United We Stand?

by Zubia Naji

Old Glory whips in the wind, flying proudly in the sky. Storefronts and businesses are lighted in red, white, and blue, and small signs stenciled with the words “United We Stand” sit in windows all over the nation. Automobiles race down highways with small flags attached to antennas that although worn and frayed, display the true American spirit. Churches, synagogues, temples, and masjids alike don the red, white, and blue, while people of all creeds, races, and religions stand hand in hand proudly singing the words of the “Star Spangled Banner.” And we, as Muslims, caught up in this newfound patriotism, hold our heads high because we too, are American, many of us children of immigrant parents, or perhaps immigrants ourselves.

We are American, but at the same time we are not. This paradox holds true for us American Muslims. As residents in a non-Muslim state, we find that we cannot fully immerse ourselves into the American mainstream culture, a culture driven by the acquisition of the Dunya. There are certain aspects of the western world that blatantly go against our Islamic teachings. But on the other hand, there are many ideas and concepts that we can adopt and implement in our daily lives, notions that have been suggested in the Quran and mentioned in the Hadith. Notions that at times we fail to see because our human eyes are instinctively critical.

We lobby for America, hand in hand with our fellow Americans, but somehow we fail to recognize our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters. We close our eyes to the brotherhood of Islam that Allah has ordained for his servants. For Allah reminds his servants: “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 favor on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love so that by His grace ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make his signs clear to you: that ye may be guided.” (3:103)

One can speculate that perhaps the weakness of our Ummah lies not in our faith, but in our failure to unite, our failure to stand as one under the banner of Islam. In this day and age we find Muslims disputing with one another, neglecting one another, failing to uphold the solidarity of Islam. On a large scale, we see Muslim nations fighting amongst one another, each pursuing its best interest, caring not for the well being of its sister nation. But yet in our own microcosmic worlds, we find it difficult to help a brother in need of financial assistance or perhaps come to the aid of an ailing sister. We turn deaf when we hear that our fellow Muslims are being butchered all over the world and mute because we do not voice our opinions. For we shudder to think that we must take action, that perhaps we as an Ummah, as the Ummah of Muhammad (SAW), can truly make a difference.

We are engulfed in our newfound individualism, the pursuit of personal happiness and security. We strive for worldly luxuries and oftentimes forget the actual reason we are here in this transitory Dunya. Allah clearly warns us: “Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs; for them is a dreadful penalty.” (3:105)

According to Allah’s ordinance we must strive to unify ourselves as Muslims and restore the honor to the Ummah of Muhammad (SAW). We must set aside our differences, join hands with our fellow Muslims and proudly carry the banner of Islam with us. We are a people with a remarkable history, therefore we must hold our heads high. We are the few whom Allah has entrusted with this glorious religion and we must uphold its dignity and strengthen it so that it is commanded the respect it deserves. Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah: I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say:

Continued as “United” on page 9

Muslims Worldwide

by Alya Khan

In Saudi Arabia...

Feb 20th:

Mecca- Some two million Muslims from around the world flowed into the Mina valley outside the holy city of Mecca Wednesday as the annual Hajj began in earnest. Around 1.4 million pilgrims have poured into Saudi Arabia, joining up to one million Saudi and other Muslim pilgrims who live in the kingdom, for the hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam.

Feb 21st:

Arafat- Saudi Arabia’s Grand Mufti slammed Israel’s terrorism against the Palestinians, as more than two million Muslim pilgrims from across the world poured into the plains of Mount Arafat Thursday for the climax of the annual Hajj.

In Palestine...

Feb. 19th:

Jerusalem- A group of high-ranking Israeli security officials will campaign for a unilateral withdrawal from the Palestinian occupied territories, as pressure on hard-line Israeli leadership gains momentum, news agencies reported.

Feb 20th:

Occupied Jerusalem- The Palestinians hope to repeat Israel’s Lebanese withdrawal humiliation through adopting a new strategy of effective resistance operations inside the occupied territories, coupled with a growing movement in Israel for a total withdrawal, analysts said Wednesday.
Is There An Answer?

To the Editor:

In the days following September 11, 2001, I heard different scholars trying to clear up the point that there is no vigilantism in Islam. Only 'a state' is permitted to declare a jihad. This made sense for a while, but then I began to question just why there is no vigilantism in Islam. The kind of 'state' that has this authority is obviously an Islamic state; one that is governed by the laws, ethics, and morals laid out in the Qur'an, and exemplified for us by the Prophet Muhammad (SA'AS). This system of laws, morals, and ethics culminates into what is known as Shari'ah.

