

United Muslims of Australia

Volume 5, Issue 1
Anniversary Issue 2007
Free

The Message

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5 WAYS TO PEACE
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- Such diseases include trachoma, hepatitis, typhoid, polio, malaria, sleeping sickness and meningitis.
- Trachoma alone is the main cause of blindness of 6 million people worldwide.
- 2.4 billion people (nearly the half of world's population) do not have access to adequate water supplies.
- 2.2 million people in developing countries die every year from diseases related to lack of water and drinking unsafe water.
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How Human Appeal Int. contributes to solve Water Crisis?

- Digging water wells.
- Providing and distribution of drinking water in the places of crisis.
- Example countries include: Bangladesh, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Senegal, and Kenya.

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The Prophet Mohamed PBUH says:

“Providing water is one of the best forms of charity”

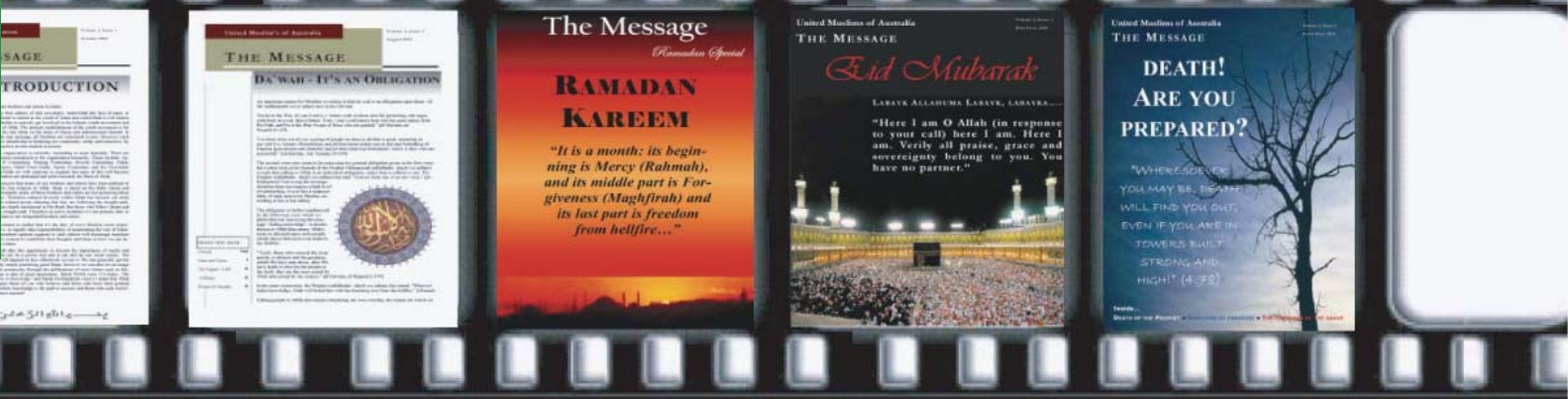
Narrated by Ahmed

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Editorial

Assalamu Alaikum

Well, we have made it to our first major milestone! This issue you are currently holding now marks the fifth anniversary of The Message Magazine. However, I will promise you from now, my short piece in this editorial will not be a road trip down 'memory lane' but rather, the very reason why we established such a magazine and the fulfilling of an obligation that every one of us is entrusted with.

Allah (Swt) says in the Quran "Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining al ma'roof and forbidding al munkar. And it is they who are successful."

All of us are in some way or another on a special mission to deliver a message brought down by previous Prophets. However, that mission to deliver this message can vary significantly whether it is through our tongues, actions, youth programs, Islamic media and through many other avenues.

I must admit that when we first started thinking about entering the field of dawah, we had serious reservations about spreading the beauty this religion has to offer due to our perceived lack of knowledge. That was until I was reminded of a simple yet elegant hadith- a hadith that has kept this magazine going for the past five years and should be used as a sign of encouragement to every Muslim in their dawah work.

The Prophet (S) was narrated to have said "Convey from me even if it is only one ayah (verse)." This simple hadith has opened

my eyes to so many things in the way I have lived my life over the past few years, which also teaches us numerous lessons. Firstly, calling someone to Islam (whether it be a Muslim or non-Muslim) is an individual obligation rather than a collective one. However, more importantly, although gaining knowledge is a critical aspect of Islam, the spreading of this message does not require a high level of scholarship, it is in fact a responsibility on each and every one of us according to our ability.

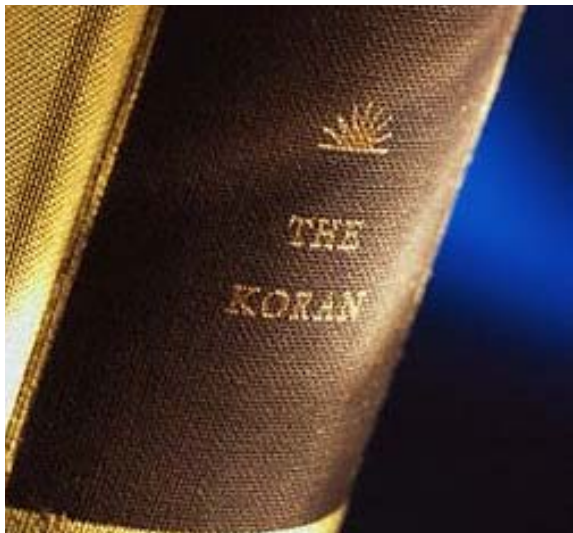
So ask yourself brothers and sisters, what can I do to spread this message our beloved Prophet (S) and his companions shed from their blood, sweet, tears, wealth and time to uphold? What are my strengths that I could utilise? How can I give back and what can I do? Jot them all down on paper, then set yourself some goals and go for it!

Alhamdulillah, the Message Magazine has gone from a black and white publication of 70 copies to a full colour magazine consisting of 5000 copies today. Persistency and patience are the keys to success. So I ask Allah (Swt) to make that path a path of ease, full of satisfaction and reward.

Finally, to commemorate our fifth year anniversary, this issue called 'five' will focus on major issues such as Salat, Charity, Sins, the Environment and much more. So I leave you to delve into our latest issue. Alternatively you can now visit our official website for 'The Message Magazine' at www.messagemagazine.com.au and download previous issues, view subscription options, use the discussion forums and lots more.

Your brother in Islam,
Mohammed Adra
Editor





S I E - K I S C O R Z E R

Five questions answered...

Question

Is it legitimate to help;

- a brother who you know is not supporting himself, does not want to try to support himself and is now having trouble
- a family who you know their father spends the families money on cigarettes not on goods for the children
- a brother who is taking advantage of you
- a brother who would rather sleep then help himself

Also, I would like to know who is more obliged to help a man in need, the man's wife or the man's brother?

Answer

In helping these people, we should be balanced in help so the person does not become reliant on others and may become motivated to do it themselves. In saying this, if you do help, you will no doubt get rewards for helping.

In regards to your final question, the wife comes before the brother.

Question

Is it Haram or Halal to adopt a child that has no parents?

Answer

The Prophet Muhammad (s) once said that a person who cares for an orphaned child will be in paradise with him, and motioned to show that they would be as close as two fingers of a single hand. An orphan himself, Muhammad (s) paid special attention to the care of children. He himself adopted a former slave and raised him with the same care as if he were his own son.

However, the Quran gives specific rules about the legal relationship between a child and his/her adoptive family.

Question

Is it haram to envy someone for their piety?

Answer

It is haram to envy someone if you want the good to be taken away from them. However, it is ok to envy someone by wanting the good for yourself and not to be taken away from the per-

son that you envy, and that is the quality of a Muslim.

Question

Sometimes I am not sure if a place is really Halal, what do I do? Is it ok to eat Kosher from the Jews?

Answer

You are requested by Islam to eat Halal meat which is slaughtered the Islamic way, if you doubt that a certain place is not halal when they say they are then leave it and go to a place which you do not doubt. As the prophet (s) said "leave what is doubtful for something that is not doubtful"

With Kosher of the Jews, it is Halal to eat it.

Remember, Allah knows best

Answers by Sheikh Shady Alsuleiman

If you have a question of your own. Visit sydneymuslimyouth.com.au and head for the forums to ask the sheikh questions about Islam

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“IMAN AND

Faith is indeed a blessing from Allah and should not be taken for granted. Just as it may increase and become fuller and stronger, it may also weaken and become less and less until it is minimal or non-existent. Hence it becomes very important for a Muslim to take steps not only to preserve their faith but also to increase it.

