

THE MESSAGE



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Volume 5 Issue 3 Ramadan 2007

رمضانك

Ramadan

Your TV guide to Ramadan





EVERY DROP COUNTS



Water, Facts & Numbers:

- A person can survive one month without food but only one week without water.
- Diseases related to water are caused either by the lack of water or drinking polluted water.
- Such diseases include trachoma, hepatitis, typhoid, polio, malaria, sleeping sickness and meningitis.
- Trachoma alone is the main cause of blindness of 6 million people worldwide.
- 2.4 billion people (nearly the half of world's population) do not have access to adequate water supplies.
- 2.2 million people in developing countries die every year from diseases related to lack of water and drinking unsafe water.
- Around 6,000 children – most of them less than 5 years of age - die every day from water-borne diseases.
- The average distance that women in Africa and Asia walk every day to collect water is 6 km.



How Human Appeal Int. contributes to solve Water Crisis?

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

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The Prophet Mohamed PBUH says:
“Providing water is one of the best forms of charity”

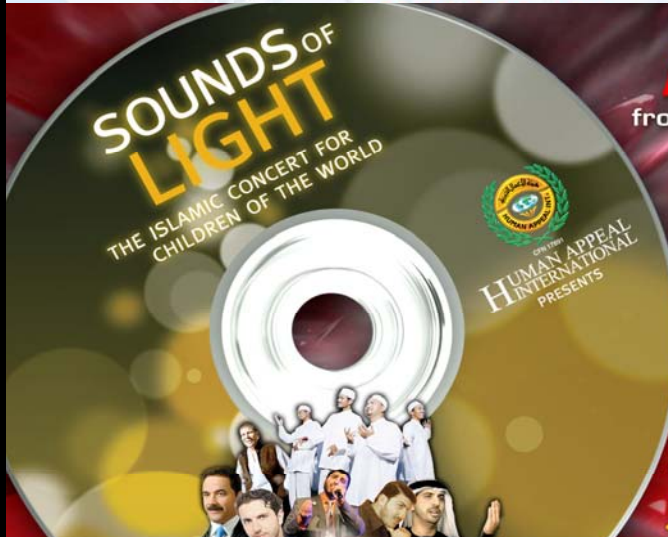
Narrated by Ahmed

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The Prophet's Ramadan Khutbah

The following khutbah was delivered by Prophet Muhammad (S) on the eve of Ramadan. It is short, but concise; informative and educational. It provides instructional models for Muslims to follow and practice in their daily lives; especially during the month of Ramadan. Due to its importance and because it was delivered by the Prophet Muhammad (S) himself on a notable occasion, the meaning of the khutbah was translated and included for all of us to develop a greater understanding behind the true meaning of Ramadan.

It was narrated by Salman the Persian (may Allah be pleased with him) that, the Messenger of Allah (S) delivered a khutbah on the last day of Sha'ban (on the eve of Ramadan). The Prophet (S) said:

"O you people! A great and a blessed month has arrived for you. A month therein a night which is better than one thousand months. The fasting during this month is an obligation (Fareedah), and the extra prayers during its nights are voluntary. Anyone who comes closer to Allah through a good deed during this month is as if he performed an obligatory duty (Fareedah) during times other than Ramadan, and he who fulfils an obligatory duty in it will be like one who fulfils seventy obligatory duties in another month. It is the month of patience, and, the reward of patience is Paradise. It is the month of visiting the poor, the sick and the needy so as to share their sorrows. It is the month where the nourishment, the sustenance and the income of the believing Muslim increase and they are blessed."

"Anyone who invites others to break their fast at Iftar will be provided with forgiveness of his sins and be saved from hell, and will receive rewards equal to the fasting person without reducing his own rewards in any respect."

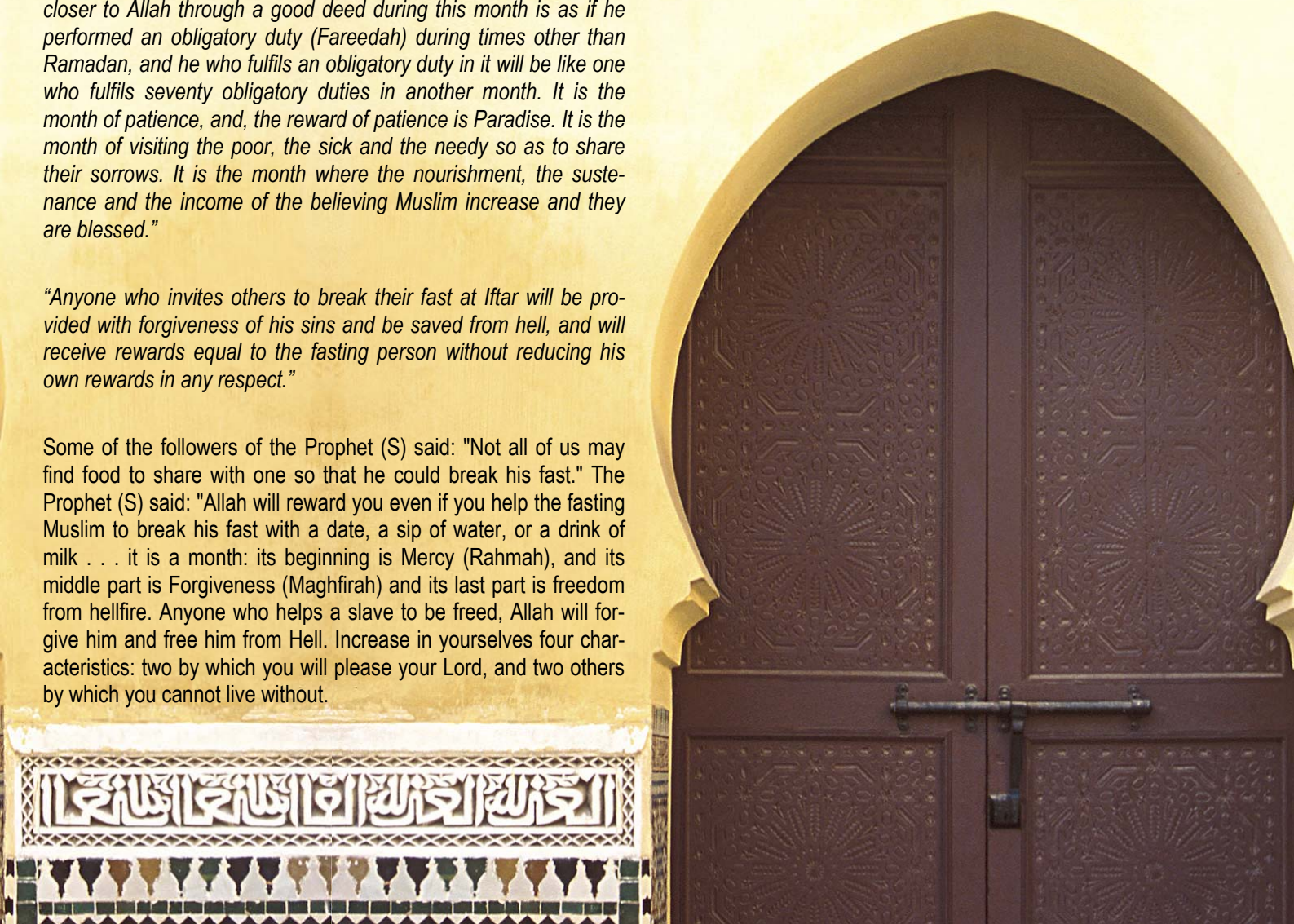
Some of the followers of the Prophet (S) said: "Not all of us may find food to share with one so that he could break his fast." The Prophet (S) said: "Allah will reward you even if you help the fasting Muslim to break his fast with a date, a sip of water, or a drink of milk . . . it is a month: its beginning is Mercy (Rahmah), and its middle part is Forgiveness (Maghfirah) and its last part is freedom from hellfire. Anyone who helps a slave to be freed, Allah will forgive him and free him from Hell. Increase in yourselves four characteristics: two by which you will please your Lord, and two others by which you cannot live without.

The first two qualities to please Allah are to bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah, and to ask forgiveness from Allah. However, the other two things that you cannot live without are: to ask Allah for Paradise, and to ask Him to protect you from Hellfire.

Anyone who gives water to a Muslim at Iftar, Allah will give him water during the Day of Judgment from the fountain of the Prophet Muhammad (S) which will make him not feel thirsty till he enters Paradise."

Dear brothers and sisters in Islam, by bringing this khutbah to your attention, we hope and pray to Almighty Allah that we will benefit from it and we will act according to the teachings of Muhammad (S). May Allah help us to live and follow this example so that Allah and His Messenger will be pleased with us all.