"To each among you, we have prescribed a law and a clear way."(Qur'an 5:48)

In today's world, the concept of Shari'ah is barely there, and so the Ummah has found itself in grievous times (or a grievous state). In today's world, there are Muslim countries, not Muslim states. I have lived in the Middle East (those countries in and around the Arabian Peninsula that represent Islam for most of the world), and when I think back to what I saw, I am saddened. How can a country call itself Muslim, and allow the sale of alcohol? How can a Muslim country accept a system of government in which God is just one who created the world, and left it to watch? This is what happens when secularism is adopted. Secularism is but an affirmation of the belief that a human judge is a better judge than Allah. "Do they seek a judgment of Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah?" (Qur'an 5:50)

Adopting secularism is Kufr, and its effect is clearly seen in the Muslim world today. Riba is rampant in these countries, as is prostitution, alcohol, and adultery. Why? Because these countries are governed by secularism, and so it is allowed. The movement away from Shari'ah has also caused the silencing of Islam. If Islam is mentioned in a decision to be made, that person is immediately silenced, and sometimes labeled an extremist simply for saying so. The rulers are ignorant of their wrongdoing, and the Ulama are helpless to effect a change. This has all brought about bitterness and anger in the Ummah, and has led to today's situation. The youth want to believe, but they are faced in one direction with leaders who have become nothing but puppets, and on the other side, they face pseudo-Ulama who spread the false word and do nothing but incite hatred. The youth want a change, and so violence has been resorted to, and the Ummah continues to rip apart.

Why all this talk of secularism, when I began to talk about vigilantism? I am writing this, because I think that something needs to be done about the situation in the world today. The problem of these "terrorists" is very simply a Muslim problem, and, insha'allah, only the Muslims will solve it.

Islam is being oppressed all over the world, both physically and ideologically, and this has caused a great amount of anger among the youth today. We see our Muslim brothers and sisters, and we are inflamed at the injustices they are suffering. So, I thought, why not vigilantism? We live in a world where there is no proper Islamic 'state' that has the authority to declare a jihad against the evildoers. The rule cannot still apply, can it? I think it does. Of course, the oppressed must protect themselves for the evil oppressors, but when it comes to the ultimate battle that Islam must fight, there is a precedent set for us. We cannot allow ourselves to fall into the trap of creating innovations that Allah may be displeased with, especially when the answer has already been provided for us. I believe that a way out of this situation has already been shown to us, and we need to apply that answer as fully as possible.

Finally, after much rambling, we come to the point of this writing; just what do we do? We need to go back to Mecca, not as a place, but as a time. The Ummah is in a sad state. Masha'allah, there are many righteous Muslims in the world, but the Ummah as a whole is in pieces. It is time to get this Ummah back into one whole. The word is Ummah; a singular, not a plural. One people, united in the belief that there is no One but Allah, and that Muhammad (SA'AS) is His prophet. We must look back to the precedent set for us by Prophet Muhammad (SA'AS) during the Meccan period of Islam.

by Ehsan Al-Amin

Visit ISRU and Nasihah online at www.eden.rutgers.edu/~muslims/nasihah/
We live in a world of ironies. We, as Muslims, hold in our hearts the key to humanity's salvation yet we find our voices, our bodies, our hopes and fears, pinned upon the rotting cross of materialism. The propagandistic scientism of the media lens has left our eyes dried from the pain of excessive crying and has caused many of us to lose objectivity of mind in our assessments of ourselves and our communities. The Muslim Ummah (community) is now in a critical stage of self-assessment. It is the criterion by which we assess ourselves that this discourse is concerned.

Our Ummah is a reflection of the collective state of our Iman (faith). According to Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, there are two states in which one always finds his/her nafs. The first state is that of tribulation, the signs of which are "anxiety, complaining, resentment, protest and suspicion toward the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He), and lack of patience, contentment and compliance." (Futuh Al-Ghaib, 42nd Discourse) The Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani holds that the state of tribulation is marked by ill-manners, the association of material and living creatures with The Creator, and disbelief. The second state of the self, that of well-being, is marked by "greed, impetuosity, and the pursuit of carnal lusts and pleasures. As soon as it gratifies one desire, it goes after another, belittling the blessings it already possesses, such as food, drink, clothing, spouse, dwelling and means of transport." (Futuh Al-Ghaib, 42nd Discourse) One can postulate that throughout the history of Islam, the Ummah has found itself in either of the above states. The most successful stages of our society were those in which happiness, contentment, hope, and faith were exclusively pinned on Allah (Glorious and Exalted is He). Through our faith came success in the world, not vice versa as many modern and post-Modern Muslim thinkers have enmeshed in the highly politicized fabric of their pseudo-Islamic agendas. Truly, we impose upon ourselves a much harsher punishment in this world and the next if we forsake the wisdom brought to us by The Chosen One, Muhammad (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon him) and our righteous forbearers and scholars, for the scientific divisiveness of the western and secular intelligentsia. The effects of secular thinking, which is seeping into our religious dialogues, is indicative of the spiritual state of our nation. Our suffering is doubled when we misdiagnose it with secular apologetics and technological failings. These are mere symptoms of a greater illness: our breaking exclusivity with Our Creator Allah (Glorious and Exalted is He).

Relying on the luminous teachings of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, I end with the following hadith (saying) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon him) transmitted by 'Ata'. Ibn 'Abbas said: "I was riding behind the Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) when he said to me: 'My boy, take care of Allah and He will take care of
by Ehsan Al-Amin

Ahmed Abdul-Ghaflar was born into this. He never got to wake up one day and say, “Yes, this is what I’m going to do for the rest of my life”. Those who watch will say that he made this choice all by himself, but then they have their plush sofas to say that from. No, he never made this decision. Sitting in the back of the jeep, his friend Wisam at his side, he pushed back the tears. It was not an easy transition in one’s life. They understood, though. His family always knew that they were going to be seeing this day, but they could only see that little Hameed he always knew. The moment is always expected, but the tears always flow. The only time he felt hesitation was when he saw what no son never wants to see: tears in a mother’s eyes. But all the men in that jeep had felt that hesitation…..well, at least those who were lucky enough to still have mothers.

