



THE ISLAMIC BULLETIN

Issue 18

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THE ISLAMIC BULLETIN

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AS-SALAAMU-ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAHI WA BARAKATU!

Welcome to The Islamic Bulletin Web Site. In addition to publishing The Islamic Bulletin, in hard copy, we are very pleased to announce that we are now available electronically! Although the website is currently under construction, we expect to have all the previous issues fully operational in a short time. You will be able to bring to Muslims and non-Muslims alike a comprehensive site to explore Islam.

We have provided links to the Holy Quran in Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, French, Dutch, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Malaysian, Spanish, Swahili, Russian, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese. Many with audio! This is, Insha'Allah, a "one-stop" site for everything you wanted to know about Islam. You can:

- Listen and read the Quran online;
- Research hadith collections such as Bukhari, Muslim, and others;
- Check daily prayer schedules;
- Listen to a live radio station from Mecca;
- Watch videos about Islam (See section on "How to Become Muslim");
- View or download "The Sealed Nectar", a biography of the Prophet (pbuh);
- Learn "How To Become Muslim" in Spanish or English;
- Find prayer locations around the world;
- Read activities and stories for children;
- View The Islamic Bulletin's past and present issues;
- etc.

InshAllah, soon you will be able to download: an Islamic Last Will, the Mosques (Masjids) in California, with driving directions. We hope that the locations and directions of the various Masjids will assist our fellow Muslims in maintaining their salaat/prayer times and responsibilities. Plus much more!

Living in this country we have problems of all sorts and dimensions. These problems are as diverse as each of us. We are a community drawn from almost every corner of the Earth. We have different cultural backgrounds and languages. We have different ethnic and family backgrounds. Despite all that, we have a desire to practice Islam in its truest sense and live peacefully. We also hope, through the web, to create a sense of togetherness, introduce individuals to each other for their support or suggestions and, at the same time, link community organizations together for the benefit of all. The development of The Islamic Bulletin and this site is the result of many dedicated people who have volunteered their time and efforts to help spread the truth of Islam. The amount of work involved in publishing such a magazine is tremendous. It is only possible when we have the support, encouragement, and co-operation from the Muslim community.

We have tried to make the site 'user friendly' with few graphics to enable easy viewing and quick loading for those with less sophisticated systems. We would like to acknowledge in particular the following people: Khawar Chaudhry and Babar from Hizone for hosting us and setting up the site. Ali Tassavor was dedicated and patient during the many changes we worked through. AbdelKader Guettatfi, Shohreh Doustani, Colette Andrews, Sabah ElTareb, Fawzia El Tareb, Mohamed Baarmah, Nasira Abdul-Aleem, Izayda Molina, Judith Thomas, Pamela Consul, and Joveria for their invaluable input.

Please bookmark our website, share it with others, and visit us often, and feel free to contact us at: info@islamicbulletin.org As-Salaamu-alaykum.

The Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor:

Not long ago, I heard some interesting things about blackseeds. I heard that the Prophet (pbuh) advised people to eat them. Can you provide more information about them? I am also worried that my relatives will not be able to bury me Islamically as they are non-Muslims.

What should I do to prepare for this? Thank you.

Salaams, Layla Barrett

Liberty Lake, Washington

Response:

Assalamu Aleikum Layla,

Let me answer your letter with an amazing story about the black seeds. One day, my friend Steve Simon, an English teacher at City College of San Francisco, looking rather sad, came to see me. I asked him why he was sad. He said, "I am taking a trip around the world." I told him he should be happy, but then he said that the doctor had just given him six months to live. I told him he was lucky because he knew when he would be going and so would have time to prepare. He told me that he didn't want to talk about religion as he didn't believe in anything nor in the hereafter. He was Jewish but never believed in anything.

I told him, "Steve, how about this...suppose you believe, and then you find out that there is no life in the hereafter...what have you lost?" He remained quiet. Then I said, "But what if you find out that there is a life in the hereafter... isn't it better to be prepared? He said, "No, no, you are trying to confuse me."

Then, I told him about blackseeds and Zamzam water. He agreed to try them, saying, "I have nothing to lose."

About a year later, I was surprised to see him again and he told me that his doctors didn't know why he was still alive. He didn't know if my 'blackseeds and zamzam' really did something or if it was the psychology of it.

Then he said that he wanted to read about Islam...not to convert or anything...but that maybe he had missed something in his life since, whenever he saw anything about Islam, his mind would block it. I gave him a Qur'an and also Mohamed Asad's The Road to Mecca. He was still taking the 'medicine' when I saw him a year later and he was still alive!

Now, interestingly enough, I saw him walking down the street wearing a tope (Muslim white hat)! I said, "Hey Steve! What happened? You became Muslim?" He said, "Well, I'm reading the Qur'an and it helps put me in the mood."

Shortly after that, he came to my office while I was on a trip to Yemen and asked the secretary to tell me to bring back some Blackseed Oil for him because he had run out of it. I brought back the oil for him, but, when I returned, he had just passed away. His sister said he kept reading a green Qur'an right up to the end. May Allah bless his soul.

Editors Note: Please see Page 10 for our article on Death & Dying and Pages 11--14 for a simplified Islamic Last Will and Testament. On Page 19, you will find our article on Black Seeds. We hope you will benefit from our modest efforts.

NEED TO CONTACT US?

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Dear **Editor:**

As-salaamu alaikum

I pray that this letter finds you in Allah's special grace and care. I am writing you with the hopes that you will print the enclosed article that I have written, entitled: The Deal of a Lifetime. I have been a student of Al-Islam for five years now and I would like to contribute in Allah's cause by assisting in the realm of Da'wah. May Allah reward you and your staff for your active service in His cause.

As-Salaamu alaikum wa rahmatullah.

Sincerely, Aquil Abdul Baseer

lone, California

Editor's Note: Please see brother Aquil's excellent article on Pages 7-9. May Allah accept all his efforts and hope you will benefit from this article.

Dear Editor:

As-Salamu Alaikum!

First of all, I want to tell you how much I enjoy your newsletter. Not only do I find it interesting, but also very informative. Because I have learned so much from your newsletter, I would like to share an experience of my own with your readers in the hope that they might get inspiration and hope from my story.

I recently gave birth to a healthy baby girl, Al-Hamduli-Lah (Thanks to God). Throughout my pregnancy, my baby was in the breech (sitting) position. The doctors informed me that my baby was not in a correct position, but my doctor did not seem concerned. She kept saying that the baby had plenty of time to move to its correct position. However, when I got close to my due date, my baby still had not turned. My husband kept telling me to put all of my faith in Allah, that Allah would take care of me.

When my due date arrived, the baby still had not turned. In fact, two weeks later, I still had not gone into labor nor had my baby turned. My doctor referred us to a doctor who specialized in turning babies by pushing them around in the womb. This doctor said that she could turn the baby, but that we would have to sign a release form because sometimes the baby's back or neck got broken when pushing them, and that the baby could be born paraplegic! My husband and I both agreed that we could never take such a risk, so I went into the hospital to have a Cesarean Section.

The doctor's were preparing me for a C-Section when my husband decided to ask Allah Ta'ala to help. My husband made two Raka'a and offered the "Taif Du'a" to Allah.

Miraculously, my baby did a 180-degree turn! I did not have to have the operation! , and I delivered my baby within one hour. Al-Hamduli-Lahi Rabbil-'Aalameen!

My husband reminded me that there is a hadith Qudsi that says that Allah Ta'ala says that He is according to what His servant expects of Him, so keep your expectations high. I think it means that He, Allah, responds our faith according to our expectations.

I would like to share this beautiful and powerful (by the Will of Allah) Du'a (supplication) with you, by the prophet Mohammed (pbuh) in Taif.

At that time, Rasulu-Lah (pbuh) prayed to Allah, our Lord, saying:

"Oh, my Allah! To Thee I complain of the feebleness of my strength, of my lack of resources and of my being unimportant in the eyes of people. Oh, Most Merciful of all those capable of showing mercy! Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my own Lord. To whom art Thou to entrust me; to an unsympathetic folk who would sullenly frown at me, or to an alien to whom Thou hast given control over my affairs? In the least do I care for anything except that I may have Thy protection for myself. I seek shelter in Your light - The light that illuminates the Heavens and dispels all sorts of darkness, and which controls all affairs in this work as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Thy wrath, or that Thou should be displeased with me. I must remove the cause of Thy displeasure until Thou art pleased. There is no strength nor power but through Thee."

Fawzia El Tareb, Daly City, California

Editor's Note: Try to memorize the above Du'a (in Arabic) if possible on Page 9.

EID SCHOOL CLOSINGS -- A MILESTONE FOR MUSLIMS



By Monique El-Faizy and Michele Comandini

A decision by Paterson (CA) school district officials to recognize the two major Islamic holidays is the first of its kind in the country, community leaders say, and reflects the growing influence of Muslims in America.

Paterson's schools will close next year for the two most important

Muslim holidays -- Eid al-Fitr on Jan. 7, which marks the end of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha on March 17, which commemorates the Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismael at God's command.

"We have a growing Muslim presence in Paterson, and this was a way to recognize that," said school board President William McKoy. "It's important in celebrating our diversity that we also have an understanding of holidays."

"On the district level, that is the first time in the United States," said Shabbir Mansuri, founding director of the Council on Islamic Education, based in Fountain Valley, Calif. "This is welcome news to the 6 [million] to 8 million Muslims in the United States. It also sends a signal to the rest of the United States."

Paterson's Muslim groups also praised the decision, saying it was "long overdue." "We have a large number of Muslims in the school system and we should be entitled to our holidays as well as others' holidays," said Riad Mustafa, president of the Islamic Center of Passaic County (California). "It shows how great we are in this country that we can accommodate everyone's religious beliefs."

McKoy said the Paterson district also will begin to incorporate the meaning of holidays in its curriculum so that "students can celebrate with more purpose rather than just having a day off."

The district recognizes Jewish and Christian religious holidays as well as Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. District officials said Eid al-Fitr was included as a holiday this school year, but the holiday fell on Jan. 18, which was also the observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

The second Muslim holiday was added last week after the board was approached by parents, students, and members of the Arab and Muslim communities.

New Jersey law allows students to be excused from school during religious holidays recognized by the state. Eid al-Fitr is one of those holidays, so students are allowed to take the day off in other districts.

Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Washington, D.C.-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, said that has been a struggle in other states. "Our main goal in this area has been to have Muslim students allowed to go to Eid without being marked absent," he said.

Paterson's decision is the latest in a series of steps toward recognizing the rights of Muslims in schools and workplaces, something the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has worked hard for. "I think that Muslims are finally coming on people's radar screens, both the general public and officials, and these kinds of things are beginning to be addressed," Hooper said.

Hooper said the council has received thousands of requests for its educators' guide to Islamic practices, which was released in late 1997, and has sent out 20,000 copies of a similar guide for employers.

Opportunity Commission is handling many more complaints from Muslims, and an increasing number of disputes are being resolved in their favor.

The Islamic Bulletin

Most recently, seven Dulles International Airport workers won the right to wear head scarves to work in conformance with Muslim tradition,

and in March a federal appeals court ruled that two Newark police officers had the right to wear beards for religious reasons.

LATINOS EMBRACE ISLAM

By Margaret Rameriz, Times Religion Writer

Slipped inside a strip mall across from Exposition Park where the smell of incense mingles with Arabic swirls on the wall, Muhammad Gomez absorbs the message of Allah. Sitting beside him in this storefront Islamic center, Domy Garcia raises her hand and asks why she and other Muslim women are obliged to cover their heads with the hijab. Mariam Montalvo takes diligent notes at the Sunday afternoon Islamic lesson with the holy Qur'an by her side.

Here at the ILM Foundation, a new Islamic movement is being born. Yet it lies far from Mecca, where the faith was founded more than 1,400 years ago. And the language of choice for this group of Islamic followers is not Arabic. These Muslims worship Allah in Spanish.

