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The Relationships Issue

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Editorial



Relationships

According to the Oxford dictionary, a relationship can be defined as “an emotional or other connection, association, or involvement between two or more persons”. So what does our book – the Quran and the many books of Hadith say about the notion of relationships? The Prophet (s) was narrated to have said “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him maintain the bonds of kinship.” [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Islam considers the family the corner stone of Islamic society. However, over time conflict may arise that may place pressure on the stability of that relationship. Today, many of us know of someone who has severed ties with family members or friends for one reason or another. Many times those reasons have been over the most trivial of things while other times the dispute centres around deeply rooted issues and materialistic matters. While materialism hurts all aspects of our lives, it is especially damaging to family ties for they require sacrifice of time, money and personal comfort.

Such problems and dilemmas in all relationships have been around since the start of human existence. So how did the Prophet (s) and his companions resolve family conflict (or any conflict for that matter) when it arose?

A young man once went to attend the weekly Hadith lecture of the close companion of the Prophet, Abu Hurairah (r), but Abu Hurairah's routine opening announcement stopped him:

"If anyone sitting here has severed any ties of kinship, he should leave." (and repair his relationship).

The young man recalled his aunt, who lived in the same town but with whom he had not been on speaking terms. The young man quietly left the gathering and went straight to his aunt's home. He met his aunt and asked for forgiveness for his past behaviour and sought rapprochement.

When the aunt inquired about the reason for this change of heart, the young man narrated how he had heard Abu Hurairah's announcement. His aunt accepted the apology but asked him to inquire from Abu Hurairah (r), the reason for this unusual announcement. Why, instead of mentioning the major sins, did Abu Hurairah focus only on this issue? What was so special about ties of kinship?

Abu Hurairah replied that he had heard from the Prophet (s) that our deeds are presented to Allah every Thursday night and anyone who has severed family ties has all his good deeds rejected. Abu Hurairah did not want any such person sitting in his gathering, which was held on the same night, for fear that it could deprive the entire gathering of blessings.

Another hadith explains further the reason for this fear: "Allah's mercy will not descend on people among whom there is one who severs ties of kinship."

Sadly, today when such conflict arises the best we do is reciprocate; more commonly we backbite, cheat, and hurt our relatives and continue the spiral of hurt and humiliation as they respond. And we just abandon those of our relatives who are economically unfortunate or elderly and frail. Islam, on the other hand, has come to create healthy family relationships and close ties of kinship. Islam teaches that our family relationships must be built on a foundation of kindness, compassion and above all - forgiveness.

So whether you believe you are in the right or in the wrong, pick up the phone and give that family member or friend a call. You never know, the person on the other side may have been longing for that phone call. Even if you do not get the response that you were hoping for, at least you can stand in front of Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgement having tried to reconcile. Let us reject influences that urge us to focus on materialism and machine relationships, and let us return instead to family relationships based on the human values of love and mercy.

Mohammed Adra
Editor

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Respecting our differences

Waste no time debating what a good Muslim should be. Be one!

Imam Malik one day entered the Masjid after Asr. Towards the front of Masjid An-Nabawee he drew closer and sat down. Rasul Allah had commanded that anyone who enters the Masjid should not sit until he first prays 2 rakas as a salutation of the Masjid. Imam Malik was of the opinion however that Rasul Allah's forbiddance of praying after Asr took precedence and so he would teach his students to not pray the tahiyyatul Masjid if they entered between the Asr and Maghrib time.

At that moment that Imam Malik sat down, a young boy had seen him sit without first praying the 2 raka's of Tahiyyatul Masjid. The young boy scorned him, "Get up and pray 2 rakas!"

Imam Malik dutifully stood up once again and began praying the 2 rakas. The students sat stunned: What was going on? Had Imam Malik's opinion changed?

After he had completed the salah, the students swarmed around and questioned his actions. Imam Malik said, "My opinion has not changed, nor have I gone back on what I taught you earlier. I merely feared that had I not prayed the 2 rakas as the young boy commanded, Allah may include me in the Ayah...

"And when it is said to them, 'Bow (in prayer)', they do not bow." - al mursalat 77/48.

Imam Ahmad held the opinion that eating camel meat nullifies ones Wudhu, an opinion that the majority of scholars differed from. Some students asked him, "If you find an Imam eating camel meat in front of you and - without first making Wudu - then leads the Salah, would you pray behind him?" Imam Ahmad replied, "Do you think I would not pray behind the likes of Imam Malik and Sa'eed ibn Al-Musayyab?"

Allah created humans with differences. It is the law

of creation. Different tongues, different colours, different cultures...all that on the outside. On the inside, humans were created with many degrees of knowledge, intellect, and comprehension of concepts. This is all a sign of Allah's all encompassing power to do whatever He wills:

"And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are signs for those who know." [30:22]

Humans shall differ, that is not the issue. The issue is: How as a Muslim should one confront these differences of opinions and what should be our relationship with someone of a different opinion.

Allah ta'ala commanded us to call and advise people in this Deen of Al-Islam. Many Muslims set off on this mission blindfolded, not realising that the map was there in the Qur'an also. In fact, in the very same verse where Allah commanded us to call and advise people in this Deen, Allah taught us how to do it. Read the following verse carefully:

"Invite (fi'l Amr - Allah is commanding) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction and argue with them in a way that is best! " - Surah An-Nahl 16/125.

There is no need to philosophise. No need to beat around the bush. It is right there, plain and simple for anyone who would take heed.

Let us leave today with a resolve to revive this air Rasul Allah and his companions breathed, an air of mercy and love and brotherhood.

Article recommended by Sheikh Shady Al Suleiman
Written by Muhammad Alshareef



Connecting with our Prophet

Muslims the world over claim to love the Messenger of Allah (swt) Muhammad (s), but how much do we truly know about this great man? Ask yourself what comes to mind when you think about the Messenger (s)? Is it how many battles he fought, or how he opened new lands? Have you ever asked yourself how he reacted when his enemies called him a liar, a poet and a madman, or what he did when the people of Taif pelted him with stones until his blood was dripping? Do you wonder how the beloved of Allah (swt) dealt with women, children, the old and those in need? What did he say when he woke up, did he laugh a lot or cry more often, did he joke or not?

The answers to these questions may surprise and even disappoint many. It is beyond the scope of this brief reminder to answer all, however, I challenge you to start your journey through the seerah of the greatest leader. It is indeed a sad reality that if we dare to take an objective, critical look at ourselves (and we must), what we see will send deafening alarm bells to our conscience.

Allah (swt) tells us that we must obey Him, His messenger and those in authority among us (Surah 4:59). How can we do this if we are ignorant or unaware of the teachings and life of the Messenger (s). When the wife of our beloved, Aishah (ra) was asked about his character, she replied: "His character was the Quran". The two sources of our belief system, the Quran and Sunnah, go hand in hand, you can't have one without the other. We must reacquire ourselves with it in order to be true believers. Islam is not something we are born into or which we inherit; it is greater than that! We must work hard to carry the honour of being a Muslim. If we do this, Allah (swt) will fulfill what has been promised to the believers.

It has been reported that on one occasion Umar ibn Al-Khattab (ra) went to the Prophet (s) and said he loved himself most, then the Messenger of Allah. Upon hearing this, the Prophet replied saying Umar's faith was not complete, that it would only be complete until he loved the Prophet most, then himself. If we think about this carefully, its implication is simple, if we love the Prophet more than we love ourselves it would be easy to follow his teachings rather than our own desires. We need to strive against our nafs in order to complete our faith so that we may reap its rewards and benefits, insha Allah!

Remember that the Messenger (s) was sent as a mercy to the worlds (Surah

21:107), not just to Muslims. This should be reflected in the way we deal with every human being; irrespective of their race or religion. We will be held accountable for this therefore we cannot afford to underestimate its magnitude. Our Prophet (s) is reported to have said that he was sent to perfect moral character. It is our character, our manners and behaviour which will weigh heaviest on our scales on Judgement Day.

When catastrophe after another befalls the Ummah, we need to be asking WHY this is happening. The answer is clear in the book of Allah (swt): "And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned, And He pardons much". (Surah 42:30)

Servants of Allah, be reminded of the verse: "And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-Muttaqun" (Surah 3:133). Do not waste any more precious time on that which is unimportant, plan now so that you may attain the greatest success by following the teachings of the best example sent to lead mankind.

