

THE MESSAGE

messagemagazine.com.au | volume 08 | issue 01

The Gift of Giving

What have YOU got to give?





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editorial

If you are reading this issue of the Message Magazine, you would have received a free copy of our most recent edition. As you take this issue to read, learn and to Insha'Allah be entertained on our current theme of 'the gift of giving', the question I ask myself firstly and our readers is: What do we give back to our community? How has my life contributed towards the betterment of both the Muslim and non-Muslim community here in Australia? What impact (if any) has my life had on my family, friends, colleagues and society as a whole? Has the impact been a positive one or negative one?

The questions could go on and on, but I'm not here to lecture anyone about the way we live our lives; quite the contrary in fact. The question we should be asking is that if I were to die today, what legacy would I leave behind and what would I carry with me to the hereafter? Have I given enough back to my religion, family, and community to warrant me entrance into paradise or will I be someone who will be full of regret on the Day of Judgment where Allah (Swt) states, "On that day, the human being will remember - but what a remembrance - it will be too late. He will say, "Oh, I wish I prepared for my (eternal) life." On that day, no retribution could be worse than His (Allah's) retribution.

Today's research shows that we have indeed become a nation of takers. We will take anything we can find under the sun. Whether we need it or whether we don't. Whether we will use it or whether we won't. Today, we are quick to backbite and slander each other and every Islamic organisation about our 'inadequacies' and yet many of us say this while sitting on our living room couches with our remote controls in our hands. The truth of the matter is that although we are a community of 400,000 Muslims in Australia, the majority of the work that goes into planning and implementing most activities within our community falls on the shoulders of a few people – and they are left to feel simply overwhelmed and burnt-out by the amount of work.

You will often find that many Islamic organisations are screaming out for help, for volunteers, for people to give back to their community and for people to build on the foundation left by our fathers and mothers...people like you!

I attended an Islamic conference entitled "A Time to Change – Now or Never". Each speaker at the conference focused on a different aspect of the verse from the Quran, "Allah does not change the condition of people until they change themselves" (13;11).

Something that struck me at this particular conference was: how are we meant to change our community for the better if we do not give something back to it? How can we move forward if we are not willing to make a few lifestyle changes for the sake of pleasing Allah (Swt)? We all know what is required to be done and yet many of us lose sight of the real objectives of life; as Allah (Swt) says, "He has created Death and Life that He may try which of you is best in deeds: and He is the Exalted in Might Oft-Forgiving" (67:2).

Without a doubt, our work and family play a major role in our lives and also within our religion but let us also allocate a part of the day (or even a part of the week) where we volunteer an hour or two of our time for the sake of giving back to our community and seeking the pleasure of Allah (Swt). Contact your local Islamic organisation and be a part of an up-coming event or project whereby you can contribute some of your skills towards promoting Islam and providing essential services to the Islamic community.

I ask Allah (Swt) to grant us a balanced life between giving and taking. Allah (Swt) providing us with the opportunity to 'give' is truly a gift in itself, as giving is an investment with Allah for our own benefit.

The United Muslims of Australia (UMA) are always looking for brothers and sisters to volunteer their time for the sake of Allah (Swt), please contact 0416 000 862 for more details of how you can get involved in our activities.

WaSalam,

Mohammed Adra
Editor

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Should I not be a thankful Worshiper?

All praise is due to Allah. We thank him and seek His mercy and seek refuge from the evil shaytan and his misguidance. We ask Allah to grant us the highest level of jannah, and to save us from the punishment of the grave and Hellfire.

Thanking Allah in Islamic terms is acknowledging that Allah is the one who grants all kinds of blessings and bounties upon us in all types and forms, which in Arabic terms is referred to as 'Hamd'. In every prayer that we perform, we recite Surat al Fatiha, where we recite the ayah: Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Alameen (All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds). Yet it is often rolled off the tongue unconsciously without any recognition for what we are thankful for.

Allah says:

"And if you were to count the blessings of Allah, you will never be able to count them." Qur'an (14: 34)

He, the All Mighty also says:

"And whatever blessings and good you have, it is from Allah ..." Qur'an (16: 53)

The blessings from Allah are so many that we take them for granted. Many people wrongly assume that we should only be thankful for our wealth, as it is something we see come and go, and it is something we are conscious of, but things like our sight, hearing, health and other senses are not appreciated until we lose them and realise how important they are. A man came to a good Muslim and complained that Allah made him very poor. The good man said: "Would you like to have ten thousand dinars and be insane?" The Complainer answered: "No." The good man said: "Would you like to have ten thousand dinars but have your legs chopped off?" The complainer answered: "No." The good man then said: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself complaining about your Lord while all of these grants which are His; have been bestowed on you?"

In cases like these, whenever we are afflicted with hardships, it is always best to humble yourself and look at others who live simple lives, sometimes even without the bare essentials such as food and clean drinking water. After thanking Allah, we realise that the distresses we face are very simple, and our ungratefulness gradually disappears. However thanking Allah shouldn't reach to this state where we only recognise Him at times of hardship.

We need to rewind way before that and give Him recognition where it is due, which is at all times. Thanking Allah can be expressed through the heart by recognition of our blessings which are all from Allah, and not from our own acclaim. Or it can be done through the limbs of the body by enjoining in good acts and abstaining from evil acts. Prostrating to Allah is also one of the favoured forms of worship when Allah grants you a great blessing or saves you from a great calamity. This was something that Rasulullah (S) often did whenever he heard good news, as it was a great form of worship for purely thanking Allah in the humblest of forms, with his forehead humbly touching the ground in gratitude due to Allah's greatness and mercy.

Abu Hurayrah (R) has also narrated that: He who is enabled to show gratitude will never be deprived of increase of blessings. ***"If you give thanks, certainly I will give you more."*** (14:7)

Finally, the greatest example that can sum up this article is the example of Rasulullah (S) who used to pray Qiyamul Layl (night prayers) until his feet would swell, crack and eventually bleed from the prolonged stance. He would weep in his prayers out of humbleness and fear of Allah. Aisha (R) asked her husband Muhammad (S): "O Messenger of Allah, what causes you to weep, when Allah has forgiven for you your earlier and later sins?" To this he replied (S):

"Should I not be a thankful servant ['abd shakur]? Why should I not do it, since Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has sent down to me the words of revelation:

Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ship that runs upon the sea with that which is of use to human beings, and the water which Allah sends down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and the distribution of the winds, and the clouds set in orderly array between heaven and earth--surely there are signs for people who can understand. (2:164)"

And Allah knows better.

Sheikh Shady Alsuleiman

Abu Dahdah

A Companion of the Ages

When looking for examples from the companions of the Prophet (S) for this issue of the Message Magazine on 'The Gift of Giving', I could have chosen to write on a host of them that would be worthy of mention. There is no doubt that the act of being generous is part of our beloved religion.

Allah has shown us in His example of the Prophet all degrees and kinds of generosity. The Prophet was completely selfless. He never said no to a request. He never turned anyone away empty-handed from his house and always gave preference to the others over his own needs.