Montalvo, who immigrated to Los Angeles from Mexico in 1996, left the Catholic faith three months ago, frustrated by what she called contradictions within church teachings and preoccupation with the saints. After research and contemplation, she took the Shahada, the simple declaration of faith by which one becomes a Muslim. "I had a lot of problems with the church. One Bible says one thing, and another Bible says something different. Then there are people who call themselves Catholics and drink and smoke," said Montalvo, 21. "With Islam, it was so pure. I found there were no intermediaries. Everything goes straight to God."

Last month, 30 Southern California converts founded the Latino-Muslim Movement with the intent of educating Spanish-speaking Muslims and spreading Islam to other Latinos. After meeting for the past seven years, the group appointed officers and elected to meet at the ILM Foundation once a week.

Scores of Latinos throughout the country--specifically in New York, New Jersey, Chicago, and Miami--have fled the church of their birth and embraced Islam as their newfound faith.

In New York, a group of Puerto Rican Muslims opened an Islamic center in the heart of East Harlem called Alianza Islamica, where hundreds of Latinos have converted since 1992. The center, the first of its kind, includes a small mosque where the Friday sermon is heard in Arabic, English, and Spanish. Islam has adherents throughout Latin America and the Caribbean as well, with especially strong followings in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Panama.

Reymundo Nur, a Panamanian who became Muslim at the age of 12 and studied Islam in Saudi Arabia, helped organize the Los Angeles group. Two years ago, Nur co-founded a national nonprofit organization called Asociacion Latina de Musulmanes en las Americas, which focuses on translating Islamic books and literature into Spanish. He said one of his group's main projects is translating the Qur'an into contemporary, conversational Spanish. At least two Spanish translations of the Qur'an exist, but Nur said they use a more formal, Castilian Spanish. "There have always been Latino Muslims. It's only now that they're coming to the forefront," said Nur, vice president of the Latino-Muslim Movement in Los Angeles. "We have a strong Islamic legacy, and people are rediscovering that part of their heritage. Many learn about it and say, 'Hey, I have more of this in me than I ever realized.'" Islamic ties to Hispanic culture date back to 711, when the Muslim general Tariq ibn Zayid conquered Spain, and the Christian Visigothic domination of Roderick came to an end. Under Moorish rule, Christians, Jews, and Muslims coexisted in Spain. Conversion was encouraged but never forced. Because the Arabs did not bring women with them, they took Spanish wives, and within a few generations the Muslim population was more Spanish than Arab. For the next 700 years, Al-Andalus, as the Muslims refer to Spain, enjoyed an era of political and cultural splendor, becoming one of the most intellectually advanced countries in medieval Europe. Islamic influence penetrated almost every facet of Spanish life, especially music, architecture, and literature.

But, gradually, Christian armies advanced. After the fall of the last Moorish stronghold in Granada in 1492, the cross replaced the crescent on Spain's minarets and Muslims were forced to convert to Christianity or be exiled. Many Latino Muslims in Los Angeles see their conversion as a return to their Moorish roots.

Today, Southern California has the third-largest concentration of Muslims in the country, including 58 mosques and Islamic centers in Los Angeles County.

"In Catholicism, there are just so many ways to go. Why am I going to pray to the saints?" she added. "When we find Islam, we don't have to waste energy. It's like if I call the operator to get a number, I waste energy. But with Islam, I have the number. I get connected directly to God."

Along with the formation of more Latino Muslim organizations, conversion stories have begun burning up the Internet. Ali Al-Mexicano, a 25-year-old Pomona computer technician, created his own World Wide Web page account of how he became Muslim that includes the first time he read the Qur'an. "It was so clear and written in a simple, understanding way," he said. "It just hit me. This has to be the truth."

Though Al-Mexicano family accepted his conversion, several other young Latinos who have begun searching outside the traditional confines of Catholicism have found conversion to be a heart-wrenching affair, often tearing families apart.

"WE HAVE A STRONG ISLAMIC LEGACY...PEOPLE ARE REDISCOVERING THAT PART OF THEIR HERITAGE." ISLAM PENETRATED ALMOST EVERY FACET OF SPANISH LIFE...MUSIC, ARCHITECTURE, LITERATURE.

Domy Garcia said her family in Mexico was confused and upset by her decision to leave the church. The Buena Park mother converted to Islam two years ago after rejecting the religion she said was forced on her Mexican ancestors.

Undeterred by her family's reaction, Garcia said her main concern now is raising her children as Muslims and introducing more Latinos to Islam. "My family just would not accept it. They said, 'What happened? You've changed so much,'" she recalled. "But it's all right, because on Judgment Day, my family won't be able to help. It will be God."

The Latino-Muslim Movement meets every Sunday afternoon for discussions at the ILM Foundation, a community center managed by Saadiq Saafir, a prominent African American prayer leader, or imam. About 2 p.m., Elizabeth Chawki, a Native American who is fluent in Spanish, usually begins the sessions, which have focused on women, preparation of food, marriage and Islamic divorce.

Despite the perception that all Muslims are Arab, Chawki said, converts see the distinction between religion and ethnicity. "This is about pure religion, not culture. We still eat our tamales and frijoles," said Chawki, referring to some Latino dishes served after the discussions.

Gomez, a native of Nicaragua with no prior religious affiliations, said it was after reading "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" that he began to explore Islam. Like several other converts, Gomez spoke with resentment about the Catholic Church's involvement in Latin America. "Viewing Jesus as a prophet and a political leader, and not a God, made more sense to me," he said.

The Latino-Muslim Movement also aims to bring together Muslims regardless of race. At a recent meeting, Saafir reflected on the emerging phenomenon of Latino conversions as similar to the time when African Americans began accepting Islam 50 years ago. In allowing the group to use the Islamic center, Saafir hopes to tear down the barriers that divide blacks and Latinos. "We all realize that we're Muslim first," Saafir said. "This religion is going to bring us together." Nur nodded. "Inshallah," he whispered.

COURT SUPPORTS MUSLIM INMATES -- PRISONERS HAVE RIGHT TO ATTEND PRAYER

SERVICES By Denny Walsh

SACRAMENTO - Every Muslim prisoner in California has the right to attend traditional prayer services, a federal judge ruled Friday. Freedom of religion doesn't end at the prison gate, U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton made clear in a blistering 15-page order in which he held the state Department of Corrections in contempt. Karlton demanded that the agency ensure that every Muslim inmate in California - an estimated 10,000 to 11,000 - be permitted to attend Jumu'ah prayer services at midday Fridays.

He gave a 15-day deadline for submittal of a plan to permit inmate access to the congregational services that are part of the Five Pillars defining Muslim religious practice. Karlton's order comes in a 1995 case in which Ernest Fenelon, a California Medical Facility inmate, sued for the right to attend the Jumu'ah services, generally held between noon and 1 p.m. The services of no other religion were at issue.

Corrections officials contend that regulations preclude prisoners from leaving their jobs to attend "routine" weekly religious services. Making an exception for Jumu'ah services, they insist, would disrupt the work program, require a regulation change, "cause problems with security and prison operations" at prisons statewide. At Jumu'ah services, the "imam" - or leader - preaches a sermon before the praying begins.

During prayer, the imam recites all the words and the worshipers silently follow him in his motions - for example, standing erect, bowing and pressing their foreheads on the ground.

Friday's action was the culmination of a series of rulings on the matter in favor of worship. In February, Karlton sided with Fenelon and issued a preliminary injunction, but his ruling was implemented only to permit such religious freedom to Fenelon - not to all Muslim inmates.

At a June hearing, Deputy Attorney General Bernice Louie Yew told Karlton this was because his injunction was "not clear with respect to other prisoners." "It is only my good sense that keeps me from putting you and your clients in jail and let you see what it feels like," Karlton fumed. "Your duty is not to cut the salami so thin that you can see through it."

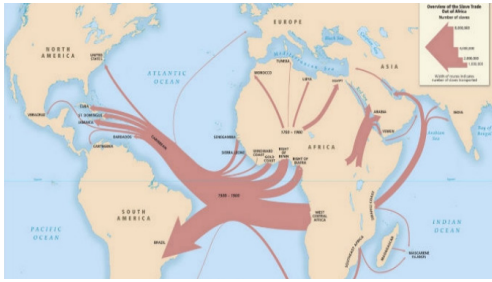
In Friday's order, Karlton assured the Corrections Department it will face sanctions by the court if it fails to submit a plan accommodating all Muslim prisoners. Department spokeswoman Kati Corsaut said the agency "fully intends to comply with the order."

"We're talking about the most basic of human rights," said attorney Steven Burlingham, representing Fenelon. "They want to use their lunch hour to pray. Yet, we have been in court for four years. 'It's ridiculous to spend taxpayers' money to fight this. There are lots better uses for the state's resources. We're not asking for television sets or a golf course. We want an hour to worship God.'" In his motion for contempt, Burlingham claimed that, after Karlton issued his preliminary injunction in February, prison officials "took steps to retaliate against (Fenelon)."

However, the judge found that three incidents cited in the motion do not prove retaliation. He adopted the recommendations of U.S. Magistrate Judge John Moulds. Quoting appellate case law, Moulds said the First Amendment requires that prisoners be afforded "a reasonable opportunity to worship in accordance with their conscience."

The U.S. Supreme Court found in 1987 that "Jumu'ah is commanded by the Koran and must be held every Friday after the sun reaches its zenith and before the 'Asr,' or afternoon prayer," Moulds pointed out. "There is no question that (Muslim prisoners') sincerely held religious beliefs compel attendance at Jumu'ah," the high court said.

MUSLIMS IN THE ANTI-BELLUM SOUTH



Job Ben Solomon Jallo was kidnapped from his home in Africa and ended up in America in 1730. He was sold into slavery and became increasingly angry with such a station in life. In a biography written about him, Job said

his unhappiness led to much praying, and that once, when he prostrated himself in prayer in public, as was his religious custom, a boy threw mud in his face. Not only was he unhappy with his treatment, he was also dismayed that he had no place to pray five times a day, as was the custom of the Muslim faith that he brought with him from Africa. So, he ran away from Maryland to Pennsylvania.

There, he was imprisoned for lack of documents showing he was either free or indentured and was eventually returned to his master. Upon his return, his master was told that Job Ben Solomon wanted to be treated better and wanted a place to pray. He got both.

But he was not content to remain a slave. He wrote his father in Africa a letter in Arabic asking for help. James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia, became aware of the letter and helped secure a bond for Job's release from his master. Job was later sent to England with the Royal African Co., his new owners, and was introduced to a number of wealthy Englishmen who eventually paid for him and set him free. These same friends paid for his return to Gambia.

Job Ben Solomon's story and dozens of others like his are told in "African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles," by Springfield College (Springfield, Mass.) professor Allan D. Austin. It's a condensation and updating and unfolds the lives of more than 80 African Muslims who were slaves in America between 1730 and 1860.

They came from Nigeria, Gambia, Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali and other surrounding countries, where many of them had been political, religious, commercial, or military leaders. They were valuable as slaves because of their intelligence and skills. Some were able to return to Africa, while others, like Bilali Mohammed on Sapelo Island, became leaders on plantations.

Austin, a noted scholar of antebellum black writing and history, visited Savannah recently and gave a lecture on his book at the Beach Institute. As a professor of Afro-American Studies, Austin said he knew there were a number of slaves who were Muslims because of his research of the antebellum writings of blacks. So, he planned an essay on the subject. But his essay grew into a 700-plus page book as he discovered much more information about the slaves who were Muslim.

WEALTH OF INFORMATION

The data Austin gathered provides a realistic portrayal of Africans, contrary to the portrayal they were given by white writers of the day. It is not yet possible to tell how many Muslims were taken out of Africa during the era of international slave trade, Austin contends. But by looking at available records, he estimates that between 5 and 10 percent of all slaves taken from Senegal and the Bight of Benin were Muslims.

