

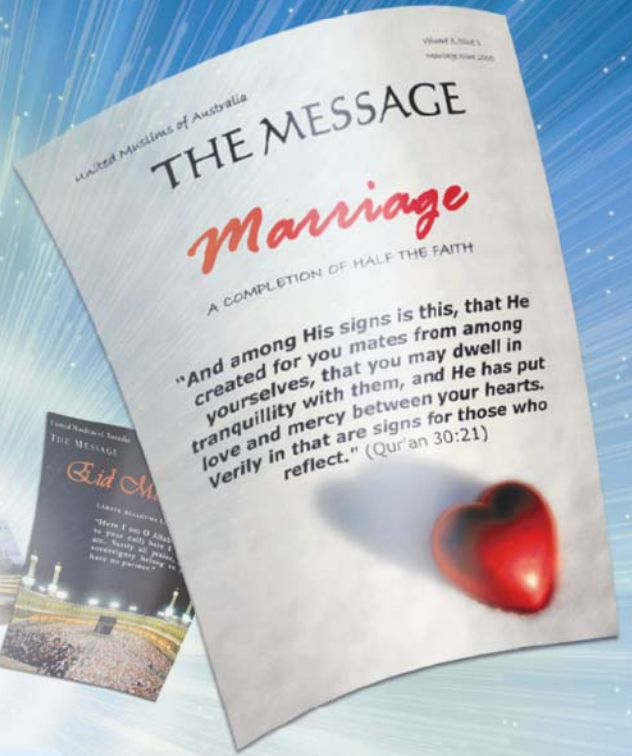
THE

MESSAGE

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Volume 5 Issue 4, 2008

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Best of the Best Editorial:

An Invitation to Reflect

Sometimes, taking a step back from life and looking out over your past can remind you of your strengths and weaknesses. It's great to also look towards the future with so many ideas, projects and goals, working faithfully towards these. However, reminding ourselves of our history teaches us lessons and gives us insight on how we can improve and change ourselves and our communities. This can also encourage us to be committed to something good and strong that we have previously found pleasure in or that we have succeeded in, as one of the great companions of the Prophet (S), Uthman ibn Affan was narrated to have said, "Learn from the past and do auspicious deeds."

Over the last five years, the Message Magazine has printed article after article, issue after issue, relating to our beautiful religion of Islam; teaching us lessons that we sometimes forget and lessons that we sometimes do not know.

So many of the magazine's readers have made contact with us over the years to ask for reprints of old issues; 'I'm missing volume two, issue three' or 'please, are there anymore of these magazines?' and sometimes 'I didn't know this existed, where can I get the whole set?'. This has encouraged the editorial team in times of stress and motivation, knowing that there are readers out there interested and hopeful for the next issue. We decided to compile an issue that would incorporate articles from different issues and volumes across the last five years showcasing excerpts of the different topics, writers and the beauty of the Message Magazine.

The articles have been hand picked by individual members of the Message Magazine team, as well as the whole group as a collective body to bring you the best of the best. So here it is! The issue that you've been asking for. We hope you enjoy the reprints of our favourite articles from our older editions, including one voted by you, the reader! We look forward to another five years insha' Allah with many more anniversaries to come.

To our Message Magazine enthusiasts, our next issue is scheduled to be released towards the end of March insha'Allah. The edition will be on the issue of money focussing on how to have barakah in our earnings, budgeting for marriage, Centrelink issues, Islamic finance and much more. Check out our official website at www.messagemagazine.com.au for updates.

On a final note, The Message team is always looking for 'new blood' to help the magazine continue to grow insha'Allah. So if you're willing to donate some of your time in seeking the pleasure of Allah then email us at info@messagemagazine.com.au and let your skills help benefit an entire community!

Mohammed Adra
Editor

NEXT ISSUE: MONEY DOES IT MAKE THE WORLD GO AROUND?

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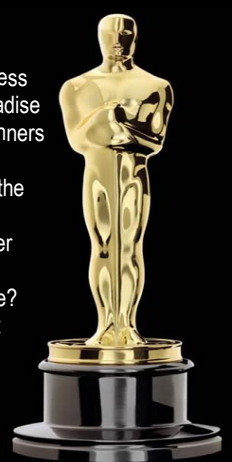
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Best of Issue

Sheikh's Corner

MFU: The Muslim Family Unit

Message Committee Pick - 'Family' Issue 2005

We have always tried to remind our readers about the importance of the Muslim family unit, and the importance it plays in the family's internal affairs, as well as the collective in the widespread community. As a result, we would like to remind you of this with a "Sheikh's corner" special we picked together. Enjoy!

All praise is due to Allah (SwT), and we seek His forgiveness and mercy to grant us the highest ranks in Paradise.

One of the foundations of the Muslim community is the family, which plays a pivotal role in our status as a collective society in this time and place. Unfortunately, the word 'family' has lost its meaning and value, since we find 'families' these days comprised of individuals who slither in and out of their homes at variant hours of the day, with each person confined to their rooms with little or no communication, and if there is any contact, it is usually about the location of the 'idiot box' remote control. Families are found to be self-indulgent with the fantasies of family shows on T.V, whilst they make no effort themselves to re-establish their own. They live in a state of self-delusion, feeding the hollowness continuously, with no apparent result but their own self-demise. Generally, the real 'home unit' exists no more, except in a few cases which include the families that strive to keep the bonds intact, by seeking the example of the Prophet (s) and his companions, who strived to maintain their families.

Alhamdulillah for the Prophet's example. Alhamdulillah for the beauty of our religion which prescribes exactly what is needed to keep the family spirit alive. Our beloved Prophet was found to be kind to his wives, playful with his children, a bread-winner for his household, and a role model for all. These are only a mere few examples of our Prophet's role. More so, there are examples of how Rasulullah (s) interacted with his family. The key point to take from this is that spending **quality time** with your family is necessary for a strong household. Many of us know the hadith of how the Prophet used to race with his wife Aisha (R), or how the Prophet used to play with his children. Simply put, it is about making quality time for each other.

Parents must realise that they are the glue that keeps the family together. They must make time for their children, regardless if they come back

home tired and late from work. They have the responsibility for the upbringing of their children and their future. Making a set time each day for the family is not hard to accomplish. By setting such a time, the children and parents have a chance to voice their concerns and know that there is somebody there for them to listen to. Sitting down and discussing matters with children can be an incredibly satisfying thing to do. You will be surprised at how much children love to talk and express themselves. You will also be surprised at how little you know about them! Play with them and laugh together. Be their friends.

Fathers, more so than the mothers who stay at home, need to have a bigger role in their children's lives. Spend time with them helping them with their homework and teach them some important lessons from the Qur'an. Instill in them the love for Allah at a young age, for the child's brain is like a sponge at such a delicate age. So by making sure that they absorb positive things, rather than negative things, you can pave the way for them leading more successful lives as Muslim role models when it is their turn to establish their own families.

Finally, **put your trust in Allah**, and make dua for yourself **and for your own parents**. They struggled themselves as parents to raise you and provide a good environment for you to live in. As a parent, you will realise how much they have sacrificed for you, so be thankful to Allah for what they have done for your personal benefit.

By the Grace of Allah Almighty, I pray that Allah grants us all the patience and time to spend with our children, so that we may have a better community to live in. After all, a healthy community stems from healthy families.

Wassalamu Alaikum warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu.

Sheikh Shady Al-Suleiman



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Dawah in Progress

Bringing your friends closer to Allah

Hebah's Pick (Co-Design Coordinator) - 'Dawah' Issue 2003

When we first printed this article, I must admit I did not read it. I spent a few hours working on the design of the page but never thought to read the text. As I was working with the title, I kept playing the words over and over in my head 'Dawah in progress, Dawah in progress.' The title stayed in my head for about two years before I went into my study and picked up the article to read it, and although it was short, the title had remained etched into my brain. Dawah is for all of us, however small our knowledge. Smile during the day, you might plant the seed of Islam in someone's heart.

Why should you, a young Muslim, be helping to bring your friends closer to Allah? After all, you've got your own struggles to deal with: trying to explain to hostile teachers why you pray, Hijab discrimination, standing up in class when the professor attacks Islam, dealing with parents who think you've gone nuts because you're growing a beard, or all the other difficulties faced by a number of practicing Muslim youth? Islam was never meant to be an individualistic faith, reserved for the "chosen few". Muslims have a duty to spread the Deen; and practicing Muslim youth, whether beginners, activists or leaders, have a crucial role to play.

Allah has put them in a position that perhaps no one else is in. They have the means to communicate with their peers, they have an understanding of what they're going through plus they have the guidance of Islam.