The uppermost branch of faith is the true, sincere, committed belief in *Laa ilaaha illaallah Muhammad Rasoolullah*. Iman has over seventy branches. The lowest or most basic branch is to remove something harmful from a pathway. Abu Hurairah (R) related that the Prophet (S) said: "Faith has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no God but Allah and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the path; and modesty is a branch of faith." (Muslim)

Basically, to do everything that Allah (Swt) has ordered us to do is a part of faith and to avoid all that He has asked us to avoid is a part of faith. A Muslim's level and strength of faith is based upon his attitude and approach when he fulfils this.

"Then we have given The Book for inheritance to such of our servants as We have chosen. But there are among them some who wrong their own souls, some who follow a middle course, and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds, that is the highest grace." Qur'an 35:32

Thus, man falls into one of the three following categories:

1 Dhaalim li Nafsihi: This person is self oppressed. He is constantly falling into sin and may be committing various acts of shirk.

2 Al- Muqtasid: he does only the basic obligations and is satisfied with this. He may also indulge in those things that are Makrooh (that which has been discouraged by Allah and His Prophet, (S) but not prohibited.

3 Saabiq bil Khaaraat: This person lives as if he were in a race with others in doing that which is liked by Allah. He does all of the obligatory deeds and not being satisfied with this, he will strive to do more of the nawafil (the optional acts in the sunnah). He will make every attempt to avoid the Makrooh acts in fear of what they may lead them to.

Iman and Hypocrisy is of extreme importance in our daily lives, as it reflects our behaviour, our manners, our faith in Allah, and His teachings. The word Hypocrisy is defined in Webster's dictionaries as: an act or a practice of feigning to be what one is not, or to feel what one does not feel; especially, the false assumption of goodness. Therefore, a hypocrite is a false pretender and dissembler to virtue or piety.

In the Islamic terminology, the word Hypocrisy is a substitute for 'Nifaq'. This word Nifaq has been mentioned in the Qur'an thirty-one times in different forms such as: Nifaq; Munafiqoon; Munafiqat; Munafiqeen, and Nifaqan.

In today's society, there are some faults that a person may acquire, nurture and establish within himself which affect his personal behaviour. The fault of hypocrisy is one of them. Allah hates those people who acquire this fault, and He therefore warns them that their punishment is indeed hell. Allah says in Sura At-Tauba: *God hath promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the rejecters of Faith, the fire of Hell; therein shall they dwell; sufficient is it for them: for them is the curse of God, and an enduring punishment. (9:68)*

Allah has also promised the hypocrites a heavy penalty by saying in Sura Nisa: *To the hypocrites give the glad*

HYPOCRISY ”

tidings that there is for them but a grievous penalty. Those who take the unbelievers as their leaders rather than the believers... (4:138-139) Dear Muslims: One may ask: how does a person act as a hypocrite? Or why is he a hypocrite? The answer could be any of the following:

1. A person who has no faith in Allah, His Messenger, and the Day of Judgment may act as a hypocrite. 2. A person who has weak faith may be trapped in his daily life to play the role of a hypocrite. 3. A person who lacks confidence in himself/herself may become a hypocrite. 4. A person who lacks security, morally, psychologically, or financially, may be led to be a hypocrite. 5. A person who is conceited, selfish, and who likes himself above all others, may play the game of hypocrisy so as to achieve his personal gains and to satisfy his ego

All of the above 5 signs are indicators of the behaviour of a hypocrite, including a person who seeks to please everybody even if it demands his cheating, lying or stealing. Allah says in this regard in Sura Al-Munafiqun: When the hypocrites come to thee, they say, 'We bear witness that thou art indeed the Apostle of God.' God knoweth that thou art indeed His Apostle, and God beareth witness that the hypocrites are indeed liars. (63:1)

Dear Muslims: These situations, factors and prerequisites may lead a person to be a hypocrite. The only way to cure this disease from people is that they should have faith in Allah, in His Messenger, Muhammad (S), in the Day of Judgment and in the teachings of Islam. Even if he/she has weak faith, he should try his/her best to strengthen it, and to enrich it daily. Therefore, it is a matter of having faith (Iman) or having no faith. Nifaq, hence is noticed and observed in those societies, in those families, and those individuals who, either have no faith, or who are weak in their faith.

Our beloved Messenger (S) mentioned to us the signs of a hypocrite are many among and thus should be wary of. Five signs which he (S) mentioned include:

1. When he speaks, he lies.
2. When he promises, he breaks it.
3. When he is entrusted, he betrays.
4. When he disputes, he acts immorally.
5. When he makes a pact, he makes pacts treacherously.

For this reason Prophet Muhammad (S) informed us that a hypocrite is a mischievous person. He said: You will find that the worst person is double-faced; he meets one group of people with one side of his face, while another with the other side. (Reported by Abu Hurayra - Agreed.)

Dear Muslims: Since this vice is most hated by Allah and His Messenger, and since the penalty is very heavy, may I request you to kindly check upon yourselves. Check your Iman, your personality, your character, your manners, your behaviour and your daily activities. Then try to find out whether you are acting like any of the above signs or like one of the companions of the Prophet (S). If any of these vices are having a foothold on you, may I request you kindly to get rid of it and to remove yourselves from it as soon as possible so as to be rewarded by Allah.

If you do not act immediately, remember that life is short, and who knows for how long you are to live! Death may be as close to us as a twinkling of an eye. Hence, we should be prepared to face Allah Almighty with happiness and not with sorrow or sadness.

May Almighty Allah bless us all. Ameen

Reference: An edited excerpt from:

<http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/increasefaith.htm>



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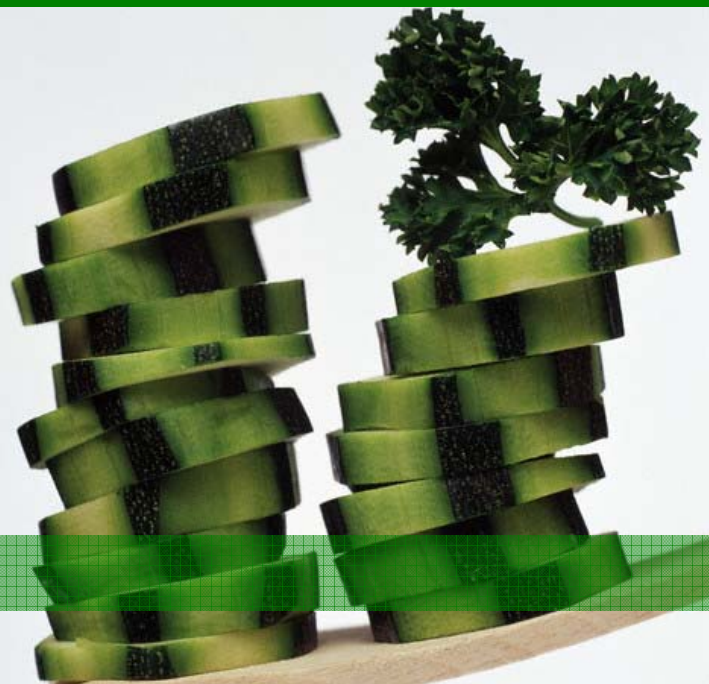


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5 Ways to be Green

"And He has subjected to you, as from Him, All that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect." 45: 13

Subhaanallah! What a wonderful and beautiful world we live in. Allah (swt) has created such a vast expanse of beauty for mankind to live in and to use, yet so many people take it for granted. Just look outside your window and behold the many things Allah (swt) has created for our use:

- The fresh, clean air which we pollute with our cars, factories and many other by-products of our life.
- The sweet, green grass that some people cover with a slab of concrete just so they don't have to care for it.
- The strong, shady trees that we chop down just because its leaves fill our gutters.
- The tiny, fluttering birds which we consider a pest because they wake us up early in the morning or create nests in our roofs.

There are many others things I could write about, but I only have a page limit! My message to you, fellow Muslims, is for you to start taking care of the world you live in! Don't take it for granted as it won't last forever. The more we take out of our environment, the less there will be for future generations to use.