Half of all Africans sent to North America came from this region, Austin said. "If the total number of arrivals were 11 million, as scholars have concluded, then there may have been about 40,000

African Muslims in the colonial and pre-Civil War territory making up the United States before 1860."

Job Ben Solomon was typical of the Muslims who found themselves in the South. Their spirituality, manners, sense of dignity and intelligence impressed slave owners and others. Some erroneously thought these slaves had received these gifts from their masters. Not so, Austin said. A memoir of Job Ben Solomon's life was later published in 1734 by lawyer Thomas Bluett. "It was a very dignified statement about an African who did not find America, its Christianity, its modernization all that wonderful, and wanted to return to Africa," Austin said.

"He struggled with his master to get the right to pray publicly and to not have to do the field work his master wanted him to do. He was in prison temporarily and started writing on the walls in Arabic. Somebody recognized that here was a man who had principles and they eventually realized this man was a Muslim. He was literate in Africa, he knew the Koran by heart, he was literate in Arabic."

THE STRENGTH OF THEIR FAITH

Austin also wrote about other slaves who also didn't give up their Muslim faith. For instance, around 1831, one Muslim slave, Umar ibin Said, wrote an autobiography thought lost until 1995. According to his writings, he was originally from Senegal. He was purchased in the early 1800s by a slave owner who recognized his intelligence and didn't put him in the fields.

He wrote nearly 22 manuscripts in Arabic, among them the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm. Said did not deny Islam, but "added Christian prayers to his spiritual stock, not an uncommon practice for religious Muslims among Christians," Austin writes in his book.

In another case, "by the time you get to the turn of the century, around 1800, there are a number of people, Bilali Mohammed and Salih Bilali, who set up their own Muslim communities on Sapelo and St. Simons Island," Austin said. Imam Maajid Ali, leader of the Masjid Jihad mosque in Savannah, explained why Muslim slaves would adopt the Christianity often forced upon them. "If we are forced to assimilate another faith, other ideas, another concept of God, we are allowed to verbalize that, as long as we don't give our heart to that particular position," Ali said.

But how did Austin's subjects, in the face of such oppression as slavery in America, maintain their faith with such urgency? "In Islam we don't have that division between secular and sacred, which means that Islam is really a total way of life," said the Imam.

"Those individuals who were Muslim and also brought here for slave labor, I could very well understand why it was that they insisted upon the practice of certain tenets in the religion such as the prayer five times daily, (refusing to do certain) types of labor.

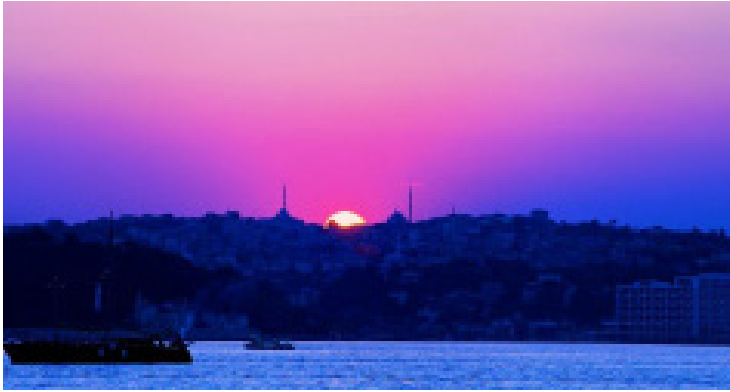
"In Islam we have the belief that all people, men and women, are the slaves of God, therefore, no human being can be the slave of another human being. That would be one of the driving forces in the Muslim's life, so I could see how they would have rejected the common status of servitude that was accepted by other non-Muslim slaves."

A Muslim in servitude would never really accept being shackled and his or her behavior could be interpreted by other slaves or the slave-master as being insubordinate, Ali said. "He or she wasn't rebelling against the person or the institution, as much as living his or her religion. If that conflict came up between religion and institution, they would choose their religion in defiance of the forced institution of slavery."

So the men Austin wrote about were moved by the dictates of their faith, not out of fear of losing some eternal reward, Ali said. Even on the issue of not eating pork, the Koran makes allowances, stipulating that if a Muslim is dying of starvation, he or she can eat enough pork to survive the threat of death.

How I Embraced Islam

Twelve Hours Muslim



"What am I doing down here?" I wonder, my nose and forehead pressed to the floor as I kneel in prayer. My knee-caps ache, my arm muscles strain as I try to keep the pressure off my forehead.

I listen to strange utterings of the person praying next to me. It's Arabic, and they understand what they are saying, even if I don't. So, I make up my own words, hoping God will be kind to me, a Muslim only twelve hours old.

"God, I converted to Islam because I believe in you, and because Islam makes sense to me." Did I really just say that? I quietly burst into tears.

What would my friends say if they saw me like this, kneeling, nose pressed to the floor? They'd laugh at me, "Have you lost your mind?" They'd ask, "You can't seriously tell me you are religious."

Religious... I was once a happy 'speculative atheist', how did I change into this whirlwind tour through my journey.

Where did it begin? Maybe it started when I first met practicing Muslims. That was in 1991, at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. I was an open minded, tolerant, liberal woman, 24 years old. I saw Muslim women walking around the international center and felt sorry for them. I knew they were oppressed.

When I asked them why they cover their hair, why they wore long sleeves in summer, my sorrow increased when they told me, that they wore the veil, and they dressed so, because God asked them to. Poor things. What about their treatment in Muslim countries? "That's culture," they would reply. I knew they were deluded, socialized, brainwashed from an early age into believing in this wicked way of treating women.

But I noticed how happy they were, how friendly they were, how solid they were, how solid they seemed. I saw Muslim men walking around the International Center. There was even a man from Libya - the land of terrorists. I trembled when I saw them, lest they do something to me in the Name of God.

I remembered on television images of masses of rampaging Arab men burning effigies of President Bush, all in the Name of God.

What a God they must have, I thought. Poor things that they even believed in God, I added, secure in the truth that God was an anthropomorphic projection of us weak human beings who needed a crutch. But I noticed how helpful these men were. I perceived an aura of calmness. What a belief they must have, I thought. But it puzzled me.

That was before the Gulf War broke out. What kind of God would persuade men to go to War, to kill innocent citizens of another country, to demonstrate against the US? I decided I'd better read the Holy book on whose behalf they claimed they were acting. I read a Penguin classic, surely a trustworthy book, and I couldn't finish it, I disliked it so much. Here was God destroying whole cities at a stroke. No wonder the women are oppressed, and these fanatics exist.

But then I discovered feminists who believed in God, Christian women who were feminists, and Muslim women who did not

condone a lot of what I thought integral to their religion.

I started to pray and call myself a 'post-Christian feminist believer'. I felt that lightness again; maybe God did exist. I carefully examined my life's events and I saw that coincidences and luck were God's blessings for me, and I'd never noticed, or said thanks.

I am amazed God was so Kind and Persistent while I was disloyal. My ears and feet tingle pleasantly from the washing I have just given them; a washing which cleanses me and allows me to approach God in prayer. God, an Awesome Deity. I feel awe, wonder, and peace. Please show me the path.

"But surely you can see that the world is too complex, too beautiful, too harmonious to be an accident? To be the blind result of evolutionary forces? Don't you know that science is returning to a belief in God? Don't you know that science never contradicted Islam anyway?" I am exasperated with my imaginary jury. Haven't they researched these things? Maybe this was the most decisive path.

I'd heard on the radio an interview with a physicist who was explaining how modern science had abandoned its nineteenth century materialistic assumptions long ago, and was scientifically of the opinion that too many phenomenon occurred which made no sense without there being intelligence and design behind it all.

Indeed, scientific experiments were not just a passive observation of physical phenomena, observation altered the way physical events proceeded, and it seemed therefore that intelligence was the most fundamental stuff of the universe. I read more, and more. I discovered that only the most die-hard anthropologists still believed in evolutionary theory, though no one was saying this very loudly for fear of losing their job.

My jigsaw was starting to fall apart. "OK, so you decided God existed. You were monotheist. But Christianity is monotheistic. It is your heritage. Why leave it?" Still these questioners are puzzled. But you must understand this is the earliest question of them all to answer. I smile. I learned how the Qur'an did not contradict science in the same way the Bible did. I wanted to read the Biblical stories literally, and discovered I could not. Scientific fact contradicted Biblical account.

But scientific fact did not contradict Qur'anic account; science even sometimes explained a hitherto inexplicable Qur'anic verse. This was stunning. There was a verse about how the water from fresh water rivers which flowed into the sea did not mix with the sea water; verses describing conception accurately; verses referring to the orbits of the planets. Seventh century science knew none of this. How could Muhammed be so uniquely wise? My mind drew me towards the Qur'an, but I resisted. I started going to church again, only to find myself in tears in nearly every service.

Christianity continued to be difficult for me. So much didn't make sense: the Trinity; the idea that Jesus was God incarnate; the worship of Mary, the Saints, or Jesus, rather than GOD. The priests told me to leave reason behind when contemplating God. The Trinity did not make sense, nor was it supposed to. I delved deeper. After all, how could I leave my culture, my heritage, my family? No one would understand, and I'd be alone.

I tried to be a good Christian. I learned more. I discovered that Easter was instituted a couple of hundreds of years after Jesus' death, that Jesus never called himself God incarnate, and more often said he was the Son of Man; that the doctrine of the Trinity was established some 300 odd years after Christ had died; that the Nicene Creed which I had faithfully recited every week, focusing on each word, was written by MEN and at a political meeting to confirm the minority position that Jesus was the Son of God, and the majority viewpoint that Jesus was God's Messenger was expunged forever.

I was so angry! Why hadn't the Church taught me these things? Well, I knew why. People would understand that they could worship God elsewhere, and that there, worship would actually make sense to them. I would only worship one God, not three, not Jesus, not the Saints, not Mary. Could Muhammed really be a messenger, could the Qur'an be God's Word?

I kept reading the Qur'an. It told me that Eve was not only to blame for the 'fall'; that Jesus was a Messenger; that unbelievers would laugh at me for being a believer; that people would question the authenticity of Muhammed's claim to revelation, but if they tried to write something as wise, consistent and rational they would fail. This seemed true.

Islam asked me to use my intelligence to contemplate God. It encouraged me to seek knowledge, it told me that those who believed in one God (Jews/ Christians/ Muslims/ whomever) would get rewards; it seemed a very encompassing religion.

We stand again and still standing, bend down again to a resting position with our hands on our knees. What else can I say to God? I can't think of enough to say, the prayer seems so long. I puff slightly, still sniffing, since with all the standing I am somewhat out of breath.

"So you seriously think that I would willingly enter a religion which turned me into a second class citizen? I demand of my questioners. You know that there is a lot of abuse of women in Islamic countries, just as in the West, but this is not true of Islam. And don't bring the veil thing up.

"Don't you know that women wear hijab because God asks them to? Because they trust in God's word." Still. How will I have the courage to wear hijab? I probably won't. People will stare at me, I'll be obvious; I'd rather hide away in the crowd when I'm out. What will my friends say when they see me in that?? OH! God! Help.

I had stalled at the edge of change for many a long month, my dilemma growing daily. What should I do? Leave my old life and start a new one? But I couldn't possibly go out in public in hijab. People would stare at me. I stood at the forked path which God helped me reach. I had new knowledge which rested comfortably with my intellect. Follow the conviction, or stay in the old way?

ISLAM ASKED ME TO USE MY INTELLIGENCE TO CONTEMPLATE GOD.

How could I stay when I had a different outlook on life? How could I change when the step seemed too big for me? I would rehearse the conversation sentence: There is no God worthy of worship but God and Muhammed (pbuh) is his Prophet.