Ameen.



اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى نَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

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wake up with the message...

Sunrise

The earth rotated around the sun for a whole lunar year, four seasons came and went, hour after hour, day after day until finally the first sunrise of the beautiful month of Ramadan arrived.

Sifting through the volumes of books on this noble month, it doesn't take long to realise why so many people- every man, woman and child goes along performing their daily chores with an extra stride in their pace, with a special gleam in their eyes.

As the anticipation of this month draws near and finally enters, you can't but help to be overtaken by the hype and excitement that surrounds this month. This month, with its elegant days and fragrant nights, the month where the mosques are full night after night with its inhabitants all seeking, all asking, all pleading for the same thing- the mercy and forgiveness of Allah (swt).

One might often find themselves asking, what distinguishes Ramadan? What makes it so special from any other month? And most importantly, how must we prepare to receive our annual guest?

Ramadan is that time of year where we return to that silent introspection and recharge our spiritual batteries. Abu Huraira (R) reported the Prophet (S) saying: "The time between the five prayers, two consecutive Friday prayers, and two consecutive Ramadan's are expiations for all that has happened during that period, provided that one has avoided the grave sins" (Muslim).

So the following issue of The Message Magazine is intended to be your own personal T.V guide to Ramadan. Switch off your television sets at home and tune into the daily recitation and study of the Quran, Dhikrullah (Remembrance of Allah), the Night Prayers and other good deeds. Remember, Ramadan is not a time for sleeping in or engaging in idle talk but rather, utilising every moment of this month in our readiness to reap its treasures and rewards.

I leave you to delve into our latest issue of 'The Message'. Keep it on your coffee table at home this Ramadan as your monthly guide. Flick through it whenever you have the desire to turn on the television and stay in tune with what Ramadan has to offer.

Finally, I pray to Allah (SwT) that He gives us all the opportunity to renew our relationship with Him that may have been broken throughout the year and that by the month's end, we are spiritually recharged, having attained an increase in faith, feeling a closeness to our Creator.

Your brother in Islam,
Mohammed Adra

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Your Television GUIDE

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FOUR/CORNERS

Welcome to our Q and A segment, where 4 Corners meets the Sheikh's corner. The Message Team collated some of the questions that are most relevant to you, and asked Sheikh Shady to enlighten us with some answers.

Can you use mouth wash during Ramadan if you are at work so you don't offend people with your breath?

If you can guarantee that you will not swallow anything from the mouth wash or that nothing will pass down the throat, then it is ok to use whilst you are fasting. However, if you cannot guarantee this, then you must abstain from it. If you still use the mouthwash despite the fact that you cannot guarantee it will pass down your throat, and end up swallowing some liquid (by mistake intentionally or unintentionally), then you would have broken your fast and committed a sin, and Allah Knows better.

Besides Praying and reading Quran, what other activities are recommended to do during Ramadan?

Remembering Allah (SwT), seeking knowledge, listening to Islamic lectures, engaging in Da'wah (calling in the path of Allah), memorising some verses from the Quran, and doing I'tikaaf in the last ten days of Ramadan, and Allah Knows better.

Are you permitted to use nicotine patches when fasting?

Yes you can use it whilst you are fasting, because nothing is entering the body from the body cavities, and/or entering into the stomach, and Allah Knows better.

If I have my period before Maghrib time, do I break my fast?

Your fast is automatically broken, because purity is a condition for the validity of fasting, and you need to make up for that day, keeping in mind that you have obtained the rewards for that day you attempted to fast, and Allah Knows better.

If I thought it was time for Iftar, but I unintentionally broke my fast before Maghrib by a few minutes and then found out later it was early, do I need to make up for this day?

If you thought it was Maghrib and you broke your fast based on that, then later you found out that you broke your fast before Maghrib, then you need to make up your fast for that day (with no sin recorded). If you are not sure or didn't know that you broke your fast earlier than its actual time, then you don't have to make it up, and Allah Knows better.

On a final note, The Message Team would like to kindly ask those who attend the Fajr prayer at Mosques and Masjids to please bear in mind the residents of the communities in which these places of worship are located. We were lucky to come across one lovely resident in Lakemba during Clean Up Australia Day this year who was astounded to see the contributions Muslims were making to the community. However she did mention that sleeping in Ramadan was a difficult task indeed. Brothers and Sisters slamming their car doors as they hurried for the prayer at 5:00am was creating a slight disturbance- not only for the Non- Muslims in the area but also for those who choose to pray in their homes. Ramadan is the best time to correct our behaviour so let's consciously make an effort to change people's opinions about us as individuals and as a community.



On the Day of Reckoning

Being a typical guy, a few days before Ramadan started, I decided to do something I rarely do... I jumped on the scales and weighed myself. To my surprise, I had actually lost over three kilos. However, I can assure you from now that my article is not going to be about how to lose weight during Ramadan (believe me, I would be the last one you would want to ask) but rather, not being the biggest loser of a different kind.

Allah (SwT) asks us a question of great importance in the Quran where He states: "Shall We tell you the greatest loser in respect of (their) deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds" (18:103-104).

Picture this scenario for a minute: after spending countless years offering the prayer, fast, spending in charity and doing the list of good deeds that goes on and on, to be finally told that all these actions have nothing to stand on, that all your deeds were not accepted but on the contrary, rejected. Imagine the anguish, the distraught, the frantic panic of being told such news. It will be at this very point that the person will come to the realisation that he has been voted out as being the biggest loser.

So I'm sure by now you're thinking, how can I NOT be one of these losers on the day we stand in front of our Lord to be brought to account for our actions. So what can we actually do to avoid being the biggest loser on the day of reckoning? The Prophet (S) taught us that for our actions to be accepted, we need to comply with two conditions:

1. A sincere intention performed totally for Allah's sake without any showing off or to gain praise or fame.

2. Our actions need to fall in accordance with the Sunnah and actions of the Prophet (S)

We are all familiar with the famous saying of the Prophet (S) who stated: "Actions are judged by intentions". However, did you know that one of the first three people who will enter the hell fire will be a man who died fighting in jihad on the battlefield, a man who memorised the entire Quran and a man who gave away his wealth in charity?

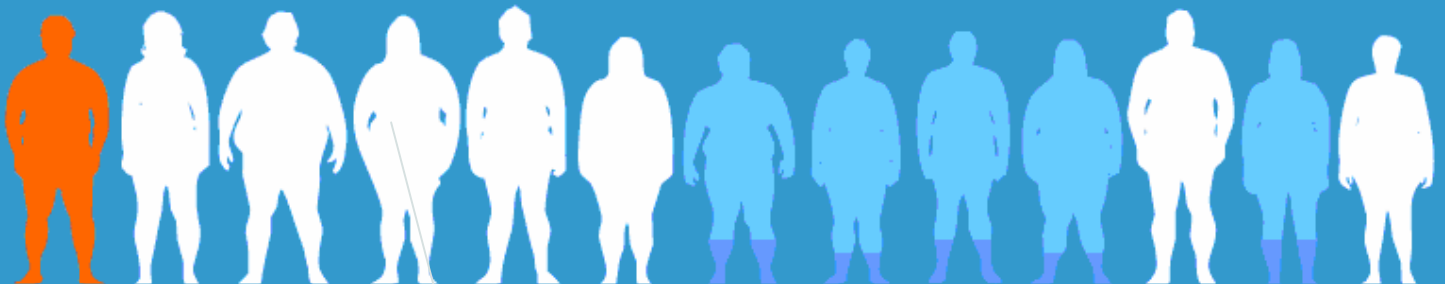
Why would these three noble acts be punished with hell fire? We can answer this question with one word: intention. All three men performed these acts for some worldly benefit whether it be to show off, gain fame or to be remembered for their courage and as such bought themselves the label of 'the biggest loser'.

I leave with a saying of Sahl Ibn Abdallah who once said: "Nothing is more difficult on a person than sincerity because the person gains no more share of the act?" I ask Allah (SwT) to seek His forgiveness from which I claimed I desired your Face, but my heart became corrupted with that which I did.

Your brother in Islam,

Mohammed Adra

Do you have any thoughts or comments? If so, email us at: magazine@uma.org.au or visit our website at: www.messagemagazine.com.au



Could you be the Biggest Loser?

Better Homes and Fences

Recently I witnessed an incident of a man who lost his cool. The issue was quite simple. If he had had just a little bit of patience, he could have gracefully solved the problem. Instead, he snapped and made the situation worse than it actually was. As one of the unwilling spectators, I shied away and left the place, wanting not to watch the display of anger anymore.