The jeep pulled up to a mud hut, and the men stepped out onto the scorching earth. Enough was enough. Watching their women raped, their babies’ skulls crushed, their children’s lives taken away, and the continued massacre of their people; it was enough. It had already gone on too long, and they weren’t going to let it go on for even one other day. They had left their homes, and had accepted that they would not be returning. Their homes would spend their days watching that their cause was one of barbarism. To them this was just another day, just another moment. Ahmed and Wisam were glad that the plan once more.

The Crimson Sword

Ahmed felt in the dark for the sound of the tree branch knocking on the door. Three times over the arms, then over the head, and behind the nose, three times on the face, three times into the mouth, three times into the ears. Three times over each foot, and he was ready. He stepped out to smell the scorching peak. They had congregated for the fifth time that day, Wisam read aloud the letter. The response was that of laughter. It was the first time they had laughed in months, and the experience of it nearly brought them to tears. Both Ahmed and Wisam were glad that the sarcasm went over well, as Ahmed tucked back another, more serious draft deep into his pocket.

Deep inside the Starray Eyes headquarters, Shamin Rajalaka was pondering this newest letter. Others had dismissed it, but he knew their truth, and knew how most of them twisted their truth. He saw them as cowards, and successfully maneuvered the ways of the world to gain sympathy for the Starray Eyes. This letter was different. It held to their truth. Shamin knew what it meant to believe a truth. It meant that nothing would stop one’s self from protecting and honoring that truth. The fat men were busy over their tea, so Shamin said nothing. Maybe what happens in a week will finally wake the fat men up. Shamin knew not to count his blessings. The Starray Eyes were only lucky until now. The ignorance of the other side played perfectly into their hands, but now they were waking up. Meanwhile, the Starray Eyes were getting drowsy, and Shamin would do nothing for another week. In one week, the Starray Eyes will wake up.

Three days had passed since the letter was delivered, and there was no change at the station on Nasr road. Not that the men expected a change. They had remained ignorant for so long, and that ignorance had become engrained in their selves. It was midday, and the sun was at its usual scorching peak. They had congregated for the second time that day, going to different places, and looking for those who saw the truth. It made them sad to see all those who lost hope, and no longer cared. This would be a fight to wake up their own people. To help them once again find the will to fight, and rid themselves of the cancer their oppressors have always been.

Our Sister by Wisam Al-Mahdi.

They dressed her in the arms of war. And so she is a sister amongst the brothers.

She will bring us revolution.

For her we will fight.

For her we will rise.

For her you will pay.

And thus the men let themselves be known.

In the night after their congregating for the fifth time that day, Wisam read aloud the letter. The response was that of laughter. It was the first time they had laughed in months, and the experience of it nearly brought them to tears. Both Ahmed and Wisam were glad that the sarcasm went over well, as Ahmed tucked back another, more serious draft deep into his pocket.

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For her you will pay.

The birds stopped their chirping, and the rustling of the leaves could be heard. With the sound of the tree branch knocking on the window, Ahmed woke. The sun as usual was not out yet, as Ahmed felt in the dark for the door to the bathroom. Three times over the hands, three times in the mouth, three times into the nose, three times on the face, three times over the arms, then over the head, and behind the ears. Three times over each foot, and he was finished. Ahmed stepped out to smell the freshness of the morning air, clinging to the small hope that it wouldn’t be his last. It all seemed so futile now: the planning, the training, the tears, the pride. With this thought, he joined the other men in praying during this dawn of the day, and of their lives. A new light arose when they were done. Ahmed’s mind was clear again, and the preparations began.

It was so quiet as the men sat in the jeep, on their way to meet fate head on. The roads were clear, and there was no sign of any extra patrolling in the area. They stopped at the corner off Al-Riba and Nasr, just out of sight of the base. Ignorance was bliss. On the other end of Nasr, the other jeep pulled up and unloaded more men. They clutched their weapons and went over the plan once more.

Ahmed stood next to Wisam, his back to the sand covered wall, with a gun clutched in his hands, and held close to his chest. “This is for my sister. This is for my parents. This is for my brother. This is for my people. This is for you.” The click of a pine removed from a grenade was heard, and it began.

to be continued...
Seeing Through the Eyes of Daniel Pipes
by Shadee Elmasry

Although there has been much compassion towards Muslims post-9/11, the opponents of Islam have begun to focus their attack. The time has come that such people cannot go unanswered; for their articulations not only threaten a fringe few, but now pose danger to the average Muslim in America. This article will focus on the head of this vicious campaign: Daniel Pipes. We will define exactly what he is saying. It is important for all readers, Muslim and other, to see through his chestnut techniques of association, selectivity, and a supposed objectivity which is nothing other than a façade, and to realize that what he and his cohorts are doing is no less than a character assassination of the mainstream Muslim community in America.