Finally, ponder over the story of Thumamah ibn Uthal. He was a leader among his people who, upon hearing about the teachings of the Messenger (s), set out to kill him. Captured by the Muslims before he could fulfill his intent, the Messenger (s) instructed that Thumamah be tied to a pillar of the Masjid and served with the best food his household could offer. After being tied to a post inside the Prophet's (s) Masjid for three days and witnessing the interaction of the companions with the Prophet (s), he was astounded. On the third day the Prophet (s) ordered that Thumamah be set free. He left the masjid, only to return a short while later declaring his belief in the oneness of Allah and that Muhammad (s) was Allah's slave and messenger!

Brothers and sisters, we need to shift back to the teachings of this perfect way of life and show mankind the beauty of this deen in the way we behave with one another and the rest of society.

Your sister in Islam
Faiza Abdullatif

Looking for the light?

All of us, being human, experience fluctuations in our level of faith -- denoted by the Arabic word "*imaan*" -- during the course of our day-to-day lives. It is perfectly normal to experience this. For Muslims, what is faith or "*imaan*"? It is the belief that resides in our hearts regarding Allah, His revealed Divine books (Quran, Bible, Torah, Abraham's scriptures), His Prophets, His angels, His Divine Decree (or what is more commonly known as "fate"), and the Last Hour or Last Day (when all humans will be resurrected for account-taking of their actions).

There are times when certain events in our lives make us doubt the existence or omnipotence of any of the above epicenters of belief. For example, someone might challenge our knowledge, especially if it is lacking, about why bad things happen to good people if God really exists; why criminals roam scot-free in this world after committing heinous injustices; why some people die of starvation while others have so much wealth that they can live 20 lifetimes on it, etc. At other times, questions about the Unseen (known in Arabic as "*ghaib*") pop up in our minds, and when we do not find answers, we follow our doubts and slowly move away from firm conviction of *imaan* to dwindling, half-hearted faith. That is the code red.

When a Muslim feels that they are moving towards the danger zone, in which the level of their *imaan* becomes so low that they start committing major sins, making a few simple lifestyle changes can reverse things. Below are some easy steps to help restore faith to higher levels:

Gain knowledge of the [Quran](#) consistently:

Just like you cannot know someone until you communicate with them, you cannot be close to Allah without reading and understanding His spoken word, the Quran. It is His message to all mankind, Muslim and non-Muslim. It is normal to have questions, and the Quran has all the answers. Therefore, it is not enough to read and understand this book once or twice, but it must be

studied consistently throughout our lives. Maybe a few times a week, it can be recited, read, and studied/discussed with a group of Muslims. The Quran should never be put away to gather dust. The greater a Muslim's knowledge of the Quran, the closer he is to Allah.

A point to note is that the Quran cannot be completely understood solitarily. There are some passages that are deep in meaning, and have to be understood in the context of revelation, backdrop, historical perspective, narrations of the Prophet Muhammad [Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] and other Quranic passages. That is why studying the Quran from a scholar is so important, although reading it alone is also prescribed for a boost of *imaan*.

Recite the Quran:

How is this different from point number 1 above? Reciting the Quran is an act of worship. It requires *wudu* or ablution (bodily purity), knowledge of the Arabic language, and command of how to pronounce each letter. In other words, anyone can read the translation of the Quran, but only a person who has knowledge of Arabic *Tajweed* (art of Arabic recitation in a melodious voice) can *recite* it.

The relationship between Quranic recitation and *imaan* is that, since the Quran is the spoken word of our Creator, when any person recites it *as it should be recited*, he pleases his Creator and becomes closer to Him. It creates an immediate bond. That refreshing worship rejuvenates the human soul, which needs to listen to some beautifully spoken, meaningful words in order to lift it out of gloom (that is why people listen to music and poetry). This need is more than fulfilled by regular Quranic recitation.

It is BEST if the person recites himself; if he cannot, listening to a good *Qari* (an expert in Quran recitation) is also extremely beneficial. After one such session, the person feels uplifted, calm, serene and revitalized to face the challenges of life. The more one understands the Arabic of the Quran, the more its recitation leaves him or her feeling close to Allah. It is, therefore, a *must* for every Muslim to improve their *tajweed* skills and understanding of Arabic in order to engage in better communion with their Creator.

Find company of righteous people:

Sure, the *hijab*-observing ladies and the men with flowing beards might be labeled fundamentalists or extremists by some spheres. But in all reality, it is important that we try and be around those who remind others most of Allah. If



you want to remove the doubts in your mind regarding Allah, increase the level of your faith, and lessen the constricted distress in your soul regarding the truth about the life of this world (why we are here, what will happen after we die, etc.), you should try hanging out with these "fundamentalists" once in a while.

If they really are Allah's favorites, they will probably welcome any questions you have with open arms. They will never scoff at your beliefs, jeer at the way you dress, or judge you for your actions. Try to be in the company of such people often, talk to them, befriend them, and respect them.

Engage in remembrance of Allah:

There are some non-Quranic Arabic terms that, when recited, soothe the soul and relieve a person from the effects of his avowed enemy, the *Shaitaan* (Satan). Uttering these *adhkaar* - remembrances - from the tongue has been prescribed by Prophet Muhammad [Allah's peace and blessings upon him] himself. Anyone can recite these remembrances in order to get an immediate boost of faith. Most of them should be uttered a hundred times each, for best results. It only takes a few seconds or minutes:

Laa ilaaha illallaah (there is no god except Allah).

Laa hawla wa laa quwata illaa billaah (there is no force that benefits and no strength that causes loss except Allah).

Astaghfirullaah (I seek forgiveness from Allah).

Allaahumma salli 'alaa Muhammad (O Allah, send peace upon Muhammad).

Persist in obligatory acts of worship and abstain from sins:

Imaan is affected by our actions. For example, if we abandon even one obligatory *salaah*, we will immediately feel a dip in *imaan*. It is a must for Muslims to never relinquish those acts of worship that are obligatory, if they want their faith to remain intact.

Similarly, abstaining from deeds which Allah has forbidden is also a means of maintaining or increasing *imaan*. When someone deliberately sins and does not repent, his heart experiences distress and constriction as Allah's anger is directed towards him. That is why repentance is a daily requirement for all believers. It washes away those sins that they commit knowingly and even those they commit unintentionally. Consequently, Allah is never displeased with them for long.

Perform supererogatory good deeds and invoke Allah in Du'a:

There's nothing better than communicating with your Lord directly in order to get His attention, so that you feel close to Him again. Just as you lose touch with a good friend, and start to slowly forget about her as time passes, when you suddenly decide to call her up on a whim -- and, after an hour of talking, you feel as if you never lost touch with her. You feel the same old love for her and chastise yourself for allowing the relationship to wither like that.

The same emotional dynamics apply to your relationship with your Creator. Communicating with Him is the best way to revive *imaan*. You can invoke Him in *du'a* -- supplication or prayer -- at any time, while doing any other task. Just talk to Him in a hushed voice, profess your love for Him, and ask Him to help you. He listens to and responds to calls, as long as they are sincere.

Also, in order to increase your *imaan*, you can perform two units of *salaah*, give some money in charity, or help someone in need by word or deed. These actions are a means of getting Allah to be attentive towards you and to be pleased with you. His mercy will be felt in your heart as a warm, enveloping happiness, and the high grades of *imaan* will be felt as a tremendous sense of serenity in your soul.

Read authentic Islamic literature:

While studying the Quran and Prophetic narrations is obligatory upon every Muslim in order to act upon Islam, reading good Islamic books and articles in print or on the Internet is a great way to entertain one's self in free time, remove doubts, and strengthen convictions about Islam in the heart. One thing to be careful about, though, is to only read literature written by authentic scholars.

"Behold! In the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace." [Quran, *Surah Al-Ra'd*: 28]

A person's faith or *imaan* is completely dependent on their relationship with Allah. The more they strive to improve this relationship, the more steadfast they will be on their faith.

Your brother in Islam

Sadaf Farooqi

Relationship with God



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Limitation in Relationships

A very common question I often hear from many young people is why are Muslims not allowed to 'date' and "If they don't date, how do they decide whom to marry?"

"Dating" as it is currently practiced in much of the world does not exist among Muslims -- where a young man and woman (or boy/girl) are in a one-on-one intimate relationship, spending time together alone, "getting to know each other" in a very deep way before deciding whether that's the person they will marry. Rather, in Islam pre-marital relationships of any kind between members of the opposite sex are forbidden.

However, I'll try my best not to spend the next 500 words that the editor of this magazine gave me emphasising on this point and telling you again that same message that our parents have drilled into our heads since as long as we can remember but rather go beyond that and help you work out how to have relationships in the real world.

The choice of a marriage partner is one of the most important decisions a person will make in his or her lifetime. It should not be taken lightly, nor left to chance or hormones. It should be taken as seriously as any other major decision in life - with prayer, careful reflection, and family involvement.