As I was walking, I kept on thinking. Why must we keep losing our temper? I know this man is not unique. I had a fair share of losing my cool too. Millions of us are just like him at times, right? What can we say? We are just human!

OK, I know that is the usual excuse whenever we make any mistakes. But seriously, no matter how true that statement is, I think there is an extension to that answer. There should be a "but" after the word human. I am only human. That is definitely right. But it should be continued with "but I am a Muslim." Yes, the full sentence should be "I am only human but I am a Muslim."

So what is the significance of that statement? A whole lot, my brothers and sisters. A whole lot. Reflect on this Qur'anic verse:

[Those who spend (freely), whether in

prosperity or in adversity; who restrain anger and pardon people; for Allah loves those who do good.] (Aal `Imran 3:134)

For one, Allah would love us, and we would be considered good-doers. Isn't that wonderful? It costs us nothing. No money or time is involved. Everyone could participate: rich and poor, men and women. Allah gave equal opportunity for everyone to earn His love. What we need to do is to simply control our anger and forgive people who wronged us. Isn't He the Most Kind? There is still more; Another verse tells us that showing patience and forgiving others are strongly recommended by Allah (Ash-Shura 42:43).

Subhan Allah! I was so taken aback with the word "recommended." It made me think further. Say I wanted to eat in a fancy restaurant and I read a recommendation by a food critique:

1. Restaurant A: Highly recommended, cosy place, delicious food, rightly priced.
2. Restaurant B: Not recommended, stuffy place, food slightly better than airline food, expensive.

Now, I ask myself, which restaurant would I rather go to? A or



B? Don't you think I would be foolish if I decided to go to Restaurant B knowing the recommendation of the food expert?

Abu Huraira reported that a man said to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) "Advise me." He said, **"Do not get angry."** The man repeated his request several times and the Prophet kept on saying, **"Do not get angry"** (Al-Bukhari).

It is very clear. The advice is not to get angry. Not once, twice, but three times it was repeated by our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

As I was reading further, I found that Allah has promised me something if I followed His instruction to be patient:

(Verily he who fears Allah and endures affliction), then Allah leaves not the reward of well-doers to waste.) (Yusuf 12:90)

A reward? This is great! Not only will I receive His love if I follow His Prophet's advice, but I am also going to be rewarded? No wonder one of His names is the Most Kind. Indeed He is.

Let me share with you a story I once read about a boy who had anger problems:

There was a boy who was always losing his temper. His father gave him a bag full of nails and said to him, "My son, I want you to hammer a nail into our garden fence every time you need to direct your anger against something and you lose your temper."

So the son started to follow his father's advice. On the first day, he hammered in 37 nails, but getting the nails into the fence was not easy, so he tried to control himself when he got angry. As the days went by, he was hammering in fewer nails; and

within weeks, he was able to control himself and to refrain from getting angry and from hammering nails. He came to his father and told him what he had achieved. His father was happy with his son's efforts and said to him, "But now, my son, you have to take out a nail for every day that you do not get angry."

The son started to take out the nails for each day that he did not get angry, until there were no nails left in the fence. He came to his father and told him what he had achieved. His father took him to the fence and said, "My son, you have done well, but look at these holes in the fence. This fence will never be the same again." Then he added, "When you say things in a state of anger, they leave marks like these holes on the hearts of others. You can stab a person and withdraw the knife but it doesn't matter how many times you say 'I am sorry,' because the wound will remain."

Deep, don't you think? After reading this story, I kept asking myself: Have I made any holes in the hearts of people around me? How long have the holes been there? How many fences have I hammered nails into? My heart felt so sad just thinking of it.

What about you, my friends? Do you think you have hammered some nails into someone's fence? If you did, maybe it is time to buy them a new fence, or maybe get plaster or cement and cover those holes. I know I am going to. And more important is that I promised myself that from now on I would leave my hammer and nails locked up in the store room where I could not reach them so that I could avoid the temptation of using them. Want to lock yours up with mine? I still have lots of empty space!

Adapted from: www.islamonline.net



Dear Diary:

Well you may think I'm weird talking to a paper but I've decided to do something different this Ramadan. My friend Fatima says that every Ramadan she aims to learn something new and gain a new experience. So I'm going to do the same and I will keep a diary to record the spectacular event of me learning something new! Exciting, isn't it?!

Anyway, this first entry has to be short and sweet because I'm off with my family to our annual Ramadan picnic – that's where we all get to stuff ourselves silly before fasting begins!! See you (don't tell anyone that I'm keeping a diary – how embarrassing!).

RAMADAN 2007

Day 2

Wow! These past two days have been very busy. Yesterday was the first day of fasting and it was so hard! I always find the first and last day of Ramadan the most difficult. It seems like the day stretches on forever. I'm always so happy to hear the radio presenter's voice telling the listeners that it's time for iftaar!

We broke our fast at my mum's house yesterday. There was so much food. Too much, in fact. We spent half the day cooking. I come from a Lebanese background so mum's always insisted on a variety of food for iftaar. We have to have a soup, fried potatoes, a salad, some macaroni with yoghurt, then the main meal or two or three!!

Today I was thinking about why we do this. We had so many leftovers after our meal that I felt guilty. I hate to admit it but some of that food eventually gets thrown out. Here we are with all this food that we can't eat and so many others have to struggle to put to gather a meal. I read today that we're supposed to learn self-restraint during fasting. We can do it no problem during the day, but when iftaar comes round we forget all about this and overdo it with the amount of food we make!

Well this year one of my goals for Ramadan is to cut down on food. I'll have to speak to mum about it too. Here's a list of some of my other goals:

1. Wake up for Suhur every day.
2. Read Quran everyday and try to read most of it by the end of the month.
3. Eat less food!
4. Learn something new.
5. Pray Taraweeh.

Hopefully I'll achieve most of these goals. See you or talk to you or ... whatever!

Day 7

Guess what? I've been waking up for Suhur for the past few days and I've even had something to eat! Each year I usually skip this meal and only wake up a few times throughout the month. I feel quite proud of myself and I hope I have the willpower to keep this up for the rest of Ramadan. Even though I feel like a zombie in the morning, I actually feel quite good inside. I'm doing something good for myself – I get to read Quran and pray Fajr and I don't usually do that.

Day 10

I can't believe that ten days have passed already. That's one third of Ramadan that has passed. I wonder if I've gained as many hasanat that I could have in these first few days. There are only 20 days left until Eid. I hate to admit it but at the beginning of Ramadan I was actually mentally counting down the days until Eid. Now I don't think I want it to end! My friend was telling me about how many hasanat we can get when fasting and how we can increase them by doing numerous things such as extra prayers and reading Quran. It's amazing just how generous Allah swt can be if only people are willing to accept this generosity. It's so easy to gain hasanat! How lucky we are to be given the opportunity to fast Ramadan. It's like Ramadan is a treas-

ure chest full of beautiful things for those who are willing to look for it.

Wow! That was very deep. My head is hurting – it's not used to me thinking so hard. I think I'll need a rest!

Day 14

Hey! Today I was invited for iftaar at my friend Fatima's house and we had such a great time. The kids really enjoyed themselves and I think they realised that Ramadan is not just about food. We started by breaking our fast with a date and some water and then prayed Maghrib straight away (I hardly ever do that). I thought that I would be thinking about food whilst praying but funnily enough I wasn't. Once the prayer was finished we ate all the yummy food my friend had prepared. I was happy to see that she hadn't overdone it! After iftaar it was a miracle to see that the men actually helped clear some of the mess away before they left for the mosque! Wow – I'm still getting over my shock!

Anyway, once the men left we were able to relax and listen to some anasheed. My kids enjoyed this part the most as they got to join in with the singing. Later we read some Quran and Fatima was able explain it to the children in simple terms. They were fascinated and didn't want to leave. I wonder why I can never get them to become so interested when I'm teaching them Quran? It must have been the fact that everyone was gathered around and that even the adults were involved too.

It was nice to see that some people don't just forget about Ramadan once they've broken their fast and that they don't turn to the telly to keep them company for the rest of the evening! I think I'll make anasheed a more regular occurrence at our house. Well, I have to go and get some sleep as I've got to prepare iftaar tomorrow for some guests. Later diary!

Day 15

Hi. Not feeling too well today. I'm exhausted and upset that my iftaar did not go to plan. I ran around like a chook with its head cut off all day and I haven't sat down until now! What upset me the most was the way my guests behaved after we finished eating. Don't get me wrong, they were very helpful in the kitchen but it was the way they were speaking of others that was not nice! They kept talking about others and bringing up their bad qualities. It gave me such a headache! This is not supposed to be happening during such a special month. I was saddened to see that these people had forgotten that fasting is not only abstaining from eating but also from bad qualities such as backbiting.