Simple words, I believe in them, so convert. I cannot, I resist. I circled endlessly day after day.

God stood on one of the paths of the fork. Come on Kathy. I've brought you here, but you must cross alone. I stayed stationary, transfixed like a kangaroo trapped in a car lights late at night.

Then one night, I suppose, God, gave me a final yank. I was passing a mosque with my husband. I had a feeling in me that was so strong I could hardly bear it. If you don't convert now, you never will, my inner voice told me. I knew it was true.

OK, I'll do it. If they let me in the mosque I'll do it. But there was no one there. I said the shahaada under the trees outside the mosque. I waited. I waited for the thunderclap, the immediate feeling of relief, the lifting of my burden. But it didn't come. I felt exactly the same.

Now we are kneeling again, the world looks so different from down here. Even famous football players prostrate like this, I remember, glancing sideways at the tassels of my hijab which fall onto the prayer mat; we are sitting up straight, my prayer leader is muttering something still, waving his right hand's forefinger around in the air. I look down at my mat again. The green, purple, and black of my prayer mat look reassuringly the same.

The blackness of the Mosque's entrance entreats me: 'I am here, just relax and you will find me.' My tears have dried on my face and my skin feels tight.

"What am I doing here?" Dear God. I am here because I believe in you, because I believe in the compelling and majestic words of the Qur'an, and because I believe in the Prophethood of your Messenger Muhammed (pbuh).

I know in my heart my decision is the right one. Please give me the courage to carry on with this new self and new life, that I may serve you well with a strong faith. I smile and stand up, folding my prayer mat into half, and lay it on the sofa ready for my next encounter with its velvety green.

Now the burden begins to lift.

DO YOU NEED INSURANCE?

DU'A FOR PROTECTION FROM MISFORTUNE

(The Du'a of Abu-Darda)

"One day, a neighbor came running to Hadrat Abu-Dardaa



(Radyi-Allaahu anhu) when he was at his shop. The neighbor said that the neighborhood where they lived was on fire and that Hadrat Abu-Dardaa's house was also burning. Hadrat Abu-Dardaa calmly said, 'No, it has not burned.' Another person came in and gave the same report, and Hadrat Abu-Dardaa gave the same

reply. A third person showed up with the same news and got the same answer. Then another man came in and said, 'Abu-Dardaa! The fire was blazing high but, when the flames came to your house, they went out!' Abu-Dardaa replied, 'I knew that Allah, The Exalted, would not allow my house to burn because I heard from Rasulu-Lah (Salla-Lahu 'alai wa Salam) that the person who repeats certain words in the morning will be safe from all misfortunes until evening, and I recited those words this morning.'"

They are:

"Allah-humma, anta rabbi, laa ilaaha illaa Anta, 'alajka tawakkaltu wa anta rabbul 'arshil kariymi maashaa Allaahu kaana wa maLam yasha' lam yakuw-wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa bil-Laahil 'Aliyyil 'Aziym. A'lamu annallaaha 'alaa kulli shay in qadiyruw-wa annallaaha qad ahaata bikulli shay in 'almaa.

Allah-humma inni a'uthu bika min sharri nafsiy wa min sharri kulli daabbatin, anta aakhithum bi naasiyatihaa inna rabiyy 'alaa siraatim-mustaqiym."

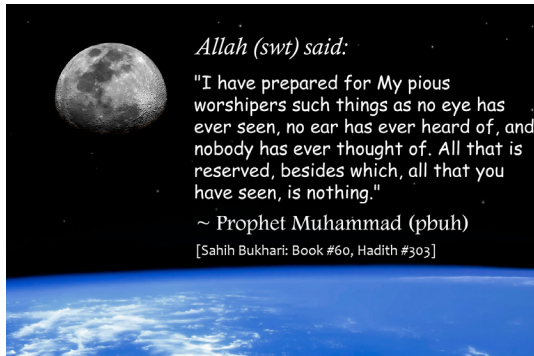
Translation:

"Oh Allah, You are my Lord. There is nothing worthy of worship except You. I place all of my trust and reliance in You and You are the Lord of the Noble Throne. Whatever Allah wishes takes place, and whatever He does not desire, does not occur, and there is no power and no strength except in Allah, The Exalted, The Mighty. I know that Allah is Powerful over all things and that Allah has knowledge of all things.

Oh Allah, I seek refuge in You from the evil of my nafs and from the evil of every creeping crawling creature. You are master over them. Verily, You are Lord of the Straight Path."

THE DEAL OF A LIFETIME

BY AQIL ABDUL BASEER



Allah (swt) said:

"I have prepared for My pious worshippers such things as no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard of, and nobody has ever thought of. All that is reserved, besides which, all that you have seen, is nothing."

~ Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

[Sahih Bukhari: Book #60, Hadith #303]

Imagine yourself driving along the road merely trying to get from point "A" to point "B": You notice, with no more than a cursory glance, the usual billboard advertisements offering you numerous goods or ser-

vices in exchange for your well earned capital. Unmoved by the many "meet or beat" pricing slogans or the "no interest or payments until next year" marketing schemes, you continue to drive on. There is no large print offering you something free, until you read the fine print and notice that there is a catch. This one offers you much more than you ever dreamed or imagined. You say to yourself, "Only a fool would refuse such a deal." You then decide learn more; in big, bold letters, the sign reads in part:

"O you who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous chastisement?" (Holy Quran 61:10)

Dear Believers, although imagery is used to introduce our topic, the offer is real. Allah praises and glorified is He, proposes a "business deal," of sorts, to the believers. Most, if not all of us, have engaged in a business transaction of one kind or another at some point in our lives. It may have been as simple as trading baseball cards, buying some milk from a store, to negotiating a car deal, yet and still these are all forms of "business deal".

For many of us the impetus behind most of our "business transactions" is to make a profit. We desire to get more for our money. Unless we're "impulse buying" we will shop around for the best deal or some of us go after bargains with such a zeal, that we are labeled as "bargain hunters". Just what is a "bargain"? A bargain is commonly understood as an advantageous purchase. Webster's 10th Edition Collegiate Dictionary defines the word bargain as an agreement between parties settling what each gives or receives in transaction between them or what course of action or policy each pursues in respect to the other. (Emphasis mine)

But what if one of the parties seeks to make no profit whatsoever. He only wills to give the other party the "better end of the stick"?

This is the case with Allah. No matter what He gives or receives neither increases decrease what he has. In a Hadith Qudsi (Sacred Hadith) Allah says:

"O My servants, you can not seek to harm Me, and you can not seek to benefit Me. O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you, to be as pious as the most pious heart of any one man of you, that would not increase My Kingdom in anything. O my servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of any one man of you that would not decrease My Kingdom in anything. O my servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you, to rise up in one place and make a request of Me, and were I to give everyone what he requested. That would not decrease what I have, any more than a needle decrease the sea if put into it."

So the benefit is entirely ours. As mentioned above, Allah says:

"O you who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous chastisement?"

He says to the believers; "Hal adullukum alaa tijaaratina!" He puts it in the form of a question. He gives the individual believer the choice whether or not to choose to be led to the bargain - as with all choice.

As with all things in the lives of men, Allah does not compel us to do anything. So He asks the believer, Shall I "adullukum," lead you, guide you, or point out to you a "tunjeekun," save you, rescue you and deliver you. Deliver us from what? "Adhaabin aleem." The Arabic word "aleem" means excruciating, painful, grievous, and sad. The Arabic words "adhaabin" means: pain, torment, suffering, agony, torture, punishment, etc. Allah implies that acceptance and fulfillment of this bargain will save us from an excruciating punishment. This is no ordinary deal.

So here we have it. Allah is proposing to us, a transaction that will prove to be so beneficial for us that it will deliver us from the pain and suffering of the Hellfire. As with anyone faced with a deal that seems too good to be true, we want to know, "Where's the catch?"

What must we do? Allah says that there are essentially two basic things that we must do in order to reap the full measure of this deal. Allah says:

"That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive (you utmost) in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your persons."

Here Allah says: "tu'minuna billahi wa rasoolihi." the Arabic word "tu'minuna" is derived from the word "amuna" which means: he was faithful, reliable, and trustworthy. In the above context it means to place our complete faith, reliance, and trust in the ability, strength, and truth of Allah. The belief in Allah is to believe that strength, and truth of Allah. The belief in Allah is to believe the He is one, having no partners. This is known in Al-Islam as "Tawheed". "Tawheed" is the most important aspect of all the beliefs in Al-Islam. We must purify our hearts of any and all other "gods" or objects of worship. Once we have done this, faith in Allah can take root and blossom in our very souls.

Knowledge of Allah and belief in Him is the first and most important aspect in the edification of Al-Islam. To establish and strengthen our faith in Allah we must learn and study His Attributes. We must come to know Him as He describes Himself. We cannot truly know Allah without becoming acquainted with His attributes. We must place complete faith in His attributes. When we come to know that He is all-seeing, all-hearing, all-knowing, and all-powerful, we must place full confidence in the fact that this is true. We must not doubt. Believing in Allah knows that all manners of worship and service are to be directed to Him and Him alone.

Allah says, in this verse, that belief does not stop there. After saying: "tu'minuna billahi," He says: "warasoolihi." That we must also believe in His Messenger (PBUH). Notice that Allah said that believe in Allah and his messenger that means we must believe in Allah and his messenger together not separately. To deny one is to deny the other.

This is not to say that Prophet (PBUH) has equal rank or status with Allah, no, it is merely suggesting that belief in Prophet Muhammad is so essential that disbelief in prophet, disbelief in Allah's veracity, and also His Book, the Holy Quran. It is through His Holy Book that Allah tells us to believe in Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Disbelief as well as obedience in the Prophet (PBUH) amounts to rejecting faith. Allah says:

"But know by thy lord they can have no Faith until they make thee judge in all disputes between them. And find in their souls no resistance against thy decision, and accept them with the fullest conviction." (Holy Quran 4:65)

"O you who believe! Believe in Allah and his messenger and the scripture, which he has sent to His messenger, and the scripture which He sent down to those before (him). And whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His angles, His books, His messengers, and the Day of Judgment, then indeed he has strayed far away." (Holy Quran 4:136)

"O mankind! The messenger hath come to you in truth from Allah: So believe in him, it is best for you. But if you disbelieve, then certainly to Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth: and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise. (Holy Quran 4:170)

"It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a

matter has been decided by Allah and His messenger, to have any option about their decision. If anyone disobeys Allah and His messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path.” (Holy Quran 33:36)

These verses clearly show that to believe in the prophet (PBUH) is integral to believe in Allah. When we state our “Shahada” (declaration of faith), we say: “I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and Mohammad is the messenger of Allah.” It is imperative that we include the prophet also. This assertion is important for two reasons:

- 1- To affirm our position that we truly believe Mohammad to Allah’s last messenger.
- 2- To ensure that we remember that he is only the messenger of Allah.

This keeps us from elevating the status of Mohammad from a messenger/prophet to that of being the deity, the Christians’ church has done with Jesus (PBUH).

The first thing Allah asks us to do is to believe Him and His messenger. This belief implies obedience as well as seen in the above verses.

The second thing that Allah asks us: “that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of Allah with your wealth and personsā□!” Allah says: “Tujaahiduuna Fe sabillillah.” The Arabic word “Tujaahiduuna” comes from the word “Jahada” which means: he strives and endeavored, or took great pains to accomplish something. So we can say that the word “tjahiduuna” means devoting serious effort or energy to Allah’s cause “fi sabillillah”. To strive in Allah’s cause means one must endeavor to bring one’s life in concert with the teachings of the Quran and to establish Islamic life in his own personal life, in his community and the world. Allah says: “Tujaahiduuna fi sabillillah bi amwaalikum wa anfusikum,” that we must attempt to accomplish this with our wealth and persons. The Arabic word “amwal” means property, possessions, money, assets, wealth, etc.