The goal of marriage is to create tenderness between two individuals and satisfy the very basic human need for companionship. "And among His signs is this; that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between you; in this are signs for those who think."(30:21)

So in today's world, how do young people manage? Understandably, many hold off on getting married for different valid reasons... studies, work, savings etc are all common reasons why many youth can not immediately commit to marriage. However, that does not reduce our natural desire to be physically and emotionally attached to someone.

So how does one in such a position withstand the temptation of getting into a relationship that is not in line with Islam?

Well, let me say right from the beginning it is not easy and there is no quick fix response that someone can say to make it easy to overcome such desires. That's why Allah (swt) has said in the Quran "And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's

(tribunal) and had restrained (their) soul from lower Desires, Their Abode will be the Garden (79: 40-41).

Naturally, attraction between a male and female is necessary to initiate a relationship that leads to marriage. Because of the far-reaching ramifications of relations outside of marriage, Muslims are prohibited by God from such behaviour. And because the process that leads to physical attraction and ultimately intimacy is part of human nature, Muslims are advised to behave in a way and avoid circumstances that could potentially result in extra- or pre-marital intimacy.

So what can be our shield to protect us from getting into a situation that may risk us getting into a position where we might compromise our Islam? Firstly, our appearance and our modesty in dress and behaviour between women and men figures prominently as a means of exhibiting self-control and our first layer of protection.

Secondly, unmarried couples should tread with extreme caution when spending time alone in isolated places with someone of the opposite sex where they would be more likely to act on and be overtaken by their feelings and desires.

Thirdly, take the advice the Prophet (s) gave us youth when it comes to such limitations in relationships. The Prophet (s) was narrated to have said "O you young people! Whoever of you can afford to get married, let him do so. Those who cannot afford it, let them practice fasting, as it may be a protection to them [against sin]".

Finally, as a young Muslim male or female, try and develop very close friendships with same-sex peers. This "sisterhood" or "brotherhood" that develops when you are young continues throughout your life and having the right type of friends can often be your best form of protection against getting yourself in such a compromising position with someone 'off limits'.

Let me finish by saying that due to our own natural inclinations, falling into such prohibited behaviour is quite easy. Even for someone who thinks they will never commit such acts. Although interacting with someone of the opposite sex for a specific purpose is permissible (i.e. for work purposes, studies etc), taking some simple precautions and being around the right people who will look out for you, will go a long way in making sure your shield is continuously reinforced.

By Iman El Kheir

AN INVITATION TO T

During the Crusades, a Muslim woman who was praying in the masjid listened to the khutbah on jihad, so she cut off her braids and went to the Imam asking him to use them as a bridle. Such a move aroused men's enthusiasm and motivated them to fight. And this spirit was one of the reasons behind defeating the occupation forces.

Many times we think of the purpose of the masjid as restricted to being a place for performing Islamic rituals and we forget that it also plays an important social and political role. Congregation prayers teach people unity and the masjid serves as a meeting place where people can discuss issues affecting the Muslim community and try to find solutions for them.

In one of his lectures, Sheikh Muhammed Alshareef mentioned some of the roles that the masjid has played throughout history:

Children: The masjid was a place where the children would accompany their parents and grow up under the shade of its walls. Abu Qataadah narrated: "The Messenger of Allah (s) used to pray and carry Umamah, the daughter of Zaynab. When he would fall into prostration, he would rest her aside. And when he stood up again, he would again pick her up." [Bukhari].

Education: The masjid was the nucleus of education. Throughout history, the masjid was the university that graduated scholars and imams. To name only a few, we have Masjid of Al-Azhar, Masjid Al-Umawee in Syria, and Masjid Az-Zaytoonah in Tunis.

Organisation: The masjid is where hundreds of Muslims come; all in straight rows; all following the lead of Allahu Akbar; all beginning when the imam begins; all ending when the imam ends.

Shelter for the weak and travelling: In Masjid An-Nabawi, we know that there was a platform known as the Suffah. The poor and the strangers would find shelter there and the Messenger of Allah (s) would grant them shares of the collected charity.

Socialising: The masjid is where the Muslims would meet one another. When someone missed a prayer he was inquired about and followed up on.

Relationships were reared, brotherhood was built.

Think tank: When important issues came up, the Prophet (s) would gather the Companions in the masjid and consult them on the matter.

Charity: The charity would be collected and distributed from the masjid. It was in the masjid that the Prophet (s) said: **"Give, if only with a half a date."**

Jihad: It was from the masjid that battalions were organised and set off for jihad. During the crusades, many masajids became the podium for inciting the feelings of the Muslims to fight off the transgression.

Serenity: Whenever the Prophet (s) felt sad or stressed he would go and pray. And he would say to Bilal, **"Relax us with [the prayer] O Bilal."**

The prophet (pbuh) said: **"There are seven whom Allah will shade in His Shade on the Day when there is no shade except His Shade..."** and of those seven will be, **"A man whose heart is attached to the masjid..."** It is quite clear that to attach your heart to something is to have a close relationship with that object or person. And it is rather sad and unfortunate that many people have severed their relationship with what the messenger of Allah (s) described as **"the most beloved of places on earth to Allah."**

So my dear brothers and sisters in Islam, without further adieu, please allow me to introduce to you, our friend, *The Masjid*.

Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala says: **"(This lamp is found) in houses (masajid) which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name shall be remembered therein. Therein do offer praise to Him in the morning and evening."** (An-Nur: 36) Ibn Abbaas commented: "The 'houses' are those masajids that were dedicated to the worship of Allah, and verily, they

THE HOUSE OF ALLAH

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light up the earth for the inhabitants of the heavens, just as stars light up the heavens for the inhabitants of the earth."

The Prophet (s) said: **"No gathering gathers in a house from the houses of Allah, reciting the book of Allah and teaching it to one another, except that serenity befalls them, mercy envelops them, the angels surround them and Allah mentions them to [the inhabitants of the heavens]."** [Muslim]

Is it no wonder that Omar ibn al-Khattab once remarked; "Mosques are the houses of Allah on earth, and the worshipper therein is a guest of Allah. And the visitor is entitled to be honoured by the visited." So my dear brothers and sisters in Islam, now that you are acquainted, would you not like to visit our friend, *The Masjid*?" Would you not like to accept the invitation to be a guest in a house where the host is Allah? A house that offers serenity and peace, where you will be engulfed in mercy and surrounded by angels? But before you decide, allow me to tempt you a little further:

The prophet (s) said: **"he does**

not take a step [towards the mosque] except that because of it, he is raised by one rank [in paradise] and one sin is removed from him. Then when he prays, the Angels do not cease supplicating for him [for] as long as he remains at his place of Prayer [saying]: O Allah send blessings upon him, O Allah have mercy upon him..." [Bukhari]

And ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah (s) said, **"Salât in congregation is twenty-seven times more rewarding than a salât performed individually."** [Bukhari and Muslim]