I'm sure that I have heard somewhere that we must make up 70 excuses for somebody's bad behaviour before speaking ill of them. I will have to find this hadith and maybe send it to my friends as a small hint. Do you think that is wise? Do you think it is any of my business? Would you tell somebody about a sin they have committed or would you just leave it? Look at me – I'm asking a paper questions!! It's not going to answer! Oh dear!

Day 18

Did you know that the battle of Badr took place on the 18th day of Ramadan in the year 624? (Of course you didn't know – you're just a diary! Or are you more than just a diary?? Mmmm?)

Anyway (I think fasting may be having a weird effect on me today) I thought that this was something I should write about as it just amazed me how strong willed the prophet Muhammad (S) and his men were. They were fasting, thirsty and greatly outnumbered and still managed to win the battle. SubhanAllah! It is something to envy. I fight a battle each day – I have three children and still can't get them to obey my orders!!

Day 23

Hi again. I'm really starting to feel like a zombie now but I know it's all for a good cause. I've been trying extra hard to finish the Quran and now I'm not sure if I will. I do this every year. I get caught up with work and family and day-to-day life that I end up running out of time. I'm trying to make up for it though. As you know (not really you don't – diary!) the last ten days of Ramadan are quite special. Laylat-ul-qadr will fall on one of the odd numbered nights of these ten days so I'm planning to stay up (as much as I possibly

can) for each of these odd nights. I've already started and it felt good. I prayed Taraweeh and read hadith too. I didn't stay up as long as I planned to as I was so tired but at least I tried.

Got to go now – I have to do some catch-up reading!

Day 28

Hello diary. I'm very excited that Eid is almost here but at the same time I'm going to miss Ramadan. It's such a shame that it passes so quickly. I feel like I haven't done enough. I pray to Allah (SwT) that I will live to see another Ramadan so that I get another chance of gaining rewards. Everyone is making plans about what they will do after this month ends. It seems they have forgotten Ramadan already. I'm too sad to continue.

Day 29

Everyone is talking about Eid now – when is it?? Why do we never agree on this? Did they sight the moon? Who saw it first? Did they sight it in a country halfway across the world? Should we follow their example? Is the moon round or is it square? How ridiculous for us to argue over something simple. I just wish that all Muslims in Australia would just celebrate Eid on the same day. A bit of wishful thinking I guess.

Well I'm just trying to get everything done in time for it. Seeing as I have supernatural powers, I'll be able to spring clean the house (and the children), buy new clothes for every member of the family (and please them all), bake sweets and treats, stock the fridge and cook dinner all in the space of one or two days! More wishful thinking!!

This year I'm even making lolly bags for my daughter to give her class at school. It was a great idea I found in this wonderful magazine called The Message. Have you heard of it?

Eid-ul-Fitr

We had a great day today. I managed to make it to the Eid prayer and the kids have eaten a record amount of lollies. They made so much money today that they could open up their own business! I'll make sure that they give some of it as Zakat (to me as I've gone broke).

I've made it! I survived the month of Ramadan without too much trouble and I think I even learnt a few things too (or did I?). I think I was able to achieve most of my goals and gain new experiences. I'm glad my friend encouraged me to keep a diary as it really made me reflect on myself and on the efforts I make during Ramadan. I think I will do this again next year if Allah (SwT) wills.

Ramadan and Eid Mubarak to all. I hope this month finds you in good health and prosperity. Remember to make good use of all the rewards available to you during Ramadan.

By Meyrnah
Khodr

Fatima

WHAT ABOUT

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN REPENT

Allah wishes to make things simple for you, as all mankind was created weak

(Quran: 4:28)

One very simple and extremely important yet often misunderstood sign from the Majestic Quran. Sometimes we will find our brothers and sisters focusing on the first part that Allah (Swt) wishes to make things easy for us.

How often have we heard a friend say 'Oh do this (a doubtful matter), come on! It doesn't matter because Allah (Swt) wants to make things easy for us not hard' or perhaps even thought it ourselves? Usually by focusing on this aspect of the ayah we immediately find ourselves in the very situation we are talking about now; making a poor choice and the need to seek the forgiveness of Allah (Swt) for it.

However once we find ourselves in this predicament, which ever way it may come about, we almost always forget the second part of the ayah- that all mankind was created with weaknesses which our Lord who brought us into being knows even better than we do ourselves.

So, continuing with our scenario, we reach a point where we have made a mistake and committed a sin. Immediately we are reminded that this will result in us being punished, perhaps in this life or the next, or even both. We begin to doubt that we will be forgiven and ever be able to make up for the sin so we do not repent and in doing so have fallen completely into the trap of the Shaytan.

We often become overwhelmed with negative sentiments of helplessness when reflecting upon the ayaat referring to repentance, for instance, that: 'This isn't for all mankind at all', 'Not everyone makes mistakes this bad and gets forgiven', 'Prophets never had to repent, I am doomed'. Yet these very ideas are detrimental to us as slaves and often serve no purpose besides a barrier from seeking repentance.

Let us first check the idea about the Prophets (peace be upon them). Did a Prophet ever repent? What does Allah (Swt) teach us?

And behold, Jonah was indeed one of Our mes-sage-bearers when he fled like a runaway slave onto a laden ship. And then they cast lots, and he was the one who lost; [and they cast him into the sea] whereupon the great fish swallowed him, for he had been blameworthy. And had he not been of those who [even in the deep darkness of their distress are able to] seek Allah's limitless forgiveness [through repentance], he would indeed have remained in its belly till the Day when all shall be raised from the dead. (Quran 37:139-144)

But perhaps there are some sins that are just too great? Maybe sometimes we have left the seeking of forgiveness too late? Are we correct in assuming this?

The Prophet (S) said, "Amongst the men of Bani Israel there was a man who had murdered ninety-nine persons. Then he set out asking (whether his repentance could be accepted or not). He came upon a monk and asked him if his repentance could be accepted. The monk replied in the negative and so the man killed him. He kept on asking till a man advised to go to such and such village. (So he left for it) but death overtook him on the way. While dying, he turned his chest towards that village (where he had hoped his repentance would be accepted), and so the angels of mercy and the angels of punishment quarrelled amongst themselves regarding him. Allah ordered the village (towards which he was going) to come closer to him, and ordered the village (whence he had come), to go far away, and then He ordered the angels to measure the distances between his body and the two villages. So he was found to be one span closer to the village (he was going to). So he was forgiven." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Finally we need to be sure – is repentance for all mankind? Have all humans been created with weaknesses that our Lord understands? To answer simply using the ayah we first looked at, Allah (Swt) uses the word '*al insan*', which means mankind as a whole. If repentance were not for all of us, Allah (Swt) would not tell us it is.

Indeed, Allah (Swt) reminds us further in the Quran:

"[Thus speaks God:] 'O you servants of Mine who have transgressed against your own selves! Despair not of God's mercy: behold, God forgives all sins - for, verily, He alone is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace!'" (Quran 39:53-54)

So now we have reminded ourselves that all mankind has a weakness that will result in committing sins and making mistakes and that Allah (SwT) will forgive us if we seek His mercy, no matter how late we may turn to Him. Thus we have to ensure we know exactly how to seek it.

Firstly, we must cease the sin we have committed. So if the sin was (for example only) to regularly sleep-in past Fajr, we have to start actually getting up for Fajr on time.

Secondly, we must actually dislike the sin we have committed and regret doing it. If we do not acknowledge we have actually made a mistake, we cannot properly repent for it.

Following this, we must have a firm intention not to commit the sin again. That is, we cannot have a 'secret plan' or desire to go back to the sin and repent again as we cannot keep secrets from Allah (SwT). Finally, we must return the rights that we have denied to whom we have sinned against. With the prayer example, we must make up the missed prayers or if we were (again only for example) to take a meal away from a friend, we must compensate them with another meal or a suitable monetary amount.

Indeed Allah (SwT) does want to make things easy for us by providing us with an abundance of opportunities to seek His forgiveness when we make mistakes and commit sins. He has told us that He knows our weaknesses even better than we do and that He will forgive us for those weaknesses if we simply remember Him, acknowledge our mistakes and do some simple works to make up for them. One of the most precious gifts He has bestowed upon the world is that though mankind sins again and again, Allah (SwT) will forgive us as long as we turn to him in sincere repentance. All praise is due to Allah (SwT), the Most Merciful, the Most Accepting of Repentance.