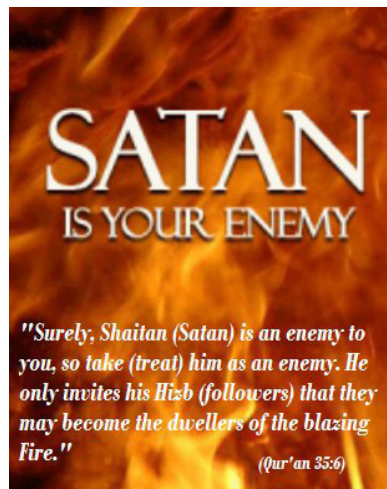
We must strive in Allah’s cause utilizing all of the halal means in our possession. Donating money, building or establishing Islamic institutions, or even by sharing Islamic knowledge can do this - because knowledge is indeed an asset. True and the proper knowledge of Quran are a wealth beyond measure.

Allah says that we must also strive in his cause with our persons. He says: “wa anfusikum” strive with your soul, mind, life, etc. We are to strive with our wealth and the most priceless comes from the Arabic word “Nafusa” which means to be precious, valuable, and priceless. We are to give our lives too, and in the cause of Allah figuratively and literally also by saying that. We should strive with our persons (selves), it so implied that we must let our character our behavior, our speech, and our actions be a means of striving in the cause of Allah. We must utilize the innate talents, all skills that Allah has instilled in us, we must use any and all halal means in advancing in the cause of Allah. We must strive our utmost to the best of our abilities, powers, and resources. Allah says: “Khayrlakum in kuntom ta’alamoon.” “That would be best, (more excellence) for you if you only knew.” It is better than anything is else that if we only knew it. This is our side of the bargain; we are to believe in Allah and His messenger and strive in his cause utilizing our wealth and persons.

But what of Allah’s end of the bargain? What does the Most Beneficent one offer us in return for our effort? As we already know, the first thing is safety from a grievous punishment. Allah says that He will forgive our sins. He says: “Waghfirlakum dhunuubikum”, he will forgive your sins. Allah says that he will forgive us and grant us a pardon for our sins, crimes, and misdeed. This one thing in itself is enough to constitute a bargain. For how many of us are free from sin? Allah mentions in the Quran that if he were to punish mankind for their wrong doings, He would not leave a single creature on the earth. After forgiving our sins, Allah says: “Yad khilkum janatin tajree min tahtehal anharo wa masakina tayebaten fi janatan.”

LETTER FROM SHAYTAN (DEVIL)

DATE: STARTING TODAY AND EVERYDAY



DEAR BELIEVERS,
I saw you yesterday as you began your daily chores. You awoke without kneeling to pray. As a matter of fact, you didn't even bless your meals, or pray before going to bed last night. You are so unthankful. I like that about you. I cannot tell you how glad I am that you have not changed your way of living, Fool, you are mine. Remember, you and I have been going steady for years, and I still don't love you yet. As a matter of fact, I hate you.

You see, Fool, GOD LOVES YOU and HE has great plans in store for you. But you have yielded your life to me and I'm going to make your life a living hell. That way we'll be together twice. Thanks to you. With all of the good times we've had.....

We have been watching dirty movies, cursing people out, partying, stealing, lying, being hypocritical,

indulging in fornication, overeating, telling dirty jokes, gossiping, back stabbing people, disrespecting adults and those in leadership position, NO respect for the mosque, bad attitudes: SURELY you don't want to give all this up. Come on, Fool, let's burn together forever. I've got some hot plans for us.

This is just a letter of appreciation from me to you. I'd like to say "THANKS" for letting me use you for most of your foolish life. You are so gullible, I laugh at you. When you are tempted to sin, you give in HA HA HA, you make me sick. Sin is beginning to take its toll on your life. You look 20 years older, I need new blood. So go ahead and teach some children how to sin. All you have to do is smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, cheat, gamble, gossip, fornicate, and listen to and dance to the top 10 jams. Do all this in the presence of children and they will do it too. Kids are like that.

Well, Fool, I have to let you go for now. I'll be back in a couple of seconds to tempt you again. If you were smart, you would run somewhere, live for God with what little bit of life that you have left. It's not my nature to warn anyone, but to be your age and still sinning, it's becoming a bit ridiculous. Don't get me wrong, I still hate you.....IT'S JUST THAT YOU'D MAKE A BETTER FOOL FOR YOURSELF.

Waiting for you,
Shaytan (Satan) Devil Iblis

DU'A (SUPPLICATION) BY THE PROPHET
MOHAMMED (PBUH) IN TAIF

“Al-Lahuma Elaika Nashku Dh’afa Quwatina Wa-Qilata Hilitina Wa-Hawana A’lan-Nas, ya Arhamar-rahimeen, ya rub-al-Mustad’afeen, Anta Rabuna. ila man takiluna illa Qawmin Yastad’ifuna Am illa A’dowin Wakaltahu Amruna...in-lam yakun laka a’lyna Ghadabun fala nubalee. Naoothu biwajhiakal al-dhi ashraqat luhudh-Dhulumat was-saluha ali-hi amrad-dunia wal-akhira ala yahal alyna ghadabuk Aou yanzil alina sakhatuk lakal-u’qba hata tarda wala hawla wala quata ala biyk.”

“Oh, my Allah! To Thee I complain of the feebleness of my strength, of my lack of resources and of my being unimportant in the eyes of people. Oh, Most Merciful of all those capable of showing mercy! Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my own Lord. To whom art Thou to entrust me; to an unsympathetic folk who would sullenly frown at me, or to an alien to whom Thou hast given control over my affairs? Not in the least do I care for anything except that I may have Thy protection for myself. I seek shelter in Your light - The light that illuminates the Heavens and dispels all sorts of darkness, and which controls all affairs in this work as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Thy wrath, or that Thou should be displeased with me. I must remove the cause of Thy displeasure until Thou art pleased. There is no strength nor power but through Thee.”

JUDGEMENT DAY AIRLINES

Non Transferable



IDENTIFICATION

Name: Descendant of Adam and Eve
Nationality: From Clay
Address: Planet Earth
Payment Method: C.O.D. (Condition of Deeds)

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Departing Terminal: This World
Arriving Terminal: The Hereafter
Departure Time: "No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die."
Arrival Time: "And the stupor of death will come in truth, 'This is what you have been avoiding.'"
Accompanying Party: No one, you will stand before your Lord alone and naked. Spouse, children, family, and friends will join you later."

FLIGHT CONDITIONS

1. The Orders in Allah's Book and The Sunnah.
2. Obedience, Love, and Fear of Allah.
3. Constant Remembrance of Death.
4. May experience turbulences. Take proper precautions now.
5. Knowledge benefited from.
6. Your food, drink, and money should be Halal (lawful).

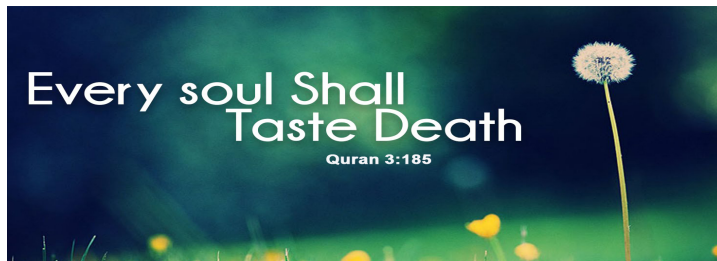
Allowed Luggage

1. No carry-on luggage allowed.
 2. Good deeds.
 3. A prayer from a righteous son or daughter.
 4. Ongoing charity.
 5. Knowledge which benefited you.
- Nothing else is allowed to accompany you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Return to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of Muhammad (pbuh).
Notices
Extra weight of good deeds is allowed.
Check out yourself prior to check-in.
This is a one way flight.
There is no need for you to confirm your reservation, it is already confirmed.
Prior to departure please call 2-4-4-3-4 (Fajr, Duhur, Asr, Maghrib, Isha) for assistance.

ON DEATH & DYING



PREPARING FOR DEATH

Suppose you learn that you have only one more day to live. How will you spend your last day?" This question was asked of prominent scholars and people known for their virtuous, "There is nothing that I would change in my daily schedule lives." The answers were to be compiled in a book designed to inspire its readers to virtue.

The most interesting response came from a scholar who did not provide a wish list of virtuous deeds, the great muhaddith, Abdur Rahman ibn abi Na'um. He replied, "There is nothing that I would change in
The Islamic Bulletin

my daily schedule upon learning that it is my last day. I already spend everyday in my life as if it is going to be my last."

Death is the most certain aspect of life. 6,178 people die in the world every hour, according to the latest statistics. These are people of all ages, dying of all causes. Some of these deaths make headlines, but the great majority do not. Yet, everyone will enter his grave the same way - Alone, at the time appointed by God. When it is time, science and technology can not prevent death. It is only in the Hands of The Creator.

Even though death happens all the time, we feel that it won't happen to us - at least, not anytime soon. Even though we bury our friends and relatives, we still think that we will live forever. At the same time, we plan for it in some ways. We take out life insurance policies. We may do estate planning. Businesses and governments have contingency plans to carry out their operations in case of sudden loss of their leaders. Our attitudes about death defy logic.

This inadequate recognition of death only defines it as an endpoint of this life. We fail to recognize it as the beginning of another life, a life that will never end, and a life where we will reap what we sowed here. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Truly smart is the person who controlled his desires and prepared for the life after death."

We never know when Allah will take our lives away from this world. Therefore, prepare ahead of time to leave this world and for our Akhirah. One of the important duties on Muslims is to prepare a Last Will and Testament. If someone lives in a non-Muslim environment, like in the western world, it is particularly important to make, ahead of time, arrangements for your inheritance and burial.

Some important general points on the Islamic Will follow, after which, we have provided a sample. We hope this will benefit you and your family. As always, please feel free to pass this information on to your friends and any other Muslims. May Allah always help us in preparing to meet Him. May we return to Him when He is pleased with us, and may He give us a smooth exit from this world to the next one. Ameen.

1) Read about death and dying in an Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh) book. Read about washing the dead body, shrouding, burying, praying, the funeral...etc. Here we are only giving you a general guideline of the Wassiyah (Last Will and Testament), which should be done NOW.

2) Make certain that the procedures follow the teachings of Quran and the way of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

3) Details will differ according to the individual and their gender.

4) Make a record of your debts to guarantee the rights of your creditors. Also remember, the most important debts are those to Allah SWT (i.e. prayers owed, fasting days owed, Zakat you haven't paid, etc.). It is very important that we make sure that these debts are paid after our death.

5) Those who live in non-Muslim communities and/or with non-Muslim families should prepare their families ahead of time for the requirements of their Islamic burial. Take into consideration your individual circumstances - will your family cooperate or not? Prepare ahead of time accordingly.

6) The following Will is provided for the benefit of all Muslims. Please feel free to use this information in preparation of your Last Will. Pray for the people who wrote, translated, and proof-read this sample Will that we have provided for you here. Jazakom Allahu Khairan.

Each adult Muslim is obligated to have a Will made according to the Shariah. Therefore, do not delay. Make yours and keep it current to reflect your changing family and status. Remember to sign, date, and number each page of your Last Will (eg: "Page 1 of 10", "Page 2 of 10", etc.).

To help you, in the center four pages of this publication, we have positioned for easy removal a Last Will and Testament. We encourage you to copy, share, and distribute the Will.

SALMAN AL-FARSI

This is a story of a seeker of Truth, the story of Salman the Persian, gleaned, to begin with, from his own words:

I grew up in the town of Isfahan in Persia in the village of Jayyan. My father was the Dihqan or chief of the village. He was the richest person there and had the biggest house.

Since I was a child my father loved me, more than he loved any other. As time went by his love for me became so strong and overpowering that he feared to lose me or have anything happen to me.