We need to think and be green! That doesn't mean you have to fly all the way to the Amazon Rainforest and chain yourself to a tree! You can be green right here, in you very own home and local area. The most important thing you can do is to start each morning by looking outside and saying 'Sunhaanallah!'. Making supplications will remind you of what Allah (swt) has created and to care for it each day. The following are five simple ways to be 'green' in your own home. These are things normal, everyday people can do make our environment a cleaner and more sustainable place to live in.

1. RECYCLE/REUSE: It's amazing how much garbage humans can create. In 2005 NSW alone produced more than 5.6 million tonnes of waste!! We can help reduce the amount of garbage by taking advantage of recycling programs many local councils offer. It's as simple as putting aside all recyclable items and placing them in a recycling bin. How easy is that! Also, before throwing out an item consider the possibility of using it in a different way. For example; children love creating toys out of old containers and boxes.

2. CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY: Think about participating in this fantastic event. This year it was held on Sunday the 4th of March. For more details, check out the website, www.cleanup.com.au. You can gather up your family and friends and head to a local park, picnic spot or even the street you live in and give it a good clean. What a great example to set for children. Cleanliness is an attribute all Muslims should have. You can also check their website for becoming a conservation volunteer all year round, good for the environment, and good Dawah.

3. USE ENERGY EFFICIENT AND WATER SAVING DEVICES: So much water and energy is wasted each day and most often it's for something unnecessary. Consider changing showerheads and toilets to those that will save water. AAA-rated toilets use about 67% less water than standard toilets. Try using energy efficient light bulbs as it not only saves electricity but also saves you money.

If you have a large garden, what could be better than using rainwater sent to you from Allah (swt)! Why not buy a rainwater tank (since rain seems to be a little scarce at times)? Sydney Water now offers its customers a rebate when they purchase a rainwater tank. In the long run, a tank will save you water and money.

4. COMPOST: this is a great idea for those who love gardening. Not only does composting help cut down on garbage going into landfill, but it can also reduce greenhouse gases. Composting is not expensive at all. Your garden will love it as the soil produced makes a fabulous fertiliser. The following website gives great advice on how to start and manage a compost heap:
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/html/downtoearth/composting.htm#reduce

5. GET INVOLVED: Get out there and get involved in the environment. The Environment Protection Authority has various dates listed on its website for activities that you can participate in for example; National Tree Day and Keep Australia Beautiful Week. Another way you can get involved is to go on outings to parks, beaches, forests etc. Take your family with you and if you have children, take them also. Spending time exploring all the beautiful places Allah (swt) has created will help you appreciate the environment even more. Your children will learn to love and care for the environment too.

Your Sister in Islam, Meyrnah Khodr

Some websites to visit: www.livingthing.net.au and www.epa.nsw.gov.au Page 9



5 ways to give

For many people, the word charity usually holds religious connotations, so it is no surprise that helping the disadvantaged is a core belief for many of the world's great religions, namely Islam. The demand for altruism is increasing and often manifests itself in our daily lives – many people see the disparity between the rich and the poor on a daily basis, whether it is through witnessing people living in utter poverty or vicariously through the eyes of a malnourished child on the television screen.

It is often stated that charity is a form of justice for those in need, and it plays a vital role in balancing the social inequality that has pervaded society. As such, charity has been prescribed as a sacred duty for Muslims, thus enabling the able to systematically set aside some of their possessions for the disadvantaged.

In Islam, there are two forms of charity – there are the obligatory alms giving, known as *Zakat* and the voluntary form known as *Sadaqah*. These two variants constitute the foundations of charity in Islam. The word *Zakat* is derived from the word *Zaka* which means purification and as such, the act of alms giving is seen as purifying one's overall wealth.

The basis of *Zakat* is given in the Qur'an: *'Of their goods take alms, that so though might purify and sanctify them; and pray on their behalf, verily thy prayers are a source of security for them.'* (9:103)

When prompted, many Muslims would easily be able to recite the five pillars of Islam: bearing witness that there is no god but God and Muhammad is His prophet, establishing the prayer, giving *zakat*, hajj, and fasting during Ramadan. *Zakat* does not play a perfunctory role in the life of a Muslim; rather it is one of the five pillars of Islam which forms the foundation of Islamic beliefs, the acts of which draw the distinction between practising Muslims, nominal Muslims and non-Muslims.

There are innumerable ways to give to those in need but some of the five most popular are as follows:

1. Zakat-ul-Fitr

Zakat-ul-Fitr is a payment of the main food of the region (per head). The staple food source differs from region to region and may include wheat, dates, rice etc. *Zakat-ul-Fitr* is paid during the holy month of Ramadan by the head of the family for himself/herself and his/her dependants.

Ibn 'Umar said: *"Allah's Messenger enjoined the payment of one Sa` of dates or one Sa` of barley as Zakat-ul-Fitr on every Muslim slave or free, male or female, young or old, and he ordered that it be paid before the people went out to offer the 'Eid prayer."* (Bukhari)

2. Zakat on Wealth

This consists of all other types of *zakat*. Some of which include *zakat* on business, on savings, on income, crops, livestock, gold, minerals etc. The payment of *zakat* is incumbent on all Muslims. It is currently rendered as a 2.5% levy on most valuables and savings held for a full lunar year.

3. Sadaqah

Sadaqah comprises of many different forms of good deeds. It has been prescribed upon every Muslim and if circumstances allow, should be enacted daily. *Sadaqah* can range from the smallest acts of kindness, such as a smile or offering a glass of water to a thirsty person, to the most generous displays of selflessness such as donating a large sum of money to a charitable organisation. Removing a harmful object from the road is considered an act of charity, as is offering people assistance for menial tasks. There is no limit on *sadaqah*. The Prophet of Allah (S) said, *'your smile for your brother is sadaqah. Your removal of stones,*



ive Charity

*thorns
or bones from the paths of people is sadaqah. Your
guidance of a person who is lost is sadaqah.' (Bukhari)*

Every step a person takes in going to pray is a charity; a good word, a greeting and enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong are also considered acts of charity. Accordingly, the poor who might have nothing palpable to donate can offer sadaqah. In essence, every good deed is considered a *sadaqah*.

Sadaqah not only extends to humans but plant and animal life as well. Planting something a person, bird or animal later eats is also a charity. The prophet (S) stated: 'A Muslim does not plant, or sow anything from which a person, animal or anything eats but it is considered as sadaqah from him.' (Bukhari)

The Qur'an urges believers to care of the needy, orphans and other disadvantaged members of society. *'The believers ... are steadfast in prayers, and in whose wealth there is a right acknowledged, for the poor and the destitute. (Qur'an 70:22-24).*

4. Sadaqah Jariah

A sadaqah jariah is a continuous sadaqah that will enhance the lives of others on an ongoing basis. It is a philanthropic funding for social development that has long played an important role in the Islamic world. It encompasses many types of almsgiving such as donating a sizeable contribution to a charitable organisation, helping someone establish a business, assisting people to overcome their illnesses, offering scholarship funds to students, building wells, imparting valuable knowledge to others, building educational institutions, hospitals and so on. A sadaqah jariah is a sustainable sadaqah that remains a legacy for future generations.

5. Sponsoring an Orphan

Orphans hold a special place in Islam and are mentioned several times in the Qur'an. This emphasis engenders a sense of responsibility to those who have experienced such a loss. Islam encourages people to look after the welfare of orphans and as the following hadith suggests, to look after an orphan holds the promise of paradise:

"I, and the one who looks after an orphan, will be together like this in the next world", then he raised his index and middle fingers together. (Hadith Muslim)

This hadith also suggests that choosing the companionship of an orphan is akin to choosing the companionship of the Prophet (S). Orphans share an affinity with Prophet Muhammad (S) who himself became an orphan at the tender age of six.

Many Islamic and non-denominational organisations (Bayt-al-Zakat, Human Appeal International, Muslim Aid etc.) have orphan sponsor programs that only require a small fee – usually on a monthly basis.

Finally, the act of giving charity is not only material but can be behavioural as well. It should be purely for the sake of Allah (Swt) and the alms should be lawfully earned and must be of value to others. Importantly, it functions as a way to expiate past sins and is considered an act of worship, the importance of which is emphasised in the Qur'an:

"They ask you (O Muhammad) what they should spend in charity. Say: 'Whatever you spend with a good heart, give it to parents, relatives, orphans, the helpless, and travelers in need. Whatever good you do, God is aware of it.'" - The Holy Qur'an (2:215)

By Asma Fahmi

"The prayer...that's the mercy of Allah (Swt)! He allows us to call onto Him when we need Him, to connect to Him, to worship Him and follow His messenger".



five prayers

On a hot sunny day, where not a cloud can be found in the sky, a thirsty little boy named Ali walks with his family towards the desert. The whole city is out, wearing their humblest clothes, asking the Almighty for forgiveness to send down the rain. It hasn't rained for months and it's affecting the land, the crops, the animals and the people living there.