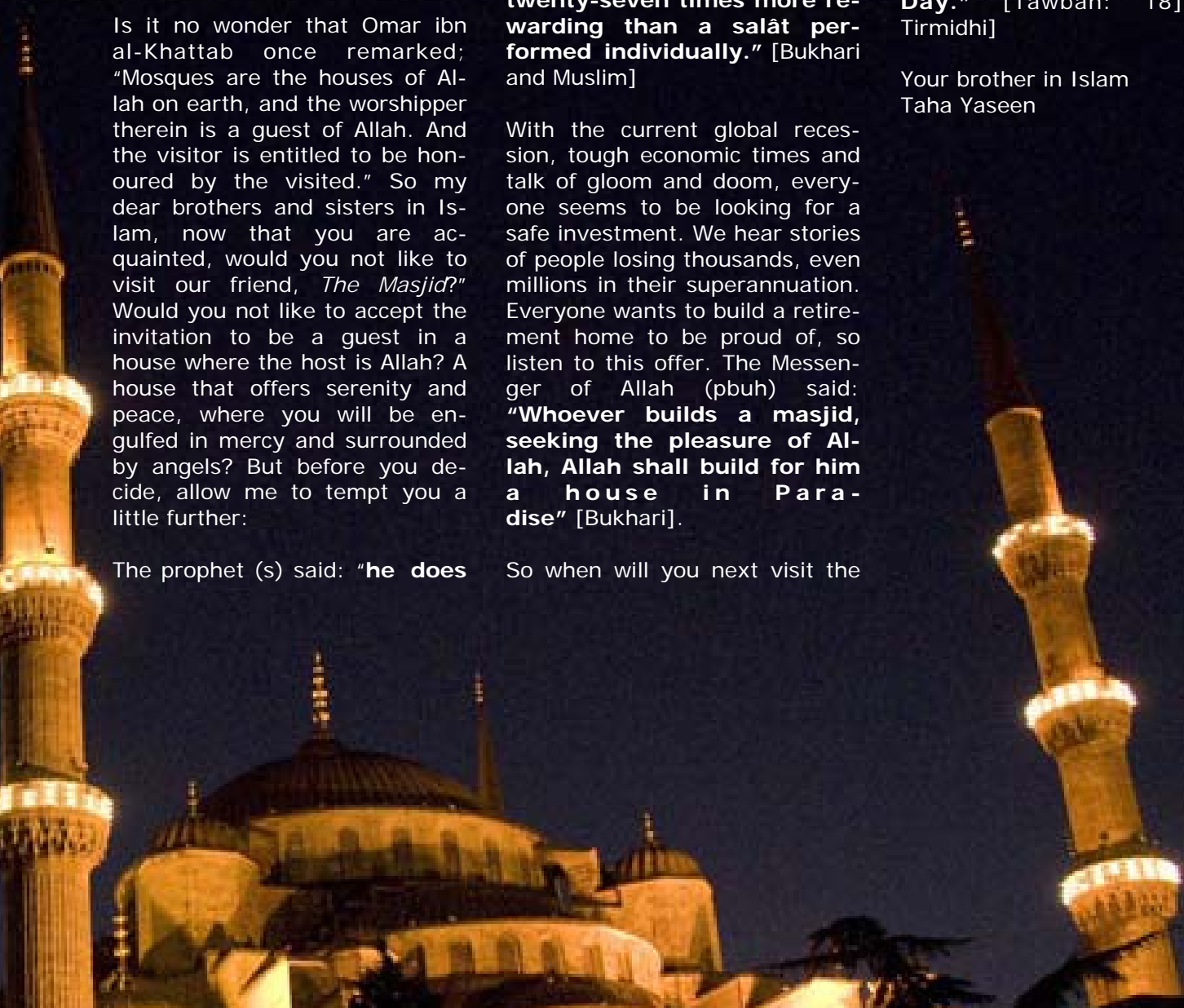
With the current global recession, tough economic times and talk of gloom and doom, everyone seems to be looking for a safe investment. We hear stories of people losing thousands, even millions in their superannuation. Everyone wants to build a retirement home to be proud of, so listen to this offer. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: **"Whoever builds a masjid, seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah shall build for him a house in Paradise"** [Bukhari].

So when will you next visit the

house of Allah? Is it still going to be the once a week visit on Friday? Or will you wait for the next Eid? Or will it be the janaza prayer of a loved one? Perhaps you want to wait for your own janaza before you next visit our friend, *The Masjid*?

The prophet (pbuh) said, **"When you see a person frequenting the mosque testify that he is a believer, because Allah says: 'Allah's masajids are visited only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day.'" [Tawbah: 18] [at-Tirmidhi]**

Your brother in Islam
Taha Yaseen



The Believers are Problem Solvers



***A sermon delivered by Dr Zachariah Matthews on Friday 10 April 2009
at the Punchbowl Musallah***

When problems occur in the community we should know how to interact with them, rather than sit aside as if they have nothing to do with us. Unfortunately our community has had a number of problems recently – some of them small and some of them big.

Interaction with a particular problem might allow us to contribute something useful and positive to resolving it or benefit from trying to understand the causes for it. We might also be able to see Allah's wisdom and justice in running the affairs of his servants.

Verses 102-105 of Surat Ali-Imraan guides the believers to a number of attributes that will help maintain their unity in the face of problems and warns of the opposite. The believers are called to have taqwa in Allah (fear, piety, etc), which will in turn lead them to brotherhood and love. While it warns that division could result in them losing their faith and suffering both in this world and in the hereafter.

Verse 104 specifically encourages the believers to be amongst those who are problem solvers and reconcilers – they invite to what is good and forbid what is wrong. They will then be the best of nations characterised by this ability to promote what is right over what is wrong.

"O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of submission." (Q3:102)

"And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brothers; and you were on the brink of the Pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to you: that you may be guided." (Q3:103)

"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones who are successful." (Q3:104)

"Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs: for them is a dreadful punishment." (Q3:105)

Taqwa and Fear of Allah (swt)

Without taqwa and the true fear of Allah (swt) we could acquire diseases that destroy our relations with each other and make our problems worse. Some of these diseases which we should avoid are:

- Arrogance and pride in one's opinions.
- Thinking badly of people and rushing to judgment without investigation.
- Desire for power and leadership.

- Fanaticism to a particular person or group.

Sometimes unfortunately these problems escalate to fighting and physical violence. Some people are quickly driven to anger that they cannot control and they lash out physically behaving like thugs, street fighters and gangsters.

Without the fear of Allah people will get up to all kinds of mischief.

Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (ra) had so much fear of Allah's punishment that one day when he was reading Surah Tur and reached verse (Q52:7)

"Verily, the Punishment of your Lord will indeed take place," he cried so much that he became sick – people came to visit him to see how he was. He used to cry so much when reading the verses of punishment and the Hell Fire that he etched two dark lines on his face. On his death bed he kept repeating: "I am doomed if He (Allah) does not forgive me."

Keeping the Peace

Islam clearly prefers non-violence over violence, and Muslims should therefore at all times be the peace-keepers – reconciling differences.

The wicked hypocrites during the Banu Al-Mustaliq campaign, instigated a dispute between the muhajiroon (emigrants from Makkah) and the ansaar (helpers of Madina) as well as slandered the Prophet (s). The situation got so heated that a fight almost broke out between the two groups. A muhajir jester shoved an ansari which resulted in a call to tribalism. The Prophet (s) in anger exclaimed: "What is this call to jaahiliyyah (ignorance) – this (tribalism) is evil." [Fath Al-Bari 3518]

In an unexpected move, the Prophet (s) ordered Umar to announce that they were leaving. They marched for two days until the sun was so hot that they had to stop and rest in the shade and all fell asleep. This was a clever move by the Prophet (s) to divert their attention away from the problem and end the conflict.

Umar (ra) was furious at the role that Abdullah Ibn `Ubay, the head of the hypocrites, played and in particular his vicious slander of the Prophet (s) – so he asked the Prophet (s) to take care of him. The Prophet (s) rejected the proposal saying that he did not become a Prophet to be accused of killing his people.

Forgiveness over Retribution

Islam also prefers forgiveness ('afu) over retribution. The Quran came to correct the common, vengeful responses of people to conflict and violence. So much of today's conflicts quickly escalate to destructive tit-for-tat revenge.

Forgiveness is consistently held as the preferred option for dealing with injustice. Allah, Almighty, states in the Noble Quran:

"The recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof (i.e., the law of retribution); but whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is with Allah; and Allah loves not the wrongdoers" (Quran 42:40).

Reconciliation

Islam teaches us to get involved in conflict resolution trying to solve problems peacefully.

"The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that you may receive Mercy." (Q49:10)

The Help of Allah (swt) is guaranteed to the peacemaker:

"Allah helps the servant as long as the servant helps his brother." [Muslim 4:2074]

When Ali Ibn Abi Talib (ra) was asked about the Muslims who fought against him whether they were mushrik (polytheists) or munaafiq (hypocrites), he said "they were brothers who rebelled against us."

Anger Management

The Prophet (s) taught us to control our anger. Some people have very short fuses and are quick to fight.

It is reported that Abu Wa'il al-Qass said: "We entered upon Urwah ibn Muhammad ibn as-Sa'di. A man spoke to him and made him angry. So he stood and performed ablution; he then returned and said: 'The Messenger of Allah (s) said: Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created of fire, and fire is extinguished only with water; so when one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution.'" [Abu Dawood 4766]

Ignorance & Misunderstanding

Lack of knowledge or corrupted understanding are the main causes of conflict. Therefore, the primary role that the Prophet (s) played was that of a teacher to correct people's understanding and actions.

One day Mu'awiyah Ibn Al-Hakam Al-Salami spoke in the salah because he did not know – he replied "yarhamukallah" (may Allah have mercy on you) when a man sneezed. Those in the prayer looked at him with piecing eyes as if he committed the gravest of sins and hit their thighs indicating to him to be silent. After the prayer, "The Prophet (s) neither rebuked me nor hit me nor put me to shame instead he just said: 'This prayer should contain nothing of the speech of men; it is only for tasbeeh (glorifying Allah) and takbeer (magnifying Allah) and recitation of the Quran.'" [Muslim 537] In this incident the Prophet (s) taught us the preferred method of education – with compassion and kindness. .

