



# Nasīḥah



THE OFFICIAL  
NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF  
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Volume 4

November 2004

MUSLIMS.RUTGERS.EDU

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FAST

Hold that tongue, I'm Fasting!

by Hina Syed

*"Whoever has fasted in Ramadan with faith and in expectancy of reward, his previous sins are forgiven him" Bukhari and Muslim*

Ibn Khuzayma reported on the authority of Salman al-Farisi (radhiyallahu anhu) that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa sallam) delivered a Khutbah on the last day of Sh'aban saying: "O people, You are about to enter the shadow of a great blessed month. A night therein is better than a thousand months. Allah (SWT) made fasting during this month an obligation and encouraged people to perform extra prayers during its

**"He [Allah] does not utter a single word without a watcher by Him, pen in hand."**

- Qur'an 50:18

nights. Seeking nearness to Allah (SWT) through a good deed would be considered like performing an obligatory act of worship. In turn, performance of an obligatory act of worship during this month would be rewarded seventy times more than during any other month. It is the month of patience, and the reward for patience is Paradise. It is the month of comforting others."

The Prophet (SAW) went on to say, "Make sure you frequently do four things, two of which would please your Lord and the other two are indispensable for your salvation in the Hereafter. As for the two things that would please your Lord, they are testifying to the oneness of Allah (SWT) and seeking repentance. And the other two are asking Allah (SWT) the favor of entering Paradise and seeking refuge in Him from the Hell Fire."

When we are fasting in Ramadan, not only are we abstaining from food, drink, smoking, and relations (if married) but we should also be guarding our tongues and protecting ourselves.

This is such a powerful message yet there are some that will continue speaking badly about others and continue to spread hatred amongst the community. Despite the fact that they are fasting, they will use the ex-



Center piece courtesy of Sadia Artmania. Total artwork collaboration by Irfan Shariff.

cuse that it's a matter of spreading truth and they do not see it as backbiting or slander.

Allah says, "He does not utter a single word without a watcher by Him, pen in hand" (50:18). Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Do you know what backbiting is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "To mention your brother in a manner he dislikes." It was said, "What if my brother is as I say?" He said, "If he is as you said, you have backbitten him. If he is not as you said, you have slandered him" (Muslim).

Allah Almighty says, "When they hear worthless talk, they turn away from it,"

Fast continued page 3

## What is RAMADAN?

by Shazia Khan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is given this name because when the Arabs changed the names of the months from the ancient language, they named it according to the season in which it fell.

Ramadan is a very sacred month for the

said, "When there comes the month of Ramadan, the gates of mercy are opened, and the gates of hell are locked and the devils are chained" (Muslim).

By fasting during the day and praying during the night, the atmosphere in the month of Ramadan is permeated through and through every Muslim and he or she feels inclined to do good deeds and abstain from evil ones. Thus the doors of Allah's (SWT) mercy are truly opened, the gates of Hell are locked and the devils are chained.

Just as the timings of daily prayers are based on the journey of the sun, similarly the period of Ramadan is based on the phases of moon. The idea behind this is to allow everyone to make calculation for him or herself, as these are the clocks of nature that everyone can easily make use of without the least bit difficulty. As Islam is a universal religion, its clocks and calendars are also universal from which everyone can derive benefit no matter where they may reside.

Abu Huraira reported what Allah's messenger (SAW) had said: "Allah the exalted and majestic said, 'Every act of the son of Adam is for him, except fasting. It is [exclusively] meant for me and I [alone] will reward it. Fasting is a shield. When anyone of you fasts a day, he should neither indulge in obscene language, nor raise his voice. If anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him he should say, 'I am a fasting person.'" " By him in whose hand is the life of Muhammad, the breath of he who fasts is sweeter to Allah [SWT], on the Day of Judgment, than the fragrance of musk. The one who fasts has two (occasions) of joy, one when he breaks the fast, he is glad with breaking of [the fast] and one when he meets his Lord, he is glad with his fast," (Muslim).

The chief merit of fasting is that its observer does it purely out of love and devotion to Allah (SWT) and there is not an iota of show and exhibition of one's piety in it. The act of fasting is completely hidden

Ramadan continued page 3

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The Islamic Society of Rutgers University presents

# Fast-A-Thon 2004

People from across the world are seen closing restaurants, refusing glasses of water, and rearranging lunch meetings to dinner. This unique circumstance occurs once a year. Why you ask? RAMADAN. Ramadan is the month on the Muslims Calendar (lunar) in which all Muslims are obliged to (abstain from Food and Drink). The Fast begins at Dawn and ends at Sunset. This year, we would like to invite all Non-Muslims to join us in Ramadan festivities by fasting.

Last year's event brought together students and professors, irregardless of faith. Each individual was given instructions for the day which included waking up early and eating breakfast before the sun came up and to not only abstain from food, but to also enjoin in kind acts towards others and practice patience. The participants were also invited to break their fast with the Islamic Society of Rutgers University with appetizers, a dinner, and educational speeches. Ramadan is an experience that all should partake in. It reminds Muslims of the blessings bestowed on them and it creates a greater appreciation for everyday things we take for granted.

## R U HUNGRY?

We would now like to continue this tradition by inviting all of you to celebrate Ramadan 2004 with us by pledging to fast on November 3, 2004 for our 3rd annual Fast-A-Thon. By pledging, you will agree to abstain from Food and Drink between the hours of 4:58 AM and 4:53 PM. For every pledge that is made, local sponsors will donate to the Franklin Township Food Bank. So don't wait any longer, be sure to pledge for this year's FAST-A-THON and you truly will understand the essence of patience, prosperity, and peace.

To pledge to FAST or for more information

Log onto:

<http://muslims.rutgers.edu/fastpledge.html>

Fast  
*continued from cover*

Ramadan  
*continued from cover*

(28:55) and the Almighty says, "Those who turn away from worthless talk." (23:3) The Almighty says, "Hearing, sight and hearts will be questioned" (17:36).

"And, when they hear vain talk, they turn away from it" (28:55). "[Successful are] those who shun vain talk" (23:3). "Indeed, truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Heaven. And, a man [continues to] tell the truth, until he is recorded before Allah as a truthful one. And, indeed, lying leads to evil, and evil leads to Hell. And, a man [continues to] lie until he is recorded before Allah as a liar" (Bukhari & Muslim).

We should give each other the benefit of the doubt and avoid such matters. After all, this is the month of Ramadan.

During this blessed month we should focus more on increasing our knowledge and our faith, in remembering Allah (SWT). This is the time when we get to really focus on the benefits of fasting as well as the benefits of cleansing the mind. This is the time when you are going to increase your time in worshipping Allah (SWT), and remembering Him.

It's real unfortunate when people choose this month as the only time to remember Allah (SWT) and the rest of the time they do not even thank Him or ask Him for guidance or protection. They use this month as their way to get back to Allah (SWT) by fasting in Ramadan, participating in the gatherings, reading more Qur'an, dhikr, and praying.