I pray that this coming Holy Month is a blessed time for all of us and that we all gain the maximum benefit from it by ensuring we approach it with as clean a slate as possible and that we recover and honour the endless bounties endowed upon us.

Your brother in Islam,

Christian Kunde



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Desperately Seeking

“O You who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for You as it was prescribed for those before you, that You may become Al-Muttaqūn (2:183).

[Observing Saum (fasts)] for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskīn (poor person) (for every day). But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for Him. And that You fast, it is better for You if Only You know (2:184).”

Allah Almighty is directing His speech to the believers (that’s you and I, brothers and sisters!) to fast, to stop eating, to refrain from drinking and encountering sexual intercourse with your partner with the sincere intention of pleasing Allah (Swt) and to get closer to Him. Just as previous nations were commanded to fast, as are we. And just as the natural order of things exists on a varied scale, people too, experience various levels of abstinence.

Stage one: Fasting of the normal and general public.

Stage two: Fasting of the special ones.

Stage three: Fasting of the exceptional ones.

The first stage includes those people who only stop eating, drinking and performing sexual acts. The second stage refers to the individuals who stop eating and drinking, as well as stop using their eyes, ears, tongues, hands and all their limbs from doing anything that displeases Allah (Swt). Also, the highest stage elevates those exceptional people who avoid everything sinful for the sake of Allah and His message. Their hearts are constantly connected to the Almighty and they see no one but Allah (Swt).

It is truly miraculous how fasting deprives the body of the means that allows it to disobey Allah (Swt), as it simultaneously weakens the desire and the whispers of the Shaytan.

The verses in Surat Al-Baqarah mention one of the goals of fasting as aiming to “attain Taqwa”. That is, to be conscious of Allah so that we may get used to the

good deeds and abstain from the evil ones in hope of getting closer (spiritually) to the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Fasting is handled by Allah alone, where Allah says in the hadith Al Qudsi “Fasting is for me and I am the one that rewards for it”. It is Allah who specifically rewards you for your fasting. And Allah says: “The patient ones will get their reward with no accounting and what a beautiful quality to learn from fasting is to be patient”.

And Allah follows on in Surat Al Baqarah:

“Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur’an, as a guide to mankind, also Clear (signs) for guidance and Judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (Should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and Perchance ye shall be grateful (2:185-186).”

Ramadan; the months that unites the ummah, which brings happiness and joy, excitement and relief! The month that Allah Has chosen for us to get back on track, repent from our sins, replenish our record of good deeds and increase our Iman.

It is the month of the Quran, the month in which the Holy Book was revealed for mankind. The month in which millions of Muslims recite the Quran and complete it so that its rewards are multiplied and the good deeds are increased.

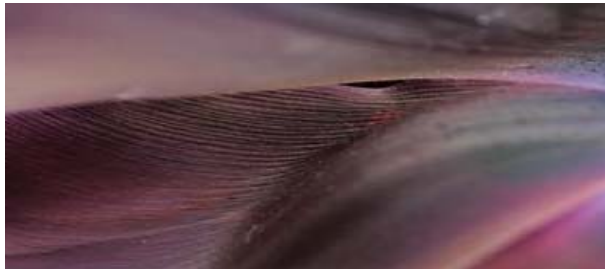
Ramadan is such a special time of the year. It is like a stranger that comes and only lives with us for thirty days and then goes away; the gold mine that we never take advantage of. Just like Friday is the best day of the week and laylat al qadr is the best night of the year and Mecca is the holiest place on earth, Ramadan is the best month of the year. This beautiful month’s splendour takes precedence over the fact that it was the month that the Noble Quran was revealed in. It is the month in which its beginning is mercy, its middle is

Knowledge

forgiveness and its end is being saved from hell fire. Let us make the most of this month as we may never know whether we will see another Ramadan.

Your brother in Islam,

Rami Al-Sharawneh



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Prison Break

Whenever we hear this title, most of us think of a program with two brothers who were locked up in prison, planning and plotting an escape due to an unfair sentence. They face many obstacles during their mission, but fortunately the leading actor also has blueprints of the jail map tattooed onto his body, which he refers to constantly during their prison break. As the story progresses, more problems arise. But one thing that remains with them and is literally imprinted onto their very existence is the tattoo which they constantly use as a guide for their ultimate mission: to break free. In light of the theme, I would like to invite you to tune into our version of the story, where different facets of the title will be addressed in light of this holy month that has dawned upon us.

Allah created everything to follow a specific order. Naturally there are several parts of a cycle that every living creature follows: birth, growth, maturity, death, and decay. These are the cycles we see in every creature, and these are our own reality as humans. We too are part of nature, and it is our task to comply with the laws of nature and nature's Lord. This is submission, what we call Islam.

As people living in this chaotic day and age, we all feel imprisoned in one way or another. We feel that we cannot afford our mortgages or rent, our iman fluctuates up and down, and we are so caught up in our daily routines, running errands that are so time consuming that we give no regard to the true calling we are supposed to submit to ever since our conception. The natural order we are supposed to live since our infancy deters from its natural course over time as we grow and integrate into society. We begin to learn how not to be ourselves but to be what our society expects of us. We lose that state of submission to our true nature, which is to submit to Allah, our Lord, our Sustainer; we begin to transgress. We learn to lie; we learn to say the opposite of what we think, feel and believe. Our state of mind is troubled, our actions are heavy and our conscience withers away. We become prisoners of this world: prisoners of this life.

We have lost our blueprints. The (temporary) tattoos imprinted onto our heart, mind and soul constantly fade, as we seldom refer to them. We have submitted to society's expectations on how to live our lives. The natural submission to Allah is clouded within us as the Qur'an quickly detaches from our hearts. As you may have realised, the Qur'an is meant to be our blueprint to life (alongside the Sunnah of Rasulallah (S), Aqeedah and the schools of thought). We need to refer to the Qur'an more to find solace and guidance to break free from this imprisonment and lead successful destinies in the Hereafter. Allah gave us this sacred book to imprint and tattoo into our hearts permanently so that we may be lead onto the straight path.

As Ramadan envelops and catches unsuspecting Muslims by surprise, the devils are shackled away due to this blessed month to give room for the servants of Allah to repent and use their time wisely.

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said,

"When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained." (Sahih Bukhari *Volume 3, Book 31, Number 123*)

In these days of great imbalance, let us use this month wisely to reconnect to the natural order of submission that surrounds us by referring back to the Qur'an, and imprinting it back into our hearts and souls forever. The barakah of this month is plentiful, with the rewards multiplied by many degrees.

May Allah allow us to die in a state of natural submission to Him, and may He preserve the Qur'an in our minds, hearts and souls, and decorate our hearts with faith and conviction. Ameen.

Ramadan Mubarak to all!

Your brother in Islam,
Hesham Mourad

Reference: <http://www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=AZ0605-2999>



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Getaway

To Hajj

Welcome to this special edition of "Getaway" ~ *Trips of a life time*. The journey we will report on today is one of epic proportions, not only physically and mentally epic, but spiritually as well: **The Journey of Hajj**

Every year the largest gathering of humanity on earth occurs in Mecca: the holy city in which the world's fastest growing religion was born....Islam. As you can see from graphs located on our website the number of pilgrims travelling to hajj has been increasing since 2001, now well over two- million followers of the Islamic faith make this spiritual voyage.

Our particular Hajj experience begins in the city of Medina, the city where the final messenger Muhammad (S) passed away and was buried. It currently has a population of more than 1,300,000 people and it ranks as the second holiest city of Islam, after Mecca, which is 210 miles north of Mecca. The Muslims refer to Medina as *Al Madinah al Munawwarah*, meaning "The Enlightened City" or "The Radiant City." Like Mecca, the city of Medina only permits Muslims to enter, although the *haram* (area closed to non-Muslims) of Medina, is much smaller than that of Mecca. Thus, many facilities on the outskirts of Medina are open to non-Muslims, whereas in Mecca the area closed to non-Muslims extends well beyond the limits of the built-up area.