Stand up for justice and the truth

Islam teaches us to stand up for justice against oppression and to stand up for truth against falsehood even if it is against ourselves or close relatives or friends.

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even if it is against yourself, or your parents, or your relative, be he rich or poor, Allah is a better protector to both (than you). So follow not the desires/lusts (of your hearts), lest you avoid justice; and you distort your testimony or refuse to give it. Verily Allah is well acquainted with what you do." (Q4:135)

The Prophet (s) said: "A Muslim's faith is not complete until he avoids lying even in jokes and disputations although he may be truthful in other matters." (Ahmad)

Attack the Problem not the Person

Finally, when trying to solve a problem, we should learn to attack the problem and not the person. The rule in conflict resolution states: "Go hard on the problem, easy on the person." We often make the mistake of condemning the person as a whole rather than just the particular mistake.

Umar (ra) reported that there was a man called 'Abdullah whose nickname was himar (donkey) and he used to make the Prophet (s) laugh. One day he was found drinking and was punished by whipping. On a second occasion he was again found drinking and was brought to the Prophet (s) who ordered that he be whipped again. One of the companions present said: "O Allah, curse him! How often has he been brought to be punished because of drinking!" The Prophet (s) said: "Do not curse him, for by Allah, all I know of him is that he loves Allah and His Messenger." [Bukhari 6780]

May Allah (swt) guide us to be the best of problem solvers and reconcilers.

Meeting the Alameddine's

The term "In-laws" tends to have a negative connotation associated with it, particularly within western society. Many television programs and movies have created around the intricacies of this wondrously intriguing relationship with all its dimensions and permutations.

One of my favorite television programs was "Everybody Loves Raymond", which is basically centered around a couple that live across the road from the husbands parents. This was a very popular TV program mostly attributed to the fact that viewers could relate to many of the characters and their behavior, whether it was the brother in-law with low self-esteem, or the daughter in-law that was deemed "never good enough" by her overbearing mother-in-law.

I would venture to guess that the majority of our readers have parents that were not born in Australia. Due to this fact coupled with our cultural influences we tend to have a stronger bond with our families, particularly after marriage in comparison to an average western family.

This places a greater emphasis on the importance of ones relationship with their in-laws.

So why is it such a struggle to get along with in-laws for so many married couples?

The reason is really quite simple; they are different to our own family.

Even people who come from the same culture, religion and live across the road can have a completely different lifestyle compared to our own. A person that continually insists on comparing their family to their in-laws will find this practice only leads to frustration, confusion and inevitably conflict within a marriage.

A married couple must acknowledge that each family is unique, with different interests, hobbies, morals, values and routines. An open-minded approach is paramount, both the wife and husband must take the time to appreciate and understand these differences in order to appease their spouse.

Islam teaches us that showing kindness, respect



RELATIONSHIPS WITH
THE IN-LAWS

and love towards family is very important; the very definition of family extends to ones in-laws.

You must extend the same love, respect and tolerance that you show towards your own mother towards your mother-in-law. The same principal applies to your father-in-law so on and so forth.

Interactions with your family-in-law can be extremely rewarding and enlightening. This may be due to bonds you form with various family members or simply experiencing different family practices that you have never experienced.

For instance an eye opening experience for me was Eid. Unfortunately all of my grandparents, uncles and aunts are overseas so I never really experienced what it was like to visit everyone during Eid.

On the other hand my wife's extended family members are all located within a twenty five minute radius of each other! All of a sudden Eid was a non-stop action packed affair with money and presents exchanged all over the place (which I conveniently profited from). This also gave me a insight into my wife's childhood and helped me realise why Eid meant so much more to her than it did to me.

Ultimately a healthy relationship with your family in law can improve your connection with your spouse; after all we are talking about each others parents, brother and sisters.

Your partner is a product of being raised by their parents and living with their family. We all love our wives and husbands (most of the time) so shouldn't we make the effort to respect and understand the family that helped produce and influence the person we are married too??

By no means am I an expert on this topic, I have made mistakes but I have also managed to handle other aspects of my relationships with my in-laws well.

With my seven years experience I have made a list of do's and don'ts that will hopefully aid you in enhancing your interactions with your family in law.

Do's

- Show respect towards your mother & father in law (at all times).

- Also show respect to older sisters and brothers in law (especially in my case, when your brother in law weights 130kg and can crush you with his arm-pit!).
- Always compliment your mother-in-laws food (If you have leftovers, get your spouse to eat them secretly...or alternatively run).
- If your in-laws are hinting for you to look for a husband for your younger sister in law, always say you have no single friends (or else you will be condemned for all future conflicts).
- Make regular visits to your in-laws, especially when you have kids (eventually you can leverage this in exchange for baby sitting services).

Don'ts

- Don't Ever tell your mother that you enjoy your mother-in-law's cooking.
- Don't Borrow a power tool off your father in law without returning it promptly (in my case keeping a ladder for 3 months isn't a good idea either).
- Don't Ever tell a sister-in-law she has put on weight (apparently you can't say this to any female...).
- **DO NOT MISS INLAW BBQs!!** Unless you are prepared to be the meat that will be roasted at the next bbq.

I have had some fun with this article, however when all is said and done, in-laws are a fundamental part of our lives. They can be a pillar of strength emotionally, financially and Insha'Allah religiously. This relationship like all others will only be as rewarding as the amount of effort you are willing to put in.

For the sake of your partners, children and above all Allah, it is your duty to ensure you exercise Sabr (patience) and persist through the challenges that may arise in this complicated relationship.

The rewards, my brothers and sister, are plentiful. May Allah (swt) guide us to the right path and may we earn His pleasure through our efforts.

Your brother in Islam
Ronnie Mikati

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Haunted by the Past

The Relationship with our Past

Allah says in the Quran; "Thus We relate to you (O Muhammad) some information of what happened before. And indeed We have given you from Us a Reminder (this Qur'an)". (Ta-Ha, 99)

Stories are an important part of human development. They instruct us on morals, entertain us and teach us about other people's lives. In the Quran, there are many different types of stories. Amongst them are stories of previous prophets and messengers and their stories, stories of previous nations and pious individuals who weren't prophets and of course stories of incidents that happened during the life of the prophet Muhammad.

From the previous nations, the Quran mentions a very relevant example of perished people - the people of Lut. Lut was a prophet who was sent by Allah to go to the land of [Sodom and Gomorrah](#) and preach Tawheed to the people and to stop them from their lustful and violent acts. His message was ignored by his people. Sodom and Gomorra were destroyed and his wife also

was left behind to be destroyed.

Lut said to his people: 'Do you commit such indecency (sodomy) in a way that no one has preceded you in the worlds? You approach men lustfully instead of women. Truly, you are a nation who exceed (in sin).' His nation's reply was; 'Expel them from your village. They are people who keep themselves purified.' (7:80-84).

Allah says: "And We turned (the cities of Sodom) upside down and rained down upon them stones of baked clay. Surely, in this are signs for those who perceive. And, verily, they were right on the road (from Mecca to Syria, where the Dead Sea is now). Surely, therein is indeed a sign for the believers." (15:74-77).

Allah destroyed these people whom He described as "people of evil, defiantly disobedient" (21:74).

When we come across this story, we often ask ourselves, how did they get so bad? There are three points that the scholars made to answer this question:

- The first is the need to satisfy themselves sexually. Their society had no restrictions on the relationship between men and women and as a result, they followed every sexual desire until they got bored of it and tried to find other ways to satisfy themselves. Thus, they reached this unnatural act.
- The second is not having fear of committing sins. One act after another blackens the heart and cause the person to not care about punishment or the pleasure of Allah.
- The third is imitating women. Ibn-Abbas says, "They used to imitate women in accessories, clothes and the way of walking." This is why there are a lot of Islamic restrictions on the sexes imitating each other. They lose their own identity and nature.

The Prophet got angry when he found a man wearing gold and said, "One of you is wishing live coal from hell, and putting it on his hand." (Authentic, Muslim, number 2090). He also forbade men from wearing silk. The Prophet refused this softness because it could lead to this devastation and as we know, the basis of the Shariah is prevention before cure.

Abdul-Malik Ibn-Marawan said: "I did not think that there are people who would do this sin. I would not believe it unless Allah mentioned it in the Qur'an." When we read this today, we wonder what will happen to the earth and this civilization. The points that the scholars mention are sadly an ordinary part of our lives in this generation.

