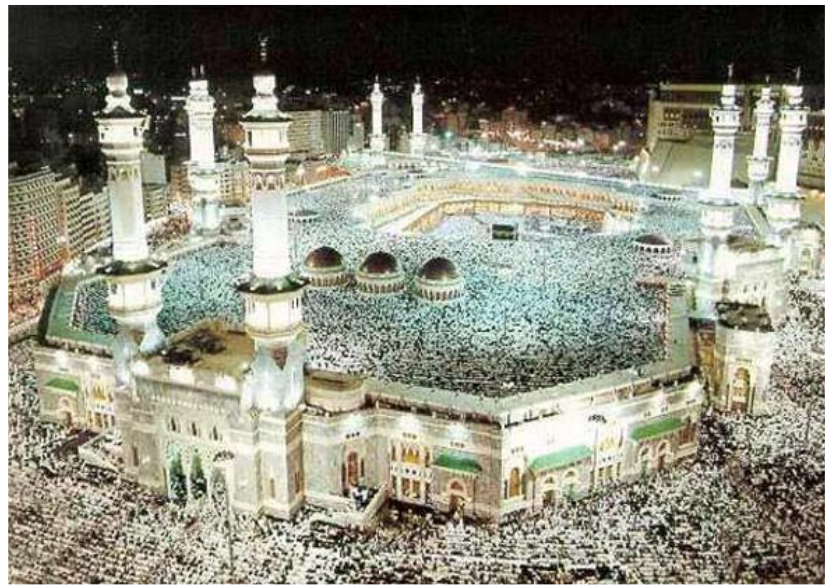
Another important quality of the travel agent is the degree they are versed in the rules and regulations of the Hajj process. This includes helping the pilgrims with the VISA process from the Saudi Arabian Embassy or Consulate to understanding the Hajj and 'Umrah rites from an Islamic standpoint. For example, in order for a pilgrim to enter Saudi Arabia, there are certain requirements that need to be met from the Saudi Arabian government. These requirements

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include the necessary vaccinations; if the person has a non-Muslim name, a letter from a Mosque stating he is Muslim is needed. Women must have proof of being accompanied by a Mahram (non-marriageable relative). In addition, there are fees that need to be paid in advance for use of the public transportation system and use of the tents in Mina along with the necessary forms that need to be completed in full and approved prior to the trip. It is also best to use a travel agent that utilizes scholars as religious guides for the trip. Besides helping to keep the travel group focused on the worship of Allaah, rather than on worldly distractions such as chatting, playing cards, etc., he is also available to ensure that group members are correctly performing the rituals.



Making Hajj and 'Umrah can be one of the most important events in a Muslim's life. However, one should not make the decision to go on Hajj or 'Umrah at the last minute. The planning of this trip takes time and is a process within itself.

Besides the financial aspects of the trip, one needs to be ready for the trip from an Islamic standpoint. This includes studying Islam, knowing what is obligatory and what is non-obligatory in the rites of 'Umrah and Hajj, and the development of a strong Eemaan (faith). While both the process and task of Hajj can be difficult for some, the rewards of Hajj can be underestimated. In a Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Whoever performs Hajj for Allaah's pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife and does not do evil or sins then he will return [after Hajj] free from all sins] as if he were born anew." [Al-Bukhaari]

The pilgrimage takes place each

year between the eighth and the 13th days of Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Muslim lunar calendar. Its first rite is the donning of the ihram.

The ihram is a symbol of purity and of the renunciation of evil and mundane matters. It also indicates the equality of all people in the eyes of God. When the pilgrim wears his white apparel, he or she enters into a state of purity that prohibits quarreling, committing violence to man or animal and having conjugal relations. Once he puts on his hajj clothes the pilgrim cannot shave, cut his nails or wear any jewelry, and he will keep his unsown garment on till he completes the pilgrimage.

A pilgrim who is already in Makkah starts his hajj from the moment he puts on the ihram. Some pilgrims coming from a distance may have entered Makkah earlier with their ihram on and may still be wearing it. The donning of the ihram is accompanied by the primary

invocation of the hajj, the talbiyah:

Here I am, O God, at Thy Command! Here I am at Thy Command! Thou art without associate; Here I am at Thy Command! Thine are praise and grace and dominion! Thou art without associate.

The thunderous, melodious chants of the talbiyah ring out not only in Makkah but also at other nearby sacred locations connected with the hajj.

On the first day of the hajj, pilgrims sweep out of Makkah toward Mina, a small uninhabited village east of the city. As their throngs spread through Mina, the pilgrims generally spend their time meditating and praying, as the Prophet did on his pilgrimage.

During the second day, the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah, pilgrims leave Mina for the plain of 'Arafat for the wuquf, "the standing," the central rite of the hajj. As they congregate there, the pilgrims' stance and gathering reminds them of the Day of Judgment. Some of them gather at the Mount of Mercy, where the Prophet delivered his unforgettable Farewell Sermon, enunciating far-reaching religious, economic, social and political reforms. These are emotionally charged hours, which the pilgrims spend in worship and supplication. Many shed tears as they ask God to forgive them. On this sacred spot, they reach the culmination of their religious lives as they feel the presence and closeness of a merciful God.

The Prophet is reported to have

asked God to pardon the sins of pilgrims who "stood" at 'Arafat, and was granted his wish. Thus, the hopeful pilgrims prepare to leave this plain joyfully, feeling reborn without sin and intending to turn over a new leaf.

Just after sunset, the mass of pilgrims proceeds to Muzdalifah, an open plain about halfway between 'Arafat and Mina. There they first pray and then collect a fixed number of chickpea-sized pebbles to use on the following days.