Who is your childhood friend going to listen to? Who is your childhood friend, who would rather spend Fridays at McDonald's than the Masjid, or your classmate who is Muslim in name and only knows that "Muslims don't eat pork" going to listen to: the nice Imam of the Masjid who would freak out if he saw the way they were dressed and talked or you who may have grown up with them, joked with them, or seen them everyday at school?

The answer is obvious: You.

Don't panic. Here are some tips and advice which can help. These are pieces of advice from other Muslims, many of whom have been there and done that:

Tip # 1: Make Your Intention Sincere

All work we do should ideally be for the sake of Allah. That includes the task of bringing someone closer to Allah. That of course means this should not be connected to arrogance, thinking you're the teacher and everyone else should be lucky you've embarked on a crusade to save them. Guidance is from Allah. Make Dua and make sincere efforts and remember Allah.

Tip # 2: Practice What You Preach

Not practicing what you preach is wrong and you will lose the confidence of anyone, young or old, once they figure you out. Don't do it.

Tip # 3: Talk To People As If You Really Don't Know Them

Don't assume you know someone just by looking at them. You don't know that the Muslim girl at your school, who walks through the school's hallways as if they were fashion show catwalks, is not someone you can talk to about Allah because she looks like a snob. Or that the Muslim guy who you've never seen at Juma at your university is a "bad Muslim". Maybe he was never really taught Islam and has no idea what importance

Friday prayers have in Islam, especially for Muslim men.

Tip # 4: Take The Initiative & Hang Out With Them

Take the first step and invite someone you may have spoken to a couple of times to sit at lunch together, to check out a sport game or invite them over for Iftaar in Ramadan. Also, share difficulties, sorrows and frustrations. Help with homework, be a shoulder to cry on when depression hits, or just plain listen when your friend is upset, discuss common problems and KEEP THEIR SECRETS.

Tip # 5: Show Them Islam Is Relevant Today, Right Here, Right Now

Young people may think Islam is too "old fashioned" and not in tune with the modern age. Prove this wrong. Show how Islam is really about relating to Allah, which any human being can do, anywhere, anytime. Allah is always closer to you than your jugular vein and He hears and knows everything. Encourage friends to ask Allah's help during tests, exams, and in dealing with problems at home with parents and siblings. Also point out how Islam relates to teenagers: Islam gives you focus and an understanding of who you are and where you are going, which most of "teen culture" does not.

Tip # 6: Get Them Involved In Volunteer Work With You

If you are already involved in the community, get your friend to help out. Ask them to make a flyer for one of your youth group's events or brainstorm for ideas about activities to hold this school year. This involvement makes them feel part of the Muslim community and deepens your friendship, since you are now working together on something beneficial for both of you. Make sure you thank them for their contribution.

Tip # 7: Emphasize Praying 5 Times A Day Before Any Other Aspect Of Islam

A person's main connection with Allah, on a daily basis, is through the prayer five times a day. Don't emphasise any other aspect of Islam until your friend starts making a real effort to pray five times a day. Emphasise the direct connection one has with Allah in prayer. If they are facing a problem, tell them to pray, and to ask Allah for help in Salah and outside this time. When possible, make it a point to pray together during your "hang out time". If your friend begins to pray, that is the first step to other aspects of Islam like giving up swearing, treating parents with respect or dressing Islamically.

Tip # 8: Support Them Even When They Become More Practicing

Remember, just because a person starts practicing Islam more regularly, this does not mean everything will be okay from this point onwards. There will still be hard times and difficulties. There may be times when your friend may have doubts about his or her newfound practice of Islam. Be there to reassure them.

By Dar-ul-Muslimeen

After reading the many verses in the Qur'an about paradise, have you ever stopped and daydreamt about how paradise might look like? Its beauty, its smell, its taste...? Many people would close their eyes and picture themselves on some tropical island. What do you think of this picture perfect image? Does it come close to the image of paradise you've got in your head right now? Well Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (S) said: "The Exalted and Glorious, said: 'I have prepared for My pious servants which no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever perceived but it is testified by the Book of Allah.'" This image doesn't even come close to the beauty Allah (Swt) is offering His pious servants...the beauty of paradise.

The reality of Paradise is something which people will never be able to understand until they actually enter it. However Allah has shown us glimpses of it in the Quran. He has described it as a place essentially different to the life of this world, both in the very nature and purpose of life, as well as the types of delights which people will enjoy therein.

The Quran tells people about Paradise, which God offers to them, describes its great blessings, and proclaims its beauties to everyone. It informs people that Paradise is one of two ways of life prepared for them in the afterworld, and that every good thing will be theirs in Paradise to a degree that surpasses our present ability to imagine. It also shows that Paradise is a place where all blessings have been created perfectly and where people will be offered everything their souls and hearts will desire, and that people will be far removed from want and need, anxiety or sadness, sorrow and regret.

Every kind of beauty and blessing exists in Paradise and will be revealed with a perfection never seen or known before. God has prepared such blessings there as a gift, and these will be offered only to people with whom He is pleased.

But what is the nature of these delights in Paradise, and how will it be different from the delights of this world? We will try to highlight a few of these differences.

Pure delight without pain and suffering

While people in this world experience some delight, they also face much toil and suffering. If one was to scrutinize the life which they live, they will find that the amount of hardship they face is much more than the ease and comfort. As for the life of the Hereafter, there will be no hardship nor suffering in it; and people will live therein in pure joy and delight. All the causes of sorrow, pain and suffering which people experience in this life will be absent in the Hereafter. Let's take a look at some of these causes.

Wealth

When one thinks of success in this life, they usually conjure the image of big houses, fine jewelry and clothing, and expensive cars; financial stability is seen to be the key to a happy life. To most people, success is inseparably related to wealth, even though this is the furthest from the truth. How many times have we seen the wealthiest of people living such miserable lives, that it sometimes even leads them to commit suicide! Wealth is something which humans in their very nature desire at any cost, and this desire has been created for a great and wise purpose. When this desire is not satiated, it causes some extent of grief in a person. For this reason, God has promised the inhabitants of Paradise that they will have all that they imagined as far as wealth and belongings are concerned, both for those who were extremely poor, experiencing even hunger and thirst, to those well-to-do but who desired even more. God gives us a glimpse of this when he says:

"... there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that the eyes could delight in ..." (Quran 43:71)

"Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent forth (good deeds) in days past!" (Quran 69:24)

"... They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade. They will recline therein on raised thrones. How good [is] the recompense! How beautiful a couch [is there] to recline on!" (Quran 18:31)

Disease and Death

DWELLE

Another cause of pain and suffering in this life is the death of a loved one or disease, which are both non-existent in Paradise. None will feel any sickness or pain in Paradise. The Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him, said about the people of Paradise:

"They will never fall ill, blow their noses or spit." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)
None will die in Paradise. All shall live eternally enjoying the pleasures therein. The Prophet Muhammad said that a caller will call out in Paradise when people enter it:

"Indeed may you be healthy and never be sick again, may you live and never die again, may you be young and never grow feeble again, may you enjoy, and never feel sorrow and regret again." (Saheeh Muslim)

Social Relationships

As for the remorse felt due to a rift in personal relationships, people will never hear any evil or hurting comments or speech in Paradise. They will only hear good words and words of peace. God says:

"They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin. But only the saying of: Peace! Peace!" (Quran 56:25-26)

There will be no enmity between people or ill-feelings:
"And We shall remove from their breasts any (mutual) hatred or sense of injury (which they had, if at all, in the life of this world)..." (Quran 7:43)

The Prophet (S) said:
"There will be no hatred or resentment among them, their hearts will be as one, and they will glorify God, morning and evening." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

People will have the best of companions in the Hereafter, who were also the best people in the world:

"And whoever obeys God and the Messenger – those will be with the ones upon whom God has bestowed favour – of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions!" (Quran 4:69)

The hearts of the people of Paradise will be pure, their speech will be good, their deeds righteous. There will be no hurtful, upsetting, offensive or provocative talk there, for Paradise is free of all worthless words and deeds. If we were to discuss all the causes for anguish in this life, we would surely find its absence or opposite to be true in Paradise.

The Eternalness of the Hereafter

The pleasures of this world are transient whilst the joys of the hereafter are lasting and eternal. In this life when a person enjoys something, it is only a short while before they get bored with it and proceed to search for something

RS OF PARADISE

Reader's Pick - 'Death & Hereafter' Issue 2004

This is YOUR pick, according to our website (www.messagemagazine.com.au)! It is no wonder that this one was the winner, as the beauty of Paradise is something we are all (hopefully) working hard for to attain eternal happiness and ease.

they feel is better, or they may not feel a need for it altogether. As for the delights of Paradise, a person will never feel bored with anything, but rather, its goodness will increase each time they indulge in it.