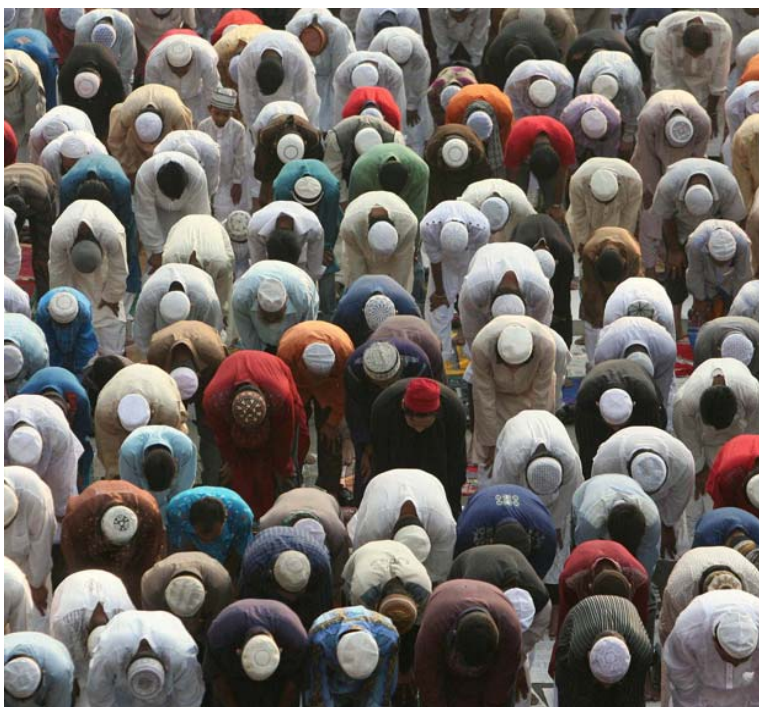
In Surat al-A'raf, Allah says what can be translated as: "And in no way was the answer of his people (anything) except that they said, "Drive them out of your town; surely they are a folk who constantly purify themselves" (7:82). They confessed that they are impure and also do not accept purity to be present among them; as if it was a crime. When their natural instinct was wiped out the facts were all turned around.

We have many lessons to derive from the stories of perished nations; those nations that Allah sent His honoured prophets to with clear indisputable signs and miracles, who didn't listen, who abused, mocked and killed their prophets. The common lesson is that those who disobey Allah the way these perished nations did will never escape the wrath of Allah.

From Allah's mercy, He has told us about these stories and even preserved their relics as a sign for all time. Let us not be from the nations who turned their back on their prophet(s), became heedless of Allah's signs and followed their whims only to be destroyed in the worst possible way.

"For has the story not reached them of those before them? The people of Noah, 'Ad and Thamud... and the overthrown cities (of the Sodomites)? Their Messengers came to them with clear proofs. It was not God Who wronged them, but they who wronged themselves." (9:70)

Your sister in Islam
Um Salahdeen



Hadith of the Month

When I was in year 9 I moved high schools. All I could remember on that first day as I sat in roll call was 'I hope I fit in'. From day one of starting at the school I went about trying to make sure my presence was felt – all in a bid to make friends. Humans by nature are very social beings where we find ourselves always in need of friends and companions. As most of our lives rely so heavily on the interaction with others, strong individuals are seen as the core of a strong community... something that all Muslims should always strive for.

In an authentic Hadith, [Prophet Mohammad \(s\)](#) said: "Man is influenced by the faith of his friends. Therefore, be careful of whom you associate with."

Prophet Mohammad (s) was sent to perfect good character. This noble character was put on show for all to see often. Today, we are constantly reminded of how the Prophet (s) dealt with people who were around him. Such interactions with people gave us a very clear and simple message and advice for all of us as to who to choose to take as friends.

Islam has always attached great importance to our choice of friends because the company that we keep has a deep influence on the development of our "selves" and on our intellect. We can gain enjoyment and comfort from our friendships; however, we can also gain distress and pain from them. Therefore, we must exercise extreme care in choosing our associates.

So how should we choose our friends and what qualities should we want them to have?

The Prophet Mohammad (s) was narrated to have said: "A good friend and a bad friend are like a perfume-seller and a blacksmith: The perfume-seller might give you some perfume as a gift, or you might buy some from him, or at least you might smell its fragrance. As for the blacksmith, he might singe your clothes and at the very least you will breathe in the fumes of the furnace".

As we go through the different stages of our life we will find that often we will have to make some pretty big decisions, decisions that will ultimately affect the way we live the rest of our lives and ultimately, our hereafter. The choice of friends is one of those decisions that we will often make albeit so heedlessly. The above analogy of the Prophet (s) was to emphasise on this exact point.

Imam an-Nawawy said that the Prophet (s) in the above analogy compared a good companion to a seller of musk and spoke of the virtue of having companions who are good, who have noble manners, piety, knowledge and good culture. Such are those who grant us from their virtue and even though you might not always do the good deeds they do, just by hanging out with them, their good character will ultimately rub off on you like that of perfume.

On the other hand, the Prophet (s) forbade us to sit with those who do evil, commit a lot of sins and other bad deeds, such as those who strive on gossip, rumours and backbiting. Although we might say we are 'not like them', eventually being around that type of people will also have an effect on you.

Many times a Muslim is encouraged by his friends to do evil and to forget his duties. The result is that Muslims themselves are often ashamed to leave them to perform prayer, their friends thus causing them to clearly deviate from the Right Path.

Ask yourself this question: What is your criteria for choosing a friend? More importantly, on that criteria list, what number is being a good Muslim listed on it? Is it on the list at all? Or maybe just pushed right down the bottom somewhere?

Quite often when we choose the wrong friends, the reason why we stick by them is because we think that they will always be there for us... 'they always have our backs'. But Allah (swt) tells us in the Quran that although such 'friends' might say this, on the Day of Judgement you will say something totally different about the friends you used to hang around as Allah (swt) says:

"And (remember) the Day when the wrong-doer will bite his hands and say: Woe to me! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger. Woe to me! If only I had not taken so- and-so as a friend! He has led me astray from this Reminder (the Qur'an) after it had come to me. And Satan is ever a deserter to man in the hour of need." [25:27-29]

Allah (swt) uses many different words and adjectives to describe the Day of Judgement. One of those words is 'the Day of Regret'. So I ask you brother and sister to reflect on those around you. Are they going to help you stand in front of your Lord smelling like the best of fragrances or will you be one who will regret the day you did not choose the right friends. It's not too late to make a change. Remember, like all things...choose wisely.

Your brother in Islam
Rami Issa



"A good friend and a bad friend are like a perfume-seller and a blacksmith: The perfume-seller might give you some perfume as a gift, or you might buy some from him, or at least you might smell its fragrance. As for the blacksmith, he might singe your clothes, and at the very least you will breathe in the fumes of the furnace".

On the authority of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari



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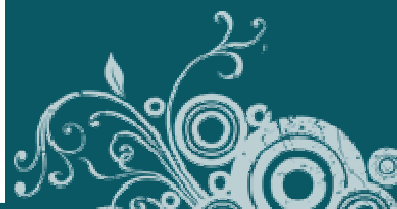


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Cyber Fatima: *The Online Effect*

Since the first web page was designed a mere two decades ago, the internet has provided millions of people the opportunity to do a 'crash course' in whatever field, study or interest they desire. Today, a search for the word "Islam" on Google yields links to thousands of sites featuring everything from shopping to sermons to "Web-muftis" who provide answers to theological and legal questions. The Web allows almost anyone to air a broad range of views and perspectives -- and much of the resulting discussion and debate can be found in online forums and chat rooms.

Muslims of all ages have turned to the Internet looking for answers or inspiration about their faith. What they have found has been a diverse Islamic world. However, some say the Internet has also altered consensus-building among the jummah, or major Islamic forces. What used to take decades, even centuries to agree on -- interpretations in the Koran, for example -- has been accelerated by the Internet's ability to give instant access to the teachings and thoughts of distant Islamic scholars and original texts. Practices, laws and beliefs once bound by geography are evolving into a mainstream Muslim identity -- on Internet time.

Therefore, the following article will examine the impact of the Internet on how non-Muslims view Islamic communities in Australia -- and more importantly, how the Internet provides Australian Muslims with a whole new way to share ideas about their faith.

Building Islamic Communities Online

These days, surfing the Web to many Islamic websites is almost like entering a virtual city. Many present their on-line users with education centres, business and finance plazas, and even online shopping bazaars that offer a range of Muslim-themed items, from Islamic books, videos, and artwork to a Barbie doll wearing the Muslim *hijab*!

As Islam is the world's fastest-growing religion, the Web is seen as a powerful way for Muslims to connect. Today, as many Muslims find themselves living in an era where elements of Islamic teachings are often seen as being under constant scrutiny, the Internet is an effective way to educate non-Muslims about the faith and portray Islam as a religion where diversity and debate are encouraged.

