



THE ISLAMIC BULLETIN

Issue 9

IN THIS ISSUE

DEAR READERS	2
ISLAM IN PRISON	2
MUSLIM TEACHES ISLAM IN CHURCH.....	3
LIBRAIRIES RECEIVE QUR'ANS.....	4
OHIO RECOGNIZES AMERICAN MUSLIMS	4
WHY I EMBRACED ISLAM.....	4
ISLAMIC DIETARY LAWS	6
PRAYER (SALAT)	6
WOMEN IN ISLAM	7
KID'S CORNER.....	8
MIRACLES OF THE QUR'AN	8
THE PROPHET YA'QUB (JACOB).....	9
STORIES OF THE SAHABAS	10
SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET(PBUH).....	11
HUMAN EXCELLENCE AWARDS	12

THE ISLAMIC BULLETIN

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

The Islamic Center of San Francisco is embarking on a number of exciting projects for the coming year. One of the plans being discussed is the printing and distribution of the Yusuf Ali translation of the Holy Quran in a paper-back edition for the many inquiries being received regarding Islam and requests for the Holy Quran. The facility of its being paperback would make distribution easier. It will be printed with the "English only" text as it would be made available to non-Muslim people.

An increasing effort is being made to provide copies of the Holy Quran to prisons and other such institutions where there is a great demand for information. There are many requests regarding Islam from the general non-Muslim public, and the need to acquaint people with Islam is ever-increasing.

A most challenging endeavor is being made to produce a beautiful "Tree of Prophets", in English and Spanish which artistically show the line of prophets from Adam to Mohammed (peace be upon them). This would be made in a lovely poster size, full-color print and would be a wonderful visual experience for children and adults alike.

Also being proposed is a committee to help with a variety of information requests, such as referrals to Muslim doctors, Halal restaurants, where to obtain Islamic books and materials, a directory of Mosques for those traveling or new to the area, and many other requests for information that are received daily from our growing Muslim community. The writing of a reference booklet has been suggested to compile all this diverse information for convenience to those making inquiries.

The continuing research of miscellaneous foods and whether they are halal is another matter under consideration in this country where ingredients of processed foods is sometimes difficult to establish.

As you can see there are a lot of exciting plans for the Islamic Center of San Francisco to better serve our community. We will need the help of anyone interested in volunteering their time to some of these efforts. We are currently setting up a "volunteer roster" to utilize the talents and abilities of those who wish to work on these worthwhile activities. Now is your chance to get involved. If you would like to help in any way, please call us at 415-552-8831 or email us at info@islamicbulletin.org.

Every one of us can make a difference!

Dear Readers,

We are proud to introduce the many new and exciting projects now beginning to take shape for The San Francisco Islamic Center and The Islamic Bulletin.

One of the projects we are especially proud to present to you is the new Volunteer Line, designed to better serve and assist the community.

In order to accomplish this, we need YOU, the members and readers of the Islamic Bulletin, an important resource and priority.

The first task of the new volunteer program is to listen to the ideas and needs of our members. We would greatly appreciate any feedback you can give us. Are you seeing the kinds of articles you want to see? Are there any items you would like to see covered by our staff? Any changes or suggestions that would make the Bulletin better or more interesting to you? Any special topics or monthly columns you would like to see added to the Bulletin? Any part of the Bulletin you don't like?

The Volunteer Lines' other objective is to help encourage and organize those who wish to contribute their time and energies to the furtherance of Islam and the glory of Allah.

There is always some small way we can help, no matter what our abilities may be, to work for Allah. If you have a few hours to help in some way, please consider spending the time as a volunteer. We have many projects and many levels of skills are required.

YOUR participation in the ongoing improvement of the Bulletin and the San Francisco Islamic Community is vital to us, whether you want to become an active volunteer member, contribute an article of our own, or offer your comments and recommendations.

But please, call the new Volunteer Line at 415-552-8831 with your comments or to discuss the possibility of your active participation.

Of course your letters to the editor are always valued, so feel free to write at any time "Letters to the Editor" at the Islamic Bulletin.

NEED TO CONTACT US?

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ISLAM IN PRISON

Prison has the Body, but Allah has the Spirit

(An excerpt from the NY Times, July 2, 1992)

Beacon, NY - The criminals faced Mecca, staring beyond the window bars and glittering rolls of razor wire lying between their basement prison mosque and the world outside.

As they prayed, a blue jay burst freely above the sharply bladed gyres and out toward a cow herd grazing by an interstate highway that laced across the horizon, a teasing reminder to the prison Muslims of how sweetly meandering freedom can be.

"That is all irrelevant," insisted Hamza Abdul Aziz, the mosque's leader. "This is only a place that keeps you locked up spatially," the 32 year old convict said. "I don't have bars and razor wire blocking my mental life. I'm in a state of peace."

... Islam has been claiming its institutional role behind bars, with New York State now employing 31 Muslims for its 171- chaplain corps and looking for more, and with a prison population that is 17 percent Muslim.

"When I started in this department 32 years ago, there weren't that many Muslims in the prison system and they were unrecognized," said Dean R. Riley, the Fishkill prison superintendent. "Today, they are probably one of the most supportive groups among themselves and within the system, too. They take care of their own. It certainly has been in the department's interest to recognize them."

The superintendent said it used to be far different. "Muslims were seen as a militant group at first, but not today," he said, drawing concurrence from Salahuddin M. Mohammed, the prison's Imam, an Islamic chaplain, making his busy rounds among the Muslims here and in two other prisons.

"Black nationalism and all that, that's out the window," said the Imam, a 41 year old clergyman who turned to Islam as a Harlem teenager interested in his African ancestors and the cultural implications of slavery.

"Prison is slavery," said the Imam, whose friends from the housing projects near Amsterdam Ave and 125th St turn up on his prison rounds. "The men feel that sense of slavery and they discover that Islam can offer a sense of freedom."

Among the 1800 Fishkill inmates, there are 200 congregants in the masjid, or mosque. Most of them are from the prison's nearly 50 percent black population.

"They are beautiful Muslims," said Sofyan Saleh, a believer serving 10 to 25 years for manslaughter who was born into the religion 35 years ago as a native Yemenite.

In the mosque, Islam's comforts appear to go beyond the relaxed solidarity and seclusion the prisoners indulge.

"It's the whole ritualistic concept," said Zaki Fatim, a 30 year old native of New York City...Wearing a yellow kuffee, or prayer cap with his green prison garb, Mr. Fatim seemed eager for the mutual respect and group worship of his peers kneeling on the simple blankets covering the mosque floor. "I feel human, more than human," he said hesitantly. "I even feel love."

"... I already know that when I'm back outside, this will play a big part in my life," he said, counting on Allah in the face of the devilish recidivism rate of former convicts. "I understand the nature of man better. A religion requires discipline and raises the level of self-esteem."...

"To be able to rise above the madness," said the Imam, summarizing the mosque's focus. "The general mood among incoming prisoners is 'The world is cruel and you have to get yours.' I talk beyond their sense that they are the scum of the earth; talk to the dignity that I know exists in all men. I teach them that if they do bad things, they 'swag,' or steal, here, they'll be doing it on the streets and eventually they must face Allah on Judgment Day."