Before daybreak on the third day, pilgrims move en masse from Muzdalifah to Mina. There they cast at white pillars the pebbles they have previously collected. According to some traditions, this practice is associated with the Prophet Abraham. As pilgrims throw seven pebbles at each of these pillars, they remember the story of Satan's attempt to persuade Abraham to disregard God's command to sacrifice his son.

Throwing the pebbles is symbolic of humans' attempt to cast away evil and vice, not once but seven times - the number seven symbolizing infinity.

Following the casting of the pebbles, most pilgrims sacrifice a goat, sheep or some other animal. They give the meat to the poor after, in some cases, keeping a small portion for themselves.

This rite is associated with Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son in accordance with God's wish. It symbolizes the Muslim's willingness to part with what is precious to him, and reminds

us of the spirit of Islam, in which submission to God's will plays a leading role. This act also reminds the pilgrim to share worldly goods with those who are less fortunate, and serves as an offer of thanksgiving to God.

As the pilgrims have, at this stage, finished a major part of the hajj, they are now allowed to shed their ihram and put on everyday clothes. On this day Muslims around the world share the happiness the pilgrims feel and join them by performing identical, individual sacrifices in a worldwide celebration of 'Id al-Adha, "the Festival of Sacrifice." Men either shave their heads or clip their hair, and women cut off a symbolic lock, to mark their partial deconsecration. This is done as a symbol of humility. All proscriptions, save the one of conjugal relations, are now lifted.

Still sojourning in Mina, pilgrims visit Makkah to perform another essential rite of the hajj: the tawaf, the seven-fold circling of the Ka'bah, with a prayer recited during each circuit. Their circumambulation of the Ka'bah, the symbol of God's oneness, implies that all human activity must have God at its center. It also symbolizes the unity of God and man.

While making their circuits pilgrims may kiss or touch the Black Stone. This oval stone, first mounted in a silver frame late in the seventh century, has a special place in the hearts of Muslims as, according to some traditions, it is the sole remnant of the original structure built by Abraham and Ishmael. But perhaps the single most important reason for kissing the

These rites performed, the pilgrims are completely deconsecrated

stone is that the Prophet did so.

No devotional significance whatsoever is attached to the stone, for it is not, nor has ever been, an object of worship. The second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, made this crystal clear when, on kissing the stone himself in emulation of the Prophet, he proclaimed: "I know that you are but a stone, incapable of doing good or harm. Had I not seen the Messenger of God kiss you - may God's blessing and peace be upon him - I would not kiss you."

After completing the tawaf, pilgrims pray, preferably at the Station of Abraham, the site where Abraham stood while he built the Ka'bah. Then they drink of the water of Zamzam.

Another, and sometimes final, rite is the sa'y, or "the running." This is a reenactment of a memorable episode in the life of Hagar, who was taken into what the Qur'an calls the "uncultivable valley" of Makkah, with her infant son Ishmael, to settle there.

The sa'y commemorates Hagar's frantic search for water to quench Ishmael's thirst. She ran back and forth seven times

between two rocky hillocks, al-Safa and al-Marwah, until she found the sacred water known as Zamzam. This water, which sprang forth miraculously under Ishmael's tiny feet, is now enclosed in a marble chamber the Ka'bah.

These rites performed, the pilgrims are completely deconsecrated: They may resume all normal activities. According to the social customs of some countries, pilgrims can henceforth proudly claim the title of al-Hajj or Hajji.

They now return to Mina, where they stay up to the 12th or 13th day of Dhu al-Hijjah. There they throw their remaining pebbles at each of the pillars in the manner either practiced or approved by the Prophet. They then take leave of the friends they have made during the Hajj. Before leaving Makkah, however, pilgrims usually make a final tawaf round the Ka'bah to bid farewell to the Holy City.

Usually pilgrims either precede or follow the hajj, "the greater pilgrimage," with the 'umrah, "the lesser pilgrimage," which is sanctioned by the Qur'an and was performed by the Prophet. The 'umrah, unlike the hajj, takes place only in Makkah itself and can be performed at any time of the year. The ihram, talbiyah and the restrictions required by the state of consecration are equally essential in the 'umrah, which also shares three other rituals with the hajj: the tawaf, sa'y and shaving or clipping the hair. The observance of the 'umrah by pilgrims and visitors symbolizes veneration for the unique sanctity of Makkah.

Before or after going to Makkah, pilgrims also avail themselves of the opportunity provided by the hajj or the 'umrah to visit the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, the second holiest city in Islam. Here, the Prophet lies buried in a simple grave under the green dome of the mosque. The visit to Madinah is not obligatory, as it is not part of the hajj or 'umrah, but the city - which welcomed Muhammad when he migrated there from Makkah - is rich in moving memories and historical sites that are evocative of him as a prophet and statesman.

In this city, loved by Muslims for centuries, people still feel the presence of the Prophet's spirit. Muhammad Asad, an Austrian Jew who converted to Islam in 1926 and made five pilgrimages between 1927 and 1932, comments on this aspect of the city: "Even after thirteen centuries [the Prophet's] spiritual presence is almost as alive here as it was then. It was only because of him that the scattered group of villages once called Yathrib became a city and has been loved by all Muslims down to this day as no city anywhere else in the world has ever been loved. It has not even a name of its own: for more than thirteen hundred years it has been called Madinat an-Nabi, 'the City of the Prophet.' For more than thirteen hundred years, so much love has converged here that all shapes and movements have acquired a kind of family resemblance, and all differences of appearance find a tonal transition into a common harmony.