Though as soon as Ramadan is over, and Eid is over they're back to their normal selves. Some will change and start practicing Islam by praying more and getting back on their feet to their deen, though some will return to their old life by forgetting about Allah (SWT) and getting on with their life. They'll find themselves with this feeling of emptiness and will be unsure how it happened, yet not really caring about its cure. Some will not believe that it was from their remembrance of Allah (SWT) that He helped them survive, yet people will say "I'm my own person and it's between Allah and I alone." Indeed it is between you and Allah (SWT) alone but we as Muslims should do better than using this excuse and we should take advantage of this month to not only remember Allah (SWT) but reflect on the great blessings within this sacred month. Focus more on dhikr rather than arguing or bickering.

And Allahu Alim, Allah knows best.

from the view of men; it is, therefore, done merely for the love of Allah (SWT) and thus deserves full reward from him alone.

Lailat-ul-Qadar is the greatest night of the year. This is because it is in this very night that the destiny is determined. Literally, qadar is translated as meaning "grandeur" and "majesty".

Allah said in the Quran: "Surely we revealed it on Lailat-ul-Qadar. And what will make you understand what Lailat-ul-Qadar is? Lailat-ul-Qadar is better than thousand months. The angels and Jibril descend in it by the permission of their Lord for every commandment. Peace! It is till the break of the morning" (97:1-5).

In both of these places we find that the glory of this night is mentioned. This night has uncountable blessings in store for the Muslims since it is the anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. The angels descend to Allah's (SWT) servants with infinite reward on His behalf. Since the exact day is not known, the only way one can be sure of full devotion on the night of Lailat-ul-Qadar is praying in the last ten nights of Ramadan; the reason for not indicating the exact night is so Muslims might not rely on that very night and neglect prayers and devotion in other nights.

Ramadan is also the month of charity (Zakat). Every Muslim who has money should help his other poor Muslim brothers and sisters. Ramadan is the month when prayers are accepted and rewards for good deeds are multiplied. We all make mistakes but the best of those are who repent, and the best time to ask for the forgiveness is the month of Ramadan. So don't keep anything against anyone, especially in this month. Don't commit any sin and don't hurt anyone with your tongue nor with your hand. When we do something wrong how come we don't remember that Allah (SWT) is watching us? Instead we are too worried we might be caught by the people in our community. It is a proof that we show more importance to the creation then to the Creator. Ramadan is a great opportunity to come close to Allah (SWT), and fear Him alone, as He should be feared.

We are lucky to have this month one more time in our lives; so let's make the best of it. None of us are sure if we will encounter it next year. Don't let this Ramadan go in vain because chances are that if you are reading this article, then you are in observance of the holy month of Ramadan.

# IT

by Ali Farooki

It's quite interesting yet disappointing to know that people read this Surah, which is named "The Time", quite frequently probably because it is one of the shortest suras, yet they pass over it quickly and don't ponder over it and don't realize that they may be one of those who are described by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) as being losers (may Allah [SWT] protect us from that).

The scholars say that the first matter, which is the foundation of the remaining three, is knowledge (knowledge of Allah [SWT]), His Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa sallam), and of the religion of Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

So my dear brothers and sisters, know (may Allah [SWT] have mercy on you) that all of our actions and especially our obligatory worship of Allah (SWT) must be based on sound knowledge and that "knowledge comes before speech and actions" as Imam Bukhari mentioned and stressed in his Sahih by devoting a whole chapter relating to this principle. And if we are still not spurred on to renew our intentions to seriously seek knowledge and to read books, attend classes, listen to lectures, etc. because it is obligatory on every Muslim, we should at least find the urge and drive to do so because of the statement of our beloved Messenger (SAW) who said,

"Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him the path to Paradise." (Sahih Muslim)

The second matter, which must stem from knowledge, is acting upon that knowledge. Ibn Masud (Radhiyallahu 'Anhu) said, "Learn, learn! So when you learn, then act." (al-Khatib al-Baghdadi's Iqtidaa-ul-'Ilmil-'Amal. Its isnad is hasan)

The texts of the Quran, Sunnah, and examples from the pious predecessors are replete with exhortations to make sure we act on what we learn and warnings from not doing so. In fact, everyday in Surah Al-Fatiha we ask Allah (SWT) to make us from the people with whom he is pleased and to protect us from being amongst those who have gone astray (those who act without knowledge i.e. the Christians) or those who have earned Allah's (SWT) anger (those who don't act on what they know i.e. the Jews). We must remember that our knowledge can be a double-edged sword. It is on our side if we act by it and live by it. However, it will be against us on the Day of Judgment if we don't apply or implement that knowledge to our daily lives.

A third very important matter is calling others to this knowledge (ad-da'wah). In order for us to have complete faith, we must love for our brothers and sisters what

we love for ourselves. What more could we want for ourselves except happiness and success in this world and The Hereafter? Therefore, in order to complete this aspect of our faith, we must be involved in calling others to the truth. However, this calling must be based upon understanding of the knowledge and that is through the path of our Messenger (SAW), the Companions, and all of those who follow them in righteousness. In order for us to be on the way of the Prophet, we must do the same.

Allah (SWT) tells Muhammad (SAW), "Say, 'This is my way. I invite unto Allah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allah [SWT]) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allah [SWT]). And Glorified and Exalted be Allah [above all that they associate as partners with Him]. And I am not of the polytheists.'" (12:108)

The fourth matter is that it is obligatory upon us to be patient when we encounter difficulties in the path of spreading of knowledge. We must understand that if people turned away from the best of creation (SAW), then they will obviously turn away from us because we are lacking in knowledge, wisdom, and manners. It is important for us then to be strong and not to turn our back on our duties to Allah (SWT). We must understand that because of the path we are taking, we may experience fitan (trials) from places we least expect. Moreover, we will be tested according to our closeness to the truth as the Prophet (SAW) informed us that those with the most severe trials are the prophets, the martyrs, the righteous, and then those most like them and so on. It may be that we will lose friends because they refuse to accept the truth, and being patient through this is fulfilling the signs of those having true faith. Allah (SWT) says, "Thus have We made for every Prophet an enemy among the mujrimun [disbelievers, polytheists, criminals, etc.]. But Sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and Helper." (25:31)

The proof for these four things (knowledge, acting upon this, calling others to this, practicing patience through the difficulties and trials), as the people of knowledge, have mentioned is Sura Al-'Asr: "By Al-'Asr [the time]. Verily, man is in loss, except those who believe, and do righteous good deeds, and call one another to the truth, and call one another to patience."

To show the importance of this short surah, which in fact is a jewel of the Quran, Imam Shafi'i (d. 204 A.H), said, "Had Allah not revealed any proof against his creation except this Surah [Al-'Asr], it would have been enough for them." (Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Adheem- Hafidh 'Imad-ud-din Ibn Kathir)



# DATES

## The Halal Kind

by Hina Syed

*The Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa sallam) is reported to have said, "If anyone of you is fasting, let him break his fast with dates. In case he does not have them, then with water. Verily water is a purifier."*

The Prophet (SAW) used to break his fast by eating dates before Salat al-Maghrib, and if ripe dates were not available, he used to substitute them with some dried grapes. When they too were not available, he used to have a few sips of water. Modern science has proved that dates are part of a healthy diet. They contain sugar, fat, proteins, and important vitamins. This was the reason for the Prophet's (SAW) great emphasis on breaking a fast with such a nutritious fruit.