One of the critical elements in the state's coming to encourage the Muslims faith behind bars, the Imam said, is that the prison-chaplain system maintains its own Council of Imams, who, he said, reflect urban black inmates' preference for the Sunni sect.

"... ours is a very radical message: telling the individual to point the finger at himself and take responsibility instead of looking for scapegoats."

The Imam speaks from some terrible personal experiences of his youth. The many young men he saw become enmeshed in the criminal culture eventually included his brother, still doing long prison time.

"There was a world of nothing but trouble, and most of the guys I grew up with are gone now," he said, speaking of their death as both victims and criminals in assorted forms of violence.

Mr. Aziz, the mosque's elected inmate leader, has discovered that, with Islam, he can adapt the street devotion that made him a force to reckon with as a member of the Savage Nomads gang in the Bronx 17 year ago.

"I was very serious into what I was doing there, a leader," he said. "And now I'm a leader in a better cause. Before, I was cold in the world, and I only cared about putting on my gang jacket and feeling good. But when you face 25 years to life inside, you know you have to change your life sooner or later."

As he talked resolutely, the outside world still eluded him beyond the mosque bars and the razor wire. The day seemed to glow from afar with freedom as the congregants in the Fishkill masjid worshipped...

MUSLIM TEACHES ISLAM IN CHURCH



On June 14 and 21, 1992, several Muslim brothers visited the First Congregational Church in San Francisco to share the teachings of Islam with our Christian brothers and sisters. These blessed events occurred at the invitation of Mr. Ray McEvoy of the First Congressional Church.

Mr. McEvoy had studied the Quran independently, and having read it in its entirety in translation by A.J. Arberry, he was struck by the many similarities between the Quran and the Bible.

Because of this and his interest in furthering the understanding of humanity, he was planning to share his discoveries with his brothers and sisters of the Congregational Church. In conjunction with this, he made an inquiry to the Islamic Center for possible Muslim participation. It was gladly accepted.

On June 14, 1992, three Muslim brothers from the Bay Area attended the first session. Our San Jose brother made a concise presentation on the basic elements of Islam to the study group. The talk was well received and it was followed by an animated question and answer period. At McEvoy's request, the study session ended with a brief prayer and blessing in Arabic which was offered by our brother from San Jose. After that, various Islamic literature and audio tapes were presented to the study group and for the Church library.

On June 22, 1992, five brothers attended a study session which was dedicated to reading passages from the Quran which Brother McEvoy had selected from his studies. The selected passages fell into categories which suggested things in the Bible, references to Jesus, fighting for the cause (of Allah), works of mercy, possible unforgivable sins, free will versus fate, Muhammad as one of God's messengers, God's defense of Muhammad against skeptics, other religions, praise to God, Heaven and hell, and miscellaneous matters.

The Muslim brothers joined the Christian brothers and sisters in reading some of these translated passages and discussed their meanings. One of the Muslim brothers also gave a very moving recitation of Surah 2, Ayahs 284-286 in Arabic for the group. The readings were followed by a short, but lively question and answer period. As with the June 14 session, this one ended with a short Islamic prayer and blessing made in Arabic, offered by one of the Muslim brothers.

The session ended with much cordiality and deep fellowship between all those present. While the Muslim brothers were hopeful that they were successful in communicating at least a grain of truth about profundities of Islam, they also learned at least one thing which increased their understanding of Christianity.

Of particular note was the revelation that the belief in the concept of the Trinity was no longer held as a universal truth in Christianity. Instead, Christ is viewed by at least the Unitarians as a mere human being, albeit as an extraordinary one, whose life mission was to awaken the people of his time to the message of the one God (Allah). This has significant implications for furthering the understanding of Muslims and Christians of each others beliefs at the highest levels of being.

After the study session, the Muslim brothers presented Mr. McEvoy and one of the Christian sisters with a copy of Yusuf Ali's translation of the Quran. Arrangements were also made to provide Mr. McEvoy with a copy of the videotape, "Book of Signs" and the Ramadan issue of the Islamic Bulletin.

The Islamic Center has been getting increased requests from the Christian community for information about Islam. These have proven to be providential opportunities for us to share our blessings with others and for us to improve the non- Muslims understanding of the truths of Islam. Such work must continue for the sake of perpetuating a living Islam in the dynamic society that America is. All Muslims are encouraged to help in this important work.

LIBRAIRIES RECEIVE QUR'ANS

Holy Qur'ans Donated to Oakland and San Francisco Libraries

Last month, three members of the Islamic Center of San Francisco distributed complimentary copies of the Yusuf Ali translation of the Holy Quran and other Islamic materials to the Oakland and San Francisco libraries. The gifts were well received and will be put into circulation in the respective library systems.

The group also met with the San Francisco Library's Director for Jail Services about the great need for educational materials about Islam for use in the San Francisco jail system. It was learned from these visits that there is a large and growing interest in Islam in all these communities and that the libraries have a difficult time keeping up with the demand for information. Of the various English translations of the Holy Quran which are available, the most frequently requested is Yusuf Ali's. Since his translation is not as readily available as others, these donations were especially appreciated.

Arrangements were made by the San Francisco Islamic Center group to keep in touch with these library representatives and to serve as a possible resource for them in case they have questions about Islam or about informational services that we might be able to provide.

If any of our readers are aware of a need for copies of the Holy Quran or other Islamic materials in their local libraries or other appropriate institutions, please send the pertinent information to the editor of the Islamic Bulletin who will assure it will be given proper attention. The basic information which would be needed is the name of the library system or institution, their address, phone number, and contact person, if it is known.

OHIO RECOGNIZES AMERICAN MUSLIMS

OHIO - First State to Give "Full Recognition" to American Muslims

The State of Ohio has become the first state in the United States to proclaim an annual "Islamic Day" following resolutions of both the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives (H.B. 280). The bill establishes October 30 as the annual date. It was reaffirmed and signed by Governor Voinovich. [The bill was the result of efforts of the Islamic Council of Ohio and its coordinator, Mr. Bashir Ahmad.]

AMC Report, Spring 1992.



WHY I EMBRACED ISLAM

Al-Haj Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, formerly Ibrahim Khalil Philobus, was an Egyptian Coptic priest who studied theology and got a high degree from Princeton University. He studied Islam to find gaps to attack it; instead he embraced Islam with his four children, one of whom is now a brilliant professor in Sorbonne University, Paris France.

In an interesting way, he reveals himself saying: "I was born in Alexandria on the 13th of January 1919 and was sent to the American Mission schools until I got my secondary education certificate there. In 1942 I got my diploma from Asiut University and then I specialized in religious studies as a prelude to join the Faculty of Theology. It was no easy task to join the faculty, as no candidate could join it unless he got a special recommendation from the church, and also, after he should pass a number of difficult exams. I got a recommendation from Al-Attareen Church in Alexandria and another from the Church Assembly of Lower Egypt after passing many tests to know my qualifications to become a man of religion. Then I got a third recommendation from Snodus Church Assembly which included priests from Sudan and Egypt.

The Snodus sanctioned my entrance into the Faculty of Theology in 1944 as a boarding student. There I studied at the hands of American and Egyptian teachers until my graduation in 1948.