Also, the life of this world is very short. Humans only live on this earth for a short while, and very few people reach the age of seventy.

"...Say: Short is the enjoyment of this world. The Hereafter is (far) better for him who fears God..." (Quran 4:77)

As for Paradise, people will live forever. God says:
"...its provision is eternal and so is its shade..." (Quran 13:35)

"What is with you must vanish, and what is with God will endure ..." (Quran 16:96)

"(It will be said to them): This is Our Provision, which will never finish" (Quran 38:54)

Superior Delights

The delights of the people of Paradise, such as their clothing, food, drink, jewelry and palaces, will be far superior to their counterparts in this world. There is in fact no room for comparison, as even the smallest space in Paradise is better than this world and all that is in it. The Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him, said:
"The space of the bow of any one of you in Paradise is better than all that the sun rises upon" (Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh 3/85, no. 5615)

Free from all Impurities

Paradise is free from all the impurities of this world. Eating and drinking in this life results in the need for excretion and its associated unpleasant odors. If a person drinks wine in this world, he loses his mind. Women in this world menstruate and give birth, which are sources of pain and hurt. Paradise is free from all of these discomforts: its people will not urinate, defecate, spit or suffer from catarrh. The wine of Paradise, as described by its Creator, is:
"Crystal-white, delicious to those who drink (thereof), free from intoxication, nor will they suffer intoxication therefrom" (Quran 37:46-47)

The water of Paradise does not become brackish, and its milk never changes in flavor:

"...rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes..." (Quran 47:15)

The women of Paradise are pure and free from menstruation, postnatal bleeding and all the other impurities suffered by women in this world, and all are free from stool and faeces. God says:

"...and they shall have therein purified mates..." (Quran 2:25)

The Prophet (S) answered a person when they asked how the people of Paradise will relieve themselves:

"They relieve themselves by perspiring through their skins, and its fragrance will be that of musk, and all stomachs will have become lean." (Ibn Hibbaan)

What we have mentioned has been a mere comparison in order to understand the nature of Paradise, but as God said, its delights are truly hidden:

"No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy, as a reward for what they used to do." (Quran 32:17)

Paradise: There is Nothing Like It

The delights of Paradise surpass the imagination and defy description. They are like nothing known to the people of this world; no matter how advanced we may become, what we achieve is nothing in comparison with the joys of the Hereafter. As is mentioned in several reports, there is nothing like Paradise:

"It is sparkling light, aromatic plants, a lofty palace, a flowing river, ripe fruit, a beautiful wife and abundant clothing, in an eternal abode of radiant joy, in beautiful soundly-constructed high houses". (Ibn Maajah, Ibn Hibbaan)

The Sahabah asked the Prophet (S) about the buildings of Paradise and he replied with a wonderful description:

"Bricks of gold and silver, and mortar of fragrant musk, pebbles of pearl and sapphire, and soil of saffron. Whoever enters it is filled with joy and will never feel miserable; he will live there forever and never die; their clothes will never wear out and their youth will never fade." (Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi, ad-Daarimee)

God says:

"And when you look there (in Paradise) you will see a delight (that cannot be imagined), and a great dominion." (Quran 76:20)

What God has kept hidden from us from the delights of Paradise is beyond our ability to comprehend. The Prophet (S) said that God said:

"I have prepared for My slaves what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no human heart can imagine." Recite if you wish:

"No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do." (Quran 32:17)

In another report:



"Never mind what God has told you; what He has not told you is even greater." (Saheeh Muslim)

Gardens Under Which Rivers Flow

Allah (SwT), may He be Blessed and Exalted, has told us that rivers flow from beneath Paradise:

"And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous good deeds, that for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow.." [2:25]

The rivers of Paradise do not just contain water. There are rivers of water, of milk, of wine and of clear honey.

Allah (SwT) says:

"The description of Paradise which the Muttaqoon have been promised is that in it are rivers of water, the taste and smell of which are not changed; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine delicious to those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey [clear and pure].." [47:15]

At-Tirmidhi reports from Haakim ibn Mu'aawiyah that the Messenger of Allah (S) said, "In Paradise there is a sea of honey, a sea of wine, a sea of milk and a sea of water, and the rivers flow out of these seas." [Jaami' al-Usool, 10/508]

Fruits Near at Hand

The trees of Paradise are abundant and good and of many kinds. Allah has told us that there are grapevines, date palms and pomegranate trees in Paradise, as well as lotus trees and acacia trees:

"Verily, for the muttaqoon, there will be a success [Paradise], gardens and grape yards" [78:31-32]

"In them both will be fruits, date palms and pomegranates" [55:68].

"And those on the Right Hand - who will be those on the Right Hand? [They will be] among thornless lote-trees, among Talh (Banana trees) piled one above another, in shade long-extended, by water flowing constantly, and fruit in plenty" [56:27-32]

What Allah (SwT) has told us about Paradise is only a small part of what Paradise contains. In short, Paradise contains all kinds of fruits and other joys that one's heart could desire:

"Trays of gold and cups will be passed round them, [there will be] therein all that one's soul could desire, all that the eyes could delight in, and you will abide therein forever" [43:71].

The fruits of the trees will be low-hanging, in easy reach of the people of Paradise: "Reclining upon the couches lined with silk brocade, and the fruits of the two Gardens will be near at hand" [55:54].

Concluding Remarks

Paradise, with its high, ascending lofty places takes a great deal of effort to attain. The way to Paradise is filled with things that go against human wishes and inclinations. This needs strong determination and willpower. In a hadith narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah (R), the Messenger of Allah (S) said, "Hell has been veiled with desires, and Paradise has been veiled with [surrounded by] hardships."

On a final note, brothers and sisters in Islam, the Prophet (S) said, "In Paradise there are things which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no heart has imagined" so if you think these pictures of the dunya are beautifully breath-taking then stop and try to imagine what types of delights await the pious servants of Allah (SwT). So instead of working solely for the world competing amongst ourselves for wealth and materialistic possessions we should not pre-occupy our lives with these things but rather be competing amongst ourselves "...for Allah's forgiveness and a paradise which is as wide as the heavens and the earth" (57:21).

Your brother in Islam
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Manal's Pick (Marketing) - 'Manners' Issue 2005

This article initially struck me because it took a back-to-basics approach regarding some of the important attributes of being a Muslim, such as: cleanliness, respecting one's parents and being a good listener. Sometimes we try too hard to perfect spiritual aspects of faith (e.g., our prayers) that we may devalue the importance of attending to some of the outer physical attributes of belonging to this Deen. Insha Allah this article serves as a pleasant reminder to us all.

The best of praise and glory be to Allah, the Lord of the universe, and the best of prayers and peace be upon his messenger Muhammad, his kin, his companions, and his pious followers who follow his guidance and etiquette. O Allah, guide us to follow them in words and actions until we die.

The following article has been written because I have seen many of my beloved brothers and sisters disregard these etiquettes and misinterpret them. In compiling this, I hope to remind them of these manners. I do not claim to be better or less in need of practicing these manners; but, it is the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil and observing the order of Allah - 'And remind because a reminder is beneficial to the believers.' May Allah enable all of us to benefit from good reminders and make this of benefit to myself and my readers. May Allah protect and guide us in this life and in the hereafter.

THE MANNERS OF CONVERSATION

SELECTING SUITABLE TOPICS

In Sura Al-Haj, Allah described the believers 'And they have been guided to the purest of speeches; and guided to the path of Him who is worthy of all praise.' When you talk during your visit, say only what fits the situation and be brief. If you are the youngest among those sitting, don't speak unless you are asked to, or unless you know that your speech and words will be well received and will please the host and other guests. Don't prolong your speech. Use a proper tone of voice. Anas reported that 'the Prophet's talk was clear and concise. Not too much nor too little. He disliked loquacity and ranting.' Bukhari narrated a Hadith in which Aisha said 'The Prophet's talk [was so little] that you can count his words'.