Upon arriving to the designated place, Ali was amazed. Everyone is here: his uncles and cousins, his friends from school, even his old neighbour that he hasn't seen for a while. The Sheikh who was leading the congregation reminded people to fear Allah (Swt) and to ask for His forgiveness. Then everyone lined up silently to get ready for the *Istiska* prayer (a prayer to ask Allah for water), foot to foot, shoulder to shoulder like a strong building, and the Imams Takbeer breaks the silence to commence the prayer.

As the Muslims were indulging in their *Istiska* prayer, the clouds were gathering up in huge numbers, becoming thicker and thicker and the day is becoming darker and darker until the sun is no longer visible. By the time the Imam said "Assalamu Alaikom Warahmatullah," announcing the end of the prayer, a loud thunder was making another announce-

ment: Allah Has accepted your prayer! It started raining non stop, pouring down like no other day! So much so, that people were jumping up and down from joy, while the Sheikh was in Sujood (prostration) thanking Allah (Swt) for the rain. Everyone indulged in hugs and exchanged congratulations due to their happiness. That night, Ali didn't go home thirsty, but rather had his thirst quenched from the mercy of Allah (Swt).

That's the mercy of Allah (Swt)! He allows us to call onto Him when we need Him, to connect to Him, to worship Him and follow His messenger.

Salat *Istiska* is just one of the prayers which the Prophet taught us to pray in special situations, these include:

Salat Istiska: When there is no rain, it was narrated that the Prophet (S) performed it numerous times in his life. It is recommended to leave the city (or town), where everyone leaves with their humblest clothes on their back.

Janaza Prayer: When a Muslim passes away, leaving this world on their way to the hereafter, Janaza Prayer is performed to ask Allah to forgive the deceased.

Tahajud Prayer: This prayer is performed after sleeping during the night, and waking up before fajr to pray to Allah (Swt). It was narrated in a hadeeth, that Allah Almighty descends down to the first heaven (in a way that suits His Majesty) every night, and calls out: Is there a repentant who wants to repent so that I accept his repentance? Is anyone asking for forgiveness so that I may forgive Him? Is there any one in need so I can grant his requests? Imagine, Allah (Swt) is calling to the people, and everyone is asleep apart from you. You are up in *Tahajud*, asking Allah for forgiveness, asking Allah to increase your Iman, to help you in your marriage, to help you in all the things you can possibly think of, how beautiful would that be?

Tahajud Prayer is a very special prayer, and you can pray it on any or every night of the year. You can pray as little as 2 units of prayer or do as many as you want. It was narrated that the Prophet (S) would constantly pray *Tahajud* until his feet would swell up from the length of standing.

Istikhara Prayer: Have you ever been in a situation where you are unsure of what path to take? Should I do this course at



university or this course? Should I accept this position of employment or the other? Should I accept this brother who is asking for my hand in marriage or shouldn't I? Ease your mind and rid yourself of your uncertainty by asking Allah through *Istikhara Prayer*. Who is there better to ask than Allah? He will place the goodness in that matter of yours and InshaAllah He will assist you in your decision.

Witr Prayer: Had a long day? Do you want to end it in peace? Then pray your witr prayer every night before you sleep! Witr is prayed in odd numbers of rakaat, meaning you can pray 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 or 11.

(Note, these prayers are not compulsory, however great reward is given to those who perform them, you can find out more about them in a book called 'Fiqh Al Sunna' by Sayid Sabbeq, or ask your local Sheikh)

We go back in time, to our beloved Prophet (S), in his final moments where the city of Medina stood still. Everyone's concern is the Messenger, and in these very last moments the Prophet (S) passed on the last piece of advice to his nation- its sound has echoed throughout

the centuries with the following words "Your prayers, your prayers and whatever you can hold on to, your prayers your prayers and whatever you can hold on to" demonstrating the importance of prayer. This was the very last advice our beloved Prophet (S) sent to us. What do we do with it? Should we accept his advice and take care of our prayers, or rather forget about it and wait for the consequences?

Brothers and sisters, if you ever need to wipe off some sins, if you're ever confused about a matter, if you need guidance, if you need the rain, then rush to your prayer, stand humbly in front of your Lord, call unto Him and ask Him to forgive you. Stay long in your sujood (prostration), and speak to Him in your own language and dialect. Tell Him that you love Him and want to be close to Him. Ask Allah to aid you in your worships, to aid the Muslims all over the world, to accept your dua for forgiveness, and to be elevated on the day of judgement.

"Your prayers, your prayers and whatever you can hold on to..." Brothers and

sisters let us perfect our prayers: that connection between us and the Almighty, the light that we have in this dark world, the ship that we can sail on in this drowning world.

Don't neglect or undermine it, verily it can take you to heaven or hell!

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A TRAGIC HISTORY

So many times we are faced with difficulties in our lives where we think we have reached our limit in patience and met our match in endurance. We reach a stage with our parents, partners, children, work, dawah commitments and other responsibilities where we feel that this is the last straw; it's time to burst, to quit, to throw in the towel.

We feel that it's justified, we talk to other people about it and ask for help. They give us support and encouragement and make us feel comfortable with ourselves. We collectively convince ourselves that enough is enough and that things ought to be in moderation because after all, everything has its limits right! Wrong.

This is not another attempt to deny that problems exist in this world and that the solution is a simple – 'be patient brother/sister'. I'm talking about someone who's been there and done that. Someone who's had one of the worst experiences in a life time and took it all in his stride...

He didn't throw in the towel, he wasn't up in arms, he didn't so much as complain.

Our Prophet and Messenger peace be upon him, our example to follow in sorrow, the ample example, our idol who deserves the title. The supreme human being, who fulfilled all his roles and achieved all his goals: Muhammad the Son of Abdullah.

As a matter of fact, consider this a challenge. You think you have problems? You think the world has conspired against you and all of a sudden everyone and everything is out to get you? You think you have a valid reason to give up? Well beat this.

I wouldn't want to list all the tragedies in the life of the Messenger; the Seerah is the best source for that. Let me list but a small number of major issues, let's say... 5?

Tragedy 1: A study conducted in 1997 by the Health Transition Review outlines that orphaned children who were adopted by parents

and schools typically do not receive the necessary emotional and psychological support needed to function as healthy adults in the future, due to various reasons. The 193 children in the study developed physical and psychological weaknesses, and suffered from the consequent lack of attention that would naturally be remedied by parents.

This sounds about right, right? Yet somehow, why do we expect that the Messenger had it any different? Having his father die before he was born and his mother die before he got to know her would have devastating effects.

If that was not enough for a very unstable childhood, his next bearer, his grandfather also died leaving him in the hands of his uncle Abu Taleb. Sounds like something from a soap opera if you ask me.

A simple modern prediction would tell you that the typical lifestyle of an average child of such a background would be a life of alcohol, drugs and eventually suicide – right?

In this case? **Very** wrong.

Tragedy 2: So he gets sent as a Messenger to mankind! The caller to Jannah with the permission of Allah! The gatekeeper to the pleasure of Lord of the Universe. Consider the honor, the esteem, the heavy weight in the heavens and earth for this individual. Can you imagine the prestige of the family and the divine nobility from the creator that falls on their lap? How fortunate?!

How excited and happy were his family?

Excited? Happy? Who? The uncle who cursed him and damned him for calling them to prepare for the hereafter? The other uncles who would rage and prepare war after war to crush him and his followers? The family who conspired and planned to destroy Islam from its root calling on all hypocrites and tribes in the Arabic peninsula to help? Yeah right!

The responsible elders, the wise counsel of Quraish, the respected authority figures of Mecca all let him down. His own flesh and blood prepared nothing but blood for him and his followers. His own uncles and cousins would inflict pain and torture upon him and his companions. How disappointing...

His family is against him, they're offering no support whatsoever, there's no point going against all those people and sticking out like a sore thumb like that right?

In this case? **Very** wrong.