The companions also have many stories of their acts of generosity. One generous companion that comes to mind is Abu Dahdah.

The story takes place in Madinah where a man by the name of Abu Lubabah wanted to build a wall between himself and his neighbours because he was a man who was excessively guarding his wealth. His neighbour, who was also a young orphan, helped build the wall for him but came across a Palm tree right on the site where the wall was to be constructed. The orphan approached Abu Lubabah, explained the situation and said, "Give me the tree." Abu Lubabah said no. The boy then asked if he could purchase the tree. Abu Lubabah also said no. The orphan got upset and took the matter to the Prophet (S).

The Prophet asked Abu Lubabah repeatedly to either give the orphan the tree or sell it to him. Abu Lubabah insisted on refusing, saying that it is his right. The orphan cried because no one could help him as he had no father to defend him and the Prophet (S) couldn't use his authority to make Abu Lubabah give up his rights.

When the Prophet saw this, he gently told Abu Lubabah that if he gave the orphan this tree, he will have a tree in Paradise. Abu Lubabah still said no and left the gathering out of anger.

Among the people sitting was Abu Dahdah. He quickly asked the Prophet: "If I purchase that tree, would I get the tree in Paradise?" The Prophet said yes.

So Abu Dahdah called Abu Lubabah back and asked him, "Do you know my garden?" Abu Lubabah said yes. It was a beautiful garden, well-known to the community and it even had his house in the middle. Scholars report that he had 400 or 600 trees. Abu Dahdah said, "It is yours for that Palm tree". Abu Lubabah was surprised and asked him, "Are you being serious?" It was hard for him to fathom someone giving up 400 or more trees for one tree. Abu Dahdah said yes and called on the others sitting in the gathering to be witnesses. Abu Lubabah finally agreed.

After the deal had been made, Abu Dahdah approached the young orphan and said, "The tree is yours". Abu Dahdah then went to his house in the garden and told his wife and children to come out because they were leaving. His wife asked him why, to which he replied, "We have sold it to Allah and his Prophet". His wife, may Allah reward her, did not get angry at her husband for giving their worldly possessions away. Instead she said, "What a successful deal!"

They left the premises immediately and as they were doing so, their children picked up some of the dates on the ground to take with them. Their mother took the dates from them and threw them back in the garden saying, "This is for Allah, my child".

Dear reader, generosity is a part of Islam and it is something that softens the heart and humbles the nafs (soul). What better way to remind the readers of "The Message" magazine about the gift of giving than through the actions of Abu Dahdah. May Allah (Swt) accept his good deeds and allow us to bear his qualities and the qualities of his righteous companions. Ameen.

Your brother in Islam

Rami Al Sharawneh



Give to yourself

The Importance of Taking Care of Yourself

As Muslims we believe Islam is a complete way of life, providing a foundation and framework for all its aspects. In a time when increasing emphasis is being placed upon physical fitness and recreation, we should know how to maximise our benefit from these pursuits in accordance with our Islamic values.

Recreation

Recreation has always been a part of human existence. It can be a natural break which allows people time for refreshment and clearing the mind. We read in the Qur'ân how the brothers of Prophet Yusuf used it as a way to appeal to their father: "Send him with us tomorrow that he may eat well and play" (12:12).

We have many examples from the time of the Prophet (S) during which the companions participated in many different forms of lawful entertainment and play. They engaged in sports like footraces, horseracing, wrestling, and archery. They sometimes spent time telling jokes in lighthearted conversations. One of the Companions, Abu al-Darda, is reported to have said: "I seek recreation in something that is neither useful nor unlawful, and this makes me stronger on the truth."

Physical Fitness

Almost everyone today is aware of at least a few advantages of being physically fit; one should also know that Islam also encourages those who take care of their health and body. The Prophet (S) (on the authority of Abu Hurayrah) is reported to have said: "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, while there is good in both."

While there are many kinds of strength, the obvious type is physical strength. A great Muslim mind from our history, Ibn Taymiyya, also thought the Prophet was talking about physical strength. He wrote that it was preferable and more virtuous for a Muslim to have the ability to perform their prayers properly. A contemporary scholar of our times had the following to say about physical strength and its relation to our belief and actions:

"The believer who is strong in his belief, body, and actions is better than the weak believer, the one who has weak belief, or a weak body or weak actions. That is because the strong believer is productive and accomplishes things for the Muslims, and thus they benefit from his physical strength, actions, and his strong belief".

So this saying is an encouragement to have strength, as Islam is the Religion of strength, the Religion of honour, the Religion of prestige!

So the strength that is sought from us in Islam is strength in belief and its tenets, as well as strength in our actions and bodies, because all of this brings forth good things for the Muslims.

The believer who has strong belief is more likely to be fit and in shape. This is because he understands the importance of striving and staying in shape, while the weak believer may easily get fat and out of shape, from his overeating and laziness. Physical strength is a direct result of strength in belief.

We see from the above that physical fitness and strength are highly valued in Islam. Additionally, as Muslims, we believe that the knowledge of how long a person has to live is something known only to the Creator. However, if someone has been blessed with a long life, should they not show gratitude by taking care of themselves?

The Prophet (S) is reported to have said: "And your body also has a right over you." Everyone should always desire to be at their best to fulfill all their obligations. There is not a single circumstance when it is advantageous to be in a poor state of health. Staying healthy and physically fit is perhaps the most practical method of implementing the above advice to avoid the health defects that aging is prone to.

Furthermore, as Muslims, we must always be aware of how valuable the time is that we have been given in our brief lives on Earth. Islam teaches us to place a premium on our time and to get as much out of it as we can, defining for us the various ways we can employ it.

No recreational activity should ever take precedence over any obligation, nor should an individual burden themselves with so many responsibilities as to not allow any time for rest. We must keep our intentions pure when we engage in these activities if we want to earn the reward and blessings from our Creator. Is there any point to spend countless hours in the gym in an effort to lose weight only for attaining a figure similar to the ones which are on the covers of magazines today with no other more significant goal in mind?

We read in the Qur'ân that: "And we have made you a balanced community" (2:143).

I ask Allah to help us maintain a balance in our lives that will always enable us to improve our service to Him, to ourselves and to mankind as a whole.

Your brother in Islam,

Justin Ducote

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The of Contentment

As a society, we have been pre-conditioned to believe that the wealthier you are, the more secure you will be in life, and thus you become a prestigious successful person. Family members and friends often compare each other's social status, financial ability and "success in life" measured by the ability to own a home via a bank loan. We all enslave ourselves voluntarily to modern day slavery, counting the dollar to counteract that feeling of insecurity, just to ensure that we will live comfortable lives. Along the track, an opportunity may come to contribute a donation for an Islamic project, or build a masjid, or help the needy. But as we contemplate the act of donating for the cause of Allah, we suddenly get a rush of thoughts, excuses and doubts of financial insecurity, where we fear our wealth may decrease if we contribute. Or the Shaytan may whisper in our ear, telling us we should not donate in public, fearing that people will notice us donating, and therefore the intention to donate becomes for something other than Allah, such as recognition amongst people. Many people (who may not be financially "well-off") also fear that it will decrease from their wealth, as they need to save for a rainy day.