Pipes is to be reckoned with. He holds a PhD from Harvard, has taught there, and has served in the State and Defense Departments. But he is to be reckoned with, because his influence ranges widely. Articles by him are published in assorted newspapers from the Jerusalem Post, to the tabloid New York Post, to the white collar Wall Street Journal (Leonard Getz, Lifestyle Magazine, June 2000). His media campaign ranges widely. Articles by him are published in assorted newspapers from the Jerusalem Post, to the tabloid New York Post, to the white collar Wall Street Journal (Leonard Getz, Lifestyle Magazine, June 2000). His media campaign desires to usher in a transition of American panic from the overseas radicals, not representative of traditional Islam by any length of the imagination, to the domestic mainstream Muslims, who are in no way violent or radical. Almost without exception, his essays not only insinuate, but directly state, that what are thought to be mainstream Muslims in America are in fact as dangerous as terrorists; not because of the use of violence, but directly state, that what are thought to be mainstream Muslims in America are in fact as dangerous as terrorists; not because of the use of violence, but in that they harbor the identical intent to “conquer America.” He has recently presented his argument in a piece entitled The Danger Within: Militant Islam in America (Commentary Magazine, November 2001), in which he may be among the firsts to mention by name, the Muslim community’s most recognizable personalities: the late Professor Ismail al-Faruqui, Imam Siraj Wahhaj, and Zaid Shakir. CAIR, ISNA, and the MSA are only on the surface legitimate in his eyes. They too receive his condemnation by name as underhanded Muslim efforts to take over America and deny Americans their prized rights and freedoms. As wide as his imagination sways, he is considered an expert on Arab affairs and is therefore given the Western ear.

Almost without exception, his essays ... directly state, that what are thought to be mainstream Muslims in America are in fact as dangerous as terrorists.

Overall, his argument may be deemed weak. He uses Osama bin Laden and Shaykh Omar Abdel Rahman as symbols of terrorism, pivot points around which America’s new enemy rotates namely what he calls “Islamism,” or the violent fundamentalist approach. He has then cherry-picked statements and comments made by the Imams in America and fit them in the fields of the above two or their followers. By that simple case, the reader is supposed to assume that the latter and their followers are just as much a threat to the nation.

Although his argument is not directed at them, Pipes adds to his own discredit by misrepresenting bin Laden and Abdel Rahman when he says that they “desire, ultimately, to transform it [America] into a nation living under the strictures of militant Islam” (TDW). As for the former, he clearly indicated in his address, which Americans viewed on October 9th courtesy of Aljazeera, that his campaign was against American presence in the Arabian Peninsula, and not the continent of America, as much as he loathes it. As for Dr. Abdel Rahman, Pipes imagines that “bombing the World Trade Center in 1993 was part and parcel of this revolutionary strategy to ‘conquer the land of the infidels’ by force” (ibid). He chooses to continue sans any hard support for this statement, which is crucial to his thesis, save for an obscure quote from El Sayyid Nosair which he cites as “words…found in a notebook kept by Sayyid Nusayr.” Those who know anything about Dr. Abdel Rahman are aware that his focal point was reform in Egypt, not America.

Finally, he wants to inform his readers that the first Muslims “who arrived here from abroad in the 1920’s, unblushingly declared, ‘Our plan is, we’re going to conquer America.’” Who said this? And where did he find it? By this point, Pipes abandons documentation altogether. His un-buttressed claims and lack of citation is frustrating considering the implications of his argument, and rather peculiar for an accomplished academic.

Yet, this will continue to go unnoticed due to his eminence. Furthermore, his pieces appear largely in newspapers that go without documentation or support. As such, he finds it easy, after conjuring largely untrue imagery of wild and ferocious Muslim terrorists out to get America, to link the Muslim leaders of North America to this representation. By simply being mentioned in the same article, much less the same paragraph, mental associations are made. Skimmers and quick readers of magazines and newspapers do not search for a thesis or argument, nor do they check documentation. They just plain read, and when they read “Siraj Wahhaj” and “conspiracy to overthrow the government” in the same paragraph—as in TDW—the former is negatively classified, consciously or subconsciously. Not that readers will remember, but all they will leave with is the simple link: “Siraj Wahhaj”—“something bad.” Pipes is using guilt by association to character-assassinate. Ismail al-Faruqui and Zaid Shakir are among the “educated Muslim leaders” who share “fanatical zeal” for “Islamism.” Pipes is worryingly obsessed with Zaid Shakir, mentioning him in two

Follow “Pipes” on page 12
Hijab: True Liberation for the Muslim Woman?

by Naila Tahir

"O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslims) and not annoyed..." (Qur'an 33:59)

Now that the Taliban have been removed from the top of the hierarchy of the Afghani state, it is not surprising to see that the West is waiting impatiently for the women in Afghanistan to “liberate” themselves by removing the hijab. Unfortunately for them this is not the case; news media all over the world is stunned at the fact that these women are not taking action to discard the even though they now have every opportunity to do so. What the media does not understand is that once given the consent to stop wearing the hijab, is not as easy as it seems. For one thing these women have been raised to cover in front of the men and feel much safer from the gazing eyes. Why does the West not realize that it’s the hijab that gives these women their own liberation and not the stripping of their clothing?