Tragedy 3: Marriage can be such a beautiful nest of happiness, comfort and belonging. The mental and emotional satisfaction built in a marriage will form the backbone in anyone's lifestyle. A happy and working marriage will bear its fruit on an individual with so much stability, focus and confidence. It provides a solid social foundation for the fortunate couples and grants strength in the adversities of life.

In the year of Sadness, the Messenger loses not only the social support for the Message and physical being of his uncle Abu Taleb, but two months later, the love of his heart and the rest of his mind, Khadijah Bint Khuwailid passed away in the 10th year of the Message. She passed away as a result of the brutal embargo on all the Muslims at the time along with many close companions of the Messenger.

Can you imagine the 'depression', the deep feeling of loss and emptiness after losing of the lights of his life? He must have given up on the Message at that stage for sure, right?

In this case? **Very** wrong.

Tragedy 4: Muhammad was a messenger; his job was to deliver the message. He loves the believers and grieves over the non believers. He would try day and night to show people the light and spread the beauty of Islam. He comes up with a plan to expand and present the Message to the people of Taa'if.

A wonderful opportunity presents itself! Genius! The religion is beautiful, they'll embrace it, they'll be saved from the hellfire and the religion will have a new home, a stronghold from which the foundations can be established and Islam can enter into a new era! Imagine all the people who will be saved from the hellfire!?

So what happens? He is rejected, kicked out of the city, pelted with rocks and chased out of the town by the kids and fools. This is the payment for all the success and safety which he envisioned for them.

You'd think he would have just hung up his boots and said – that's it, I'm sick of this, I can't do it anymore? Sounds like anyone one of us doesn't it? Ever had an idea rejected? A product fail? You know the feeling?

Surely he must have assumed that there was no point anymore, right?

In this case? **Very** wrong. Even when he got the opportunity, he had no intention of revenge as he hoped that one day, things will change – Allahu Akbar, the perseverance!

Tragedy 5: There will be a day of judgment and everyone will be held accountable for their deeds. Along will come the Messenger of Mercy so excited to see his huge nation and what they got up to after him. What will be reported to him?

Dissent, grudges, blood shed, splits, cults, sects, groupies, wars, crimes, interest, adultery, lies, disunity, neglect of the prayer, of Zakat and pillars of the religion, disrespect of Allah and Islam, Muslims being slaughtered day and night, lands of the Muslims taken in broad daylight, Muslims selling away other Muslims and selling away lands and the religion for a cheap price in this world, back-biting and public slandering of Allah and His Messenger. Can you imagine his grief? Can you?

I think you get the picture after all of these points. Let's complain to Allah brothers and sisters, let's return to Allah and complain to him about our affairs as a true slave would. Let's soldier on in our journey towards pleasing Him alone and attaining his pleasure...

If all of these experiences in the life of the perfect man teach us one thing, it's that there's no room for sooks and quitters amongst the pious slaves of Allah...

May Allah make us steadfast on His religion.

By Muhammad Khodr



Hadith of the Month

*The Prophet (S) said: "Take advantage of five before five: You're youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you become occupied, **and your life before your death.**" (Al-Baihaqi)*

"Knock knock"

"Who's there?"

"The Angel of Death"

"But I'm not ready yet!"

It's ten past four in the morning as Mazen sits down with his laptop in front of him, frantically trying to complete his essay before its due time at 9am. The window in his disarrayed room is fully swung open to the main road; with the sound of roadwork near by as council workers also try to finish their job by their deadline. The time is ticking; the entire house is silent despite the hushed tapping of Mazen's keyboard. He must finish before the cut off, as this will make or break his degree!

A few moments later, the sweet melodious sound of the Athaan is echoed throughout the streets to awaken all the Muslims from their deep slumber. Mazen hears the call to prayer, but dismisses it, and thinks to himself that he will pray as soon as he finishes. Otherwise, he will offer his salaah with his essay on his mind, and he would rather not degrade his salaah that way. He continues on, tapping away on his keyboard with his bloodshot, tired eyes...

The morning progresses on, as the darkness outside envelops into light. The sun has risen into the sky, beaming its sunlight slowly and steadily into Mazen's room. He realizes that he has missed fajr prayer, as it has become shurooq time. Unexpectedly, a council worker accidentally has a malfunction with his work-truck outside and drops a gigantic heap of wasted shrapnel, dust and wood, forming a gust which lurks its way into Mazen's room. As he takes a breath, the dust aggressively works its way through to his airways and lungs, aggressively causing his airways to spasm out of control. Mazen hysterically tries to gasp for air, as his airways contract violently, leaving little chance for him to act rationally. He tries to use his inhaler to control his asthma attack, but alas it was not working to his avail. His mother rushes to his room and finds her son fighting for his life, trying to combat his asthmatic fit. She calls the ambulance frantically whilst Mazen's father tries to calm him down, and helping him try his inhaler again. With another desperate attempt, Mazen struggles with his inhaler and manages to draw in his medication, which slowly controls his contracting airways, giving him the chance to breathe and regain normal bodily order. The ambulance arrives a few minutes later, only to find Mazen in a state of emotional distress. After appropriate consultation with his parents, the ambulance takes him away to the hospital for further tests to ensure his health and safety. Mazen's mother rides the ambulance with him, in a teary state. During this time, he thinks to himself: "Allah sent me a few specks of dust to give me a violent reminder... how could I have faced Him without praying fajr on time? Alhamdulillah for this reminder, alhamdulillah, alhamdulillah."

Many of us have heard others telling us, "Brother/sister, remember death constantly..." It has almost become a Muslim cliché. However, insha Allah we can realize that we are not invincible, even during our youth, for Allah can send a simple speck of dust to send us back to reality. We should also realize that nothing is more important than serving and seeking the pleasure of Allah. After all, Mazen was about to sell his afterlife for a university essay.

Besides, the analogy mentioned in the beginning is not entirely true: The Angel of Death will not wait for you to say "I'm not ready yet!" He will not even knock on your door; rather he means business and will not even ask for your permission to take your soul!

May Allah keep us steadfast on His religion. Ameen

Your brother in Islam

Hesham Mourad

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HOMOUS WITH MEAT :: TABBOULEH :: SALADE :: KAFTA :: SHISH KEBAB

SINFUL

Major sins tend to be similar across various religions; they also tend to reflect what is deemed criminal activity, sins such as Murder, Rape, Theft, Abuse, Etc. Islam also recognises the above as being despicable sins which Almighty Allah has told us to abstain from, or be prepared for the consequences in this world and the next. However the purpose of this article is not to discuss the above sins, because the vast majority of Muslims and indeed society recognise these major acts of indiscretion and avoid committing them.

The objective here is to remind us (myself included), about five major sins that we are prone to commit day to day and tend to forget just how serious the punishments are for committing these sins.

Disrespecting Parents / Abandoning relatives

After Allah and his messenger (S), our parents should be the most beloved to us.

They raised us with struggle and sacrifice; they are our safety-net if things don't go as planned, a parent's love towards their children is pure, unconditional and unrelenting.

Abu Hurairah reported that a man asked: "Messenger of Allah, who is the most deserving of friendly care from me?" He replied: "Your Mother," He asked who came next and He (the Prophet) replied: "Your Mother." He asked who came next and He (the Prophet) replied: "Your Mother", He asked who came next and He (the Prophet) replied: "Your Father" (Bukhari and Muslim). The prophet Muhammad (S) emphasized on the duty of care of a child towards his mother; a mother's love and tenderness to her child eclipses everything else, in addition to enduring child birth, breast feeding and sleepless nights.

Allah the Most High Says: "And your Lord has decreed that you worship no one else except Him and that you treat your parents well. If one or both of them reach old age along with you, never say "Uff!" to them nor repulse them, but (rather) speak to them with words of honour. And, out of mercy, lower to them the wing of humility and say: "My Lord, have mercy on them, as they took care of me when I was little." (Al-Isra 17:32-34). We must remind ourselves that our parents have done a lot for us, and we are indebted to them for many reasons, showing them any form of disrespect is a major sin: one that is hated from our Lord Allah and his messenger.

Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Messenger (S), who said:

"Four (kinds of) people deserve Allah not letting them enter his garden or not letting them taste his favours: 1) One addicted to wine, 2) One who accepts interest, 3) One who unjustly consumes the property of orphans, 4) And one who is undutiful to his parents, except the one who repents."