However, Allah reminds us in the following Ayah in the Qur'an: "And whatever you spend of anything (In Allah's cause), He will replace it". (34:39)

A question was raised at a fundraising dinner to build Masjid Al Bukhari in Granville by Sheikh Omar El-Banna: Do we truly believe in Allah's promise? Do we believe that Allah will replace the wealth we donate?

Subhanallah, this question truly resonates in the heart... 'Sure we do', we try to convince ourselves. 'I donated \$50 five weeks ago to a charity.' Why is it then that we hesitate and think twice on many occasions when we walk past a donation box in the masjid, or in the local store? Shaytan is very good at tricking us in making us believe that we shouldn't donate out of fear of not having the right intention. He makes us believe that people are looking at us, which would result in donating for the sake of people noticing, so that they can say "Masha Allah what a generous Muslim." As a result, we hold back and promise ourselves that we will do it in secret, when in actual fact we forget altogether.

Or if we decide to donate, we sometimes decide to give less than we originally intended. Islamically speaking, with these tricks of the shaytan, we should do the act anyway, as Allah knows best of our intentions, and eventually, we will break out of this mindset.

There are also millionaires out there who are so consumed with making more money and building mansions and other properties, worrying that their wealth will not be enough to sustain them. Their sense of security is attached with earning more wealth whilst not being able to enjoy what they have been blessed with, as it becomes a vicious cycle to earn more money to feed that empty hole of 'security'. Such a person may be wealthy monetarily, but they have no contentment, and are scared to donate out of fear of losing their financial security. These people unfortunately have been blessed in riches, but the true wealth is the wealth of contentment in the heart of a person, which is a gift from Allah (Swt). The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "Richness does not lie in the abundance of (worldly) goods, but richness is the richness of the soul (heart, self)." [Muslim]

Gift Contentment



By Allah, on that night, people truly believed... by the end of the auction, Allah proved us both wrong and the final amount raised to build Masjid Albukhari was close to \$1 million. People were donating in hundreds of dollars, thousands, even tens of thousands. The final tally kept on rising exponentially, and even more money was later pledged to tip the scales over the 1 million dollar mark. This gave me faith in the community and exceeded my expectations of people who seem to have their priorities straight (may Allah make us all of this calibre, ameen). They wanted to invest in a property in the Hereafter, as the Sheikh quoted a hadith from Sahih Bukhari and Muslim: "Whoever builds a house for Allah, Allah will build him a house like it in paradise." Rather than worrying about fulfilling the 'great Aussie dream', they were concerned about fulfilling the 'great Muslim dream'.

May Allah make us from those people who have the gift of contentment so that we may lead successful lives during this time and the Hereafter. Ameen

Back to the Sheikh's question: Do we truly believe in Allah's promise? Do we believe that He will replace our wealth not only in this life, but the Hereafter as well? Subhanallah, it doesn't make sense to us because if this was the case, and all people truly believed in this promise, poverty would be much lower, but at the same time, our own wealth will increase the more we give! This can be deduced from the hadith, where our Prophet (S) said: "Wealth does not diminish by giving charity" (Muslim). One needs to realise that our wealth may not increase monetarily, but it may increase in other forms. We need to also realise that Allah has set our rizk (wealth and sustenance) 50,000 years before the creation of the heavens and the earth, so stressing over what has been already determined in this life is a waste of time. What we really should be worrying about is the uncertain, which is the Hereafter, and what better form of trade with Allah is there than giving charity to benefit us for the Hereafter!

On the night, my friend and I tried to estimate a final figure that would be raised that night. We both assumed it would be about two to three hundred thousand, maybe up to five hundred thousand maximum, including the money raised from the tickets which were \$100 each (there was an attendance of approximately 900 people)

Your brother in Islam

Hesham Mourad



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Charity

The Buck \$tops Here!

The Message Magazine usually leaves a topic like 'charity' to the month of Ramadan to provide our readers with details of how to fulfill the third pillar of Islam, as this is the month when most of us give our Zakat. So why write an article about charity this time of year? Simple. To remind firstly myself and our readers that charity is not meant to be done one time in a year. In fact, the purpose of this article is to create a greater awareness that there is a whole lot more to charity than just giving money.

Charity comes in many different forms. Yes, there is the most obvious form. The form we all know... the giving of a part of our wealth to the poor and needy. Unfortunately many of us leave charity at this. The Prophet (S) was narrated to have said, "There are 360 joints in the human body, for each one he (each person) must give Sadaqah."

It has been pointed out in the Hadith that Sadaqah (charity) is something that must be done on a daily basis. However, I'm sure not many of us can afford to give away money every day of the year. So what else can we do that can fall under the category of Sadaqah?

This was a question asked by a group of poor people to the Prophet (S) who claimed that they were being unfairly disadvantaged in terms of doing good deeds, when it came to the giving of Sadaqah in comparison to their wealthier brothers and sisters; as Allah (Swt) had not blessed them with the same amount of wealth. The Prophet (S) replied by saying, "There are so many ways of doing good, such as praising Allah, glorifying Allah, claiming His Magnificence, declaring that there is no god except the One God, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, removing a harmful obstacle from one's path, helping the deaf to hear, guiding the blind, directing the one seeking help and striving to one's utmost in helping the needy and the weak. All of these are acts of charity required from yourselves."

Although giving a part of your wealth is an obligation in Islam in purifying your wealth, the teachings of the Prophet have also shown us that the notion of charity covers a very large area. Spending time with your family is a form of Sadaqah. Teaching another to recite a verse of the Qur'an, or how to take care of a baby, or how to take out an appendix are all forms of Sadaqah,

with the teacher continuing to reap credit for these actions as long as that knowledge is used for the sake of Allah.

A person who digs (or participates in the process of digging) a well from which people can draw water, free, with the intention of doing it for the sake of Allah is another form of Sadaqah. This is an act of charity which continues over time; and as long as people benefit from the well, the donor (dead or alive) will continue to receive credit for having done it. The Prophet (S) also said that "a good word is a Sadaqah" and "a smile (to your brother or sister) is a Sadaqah".

We are given the opportunity to give Sadaqah numerous times in a day. However, many of us pass these opportunities by due to a lack of knowledge, time and selfishness. Let us all put into practice the Hadith of the Prophet (S), "Love for your brother what you love for yourself" to ensure we do the actions of showing compassion, kindness and generosity to others so that we utilise every opportunity that comes our way to perform a Sadaqah. This way we will continue to receive rewards for our actions and Sadaqah for years to come and Insha'Allah well after our deaths.