Dates are also rich in natural fibers and they also surpass other fruits in the sheer variety of their constituents. They contain oil, calcium, sulphur, iron, potassium, phosphorous, manganese, copper and magnesium. In other words, one date satisfies the minimum requirements of a balanced and healthy diet. Dates have been mentioned in the Noble Qur'an 20 times, a clear indication of their importance.

Besides the fibers they contain, dates are rich in several vitamins and minerals as well. When the level of trace elements falls in the body, the health of the blood vessels is affected leading to an increased heart rate and a consequent inability to perform functions with normal efficiency. Rich in calcium, dates help to strengthen the bones. When the calcium content in the body decreases, children are affected with rickets and the bones of adults become brittle and weak. Dates are also important in maintaining the health of eyes. They are quite effective in guarding against night-blindness. In the early years of Islam, dates served as food for Muslim warriors. They used to carry them in special bags hung at their sides. They are the best stimulant for muscles and so the best food for a warrior about to engage in battle.

The Prophet (SAW) used to combine dates with bread sometimes. At other times he mixed ripe dates with cucumber or dates combined with ghee (butter). He used to take all varieties of dates, but he preferred the variety called ajwah.



# How Ramadan Increases Our Awareness of Allah

by Farah Chaudhry

Communities gathering in the masjid, spending whole nights in prayer, abstaining from food and drink between the times of sunrise and sunset; these are the actions which result in a special psychological atmosphere for the individual. Why do we gather, why must we fast, why must we pray? The answers to these questions trigger a sense of understanding and realization within Muslims that there is a purpose. We are doing all of this for Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). And therefore this increases our awareness of Allah (SWT).

In light of worship, Ramadan could be paralleled with the season of spring. The fruits of worship begin to bloom and the spirit of goodness flourishes and grows in the hearts of Muslims. The fear of Allah (SWT) spreads across the entire Muslim community and the spirit of evil rapidly fades away. People develop shame in sinning and rather than responding to the whispers of the Shaytaan, their hearts turn soft and humbleness is instilled in them. In one month, the souls of an entire community are cleansed and the Islamic spirit is revived. Such purification is achieved because as the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa sallam) said, during Ramadan the gates of Heaven open, the doors of Hell close, and the devils get chained up (Bukhari). Fasting allows one to attain purification and resist sinful temptation.

**"Your heart is purest when your stomach is empty."**

-Imam al-Ghazali

A pure fast is one that creates an intense fear of Allah (SWT). Your fear of Allah (SWT) is the only thing controlling your four major desires: eating, drinking, sleeping, and sinful temptation. Allah (SWT) is Omnipotent, All-Knowing, All-Seeing; you know that you cannot sneak a snack when nobody is looking because you are aware that Allah (SWT) is always watching you. Every time a feeling of hunger or weakness runs through you, you remember your Lord and that you are fasting to gain His pleasure.

Fasting drastically improves the spiritual level and quality of your ibaadah. It is the key to bringing you closer to Allah (SWT) which only a mu'min (true Muslim) can experience. Imam al-Ghazali said, "Your heart is purest when your stomach is empty." After eating a big meal your stomach often feels so full

that you can barely move, disallowing you to pray salah effectively. Salah is said to be most effective when performed with up to 1/3 of your stomach full in which you can still feel a degree of weakness within you. How much easier is it to connect from your heart to Allah (SWT) when your stomach is not filled with a full five-course meal? Truly it is in this beautiful month of Ramadan where we can not only increase our awareness of Allah's (SWT) presence but also polish our personal habits so that they may please Him.

There is an undoubted increase in worship and desire to be a part of the Islamic atmosphere during this month. This atmosphere draws in entire communities to the single act of worshipping their Creator. Muslims make it a point to go to the masjid more frequently to pray taraweeh, participate in itikaaf, and attend or hold iftaars (breaking of the fast). And we should take advantage of this feeling to continue such actions of ibaadah throughout the year. Ramadan encourages training and realization in the individual that we are Muslim and are here to worship and obey our Lord, our Creator.

The spiritual power and beauty that is experienced during the month of Ramadan cannot be described in words.



Fasting is therefore an act of worship that purifies the heart and humbles the individual to connect with those less fortunate in society. At the same time, it teaches the individual to be content and grateful to Allah (SWT) for bestowing upon him or her countless blessings. Food is a mercy and gift for us and we should be thankful for it. Every time we are about to indulge in our next meal for the day, we should know that Allah (SWT) has intended for us to eat from this. It is only by His decree that we continue to live and breathe with each passing moment. Abstaining from food and drink during our fasting days allows for us to be satisfied and content from knowing that this is our worship, our submission to the command of Allah (SWT). All we do is for Him alone, and therefore fasting in this holy month of Ramadan increases our awareness of Allah (SWT).

# WHAT DOES RAMADAN MEAN TO ME?

by Salah Issa

I started fasting when I was five years old. At that time fasting meant you were cool. However, as I got older the meaning of fasting began to change. It is now a means of ibadaah, and although it is not much of a challenge with regard to sustenance as it was when I was five, it is still a challenge on how well I can do my ibadaah and if, even after Ramadan, I can stay like that throughout the remainder of the year.

When I feel Ramadan coming, I always get extremely excited, and start wishing that it will hurry up and bind me into spirituality. I shiver and dream of how well I will do in ibadaah, and then Ramadan sneaks by, and catches me by surprise. Every year I promise myself I will start out the first day as best as I can, but it often takes me a couple days and then as I increase in my ibadaah steadily, I do fine in the end.

**"When I feel Ramadan coming, I always get extremely excited, and start wishing that it will hurry up and bind me."**



Without Ramadan, I would not be the person I am. Without it, I would not have a time for my spirituality and realization of Allah's Greatness to grow. I can not imagine how I would live without this blessed month, and so I pray thanking Allah (swt) for allowing me and all the other Muslims around the world to have this month as an opportunity to better ourselves as best we can. Ameen.

# RAMADAN

## When We've Sighted the Moon

by Nadia Awad

"Man, oh man, what time is it now?"  
I look at the clock - 4:37 pm. Only five more minutes to go.

Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock...  
I stand up and pace the room, while smelling the delicious aroma of food at the same time. Do I dare...? No, it's not worth it when there's now only two minutes left.

I sit back down again, cross my legs, and then uncross them. I look at the clock again. Oh, boy, sixty seconds left. I watch the clock intently now...3, 2, 1...and I then hear, "Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar..."

Another day of Ramadan has gone by. Slowly, but surely, the time to break our fast, which had lasted from sunrise to sunset, had come. Many non-Muslims believe fasting is an impossible task because it involves self-sacrifice by giving up food and drink and many other desirable things during the light hours of the day. In fact, I've even had some come up to me and ask, "Wow, how do you do it? Aren't you starving?" Well, I'll be honest and say that it is somewhat difficult during the first few days, but after that, one gets used to the fast, and it isn't too bad.