Showing Off / Pride

The Prophet Muhammad (S) said: "The one who has a grain of pride in his heart will not enter the Garden (paradise)" (Muslim). It may surprise a person that in Islam showing off is a Major sin!

In-fact one of the attributes of a true believer is to be humble and grateful. Showing off and having pride is the opposite of humility, hence one could conclude that this sin is also a quality that can be attributed to a disbeliever, highlighting the severity of this sin.

Allah's Messenger said: "The greatest fear I have about you (Muslims) is minor Shirk".

When asked what minor Shirk was, the messenger of Allah responded by saying: "That is doing good deeds for show. On the day when Allah most high will reward people for their deeds, He will tell them, go to those people for whose attention and pride you did these deeds, and see if they will reward you (Ahmad). It is important for Muslims to be righteous and to perform good deeds, however it is of greater importance that we correct our intention before we execute each deed and make sure we are doing it for the sake of Allah, and not to seek pleasure from those around us. We are all Allah's slaves and only He can judge whom among us are better than the other, for those of us that insist on boasting, showing off and being engulfed in pride must prepare for Allah's anger...

Ibn Umar reported Allah's Messenger, who said: "Any man who walks haughtily and considers himself great will not meet Allah without His being angry with him."

Recounting favours

"Hey brother I need I favour, come on...remember two weeks ago when I did such and such for you?". How many of us have had similar dialogue with someone we have known at some stage of our lives? Sometimes it is so easy to forget that recounting favours is a major sin in Islam, it is also a sin which is committed by so many of us whether it be out of ignorance, recklessness or possibly even committed intentionally.

FIVE

Allah Most high says: "O you who believe, do not render your charity vain by reminders (of your kindness) and by injury." (Al-Baqarah 2:264). A well known scholar has also been quoted to say: "Reminding (the recipient) of a favour destroys the gratitude shown for it, and being proud of a deed destroys its reward."

"...The one who keeps reminding another of his favours he has done for him, and the one addicted to alcohol will not enter the Garden." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Constantly missing Friday prayer(S) without excuse

The benefits of praying in congregation are immense. Abu Hurairah reported the Messenger (S), who said: "A man's prayer in congregation is 27 times as valuable as his prayer in his house, and in his shop; for when he makes Wudu (washing for prayer), doing it well, and then goes out to the mosque having no other reason than prayer for going out, he does not take a (single) step without being raised a degree for it and having a sin forgiven for it, and when he prays, the angels continue to bless him as long as he is in his place of prayer." (Bukhari and Muslim)

In this case constantly missing Friday prayer is a major sin which all of us most strive to avoid, for we cannot possibly bear the punishment. Allah Most High Says: "A day when the truth will be uncovered and they will be called upon to prostrate but they will not be able to; with their eyes cast down, disgrace will overwhelm them. And before, they were called upon to prostrate while they were whole." (Al-Qalam 68: 42-43)

Sa'id ibn Mussayyab said: "They heard 'Come to Salat, come to success' (the words of the call to prayer), and they did not respond when they were in good health. Therefore, on the day of resurrection, disgrace and regret will cover them."

Abu Hurairah (R) report Allah's Messenger (S), who said: "I intended that I should command my young men to gather bundles of fuel for me, and then to order a person to lead the prayer, and then to burn the houses of those persons who pray in their houses without any excuse." (Muslim)

Backbiting

We conclude with the sin of backbiting (talking behind people's backs); because this sin has become so widespread that it has become part of the very fabric of society. There are even entertainment channels dedicated to gossip and backbiting, endorsing and encouraging such behaviour. This trend should be very alarming and concerning to every Muslim, Backbiting and slander are forbidden by Allah, as it causes hostilities in one's home, work and community.

"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion, in deed some suspicions are sins. And spy not neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah, verily, Allah is The One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful" (Qur'an 49: 12). The final messenger of Allah (S) defines the difference between Backbiting and Slander for all Muslims to abide by:

Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (S) said: "Do you know what backbiting is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He then said, "It is to say something about your brother that he would dislike." Someone asked him, "But what if what I say is true?" The Messenger of Allah said, "If what you say about him is true, you are backbiting him, but if it is not true then you have slandered him."

On the Day of Resurrection both the wrongdoer (backbiter/slanderer) and the wronged will stand before for Lord of mankind. Allah will then give this wronged person from the good deeds of the person who wronged him to compensate for the act of backbiting.

Inshallah this article can serve as a reminder for all of us to abstain from the above sins, and increase the awareness of our actions. Allah is swift in punishment, but He is also the most Merciful! Allah says to the believers in a Hadith –ul-Qudsi.

"O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me, and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth, and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it."

So repent to Allah today and Insha Allah let us all make intention to refrain from committing these sins. May Allah shower you with his mercy.

Your Brother in Islam...

Muhammad Hafiz a.k.a Ronnie Mikati

One Call, One Message...

Sara

I came to Islam by a long & circuitous route. My family background is Christian (Presbyterian). I accepted the teachings without question until my teens. In my 20's my faith diminished to such an extent that my once strong belief in God no longer existed. For some years, I lived in what could only be described as a spiritual desert! I believed in nothing; but this did not bring me any peace of mind; quite the opposite. I started searching for a way to achieve inner calm and divest myself of the anger that was eating me up.

I started to explore Buddhism and felt it held the answers I sought. I was a Buddhist for about 7 years but then I became curious about Islam. I had met and befriended several Muslims at work and had always been struck by "something" about them so I decided to do something about my almost total ignorance of Islam. I got myself an English Qur'an and several books about Islam. After about a year of consideration, I had to be sure I was doing the right thing for the right reasons, I finally said the Shahada in January, 2006. During the Ramadan fast, someone at work asked one of my Muslim friends "Why would you want her, she's already been a Christian and a Buddhist?" His reply expressed perfectly how I now feel; "She has finally got it right!"

Mashala

Being brought up in a Christian family, my mother and her family were Church of England and my father was Catholic. Neither of these religions seemed to be right because so many things did not add up, but I had a strong faith that there was only one God and I longed a

desire to know more. I prayed often that God would lead me to the right path. This was until one day I was watching the news, I heard a young Lebanese Muslim guy received 55 years for Gang rape. 55years??? I thought to myself, "hang on a minute did they say Lebanese Muslim", I knew what Lebanese was but "what is a Muslim?" I thought about this and I could not understand why but I was filled with an unexplainable burning feeling, not anger; I don't know what it was but I had a strong desire to contact this person and his family and offer help. Being a victim of rape myself I did not know why I had such a strong feeling to contact this family.

Eventually I managed to write to them. A reply came back from the family who invited me to their home. They were amazed by my name from the moment they met me and told me what it meant. This led them to talking to me about Islam. I felt incredible peace, it felt right. I asked questions and they gave me books to read. Reading, yuck! I hated reading but when I went home, I read and read and read. It all made sense.

Subhan Allah several things in my life have led me to the truth, alhumdulillah alhumdulillah, alhumdulillah I am Muslim I have peace and comfort knowing that Allah (Swt) has guided me to the right path.

Eina

Churches filled with candles, walls covered with pictures of saints, one after the other we would bow down kissing the pictures, the crucifix and the hand of the priest. As a Macedonian Orthodox this was my religion. We just followed a religious ritual that was orchestrated by culture. I was 12 when the seed of Islam was first

planted in my heart. My family would say that we are all different and that there was a religion given to every race. I left it at that, understanding that Islam was for them, not us. Trials and hardships stained my soul. I was only 18 when I became a mother, and my journey for the truth continued, and became a 'Born Again Christian'.

Time and time again I would question doctrine that just didn't stick, ignoring gaps because I liked being part of something. I was 30 when I left the Church and my marriage, a single mum holding on to the hope of that 'better day'. Islam had started to re-surface, the little tap at the 12 yr olds door became a thump. It couldn't be ignored. A dear sister that I worked with beautifully shared Islam with me, teaching me small amounts at a time that always left me thirsting for more.

A brother gave me the Qur'an and other important material that would prove to me the truth was there. The scientific proofs of the infallibility of the Qur'an tipped the scales. I was blown away when I discovered the rights of a Muslim woman. The respectful liberation that belongs to me is so far away from how society views the treatment of women in Islam. Loving, worshipping and faith in the one God (Allah) made sense. Here was a religion that had an answer for every situation in life. For 32 years I had governed my life always hitting a brick wall. It was time now that I let go and placed my complete faith and trust in Allah (Swt) to guide me. On November 19th 2006 I became a Muslim. Subhan Allah my 'better day' had come and it was my best.