Your sister in Islam

Sahar Zreika



When giving turns ugly

Have you ever given advice that has backfired on you or turned ugly? Well hopefully the following article will help provide a few practical tips for giving advice (or advice on giving advice). I must admit that during my teenage years, I wasn't always an 'angel'...in fact far from it. Looking back and reflecting on those so called 'good old days' often brings a small, cheeky smirk to my face over some of my actions and sometimes a shiver and a twinge down my spine.

As I continue to reflect, one of the first things that comes to my mind are my very young days when my dad would sit me on his knee and try to explain to me what I had done wrong (something I now do with my own kids) and then I think back to my friends in high school giving me advice whenever they felt 'I needed to pull my head back in.'

The problem we face with advice is that sometimes the person we are trying to advise doesn't appreciate either the advice given or doesn't like the manner in which the advice was given. As a result of this (and to save us a headache) the question so many people ask themselves is: is it okay to keep quiet if we see a wrongdoing by our close relatives (parents, siblings etc) because we fear our advice might hurt their feelings or that it may turn into a nasty argument?

I'm sure many of us over the years have asked ourselves this question. Many of us may also feel that giving advice in such occasions might make us feel proud of ourselves, i.e., thinking that we know more than the other person or that we are better than them.

The trickiest question of all is one that most of us experience where we often find it difficult to give advice to people (especially elders) as they tend to be hypersensitive towards advice. They think we are trying to belittle them. For example, I was recently approached by a fellow brother who knew some of his relatives purposely delay their prayers, not out of forgetfulness or sleep, but because they busy themselves with their daily chores or out of laziness and he wanted to know how to approach this problem.

If you were in his shoes what would you have said and what advice would you have given? As you ponder over the answer to this question let me mention that remaining silent in Islam should not be an option. In fact, giving sincere and sound advice is a strong Islamic opinion which every Muslim should fulfill regardless of what people may think of them. We should not think about the reaction of people, whether they will condemn or praise us. Moreover, one should not allow satanic whispers to hinder them from giving advice on the pretext that they may feel superior to others but should let the pleasure of Allah and obtaining His reward be their sole goal and motivation.

This is often easier said than done. However, it is important to keep in mind that there are some manners and conditions which are necessary that will help considerably in fulfilling this task. Allah Almighty says, "Call people to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and best advice, and reason with them, if you have to, in the most courteous manner: for your Lord knows best who strays from His Way and He knows best who is rightly guided". (An-Nahl 16:125)

Wisdom and sound advice are the most important prerequisites for a da'iyyah (caller to Islam), as he/she should be careful in choosing the suitable time and means for giving advice. For instance, one should be careful in choosing his words and should speak in a very gentle manner. The advisor should not give advice publicly where they may embarrass the person whom he/she advises.

Elaborating on this, it is important to keep in mind as you give advice to your fellow brother or sister that Islam requires certain ethics which must be followed - These include:

1. It should be done in secret or in a private setting so as not to embarrass the person.

2. Ask permission. Unsolicited advice is a major cause of grief among friends and family members. Thus, asking if your advice is desired shows respect for others and prevents resentment.

3. Listen first. While this rule applies to all good communication, it becomes very important when we wish to give advice. Issues are often more complex than they initially appear. By listening first, we open some space for the speaker to fully describe the situation so that it can be fully understood. What is the point of offering advice when you don't know

the entire story? In addition, when we listen first, it makes it more likely that the other will then listen to what we have to say. One needs connection before correction. It is empathic listening that establishes the connection.

4. Advice should be given in a kind and gentle manner. Do not make threats or scare someone by turning advice or criticism into ultimatums. Such displays of authority (or superiority) are unlikely to produce positive results.

5. Consider the other's frame of mind. Moments of emotional upheaval are not conducive to giving advice. Always state the positives first. This will make the other person relax and welcome your advice.

6. The advisor should explain to the person his wrongdoing and support his/her stance with proofs from the Quran and Sunnah.

Therefore, if you abide by the above ethics, people will most likely accept your advice. If they do not accept, Allah will reward you for your sincere efforts. Accordingly, you should sincerely advise your friends, relatives, etc. in the same manner, irrespective of their acceptance as long as you abide by these Islamic ethics.

As I have mentioned earlier, advising one another is a must in Islam, for the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was narrated to have said: "Religion is founded upon (sincere) advice." And: "Whoever sees a wrong, should change it by his hand, if he is not able to do so, let him do so by his tongue, and if he is not able to do so, let him do so by his heart, and the latter is the slightest of faith."

Let me end my article on a practical example of giving advice to elders. This is the example set by Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, the grandsons of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) while dealing with an old man who did not perform wudu (ablution) properly. Upon seeing this, they masterminded an idea that involved asking the elderly man to judge between them to see who could perform their wudu in a better manner, as they both claimed that they could perform wudu in a more proper way than the other. Both of them performed wudu properly in front of the man. The man got their hint and learnt the proper way of making ablution. This proves that in cases like this, hints and indirect advice are much more effective for they save one from embarrassment and do not hurt other people's feelings.

I ask Allah (Swt) to grant us the wisdom to give sincere advice.

Your sister in Islam

Fatima Assal



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There are among those who believe in the popular saying that "Time is Gold." Time in Islam is more than Gold or any precious material thing in this world. Of all religions, only Islam guides mankind not only to the importance of time, but also how to value it. Allah the Almighty and His Messenger, Prophet Mohammad (S), very clearly tell us the value of time, why we must not waste it and how we can make use of our time wisely to increase our Eeman (Faith) and thus attain success, especially eternal success in the life hereafter.

"When looking at the concept of time, many dwell on the past...But why put time and energy into remembering events that happened centuries ago? Why not let the past be the past and put it behind us once and for all? Why does the Qur'an admonish us constantly to remember?"

These are very legitimate questions and ones that deserve careful consideration because the answer lies within the fundamental nature of Islam and of the Qur'an. It lies in the way the Qur'an views history and in the manner in which it illustrates history.

Time in Islam is a creation. Just like a book, a pen, a computer, etc. Anything...

The thing is... since we are "within" this creation of Time, it

is all we know. It's through this thinking that I understand (just a tad) the nature of why we cannot even imagine infinity or eternity. We can at best guess and refer to it, but truly understand and perceive it? Never.

Well, maybe after this life.

Allah created time; hence he can do whatever He wants to with it. If you think of the above analogy of time being a creation, it can be turned upside down, inside out, looked at backwards, changed and destroyed. He is beyond time, He is and always was. This is a concept that we cannot fathom simply because our entire existence is rooted in Time.

Even Atheists concede that the Big Bang began from something infinitely small and infinitely dense. So basically they concede that Time and the Universe was "created" from something infinite. But how can they explain it?

Coming from the Life of the Prophet Muhammad (S) we know that on his Night Journey (Me'raj), he was taken from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to the Heavens. He (S) says he saw people in Hell as well as in Heaven... but how can that be if the Day of Judgment had not yet occurred? Nobody had gone to Jannah or Jahannam yet, or been judged yet... if we're looking at this through the logicity of Time itself.