Many Muslims use such 'virtual cities' to get together in chat rooms, post messages to discussion boards and download lectures or debates. "We feel that all of these discussions allow us to express ourselves in ways that maybe in other countries they don't have the ability to do," says Mohammed Aleem. "We are still a very young community, a growing community. But the advent of the Internet... is bringing us a collaborative tool, where we can make sure we can leverage our strengths in a meaningful way."

And that includes Muslim women. "I think for the first time for a lot of Muslim women they can be equal partners in a discussion on anything," says Samer Hathout. "That is, I think, primarily the beauty of it - that nobody knows who you are. They don't know if you are a woman or a man -- or if you're covered, or you're not covered."

Muslim Women on the Web

For many Muslim women, the Internet has become a safe portal where

traditional notions of the ideal Muslim woman can be tested and expanded. Today, there is a dynamic exchange taking place online, where a Muslim woman can be a traditionalist or an iconoclast, a homemaker or an entrepreneur.

I recently met one woman who personifies the "cyber Fatima" trend. In many ways, Eisha Saleh is a traditional Muslim woman who chooses to wear the Islamic veil and stay home. But she's also the owner of a thriving home-based Internet company -- *barakawomen.com* -- selling traditional and modern women garments over the Internet.

Eisha says that before the Internet, many Muslim women would give money and a shopping list for traditional clothes to anyone travelling to an Islamic country -- and never get the exact size or colour they were looking for. So she teamed up with a friend and founded a company that designs and manufactures Islamic clothing.

In the first two months of operation, Eisha says her Web site saw a dramatic rise in demand. "I have people in places you wouldn't even imagine Muslims would live," she says. "I have many customers from within Australia, the United States and England to name a few places". The internet therefore has given many Muslim men and women the opportunity to run businesses, advocacy groups and education centres on the Internet -- ranging from sites where online visitors can buy traditional women's Islamic garb to groups that advocate greater rights for Muslim women. Women isolated by geography or custom can download sermons, chat with other Muslim women all over the globe and find Islamic educational sites for their children.

The Internet therefore has quickly become an important part of the daily lives of many Muslims like Eisha. Muslim surfers can utilise the internet to download daily prayers from Mecca or Sydney, become an entrepreneur buying and selling things and even listening to Webcasts to get live feeds from Masjids and prominent imams and scholars and a host of other services.

The Internet: A Double-Edged Sword

The Internet has been a two-edged sword for many Muslims. It has helped the religion grow and has given millions of Muslims unfettered access to primary texts and new perspectives, nurturing a healthy online religious debate.

But the Web has also created an avenue of many of our brothers and sisters to be distracted from their deen by the millions upon millions of websites readily available by a simple click of a button. As we have seen, there are many benefits to the internet in enabling oneself to learn more about Islam, spreading the deen of Allah (swt), improving one's relationship with Allah and even to run successful businesses. However, many others stand on the side of caution when wanting to log onto the internet super highway.

Today, besides the many inappropriate and tasteless websites that can be viewed online by almost anyone, the addiction to such technology and the subsequent wastage of time that can easily distract us is something many of us need to be weary of.

A *sydneymuslimyouth.com* forum member and parent recently sat down and shared her thoughts with her past issues linked with her usage of the internet. The forum member identified the net as something that can very

quickly become a problem for some people. "You may say to yourself, I will only go on for one hour and then you find you have been sitting at the PC for five hours. Within these five hours of tapping away at the keyboard there are so many more things that could have been done" she says.

"I know that when I was sitting for a long times at the PC everything else around me would fall apart. The house, the kids, my family life etc.. It would all be put on hold just so I can get that extra time online".

The forum member continues adding, "I would find myself waking up early in the morning logging on and then not sleeping till the wee hours of the morning so I could log on. I was a MIRC, Facebook, MSN addict all at the one time! This was no way to live.

Since leaving my internet interests behind, I do find I have so much more time to do the things I used to enjoy. It's not until you let it go do you realise just how much more time you really do have in the day".

Another anonymous forum member also adds to the discussion stating that as a parent, "I am very wary of the times my kids are online and also what they are doing online... why? Because from what I have seen personally online and because of the way I became addicted to the net. I do not want my kids wasting their lives away online. There is so much more they can be doing with their time, than chatting with their friends online or playing games".

She continues stating "even when it comes to Islamic sites I am also weary... although the net can be filled with a mountain of information, the chance of them coming across something that is not correct is very high, and at a young age they are at the stage where they may believe everything they read... they haven't developed the tools to be able to say.. wait... this doesn't sound right. And I believe that this can be a problem for a lot of young teens".

The chances of them being led astray or coming across material that is haram is very high also. Therefore, parents do have a right to be concerned about their children's time and activities online because they may be questioned about their children's time and what they did as a parent to prevent their child from coming across such harmful material.

How many teens do you know that are having online relationships? Muslims included... if anyone is going to tell me that it doesn't happen then I will just say... open your eyes. It is happening and it is happening in a big way amongst the Muslim community.

The internet has opened "hidden" options for teens, especially for teens whose parents don't know about the dangers of the net and don't monitor their children's online activities

I have in the past described the internet as a tool easy accessible to satan... because you enter firstly with care, you are careful not to share personal information etc then in time you become more pulled in and the twines of the web are encircling you and as you become more comfortable you are being enticed to do more, share more, add that first brother or sister... then as time goes by you find yourself trapped.. just like the spider and fly... the trap being the net, shaytan the spider and you the fly.... once trapped it's hard to undo those strings.

Conclusion

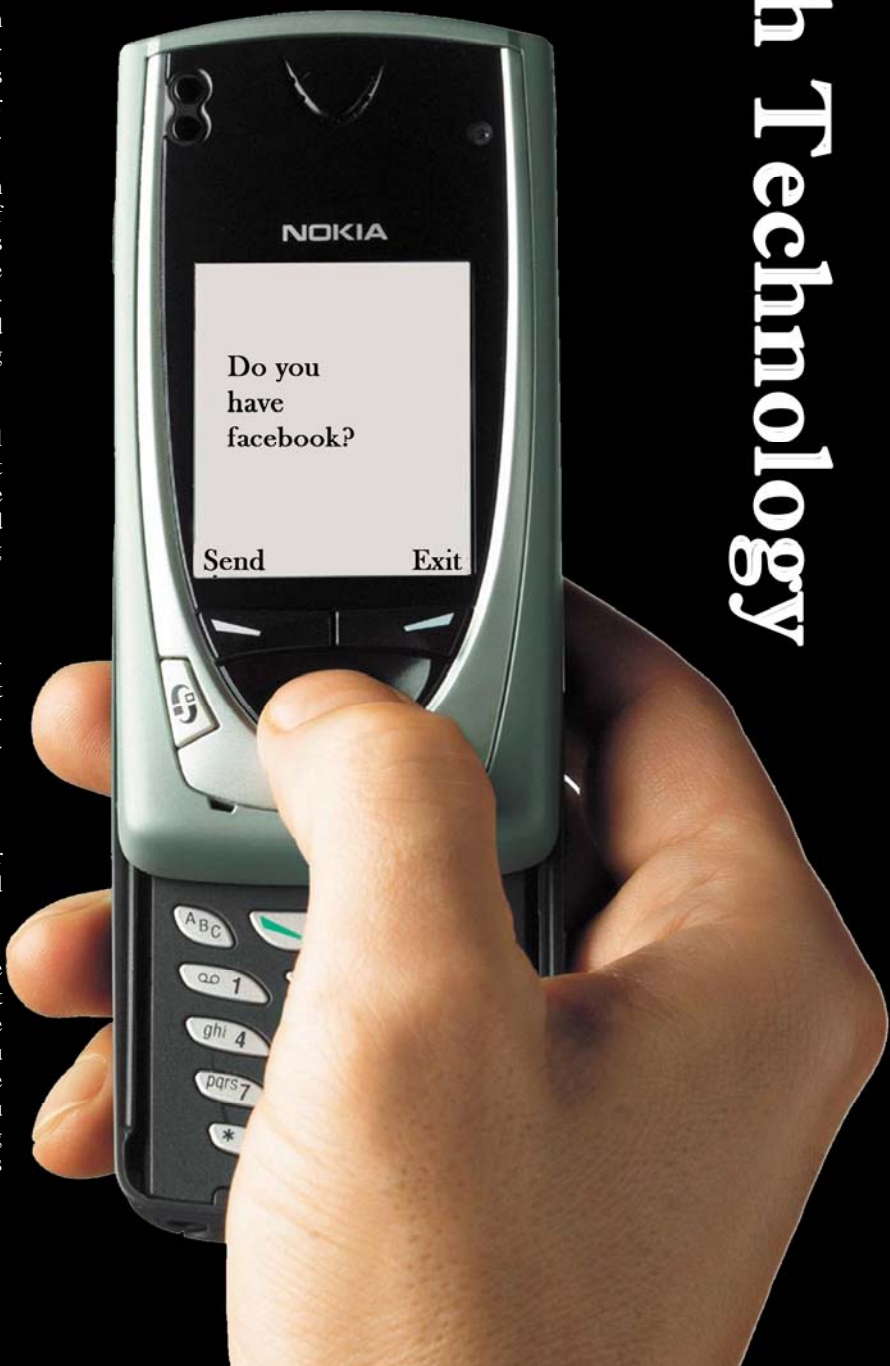
Although the Internet has quickly become an important part of the daily lives of many Muslims we still have to be very cautious every time we log on. Even someone with the most innocent of intentions may find themselves over time having compromised their Islam because of the internet.