If any one woman has lost her source of freedom and liberation, it would have to be the woman in the West. Most of these women feel that they have achieved some sense of freedom from men, but what they don’t understand is that men only view them as sexual objects. Everywhere you look in the commercial world today, you can see how most ads, such as car and magazine ads, feature a woman posing next to it. This exploitation of women in such ads illustrates how women are degraded to the extent of having to remove her clothing. How is this exploitation of women in anyway giving her a sense of freedom, when she is basically picked apart by the eyes of men?

If one takes a careful look at the Christian religion we see that the only women who actually cover themselves as the Muslim women do, differentiated from the Pagan women by covering themselves. I Corinthians 11 (3-10) offer one example: “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn or shaven; but if it be a same for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”

Slowly this faith seemed to disappear from the practicing group of people, because they allowed certain things to “slide by”. Finally, in retrospect, it appears that religion has gone and done a 180 degree turn. So the same critics of the hijab who claim that all Muslim women are being oppressed, should ask themselves first if they also believe that nuns are also being oppressed? The religion of Islam was not to be practiced within a certain group of people within the Muslim community; rather it is a religion for all to practice equally. No one person is any different in Islam from another, rather we are all given a set of rules from Allah (SWT) that we are to practice and follow.

We the women in Islam have been given the most sacred thing of all, the respect that we deserve from the men. When a man sees a woman who is covered from head to toe, he knows that he must treat her differently and with full esteem. Our body is the most beautiful thing that Allah (SWT) has blessed us with, and we need to respect it and take care of it by the commands of Allah(SWT). There are some things that cannot be explained, but we are we must remind ourselves that sometimes even if we don’t understand one of Allah (SWT)’s commands, we need to realize that there is infinite wisdom in the commands of Allah(SWT) which may be hidden now, and may later become apparent. His reasons must be respected for He is the One who has created us and we need not question everything he has set out for us to do. So while the media and the West waits for the women in Afghanistan to “reclaim” their liberation, we Muslims can rest assure that they already have. Now the only question is, how long can we as Muslims last without doing our own 180’s?
Who is really Right?

by Arif Hussein

Kabul is entirely dedicated to the complete care of women. Another hospital in Kabul, the Indira Gandhi Children’s Hospital also takes care of women. Schools are open to women as well throughout the country, and there are ALL women schools teaching subjects relevant for women’s roles in their society. As far as living safely, the Taliban have abolished rapes, prostitutes, robberies and murders. People can travel safely even at night. There are no TV’s, photography, gambling, and any other “immoral” activity in Afghanistan. I hardly think a person is deprived if the aforementioned activities are not available. With regards to TV and its ill effects, I would highly suggest reading an excellent book by Jeffrey Mander: The Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television. As for the other prohibited activities, I doubt anyone can find fault with living in a society free from those evils, where everyone’s life and respect is in order.

The origin of the Taliban, as it is widely believed to be, is that Pakistan and its Intelligence Agency (ISI) funded and supported them in the 90’s. Since then, the Taliban have gone on to acquire control of 95% of Afghanistan. While it may have seemed when the Taliban first took control of the country that they were committing acts of injustice, Afghanistan has improved as a society in which to live, after their rise to power. On various eyewitness accounts of the conditions in Afghanistan, there are reports that there is no oppression of women and children, women can work and there are schools for them also. Raza Khan, a doctor on a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan from Canada related his experiences during his stay in the war-torn country. He said that women were freely shopping in stores without escorts, many women did not have their faces covered, and house windows were not painted black, as well as there being a presence of women nurses and doctors working in clinics and hospitals. The Women’s Gyne and Maternity Hospital of Kabul is entirely dedicated to the complete care of women. Another hospital in Kabul, the Indira Gandhi Children’s Hospital also takes care of women. Schools are open to women as well throughout the country, and there are ALL women schools teaching subjects relevant for women’s roles in their society. As far as living safely, the Taliban have abolished rapes, prostitutes, robberies and murders. People can travel safely even at night. There are no TV’s, photography, gambling, and any other “immoral” activity in Afghanistan. I hardly think a person is deprived if the aforementioned activities are not available. With regards to TV and its ill effects, I would highly suggest reading an excellent book by Jeffrey Mander: The Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television. As for the other prohibited activities, I doubt anyone can find fault with living in a society free from those evils, where everyone’s life and respect is in order.

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by Ayman Elsawah

A Muslim walks into a mosque and is greeted by another Muslim; an example of 2 different greetings: Who are you? Who is your family? Do you come here often? That’s odd, I’ve never seen you here. So, are you fasting today?

Hi, how are you? My name is Ayman. Nice to see you here. Welcome. Haven’t seen each other in quite some time. Would you like to join me for breakfast today?

Arrogance. Pride. It comes in many shapes, sizes, and forms. Many of us have been or are guilty of this. The first step is that one must recognize a symptom in order to come up with a solution. Pride is such a huge issue, so this article is only going to touch on a small part of the subject: pride within the Muslim community.

Muslims like to compare amongst each other. They ask intrusive questions like in the first statement, pass unverified gossip around that causes no good, and lose fact of the important issue: that we are Muslims and need to be a community, not police.