Just as the Me'raj was a miracle in itself which gives us the concept of a "time beyond time", a place where Time has no effect; similarly, Time has no effect outside this Universe of ours. Hence, he (S) could see all those people in Heaven and Hell because their existence there did not depend on the Time on Earth.

So... what bearing does this have on our lives at present? What insight can we gain by understanding this?

This life is nothing but a journey and a very, very short one at that when compared to eternity. The only time we can even get a glimpse of what we are really in for is at Death. So make the most of this life in terms of attaining the ultimate goal of Jannah. If you look at the greater scheme of things in this context, we are nothing. Our purpose on Earth is only to serve Allah, and the only way to do that is through the service of His creation.

seconds

By serving His creation, you are ultimately worshipping Him. By going to work, being with your family, eating ,drinking, sleeping ,playing, ... if all is done in the pursuit of justice and truth and to ultimately attain His pleasure, you will be successful.

Ibn Abbas narrated that Prophet Muhammad (S) said: "There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) health and free time for doing good." (Bukhari 8/421).

And from the Qur'an, Allah (Swt) says...

"By (the Token of) Time (through the ages), Verily Man is in loss, Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy." (103:1-3).

Without doubt, time is something that needs to be duly appreciated and managed. In Islam there is no room for slogans like the so-called "killing time", for in Islam, time is really valuable. In fact, wasting time is much more dangerous than squandering property, because unlike property, time cannot be compensated. Free time is a blessing that is overlooked and not wholly appreciated by many people.

This indicates that it's very important for a Muslim to try his utmost to utilise his time efficiently and to make the best use of it in beneficial things. A Muslim may use portion of his time in making invocations and supplications, celebrating the praises of Allah. The Prophet Mohammad (S), used to supplicate: "O Allah! I seek refuge in You from sorrow and distress, and I seek refuge in You from disability and laziness."

A Muslim should learn how to organise his time and make a realistic plan for worldly and religious duties. That is to say that one should know how to arrange their priorities: the most important and the most urgent comes first and carried out according to schedule. Organising time also includes leaving a portion for relaxation and entertainment, for 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.'

Finally, I would like to conclude with the following Hadith of the Prophet Mohammad (S): "A sane person, unless he is mindless, should have four hours: an hour to invoke to his Lord, an hour to count his own deeds, an hour to contemplate about the creation of Allah and an hour to satisfy his worldly needs."

Verily, time is very important for our success both in this temporary world and the eternal world to come. If we waste time, if we abuse it, then we waste and abuse our lives. In the Hereafter we will be among the losers, who will suffer the torments in the Hell Fire if Allah the Almighty will not forgive us. Therefore, if we really give value to our lives, then we must give due value to the importance of time.

Your brother in Islam,

Muhammad Karim



Growing Fast

A Snapshot of the Global Islamic Community

"Nearly one in four people in the world practice Islam, according to a report billed as the most comprehensive of its kind. It says the global Muslim population stands at 1.57 billion".

A comprehensive demographic study of 232 countries finds that there are 1.57 billion Muslims of all ages living in the world today, representing 23 per cent of an estimated 2009 world population of 6.8 billion.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life report provides a precise number for a population whose size has been subject to guesswork, with estimates ranging anywhere from 1 billion to 1.8 billion.

Researchers analysed approximately 1,500 sources, including census reports, demographic studies and general population surveys. The project, three years in the making, also presents a portrait of the Muslim world that might surprise some. For instance, Germany has more Muslims than Lebanon, China has more Muslims than Syria, Russia has more Muslims than Jordan and Libya combined and Ethiopia has nearly as many Muslims as Afghanistan.

It showed that 20 per cent of Muslims live in the Middle East and North Africa. Pew officials call the report the most thorough on the size and distribution of adherents to the world's largest growing religion.

The report provides evidence that while the heart of Islam might beat in the Middle East, its greatest numbers lie in other regions of Asia: More than 60 per cent of the world's Muslims live in Asia.

About 20 per cent live in the Middle East and North Africa, 15 percent live in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2.4 per cent are in Europe and 0.3 per cent in the Americas. While the Middle East and North Africa have fewer Muslims overall than other regions in Asia, the region easily claims the most Muslim-majority countries.

While those population trends are well established, the large numbers of Muslims who live as minorities in countries aren't as scrutinised. The report identified about 317 million Muslims – or one-fifth of the world's Muslim population – living in countries where Islam is not the majority religion.

About three-quarters of Muslims living as minorities are concentrated in five countries: India (161 million), Ethiopia (28 million), Russia (16 million) and Tanzania (13 million). The immense size of majority-

Hindu India is underscored by the fact that it boasts the third-largest Muslim population of any nation – yet Muslims account for just 13 per cent of India's population.

Most people think of the Muslim world being Muslims living mostly in Muslim-majority countries. Two-thirds of all Muslims live in 10 countries. Six are in Asia (Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Iran and Turkey), three are in North Africa (Egypt, Algeria and Morocco) and one is in sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria).

Indonesia, which has a tradition of a more tolerant Islam, has the world's largest Muslim population (203 million, or 13 percent of the world's total). In China, the highest concentrations of Muslims were in western provinces (22 million). The country experienced its worst outbreak of violence in decades when rioting broke out last year between minority Muslim Uighurs and majority Han Chinese.

Very few Muslims, however, live in the Pacific with Australia having the largest concentration of Muslims with a little fewer than 400,000 or 1.9 per cent of the total population.

Europe is home to about 38 million Muslims, or about five per cent of its population. Germany appears to have more than 4 million Muslims – almost as many as North and South America combined. In France, where tensions have run high over the banning of the wearing of the hijab in government institutions and the influx of Muslim immigrant labourers, the overall numbers were lower but a larger percentage of the population is Muslim.

Of roughly 4.6 million Muslims in the America, more than half live in the United States although they only make up 0.8 per cent of the population there. About 700,000 people in Canada are Muslim, or about 2 per cent of the total population.

The Pew Forum has said the findings will lay the foundation for a forthcoming study that will look at how Muslim populations worldwide have grown and what they may look like in the future. It also plans to compile figures for the other major world religions.

According to the internet-based group, Adherents, there are currently 2.1 billion Christians, 900 million Hindus and 14 million Jews worldwide.

Your brother in Islam

Abu Ali

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She's my Sister



Translated by Muhammad Alshareef from the book Azzaman Alqaadim compiled by Abdulmalik Al-Qasim.

Her cheeks were worn and sunken, and her skin hugged her bones. That didn't stop her because you could never catch her not reciting the Qur'an. She was always vigil in her personal prayer room that our father had set up for her. Bowing, prostrating, raising her hands in prayer, was the way she was from dawn to sunset and back again; boredom it was for other people.

As for me, I craved nothing more than fashion magazines and novels. I treated myself to videos until the trips to the rental place became my trademark. It's a saying that when something becomes habit, people tend to distinguish you by it. I was negligent in my responsibilities and my salah was characterized by laziness.

One night, after a long three hours of watching, I turned the video off. The adhan rose softly in the quiet night. I slipped peacefully into my blanket.