Jeff

I was born and bred in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. You could say I was a Catholic

Islam

Finding the Truth: Five Ways People Have Come to Islam

junkie! I had a dream that I wanted to work for the Catholic Church. I graduated from university and applied for a diocesan-based position, working with intellectually disabled people. In this position, I was able to attend many in-service training courses on the Church, Jesus, and God. What I began to discover was just how much the Catholic Church had lost hold of its grass roots and had become institutionalized. While I was working in this position, I met my future wife, who had converted to Catholicism. Eventually, I ended up working at another local Catholic school but it became evident by the end of 1999 that I could not keep on teaching. Subsequently, I was laid off from my job.

It was then that I lost all faith in the Church. I thought it was depression, yet it was something deeper. Little did I know my wife was also beginning to have reservations about the Catholic Church. My studies revealed a church that was created by men and riddled with corruption, that often threw out those who questioned it or were a burden, and this is what had happened to me. My wife already had questions. She found that she had become part of a church that was full of inconsistencies. She had studied Islam while studying religion at the University of New England in Australia. In Islam, she had found a religion that held faith in God, preached peace and equality for all, and wasn't afraid to answer a lot of hard questions, unlike what she had found in Catholicism.

In 2001, she became a Muslim about a month before I did. She began wearing a hijab and dressing modestly. My turning point came about one month after my wife unofficially reverted. During that month, I had become very disappointed in what my Church was, and during a sermon, the priest said, "If all Christians treated each other with respect, we would not have so many divisions." It was then the penny

dropped. All Muslims treat each other with respect, men and women have equal status, and there is no hierarchy. In the Qur'an, it is said, [O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.] (Al-Hujurat 49:13). I discovered that I had already been living my life with a lot of Islamic ideas — giving to the poor; seeing people as equals. Throughout my life, God was leading me to Islam; I just didn't know it.

Ayesha

My name is Ayesha. I am 26 years old, I am Australian, half-German and a revert to Islam. I was married at the age of 18 years to a Muslim man; we were married for 3 years. 2 years of that life, we had a very happy marriage, the last year of our marriage; my husband became extremely violent towards me and also to his family members due to problems that kept happening to him in life. Our marriage eventually ended in divorce as I couldn't handle any more pain any longer.

When I got divorced, I asked myself "was it his religion that permitted him to treat women like he did"? So I went to an Islamic Bookstore and purchased a book on marriage, went home, read the book and fell in love with how many rights a Muslim woman has and how much a woman is honored in Islam. Right then I knew that no matter how many Muslim men don't practice their deen or display respect to women, it is not Islam that results in them performing such horrendous acts, rather it is either their culture, upbringing, personality or just plain arrogance or ignorance of what the Quran truly teaches us all.

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Waiting for the Day

They ask you about the Hour (Day of resurrection): "When is its appointed time?" Last year, Sheikh Shady Al Suleiman gave a series of lectures at Lakemba Mosque on the Hereafter. The series began with the signs of the day of judgement and the response from those who attended was overwhelming. Due to the popularity of this topic, The Message magazine thought it would be appropriate to include a summary of some of the points covered in our "Five" issue. Inshallah what follows is a brief outline of five of the many relevant minor signs of the Hour.

1. The construction of high buildings

Narrated Abu Huraira: "One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, a man came and asked, "What is faith?" Allah's Apostle replied, "Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Messengers, and to believe in Resurrection." Then he further asked, "What is Islam?" Allah's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan." Then he further asked, "What is Ihsan (perfection)?" Allah's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you." **Then he further asked, "When will the Hour be established?" Allah's Apostle replied, "The answerer has no better knowledge than the questioner. But I will inform you about its signs"** The Prophet said, "When the female slave gives birth to her master, then that is from its signs, and when you see the barefooted, naked, poor, shepherds of sheep competing with one another in the construction of higher buildings, then that is from its signs." The man then left and the Prophet asked his companions to call him back, but they could not find anyone. Then the Prophet said, "That was Jibrael (Gabriel) who came to teach the people about the affairs of their religion." (Muslim, Bukhari)

The common theme in the aforementioned Hadith is that authority will be delegated to those not worthy, which is yet another sign of the coming of the day of judgement: "...When the power or authority comes in the hands of unfit persons, then wait for the hour (Doomsday)." (Bukhari). In this case, unsuitable, ignorant individuals will attain wealth and enjoy leadership positions, subsequently corrupting religious and worldly matters. We see this day after day. Listening to the news of how random individuals are heading up massive corporations, corrupting and cheating the system. A product of their relation to power and wealth is the buildings which are increasingly getting higher as time passes. Sadly, we do not need to look to the west to see this fruition. Instead we can visit the city of Mecca and observe the continuous construction of ridiculously high buildings whose foundations have been established less than 500m outside of the boundary of the Haram. This is indeed a highly relevant sign for those who wish to reflect.

2. The disappearance of knowledge and the appearance of ignorance

Narrated by Abu Huraira (R): The Prophet (S) said, "(Religious) knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious scholars) ('ulama'), ignorance (in religion) and *Al Fitān* (trials and afflictions etc.) will appear; and *Harj* will increase." It was asked, "What is *Harj*, O Allah's Messenger?" He replied by beckoning with his hand indicating "killing." (Bukhari)

What is meant by this Hadith is that there will come a time before the Hour

when the Qur'an will be removed from the hearts of men and women, and ignorance will become widespread. Life will continue until there comes a day when there is not a single believing soul left on earth since the Rasul (S) informed us that "The Hour will not arrive upon anyone who says, 'Allah, Allah,' and it will not arrive except upon the most evil of people."

Another authentic Hadith which elaborates further on the previous narrations is as follows: 'Abullah bin 'Amr (R) reported that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "Verily, Allah does not seize knowledge by force, taking it forcefully from the people; instead, He takes away knowledge by the death of scholars, until there remains no scholar. The people will take ignorant leaders, who will be asked, and who will rule with knowledge. They are misguided and they will misguide others." (Bukhari). The quality of believers was at its peak during the life of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (S). Year upon year, we look around and can not say that the number of true, learned believers is increasing. Rather it is quite the contrary. Innovation has become common and as valuable religious knowledge begins to perish, people will look for guidance from those who do not have the capacity to offer such guidance. Subsequently, true Islam will die and soon after major signs of the Day of Judgement will appear more frequently until mankind is finally questioned on their deeds.

3. Wishing for death

Abu Hurairah (R) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say: "The Hour will not arrive until a man passes by the grave of another man and says, 'Would that I were in his place.'" (Bukhari, Muslim). Some people have wrongly assumed that a man will make this statement because of debt that has taken over him. This is in fact false. The correct interpretation of this Hadith addresses the affliction that man will experience. Humans will encounter such a great deal of suffering and hardship that it will eventually impel them to prefer death over this life. It seems society is starting to believe that those who have passed away are "rested" compared to the misery we not only experience but also fall witness to on a daily basis. One of the reasons as to why these calamities and problems occur is again due to the lack of knowledge and the prevalence of ignorance. As people abandon Islam, they commit sins and acts of disobedience and violate the essence of Islam through their actions and words. These tribulations will weigh so heavily on Muslims and other individuals that he would prefer death so that he may escape his problems.

4. Time will pass rapidly

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) said: "The Hour will not come to pass until knowledge will be seized, earthquakes occur frequently, time converges (scholars have different opinions about this saying. Some understand it literally, others say it points to the nearness of the Day of Resurrection, and yet others say it means that people will not be blessed in their time, and so day and night will go by quickly for them), tribulations become widespread, and *al Haraj* occurs often- and it (*al Haraj*) is much killing; and not until wealth increases and flows among you." (Bukhari)

"Time will converge" is explained in another Hadith, in which the Prophet said: "The Hour will not come to pass until time converges, so that a year becomes like a month, a month becomes like a week, a week becomes like a day, a

Day of Judgment?