When greeted, a fellow Muslim should be in the most comfortable situation that is possible at that moment, and be able to experience the most possible warmth and hospitality from a fellow Muslim. Not only that, but it should and must be genuine. We are intelligent beings and can sense negative vibes and arrogance. Who are you to say that you are better than the next? If someone is not fasting, there may be unlimited reasons why. They do not need to justify to you, only to GOD.

Many Muslims today are so consumed by such petty things, that they are overseeing the greater aspect of the world and busying themselves with who is good and who is bad. Our actions speak it all. Let me give another example to clarify.

Muslim A and B are walking down the street and they see Muslim C. All parties involved know each other, but Muslim A and B heard from someone that C has been up to some “bad” things. As they cross each

other down the street, C says hello, and A and B reluctantly respond. If C had not initiated a hello, neither A nor B would have, and everyone would have passed each other in silence.

What place do A and B have in passing judgment on their fellow Muslim, and outing casting that person out of their social bubble? Unfortunately, there are many Muslims that believe they are more righteous than the next. They ask questions as in the first statement to see whether someone is a ‘good’ Muslim or not.

The key to this article is that it is not our job to figure whether we are more righteous than the next. Judgment is for GOD alone. If you find yourself in a situation where you believe a fellow Muslim may be in the wrong, instead of ignoring the person and talking behind their back, talk to them and welcome them. Become their friend. Even if you may not be in a situation to speak to them concerning their wrong, welcoming them is always better than pushing them away. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) did not even treat his enemies in such a manner.

Many Muslims are scared to show up at Mosques because of such behaviors. Many Muslims lose any motivation, and fear showing up at Muslim functions and meetings because of the arrogance of the people who may be there, whether it is presented jokingly or not. This ideology of classifying Muslims into ‘good’ or ‘bad’ AND incorporating it in our behaviors towards our brothers and sisters must stop immediately. This is without going into how people assume and are so quick to pass rumors off to the next. Let us strengthen our community, not segregate it. Let us drop the fakeness of our personalities inherited by our cultures. If our brothers and sisters cannot come to us for support and strength, whom will they go to?

Allah warns us about the arrogance and pride that led Iblis to his downfall. Do not take for qualities in yourself that which the enemy of God possesses. Arrogance and Pride are characteristics of evil and of Iblis. Remember the warning given to us by Allah: “We made The Satans friends (only) to those without Faith” (Quran 6:27).

by An Anonymous Sister

When I think about how Allah (swt) has guided me back to Him within this past year, the overwhelming feeling of gratitude I feel towards Him drives me to tears. In private, I whisper to Him things like “Thank You” and “Please keep me constant in my faith.” This past January, I prayed for the first time since I was little (I was born to parents who were not religious until I was a teenager, and by then, any attempt to teach me Islam fell on deaf and rebellious ears). Since then, may Allah be pleased with them, they have become even better Muslims and have continued to be fine examples of how to live by your beliefs.) What kept me from approaching Islam before this was my arrogant denial of Allah’s absolute right to tell me how to live, plus the exaggerated value I placed on the opinions of others in contrast Muslims or pseudo-Muslims (what I call those who are Muslim in name only, as I was) in a way which hopefully allows them to hear the message of Islam with a slightly more thawed heart. Insya’Allah, next fall I hope to begin my participation in a program abroad. It’s designed to teach me Islam in a systematic and comprehensive way over the next few years so that I can start building on my own knowledge base in Islam, and so that I may fulfill my desire and duty to teach others. Here’s the problem, though: my parents are not thrilled with my career choice, meaning they are not confident in my decision, but have not flat-out asked me not to follow through with it. Like any responsible and loving parents, they want the best for their children. So, when they picture the possibility of me living in poverty, they react with fear (and, I suppose, some anger at my choosing to “waste” the opportunity at a comfortable life they have worked hard to offer me). However, my question is, is it not a sign of faith in Allah that I believe if I follow His commands and work hard to be a teacher of Islam to others, that I will, if Allah so wills, live a blessed life, and have the ultimate success in the afterlife? When I look at the examples of our prophets (peace be upon them all) and the companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), I see signs of true faith in their choices to rely on Him and push their fears aside to do what was right. Although I understand my parents’ fears, and although I also don’t wish to live in poverty, I choose to put my trust in Allah. I am going to have to do what I feel is best, insya’Allah, and pray that whatever happens, I pass this test called “life” by staying a faithful Muslim, with or without the BMW in my driveway.
“A group of people from my Ummah will continue to fight in defense of truth and remain triumphant until the Day of Judgment.” (Sahih Muslim, 897)

And thus we must take the example that our country, America, gives us, we must don the colors of Islam and join hands with our Muslim brothers and sisters all over the world. We must give strength to those who are weak and aid those in need of assistance. Allah is with his servants and he will aid us in this, although rewarding, but arduous task as long as we are sincere in our intentions. In the Quran, Allah tells us:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (49:13)

May Allah aid the Ummah of Muhammad (SAW) overcome its differences and resolve its disputes, and may Allah join us as “One nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

Nuclear-armed arch rivals India and Pakistan have been locked in a tense military standoff since the December attack on the Indian parliament, blamed by New Delhi on two Pakistan-based Islamic groups.