Her voice called me from her prayer room. "Yes? Would you like anything Noorah?" I asked.

With a sharp needle she popped my plans. "Don't sleep before you pray Fajr!"

Agghh! "There's still an hour before Fajr. That was only the first adhan," I said.

With those loving pinches of hers, she called me closer. She was like that even before the fierce sickness shook her spirit and shut her in bed. "Hanan, can you come sit beside me."

I could never refuse any of her requests; you could touch the purity and sincerity in her. "Yes, Noorah?"

"Please sit here."

"Alright, I'm sitting. What's on your mind?"

With the sweetest mono voice she began reciting:

Every soul shall taste death and you will merely be repaid your earnings on the Day of Resurrection.

She stopped thoughtfully. Then she asked, "Do you believe in death?"

"Of course I do," I replied.

"Do you believe that you shall be responsible for whatever you do, regardless of how small or large?"

"I do, but Allah is Forgiving and Merciful, and I've got a long life waiting for me."

"Stop it Hanan! Are you not afraid of death and its abruptness? Take a look at Hind. She was younger than you but she died in a car accident. Death is age-blind and your age could never be a measure of when you shall die."

The darkness of the room filled my skin with fear. "I'm scared of the dark and now you made me scared of death. How am I supposed to go to sleep now? Noorah, I thought you promised you'd go with us on vacation during the summer break."

Her voice broke and her heart quivered. "I might be going on a long trip this year Hanan, but somewhere else. All of our lives are in Allah's hands and we all belong to Him."

My eyes welled and the tears slipped down both cheeks. I pondered my sisters grizzly sickness. The doctors had informed my father in private that there was not much hope Noorah was going to outlive the disease. She wasn't told, so I wondered who hinted to her. Or was it that she could sense the truth?

"What are you thinking about Hanan?" Her voice was sharp. "Do you think I am just saying this because I am sick? I hope not. In fact, I may live longer than people who are not sick. How long are you going to live Hanan? Perhaps twenty years? Maybe forty? Then what?" Through the dark she reached for my hand and squeezed gently. "There's no difference between us; we're all going to leave this world to live in Paradise or agonize in Hell. Listen to the words of Allah:

Anyone who is pushed away from the Fire and shown into Jannah will have triumphed.

I left my sister's room dazed, her words ringing in my ears: "May Allah guide you Hanan - don't forget your prayer."

I heard pounding on my door at eight o'clock in the morning. I don't usually wake up at this time. There was crying and confusion. O Allah, what happened?

Noorah's condition became critical after Fajr; they took her to the hospital immediately.

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'oon.

There wasn't going to be any trips this summer. It was written that I would spend the summer at home.

It felt like an eternity had gone by when it was one o'clock in the afternoon. Mother phoned the hospital.

"Yes. You can come and see her now." Dad's voice had changed, and mother could sense something had gone deathly wrong. We left immediately.

Where was that avenue I used to travel and thought was so short? Why was it so very long now? Where was the cherished crowd and traffic that would give me a chance to gaze left and right? Everyone, just move out of our way!

Mother was shaking her head in her hands crying as she made du'a for her Noorah. We arrived at the hospital's main entrance. One man was moaning, while another was involved in an accident. A third man's eyes were iced. You couldn't tell if he was dead or alive.

Noorah was in intensive care. We skipped stairs to her floor. The nurse approached us. "Let me take you to her."

As we walked down the aisles the nurse went on expressing how sweet of a girl Noorah was. She somewhat reassured Mother that Noorah's condition had gotten better than what it was in the morning. "Sorry. No more than one visitor at a time," the nurse said.

This was the intensive care unit. Past the flurry white robes, through the small window in the door, I caught my sister's eyes. Mother was standing beside her. After about two minutes, mother came out unable to control her crying. "You may enter and say salaam to her on the condition that you do not speak too long," they told me. "Two minutes should be enough."

"How are you Noorah? You were fine last night sister, what happened?"

We held hands; she squeezed harmlessly. "Even now, alhamdulillah, I'm doing fine."

"Alhamdulillah...but...your hands are so cold."

I sat on her bedside and rested my fingers on her knee. She jerked it away. "Sorry, did I hurt you?"

"No, it is just that I remembered Allah's words."

Waltafatul saaq bil saaq (One leg will be wrapped to the other leg [in the death shroud]).

"Hanan pray for me. I may be meeting the first day of the Hereafter very soon. It's a long journey and I haven't prepared enough good deeds in my suitcase."

A tear escaped my eye and ran down my cheek at her words. I cried and she joined me. The room blurred away and left us two sisters to cry together. Rivulets of tears splashed down on my sister's palm, which I held with both hands. Dad was now becoming more worried

about me. I've never cried like that before.

At home and upstairs in my room, I watched the sun pass away with a sorrowful day. Silence mingled in our corridors. One after another, my cousins came in my room. The visitors were many and all the voices from downstairs stirred together. Only one thing was clear at that point – Noorah had died!

I stopped distinguishing who came and who went. I couldn't remember what they said. O Allah, where was I? What was going on? I couldn't even cry anymore.

Later that week they told me what had happened. Dad had taken my hand to say goodbye to my sister for the last time. I had kissed Noorah's head.

I remember only one thing while seeing her spread on that bed – the bed that she was going to die on. I remembered the verse she recited:

One leg will be wrapped to the other leg (in the death shroud).

And I knew too well the truth of the next verse:

The drive on that day will be to your Lord (Allah)!

I tiptoed into her prayer room that night. Staring at the quiet dressers and silenced mirrors, I treasured the person that had shared my mother's stomach with me. Noorah was my twin sister.

I remembered who I had swapped sorrows with, who comforted my rainy days. I remembered who prayed for my guidance and who spent so many tears for many long nights telling me about death and accountability. May Allah save us all.

Tonight is Noorah's first night that she shall spend in her tomb. O Allah, have mercy on her and illuminate her grave. This was her Qur'an and her prayer mat. And this was the spring, rose-colored dress that she told me she would hide until she got married; the dress she wanted to keep just for her husband.

I remembered my sister and cried over all the days that I had lost. I prayed to Allah to have mercy on me, accept me and forgive me. I prayed to Allah to keep her firm in her grave as she always liked to mention in her supplications.

At that moment, I stopped. I asked myself what if it was I who had died. Where would I be moving on to? Fear pressed me and the tears began all over again.

"Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar..." The first adhan rose softly from the masjid. It sounded so beautiful this time. I felt calm and relaxed as I repeated the mu'adhin's call. I wrapped the shawl around my shoulders and stood to pray Fajr. I prayed as if it was my last prayer, a farewell prayer, just like Noorah had done yesterday. It had been her last Fajr.

Now, and insha Allah for the rest of my life, if I awake in the morning I do not count on being alive by evening, and in the evening I do not count on being alive by morning. We are all going on Noorah's journey. What have we prepared for it?