I was supposed, he continued, to be appointed in Jerusalem had it not been for the war that broke out in Palestine that same year, so I was sent to Asna in Upper Egypt. That same year I registered for a thesis at the American University in Cairo. It was about the missionary activities among Muslims. My acquaintance with Islam started in the Faculty of Theology where I studied Islam and all the methods through which we could shake the faith of Muslims and raise misconceptions in their understanding of their own religion.

In 1952 I got my M.A. from Princeton University in U.S.A. and was appointed as a teacher in the Faculty of Theology in Asiut. I used to teach Islam in the faculty as well as the faulty misconceptions spread by its enemies and the missionaries against it. During that period I decided to enlarge my study of Islam, so that I should not read the missionaries books on it only. I had so much faith in myself that I was confirmed to read the other point of view. Thus I began to read books written by Muslim authors. I also decided to read the Quran and understand its meanings. This was implied by my love of knowledge and moved by my desire to add more proofs against Islam. The result was, however, exactly the reverse. My position began to shake and I started to feel an internal strong struggle and I discovered the falsehood of everything I had studied and preached to the people. But I could not face myself bravely and tried instead to overcome this internal crisis and continue my work.

In 1954, Mr. Khalil added, I was sent to Aswan as secretary general of the German Swiss Mission. That was only my apparent position for my real mission was to preach against Islam in Upper Egypt especially among Muslims. A missionary conference was held at that time at Cataract Hotel in Aswan and I was given the floor to speak. That day I spoke too much, reiterating all the repeated misconceptions against Islam; and at the end of my speech, the internal crisis came to me again and I started to revise my position.

Continuing his talk about the said crisis, Mr. Khalil said, «I began to ask myself: Why should I say and do all these things which I know for sure I am a liar, as this is not the truth? I took my leave before the end of the conference and went out alone to my house. I was completely shaken. As I walked through Firyal public garden, I heard a verse of the Quran on the radio. It said:

"Say: It has been revealed to me that a company of Jinns listened (to the Quran). They said: We have really heard a wonderful recital! It gives guidance to the Right, and we have believed therein: We shall not join (in worship) any gods with our Lord." (Quran 72:1-2)

"And as for us, since we have listened to the Guidance, we have accepted it: and any one who believes in His Lord, has no fear of either a short (account) or of any injustice." (Quran 72:13)»

I felt a deep comfort that night and when I returned home I spent the whole night all by myself in my library reading the Quran. My wife inquired from me about the reason of my sitting up all night and I pleaded from her to leave me alone. I stopped for a long time thinking and meditating on the verse; "Had We sent down this Quran on a mountain, verily thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah." (Quran 59:21)

And the verse: **"Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt thou find the Jews and the Pagans, and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, 'We are Christians': Because amongst these are men devoted to learning. And men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: They pray: 'Our Lord! We believe, write us down among the witnesses. What cause can we have not to believe in Allah and the truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous?'" (Quran 5:82-84)**

Mr. Khalil then quoted a third quotation from the Holy Quran which says: "Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures), in the Taurat and in the Gospel; for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them what is bad (and impure): He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him and follow the light which is sent down with him, it is they who will prosper." Say: **"O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: It is He that giveth both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger. The unlettered Prophet, who believeth in Allah and His Words: follow Him that (so) you may be guided." (Quran 7:157-158)**

Now that same night, Mr. Khalil dramatically concluded: I took my final decision. In the morning I spoke with my wife from whom I have three sons and one daughter. But no sooner than she felt that I was inclined to embrace Islam than she cried and asked for help from the head of the mission. His name was Monsieur Shavits from Switzerland. He was a very cunning man. When he asked me about my true attitude, I told him frankly what I really wanted and then he said: Regard yourself out of job until we discover what has befallen you. Then I said: This is my resignation from my job. He tried to convince me to postpone it, but I insisted. So he made a rumor among the people that I became mad. Thus I suffered a very severe test and oppression until I left Aswan for good and returned to Cairo.

When he was asked about the circumstances to his conversion he replied: "In Cairo I was introduced to a respectable professor who helped me overcome my severe trial and this he did without knowing anything about my story. He treated me as a Muslim for I introduced myself to him as such although until then I did not embrace Islam officially. That was Dr. Muhammad Abdul Moneim Al Jamal the then undersecretary of treasury. He was highly interested in Islamic studies and wanted to make a translation of the Holy Quran to be published in America. He asked me to help him because I was fluent in English since I had got my M.A. from an American University. He also knew that I was preparing a comparative study of the Quran, the Torah and the Bible. We cooperated in this comparative study and in the translation of the Quran.

When Dr. Jamal knew that I had resigned from my job in Aswan and that I was then unemployed, he helped me with a job in Standard Stationery Company in Cairo. So I was well established after a short while. I did not tell my wife about my intention to embrace Islam thus she thought that I had forgotten the whole affair and that it was nothing but a transitory crisis that no more existed. But I knew quite well that my official conversion to Islam needs long complicated measures and it was in fact a battle which I preferred to postpone for some time until I became well off and after I completed my comparative study."

Then Mr. Khalil continued, "In 1955 I did complete my study and my material and living affairs became well established. I resigned

from the company and set up a training office for importing stationery and school articles. It was a successful business from which I gained much more money than I needed. Thus I decided to declare my official conversion to Islam. On the 25th of December 1959, I sent a telegram to Dr. Thompson, head of the American Mission in Egypt informing him that I had embraced Islam. When I told my true story to Dr. Jamal he was completely astonished.

When I declared my conversion to Islam, new troubles began. Seven of my former colleagues in the mission had tried their best to persuade me to cancel my declaration, but I refused. They threatened to separate me from my wife and I said: She is free to do as she wishes. They threatened to kill me. But when they found me to be stubborn they left me alone and sent to me an old friend of mine who was also a colleague of mine in the mission. He wept very much in front of me. So I recited before him the following verses from the Quran:

"And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: They pray: 'Our Lord! We believe, write us down among the witnesses. What cause can we have not to believe in Allah and the truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous?'" (Quran 5:84)

I said to him, "You should have wept in humiliation to God on hearing the Quran and believe in the truth which you know but you refuse. He stood up and left me as he saw no use. My official conversion to Islam was in January 1960."

Mr. Khalil was then asked about the attitude of his wife and children and he answered: "My wife left me at that time and took with her all the furniture of our house. But all my children joined me and embraced Islam. The most enthusiastic among them was my eldest son Isaac who changed his name to Osman, then my second son Joseph and my son Samuel whose name is Jamal and daughter Majida who is now called Najwa. Osman is now a doctor of philosophy working as a professor in Sorbonne University in Paris teaching oriental studies and psychology. He also writes in «Le Monde» magazine. As in regards to my wife, she left the house for six years and agreed to come back in 1966 provided that she keeps her religion. I accepted this because in Islam there is no compulsion in religion. I said to her: I do not want you to become a Muslim for my sake but only after you are convinced. She feels now that she believes in Islam but she cannot declare this for fear of her family but we treat her as a Muslim woman and she fasts in Ramadan because all my children pray and fast. My daughter Najwa is a student in the Faculty of Commerce, Joseph is a doctor pharmeologist and Jamal is an engineer."