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) says in the Holy Qur'an: "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you may become pious" (2:183). This verse has a deeper underlying meaning than what appears on the surface. From a faster's perspective, Ramadan is not only a time where we fast from sunrise to sunset, it has another very special purpose. It is a time for sacred recollection and spiritual purity of the mind, body, and soul. It is meant for reflection on the important religious aspects of our lives, for indeed this is the very month in which the Holy Qur'an was first brought down to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wa Sallam).

Therefore, we should make every effort to read the Qur'an daily during Ramadan, so that we can get into the habit of reading it everyday thereafter. Additionally, the Qur'an was revealed on Laylatul Qadr, the Night of Power, which "is better than a thousand months" (97:3). This is because it is the breaking point

of the Age of Ignorance. When Allah (SWT) revealed the Holy Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), it was the time when the Message and Truth of Islam were being revealed in order to spread wisdom, knowledge, and peace to all of mankind. This is why it is essential to worship, supplicate, and recite the Holy Qur'an during this night.

When we fast from sunrise to sunset, we should be truly thankful for the bounties Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon us. Ramadan gives us the opportunity to reflect on those who live day after day with very little or nothing to eat or drink. When we remember this, we should make an effort in offering a helping hand to these people, whether it is through donating to charitable organizations or simply setting some time aside to serve food in a soup kitchen. This month of fasting also serves as a test of our piety towards Allah (SWT) - namely, to remember to say, "Alhamdulillah" for everything He has given us and understanding that everything happens for a reason best known to

Him, the All-Knowing and All-Merciful.

The month of Ramadan is also the perfect time for improving our character, morals, and behavior. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "When Ramadan arrives, the gates of Paradise are opened, and those of Hell are closed up, and the shayateen [devils] are imprisoned" (Bukhari and Muslim). From a faster's perspective, it's good to know that we do not have any shayateen whispering in our ear, persuading us to commit sins during this holy month. As we make an effort to improve our character, we should become more conscious

of the fact that Allah (SWT) is aware of every one of our actions and intentions and will hold us accountable for the deeds that we perform throughout our lives. Hence, we should strive to enhance our character and this strife should not last only during the month of Ramadan, but for the rest of our lives. This enhancement, in a way, is a form of da'wah since we, as Muslims, are representatives of Islam.

I pray that Allah blesses all of us during this holy month, and that this Ramadan helps strengthen our health, wisdom, and iman as we strive to fulfill our duties for Allah (SWT). May Allah (SWT) accept our fast, have mercy upon us, and answer our prayers during this holy month. Ameen.



# THE FAST

by Natasha Daya

The empty space in yourself  
is draining  
but more so  
it is satisfying

It speaks  
and normally you respond  
but not today  
you ignore its plea

And if you listen carefully  
you can hear it sing  
you can taste its sweetness  
you can feel its fulfillment

It is the void that shall elevate the believer

# The Balance of ISLAM

by Zubia Naji

The Holy Book of Islam, the Qur'an, describes the Muslim society as "Ummah waasataa," a balanced society (2:143). It means a society that adopts a middle course, not swerving to extremes.

This balance is visible in many aspects of Islam. One example is its stand towards this world and the other world. Religions are expected to be afterlife-directed, and renunciation of earthly life is generally considered a very desirable attitude, though most people fail in this venture. The Qur'an, however, teaches, "Seek your Home of the Hereafter with what Allah has given you in this world; and do not forget your portion in this world" (28:77).

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) has also said: "It is He (Allah) Who has created for you all things on this earth" (2:29). This clearly shows that Allah (SWT) wants us to make

**"...a Muslim has to be a reasonable person, a person of proper balance and equanimity."**

use of the blessings of this world for our progress. So Islam does not teach us to adopt a negative attitude to this world; it does not say that the world is evil in and of itself.

Allah has given us the intellect, imagination, memory, speech, and so on, which

are all required for our life in this world. He has also given us freedom, without which our intellectual faculties would be useless. It is up to us to use these faculties in a balanced manner to our benefit and prosperity. This balance should be present in everything we do. Therefore a Muslim cannot be an extremist in anything, just as he cannot be a spendthrift or a miser in his or her actions. Allah (SWT) decries extremism even in religious matters. For this reason, a Muslim has to be a reasonable person, a person of proper balance and equanimity. Thus the same reasoning applies to the acquisition of knowledge. Man should acquire good ideas, thoughts, knowledge, and skills, from all corners of the world. The Muslims were responsible

for developing the sciences of physics and chemistry. It was Muslims who first taught these sciences to others and later on other people made expansions in these fields. We should learn from our predecessors and seek all kinds of knowledge from the cradle to the grave. But we should remember at the same time that our predecessors complemented their worldly knowledge with the knowledge of Islam and did not sacrifice one for the other.

# KNOW

## The Tragedy of Madhabism

by Sabah Chaudhry

A group of sisters begin to pray in Jamaat. One sister says, "Ok no gaps, let's keep the line straight." She looks at another sister, "Oh wait, but we are Shafi'ee and you are Hanafi (although the sister has no clue she is Hanafi). So you can't pray with us." The supposedly Hanafi sister replies blank faced, "Oh, ok." She walks away from the group, confused and alienated.

This situation is a tragedy indeed, a tragedy so common in our Ummah called madhabism. And what is madhabism? It is to strictly follow one madhab of the four great imams, Imam Abu Haneefa, Ash-Shafi'ee, Malik ibn Anas, or Ahmed ibn Hanbal. For the majority of us, madhabism is a force which has taken over our intellectual understanding of Islamic belief and practice. Yes, we should adhere to the wisdom of the great imams to better understand our deen, but we need to set limits. Muslims are traveling to the extreme by narrowing themselves to the views of one madhab and making that their Islam. Wouldn't one testify that in the eyes of Allah, the most blessed people are those most unified in their worship of Him? And the solution to this ailment so predominant in our Ummah is knowledge. Gaining knowledge particularly in fiqh is the key to eradicating these madhab divisions.

Fiqh is the practical application of the Qur'an and Sunnah and it teaches halal and haram in the form of commands and prohibitions. This was the process used by the four imams for deriving and implementing Islamic rulings.

By analyzing this process can we observe and understand where rulings come from. Only then can we contemplate and realize how important it is to ask the question "Why?" We must set the means of breaking loose from these webs of madhab confusion. By understanding the hikmah, reasoning, behind every law, only then can we understand what is truth. As stated by Imam Ali, "Truth is not to be learned on the basis of authorities. Learn the truth and then you will know who the truthful ones are."