F-A-M-I-L-Y

Find Out What it Means to Me

Simply put, families are the building blocks of society. The parents of today raise the parents of tomorrow. So the values we instill in our children are the values they will carry on to their children. Being a positive role model for your child is essential. Parenthood is also about friendship. Your children should feel comfortable coming to you with any problem they may have. Working with youth, one of the things I hear most is; "My parents don't understand me." As children and young adults, we often do not realise that our parents are just as new to this as we are. Parents, like children, make mistakes and to have successful relationships I think it is important for children and parents alike to admit this. The child should always obey the parents, but parents should be open and honest.

All too often parents let the world teach their child, when they should be teaching the world to the child. We find many children who are left to be raised by their peers, or whatever adult is around them at that time. Family doesn't have to be exclusive to blood relations. If we know someone like this, imagine the rewards in reaching out to them and offering a positive influence in their life, even if it is only a few hours a week. This could mean the difference between a murderer, or rapist and a successful productive person in society. You don't have to give birth to a child to raise that child.

Adults often underestimate the abilities of young people. When we teach children to make good choices at a young age, we teach them to make good choices in young adulthood. Letting a child think for themselves is an amazing thing, when they are instilled with knowledge and Islam. To each parent reading this article, remember that one day your children will be taking care of you. Teach them the best you can. As the Qur'an says:

"And the Lord commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Uff" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." Qur'an 17:23-24.

And elsewhere in the Quran, Allah (Swt) states:

"Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, and kinsfolk" Nisa:36

The above are but only a few examples of how Allah (Swt) has honoured our parents. Yet how many of us show them this respect? Teaching our children how to live correctly and love Allah (Swt) and their fellow people will help ensure a successful society for all.

The mother is probably the single most important parent as children cling to the mother for obvious reasons, and as adults for support and advice. Without our mothers life is very difficult, as the mother's role in early life is very important. She nurtures us and weans us from sole dependence on other people. This job would be difficult for the man more so than the woman as Allah (Swt) tells us this in the Qur'an:

"With trouble did his mother bare him and with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months..." Qur'an 46:15

Husbands do not forget this. A companion once asked the Prophet (S); "Who deserves my good treatment most?" The Prophet answered, "The mother." "Who is after that?" he asked again. "Your mother", was again the answer. "And then who is next?" he asked yet again. "Your mother," once again was the reply. "What is after that?" he asked again. "Your father", the Prophet (S) then said.

The love of your mother is unconditional. Show her your love and respect. Mothers, also remember your importance because you have this much power over your children. As for the child, Allah (Swt) commands us to obey our mothers and fathers at all times, unless they ask us to work against the teachings and laws of God. This is very important in Islam as the Qur'an tells us:

"...and if they contend with you that you should associate (others) with Me, of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them, to Me is your return, so I will inform you of what you did." Qur'an 29:8

Islam tells parents to show mercy and love to children. It places the responsibility of education on the parents. Islam tells us to raise our children with good, strong morals and to be productive in society. The Prophet (S) said a proper education is the best gift a father can give his children. Also, the Prophet (S) tells us of the great rewards for fathers for raising their daughters properly. Allah (Swt) will reward us greatly for raising our daughters correctly and treating them well and loving them as fathers love their sons. Allah (Swt) also tells us to raise our children with moderation and not to spoil them, or to teach them that they are better than others.

The Qur'an says this:

"O you who believe! Let not your wealth, or your children, divert you from the remembrance of Allah; and whoever does that, they are the losers." Qur'an 63:9.

The blessing of marriage is the single most sacred contract between two people. My advice to all: Treat your wives well. This woman loves you and she is sacred to you. Do not let your mind and eyes stray to other women who are strangers to you. Does your wife not love you so much? Is she not the one who strives every day to love you so? Is she not the woman who birthed and raised your children? Love this woman and treat her well. She has given much to satisfy you in many, many ways. Do the same for her and more. This woman is a gift to you from Allah (Swt). Provide for her and love her always and treat her fairly. Provide for her and let her keep her income for herself so that she may be happy and have the things she wants; this is a command from Allah (Swt). She is not your slave but your wife; give your heart to her. Let her know you are thankful for her sacrifices. Let her know you are grateful for her.

Allah (Swt) tells us in the Qur'an:

"And among His Signs is this; that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are Signs for those who reflect." Qur'an 30:21

About marriage, the Qur'an also says this:

"They are your garments, and you are their garment." Qur'an 2:187

Subhanallah! What a powerful statement about a husband and wife. Think of what that means. What do garments offer us? Warmth, comfort, protection and modesty, just to name a few. Stop reading this article right now and take five

minutes to think about what that is really saying. Expand on the little insight I just gave.

Okay, so what do you think of that statement now? The Prophet (S) says, "Marriage is half of your religion." Subhanallah! What another powerful statement. I could write for years and never begin to cover a fraction of what these two statements mean. Love your wife men, is all I can say on that.

There are many examples of this throughout the Qur'an. This subject can be talked about for hours and days on end. As I reach the end of my article, I hope you have understood the point about the concept of 'giving to your family' in Islam. Treat all your family well (including extended family) and remember how important your role is to your children and your parents. Allah (Swt) tells us to open our hearts and to love one another. Remember how much the Prophet (S) loved and trusted his wives and children. Let him be our role model so we can be good role models for our children that they may carry on this tradition and make their society and our world a better place for everyone. It has to start somewhere, so it's up to us as Muslims to take the first step and guide the world to a better, peaceful place.

May Allah's peace and mercy follow us always and may His blessings fall on you and your family

Your brother in Islam

Yusef Moring

The Gifts of Islam

By *Ronnie Mikati*

Allah (Swt) the most Gracious, the most Merciful has showered us with many gifts such as our senses, our parents and friends, our shelter, our sustenance, this beautiful country and all its bounties and many more. These are all gifts that we will never be able to repay.

Allah's greatest gift to humanity is Islam. Through this blessing, he has given us guidance to the straight path; a holy book and a comprehensive sunnah through our beloved final Messenger (S).

36:69 And [thus it is:] We have not imparted to this [Prophet the gift of] poetry, nor would [poetry] have suited this [message]: [38] it is but a reminder and a [divine] discourse, clear in itself and clearly showing the truth, [39] Yaseen.

As seen in the ayah below, Allah shows us that gifts come in many shapes and forms. Islam is the most generous religion because it comes from Allah, whose generosity is limitless.

89:15 But as for man, [8] whenever his Sustainer tries him by His generosity and by letting him enjoy a life of ease, he says, "My Sustainer has been [justly] generous towards me"; [9] Al-Fajr

The following is a compilation of five gifts which gives us a glimpse into the diversity of our religion and the various treasures it contains. Some gifts are given to us from our Creator, others from our Prophet (S) and also highlighted are gifts that we can share with each other.



1) Prayer

Prayer is a gift we are given 5 times a day, a chance to communicate to Allah our Creator, a chance to submit ourselves as Muslims to the Almighty, a medium that can grant us Paradise through His Mercy; however many times we lose the opportunity to make the most of our prayers due to a lack of focus. It is important to capitalise on this time between us and Allah and harvest the rewards that come from prayer.