So he kept me at home, a veritable prisoner, in the same way that young girls were kept.

I became devoted to the Magian religion so much so that I attained the position of custodian of the fire which we worshipped.

My duty was to see that the flames of the fire remained burning and that it did not go out for a single hour, day or night.

My father had a vast estate which yielded an abundant supply of crops.

He himself looked after the estate and the harvest. One day he was very busy with his duties as dihqan in the village and he said to me: "My son, as you see, I am too busy to go out to the estate now. Go and look after matters there for me today."

On my way to the estate, I passed a Christian church and the voices at prayer attracted my attention. I did not know anything about Christianity or about the followers of any other religion throughout the time my father kept me in the house away from people.

When I heard the voices of the Christians I entered the church to see what they were doing. I was impressed by their manner of praying and felt drawn to their religion.

"By God," I said, "this is better than ours. I shall not leave them until the sun sets."

I asked and was told that the Christian religion originated in AshSham (Greater Syria). I did not go to my father's estate that day and at night, I returned home.

My father met me and asked what I had done.

I told him about my meeting with the Christians and how I was impressed by their religion. He was dismayed and said: "My son, there is nothing good in that religion. Your religion and the religion of your forefathers is better."

"No, their religion is better than ours," I insisted.

My father became upset and afraid that I would leave our religion. So he kept me locked up in the house and put a chain on my feet. I managed however to send a message to the Christians asking them to inform me of any caravan going

to Syria.

Before long they got in touch with me and told me that a caravan was headed for Syria.

I managed to unfetter myself and in disguise accompanied the caravan to Syria.

There, I asked who was the leading person in the Christian religion and was directed to the bishop of the church.

I went up to him and said: "I want to become a Christian and would like to attach myself to your service, learn from you and pray with you."

The bishop agreed and I entered the church in his service.

I soon found out, however, that the man was corrupt. He would order his followers to give money in charity while holding out the promise of blessings to them.

When they gave anything to spend in the way of God, however, he would hoard it for himself and not give anything to the poor or needy.

In this way he amassed a vast quantity of gold.

When the bishop died and the Christians gathered to bury him, I told them of his corrupt practices and, at their request, showed them where he kept their donations.

When they saw the large jars filled with gold and silver they said.

"By God, we shall not bury him." They nailed him on a cross and threw stones at him.

I continued in the service of the person who replaced him. The new bishop was an ascetic who longed for the Hereafter and engaged in worship day and night.

I was greatly devoted to him and spent a long time in his company.

(After his death, Salman attached himself to various Christian religious figures, in Mosul, Nisibis and elsewhere.

The last one had told him about the appearance of a Prophet in the land of the Arabs who would have a reputation for strict honesty, one who would accept a gift but would never consume charity (sadaqah) for himself. Salman continues his story.)

A group of Arab leaders from the Kalb tribe passed through Ammuriyah and I asked them to take me with them to the land of the Arabs in return for whatever money I had. They agreed and I paid them.

When we reached Wadi al-Qura (a place between Madinah and Syria), they broke their agreement and sold me to a Jew.

I worked as a servant for him but eventually he sold me to a nephew of his belonging to the tribe of Banu Qurayzah.

This nephew took me with him to Yathrib, the city of palm groves, which is how the Christian at Ammuriyah had described it.

In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

Islamic Last Will and Testament

OF

RESIDING AT _____

COUNTY _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ TELEPHONE _____ TODAY'S DATE _____

ARTICLE I: PREAMBLE

The Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) ordered Muslims to have their Last Will and Testament drawn up: Abdullah bin 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Pbuh) said, "It is not permissible for any Muslim who has something to Will to stay for two nights without having his Will and Testament written and kept ready with him" (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

While being in full mental capacity and good health, I, _____ a Muslim, do hereby declare, request, and certify this, my Last Will and Testament. I also do hereby declare that this document revokes any and all former Wills and codicils that I have made previously.

All praise to Allah (SWT), The Creator of the heavens and the earth and all within. I believe in Him and I put my trust entirely in Him. I beg for His Help and His Forgiveness. I seek refuge in Allah (SWT) from the Shaitan (Satan) and the evils of the world and the evils of my deeds. I ask Him to Guide me; those whom Allah (SWT) Guides no one can mislead, and those whom Allah (SWT) leaves to stray, no one can guide. I testify that I believe that The Hour will come for certain, and that Allah will resurrect all those who are in the graves. I testify that there is no deity except Allah, He is One and has no partners, and I testify that Mohammed is Allah's servant and last Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be on him).

I request of all of my immediate relatives and closest friends, and any others involved in the procedures surrounding my death and burial, whether they be Muslims or non-Muslims, to honor my human and Constitutional right and choice to be a Muslim. I ask them to also honor the spirit as well as letter of this document and to not obstruct or change it in any way. Let them see to it that I am buried as a Muslim, and my property divided and disperse as I ordered, according to the Sunni Muslim Islamic Law (hereafter referred to Shariah). Under no circumstances does anyone have the authority to change the contents of this Will.

I request of all of my immediate relatives and closest friends, for the sake of Allah and out of fear of Him, to settle their disputes and correct their relationships among themselves according to the following orders of Allah in The Quran: **"So fear Allah and amend that which is between you and obey Allah and His Messenger if you should be believers" (Surah al-A nfal 8: 1).**

I request of all of my immediate relatives and closest friends what the prophets Ibrahim and Ya'cob (Peace be upon them) directed their sons: **"O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims." (Surat-ul-Baqarah, 2:132).**

I request of all of my immediate relatives and closest friends, when I am on the brink of death, that they insist that I say the Shahadah: **"La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammadun Rasulallah** (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of God)" This is in observance of the Prophet's (Pbuh) saying: "Anyone whose last words were 'La ilaha ill-Allah (There is no God but Allah) will enter Paradise". (Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and al-Hakim - Sahih).

I insist that no one wail or slap their cheeks because of my death, as the Prophet (Pbuh) has prohibited these acts. After you have buried me, the first thing you must do is to clear me of my debts (if there are any), as the believer's soul is held back by his liabilities.

Distribution of Inheritance According to the Quran

Allah (SWT) says in the Quran in Sura (verse) An-Nisaa: 7-14

7. For men is a share of what parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much – an obligatory share.

8. And when [other] relatives and orphans and the needy are present at the [time of] division, then provide for them [something] out of it [i.e., the estate] and speak to them words of appropriate kindness.

9. And let those [executors and guardians] fear [injustice] as if they [themselves] had left weak offspring behind and feared for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate kindness.

10. Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze [i.e. Hellfire].

11. Allah instructs you concerning your children [i.e. their portions of inheritance]: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females. But if there are [only] daughters, two or more, for them is two thirds of one's estate. (Literally, "that which is left. "). And if there is only one, for her is half. And for one's parents, to each one of them is a sixth of his estate if he left children. But if he had no children, and the parents [alone] inherit for him, then for his mother is one third. And if he had brothers [and/or sisters], for his mother is a sixth, (Although the siblings themselves do not inherit in this case.) after any bequest he [may have] made or debt. Your parents or your children – you know not which of them, are nearest to you in benefit. [These shares are] an obligation [imposed] by Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.

12. And for you is half of what your wives leave if they have no child. But if they have a child, for you is one fourth of what they leave, after any bequest you [may have] made or debt. And if a man or woman leaves neither ascendants nor descendants but has a brother or a sister, then for each one is a sixth. But if they are more than two, they share a third, (these shares are divided equally between males and females), after any bequest which was made or debt, as long as there is no detriment [caused]. (This is a condition for any bequest. If it has been violated by the deceased, his bequest is not to be honored, or it may be adjusted by the executor). [This is] an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is knowing and Forebearing.

13. These are the limits of Allah, and whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted by Him to gardens [in Paradise] under which rivers flow, abiding eternally therein; and that is the great attainment.

14. And whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, and transgresses His limits - He will put him into the Fire to abide eternally therein, and he will have a humiliating

ARTICLE II: MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY

A. I am married to _____ and all references in this Will to my husband/wife (s) are references to this person.

B. I am the father/mother of the following children whose names and dates of birth are: 1. _____

2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 5. _____

6. _____ 7. _____

ARTICLE III: EXECUTOR AND BENEFICIARY

A. I hereby entrust all my estate: cash, bank accounts, real property, shares in any business, and any other property not mentioned in this Will, to the person named below, who shall act as my executor to serve without bond, to distribute it according to Shariah. I ordain that the executor of this Will be a Muslim.

1. My husband/wife _____, or, if he/she fails to survive me by 45 days, 2. _____, or, if fails to survive me by 45 days,

3. _____, or, if fails to survive me by 45 days, 4. _____, or, if fails to survive me by 45 days,

B. The Imam of the local Sunni Muslim community.

C. I direct that the executor take all actions legally permissible to have the probate of my estate done as simply and as expeditiously as possible.

D. I give my executor power to sell my property, real, personal or mixed, without a court order and without bond.

E. I give my executor power to settle any claim for or against my estate.

ARTICLE IV: BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. I ordain that my body be prepared for burial in keeping with the Sunni Muslim Law (Shariah).

2. Under no circumstances shall my body be voluntarily turned over for an autopsy, or embalming, or organ donation.

3. My body must be prepared for burial according to the Shariah

4. Once the body is prepared for burial there is to be no viewing of my remains.

5. Absolutely no non-Islamic religious service or observance shall be conducted upon my death, or on my body, or at the grave site. No pictures, stars and crescents, decorations, crosses, flags, flowers, plants, signs, symbols, or music be involved at any stage of my burial.

6. My body may not be transported over any unreasonable distance from the locality of my death unless necessitated by the circumstances or consensus of my Muslim family members.

7. My grave must be dug in complete accordance with the Shariah practice. It should face in the direction of the Qiblah (Ka'aba in Makkah, Saudi Arabia).

8. My body must be buried without casket or any other encasement that separates the shroud from the surrounding soil.

9. My grave must be covered with dirt only. The marking, if necessary, should be a simple rock. There should be no inscriptions or symbols on it.

10. My burial must take place as soon as possible, preferable before sunset on the day of my death or the following day. Under no circumstances should the burial be unduly delayed.

11. In the event that the local laws require casket-encasement, I command that such encasement be of the simplest, most modest, and least expensive type possible, and I furthermore command that the encasement be left open during burial and filled with dirt unless prohibited by law.

12. No one is permitted to cry out, moan or wail. I demand that such a person leave the burial site. Only what comes from the eye is acceptable (tears). Muslims should say a dua (supplication) for me and that there be a moment of silence when they pray that my grave is made spacious and comfortable.

ARTICLE V: CUSTODY OF MINOR CHILDREN AND GUARDIAN

If, at my death, any of my children are minors, I recommend that my husband/wife _____ be appointed guardian of my minor children, provided he/she is a Muslim. If

he/she is unable or unwilling to serve as personal guardian, I recommend that _____ be appointed guardian of my minor

children. If he/she is unable or unwilling to serve as personal guardian, I recommend that _____ be

appointed guardian of my minor children. If he/she is unable or unwilling to serve as personal guardian, I recommend that _____ be appointed guardian of my minor children. In all cases, I urge that all my minor children be raised to be practicing Sunni Muslims and not in any way be indoctrinated into any other faith, religion, or sect of Islam. I direct that no bond be required of any personal guardian. Any property or other inheritance that this Will gives to any of my minor children shall be administered by their guardian in their best interest.

ARTICLE VI: DEBTS AND EXPENSES

I direct my executor:

- A. To return to the rightful owners all trust and property that are in my care at the time of my death.
B. To first apply the assets of my estate to the payment of all my legal debts, including such expenses incurred by my last illness and burial as well as the expenses of the administration of my estate.
C. To pay any outstanding "obligation due to Allah (Huquq Allah) " which are binding on me including unpaid zakat, kaffaraat of unperformed pilgrimage (Hajj), etc.