THE ART OF LISTENING

If a person started telling you or your group something that you know very well, you should pretend as if you do not know it. Do not rush to reveal your knowledge or to interfere with the speech. Instead, show your attention and concentration. The honourable follower Imam 'Ata ibn Abi Rabah said: 'A young man would tell me something that I may have heard before he was born. Nevertheless, I listen to him as if I have never heard it before.' Khalid bin Safwan Al-Tamimi, who was with the two caliphs Omar bin Abdul Aziz; and Hisham bin Abdul Malik, said: 'If a person tells you something you have heard before, or news that you had already learned, do not interrupt him or her to exhibit your knowledge to those present. This is rude and ill-mannered.' The honourable Imam 'Abdullah bin Wahab Al-Qurashi Al-Masri, a companion of Imam Malik, Al-Laith bin Sa'd and Al-Thawri, said: 'Sometimes a person would tell me a story that I have heard before his parents had wed. Yet I listen as if I have never heard it before.' Ibrahim bin Al-Junaid said: 'A wise man said to his son: 'learn the art of listening as you learn the art of speaking. Listening well means maintaining eye contact, allowing the speaker to finish the speech, and restraining yourself from interrupting his speech.'

SWEARING BY ALLAH

To confirm a statement, many resort to swearing by the name of Allah (swt) or one of His attributes. This is a bad habit that should be resisted. The name of Allah should not be used so lightly, and to swear by it is a very serious matter. Allah (swt) in Sura Al-Nahl says 'And do not take your oath to practice deception between yourselves, with the result that someone's foot may slip after it was firmly planted.' Always remember the hadith of the Prophet reported by Bukhari and Muslim ' Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should say

something good or remain silent.'

SOCIAL MANNERS/IMPORTANCE OF APPEARANCE

CLEANLINESS

The Sunnah is to keep perfume and to use it regularly on oneself. Al-Bukhari narrated that Salman Al-Farsi said: the Prophet, peace be upon him, said 'Allah will forgive the sins of the past week for he who on Friday will take a bath, cleanse himself, put on his [regular] perfume or any perfume available in house. Then, he goes out [to Jumu'ah prayer] and does not try to separate two friends. Then he prays wherever he could and listens to the Imam.' If the body became odorous a day or two before Friday, one should not wait till Friday to cleanse the body. We should wash our bodies as soon as it requires washing to keep ourselves clean and fresh.

To take a bath on Friday is specifically required since a large number of people will be gathering at mosques. However, if our body became dirty or sweaty on a particular day, then we should take a bath at the end of day or the next morning. This is indicated by a Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim that Abu Huraira said, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'It is the duty of every Muslim to have a bath once every week to wash his head and body.'

DRESS PROPERLY AROUND FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Dress properly, even amongst friends and relatives. Dress properly when visiting your parents, a pious person, an elder, a relative or a friend. Your attire should be clean and elegant, not ugly or unsightly. We are attracted or repulsed by what we see. If you look good in clean clothes, smelling nice, you will be pleasant to look at and people will be attracted to you and enjoy your presence. If you were the opposite, people will look down on you even if you were a relative or friend.

Imam Bukhari in his book, 'Al-Adab Al-Mufrad' reported that the great follower Abi Al-'Alia Al-Riahi Al-Basri said, 'Muslims were at their best when visiting each other.' Al-Hafez Al-Haithami in 'Majma Al-Zawaed' (1:169) reported that Thabet Al-Banani, the student of Imam Anas bin Malik said, 'When I used to visit Anas, he would call for a perfume and run it along his cheeks.' Accordingly, if you were being visited at home whilst being dressed quite casually, you should change your clothes for your visitor. This will enhance his respect for you and he will complement your hospitality. It is, after all, the manners and etiquette of the early Muslims.

MANNERS WITH PARENTS

Observe complete respect and reverence to your father and mother, for they are the most worthy of your consideration. Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that a man asked the Prophet (pbuh): 'Oh Messenger of Allah, who is the most worthy of my best conduct?' He answered: 'Your mother! Your mother! Your mother! Then your father, then the next, and the next.'

Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad and Abdul Razzaq in his Musanaf (the wording is his) reported that Hisham bin 'Urwa recounted that his father told him that Abu Hurairah (r) saw a man walking ahead of another. He asked him: 'How is this man related to you?' 'He is my Father,' the man answered. Abu Hurairah told him: 'Do not walk ahead of him, do not sit until he sits, and do not call him by his

name.'

According to Ibn Wahab, a student of Imam Malik bin Anas named Imam 'Abdul Rahman bin Al-Qasim Al-'Utaqi Al-Masri (132-191 AH), said: 'While Imam Malik was reading Al-Muwata to me he suddenly stood up for a long while, then he sat again. He was asked why, and he answered: 'My mother came down asking me something. Since she was standing I stood up respectfully, when she went, I sat back down.'

The revered follower Tawoos bin Kisan said: 'It is part of the Sunnah to respect four persons: a scholar, an elder, a leader, and a father. It is considered rude that a man call his father by his name.' At the end of his book of Malkite Fiqh Al-Kafi, Imam Bin 'Abdul Al-Barr said:

'Kindness to the parents is an obligatory, duty and by the grace of Allah it is an easy matter. Kindness means to be humble with them, to speak to them nicely, to look at them with love and respect, to speak in a mild tone that does not surpass theirs unless they are hard of hearing, to give them complete access to your own wealth, and to offer them the best of your food and drink.'

Children should also wholeheartedly avoid upsetting their parents and should seek their pleasure as much as possible. Making your parent's life enjoyable is one of the most virtuous acts. Children must hasten to respond to their parents' call. If a child is praying voluntarily, he/she should shorten the prayer and respond promptly. Children should also express only good words. In return, it is the parents' duty to make it easier for their children to be kind to them also.

Keep in mind that everyone likes to be the best in status, prestige and popularity, and hates to see someone better than himself or herself. Only your parents would wish that you would become better than what they are.

TELL YOUR FAMILY YOUR WHEREABOUTS

If you leave home to go to a place other than your usual work, it is advisable to inform your family where you are going. This information is very useful to keep their mind at ease by them knowing where you are. Imam Ahmad reported that Qatada narrated that he went with Abu Ma'shar to visit Al-Sha'bi. His family said he was not home. Qatada asked, 'Where did he go?' His family said, 'We do not know.' Qatada then said, 'You mean he does not tell you where he goes?' They said, 'Yes.' Telling your family where you are lessens their worries and puts both you and them at ease if you were to arrive at home late, since they know where you are.

FINAL COMMENTS

Do not overlook these manners when interacting with the appropriate people, and act nicely and amicably with others. If you do not behave properly, you degrade yourself, abuse the duty that you are entrusted with, and abandon the guidance of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Rely on Allah to attain His pleasures and the manners of His religion, for it is He who protects the virtuous people.

May Allah protect you, your relatives and your beloved ones. May Allah help you obey His orders, remain obedient to Him, and follow the example of His Prophet. May Allah grant you His love, grace and His generosity. All praise to Allah, the Lord of the universe. Ameen.

Your Brother in Islam
Sheikh M. Raini

TAKING YOUR MANNERS WITH YOU

Your Brother In Islam, Sheikh M. Raini



COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET



WHO WERE THEY?

Uthman bin Affan

Ronnie's Pick (Business Sponsorship Coordinator) - 'Manners' Issue 2005

I love this article, because I love this companion. Due to his wisdom we have a complete Quran to read. His attributes of warmth, generosity and fairness are ones all Muslims should aspire to attain. He dedicated his life, wealth and his words for the sake of Allah. This article reminds us of his great contribution to Islam and serves as an example for all believers to follow. I hope you enjoy this article, as I never tire from reading and reflecting upon it.

Uthman's Life

Uthman bin Affan was born seven years after the Holy Prophet (S). He belonged to the Omayyad branch of the Quraish tribe. He learned to read and write at an early age, and as a young man he became a successful merchant. Even before Islam, Uthman had been noted for his truthfulness and integrity. He and Abu Bakr were close friends, and it was Abu Bakr who brought him to Islam when he was thirty four years of age. Some years later, he married the Prophet's second daughter, Ruqayya.

In spite of his wealth and position, his relatives subjected him to torture because he had embraced Islam, and he was forced to immigrate to Abyssinia. Some time later, he returned to Mecca but soon migrated to Medina with the other Muslims. In Medina, his business began to flourish again and he regained his former prosperity. Uthman's generosity had no limits. On various occasions he spent a great portion of his wealth for the welfare of the Muslims, for charity and for equipping the Muslim armies. This is why he came to be known as 'Ghani' meaning 'Generous.'

Uthman participated in the Battles of Uhud and the Trench. The portrait we have of Uthman is of an unassuming, honest, mild, generous and very kind man, noted especially for his modesty and his piety.

To highlight the man Uthman (R) was and the respect our Prophet (S) had for him, Aisha (R) relates that on an occasion, "The Prophet was in a position in my home, with his thigh uncovered when Abu Bakr sought to see him. The Prophet allowed Abu Bakr to come in without changing his position. Abu Bakr spoke to him about whatever he wanted, and left.