"During this period, that is since 1961 until the present time I have been able to publish a number of books on Islam and the methods of the missionaries and the orientalist against it. I am now preparing a comparative study about women in the three Divine religions with the object of highlighting the status of women in Islam. In 1973 I performed Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and I am doing activities preaching Islam. I hold seminars in the universities and charitable societies. I received an invitation from Sudan in 1974 where I held many seminars. My time is fully used in the service of Islam."

Finally Mr. Khalil was asked about the salient features of Islam which have attracted his attention most. And he answered: "My faith in Islam has been brought about through reading the Holy Quran and the biography of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. I no longer believed in the misconceptions against Islam and I am especially attracted by the concept of unity of God, which is the most important feature of Islam. God is only One. Nothing is like Him. This belief makes me the servant of God only and of no one else. Oneness of God liberates man from servitude to any human being and that is true freedom."

I also like very much the rule of forgiveness in Islam and the direct relationship between God and His servants.

Say: **"O my servants who have transgressed against their souls!, despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. Turn ye to your Lord (in repentance) and submit to Him before the Chastisement comes on you: After that ye shall not be helped." (Quran 39:53-54)**

The Prohibition of Eating What is Dead and its Wisdom

The first thing mentioned in the verses concerning prohibited foods is the flesh of “dead animals,” that is, the beast or fowl which dies of natural causes, without being slaughtered or hunted by men. There are obvious reasons for this prohibition:

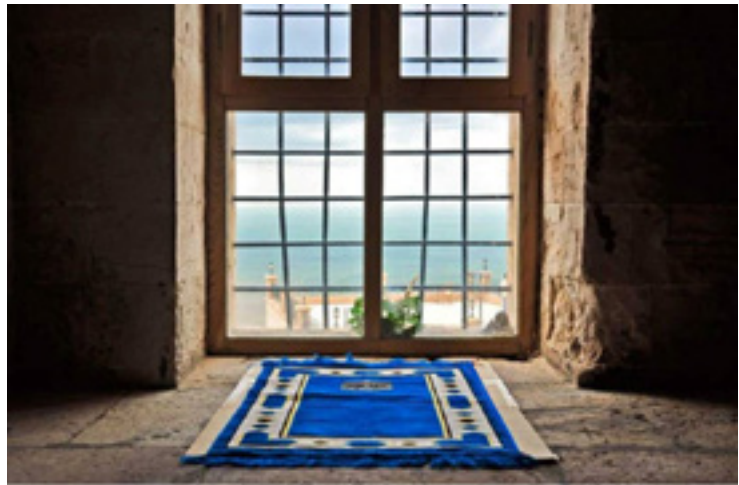
a) Eating the flesh of a dead animal is repugnant to civilized taste and is considered by thinking people in all societies to be contrary to human dignity. We also observe that all people possessing a divinely revealed scripture have prohibited it and that they do not eat the flesh of an animal unless it is slaughtered. However, the methods of slaughter may vary.

b) In whatever he does, the Muslim acts with a set purpose and intention; he does not use a thing nor reap its benefit without directing his intention,aim, and effort toward it. The significance of slaughtering, which is to take the life of the animal in order to use it as food, is to remove the slaughtered animal from the category of “dead animals.” Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala does not desire that man should eat of what he did not intend or think of eating, as is the case with the dead animal; conversely, slaughtering an animal or hunting it as game both require an intention followed by effort and subsequent action.

c) If the animal died a natural death, it is quite likely that it died of some acute or chronic disease, through eating a poisonous plant, or other similar causes; hence eating its flesh would probably be harmful. The same is that case when the cause of death is old age or starvation.

d) By prohibiting the flesh of a dead animal to human beings, Allah in His Mercy provides source of food to animals and birds, who, in the words of the Qur’an, constitute an ummah (nation) like themselves. The truth of this is demonstrated by the fact that carcasses of animals lying out in the open are devoured by birds and animals.

e) This prohibition encourages the owner to guard it from disease and malnutrition lest it die and be wasted. Accordingly, in the case of disease, he will be quick to seek a cure for it or will hasten to slaughter the animal.



And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity: And whatever good Ye send forth for your souls before you, ye shall find it with Allah: For Allah sees well all that ye do. (Quran 2:110)

Salat, usually translated into English as “prayer”, is one of the five pillars of Islam. The other four pillars are the Declaration of Faith (Shahadah), charity (Zakah), fasting (Sawm), and the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). Salat should be performed five times a day: daybreak (Fajr), noon (Zuhr), mid-afternoon (Asr), sunset (Maghrib), and evening (Isha). These periods also conveniently correspond with man’s daily routine activities: rising, noon break, after work, dinner, and sleep. One could ask, why have prayers been described for Muslims five times a day? Would not once or twice, or whenever one happens to feel like it, be sufficient? In answering these questions, it must first be pointed out that Islamic prayers (salat are somewhat different from “prayer” as used in Christian sense, although personal supplication and glorification of God (known as du’a) are also a very important part of the Muslim’s worship in addition to salat. Actually, the word “worship” conveys the meaning of salat much more accurately than “prayer”. Keeping all this in mind, we can now proceed to answer the above question of “why?”

Salat is a multi-dimensional act of worship. Performing it regularly serves as a repeated reminder to the Muslim during the day and night of his relationship with his Creator and his place in the total scheme of reality. Its regular observance is a vital centering process that helps keep one properly oriented to the truth and reality of one’s role in life as a servant of Allah (God) amid the constant distractions of mind and soul that we encounter in the material world (dunya). The remembrance of Allah and his glorification for a brief, concentrated period of prayer in the midst of one’s daily activities keeps this perspectivte always clear and intact.

True, there is for thee by day prolonged occupation with ordinary duties: But keep in remembrance the name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him wholeheartedly. (Quran 73:8-9)

Thus faith becomes an effective force in his life, and he keeps away from greed and evil or unjust deeds. To this effect, God commands:

Establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that ye do. (Quran 29:45)

Everyone has to turn to God and submit his will to Him with sincerity-which prevents him from committing vile or bad deeds. If one’s prayer does not include this concept, it is rejected. Salat is essentially a form of ritual worship of God that consists of recitations from the Holy Quran. It should always be borne in mind that God does not need man’s prayer, because He is free of all needs. He is only interested in our prosperity and well-being in every sense. Some of the benefits of prayer are that it strengthens the belief in the Existence of God and transmits this belief into the innermost recesses of man’s heart, it purifies the heart and develops the mind, cultivates the conscience and comforts the soul, and also fosters the good and decent elements in man, suppresses the evil and indecent inclinations.

Salat always begins with the call to prayer (adhan). The power of the adhan on one who hears it is indescribably moving. The personal experience that Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, reportedly had with it suggests only the slightest hint of the scope of its spiritual power and effect. It has been reported that when he was on the moon, he heard a strange sound that he could not place within his vast scientific training and experience. Some years later, while walking through the streets of a town in Cairo, he heard the same sound again. In anxious anticipation, he inquired what the unusual sound was. He was told that it was the adhan, the Muslim

call to prayer. According to this story, this awakening of spiritual insight in him resulted in his conversion to Islam.

In Salat, the recitations are always recited in Arabic, the sacred language of the Quran. However, a new convert to Islam who does not know Arabic may recite verses in translation in one’s own language until one is able to memorize at least two short passages in Arabic. Mastery of such a task is its own spiritually transforming reward.