238 Be ever mindful of prayers, and of praying in the most excellent way; [227] and stand before God in devout obedience. Al-Baqara



2) Supplication

Rasulullah (S) said: "Dua can change our life, our outlook, and our fate. It is the most potent weapon of a believer."

The mercy of supplication is taken for granted sometimes. The ability to communicate with Allah at any time, in any condition is truly a gift we need to take advantage of.

Not only can we supplicate for ourselves but for our families and friends and also for our enemies so that Allah can guide them.

We should also remember that supplication is not only about asking Allah to grant us certain things, but also an opportunity to thank Allah for all that he has granted us.

"And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way. Surah Baqarah 2:186"



3) Knowledge

To share the gift of knowledge with your brothers and sisters is strongly recommended. Narrated by Abdullah:

Allah's Apostle said, "Do not wish to be like anybody except in two cases: The case of a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and that of a man whom Allah has given religious wisdom (i.e., Qur'an and Sunnah) and he gives his verdicts according to it and teaches it." (to others i.e., religious knowledge of Qur'an and Sunnah (Prophet's Traditions))."

However a common pitfall that we fall into these days is the harsh manner in which we share our knowledge with others. Lecturing people aggressively or using a condescending tone regardless of our pure intentions only causes further aversion from our religion.

We must follow the example of our beloved Prophet (S) and be gentle in our approach.



4) Materials and Money

Gift giving is encouraged in Islam. Narrated Abu Shuraih Al-Adawi:

My ears heard and my eyes saw the Prophet (S) when he spoke, "Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his neighbor generously, and anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his guest generously by giving him his reward."

Materialistic gifts can have rewards for both the giver and receiver if the gift in question encourages Islamic values and behaviours; such as Islamic books, CDs, DVDs etc.

There are also portable electronic devices filled with Quran and Hadith content that can help overcome language barriers. Think of these alternatives the next time you come across a gift-giving occasion.

Money is a form of sustenance provided by Allah; a type of gift that allows us to purchase food, shelter, goods and services. However, money comes with a grave responsibility. We will be questioned on the Day of Judgment on how we earned our income and what we spent it on. We must be diligent and spend our money in a manner that benefits us both in this life and the next.

"Verily, those who have attained to faith and do good works, and are constant in prayer, and dispense charity - they shall have their reward with their Sustainer, and no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve." Surat Al-Baqara 2:277

Charity is also a gift that keeps on giving to both the charity giver and the receiver.

"My grace overspreads everything: and so I shall confer it on those who are conscious of Me and spend in charity, and who believe in Our messages" - Surat Al-A'raf 7:123



5) Belief

Above all, the fact that we believe in these two sentences is the greatest gift of all;

La Illaha Illa Allah, Muhammad Rasool Allah: There Is No God Worthy Of Worship But 'Allah' and Muhammad is His Messenger.

"How can you refuse to acknowledge God, seeing that you were lifeless and He gave you life, and that He will cause you to die and then will bring you again to life, whereupon unto Him you will be brought back?" Surat Al-Baqara 2:28

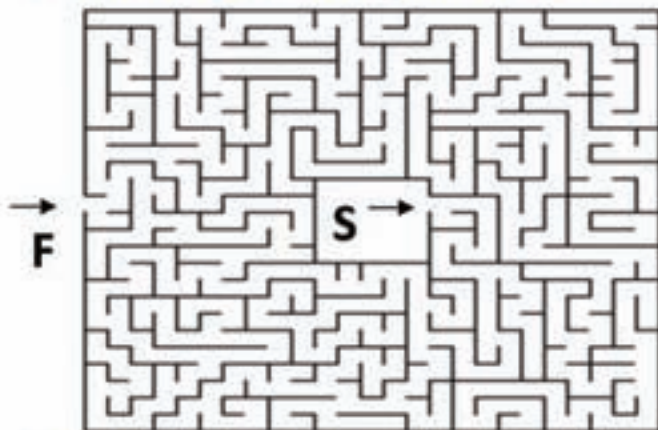
In a world full of temptation, misguidance and evil doing, the gift of belief keeps Muslims firm with a strong sense of direction, greater mental health and stability.

The reward for such belief is a gift we cannot even begin to comprehend... eternal Paradise!

"And for this their belief, God will reward them with gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide: for such is the requital of the doers of good." – Surat Al-Ma'idah 5:85

Amusements Page

The Great Escape Maze!



Picture of the Month

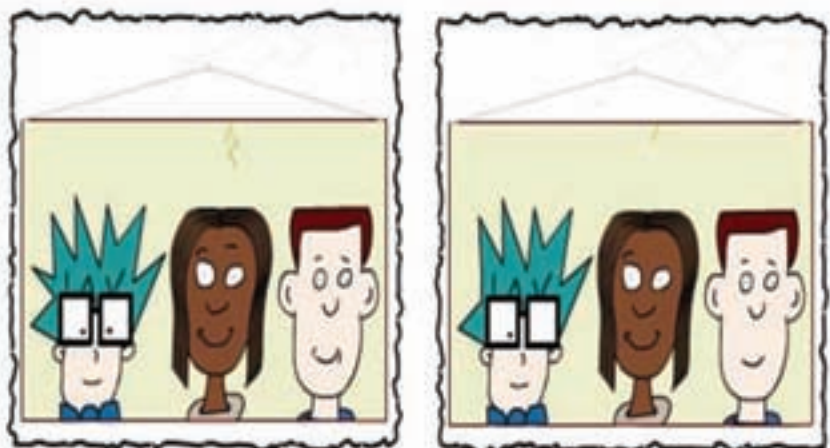
Indian Muslims gather during Friday Prayers at a mosque in Allahabad, India, Friday, Oct. 15, 2010.

Find Allah's Gifts

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

Advice	Gift	Time
Brotherhood	Giving	Worshiper
Charity	Health	Family
Community	Knowledge	Supplications
Contentment	Prayer	

Spot the 5 Differences



Fallen Phrase:

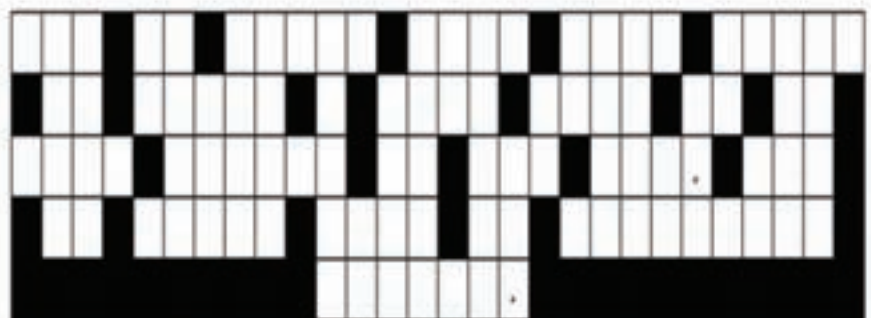
The Gift of Giving

Sudoku

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

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.



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

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