Later, Umar who was the second closest companion to the Prophet also sought to see the Prophet. Again, the Prophet allowed him to come in maintaining his reclining posture on his wife's bed. Umar explained his business

and left.

A short while later, Uthman later sought to see the Prophet. The Prophet immediately sat up and tidied up his clothes before letting in Uthman. When he left, I asked: O Messenger of God, Abu Bakr came in and you remained in your casual position. Umar then came in and you maintained the same position. When Uthman came in, you sat up and, tidied up your clothes." He answered: "Would I not feel shy in the presence of a man who inspires shyness in angels?"

Uthman often spent a part of the night in prayer, fasted every second or third day, performed hajj every year, and looked after the needy of the whole community. In spite of his wealth, he lived life very simply and slept on bare sand in the courtyard of the Prophet's mosque. Uthman knew the Qur'an from memory and had an intimate knowledge of the context and circumstances relating to each verse.

Uthman's Caliphate

During Uthman's rule, the characteristics of Abu Bakr's and Umar's caliphates (impartial justice for all, mild and humane policies, striving in the path of God, and the expansion of Islam) continued. Uthman's realm extended in the west to Morocco, in the east to Afghanistan, and in the north to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Uthman's most notable contribution to the religion of God was the compilation of a complete and authoritative text of the Qur'an. A large number of copies of this text were made and distributed all over the Muslim world.

Uthman ruled for twelve years. The first six years were marked by internal peace and tranquility, but during the second half of his caliphate, a rebellion arose. The Jews and the Magians, taking advantage of dissatisfaction among the people, began conspiring against Uthman. By them publicly airing their complaints and

grievances, they gained so much sympathy that it became difficult to distinguish friend from foe.

It may seem surprising that a ruler of such vast territories, whose armies were matchless, was unable to deal with these rebels. If Uthman had wished, the rebellion could have been crushed at the very moment it began. But he was reluctant to be the first to shed the blood of Muslims, however rebellious they might be. He preferred to reason with them, to persuade them with kindness and generosity. He well remembered hearing the Prophet (S) say, "Once the sword is unsheathed among my followers, it will not be sheathed until the Last Day."

The rebels demanded that he abdicate and some of the Companions advised him to do so. He would gladly have followed this course of action, but again he was bound by a solemn pledge he had given to the Prophet. "Perhaps God will clothe you with a shirt, Uthman" the Prophet had told him once, "and if the people want you to take it off, do not take it off for them." Uthman said to a well-wisher on a day when his house was surrounded by the rebels, "God's Messenger made a covenant with me and I shall show endurance in adhering to it."

After a long siege, the rebels broke into Uthman's house and murdered him. When the first assassin's sword struck Uthman, he was reciting the verse, "Verily, God sufficeth thee; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing" [2:137]

Uthman breathed his last on the afternoon of Friday, 17 Dhul Hijja, 35 A.H. (June, 656 A.C.). He was eighty-four years old. The power of the rebels was so great that Uthman's body lay unburied until Saturday night when he was buried in his blood-stained clothes, the shroud which befits all martyrs in the cause of God.

Your brother in Islam,
Mohammed Adra

MOTHER

O

I Forget...

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Rabi's Pick (Co-Design Coordinator) - 'Characteristics of a Muslim' Issue 2005

I chose this article for publication as it provides a different and unique outlook on how we treat our mothers when it comes to the "small things in-between" in our daily lives. There are many pieces out there that tell us what to and what not to do, however I loved this article, as it is written as a self-reflection, something we can relate to on a personal level and apply to ourselves individually. Our mothers truly deserve the best, but they are often taken for granted. This reflective entry extends more on this concept in a much more justifiable manner.

Yes, alhamdulillah I have two wonderful parents. Unlike many, I have been blessed with parents that have played an important/essential role in the building of my character - who I am as a complete person. But how many times a day, a week, a year do I remember this? How many times am I thankful? How many moments do I dedicate in reflection of this blessing?

In all honesty, I do not know, I cannot remember. And as I write this I am beginning to depress myself, as the guilt slowly creeps from my head to my heart.

I am living my life in this constant state of forgetfulness.

I forget to say Alhamdulillah.

I forget to thank my parents.

I forget...

So what role does Islam play? What does my being a Muslimah have to do with any of this? One of the foundations of Islam is the behaviour of a believer. This includes responsibilities and duties to my parents, the rights that they have over me. This has been one of the most difficult areas in my life to fulfill, because it is in the "half-way" moments that I remember my duties.

Mum shouts out my name once, twice, thrice and then she just does what ever it is she needs herself, 'cause it's easier'. By the time I get around to responding to her, she has finished whatever it was she needed doing. I am running down the stairs, 'Yes mum, what is

it?'

Suddenly I remember, paradise is beneath my mother's feet. It is there that my honour, my reward, my everything lies and yet I continue to deny myself these things through my insolence.

So how do I mend this?

Is it fixable, considering my forgetfulness?

Where do I start?

Islam, Muhammad (S), the Quran, prayer and many more things; all of these things, practice to serve as a reminder, or rather should remind us of our duties to our parents. Through prayer, reading Quran, learning the Sunnah of the Prophet (S); through submission to Allah (Swt), one can learn and maintain a state of respect, obedience, appreciation and love for one's parents.

The more you can give to your parents, the more you will receive in return from Allah (Swt). Every good we do returns to us. Remember, soon enough we will be parents ourselves, insha'Allah. We all talk or think about the ways we will bring up our children and how we are going to improve on our parents' skills and methods. But how many of us have shown our parents what a good job they have done, by behaving the way in which they taught us?

I can't remember.

By Asma Khoder

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MALCOLM

LETTER FROM MEKKAH

"This is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white - but the white attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colours together, irrespective of their colour."

Randa's Pick (Magazine Layout) - 'Hajj' Issue 2004

This article is one of my favourites because it reminds me of how Islam is capable of changing people's lives. Malcolm X became a significant figure in modern history due to the inspiration of the Islamic faith. This article also highlights the miracle and beauty of the Hajj experience, and how it has a unique and profound effect on all pilgrims, irrespective of status. It was the Hajj experience that made Malcolm X complete his true reversion to Islam and allow him to believe that Islam contained the solution to end racism and bring peace to the world.

Malcolm X saw and experienced many positive things. Generosity and open-heartedness were qualities which he found to be impressive due to the welcoming he received in many places. He saw true brotherhood through many different races; *"This is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white - but the white attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colours together, irrespective of their colour.*

When Malcolm X was in Makkah, he wrote a letter to his loyal assistants in Harlem. From his heart he wrote: "Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colours and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colours.

I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Mecca, I have made my seven circuits around the Ka'ba, led by a young Mutawaf named Muhammad, and I drank water from the well of the Zam Zam. I ran seven times back and forth between the hills of Al-Safa and Al Marwah. I have prayed in the ancient city of Mina, and I have prayed on Mount Arafat.

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colours, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe could never exist between the white and nonwhite.

America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white - but the white attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colours together, irrespective of their colour.

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept on the same rug - while praying to the same God - with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the deeds of the white Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt amongst the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana.

We were truly all the same (brothers) - because their belief in one God had removed the white from their minds, the white from their behavior, and the white from their attitude.

I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man - and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in colour.

With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called 'Christian' white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster - the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves.

Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black and white people. The American Negro can never be blamed for his racial animosities - he is only reacting to four hundred years of the conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path, I do believe, from the experiences that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the walls and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth - the only way left for America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to.

Never have I been so highly honored. Never have I been made to feel more humble and unworthy. Who would believe the blessings that have been heaped upon an American Negro? A few nights ago, a man who would be called in America a white man, a United Nations diplomat, an ambassador, a companion of kings, gave me his hotel suite, his bed. Never would I have even thought of dreaming that I would ever be a recipient of such honors - honors that in America would be bestowed upon a King - not a Negro.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds.

Sincerely,

Al-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X)."

The Electronic Babysitter

Hamdy's Pick (Website Administrator) - 'Family' Issue 2005

This article is a befitting addition, as it is an extension from the Sheikh's corner which deals with the oblivious effects the television set may have on people. One may wonder and think that this source of entertainment is harmless, but the trail of immorality that this device slowly imprints on us can truly shake our inner cores without our awareness. We invite you to ponder on these thoughts by reading the following piece.