ARTICLE VII: BEQUESTS

I direct my executor to:

Pay the following amount from the remainder of my estate after paying all the expenses mentioned above, to the person/s or organization/s named below. Bequests can only be given to non-inheritors, ie distant relatives or others who do not have a fixed portion of inheritance set in the Quran. This is because the Prophet peace be upon him said: "La wasseeyata lil waarith. There is no bequest for an inheritor." It is important to make this distinction since most Muslims do not know this ruling.

The total must not exceed 33 percent (one third) of the remainder of my estate.

Table with 5 rows for bequests, each with a percentage of the total remainder. Row 5 includes a total for bequests, capped at 33%.

ARTICLE VIII: DISTRIBUTION OF THE REMAINDER OF MY ESTATE

- 1. Distribute the residue and remainder of my estate strictly in accordance with the tenets of Sunni Muslim law of inheritance.
2. Ensure that no part of the remainder of my estate shall be inherited by any non-Muslim, no matter how he/she is related to me.
3. Ensure that, should I die as a result of murder, no part of the remainder of my estate shall be inherited by my adjured murderer responsible for direct unlawful killing (actionable homicide), no matter how he/she is related to me.
4. Ensure that no part of the remainder of my estate shall be inherited by a person whose claimed relationship to me, ascending or descending, is the result of a non-Islamic or unlawful marriage, or through adoption, except if this relationship to me is through his/her mother who is biologically (through blood) related to me or if he/she is specifically mentioned in bequests above.
5. Regarding a fetus conceived before my death, whose relationship to me qualifies it to be an heir according to this article, if it is born alive within the limit of time specified by Shariah. The executor may delay the distribution of the residue and remainder of my estate after the execution of Articles I to VII, until the birth of the fetus. If he/she chooses to distribute the estate prior to the birth of the fetus then he must withhold a portion of the estate equal to the share of the fetus for distribution until after the birth of the fetus.
6. In case of any difficulty in distributing my estate according to this Will, the matter should be referred to a Muslim knowledgeable in Islamic Inheritance Law for advice and guidance.
7. The residue and remainder of my estate after the execution of Articles I to VII and Article VIII sections 1 to 6 above be donated to the following person/s or organization/s for the establishment of

Islamic communities and Masjid.

- 8. Any portion of my estate disclaimed or refused to be received by any of the legatees names or referred to in this document be donated to the following person/s or organization/s for the establishment of Islamic communities and Masjid.

ARTICLE IX: SEPARABILITY

I direct that no part of this Will be invalidated by a court unless competent in Shariah. If any part of this will is determined invalid by a court the other parts shall remain valid and enforceable.

I insist that no one practice innovations regarding the three-day condolence period after my death, such as bringing in someone to recite excerpts from the Quran or to preparing food for guests. If you do any such innovations, I am free from that guilt and deviation, having herein charged you against it.

I declare that I forgive everyone who has backbitten me or erroneously taken anything from me. I beg of all those who knew me that they please forgive me for whatever I may have erroneously taken from them or said against them.

I request that if you differ in anything among yourselves you refer the decision to Allah and His Messenger (Pbuh), for Allah (SWT) said: "And know, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you, [O Mohammed], judge in what they dispute among themselves and then find no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in full, [willing] submission" (Surah an-Nisa 4: 65).

My final bequest for my family and children is the same one that the Messenger of Allah (Pbuh) enjoined upon his followers: "The prayer, the prayer". I advise and implore my family to have patience and accept Allah's will. (Surah al-Baqarah: 156)

This concludes my Last Will and Testament. I am now free, in front of Allah (SWT), from any words or deeds that distort and contradict this document according to the guidance of Allah's Messenger (Pbuh), as forewarned by the Quranic verse: "Then, whoever alters it [i.e. the bequest] after he has heard it - the sin is only upon those who have altered it." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:181).

"Exalted is your Lord, The Lord of might, above what they describe. And Peace be upon the messengers, and praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds" (Surah as-Saffat: 37: 180-182)

I subscribe my name to this Will this day at and do hereby declare that I sign and execute this instrument as my last Will and that I sign it willingly, that I execute it as my free and voluntary act for the purposes therein expressed, and that I am of age or otherwise legally empowered to make a Will, under no constraint or undue influence.

WITNESSES

On this day, _____ date of _____, the undersigned declared to us that this instrument was his/her Will and requested us to act as witnesses to it. He/She thereupon signed this Will in our presence, all of us being present at the same time. We now, at his/her request, in his/her presence, and in the presence of each other, subscribe our names as witness and declare that we understand this to be his/her Last Will, and that, to the best of our knowledge the testator is of the age of majority, or is otherwise legally empowered to make a Will, and under no constraint or undue influence.

Witness 1. _____
Name and Signature

Witness 2. _____
Name and Signature

HEALTH CARE PROXY AND LIVING WILL

If the time comes when I am incapacitated and can no longer actively take part in decisions for my own life and am unable to direct my physician as to my own medical care, I wish this statement to stand as a testament of my wishes.

I, _____ hereby appoint the following individual as my health care agent.

Name: _____ Phone# _____

Address: _____

This health care proxy shall take effect if and when I become unable to make my own health care decisions. In respect of each decision made for me by my agent, it is my wish and direction that my agent be guided solely by Islamic Shariah as to what my own decision would have been in the same circumstances. Without limiting the unrestricted scope of my agent's authority hereunder, I expressly authorize my agent to direct that no treatment be conducted or withheld from me if to do so is against the teachings of Islam, to the best of understanding of my agent. I direct that medication be judiciously administered to me to alleviate pain. I do not intend any direct taking of my life. I also direct that "life support systems" may be used in a judicious manner and its use discontinued, just like any other medicine, if it becomes reasonably apparent that it has no curative value. The "life support systems" include but are not limited to artificial respiration, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, artificial means of providing nutrition and hydration, and any pharmaceutical drugs. I direct that my family, all physicians, hospitals and other health care providers and any court or judge honor the decision of my agent/alternate agent. This request is made, after careful reflection, while I am of sound mind.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name and Signature _____ Witness 1.

Name and Signature _____ Witness 2.

*****OPTIONAL*****

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____.

Notary Public _____ Signature & Seal

In Case of Emergency Contact: (Include Mosques and all phone numbers)

We hope this will benefit you and your family. For a will to be legal in most states, you have to be at least 18 years old and of sound mind. The will must be signed by you and witnessed by two people who won't receive anything from your estate. However, please consult with an Islamic Scholar and/or an attorney first. As always, please feel free to pass or share this information on to your friends and other Muslims. Pray for the people at The Islamic Bulletin who prepared this sample Will for you. Jazakum Allahu Khairan (May Allah Reward You). If more copies are needed please go to: www.islamicbulletin.org and click on enter here and then Islamic Last Will. For a list of mosques click mosques under enter here. You can print the whole mosques in a PDF format.

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For More Information Please Contact: **The Islamic Bulletin**

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San Francisco, CA 94141-0186

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E-Mail: info@islamicbulletin.org

THIS INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR THE DEATH CERTIFICATE:

Full Name _____

Date Of Birth _____ Place Of Birth _____

Social Security Number _____ Race _____

Street Address And Zip _____

City/Town Of Residence _____ County Of Residence _____

Full Name Of Father _____

First And Maiden Name Of Mother _____

Highest Level Of Education In Years
Elementary/Secondary (0-12) _____ College (1-4 Or 5+) _____

Marital Status (Circle): Never Married Married Widowed Divorced

If Married Or Widowed, Name Of Spouse _____

Usual Or Last Occupation _____ Kind Of Business Or Industry _____

Name Of Attending Physician _____

Next of Kin and Contact info:

THE NET VALUE OF YOUR ESTATE

I. ASSETS (Add up what you own and where located)

A. Personal Property:

1. Cash _____ Located: _____

Cash _____ Located: _____

2. Savings: _____ Bank _____

Savings: _____ Bank _____

3. Checking: _____ Bank _____

4. Other: _____

5. Interest in Profit Sharing, Stock, Partnership, etc. _____

6. Automobiles, Jewelry, Household & Clothing _____

7. Miscellaneous _____

B. Real Estate (describe for each property you own)

Value _____ Located _____

Value _____ Located _____

Total Value of all the above assets:

II. LIABILITIES (add what you owe)

1. _____ Money Owed to _____ \$

Address and Phone: _____

2. _____ Money Owed to _____ \$

Address and Phone: _____

3. _____ Mortgage

4. _____

5. Personal debts: (loans, car, etc.) _____

Total Amount owed: _____

Safe Deposit Box _____ located at _____

Passport # & Type _____ Important Passwords #: _____

This document, comprising _____ pages, is made in _____ copies. The original is with me, one copy is

deposited with _____ Name and Phone # _____ and

one copy with _____ Name and Phone # _____

<http://www.islamicbulletin.org/services/testament.htm>



MY BODY IS MY BUSINESS

By Naheed Mustafa

As a Canadian-born Muslim woman I have taken to wearing the traditional hijab scarf. It tends to make people see me as either a terrorist or a symbol of oppressed womanhood, but I find the experience LIBERATING.

I OFTEN wonder whether people see me as a radical, fundamentalist Muslim terrorist packing an AK-47 assault rifle inside my jean jacket. Or maybe they see me as the poster girl for oppressed womanhood everywhere. I'm not sure which it is.

I get the whole gamut of strange looks, stares, and covert glances. You see, I wear the hijab, a scarf that covers my head, neck, and throat. I do this because I am a Muslim woman who believes her body is her own private concern.

Young Muslim women are reclaiming the hijab, reinterpreting it in light of its original purpose to give back to women ultimate control of their own bodies.

The Qur'an teaches us that men and women are equal, that individuals should not be judged according to gender, beauty, wealth, or privilege. The only thing that makes one person better than another is her or his character.

So many of us are so ashamed of our religion that we change ourselves, to blend in. We all know a Samer who has become Sam or a Mohammad who calls himself Mo. We all know the woman who wears a Western Hijab: jeans, a long shirt, and the obligatory headpiece. How many times do Muslim women take off the hijab because of the pressures of society? How many times have you heard: "I can't get a job; I can't handle the stares."

Nonetheless, people have a difficult time relating to me. After all, I'm young, Canadian born and raised, university educated. Why would I do this to myself, they ask.

Strangers speak to me in loud, slow English and often appear to be playing charades. They politely inquire how I like living in Canada and whether or not the cold bothers me. If I'm in the right mood, it can be very amusing.

But, why would I, a woman with all the advantages of a North American upbringing, suddenly, at 21, want to cover myself so that with the hijab and the other clothes I choose to wear; only my face and hands show?

Because it gives me freedom.

WOMEN are taught from early childhood that their worth is proportional to their attractiveness. We feel compelled to pursue abstract notions of beauty, half realizing that such a pursuit is futile.

When women reject this form of oppression, they face ridicule and contempt. Whether it is women who refuse to wear makeup or to shave their legs, or to expose their bodies, society, both men and women, have trouble dealing with them.

One day, a covered Muslim sister was on the shuttle at the university where she was studying. This young American woman boarded the bus. She was wearing a skirt so short, it left nothing to the imagination. She sat across from the muhajiba sister. The sister looked up and noticed that the American woman was staring at her, and shaking her head. She apparently disapproved of her dress. No matter. If she had not believed that hers was the superior way, she might have felt embarrassed or humiliated. But it seemed that she knew, believed, and accepted that Islam is the right way, because instead of pulling back, she looked right at the non-Muslim American woman with a look of severe disapproval. She then looked to the woman's exposed legs and tisked while shaking her head.

The American woman responded by tugging at the bottom of her skirt, like she was trying to cover her legs more. The American woman felt the shame and humiliation of her exposure. This woman recognized her inferior status and reacted accordingly, because the Muslim woman did not back down or allow the non-Muslim to make her feel inferior. This is the way we should all act.