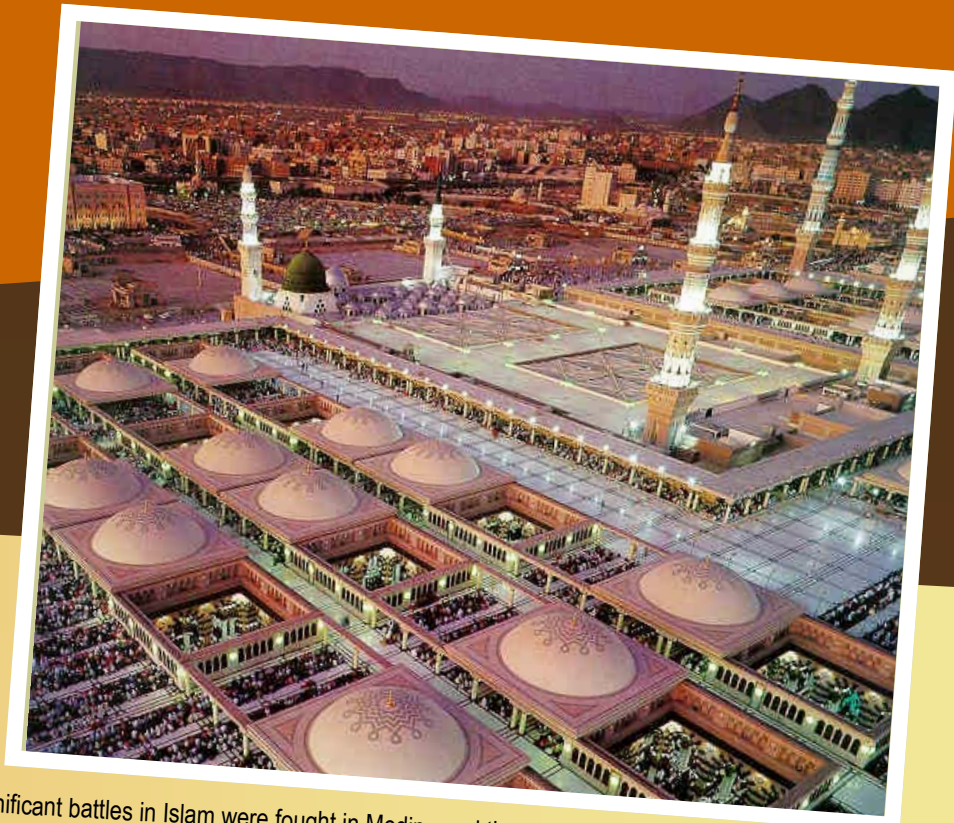
We were fortunate to have accommodation 5 minutes away from 'Masjid-al-Nabawi' or 'The Mosque of The Prophet'. The Mosque was built on a site adjacent to Muhammad's (S) home and since Muslims believe that Prophets must be buried at the very place of their death, accordingly, Muhammad was buried in his house. The tomb later became part of the mosque when it was expanded by the Umayyad Caliph Al-Walid I. The first time you see this mosque is truly an experience you will remember for the rest of your life. As you walk along the side of thousands of people from various countries around the world, you slowly start to realise how special this city is.

The mosque itself is glorious. Tiles which are heated at night and cooled during the day surround the interior and exterior of the house of worship, the large lighting fixtures and entry doors are gold plated and extremely well maintained by the hundreds of full time cleaners solely dedicated to meticulously guard the cleanliness of the Prophet's mosque. Once inside I became overwhelmed by a sense satisfaction, I couldn't believe I was actually there! There is a small Quran museum of sorts located within the Prophet's Mosque- it can be tricky to find but ask around, as it's well worth your time.

In retrospect, one of the highlights of my Hajj trip was praying the **Shurooq** prayer on the roof of this mosque, I still find myself constantly reminiscing about that moment in an attempt to emulate the same level of **Khoshoo'** that I had praying in Medina... I have been unable to attain that level of concentration in prayer since coming back to my beloved home in Australia. The one thing that I always found amazing about Masjid-Al-Nabawi is that the building itself constantly looked like it was a different shade of color depending on the time of day, where photographs and video footage cannot capture this unique effect; it must be viewed in person.

Furthermore, our Hajj package had us staying in a four and a half star hotel in Medina which included an all you can eat breakfast buffet, and a big breakfast is very important because at Hajj your days are long and your nights are short. There is so much to do and so many rewards to earn, that you don't want to miss out by sleeping in! Even though I strongly recommend you spend most of your time in the mosque praying or reading Quran, I cannot help but point out that the shopping in Medina is fantastic!

First of all the currency conversion is phenomenal, one Australian dollar will convert to 3.08 Saudi Riyals, which equates to a lot of quality Islamic merchandise, at great value such as Islamic books / texts, Islamic DVDs & CDs from world renown Islamic authorities/lecturers and a wide range of Head scarfs, and abayas and much, much more.



Some of the most historically significant battles in Islam were fought in Medina and these sites can still be visited today. Your Hajj group will probably take you on a brief tour of such locations where the battles of Badr , Uhud and the battle of the "trench" took place. As you hear the re-creation of these battles, and realise you are standing on the very grounds on which hundreds of Martyrs died for Islam, it sends a shiver up your spine, perhaps even bring a tear to your eye. Our time in Medina had sadly come to an end; however we were extremely excited to be headed towards Mecca!!

Mecca has a population of 1,294,167 (2004 census). The city is revered by Muslims for containing the holiest site of Islam, the Masjid al-Haram, where the Kabaa is located. It was at this point in our journey where the spiritual aspect of Hajj excelled, we were in a state of Ihram on a bus traveling from Medina to Mecca, it was 3am and we were heading to the Kabaa to start our Umrah rites. As I walked through the doors of the Masjid al-Haram, my group leader took my hand and led me towards the Kabaa, I was instructed to look at the floor and only look up when he instructed me to. He did this because he wanted me to be up-close before I looked at the first house of worship ...It's pointless for me to attempt to describe what it felt like to gaze upon the Kabaa for the first time. I will say that the sensation of that moment is worth a lot more than the ticket of the entire trip.

In addition to the Kabaa there are other Islamic sites I recommend you visit such as: The birthplace of the final messenger Muhammad (S), Cave of Hira', various locations where revelations were sent down, and Prominent mosques. The city of Mecca is a special place and Hajj is an experience like no other. Throughout the process of Hajj, you will be systematically stripped of status, luxury and energy. You will come to the realisation as I did, that only your Iman and steadfastness will enable you to make the most of this journey.

"You shall certainly be tried and tested in your wealth and properties and in your personal selves..... but if you persevere patiently, and become Al-Muttaqun (the pious) then verily, that will be a determining factor in all affairs."
 (The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 186)

I whole-heartedly implore all Muslims who are able, to complete their Hajj obligation. This voyage exceeded all my expectations and reaffirmed my commitment and belief in Allah and his chosen religion of Islam. Yes, you will experience hardship, you will laugh, you will cry, you will forge friendships for life, however the reward my brothers and sisters is the only reward worth struggling for...
"The reward of Hajj is nothing but paradise". Prophet Muhammad (S)

Al-Bukhari : Vol. III :1

May Allah grant you the opportunity to complete Hajj. May Allah help you make the most of your Hajj. May Allah accept your Hajj.

Your brother in Islam,
 Ronnie Mikati

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As we fast for most of the day, we should eat slow digesting foods so we have a consistent amount of energy throughout the day. Slow digesting foods last up to 8 hours, while fast-digesting foods last for only 3 to 4 hours. Slow-digesting foods are foods that contain grains and seeds like barley, wheat, oats, millet, semolina, beans, lentils, whole meal flour, and unpolished rice (called complex carbohydrates).

Fast-burning foods are foods that contain sugar and white flour (called refined carbohydrates). Foods that contain fibre include bran, whole wheat, grains and seeds, vegetables like green beans, peas, spinach, and the leaves of beetroot (iron-rich), fruit with skin, dried fruit, especially dried apricots, figs, prunes and almonds.

The foods eaten should be well-balanced, containing foods from each food group, i.e. fruits, vegetables, meat/chicken/fish, bread/cereals and dairy products. Fried foods are unhealthy and should be limited. They cause indigestion, heart-burn, and weight problems.

Foods to Avoid

Fried and fatty food, Foods containing too much sugar, Too much tea or coffee during the Suhur as caffeine makes you pass more urine taking with it valuable mineral salts that your body needs during the day, and also smoking cigarettes - if you cannot give up smoking, cut down gradually starting a few weeks before Ramadan.

Foods to Eat

Complex carbohydrates during Suhur so that the food lasts longer making you less hungry, dates are an excellent source of sugar, fibre, carbohydrates, potassium and magnesium, almonds are rich in protein and fibre with less fat and bananas are a good source of potassium, magnesium and carbohydrates.

Drink

Drink as much water or fruit juices as possible between Iftar and bedtime so that your body may adjust fluid levels in time. Don't forget Ramadan is not about food! Make the most of this blessed month – make a habit of walking to the Mosque for Salat ul Isha and Taraweeh every day and keep the habit of attending Fajr and Isha at the Mosque even after Ramadan.