The Prophet Muhammad (S) said:

The zina (adultery) of the eyes is the gaze (at which is unlawful, e.g. nudity); the zina of the ears is to listen (to talks of immoral or sexual indecency which excites the carnal desires); the zina of the tongue is to speak (what is evil); the zina of the hand is to touch (the female or male that is unlawful to you); the zina of the feet is to walk (towards immorality); the zina of the heart is to desire (what is unlawful), and it is the private parts which either commits or shuns the actual act of fornication. (Muslim)

After reflecting on the Sheikh's words, I have decided to focus and extend on what he said about the effects of the "idiot box (television)" on the family, especially on children, as this electronic babysitter has become a home wrecker for most families, where it has become the primary source of communication, hindering the ability of the family to interact with each other.

Many of us may find that our children or younger siblings are slouched in front of the T.V, with their chins locked by their two hands, hypnotised by the television without uttering a word. Some hours later, we find them in the same exact position, slouched in front of this mechanical device and entranced by what is projected to them. What is even more detrimental is that we also find ourselves in the exact same situation during many occasions. Many of our parents are also glued to the T.V set with Al-Jazeera being screened all day, or they are otherwise found to be watching Arabic versions of soap dramas.

One must distinguish however, that the television device itself is not the harmful thing per se, rather it is what is projected and shown through those images that Islam has a problem with; and rightfully so! Images of sexual immorality are constantly being repeated to us and are being imprinted into our brains so that we can become desensitised to the different forms of adultery that our Prophet (S) warned us against. This is why I have chosen the hadith above, as the television is a source of zina for the eyes and ears, which can fundamentally lead to the ultimate zina. What was once a shock for us to see (e.g.: a kiss or an exposed man/woman) becomes the social norm, so it is now ok for us to look at people engaging in sexual behaviour, and with some people, pornography has become the norm, and will be for many other people in time to come.

The brain of a child is like a sponge. It will absorb anything and everything around it, as the brain is still developing constantly at a high rate. The brain feeds on its surroundings to shape and mould the personality of a child. This also occurs in adults, but more so in our younger generation. Therefore, since we have a limited environment which largely includes television, these illicit images that are constantly being absorbed in our brains will cause a change in our morals and behaviour. We may not realise this, but television numbs our brains as we watch it with an inner calm. We do not reflect, nor question the images projected to us, but we allow the television to do it for us. It deprives us from the potential for reflection and intellectual thought.

The television does the thinking for the viewer (like a sitting zombie), who is unaware of this effect. They become oblivious to both their internal and external surroundings. People like these are mentioned in the Quran:

"They have hearts they do not understand with. They have eyes they do not see with. They have ears they do not hear with. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A'raf: 179)."

Moreover, television also has the capacity to impede the child's imagination, or attention span. It may also hinder the child's reading skills and slow down the child's speaking skills. In the child's mind, it doesn't need to learn how to read or speak, as the television does it for them.

The list goes on and on, and it takes way more than a simple and limited article like this to discuss the endless effects of the "idiot box." However, it is easy to come up with some practical solutions to this problem. The simple answer is to turn it off and only use it when you need to. It only takes a few calories to do this, which may actually be a good thing for the couch potato. Hold on a sec, the remote control can do that.

I can acknowledge that it is hard to go "cold turkey" regarding television, however, there are far more rewarding things that can take its place, like communicating with the family and spending time together. Playing in the park can help maintain the child's mind in a healthy state, as well as yours! Reading books can help expand the mind, rather than numb it. Playing arts and crafts can stretch the imagination. There are many different things we can all do for spare time and leisure. However, the challenge is to go out and seek to achieve them.

By Hesham Mourad

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The Death of the Prophet

Message Committee Pick - 'Death & Hereafter' Issue 2004

The death of the greatest man to set foot on this earth never fails to bring a tear to our eyes. This noble man who had sacrificed all that he owned, all that he ever was for the sake of Allah brought great sadness to humanity once he breathed his last breath. However, Muhammad (S) left an imprint of love behind in the hearts of millions of Muslims around the globe, and the fact that this effect has remained in the hearts of believers across the world more than 1400 years after his death demonstrates the profound effect he had on people to call them to the true purpose of this life: to worship Allah, the Most Exalted and Beneficent.

One night, shortly after his return to Medina, the Prophet (S) woke up at midnight and asked his servant 'Abd Allah to saddle his mule. They then left the house and went to the Baqi al-Gharqad, the burial ground of the Muslims.

There the Prophet (S) stood in the front of the graves and, as though he could see the Muslims buried in them, spoke to them and prayed over them. Later, 'Abd Allah reported, 'The Prophet (S) told me that he was ordered to pray for the dead and that I was to go with him.' After the Prophet (S) had prayed he turned to 'Abd Allah and said, 'I can choose between all the riches of this world, a long life and then Paradise, or meeting my Lord and entering Paradise now.'

'Abd Allah begged him to choose a long, rich life, followed by Paradise, but the Prophet (S) told him that he had already chosen to meet his Lord now rather than remain in the world. The following morning the Prophet (S) awoke with a terrible headache, but despite this he had led the prayers at the mosque. From what he said afterwards to the people assembled there, they understood that his death was near.

The Prophet (S) praised his best friend, Abu Bakr, who had begun to weep, and told everyone that he knew they would all meet again at a pool in Paradise. He added, however that although he was sure they would always worship Allah alone, he feared that the pleasures of the world would attract them, and they would begin to compete with one another for material possessions, forgetting spiritual things.

Soon after the Prophet (S) requested that he be moved to the room of A'isha, one of his wives. As the days passed his fever grew worse, until one day he was so ill that he could not even get to the mosque, which was next to where A'isha lived. The Prophet (S) told A'isha to tell the Muslims to let Abu Bakr, her father, lead the prayer, which made them very upset for this was the first time anyone had taken the Prophet's place.

Later, on the 12th day of Rabi al-Awal, in the 11th year of Islam (June 8th 632 A.D.), the Prophet (S) heard the voices of the people in prayer. With great effort he got up and looked from his door at all the Muslims who were assembled in rows behind Abu bakr; he smiled with great satisfaction.

'All praise belongs to Allah! O people, whoever worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. But for him who worships Allah, Allah is living and never dies.'

Abu Bakr on hearing the news of the death of the Prophet

Abu Bakr saw him and stepped back to give the Prophet (S) his place. The Muslims were overjoyed, thinking he was going to pray with them as before, but the Prophet Muhammad (S), who looked radiantly beautiful that day signalled to them to continue on their own. He prayed in a sitting position at the right of Abu Bakr, after which he went back inside and lay his head on 'A'ishah's lap.

He was in such pain that his daughter Fatimah cried out in pity. Then the Prophet (S) said, 'There is no pain for your father after this day; truly, death has appeared to me. We must all suffer it till the Day of Judgment.' As he lay there, A'ishah remembered that he had once said, 'Allah never takes a Prophet to Himself without giving him the choice.' Then she heard the Prophet (S) speak. His last words were, 'Nay, rather the Exalted Communion of Paradise.' A'ishah then said to herself, 'So, by Allah, he is not choosing us!'

When the people in the mosque heard that the Prophet (S) was dead, they were filled with grief. 'Umar could not, and would not, believe it, and exclaimed that it was not true. Abu Bakr then went out and spoke gently to the people, saying;

'All praise belongs to Allah! O people, whoever worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. But for him who worships Allah, Allah is living and never dies.'

He then recited this verse from the Quran which had been revealed after the battle of Uhud:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Muhammad is but a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? He who turns back does no hurt to Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful. No soul can ever die except by Allah's permission and at a term appointed. Who so desires a reward in (this) world, We will give him of it; and whosoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We shall give him thereof. And We shall reward the thankful." (3: 144-145).

After this the people pledged their loyalty to Abu Bakr, whom the Prophet (S) had chosen to lead the prayer. Abu Bakr accepted and concluded what he had to say with these words:

'Obey me so long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. But if I disobey Allah and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience. Arise for your prayer, Allah have mercy upon you!'

The people rose and asked him; 'Where will the Prophet (S) be buried?' Abu Bakr remembered that the Prophet (S) had said, 'No Prophet dies who is not buried on the spot where he died.' And so the Prophet (S) was buried in a grave dug in the floor of A'ishah's room, in the house next to the mosque. The spot became known as the Haram al-Nabawi and Muslims from all over the world go there to pray and to give their blessings and greetings of peace to the Prophet Muhammad (S).

Your sister in Islam
Leila Azzam

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Mohammed's Pick (Co-Editor) - 'Spreading the Message' Issue 2003

This article is from one of our first editions of The Message, when it was a mere 14 page black and white newsletter. The topic chosen has been debated in all corners of the world numerous from many aspects and all religions: some with myopic viewpoints, others with sound words and wisdom. However, I believe that this article provides a balanced view of the topic at hand, and since it has been 5 years since it was last published, I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to share this article with you all again.