A vital element of fiqh is recognizing taqleed which

is the root cause of all madhabism. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaymin explains in *Ijtihad and Taqleed*, taqleed is "placing something around the neck" so as to place one's destiny on the neck of his scholar, adhering to his exact opinion or position. How often do you see people claiming they are Hanafi or Maliki but have no idea who Imam Abu Haneefa or Imam Malik were, better yet what their teachings were? Allah states in the Qur'an, "Say: The things that my Lord has indeed forbidden...[are] saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge." (7:33). Thus this also means it is dangerous to speak about the madhab's understanding of Allah's rulings without knowledge. The reason is this may lead to the grave sin of "changing the religion of Allah," as stated by Jamal al-Din Zarabozo in *Speaking About Allah Without Knowledge*. This can also lead to the following of one's desires when we know we should only follow the commands of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa T'ala).

Analyze the word madhab. Its Arabic literally means "to take as a way" and it is a mujtahid's (a qualified scholar of Islamic law) choice in possibilities for deriving the rule of Allah from the Qur'an and hadith. This formulates a school of thought or madhab. It is interesting to note that "the leading scholars of these schools [the four great imams] never claimed that they were infallible; they were, in fact, researchers who sought to know the truth. Only the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam was infallible and we should look to him for advice," explained Yusuf al-Qaradawi in *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*.

However, I am not stating that we should avoid following a madhab. On the contrary, scholars have advised students of knowledge to adhere to a particular madhab in order to clarify Islamic rulings for those who do not have them available and require guidance. It is agreed upon by many scholars that "...Taqleed is allowed for whosoever cannot search for or understand the evidence." Sheikh Yaser Birjas further explains if someone has the capacity to understand, learn, and apply the sources (Qur'an and Sunnah) of Fiqh, such as a mujtahid, then this person should not perform taqleed. He further

Tragedy continued page 11



# is Illum

"The best witnesses to God's truth are those

# From DARKNESS into *Light*

by Sabah Chaudhry

“Orgo exam tomorrow, gotta study. Oh yeah, but first I have to go to the gym, work out for a few hours. After that, I have to stop at the computer lab to check my e-mail. Wait but I can’t forget about meeting with my professor.” Sound familiar. It is probably what you’re thinking right now if you are a college student. These are all valid worries of students these days but there is one very

important concern missing in the mindset of the Muslim student. And that is, “What have I learned about my deen (religion)?

Why is it that many of us have become forgetful of their Islam, so caught up in the race towards the duniya (world)? The reason is they have forgotten the essence of their deen and the purpose of the message when it was brought down by the Prophet Sallallahu Alayhi Wa sallam. We have forgotten what he lived and died for. Allah sent him down as a mercy, a blessing for mankind so we could have the guidance and so we could understand the meaning of our existence. But too often do Muslims forget that. When it comes time to read Quran, attend a halaqa, sign up for an Islamic class, it’s a simple, “I don’t have time,” “I work everyday,” or “My classes are more important for me right now.” Why has Islam become

an extracurricular activity or a side thing? Islam came to conquer the minds, bodies, and hearts of mankind and instead here we have other activities or even the computer enslaving our every human ability.

The only cure to breaking free from such

**“...knowledge is the light of the inner eyes that cures one’s blindness and restores his inner sight.**

-Mu`aadh ibn Jabal

psychological bondage is to stop running after our worldly desires. We need to understand who we are, who is Allah, and why were we created to worship only Him. In the end, there will be nothing left of this

world and all that we will gain will be the wrath or the pleasure of Allah. And what better way to gain Allah’s pleasure than to enliven our speech and infiltrate our hearts with words of the Quran. We must radiate our minds with books of Islamic truth. We should take from the wealth of scholars and imams by attending Islamic lectures and registering for deen-intensive classes. Knowledge is the gold we long for, the truth we seek, the answer to our never ending questions. Only through comprehending the deen can a person acquire these ultimate treasures and be at peace with his Creator.

The Prophet Muhammad salalaahu alayhi wasalam asserts the importance of gaining knowledge. “The person who walks through any road seeking knowledge, Allaah makes the road to Jannah easy for him.” There is great reward in making that extra effort to read

*Light continued page 12*

# LEDGE



# ination

*who shine its light in their lives.”*

*Tafseer of the Qur’an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali*

## Importance of Etiquette in spreading the deen

by Sabah Chaudhry

“You can’t pray like that, what’s wrong with you. Don’t you know the Hadith of the Prophet?” Have you ever been a victim of such a harsh statement? Or, have you ever found yourself saying things like, “Allah has blessed me with the truth and I know everything a Muslim needs to know about this deen.” What about, “Someone who went to a lecture by this sheikh told my friend who told me, I think this is right, that the Qur’an states...”

So what’s wrong with all of these statements? The first one is an example of a person who had the knowledge but no wisdom. Statement number two is an example of arrogance or pride. Statement number three, is citing the Qur’an without proper citation and assurance. All three are actions resulting from improper etiquette in gaining or spreading knowledge. Practicing proper adaab (mannerism) or etiquette is so essential in guiding others to the truth and inviting them to learn this deen.

Let’s take the life of Imam Ibn Hazm Al-Andalusee. He was a great scholar of his time who wrote many books of Islamic knowledge. However, he left a negative impression on the hearts and minds of scholars. The main reason for this was his negative conduct. It is unquestionable the level of knowledge this man had, however, he terrorized and harassed the people with his harsh attitude when trying to educate them. He tried to force his opinion on them. His life is a prime example of the detrimental effects of spreading knowledge without proper etiquette.

The best way to spread knowledge and give dawah is to set the example. And this can only be done by applying what you learn. “...Guiding people by one’s actions is more inspiring than doing so by words... one should implement what he knows for it is indeed the greatest foundation,” as stated in Sayd Al-Khaatir. A person who observes

the application of knowledge and witnesses its benefit would likewise desire to partake in that same benefit.

When presenting knowledge, it is important to use reason and explanation for everything. This use of reasoning is not for human desire but for better understanding of the deen. Imam Abu Haneefa stated, “It is not permitted for anyone to accept our views if they do not know from where we get those views.” The great imams of Islamic law even advised people to search for reason and proofs in their derived Islamic rulings and that is only possible through the gaining of knowledge. So that is how essential it is for the individual to understand the benefits of abiding by the laws of Allah.

Discussion or argumentation on Islamic topics can be beneficial for the sake of gaining knowledge if conducted in the right manner. Imam Shafi’ee stated, “I never debated with someone but sincerely wished that we would come upon truth, regardless of whether he or I should be the one to think of it first.” So debate is allowed, so long as it is for the purpose of reaching some Islamic conclusion. It is not permissible to argue about matters that have been well established in religion in the Qur’an or Sunnah. Allah gravely warns against such forms of argumentation in the Qur’an, “(Their doom is) because Allah sent down the Book in truth but those who seek causes of dispute in the book are in a schism far (from the purpose)” (1:176).