How much to eat during Suhur

During Suhur, many people tend to over-eat to the extent that they can do nothing but sleep. There are Hadith about how much the Prophet (S) used to eat; most of the time he used to take one sip of water and eat one date! It is recommended however to eat until you no longer feel hungry; not until your stomach is full. It is encouraged to eat low GI (glycemic index) foods, such as beans and lentils as they take a longer time for the body to process, so that a slow and sustained amount of energy is released to the body over the day. Remember to drink plenty of water at Suhur!

Iftar

Another common practice amongst Muslims is to over-eat during Iftar. This is not advised as eating a large amount of food can overload your body. There is a Hadith that states that the Prophet's (S) stomach never exceeded his chest, which means that he never ate excessive amounts of food. It is highly advisable to break the fast with an odd number of dates and drink a few sips of water whilst the Athan is being recited. Then you should pray Salat ul Maghrib and sit again and continue the Iftar. The logic behind this is that instead of putting the digestive system under excessive pressure by eating a lot in a short period of time, you should slowly start the digestive system with something small. This reduces the chance of feeling bloated after Iftar.

The Late night Cultural Habits

There are generally many Muslims who think that eating is the way to go to stay well during Ramadan. People often continue eating even though their stomach is full! Often our friends and relatives keep encouraging us to continue eating, but we must be mindful that Ramadan is an excellent opportunity to gain faith, not weight!

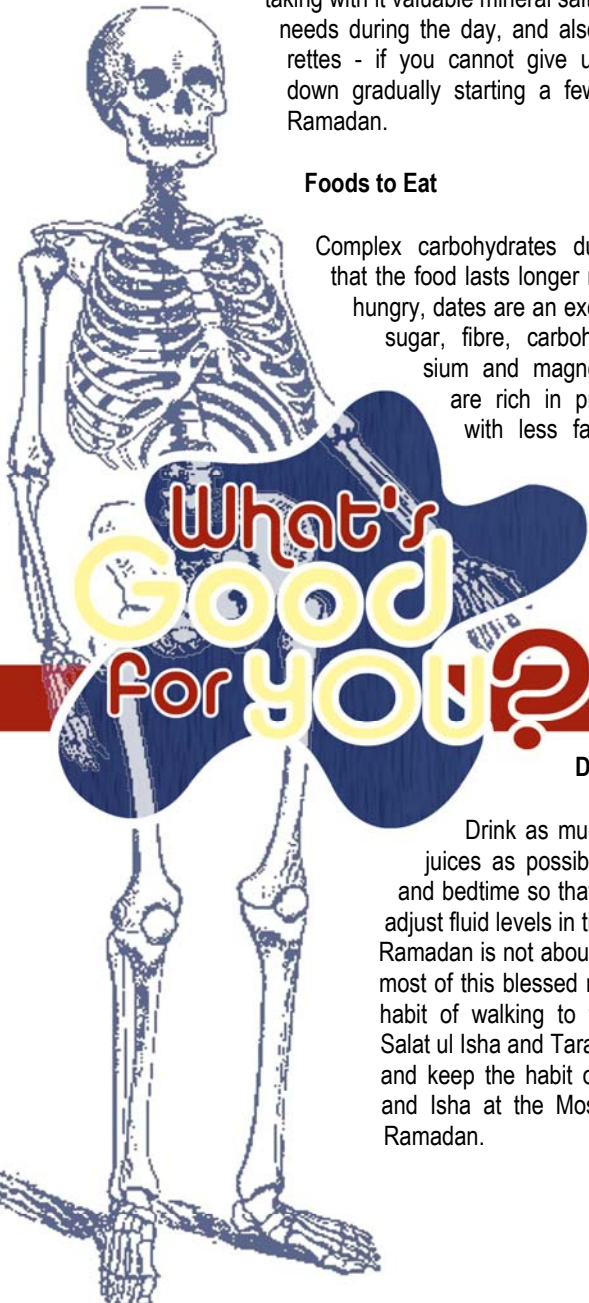
Negative effect

The main negative effect of over-eating is gaining weight which leads to many other health problems. Another negative effect is that we eat so much during Iftar that it becomes terribly difficult to concentrate when praying Salat ul Taraweeh. Many people even continue eating after returning home from Taraweeh which makes waking up and taking something to eat at Suhur (as in the Sunnah) impossible.

Solution

The Prophet (S) said, "We don't have to eat unless we feel hungry. And when we eat, we should not fill our stomach. He (S) recommended for us to follow that and if we were unable to, to imagine dividing our stomach into thirds: one third for food, one third for drink and one third for air. Another Hadith mentions "The food of two people is sufficient for three, and the food of three is sufficient for four."

Adapted from
www.ramadan.com.au



Despite the title of this article and the traditional rules of the game, I won't be asking anyone to select a case from the podium nor will I be asking anyone to take a chance on the banker. What I concern myself with today is of a deal of a different kind. Recently, I was introduced to a story that involved the dealings of trade and business in the Islamic community. The events that unfolded were as follows...

(Phone rings)

As Salamu Alaikum.

Wa Alaikum Assalam.

Is this Brother Bilal?

Yes it is. How can I help you?

My name is Ahmad. I got your number from a brother at the mosque who told me that you provide a tutoring service. Is that right?

Yes it is.

Great! I have a child that needs urgent tutoring because he has a science examination in a few weeks. Will you be able to help us? I know its short notice but I have heard a few other people recommend your service and I would really appreciate it if you could help.

(There is a short pause)...Okay, I can squeeze you in for a session this afternoon at 4:30. How does that sound?

Alhamdulillah! Thank you so much Brother Bilal. Inshallah we will see you this afternoon. Your fee is \$45 for every session is that right?

That's right Ahmad. I look forward to seeing both you and your son at 4:30.

Inshallah.

(It is now 5.30 and the session is over. Brother Ahmad extends his hand to Brother Bilal and hands over \$35. At this point, Brother Bilal is feeling a little awkward and

kindly says to Brother Ahmad...)

Brother I thought I was clear during our phone conversation that the prescribed fee was \$45.

Well yes, but everyone else charges \$35.

You need to understand Ahmad that I have just established my business and I provide a professional service. This is how much I need to cover my costs.

(Brother Ahmad begins flailing his arms in the air)

Alright, alright! Here's the rest of the money!

(Needless to say, the brothers did not end on a positive note and sadly, the issue did not end that day)

The next day Brother Bilal receives a somewhat disturbing phone call. The man on the other end was negotiating the price of brother Bilal's tutoring sessions and arguing that he should decrease his fee. Bilal tried to explain that he could not do this given the quality of the service he was providing and insisted the fee be kept at its original price. Bilal felt something was not right. There was laughter on the other end of the phone every time he finished speaking. It was then that he learned that the man on the other end of the conversation was actually in a gathering at the mosque and had asked other brothers to listen in on their conversation. It seems the incident with Brother Ahmad the day before had triggered a rather unpleasant reaction.

It saddens me to say that the conversation ended with the man threatening to tell the brothers in the gathering as well as other brothers in the community to refrain from using Brother Bilal's service. What's even more distressing is that this is a true story that has been circulating in the Muslim community and the above events took place less than two months ago!

What had disappointed me the most was the lack of encouragement this brother was receiving. Instead of praising his efforts, he was met with opposition and disapproval and all because of \$10! No one had taken into consideration the costs required to establish his business nor did they care about the family he was support-

TRADE IN ISLAM

DEAL OR NO DEAL

HOSTED BY MANAL MIKATI

ing. This individual has every right to charge whatever he wishes and all brother Ahmad had to do was say, "No thank you. I think it's a little out of my price range." But the lengths that Ahmad had gone to shame brother Bilal is what makes this story so upsetting.

On hearing this story I was outraged and it prompted me to post an online poll for the following question:

"Would you stop purchasing a good or service from a Muslim brother or sister if they were slightly more expensive than a Non-Muslim competitor, or would you continue supporting their business despite the price?"

The wording of the question was not meant to determine whether Muslims would prefer dealing with Non-Muslims. Instead it was intended to establish people's opinions on Muslim businesses. I would like to thank everyone who participated and took the time out to share their views on the matter. I was quite surprised with the results myself and I am sure you will be too.