In Afghanistan . . .
Feb 19th:
Kabul- Two British paratroopers have been sent home amid an inquiry into a shooting incident in which an Afghan teenager was killed, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said Tuesday. He said six soldiers from the British 2nd Parachute Battalion were involved in the incident in the early hours of Saturday, February 16, in which they claimed they responded to an armed attack on one of their outposts here.

In Pakistan . . .
Feb 19th:
Islamabad- Pakistan Monday said it would open an arms race in South Asia and raise military tensions in the already volatile region.

Feb 20th:
Islamabad- Pakistan Wednesday turned down an Indian request to share information from the prime suspect in the kidnapping of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, missing in southern Karachi since January 23, 2002.

In Egypt . . .
Feb 20th:
Al Ayatt- At least 300 people were killed in a fire early Wednesday on a train south of the Egyptian capital Cairo. Firefighters said so far they had pulled 108 bodies, many burned beyond recognition, from the carriages and recovered another 15, who had jumped from the windows of the moving train, lying by the tracks, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported.

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Shame upon a Muslim with a soul so dead

by Zaki Ahmad Sabih
Shame upon a Muslim with a soul so dead: Who has never said to himself, "I am a Muslim, and these are my people." Who is so greedy for power and pelf.

Who may have many farms and factories, Who may have servants under him, But if he cares not for his fellow Muslims, His future is dark and grim.

Who may own a palace or a mansion, Who may be rich like Qaroon, But if he is a tyrant and a cruel oppressor, His reckoning will come soon.

Who betrays and shuns his own people, And ignores the ones in need, He too will be shunned and ignored, And thrown away like a weed.

Who is a leader, and spreads corruption, And embezzles our treasury, If he misleads, and defies the Almighty, It will be recorded in history.

The day he dies will be remembered well. On or about his coffin's rim, It will be a celebration, a day of freedom, And nobody will cry for him!

The Lord will not look kindly upon him, And neither the Prophet. Well, In all likelihood, his destination will be, Jahannum, the fire of hell!

The Hardest Working Seven Letter Word "SUCCESS" --Achieve It
(Surah Al Nur 24:37-38)

The Most Powerful Nine-Letter Word "KNOWLEDGE" --Acquire It
(of Allah & the Holy Qu’ran)
(Surah Y a Sin 36:2
Surah Yusuf 12:2

The Most Essential Ten-Letter Word "CONFIDENCE" --Trust It
(Trust in Allah's Guidance)
Surah Yunes 10: 9
Surah Al Tawbah 9:51

compiled by anonymous

Oh Lord increase me in breath that I might sing Thy praise,
Until it becomes inscribed unto my heart.
And when the angel of death comes to take my soul,
He will know that I was a believer.

He says: I have been wronged and I have not been given my due.
Foolish man, doesn't he know what his Generous Lord hath revealed unto his beloved,

That He does not even wrong the weight of an ant.
Indeed he did know, but now he does not remember.
And his forgetfulness will be his undoing

Looking to Afghanistan
I see my brothers dying
Little kids on the street
Blown up with bare feet

While we sit and watch them bleed
As they are covered in their sheet
Who could tell me what's their Deed?
For being bombed while they sleep?

Listen close and you'll hear them crying
It our sisters they are sighing
These news agencies keep lying
While their fighter jets just keep on flying
And our brothers are still dyeing

Borders closed after another
Brothers shooten at each other
We were brothers to one another
Now we envy one another

We keep fallen in this trap
We are divided on the map
Now we have been divided yes its a fact
The whole world has turned its back
Now you tell me it's not a trap
It just seems will never change
And when we are ready to call for change
All we do is spare some change
Our situation stays the same
Now you tell me who is to blame
It seems we are headed towards the flame

This is a reminder to steer us all
Towards the straight path of Allah
Now let me ask you one more question
How much more of this aggression
Are we going to just sit for
I want you all to hold on to that answer and give it to Allah swt on the day of judgement.
To The Lost Souls

by Maria Ashraff

Hard core, you think you are
One bullet in the name of Allah, gone all far
words coming out, something else in your heart
you didn't even mean it from the start
you know how to play but can you win
you say you're strong, but can you resist sin
you think you're your own boss, you don't follow
but you blindly obey Satan, your words are hollow
Your mind, but you can't even think for you
It's them deciding what you do
Open minded, gives room to all
But you're so biased, is that what you call,
Free Country? Since when?
Not since I last checked, let me see again
So many (man-made) restrictions put upon
You say that's free...uh oh...wrong!
People, so prejudiced, they don't even bother to look
Just one-sided stories got you all shook
Just one look, and you turn away
dang, you missed it all, all confused, a disarray
you think you've got it made, maybe for now
always your head up, can't even bow
Oh...so you think you don't need to thank God
Ok...umm...He only provided you with everything you've got
No, no, I'm sorry I must be the one who's out of her mind
I actually avoid dating? Party? Oh my God, I've never tried
drinking before...I'm so "behind" ?!
Here, it's forever, you can't melt this candle
I have seen, I have done, I have felt, I have learned and will more than
your mind can handle.