The positions of “salat” consist of standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting. These physical acts are symbolic of the spiritual states of submission, humility and adoration of Allah Most High with one’s entire body and soul. In performing them, one’s heart is filled with the love of Allah, the recognition of one’s worldly existence and Allah’s infinite greatness and beneficence.

The self-discipline that is needed to perform salat regularly and at proper times reaffirms the human beings total dependence on his Creator and his position as His servant. Salat is the complete expression of man’s voluntary submission to Him. It is to be performed with strict concentration, attention and presence of heart, not simply as a mechanical, verbal and physical exercise.

So woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers. (Quran 107:4-5)

A Muslim is required to pray at the prescribed times wherever he may be - but it is preferable and more meritorious to pray in congregation with his fellow-Muslims if possible. In such congregational prayer, in which Muslims stand in straight rows, shoulder to shoulder as one body united in worship of Allah, the elements of discipline, orderliness, brotherhood, equality and solidarity are very strongly exemplified. Non-Muslims observing Muslims praying in congregation for the first time are often very moved by this sight of universal harmony and submission to the will of Allah.

Because of all these aspects, Salat is the principal means by which the Muslim keeps his life in proper perspective, having always before his mind, the limited, finite nature of this world’s life, with all its allurements and involvements, pleasures and pains, and the certainty of death and the Hereafter, attempting to maintain a sense of balance and proportion between the needs and claims of this world and the next. Through worship at regular, fixed intervals, marking the periods and divisions of the day, the individual voluntarily affirms the relationship existing between himself and Allah amid his involvement with his worldly affairs:

In the houses in which Allah is exalted and in which His name is remembered there are people who glorify Him at morning and evening - men whom neither merchandise nor trade takes away from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in salat and payment of zakat, who fear a Day when the hearts and the sight will be overturned; that Allah may reward them with the best for what they have done and create the reward from them out His bounty, for Allah provides for those whom He wills without measure. (Quran 25:35-38)

A Muslim always ends his salat with a call for peace: “Assalum ‘alaikum wa rahmatullah”. (“Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah”).

To state it simply, prayer must exist, for without it Islam can not stand. Abdullah ibn Oart related that the Prophet (PBUH), said, “The first act about which a person will be accountable for on the Day of Judgment will be prayer. If it is good, then the rest of his acts will be good. And if it is evil, then the rest of his acts will be evil.” (At-Tabarani.)

It is the last thing that the Prophet (PBUH) recommended to his nation before he died, saying, “Prayer, prayer and what your right hand possesses.”



Fatimah’s Tasbih

Ali (R.A.A.) once said to one of his pupils: ‘Shall I tell you the story of Fatimah (R.A.), the dearest and the most loved daughter of the Prophet (PBUH)?”

When the pupil replied in the affirmative, he said: “Fatimah (R.A.) used to grind the grain herself, which caused corns on her hands. She carried water for the house in a leather bag, which left a mark on her breast. She cleaned the house herself, which made her clothes dirty. Once some war-captives were brought to Madinah; I said to her, ‘Go to the Prophet (PBUH) and request him for an assistant to help you in your housework.’ She went to him, but found many people around him. As she was very modest, she could not be bold enough to request the Prophet (PBUH) in the presence of other people.”

The next day the Prophet (PBUH) came to our house and said, “Fatimah! What made you come to me yesterday?” She felt shy and kept quiet. I said, “O, Prophet of Allah! Fatimah has developed calluses on both her hands and breast, on account of grinding and carrying water. She is constantly busy in cleaning the house and in other domestic jobs, causing her to remain dirty. I informed her about the captives and advised her to go to you and make a request for a servant. It has also been reported that Fatimah (R.A.) made a request, “I and Ali own only one bedding and that also is a skin of a goat. We use it in the morning to put the feed of the camel.” The Prophet (S.A.W.) said,

“Fatimah! Be patient. The Prophet Moses (A.S.) and his wife owned only one bedding, which was the cloak of Moses. Fear Allah; acquire Taqwa--(the fear that arises out of love. When we love Allah so much that we become very God conscious and we want to please Him all the time) and keep doing your service to Allah and attend to your domestic jobs. When you go to bed, recite ‘Subhanallah’ 33 times, ‘Alhamdulillah’ 33 times, and ‘Allahu akbar’ 33 times. You will find this more helpful than an assistant.”

Fatimah (R.A.) remarked, “I am happy with what Allah and His Prophet (PBUH) would be pleased.”





Q: 1. During how many years was the Qur'an completely revealed?

Q: 2. How old was Umar Ibn Khattab (R.A.A.), the second Caliph, when he embraced Islam?

Q: 3. When was wine prohibited?

Q: 4. Which was the first mosque built by the Prophet (SAW)?

Q: 5. In which month did the Battle of Badr take place?

A: The Holy Qur'an was revealed over a period of 23 years.

A: The 2nd Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab (R.A.A.) was 23 when he embraced Islam.

A: Wine consumption was prohibited in the year Hijri 3.

A: The first mosque built by the Holy Prophet (SAW) was Majid-Quba.

A: The Battle of Badr took place in the month of Ramadan.

MIRACLES OF THE QUR'AN

The Difference between the Miracle of the Qur'an and other Miracles

The miracle of the Qur'an sent to the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) differs from those of other Messengers and Prophets in many respects. In the Qur'an there are many miraculous aspects which demand a considerable degree of contemplation before their secrets are unlocked. When this happens it becomes apparent that within the Qur'an there are layers of meaning which throw new light on the superficial significance of its verses. This miraculous feature may be in one single letter which alone may denote immeasurable meanings.

For each successive generation, the Qur'an offers new and relevant meanings, proportionate to the development of knowledge and the growth of that generation's intellectual aptitude. In other words, they are applicable to the constantly changing perceptions of the human race, expanding in meaning as man's exploration of the universe and his search for knowledge about his life and existence increases. From this we see that the Qur'an was not intended solely for one people or nation, but came for the benefit and guidance of all, as a complete and comprehensive religion, providing knowledge for all generations.

To clarify this feature of the Qur'an, it is essential that we distinguish the precepts of worship, on the one hand, and on the other the laws that govern this universe and its phenomena.

By precepts of worship we mean the discipline which Allah decreed and defined for the human race to follow and observe. Specific commands such as 'do this and not that', 'this is lawful and that is not', are not liable to alteration or misinterpretation. They should be practiced and followed exactly as they have been elucidated by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) at the advent of Islam and the revelations of the Qur'an. These laws are commands to be observed on which man's deliverance or damnation depends. There can be no speculation.

When the Qur'an was first revealed to Muhammad (PBUH), the human race lacked the basic knowledge necessary for understanding and perceiving the complex facts it contained. Because of this paucity of knowledge, many phenomena such as the sphericity of the earth and its movements in the solar system, or the notion of relativity embryology, were simply touched in the Qur'an, leaving their profound exploration and identification to the inquisitive minds of future generations.

The miracle of the Qur'an is that it yields its knowledge to each mind within its capacity and degree of intellect. It gives to the mind that which satisfies it. Thus we find the illiterate quite content to listen to the Qur'an being read or recited. The literate obtain a great deal of contentment and satisfaction from reading it or listening to its meaningful elucidation.