5 Signs of the Hour

day becomes like an hour, and an hour becomes like the burning of a palm leaf." (Al Tirmidhi, Ahmad). It is largely during our time that this Hadith is better understood. It is possible that blessings have been removed from everything we do; food never seems to satisfy our hunger, water never seems to quench our thirst, and in particular, 24 hours in a day is inadequate to get a few chores done... or is it? Perhaps we have been deceiving ourselves by prioritising worthless daily activities over recitation of the Qur'an or the remembrance of Allah. It is possible that as Shaitan gains a stronger hold over us, we slowly give in and allow unimportant chores to define the patterns of our day. Consequently, people globally begin to feel the constraints of time because the 'to-do' list of the 21st century has expanded so dramatically that it is impossible to physically complete them in a day. However, should we turn our attention to Allah, then Allah will turn His attention to us. Ask yourself, what is written on my list for tomorrow? Now take a pen and add: read three lines from the Qur'an, and if you do not see the blessings and rewards for it in this life, then insha'Allah Allah has a greater reward waiting in the next.

5. Exclusive greetings, widespread trade and severance of family ties

"Verily, these (events) will occur before the Hour: greetings of peace will be extended only to specific (people); trade will spread, to the extent that a woman will help her husband in his business; ties of family relations will be cut off; false testimony (i.e., false testimony will be given on a widespread scale; truthful testimony will be kept hidden; and the pen (i.e., writing) will become widespread." (Ahmad)

We are all guilty of limiting our greetings to those we know. Think about the number of times a sister has passed another visible Muslim sister and restricts herself from extending a greeting. The same applies for brothers who pass another brother with a beard for instance, and again do not extend their greetings. Many do it out of embarrassment, some do it out of ignorance, but it's odd that so many of us identify a Muslim as a stranger on the street rather than a brother or sister in Islam. Unfortunately this incessant refusal to say "As Salamu Alaikom," to another Muslim is a very clear sign of the coming of the Hour since the Prophet (S) said: "Verily, one of the signs of the Hour is that greetings will be extended to acquaintances only" (Ahmad). We need only to go to the Masjid to notice this phenomenon. Additionally, we see trade growing at an unprecedented rate, and women assisting their husbands in business. Muslims are also letting go of family ties and limiting their visits to family to allow room for the completion of other daily activities, all the while forgetting that the family unit is the backbone of society. The final signs mentioned in the Hadith make reference to lies or "false testimony" which exists in courtrooms, on streets and even in the home. As most of the signs of the Hour are negative events or practices, we must endeavour to steer clear of perpetuating such practices.

The evidence is clear. If we truly believed and understood in what Allah has revealed about the affairs of the Hereafter, our thoughts would be completely consumed by matters concerning the Hereafter. However, we bother ourselves with worldly matters and give in to worldly desires not knowing what lies ahead. As the saying goes, 'out of sight, out of mind.' By human standards, the day may seem far off, but it is indeed close. Our Ummah must not walk around blindly because the Messenger of Allah was heard to have made the following statements, whilst gesturing with his index and middle fingers, "I and the Hour have been sent like this" (Muslim) and "The lifespan of this ummah, in comparison with that past nations, is like the time from 'Asr prayer until the sun set.'" (Bukhari)

Brothers and sisters, the Rasul (S) compared our existence in this world to the time between 'Asr and Maghrib. 1400 years has already passed. How many more years could possibly be left? Accountability is a serious issue, so give it the attention it deserves. Do not be of those who are "negligent of the terror that has almost come upon them and has nearly encompassed them," (al Ashqar, vol 5, p150) instead, strive to ensure we are united with our Prophet in the highest rank of Paradise.

And Allah knows best.

Your Sister in Islam, Manal Mikati

Comments and criticisms welcome.

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"...The knowledge of it rests with my Lord alone..." (The Noble Qur'an, 7:187)



Amusements

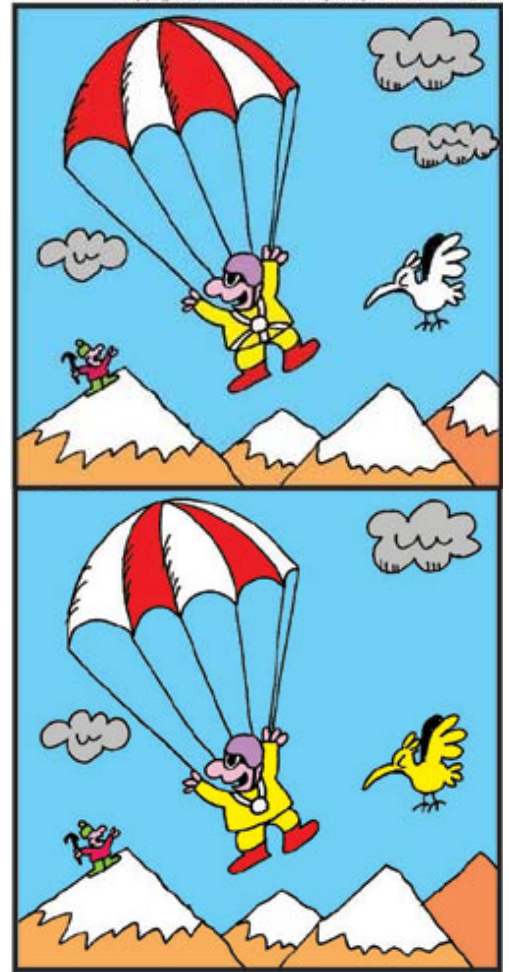
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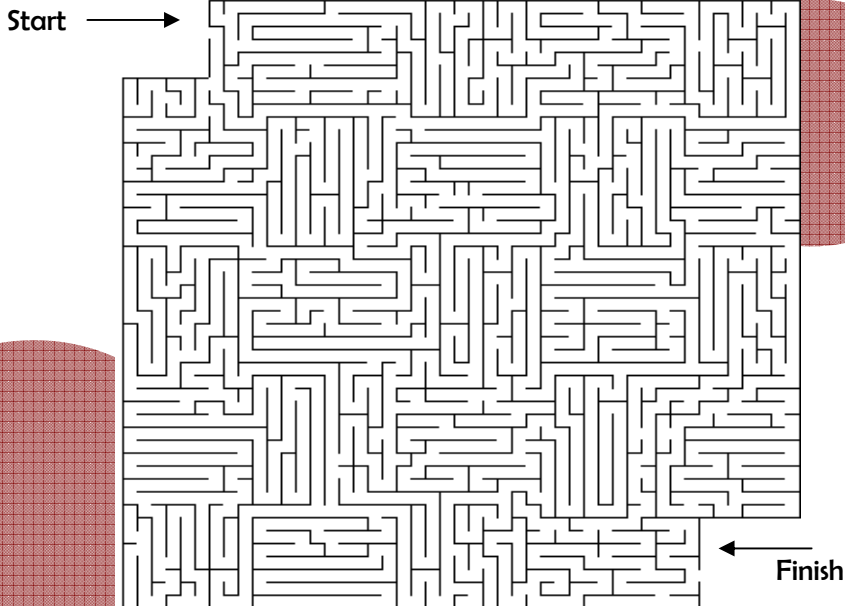
Spot The Difference

Spot the five differences

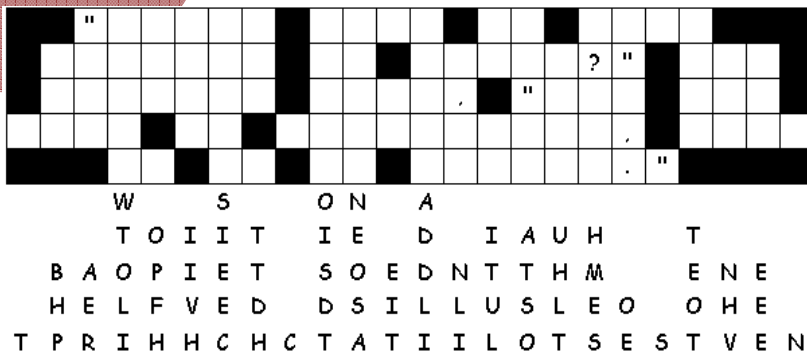


1: Parachute panels have changed colour. 2: Bird is different colour. 3: Harness straps are missing. 4: No snow on mountain at right. 5: Cloud missing.

Take the ultimate maze challenge



Fallen Phrase: Question to the Prophet & his answer



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				7				5
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9	7							2
			6		4	3	7	
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SUDOKU

Fill in all the squares of the grid so that each row, each column and each 3x3 section contains all the numbers 1-9 inclusive.

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