Yes- I would stop buying from a Muslim Brother or Sister = 33.3%
No- I would not stop buying from a Muslim Brother or Sister= 66.7%

Here are some of your comments:

Sister Ameena stated that, "If it were "slightly more expensive" than the Non-Muslim competitor, I would still buy from the Muslim brother/sister. I'd feel better supporting them (morally)." Similar responses raised the point that the extra bit of money they pay for services conducted by Muslims may be given back to charity eventually, and therefore they felt it more appropriate to deal with Muslim businesses. However one brother raised a good point stating that at times he felt some Muslims charge a ridiculous amount more than their competitors, because they know loyal Muslims customers will continue to come back to them. "I believe this to be an abusive use of our religion, And contradictory to Islam as a whole," he continued. <http://www.messagemagazine.com.au/forums/showthread.php?t=171>)

One sister managed to sum things up beautifully with this statement: "...I would be happy to support anyone who has their whole heart in their business, Muslim or not..." (Sister Hebah). This is precisely the attitude we all need to acquire. The fact that one man set out to stand on his own two feet and establish himself in an already competitive market only to be abandoned and mistreated by his fellow brothers as they laughed at him while they sat in the house of Allah, is a disheartening story indeed.

Before being appointed his Prophet hood, our Rasul (S) was himself a businessman. And it was his honesty and hard work which later won the heart of his employer, Khadijah (RA). In His glorious book, Allah has stated: *O ye who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: But let there be amongst you Traffic and trade by mutual good-will: Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah hath been to you Most Merciful! (4:29).*

As another month of Ramadan dawns on us, please open your hearts to those around you and support those businesses in the community who strive to serve you. As your thirst increases and hunger overtakes you, be patient and hold your tongue. And if you can not manage to utter the words, 'please' and 'thank you,' then try to force a smile, since the Prophet (S) said: "Your smile for your brother is charity... and to act justly between two people is a charity." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Insha' Allah you will enjoy the rest of this great issue as I thank the rest of the Message Team who have poured their hearts and souls into this magazine for five fantastic years, ensuring they provide a quality product for the community. I look forward to Inshallah seeing all our readers for Salat al-Eid bright and early on Eid ul-Fitr.

Your sister in Islam,
Manal Mikati

† Pseudonyms have been used

So what do you think? Email your comments and/or suggestions to: magazine@uma.org.au or visit our website: www.messagemagazine.com.au



Amusements

Find the attributes of a Muslim in Ramadan...

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

- Al Qadr
- Charitable
- Eid
- Fasting
- Forgiveness
- Humble
- Manners
- Patience
- Pious
- Quran
- Ramadan
- Revelation
- Seclusion
- Taqwa
- Willpower

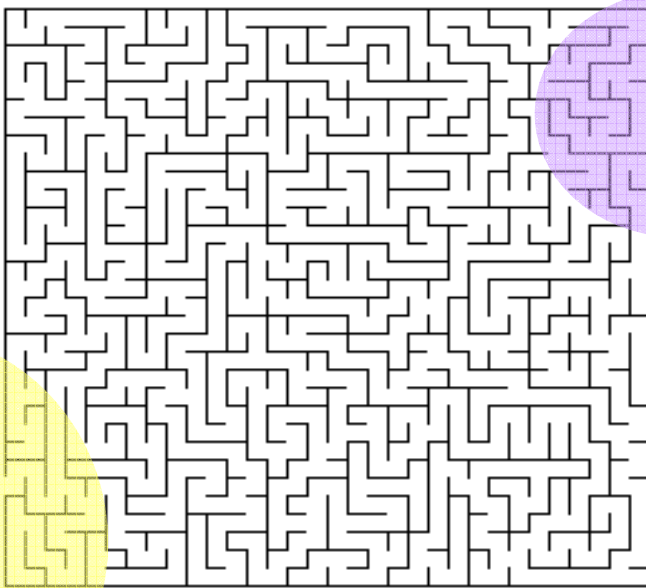
Spot The Difference

Spot the five differences

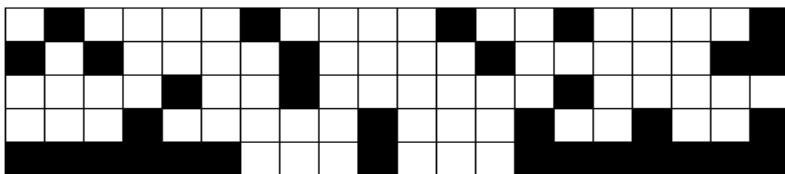


1: Extra leaf on tree. 2: One bird is missing. 3: Handle missing from bin. 4: Rake has changed. 5: Pile of leaves is bigger.

Take the ultimate maze challenge



Fallen Phrase: Ayah from the Holy Quran



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

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

SUDOKU

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

Our last issue for this year (Dec '07) will be a 'Best Of' issue, celebrating the magazine's

FIFTH YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

We want you to have your say by logging onto our website at www.messagemagazine.com.au and voting for your favourite articles from the last five years. Can't remember any of the titles? Easy, just download any of our past issues and refresh your memory. It's that simple! We're waiting to hear from you so what are you waiting for? (poll closes Friday 2nd November, 2007)

Tuscany

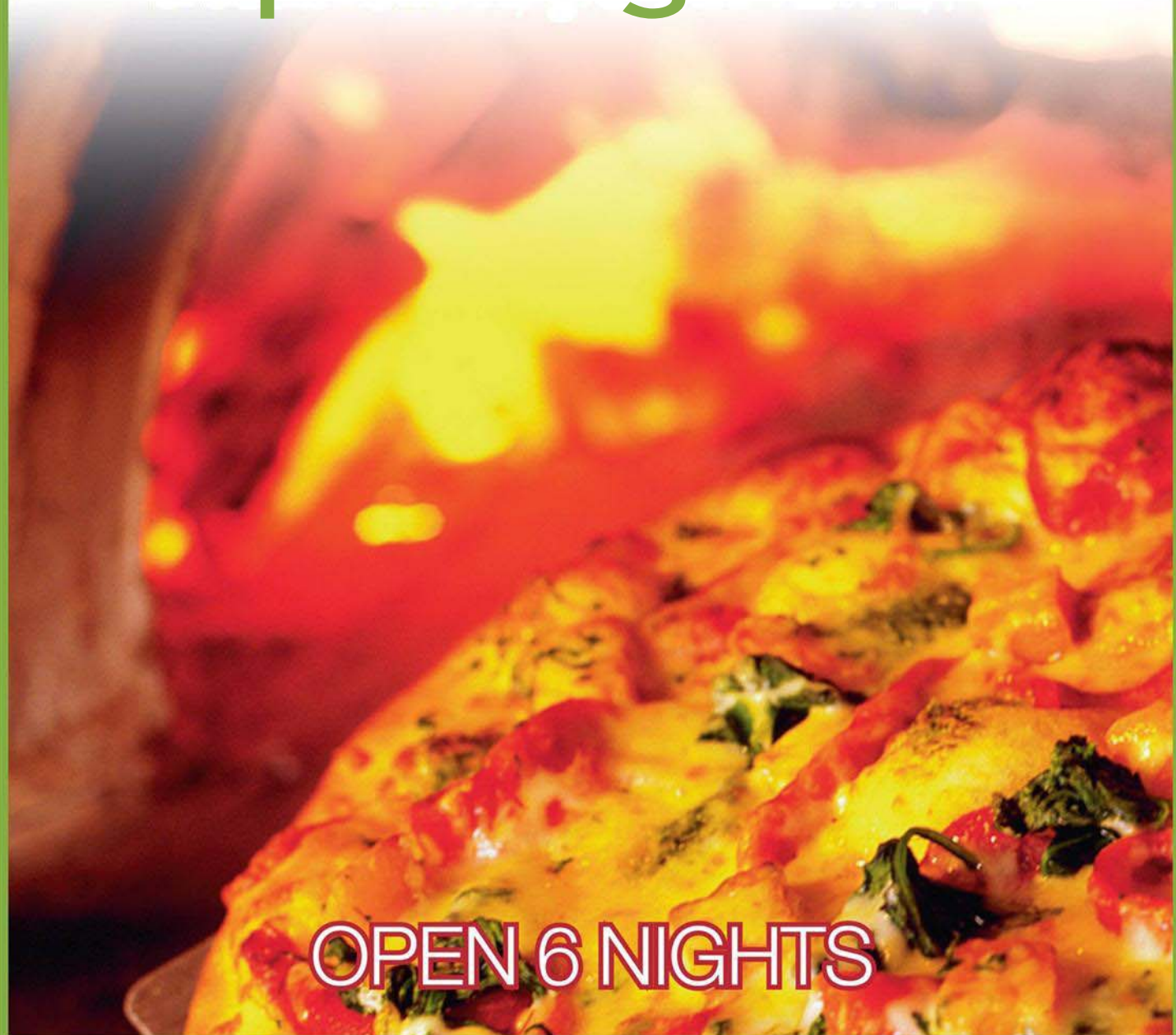
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