Today, a common belief held among some young men is that the place of the woman belongs solely at home where attaining tertiary education, entering the workforce and even the attending of social outings are frowned upon. Some have even condemned sisters for participating in Dawah work by often misquoting verses from the Holy Quran, ordering woman to stay in their homes (*And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of former Times of ignorance*) [Surat Al- Ahzab: 33]. To the relief and sighs of the many sisters who will be reading this, my short article will be more about educating both my brothers and sisters that the role of the woman should not be restricted to merely that of the home.

My answer to such zealous statements is that the verse mentioned above was addressed to the Prophet's women, who had a special position that no other women would have, and were subject to restrictions that do not apply to other women. Allah the Almighty says to them in the Holy Quran, (*O consorts of the Prophet! You are not like any of the [other] women*) [Surat Al- Ahzab: 32]. However, this verse did not prevent the Prophet's wife, Aisha from going to war in the Battle of the Camel, to demand what she thought right in politics, supported by two of the senior Companions of the Prophet (S) who had been nominated for the caliphate and are among "the Ten Who Received Glad Tidings" (of sure entrance into Paradise).

Her regret of that situation, as told by historians, was not because her going out of the house was illegal, but because her political view was not successful, may Allah grant her forgiveness and bless her soul.

However, if we examine the opinion of those who claim that this verse was meant for all women, we will find that it does not mean confining them to the houses and never letting them out. The confinement of a woman was stipulated by the Quran as punishment for sinning women who proved to have committed adultery. Allah the Almighty says (*If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four [reliable] witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them to houses until death claims them, or Allah ordains for them some [other] way*) [Surat Al- Nisa: 15]. Otherwise, a woman has every right to leave her home and to go about her day to day business as long as she does not cross over this very clearly defined mark.

Moreover, Allah's saying (*And make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of ignorance*) [Surat Al- Ahzab: 33], indicates that it is legal for women to go out if they are dressed modestly and do not make a dazzling display, for a woman is not to be prohibited from displaying herself within her home, as she is allowed to dress and make herself beautiful as she likes at home. What a woman is ordered to refrain from is to make herself beautiful and display herself when she goes out on the street or goes to the market or anywhere else, so as to avoid any suspicion of dazzling display.

My brothers and sisters, if you believe that the role of the woman should be restricted to that of the home, then from the many hadiths of the Prophet (S) we learn that men need to also spend their share of their time at home as well. Women, like men, are also expected to spend some time over the kitchen sink washing dishes, vacuuming the living room and helping with other chores. Again, it is unfortunate that today many of our younger brothers believe this is not part of their responsibility as it was something the Prophet (S) often did. That's right brothers; the Prophet (S) himself used to roll up his sleeves and help out with domestic work, and even mended his own shoes. Therefore, the man is also obliged to provide domestic help within his means, and to make sure that food gets to his wife and children already cooked. The Prophet (S) also taught us that our sisters are allowed and are free to engage in business or work at home or outside the house in a suitable environment, so long as the family does not suffer, and the money they make is their own, with no calls on it from other people until their death.

So, my advice to the brothers and sisters is not to confuse the culture that exists in some parts of the world where women are seen as merely keepers of the house. Their role encompasses much, much more than this very narrow minded view. Islam encourages both men and woman to go to university or TAFE, to work and contribute to society... God only knows how the Islamic community is crying out for more female doctors and nurses to attend to our elderly and sick, as well as teachers to educate our future generations. Today, many Islamic schools employ non-Muslim teachers due to this short fall. It is a very rare sight to have non-Jewish teachers at Jewish schools, or non-Catholic teachers at Catholic schools and yet this mentality that woman belong at home is contributing to this growing problem within the Islamic community.

Finally, some advice to my sisters: although you have a responsibility to your household, similar to that of men, don't be content to 'just sit at home'. The Islamic community needs you! Play your part in making a difference. If you really want our community to move forward in all areas then the buck has to stop with you. The many female sahabi's at the time of the Prophet (S) are not only great examples to follow, but their stories are truly inspirational to both sexes. Jump online to the Message Magazine website (www.messagemagazine.com.au) and have a read of some great women of the past and present and the impact and contribution their lives made to society... a contribution we should all be aiming to achieve regardless of our sex.

Adapted from Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase by Sh Yusuf Al- Qaradawi and the works of Maher Magrabi.

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THE TRUTH

Hesham's Pick (Co-Editor) - 'Marriage' Issue 2005

Marriage is a controversial topic commonly discussed in the Muslim community. Love or hate the topic, it is always a popular one that pops up regularly amongst the young and old. Some feedback from our readers on our website proves this notion, which is why I picked to include this light-hearted and funny interview in this special edition. Another reason why I picked this article is because it demonstrates very effectively the way a Muslim couple exists in the West, a non-Muslim environment, which is a common challenge for Muslims in this society.

Narrated by Sahl Bin Sa'd: The Prophet (S) said to a man, "Marry, even with (a Mahr equal to) an iron ring." (Sahih Bukhari)

Yes, you have heard it all before from various friends, authority figures, and in some of the other articles in this magazine - get married (preferably young), or fast instead. The hadith above inspired me to compile an interview with a young Muslim couple, so that all the single ones out there can get a small taste of what marriage is like first-hand, and what is expected from it. Hence, **The Message Magazine** hit the road and found a young Muslim couple who were willing to spill the beans. For privacy reasons, our interviewees wish to remain anonymous, so we will refer to them as Ali and Aisha.

Q: *How did you meet your wife/husband?*

Aisha: I was on my way to University. The girls that I knew would always catch the same carriage everyday. I used to get on at Yagoona and was always the first one to get on the train. At Wiley Park, a young guy gets on. He sat across from me because he knew all the girls from high school. He was reading a two week old newspaper which made me laugh. It was really strange, this guy I had never met before made me laugh from Wiley Park until Redfern. I remember having a moment of serendipity and thought to myself *I'm going to marry this guy*. Then my conscious took over and said *yeah right*, as if I will ever get married.

A GIRL

Q: *As a Muslim youth living in this day and age in Australia, what drove you to search for "the one?"*

Ali: Don't get me wrong, I loved living with my parents and more importantly living off them (laughs). But in saying that, I think there comes a time in everyone's life where you find yourself wanting and looking to share your inner thoughts, feelings and intimacy with someone on a really deep level, and I think I reached that stage in my life a couple of years ago.

Aisha: It would be surprising to most to say that I never really went out looking for the one at all. Most of my friends around me were all extremely excited about meeting the one and would get upset if a close friend found their partner before they did. It somehow represented how beautiful, intelligent and attractive a girl was amongst her peers. I was looking forward to a career overseas in Lebanon or UAE, as my uncle lives there and I thought I might have a shot at being allowed by my parents to do something out of the ordinary. Maybe start designing a few things or even writing a book, but 'the one' came along, and I truly believe that once you stop thinking about the one, it will come right up to you when you least expect it, alhamdulillah.

How Lebanese!

Ali: Yep, that's how it happened (laughs)! Adding to that, as I got off the train at Redfern station, I forgot about this girl thinking I would never see her again. That's until a couple days later, when I walked into one of my classes at uni, she was there... doing the same subject. Her first words were, "Aren't you that weird guy on the train who was reading that two week old newspaper?" To cut a long story short, soon afterwards, I found myself asking for her hand and today we find ourselves as husband as wife... Alhamdulillah.

Q: *Were there obstacles faced (if any) on your quest for matrimony?*

Ali: To be honest, I didn't see many major obstacles. What I did see however, was this whole process of marriage and asking for a girl's hand quite a daunting experience. I will never forget the thoughts that went through my head the day I went over to ask for her hand. Things like: I bet you her father had a baseball bat tucked away somewhere just waiting for the right moment to use it or I wonder whether her mum had cooked something for me because I'm really hungry, and other really stupid thoughts. Looking back at it all, I think I made it seem like such a daunting thing. It was all in my head; it wasn't really the case at all.