Tahajjud

by Saleem Safdar

Having been rebuked by the time conscious
light, I languish in myrky depths of night,
whose minutes and hours are generous,
cloaking my worldweary visage from sight.
But for a moonlit sky seeping through boughs,
and its translucent comfort from on High,
in solitude sullen rivulets flow,
reverential snow melting in my eyes.
Of dreams deferred and penalties incurred
have my waking hours been fabricated,
while unravelled in shadows of blurred
vision the truth is encapsulated.
past sunrise and sunset of lies and men,
In moonlight mirrors is an Honest Friend.
A Child Speaks

by Sana Khan

After some time she looks up with her watery eyes and asks, "Why are they doing this?" Folding her small hands upon her lap her eyes give way to a cascade of tears, streaking down her cheeks and blotting her dress. The simplicity of her being and question brings about a frustration. Why must she suffer so, and how can one answer her question? The innocence and curiosity behind her words make it difficult to formulate an answer to target her understanding. However, pain and loss have caused her to mature, allowing her to hold her gaze and not sob aloud until clear explanation of such injustices against her people is given.

She speaks again shattering the surrounding silence and in another whisper says two words, two clear, strong words to clarify her question: "The Muslims." I look at her unable to formulate any thought. The hopelessness in her eyes turns into anger and disgust. As I sit before her I come to the conclusion that she is questioning me....and us. Another tear swells up in her eye preparing itself to run down that soft face. Alas, it trickles down joining the pool within the folds of her dress.

In complete silence I watch how the horrors of life have subjected such a beautiful child, requiring her to face her struggles alone. Yet she questions us, the Muslims, as to what we've done. I begin to think, have we caused her pain? Do we have a role in shattering her hopes and dreams? Undoubtedly, after having her sit here and demand an explanation I have become aware of at least why she is not angry at those who have given her physical pain by destroying her home, leaving her hungry and taking away her loved ones. She is angry at those who have caused her emotional pain as well.

I lean over and take her small hands into mine and reassure her that everything will be alright. Explaining to her, as I wipe her tears, that Allah has different ways of testing people and that He reminds us with hardship will come ease. Silent once again she begins to smile, a sly playful looking smile that children often get after having done something mischievous. She tilts her head to the side, as if she were memorizing my face, as if she were formulating an idea and then the smile vanishes as unexpectedly as it came.

She leans forward looking directly into my eyes and says softly, "Didn't you see me on T.V.? Or in the papers? The child sitting amongst the rubble was me, the boy being hurriedly carried away after having been injured was me, the mother crying for her hungry child was me and the newly wed sister praying for her lost husband was me. Every picture, every story, every topic of the violence, pain and suffering was about me. Didn't you feel my pain?"

My hands tensed and began to sweat; my eyes darted back to and from her face; my words stopped and my tears flowed. How can I answer her questions? As she sat before me she seemed to be bigger and stronger than when we had first started this conversation. Her words stung deep as she questioned my soul and held me partially responsible for shattering her hope.

Brothers and Sisters this was just a child, much younger and more naive, who so innocently brought about a topic which many would leave aside. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "The believers in their mutual love, compassion and sympathy are like one body; when one of its parts suffers from some illness, the rest of the body shares its suffering with sleeplessness and fever." (Bukhari, Muslim: 'Nu'man ibn Bashir) Then why is it that we so easily turn away from the injustices that are being carried out amongst our brothers and sisters?

In our busy lives, in such a secure country, as we sleep in warm beds, drive fancy cars and live in the comfort of huge homes we tend to forget or overlook this reality, this ugliness. However if we cannot answer this child, how then will we face our Lord? This incident can be forgotten, T.V. channels changed, newspapers thrown away, but when we are standing in front of Allah what will we do then? Speak out brothers and sisters, show solidarity, strengthen your iman and live this deem before our shortcomings bring about another people to fulfill that which we have failed to do.

"Pipes" continued from page 5

of three November articles. He repeats the same quote from the Connecticut Imam, this time as proof that the Imam is not traditional but militant (Fighting Militant Islam without Bias, City Journal, November 2001). It may go without say that Pipes is far from an "expert" on Islam. Shamsi Siddiqi, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, and Ahmed Nawfal are also used to show how the vast majority of American Muslims are to be cautioned.

By posing definitions for Islam vs. Islamism, Pipes assumes a type of knowledge on the religion, trying to show that he is an objective scholar, whose warnings should be heeded. He defines traditional Islam as a personal relationship with God, with the government not involved (FMI). Any political or social activism renders one—not a Muslim—but now, an "Islamist."

Pipes interprets all dawa efforts as "non-violent Islamism." In other words, even when they are not violent, Muslims are bad. Says he: "Practically speaking, there are two main prongs to the non-violent strategy. The first involves radically increasing the number of American Muslims...Islamists are not so unrealistic to think that these numbers have amounted to a series of vacated buildings, and would undoubtedly have been used for regretful causes. And what does Pipes conclude from this? "The preservation of our existing order can no longer be taken for granted; it must be fought for." (TDW).

That the Muslims must bear with individuals like Daniel Pipes is an unfortunate reality. Ostensibly, this briefing on him will reach a Muslim readership, in whichever media would accept it.

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