One must maintain a positive mindset and attitude in the pursuit of knowledge. It is important to be sincere and open minded when discussing knowledge. Imam Shafi’ee said, “When you go in discussion, you assume your opinion is correct with the possibility of being wrong, and that the other opinion is wrong with the possibility of being correct.” One should abstain from being arrogant or intolerable of change as only Allah is flawless. We as human beings are capable of making mistakes. Being excessively emotional or passionate about a matter can lead to feelings of anger and therefore result in unfavorable argumentation. In Volume 1

*Etiquette continued page 11*

# Seeing the Ka'bah

by Salah Issa

I was walking fast through the well-lit and spacious corridor. On both sides there were people praying and every few yards I passed by orange water gallons. In front of me was the opening of the corridor and I could only see the bright whitish-light of the day. I kept on going until I reached the end and stepped out into the sunlight. I was struck still as I looked around.

In the center was the Ka'bah, a big cube house about 16 feet high and 16 feet wide. It was totally covered with a black cloth that seemed so thick and so holy. About two feet under the top was this half foot-long yellow band that went all the way around the cube. On it was intricate black writing of well-chosen verses from the Qur'an, the holy book of the Muslims. Around the Ka'bah were hundreds and hundreds of people, men dressed in two white towels and women modestly covered from head to toe. Every person was going in the same direction around the Ka'bah; white, black, brown and yellow people. They came from rich, middle class and poor families. However, in that dress code they all looked the same, for they were all the servants of

As my eyes left the people who were circling the Ka'bah, I observed those performing their prayer facing the Ka'bah. Behind the praying people were the great gates that lead to the Ka'bah. These gates were 16 feet tall and very wide and there must have been at least 20 to 30 gates. Behind these gates were long open corridors with people praying in the sides of the corridors. On top of these gates was a second floor that was also packed with worshippers. Even the roof was filled with worshippers. This beautifully built masjid held so many people, each praying to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala), each taking full advantage of their visit. Although it was a very hot day, the marble floors were extremely cool to my bare feet. Until now, I wonder why and how these floors remain so cool in the middle of a desert.

There were two stairways leading to a basement. It is in this basement where the oldest well in the world runs its water: the water of Zamzam. This water has its own taste unlike any other water found on this earth, and is very pure. This well has been supplying the city with water for more than 1400 years and it is still meeting the demands of the people of Mecca with no shortage in supply; a truly lasting miracle. I drank from it until I could drink no longer



the Great Lord. The circle that they made was about the width of sixteen people from shoulder to shoulder. As I looked at them, I felt a rich feeling of belonging.

and then joined the multitude of people going around the Ka'bah where I continued my prayer to Allah (SWT), the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

# T A Q W A sum of all good

by Saeed Shaikh

Generally speaking if two variables (e.g. X and Y) are so related that when a value is assigned to X, a corresponding value of Y can be determined. And then Y is called the

lives and say one portion of our Taqwa is T1, and it is dependent on only one variable, say good deeds or simply good or G1. So  $T \equiv f(G1)$ . If G1 is increased without limit, so will be T1, without limit. In other words, if the "good" increases, so does the Taqwa.

We know as humans, however, that most things cannot be increased (or decreased to



To Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and Allah hath power over all things. (Qur'an 3:189)

function of X. Y is a dependent variable and X is an independent variable. X can be one or more variables such as X1, X2, and so on. How are they related to each other? That's the functionality that is being discussed here.

Let us talk about one such function called Taqwa; T. It is a dependent variable. What are then associated independent variables? We know that Taqwa increases and Taqwa decreases. That means the value of T is not constant. Just like the value of Y varies, so is T's - depending upon what values are assigned to its independent variables. Think about those independent variables, which will make the T, increase or decrease based on the increase or decrease of the associated independent variables. How about righteousness, and piety, and fear of Allah, and love of Allah, and obedience of

that matter) without setting limits in life. There are limitations to almost everything in practical life. And they make the "function" more "definitive" or shall we say "more suitable" so that we can manage it. In addition, not necessarily all variables can always be in direct proportions. There could be some inverse functions and some square functions and some combinations of arithmetic, and so forth.

Let us take one hypothetical example:  $f(G) = \{700G/(G + 1)\}$ . If  $G \rightarrow \infty$ , then  $(1/G) \rightarrow 0$ . Therefore, when  $G \rightarrow \infty$ ,  $f\{700G/(G + 1)\}$  or  $f\{700/(1 + (1/G))\} = 700$ . Therefore, the function  $f(G) = \{700G/(G + 1)\}$  approaches the limiting value of 700 as G approaches infinity. Thus 700 is said to be the limit of this function. That means if our goodness or simply "good" approaches infinity (we do not do anything wrong), our function (which is basically our reward for that action or "function") amounts to be 700. That may be the 700 times thawab that we may get from Allah (SWT) for our good deed G! That may be the portion of Taqwa T1 derived from goodness G1. And how about many more portions of Taqwa T2, T3, ... and so forth derived from goodness G2, G3, ... and so forth?

You probably know where this is leading. How about adding up all portions of Taqwa T1, T2, T3, ... and so forth derived from goodness G1, G2, G3, ... and so on. So the sum of all little portions of Taqwa will become our overall Taqwa T at a given point in time. This overall Taqwa T is derived from the sum of all goodness G1, G2, ... and so forth.

Did we say sum of all goodness? Yes, indeed! That's one definition of Taqwa. Ibn Juzayy had defined Taqwa as sum of all good.

**"Allah has blessed all of us to define our own functions and establish our own limits."**

Allah's commands, and fear of punishment of Allah on the Day of Judgment, and fear of losing Allah's blessings, and fear of displeasing Allah, and gratefulness of Allah, and steadfastness, and justice, and simply the goodness? These are all independent variables X1, X2, X3, ... and so on of our dependent variable T or Taqwa. Taqwa is dependent on all of these and some. Increase or decrease in them will increase or decrease your Taqwa. In calculus you will call it  $T \equiv f(X1, X2, X3, \dots Xn)$ .

Allah has blessed all of us to define our own functions and establish our own limits. Let's see what a limit is. Let's simplify our

Lowering your

GAZE

by Irfan Shariff

Indeed lowering one's gaze is not the easiest thing to do in today's world but here are a few tips to help you out.

If you hang out with people who just sit around and check out the opposite sex for no apparent reason, change the people you hang out with because sooner or later looking won't be the only problem on your hands. The Prophet (Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wa sallam) said, "The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is that of a person carrying musk and another blowing a pair of bellows. The one who is carrying musk will either give you some perfume as a gift or you will buy some from him, or you will get a good smell from him. But the one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him" (Bukhari).

Walk quickly and with a purpose. Being mindful of your intention for where you are headed helps out a lot. Especially when you are stopped in the street and one is forced to do more than just talk casually. Hassan al-Ahwasaid, walked, his legs vigorous, slightly and his feet on the He took a long did not take small steps. When he walked it seemed as if he was descending to a lower place. When he looked at something, he turned his whole body towards it. He always looked down. His blessed glance was focused more to the ground than towards the sky. His noble habit was to look at something with a slight glance. He greeted first whomsoever he met." (Shamaa'il at-Tirmidhi)



Performing constant dhikr (remembrance of Allah [Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala]) keeps oneself from looking astray (also, you'll receive hasanaat for it).