Aisha: Before we got engaged it was very difficult for me to ever imagine myself getting married; especially to my husband. He was a great guy, but just a friend. He had thought of other girls, and likewise for me. I also had numerous suitors that just made me laugh and also a few serious encounters that made it difficult to move

ABOUT MARRIAGE

on. Once we decided to go through with it, it was pretty much smooth sailing. Two of my sisters were already married, so my parents were not new to the concept. I think his parents 'expected' him to marry within the family. His older brother had just fought long and hard to marry outside of the family and for my husband to do the same was a major blow. When we got engaged, my fiancé left for Hajj. This was both the most difficult period, and the best. I was distraught when he left but did not want to show my emotions. Because we had mutual friends, we did not want to announce our engagement to everyone until we were settled, so I did not even get to go to the airport, which was difficult. The best part of this was when he returned. I remember sitting with my mother at his place waiting for him to come and greet us. I was so nervous. Our mothers were not getting along which made it worse, but when he walked into the room; I had a strange feeling of butterflies in my stomach. It was the third time I had felt this since I had met him and now I knew that I had actually missed him. It was a great feeling to know that he made me feel that way.

Q: What were the ideal qualities that you looked for in your wife/husband?

Aisha: I knew the qualities that my father had and he was the type of man I admired. When I met my hus-

Ali: Since getting married, I never really thought much about divorce. In every marriage there is a chance it might end up in divorce. However, you should never get involved in a marriage thinking it will end up that way. Remember, our lives were written for us 50,000 years before the creation of Adam, so what is written for us cannot be changed. All we can say is Alhamdulillah and move on.

Aisha: I can not advise a person unless I know more about their situation. I was only 23 when I got married. A lot of my school friends were married by the time we hit year 12; to them I was too old to get married. My university friends were married by third and fourth year. One of my elder sisters married at 27, and my 29 year old sister is *not* married. All of my non-Muslim friends are still single. Being Muslim indicates a different lifestyle. If young men feel they will commit haram, they should get married no doubt about it unless they can learn self control and discipline which is extremely difficult. Younger girls should look at their own maturity, as most chaste females will not face this difficulty unless they have been married and divorced. *Nasib* or destiny will happen at any age, but it is best to talk to a parent or friend who is married, or speak to a Muslim counsellor or sheikh who can tell you a little more about marriage before you jump into the deep end. The

implement and how hard it is to do such things. Another important factor that I will briefly mention is the difference between men and women. Men will need time to themselves every now and then; women should know this and respect this part of their husband. Similarly, in order for men to receive this respect, they should understand that women are highly emotional (no man will understand this until they are married, and women may not know this about themselves until they get married). Allah (Swt) created women highly emotional, to be able to tend to their baby in the middle of the night and wake up without a flinch. Finally, women and men alike should treat each other with respect as Islam tells you to, never degrade your partner in public, and make sure you fulfil each others needs in every way possible. Both parties have left a home and need time adjust, therefore patience is the key.

Q: Describe the setting for your wedding.

Ali: The day of our marriage didn't really go to plan. I knew it was going to be a long day when the photographer dropped his camera and broke it. He had to drive back to his shop and get his spare. That meant we were about two hours behind schedule. It gave me time however, to watch the end of the cricket on T.V. (laughs) It didn't get much better at the wedding reception. They served us things we didn't order, and they

T OF A LIFETIME

band, he really did begin to build the qualities that I wanted in my partner; piety, humor, he was carefree but also serious in the times it was needed. When were getting to know each other, I was very worried that we were just not going to get along with each other. Did this guy have a deeper side that I was not seeing? We were talking about our dreams and I told my fiancé about my wish to work overseas; and to my surprise he reciprocated and told me he had always dreamt of this too. I had never known this about him and it was a side of him I was getting to know slowly that I really enjoyed. One thing I learnt from the beginning and through Istikharah was not to assume anything about anyone; there is much more to a person than they first let on. Being engaged and performing *Katib Al-Kitab* is a great way to know more about a person. I realised we meshed on a different level that made me learn more about myself and what I expected in a person. My husband possesses great qualities; honesty, he is trust worthy and has no pride whatsoever, he is strong, sensible and the funniest person I have ever met. These are most definitely the qualities that I find ideal in a partner.

Ali: As for me, in my entire life I only had guy friends, where every weekend I was with them. I was having so much fun with them that I never really saw the need to think about getting married, settling down or what qualities I was looking for in a wife. I guess, you can't really help who you fall for. Your heart either opens up to them or it doesn't. The only real quality my wife needed to have was to be a pious Muslimah with Islamic ideals; the rest I left up to my heart to decide.

Q: With the rising rate of divorce, do you advise the young people to get married early?

way marriage is portrayed on TV is very different to the way a Muslim marriage is implemented. The best thing is to keep your options open, do not go searching for marriage alone, but do not close any doors on it either.

Q: Have you attended or undertaken any sort of pre-marital preparation course? What are some of the responsibilities of marriage that are essential to be taught to the Muslim Youth?

Aisha: My husband and I did not undertake any pre-marital course. On our engagement one of our friends gave us a whole lot of Islamic books about marriage in Islam which was one of the best gifts we received. We read through these books which gave me an outline of the way Islam perceives marriage. Marriage is not easy and nobody I know warned me of this. It really does require a lot of patience. For the youth who live at home with their parents, moving out of home is a major life change in itself. Being patient has to be the most important aspect of marriage that I can think of: being patient with each other and in the way we live. Even though we may have the same background, each person's way of life is different and we have to keep that in mind. A person who reads the Quran and follows Hadith will never have a problem in marriage life; but being realistic, nobody is perfect.

Ali: Yeah, I guess that you have to try your best to be patient with your partner. The husband and wife have rights over each other; it's a two way relationship no matter what anybody tells you. Islam is fair and just. My advice is to read the "Muslim marriage guide". It is the best way marriage can be explained. Read it before you get married, and then read it six months after you get married. You will be surprised at how little you

were quite rude about it all as well. However, even though the day didn't go to plan, I still wouldn't change a second of it. Just standing there next to my new wife made all these things just disappear...it's all part of the experience of getting married.

Aisha: Our wedding day was a little different. My family did not mind the way we chose to do our wedding; although my mother did want to have my wedding dance. My husband's mother and family preferred a mixed wedding. Being quite religious, my husband originally wanted a female only wedding. As not all parties agreed, we had to think up something different. We had dinner at a restaurant, and invited close family and friends (about 100 people). There was only anasheed and no dancing was permitted. We had a three course meal, my husband read some Quran, my brother-in-law gave anasheed, my sisters made a great PowerPoint presentation, we cut a cake, exchanged wedding bands, gave speeches and left. It was a very romantic occasion but we tried to make it as Islamic as possible. We did everything we dreamed of for a wedding, as we knew that if we did not do so, we might regret it later. We just had to be creative with the way we planned it. I still got to make my own favours and stationary and we planned everything to detail. I feel it is important to celebrate, but in an Islamic atmosphere.

Many thanks to our interviewees for sharing a part of their lives together. Let us know what you think of this interview by emailing us at: info@messagemagazine.com.au

Your brother in Islam
Hesham Mourad

Amusements Page

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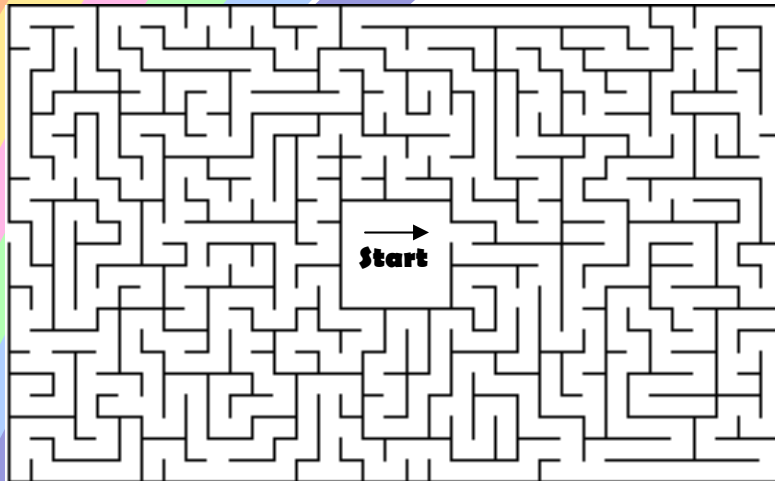
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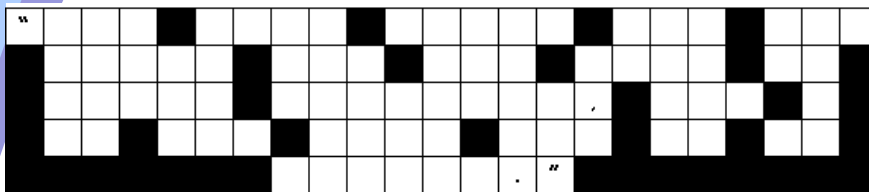


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