The highly-educated person finds its miraculous features challenging and stimulating to their mind and thought. This is because within the Qur'an the basis for all knowledge a man may attain by Allah's will, at any period of time, can be found. When such knowledge is attained and the relevant verses for enlightenment cited, one is overwhelmed by their consistency and authenticity.

For example, we know that during a single solar rotation every place on earth has its particular sunrise and sunset, in an ever-changing pattern, as the earth moves along its orbital path around the sun. In other words, the sun never rises or sets at the same angle as that of the previous rising or setting, even though the direction remains unchanged.

During the holy month of Ramadan, the times of prayer for Muslims continually vary according to the earth's revolution around the sun. It is this movement that causes variation in time and in the angle of sunrise

and sunset which led to the conclusions about the earth's sphericity and its movement. If it were flat as was once believed there would have been only one unchanging position for the sun's setting and rising, with no seasons. The term "Lord of east and west" must not be thought contradictory to the two descriptions mentioned. Even scientific progress which has unfolded many of the secrets of the universe and its phenomena, does not find discrepancy between their meanings about confirms their veracity.

When we contemplate the relativity of time and the divine organization of the universe we are able to grasp the fundamental purpose and wisdom underlying the immaculate harmony and uniformity which ensure that around the world prayer is continuously taking place.

It is evident that the meanings of the above mentioned were planned by Allah, The Source of all knowledge, to expand with human knowledge and scientific exploration. While offering appropriate meaning at the onset of Islam, they yield a more elaborate meaning today, and it is likely that future generations may discover an even deeper meaning in them.

Therefore we see that one miraculous feature of the Qur'an is its ability to offer knowledge to each generation according to its capacity without contradicting existing facts, in harmony with the realities of the universe, yielding new and more profound meaning to successive generations.

For each of Allah's Messengers there was an exclusive miracle and that of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the Qur'an itself. With the very nature of the Qur'an standing as a miraculous proof of the Prophet's divine mission, Allah ensured that both the code of injunctions and its eternal message would be forever safeguarded from falsification.

To protect the Qur'an integrity, Allah made it clear in His divine verse: "Lo! We, even We, reveal the Reminder and lo! We verily are its Guardian." (Surah Al-Hijr 15:9) that He had undertaken the task of its preservation. Moreover, as the Qur'an itself is a miracle, it was essential that its textual authenticity be preserved, as corruption of the text would diminish the miracle.

One can discern from the reverence in which Muslims hold the Qur'an another of the divine safeguards that guarantee its authenticity. Despite that lack of spiritual concern that generally characterizes present day living, there has, nevertheless, been a resolute effort to preserve and propagate the text of the Qur'an. Throughout the Islamic world it is common for a Muslim to possess one or more copies of the text. It is carried in cars, while at home one or more copies can be found.

This determination and zest by mankind to honor, preserve and propagate the Qur'an has no other explanation than it being an act of Allah and the fulfillment the promise made by Him. It is not a human endeavor per se.

Oddly enough, many of those who keep a copy of the Qur'an in their cars, homes, pockets or on their library shelf are not always so eager to implement its divine injunctions, and frequently fail to give any convincing justification for this paradoxical behavior. It appears, therefore, that despite our reluctance to carry out and adhere to the norms of behavior prescribed in the Qur'an, our concern and care to preserve it has not diminished.

In the past, Allah's Messengers were sent to different societies and communities to remedy their ills and guide them to salvation. As each of these communities had its own particular afflictions, messengers were sent with the predetermined task of remedying those ills alone. In some instances, more than one messenger was sent. Sometimes these communities were widely scattered and knew nothing of the other's existence. Each messenger's task was, therefore, designed to treat the ills of a particular community or society.

These afflictions were not always the same. Some communities were pagans and worshipped man-made idols, while others wallowed in sinful living or festered in corruption and dishonesty. As transport and communications have developed, the whole of mankind has become one large community. As a result of this development, people of all nations have come closer to each other and as they have, at the same time the ills and afflictions of one nation eventually affects other nations in similar ways.

As a result, Allah sent the Qur'an as a means of deliverance for the whole of mankind.

THE PROPHET YA'QUB (JACOB)

Allah conveyed to the Prophet Abraham (PBUH) glad tidings regarding the birth of elite Prophets, Ishaq and Ya'qub (peace be upon them). The Holy Qur'an says:

We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub. Each of them We made a Prophet. And We gave them of Our mercy and assigned to them a high and true renown. (Qur'an 19:49-50)

Qualities of the Prophet Ya'qub

The Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) was the son of Prophet Ishaq (PBUH) and his wife Rebecca. He was born at Palestine. He passed his life exactly in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. He had full faith in the Oneness of God. He directed his followers to do good and shun evil. He advised them to keep up prayer and give alms. He was a man of peace and wisdom. God showered His blessings on him and his kith and kin. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

And We gave him tidings of the birth of Ishaq, a Prophet of the righteous and We showered Our blessings on him and on Ishaq and of their offspring are some who do good and some who plainly wrong their own selves. (Qur'an 37:113)

At the age of sixty the Prophet Ishaq (PBUH) was blessed with a pair of twins namely Esau and Ya'qub. Esau was a hunter and provided his aged parents with meat. Ya'qub was chosen to be the Prophet of the Bani Israel (Israelites).

His Marriage and Offspring

It is narrated that his uncle Laban made Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) serve him for seven years on promise to marry Rachel with him. At the end of this period the marriage was solemnized. Later on he entered into matrimonial contract with three more women. The Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) had four wives and twelve sons who became the progenitors of twelve tribes. The Prophet Yusuf (PBUH) and Benjamin were from Rachel. The Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) had great affection for them.

Plot Against Prophet Ya'qub

As the offsprings of his other wives were jealous of Prophet Yusuf (PBUH) they hatched out a plan to separate Yusuf from his father. They took him out on a lame excuse of tending sheep and threw him into a waterless well. They came back home shedding crocodile tears and said: "A wolf has devoured Yusuf." Ya'qub (PBUH) suspected foul play on the part of his sons. He bore with patience the mental torture to which he was subjected in his old age. He wept bitterly day and night and lost his eyesight. After a long time he came to know that Prophet Yusuf (PBUH) was alive. He was the custodian of storehouse in Egypt. The Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) along with the whole family proceeded towards Egypt on the invitation of his son. They were awarded a warm reception. He settled in Egypt. He died at the age of 140 years. He was buried in Hebron (al-Khalil) according to his will.

When the Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) was on the point of death, he called his sons and held conversation with them. It is mentioned in the following Verses of the Holy Qur'an:

The same did Abraham enjoin upon his sons, and also Ya'qub (saying): O' my sons! Lo! Allah has chosen for you the true religion, therefore die not save as men who have surrendered (unto Him) or were you present when death came to Ya'qub when he said to his sons: What will you worship after me? They said: We shall worship your God, God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishaq, One God and unto Him we have surrendered." (Quran 2:132-133)



SA’ID IBN AAMIR AL-JUMAH

Sa’id ibn Aamir al-Jumahi was one of the thousands who left for the region of Tan’im on the outskirts of Makkah at the invitation of the Quraysh leaders to witness the killing of Khubayb ibn Adiy, one of the companions of Mohammed (PBUH) whom they had captured treacherously.