Keep some Quranic recitation or nasheeds in your CD player. It helps out with keeping your mind clear of the

"The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is... the [evil] one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him" (Bukhari).

haram things in your environment.

Inshaa 'Allah we will be safer in the environment we live in by keeping Allah (SWT) firm in our hearts.

PATIENCE

by Saba Rathore

Despite the countless number of times that we hear of patience as a virtue, not a single day goes by when we do not hear about a death due to road rage, suicide as a result of loss of business or wealth, people turning to alcoholism and drugs and even nations quickly going to war to resolve their conflicts. Although patience is the missing element in the equation of success and perseverance, its importance is not all lowered, for it remains the key to resolving many personal, social, and global problems we face today.

The Islamic concept of sabr (patience and constancy) is deeply rooted in the belief that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala) is All-Mighty, All-Knowing, and All-Merciful. He has clearly promised to grant peace, blessings, and victory, in this life and in the hereafter – a powerful motivation for an individual to practice sabr. There are two critical aspects of sabr: endurance in the face of adversity and perseverance in good deeds. These are emphasized in the Qur'an as beneficial not only for an individual but society as a whole.

The first aspect of sabr, maintaining faith in times of hardships, is one of the most challenging feats to accomplish. Although challenging it is not impossible, and one can actually see the advantages of practicing sabr in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa sallam). At one point, when the Prophet (SAW) and his companion, Abu Bakr (Radhiyallahu Anhu), had to protect themselves from the Quraysh, they hid in a cave. Because of the Prophet's complete trust in Allah and patience, "then that God sent down his peace upon him and strengthened him with hosts invisible and He made the word of the unbelievers the lowermost and He made the word of Allah (SWT) supreme" (9:40). Right before the Quraysh approached the cave, Allah (SWT) produced three miracles that saved the Prophet (SAW) and his companion. A spider weaved its cobwebs around the entrance (Ibn Hajar classified its isnad as hasan). Allah (SWT) had, in such an unthinkable way, saved His Prophet (SAW) and his companion.

However, the path to Allah's (SWT) mercy and guidance will not come easily, as He will test people's patience with many difficulties. Allah (SWT) explicitly states in Surat Al-Baqarah, "We shall test your faith by means of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and crops, but give good tidings to those who in hardship say, 'To Allah (SWT) we belong and to Him shall we return'" (2:155-6). Although the tests may be seemingly unbearable, Allah

(SWT) does not test anyone beyond his or her limit.

Another example of Allah (SWT) testing one's patience is the story of Prophet Abraham (Alayhi As-salaam) when he dreamt of sacrificing his son. And so when the Prophet Ibrahim (AS) told his son of his dream, the son said: "O my father! Do as thou are commanded: thou will find me, if God so wills one practicing Patience and Constancy!" As a result of Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) sabr, Allah (SWT) rewarded him by allowing him to keep his son and to sacrifice a ram instead; Ibrahim had succeeded in Allah's (SWT) test by remaining firm in his faith.

The second aspect of patience is to persevere in good deeds and Allah (SWT) explains the benefit of being consistent in righteous actions, "And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune" (41:35). Despite the main reward of Allah's (SWT) bliss, there is a subtle, yet significant reward for being constant in virtuous conduct. Those who do good deeds by mutually teaching patience and constancy to others end up developing a strong bond with each other. Practicing good deeds as a group, community, or society not only serves as glue to the Muslims, but also helps enrich the foundation of beliefs that the Qur'an sets as a way of life.

What happens when individuals fail to recognize the value of practicing sabr? The consequences may be devastating and regretful. During the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (SAW) stationed some of his people at the top of Mount Uhud. Preventing the Meccans from attacking from behind, the archers were not allowed, under any circumstance, to leave their station unless the Prophet (SAW) gave them orders to leave. For the first half of the battle, it seemed victory for the Muslims. However, many archers lost their patience and left their stations to join their fellow Muslims who were collecting booty. The Meccans saw the opening after the archers left and attacked. Many were injured and chaos took over; the unity of the Ummah was destroyed. Victory turned into defeat. The Battle of Uhud reminds every Muslim that patience can put the whole ummah at risk.

By becoming a "people of reliance", we completely trust in the planning of Allah (SWT) and we know that Allah (SWT) is the best of all planners. Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani said, "Do not be ruled by lust; seek freedom by following the righteous. Mere claims of piety will not earn your inner freedom. Remain patient in adversity to attain peace, for adversity is the threshold to freedom. Those who cannot persevere are held back from the doors of Mercy."



## MAN BEHIND THE BOOK

Oh poor man, don't be afraid  
For your actions, you truly will be paid

Your beard is the key  
On the Day of Judgment you will see

That Jannah is awaiting and calling  
Those who are strong and not falling

You shouldn't hide behind the book  
For a covenant we have took

We were born of the faith  
Pray that you have a good fate

Oh poor man, don't be afraid  
For your actions, you truly will be paid



## DEATH

by Irfan Shariff

To take this world and blame it on  
others would not appropriate

To only complain and not  
be thankful would be oh so wrong

For the truth lies towards He  
And religion is nothing  
But a play on words,

I have no religion...  
There is no person I repent to

For I am a slave to He  
And I retain a life to serve only the One

My way of life; a purpose to praise  
No one but God

The smile on my face, to enjoy only,  
the happenings created by Allah

For God is nothing I could imagine...  
A being to seek protection

And so I try, and I try  
To meet Him on The Last Day  
For death shall come  
Without an instance of delay

## Poetry Corner



## Bearded Man

by Saba Rathore

There's this bearded man

That looks so lonely

If only

I could make him smile,

But he must trek,

Risk breaking his neck,

And get involved in many a wreck

To make the world realize

How pitiful we all are

And how so far

We stray from reality

*Sunday July 18, 2004 (10:55 am)*

*(a man seen on the road while going to Abbotabad, Pakistan)*

## HERE IN HIS LAND

by Eman Younes

Everyday I encounter so many  
calamities  
But I try to handle them with calmness  
and ease

Like when I get up and get ready for  
college  
There are so many problems I see and  
acknowledge

Getting dressed I just slip on a skirt or  
jilbab  
But now a real dilemma, how to wrap  
my hijab!

And do I want to wear a one piece or  
two  
And do I want it to match my shirt or  
my shoe

Why don't guys have this problem,  
that's not fair  
They don't even have to comb their  
hair

So anyway, I get to class and I sit in my  
seat  
Then I realize the AC broke and I feel  
the heat

Then I wish I didn't wear this thick  
hijab today  
But what do I do, what do I say?

Then I think for a second and then I  
put on a big smile  
And say Alhamdulillah I'm Muslim,  
even if I'm hot for a while

So even if sometimes this hijab makes  
me hot  
I know I'm going to benefit a lot

Allah is pleased and that's all I really  
want  
And I don't care if people laugh at me  
or taunt

Because in the end it will not be them  
judging me  
It will be The Most Merciful, so  
pleasing Him is key

So if you think "I can't wear hijab."  
Think again before it's too late  
Think about how your reward from  
Allah will be so great.