I therefore, remind myself first and every reader of the magazine to fear Allah (swt). The advent of the internet has made giving and receiving the dawah easy but has also made committing the haram just as easy. So the next time you jump on line, remember that Allah (swt) is the ever watchful.

Your brother in Islam
Mohammed Adra

References:

<http://www.npr.org/programs/watc/cyberislam/>
www.sydneymuslimyouth.com



When Storm Clouds Gather

Life After Divorce

The Prophet (s) said "Among lawful things, divorce is most hated by Allah.". Although divorce in Islam is frowned upon, Islam does allow a couple to end their relationship if attempts to reconcile fail.

Allah, in His infinite wisdom, recognised that some people would be ill-suited for one another. Rather than force them to live together in a farce of a marriage, divorce is allowed. However, divorce is not something to be taken lightly; it is to be used as a last resort. In fact, getting a divorce without a valid reason is considered a sin.

Although the phrase "irreconcilable differences" is overused in our culture, those are the *only* differences that would necessitate a divorce. If there is hope of reconciliation, you must seek that first. Divorce should not even be considered until all positive avenues have been explored. Only problems that cause such anger, bitterness and hatred that marriage becomes impossible should lead to divorce.

Obviously, that could vary from person to person and marriage to marriage. Unfortunately, these days, instead of attempting to reconcile, many of our brothers and sisters are quick to utter the word 'Taliq' to their spouse. Many times, this is due to petty differences or even boredom, both of which are not legitimate grounds for divorce. Most marriages do have moments of boredom where the spark has gone. That is just motivation to spice things up! Running away and destroying a family will not solve that problem.

When divorce does take place, it does not utterly cut off the marriage tie and make it irremediable. On the contrary, as mentioned in the Qur'an, divorce gives every divorced man two chances to go back and 'patch things up'. If the divorces occur one after another and if the two times do not succeed in changing the couple's mind, then the third divorce is the final and decisive one, after which the spouse cannot return to him unless the woman has first been married to another man (and widowed or divorced from him).

However, contrary to what many people think, a divorce does not mean that the woman is thrown out of the house leaving with nothing except the clothes on her back. Although divorce is disliked in Islam, when a relationship fails it ensures that both parties are protected, especially the women.

Divorce does not deprive the divorced woman from taking maintenance during the legislated period that she stays without marriage ('iddah). I regard the Iddah

as being like a waiting or cooling off period where the parties are free to change their minds at any time and resume their marriage. Its duration is usually (a) until the woman gives birth if she is pregnant, or (b) three menstrual cycles if the woman has regular periods, or three calendar months if she has no menses.

During the iddah, the woman is not free to marry anyone else. If it is a reversible divorce (not the third divorce) her husband may choose to take her back at any time during the iddah. If he does not take her back after the waiting period, the divorce is final and the woman is free to marry someone else or she may go back to her husband with a new marriage contract.

Divorce during the iddah period does not allow the husband to dismiss the woman from her home, but forces the husband to let her stay in her house with him; perhaps old sentiments may return or hearts be purified and urges renewed as Allah (swt) states in the Quran: "it may be that Allah will afterward bring some new thing to pass (i.e. to return her back to you if that was the first or second divorce)". [Surah 65:1]

Moreover, in the case of a divorce, it is not allowed for the man to consume the woman's dowry or take back what was given before as Allah (swt) states in the Quran: "And it is not lawful for you (men) to take back any of your Mahr (bridal money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) (from your wives) which you have given them". [Surah 2:229]

It is also forbidden for the divorced man to spread rumours about his ex-wife or to scandalise her or offend her or her family after divorce: "either you retain her on reasonable terms or release her with kindness" [Surah 2:229] "And do not forget liberality between yourselves". [Surah 2:237]

That is divorce as decreed by Islam. It is a cure as it should be, at the right time, in the right measure, in the right style and with the right aim.

Your sister in Islam
Rana Eid

Editor's Note:

Dangers of using the word 'Al Taliq':

Today, many husbands jokingly tell their wives that if you don't do such and such I will divorce you. My advise brother, be careful! Many scholars are in agreement that if one uses the word Al Taliq than it is counted as a divorce (even if it is meant as a joke). Remember, after the third divorce, the divorce is final!... Don't be so quick to use the word 'Al Taliq'.





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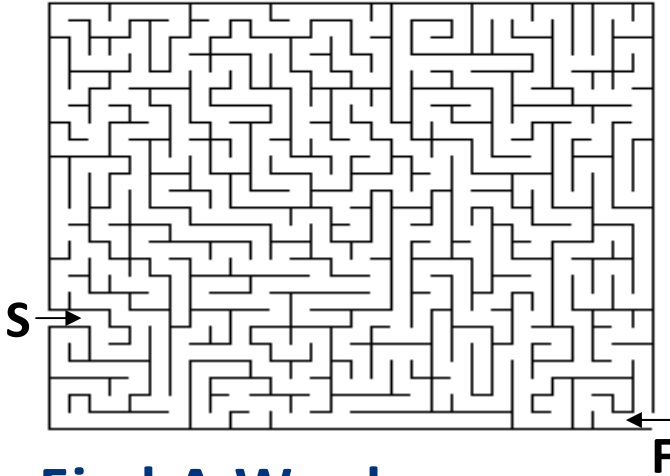
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Amusements Page

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I P S U X Y N H I A E N E C L
U B H N L D F S T R L F P E O
N T B I N A T N U R V O S U Y
H I M E T E I O G A C R E G E
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W R O Q G K B A P H L V M L M
I O C I P G Y L J H U E O L U
D A E P M W R E Y U C N T O T
Q N D B M A R R I A G E H C K
N O I S S A P M O C K S E Y Q
B R O T H E R H O O D S R A Y

Relationships Family Mother
Acquaintance Father Neighbour
Brotherhood Forgiveness Parents
Colleague In laws Sisterhood
Employee Kindness
Respect Marriage

Sudoku

					3			
	9	4	7				1	
1		8				6	7	3
7		6		2			8	1
8			4		9			7
9	2			7				4
5	7	9				1		2
	1				7	8	9	
			2					

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.



Current expansion work at Masjid al Haram, Mecca. Picture taken on December 9, 2008.

Picture of the Month

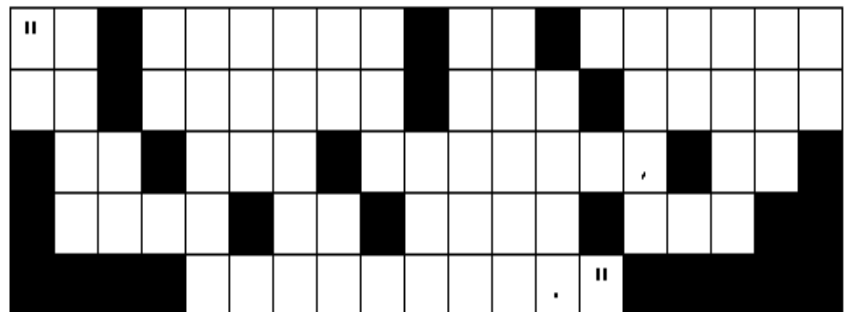
Spot the 5 Differences



1. Extra drop of soup.
2. Hair ribbon missing.
3. Mixing spoon missing.
4. Extra rosy cheek.
5. One pig tail shorter than the other.

Fallen Phrase:

Hadith of the Prophet (s)



O S H H
O K L F O F I D E
A O B I A O N E I S N F A S O
L F P H E S T W W N O E D I K U L Y
T O O F E R L R I R T E M L Y O I T H

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