With his exuberant youthfulness and strength, Sa’id jostled through the crowd until he caught up with the Quraysh leaders, men like Sufyan ibn Harb, and Safwan ibn Umayyah, who were leading the procession. Now he could see the prisoner of the Quraysh shackled in his chains, the women and children pushing him to the place set for his death.

Khubayb’s death was to be the revenge for Quraysh losses in the battle of Badr. When the assembled crowd arrived with its prisoner at the appointed place, Sa’id ibn Aamir took up his position at a point directly overlooking Khubayb as he approached the wooden cross. From there he heard Khubayb’s firm but quiet voice amid the shouting of women and children. “If you would, leave me to pray two rakaats (unit of prayer) before my death.”

This the Quraysh allowed.

Sa’id looked at Khubayb as he faced the Ka’bah and prayed. How beautiful and how composed those two rakaats seemed!

Then he saw Khubayb facing the Quraysh leaders. “By God, if you thought that I asked to pray out of fear of death, I would think the prayer not worth the trouble,” he said.

Sa’id then saw his people set about dismembering Khubayb’s body while he was yet alive and taunting him in the process.

“Would you like Muhammad to be in your place while you go free?”

With his blood flowing, he replied, “By God, I would not want to be safe and secure among my family while even a thorn hurts Muhammad.”

People shook their fists in the air and the shouting increased. “Kill him. Kill Him!”

Sa’id watched Khubayb lifting his eyes to the heavens above the wooden cross. “Count them all, O Lord,” he said. “Destroy them and let not a single one escape.” Thereafter Sa’id could not count the number of swords and spears which cut through Khubayb’s body.

The Quraysh returned to Makkah and in the eventful days that followed forgot Khubayb and his death. But Khubayb was never absent from the thoughts of Sa’id, now approaching manhood. Sa’id would dream of Khubayb in front of him praying his two rakaats, calm and contented, before the wooden cross. And he would hear the reverberation of Khubayb’s voice as he prayed for the punishment of the Quraysh. He would be afraid that a thunderbolt from the sky or some calamity would strike him.

Khubayb, by his death, had taught Sa’id what he did not realize before--that real life was faith and conviction and struggle in the path of faith, even until death.

He taught something else too- that the man who is loved by his

companions with such a love as Khubayb’s could only be a Prophet with Divine support.

Thus was Sa’id’s heart opened to Islam. He stood up in the assembly of the Quraysh and announced that he was free from their sins and burdens. He renounced their idols and their superstitions and proclaimed his entry into the religion of God.

Sa’id migrated to Madinah and attached himself to the Prophet (pbuh). He took part with the Prophet in the battle of Khaybar and other engagements thereafter. After the Prophet passed away, Sa’id continued active service under his successors, Abu Bakr and Umar. He lived the unique and exemplary life of the believer who purchased the Hereafter with this world. He sought the pleasure and blessings of God above selfish desires and bodily pleasures.

Both Abu Bakr and Umar knew Sa’id well for his honesty and piety. They would listen to whatever he had to say and follow his advice. Sa’id once came to Umar at the beginning of his caliphate and said, “I adjure you to fear God in dealing with people and do not fear people in your relationship with God. Let not your actions deviate from your words for the best of speech is that which is confirmed by action. Consider those who have been appointed over the affairs of Muslims, far and near. Like for them what you like for yourself and your family. Surmount any obstacles to attain the truth and do not fear the criticisms of those who criticize in matters prescribed by God.

“Who can measure up to this, Sa’id?” asked Umar. “A man like yourself from among those whom God has appointed over the affairs of the Ummah of Muhammad and who feels responsible to God alone,” replied Sa’id.

“Sa’id,” he said, “I appoint you to be governor of Homs (in Syria).” “Umar,” pleaded Sa’id, “I entreat you by God, do not cause me to go astray by making me concerned with worldly affairs.”

Umar became angry and said, “You have placed the responsibility of the caliphate on me and now you forsake me.” “By God, I shall not forsake you,” Sa’id quickly responded. Umar appointed him as governor of Homs and offered him a gratuity.

“What shall I do with it, O Amir al-Mu’mineen?” asked Sa’id. “The salary from bayt al-mal will be more than enough for my needs.” With this he proceeded to Homs. Not long afterwards, a delegation from Homs made up of people in whom Umar had confidence, came to visit him in Madinah. He requested them to write the names of the poor among them so he could relieve their needs.

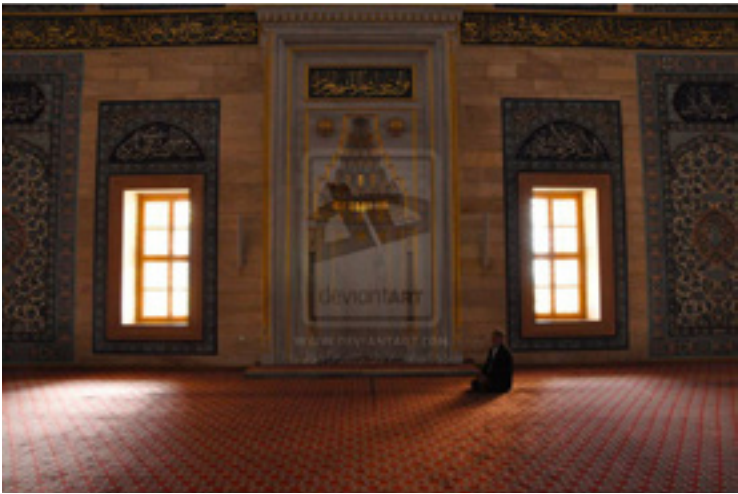
They prepared a list for him in which the name Sa’id ibn Aamir appeared. “Who is this Sa’id ibn Aamir?” asked Umar. “Our amir,” they replied. “Your amir is poor?” said Umar, puzzled. “Yes,” they affirmed, “By God, several days go by without a fire being lit in his house.” Umar was greatly moved and wept. He got a thousand dinars, put it in a purse and said, “Convey my greetings to him and tell him that the Amir al-Mu’mineen has sent this money to help him look after his needs.”

The delegation came to Sa’id with the purse. When he found that it contained money, he began pushing it away saying, “From God we are and to Him we shall return.” He said it in such a way as if some misfortune had descended on him.

His alarmed wife hurried to him and asked, “What’s the matter, Sa’id? Has the Khalifah died?” “Something greater than that.” “Have the Muslims been defeated in a battle?” “Something greater than that. The world has come upon me to corrupt my hereafter and create disorder in my house.”

“Then get rid of it,” said she, not knowing anything about the dinars. “Will you help me in this?” he asked. She agreed. He took the dinars, put them in bags and distributed them to the poor Muslims.

Not long afterwards, Umar ibn al-Khatib went to Syria to examine conditions there. When he arrived at Homs, which is called little Kufah because, like Kufah, its inhabitants complained a lot about their leaders, he asked what they thought of the Amir. They complained about him mentioning four of his actions each one more serious than the other.



“I shall bring you and him together,” Umar promised. “And I pray to God that my opinion about him would not be damaged. I used to have great confidence in him.”