Think about a place in heaven for you  
for listening to Allah's (Subhanahu Wa  
Ta'ala) command  
And how Allah (SWT) will continuously  
bless you over here in His land.

**Tragedy**

*continued from page 6*

explains that when one does follow a madhab, one should remember to perform "ittibaa," which is following a scholar based on his proofs." Remember to be sincere in gaining knowledge and to follow open-minded, qualified scholars.

Fiqh should be a source of unity, not division. The sisters mentioned above could have avoided that situation if they acted upon knowledge. If a person decides to follow rulings from a specific madhab, he or she should inform the other person why. Let's educate and not estrange one another by identifying ourselves as Shafi'ee or Hanafi. Otherwise new sects will emerge which Allah warned against.

And the key again is to be insightful and to search for the truth. It's easy to sit around and be spoonfed information. The true struggle is in making that effort to search for knowledge of the deen, which is fard, obligatory, upon every Muslim. Allah blessed us with the intellect so we should utilize it to understand His Guidance. Let's wake up as an Ummah and realize the purpose of our existence. We were created to know Allah, to know His Deen, and not to taqleed or blindly submit.

The great Imams themselves were students of one another and encouraged the exchange of knowledge. We must unify as one Ummah with Islam as our aqeedah (faith) not Shafism or Hanafism. Imam Shafi'ee said, "When a hadeeth is found to be saheeh (authentic), then that is my madhhab." So if we are to label one another, let's identify ourselves as members of the madhab of Rasulullah (salalaahu alayhi wasalam) and abiding by this statement is what will gain us the pleasure of Allah and Insha-Allah Jannatul-Firdaus. Ameen.

**Etiquette**

*continued from page 7*

of *Al-Ihya*, Imam al-Ghazali said, "By showing excessive enthusiasm for truth and their contempt of their opponents, the latter would be stimulated to retaliate and react in the same manner. They would be driven to stand for falsehood



and to be true to the label attributed to them." So it is important to remain calm and peaceful during discussion.

And if you really have no knowledge about something, do not attempt to discuss it. Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (Radhiallah Anhu) said, "The merit of an Aalim is that he says Allaahu A'lamu (Allah Knows best), when he does not possess knowledge about something."

Also, many people nowadays fall into the trap of speaking about the Qur'an and Hadith without knowledge. It is important to verify knowledge with evidence from the sources or from scholars. Abu Bakr one time said, "What earth would give me place to live and what sky would shade me if I should speak about the Qur'an with my opinion or by something I do not know." Even the great Sahaba were so afraid of speaking without knowledge yet how easily do people fall into this sin today. And it brings chills to the body and soul when we ask ourselves, do we feel this same fear when speaking about matters of the deen as did he (Abu Bakr) who was promised Jannah?

Finally, do not judge others or label them as committing acts of bid'ah or kufr. And do not make assumptions that others have negative intentions, no knowledge, or are misguided. Remember, Allah is The Judge of all things. We must be respectful towards one another and realize that we are all brothers and sisters in Islam.

Etiquette in spreading knowledge is just as important as having knowledge. It is fard upon us to spread knowledge once we have it. And if an individual cannot gain reward for spreading knowledge because of his or her unwelcoming attitude and conduct, there may be no use in having that knowledge. So let's reevaluate ourselves, for in the end lacking proper adaab may be the same as having no knowledge at all.



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Light  
continued from page 7

the Qur'an, to walk that additional mile to attend a halaqa in the masjid, all to gain knowledge. Imagine, that daily trek or recitation can be your ticket to Jannah.

And remember that knowledge precedes faith. "How can one have faith without knowing what it is that one has faith in?" stated A. B. Khan in *Knowledge*. So often times Muslims affirm the shahadah, belief in Allah and Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam as His last prophet but they still don't realize what the belief entails. Again, knowledge is what provides us with that understanding.

There are three valuable principles to remember in this quest for knowledge. Knowledge should be obtained to instill taqwa, fear of Allah, in the individual. Sufyaan Ath-Thawree, rahimahullaah, said: "The excellence of knowledge is due only to the fact that it causes a person to fear and obey Allaah, otherwise it is just like anything else." Also, knowledge should be implemented and applied to one's daily life. And that person will receive a painful punishment who gains knowledge simply for the sake of showing off, riya. The Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said in describing what Allah will say to this person on the Day of Judgement, "you did not acquire knowledge that it might be said [of you]: He is learned. You recited the Qur'an that it might be said [of you]: He is a reciter. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into the Hellfire..." (Muslim, at-Tirmidhee, an-Nasaa'ee). Thirdly, just as it is fard, mandatory, for a person to gain knowledge, it also becomes fard on him or her to spread that knowledge to others and invite them to Islam.

Knowledge is a guiding light which enhances the straight path for mankind. Mu'aadh ibn Jabal (radhiallahu `anhu) said, "Knowledge revives the dead hearts and drives them out of darkness into light, and... knowledge is the light of the inner eyes that cures one's blindness and restores his inner sight." Through knowledge, the believer begins to perceive existence with a keener sense and views life with a sharper eye.

Do not be discouraged from studying the sciences,



law, and the philosophies as they are also essential to learn. But don't forget to study your deen. "It is important to obtain secular knowledge. Also, as a nation, we do need doctors, lawyers and engineers. But we need people who are knowledgeable of their religion first and foremost," stated Sumayyah bint Joan in *Knowledge, the Key to Success*. We need to maintain a balance and in the same way we dedicate so much time and effort to studying for our classes, we also must worry about learning to please Allah.






As it is said that any form of knowledge can be beneficial knowledge, but if we have no solid understanding of Islamic law and beliefs, we may lack the ability to distinguish between what is right and wrong. We may very well fall into the trap of taking these secular philosophies as truth if we do not fully comprehend the Islamic perspective. Islam should be our perception, it protects us from falsehood. That is why it is so fundamental for us as Muslims to set gaining knowledge of the deen as our priority. Yes, gain knowledge of the changing world, but use it positively, to better understand our existence and strengthen in worship of Allah.

So how do we go about gaining knowledge? Most importantly, we should strive to know Our Lord. Who is He, what are His attributes and what is His relationship to His Creation? We should read the Qur'an, and try to learn to read it in Arabic, in order to better understand its beauty and meaning. And we should know our Islamic history. Since we were children, we were taught about Islamic history in school very briefly and usually from a twisted or biased perspective. We need to make it a point to no longer depend on the NonMuslims for guidance and truth, but to the authentic Islamic sources. We can even gain the knowledge directly by making the time to attend Islamic lectures and take classes with esteemed sheikhs and ulema (scholars).


Also, we should read ahadith of the Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa sallam and the stories of the companions to take on their lives as prime examples. And in turn, we will desire to be more and more like them, to increase in our worship of Allah in the same ways they did. May Allah guide us all on the path to seeking knowledge and make us successful in that. And may Allah protect me from preaching what I don't practice and make all of us amongst those who can Insha-Allah obtain true Islamic knowledge. Ameen.

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