When the meeting was convened, Umar asked what complaints they had against him. “He only comes out to us when the sun is already high,” they said. “What do you have to say to that, Sa’id?” asked Umar.

Sa’id was silent for a moment, then said, “By God, I really didn’t want to say this but there seems to be no way out. My family does not have help in the home so I get up every morning and prepare dough for bread. I wait a little until it rises and then bake it for my family. I then make wudu and go out to the people.”

“What’s your other complaint?” asked Umar. “He does not answer anyone at night,” they said. To this Sa’id reluctantly said, “By God, I really wouldn’t have liked to disclose this also, but I have left the day for them and the night for God, Great and Sublime is He.”

“And what’s your other complaint about him?” asked Umar. “He does not come to us for one day in every month,” they said.

To this Sa’id replied, “I do not have a house help, O Amir al-Mu’mineen and I do not have any clothes except what’s on me. This I wash once a month and I wait for it to dry. Then I go out in the later part of the day.”

“Any other complaint about him?” asked Umar. “From time to time, he blacks out in meetings,” they said.

To this Sa’id replied, “I witnessed the killing of Khubayb ibn Adiy when I was a mushrik (ascribing partners to Allah). I saw the Quraysh cutting him and saying, ‘Would you like Muhammad to be in your place?’ to which Khubayb replied, ‘I would not wish to be safe and secure among my family while a thorn hurts Muhammad.’ By God, whenever I remember that day and how I failed to come to his aid, I only think that God would not forgive me and I black out.”

Thereupon Umar said, “Praise be to God. My impression of him has not been tainted.” He later sent a thousand dinars to Sa’id to help him out.

When his wife saw the amount she said. “Praise be to God Who has enriched us out of your service. Buy some provisions for us and get us a person to help in the house.” “Is there any way of spending it better?” asked Sa’id. “Let us spend it in whoever comes to us and we would get something better for it by thus dedicating it to God.” “That will be better,” she agreed.

He put the dinars into small bags and said to a member of his family, “Take this to the widow of so and so, and the orphans of that person, to the needy in that family and to the indigent of the family of that person.”

“Sa’id ibn Aamir-al Jumahi was indeed one of those who deny themselves even when they are afflicted with severe poverty.

SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)

Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “He has no faith who does not keep trust, and he has no prayer who is impure, and he has no religion who does not offer prayer. Verily the place of prayer in the religion is just as the position in the body.” (Al-Mu’jam Al-Saghir)

Abu Musa Ash’ari (R.A.A.) said, “A person, who comes to offer prayer from a long distance, gets the highest reward; and he who waits so that he might say his prayer along with the Imam (in congregation) has higher recompense than the one who prays all alone, and thereafter goes to sleep.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Abu Saeed Khudri (R.A.A.) relates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: “When you notice a person regularly visiting a mosque, testify to his faith (his being a believer) for Allah, the Master of Honor and Glory said: “The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day.” (S.9 V.18) (Tirmizi)

Abu Hurairah (R.A.A.) relates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: When a person goes under sound sleep the Satan ties three knots at the nape of his neck (where it touches the head) reciting some spell over each of these knots i.e. there is enough of the night go on sleeping. If he wakes up and remembers Allah, one of these knots is untied. Then if he gets up and makes ablution, another one is loosened. If he offers his prayer, then the remaining third knot is loosened. Thus he faces his morning quite fresh and is in a cheerful mood. Otherwise he gets up in an unpleasant, dull and lethargic mood. (Bukhari and Muslim)

When you are among your goats in the desert and call the Adhan, raise your voice for whoever of the jinn and men; and whatever hears the farthest sound of the voice of the muezzin shall bear witness to it on the Day of Judgment. (Bukhari)

If people realized the beneficence of calling the Adhan and standing in the first row for Prayer, and they could secure these privileges only through drawing lots they would draw lots for them; and if they knew the merit of coming early to Prayer they would vie with each other in hastening to it; and if they appreciated the value of the dawn and evening Prayers they would come to them even if they had to crawl on all fours. (Bukhari and Muslim)

When you hear the Adhan, repeat after the muezzin what he says. (Bukhari and Muslim)

A supplication made between Adhan and Iqamah is not rejected. (Abu Daud and Tirmidhi)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: “Tell me if one of you had a stream running at his door and he should take a bath in it five times every day would any dirt be left upon him?” He was answered: “No dirt would be left on him.” The Holy Prophet observed: “This is the case of the five Prayers. Allah wipes out all faults in consequence of them.” (Bukhari and Muslim)



He who is constant in the dawn and afternoon Prayers will enter Paradise. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Usman Bin Affan (R.A.A.) says that he heard the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) say: "A person who offers night (Isha) prayer in congregation is deemed to have spent half the night in optional prayer and one who joins the dawn (Fajr) prayer in congregation, is considered to have spent the whole night in optional prayer." (Muslim)

Prayer with the congregation is twenty seven times more beneficent than Prayer performed by oneself. (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "The servant of Allah is closest to Him when he prostrates himself before Him. Therefore, when you prostrate yourself, pray fervently." (Muslim)

Between Adhan and Iqamah there is a Prayer, for him who so wishes. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Offer your Prayers in your homes for, with the exception of the prescribed Prayers, the best Prayer is that which is offered at home. (Bukhari and Muslim)

When you have finished your Prayer in the mosque you should offer the rest of your Prayer at home, for Allah will bless your home because of your Prayer. (Muslim)

When any of you enters the mosque he should not sit down till he has offered two rakaats. (Bukhari and Muslim)

If a man awakens his wife at night and they offer Prayer (or offer two rakaats) they are both recorded among those who remember Allah. (Muslim)

HUMAN EXCELLENCE AWARDS

On Saturday, July 18, 1992, the San Francisco Muslim Community Center held its 6th Human Excellence Awards Ceremony at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, California.

The Human Excellence Awards Ceremony honored individuals and organizations who have displayed outstanding contributions throughout the Bay Area. One of the goals of the awards ceremony was to raise funds to build a Masjid and school.

"The religion of Islam teaches us that excellence is a part of the divine destiny of every human being. In a time when we constantly hear about the lack of role models for our youth, we believe it is our duty to present and acknowledge these distinguished people." Imam Abu Qadir Al-Amin.

Since its conception, the Human Excellence Awards has recognized efforts of not only the Muslim community, but also individuals and agencies outside the Muslim community who have pioneered themselves in selected areas of human interest.

This year's Keynote Speaker was Dr. Ali A. Mazrui, Ph.D., creator of the distinguished PBS series *The Africans: A triple Heritage*. The awardees honored for their contributions to Human Excellence included:

Special Recognition Awards

Criminal Justice.....	Delancy Street
Sports.....	Kevin Johnson
Community Service.....	Rev. Yvette Flunder
Journalism.....	Rhonda White-Warner
Philanthropy.....	Bay Area Black United Fund
Arts and Culture.....	Jeyhan Rohani
Religion.....	Fellowship Church
Media and Communications.....	Janice Huff
Education.....	Anita DeFrantz
Health and Science.....	Michael LeNoir, M.D.
Oakland Black Firefighters.....	Dan Farrell, President
Ayesha Mustafaa.....	Editor, Muslim Journal
V Street Mosque.....	Sacramento, California