In the Western world, the hijab has come to symbolize either forced silence or radical, unconscionable militancy. Actually, it's neither. It is simply a woman's assertion that judgment of her physical person is to play no role whatsoever in social interaction.

Wearing the hijab has given me freedom from constant attention to my physical self. Because my appearance is not subjected to public scrutiny, my beauty, or perhaps lack of it, has been removed from the realm of what can legitimately be discussed.

No one knows whether my hair looks as if I just stepped out of a salon, whether or not I can pinch an inch, or even if I have unsightly stretch marks. And because no one knows, no one cares.

Feeling that one has to meet the impossible male standards of beauty is tiring and often humiliating. I should know, I spent my entire teenage years trying to do it. It was a borderline bulimic and spent a lot of money I didn't have on potions and lotions in hopes of becoming the next Cindy Crawford.

The definition of beauty is ever-changing; waifish is good, waifish is bad, athletic is good - sorry, athletic is bad. Narrow hips? Great. Narrow hips? Too bad.

Women are not going to achieve equality with the right to bear their breasts in public, as some people would like to have you believe. That would only make us party to our own objectification. True equality will be had only when women don't need to display themselves to get attention and won't need to defend their decision to keep their bodies to themselves.

Naheed Mustafa graduated from the University of Toronto last year with an honors degree in political and history. She is currently studying journalism at Ryerson Polytechnic University.



TUNA BURGERS

(Yield 8 servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 7-ounce can tuna
- 1 cup chopped celery
- ½ cup American cheese, cut in pieces
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1 small onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 buns

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix tuna, celery, cheese, mayonnaise, onion, salt and pepper.
3. Fill buns with tuna mixture.
4. Wrap in foil.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes.

ENJOY!!



RAPP ARTIST EMBRACING ISLAM

Everlast: Taking Islam one day at a time

An interview by Adisa Banjoko

Rapp music has seen more than its share influence from the religion of Islam. With groups such as Public Enemy rapping about their respect for the Nation of Islam, to people such as Q-Tip of A Tribe Called Quest embracing mainstream Islam, the re-ligion seems to be a recurrent theme in the genre, both impacting lyrics and lives. One artist more recently touched by Islam is Eric Schrody, bet-ter known in music circles as Everlast.

While Everlast began his musical career as a rapp artist, he has recently shown himself to have much greater depth and diversity.

His current album, Whitey Ford Sings the Blues (currently ranked #49 on billboard's charts after peaking at #9) exhibits this in its reflective and somewhat philosophical tone, showing glimpses of the influence Islam has had on his life.

What follows is an interview in which Everlast discusses his journey to Islam and the challenges he faces as a new Muslim.

Tell me about the first time you learned about Islam?

It was probably around the late 80's. I was hangin' out with Divine Styler (a popular Los Angeles rapp artist). He was basically at the end of his 5% period (referring to the pseudo-Islamic "Nation of Gods and Earths" sect). He was starting to come into Islam. He lived with the Bashir family. Abdullah Bashir was sort of his teacher; and mine it wound up later. As he was making the transition from 5% into Islam I would just be around and hear things.

I'm trying to think of the first time I recognized it as Islam. I think it was when one of Divine's friends took Shahada (the Muslim profession of faith) and I was there. I heard him say, "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the servant and messenger." And I remember me being like, "What is this? I'm white. Can I be here?" It was outta ignorance, you know? 'Cause here in America, Islam is considered a "Black thing." And that's when someone pointed out to me, "You have no idea how many white Muslims there are in the world." I was like, "Really," and somebody broke it down. I said, "That's crazy. I had no clue."

Do you feel any extra pressure being a white Muslim in America?

I don't think of it on the grand scale. To me, Islam is mine. Allah is the God of all the worlds, and all mankind and all the Al-Amin (worlds/universe). Islam is my personal relationship with God. So, nobody can put any more pressure on me than I can put on myself. But as far as the mosque where I pray, I have never felt more at home or more welcome. And it's not just mine. The few mosques that I've gone to around the country, I've never ever been made to feel uncomfortable. Like in New York, the mosque is big and there's so many people that nobody is lookin' to notice you. There were Chinese, Korean, Spanish - everything, which was a good thing for me because at my mosque I'm the only white male, [although] there are some white females.

I think at first, I thought about it more than anybody else the first couple times I went to Jumma (the Friday congregational prayer). The first time I went to Jumma, I was taken by a friend of mine in New York. It was in Brooklyn in Bed-Stuy (Bedford Stuyvestant).

The Islamic Bulletin



I was nervous about the neighborhood I was in, not the mosque. But I was just so at ease once I was there. I was like, "This is great." I didn't feel any different than anybody else in the mosque.

How did your family take your turning to Islam? Because you were raised Catholic, right?

Well, you know my mom is very open minded, very progressive. My mother lives with me. And I've been raised all my life with not a belief in God, but a knowledge that he exists. I was taught [that] if [I were to know] anything in the world, [I should] know there's a God. And my mom, even though she was Catholic she was the first person to point out hypocrisy in the church. My mom really hasn't attended church in a long time. But as far as me, my mom is just happy that I have God in my life.

She sees me making prayers. And Divine is one of her favorite people in the world. She knows how much different we are than when she first knew us as kids. When me and Divine first hooked up, we were wild. We were out partyin', fightin', doin' whatever we had to do. We thought, "Yeah, that's what being a man is about. We're gonna go out here and be thuggish."

[But] she has seen how much it's changed me and him; and how much peace it's brought me since I've started to really accomplish something with it. I actually had a long talk with my mother the other day and we were on the topic of religion. We were actually talking about life and death, and the future and when she might go (die, pass away). That won't be for a long time, inshallah (God willing). But I asked her to do me one favor. I said, "Mom, when you die there might be some angels who ask you a question, and I want you to answer it; and I'm not sure exactly how it goes, 'cause I ain't died yet. Remember that there's only one God, and he's never been a man." She said, "I know what you are trying to tell me." [And] I said, "Jesus wasn't God, Ma".

Some of what I know has definitely shown up in my mother. She's no Muslim, but she knows there's only one God. And that makes me very happy. I know guys that have turned towards Islam and their families have turned them out (i.e. rejected them).

My family tried to. I just can't understand that. But you know what? That's a trial. Although I've changed my name for like 8 years now, they still run up calling me by my birth name. Then it's, "Oh I forgot that you're Muslim." Then it's the pork jokes. It never stops.

It's one of those things where people laugh at what they don't understand. Or they fear what they can't grasp. The thing is that nobody can pretend that they don't understand it. Because I've never come across anything more simple in my life.

Like I remember that when I sat down and asked, "So, what does a Muslim believe," and I got the list run down to me. I was like, "You don't put up the wall between Christianity and Judaism." They were like, "Nah, it's all the same story." *continued on page 22*

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Halal or Haram...How Do You Earn Your Living? The Message of the Prophet Shu'ayb

The people of Madyan were from the early Arab tribes that had settled in the area between Hijaz and Palestine. They were known for their prominence in business activities, and their town was a commercial center for passing caravans.

This community, lacking faith in Allah and in the reckoning of the Hereafter, had fallen into sin, especially as might be expected, into cheating and injustice in their business dealings. So widespread was this that it was considered the norm in society. No one questioned this apparently successful and prosperous way of life.

So to the Madyan people Allah sent their brother, Shu'ayb. He said, **"Oh my people, worship Allah. You have no god but Him. And do not subtract from the measure and the scale. Certainly I see you in prosperity, and I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing day."** (Qur'an 11:84)

Shu'ayb also pleaded, **"Oh my people, fulfill the measure and weight with justice and do not deprive people of their due, nor spread evil on the earth intending corruption. That which Allah has left (lawful) is best for you, if you were believers."** (Qur'an 11:85-86)

Shu'ayb's message was straight to the point. He not only condemned the obvious sin of cheating in business, but he also warned against depriving people of things that were theirs by right. This had a wider and more general meaning, including not only measurement, price and estimate, but also non-material concepts such as appreciation and respect.

Shu'ayb (pbuh) emphasized an order from Allah including all that is just and good, anything due to a person for any reason should not be withheld. He stressed that failure to give anyone his due would result in bad feelings which would harm personal and social relationships.

Because of their rejection of Allah, the order was given for the destruction of the transgressors. They were taken by the punishment of a black cloud, a violent blast and a final earthquake. (These three things have been said to have occurred simultaneously and perhaps indicated a volcanic eruption, but Allah knows best).

Turning away from the terrible spectacle of devastation before him, Shu'ayb could only say, "O my people, truly did I deliver to you the messages of my Lord and advise you, so how could I grieve for a disbelieving people?" (Qur'an 7:93)

The Message of Prophet

Muhammad Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was also entrusted with messages concerning fairness in business, halal earnings, and honesty towards our brothers. "May Allah have mercy upon the man who is generous while selling, and also generous in buying and demanding his balance from people.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, **"No one has ever any food which is better than which he had earned through working with his hands. And verily Allah's Nabi (prophets) Dawood (pbuh) used to eat that which he earned with his hands."**

In today's world of high technology, electronic commerce, and the fast pace and open life style of the westernized countries, it can be a temptation difficult to avoid when confronted with the opportunity to earn a living in a haram way.

We see much the same problems in the course of business as did the Prophet Shu'aib and Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). Everyone desires economic security for themselves and their families, but at what price?

The Prophet (pbuh) said **"Both legal and illegal things are obvious, and in between them are (suspicious) doubtful matters. So whoever forsakes those doubtful things lest he may commit a sin, will definitely avoid what is clearly illegal; and whoever indulges in these (suspicious) doubtful things bravely, is likely to commit what is clearly illegal. Sins are Allah's Hima (i.e. private pasture) and whoever pastures (his sheep) near it, is likely to get in it at any moment."**

Can we say that we never cheat anyone in business? Do we sell items that have been forbidden to us? Do we lie to make a sale? Do we give fair weight and measure to our employers by working to the best of our ability?

Indeed it is challenging to see those around us with the wealth of this world while perhaps we struggle to make ends meet, but this has been addressed numerous times in the Qur'an and Hadith as a guide for us.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said the following:

"Richness does not lie in the abundance of worldly goods, but richness is the richness of the soul (heart, self)."

"Allah's Mercy be upon that person who acts generously when he sells, generously when he buys, and generously when he reclaims a debt due to him."

"Refrain from swearing oaths excessively when selling."

"Indeed, the trader who is both honest and trustworthy in both word and deed will, on the day of Qiyamah (Day Of Judgment), arise with the Prophets of Allah and the righteous elders and the martyrs."

"May Allah keep safely that believer who is a hardworking tradesman, who cares not what clothes he wears."

"For every person who earns anything halaal, which he either eats himself or whereby he clothes himself or clothes anyone else of Allah's creation, that shall be written as a deed of charity."

"To earn a halaal livelihood is compulsory after the completion of other obligatory acts."

"Whosoever, in the evening, is exhausted through his work, he has all his sins forgiven by that evening" (assuming his work is halaal)."

"If you people should put your trust in Allah (tawakkul) as you should, He will grant you sustenance in the same manner as He grants the birds who go out in the morning with empty bellies and return in the evening with bellies full of food."

"Whomsoever cares not how his earnings are, Allah will not care through which door he enters Hell."

"That body will never enter paradise which had been nourished with foods from haram sources."

"It is more acceptable for me to return (to its owner) one dirham which is of doubtful origin that to give one hundred thousand dirhams in charity."

The Miraculous Black Seed



Black Seeds ... the Islamic Cure

It is narrated by hadith that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: "Use the black seed because it has a relief of all diseases, but death."

Black seed (Nigella Seed) has a tasty aroma and contains phosphate, iron, phosphorate, carbohydrate, oil 28%. It contains anti-virus bacteria, carotene, anti-cancer fighting material, and hormones which give strength and activity.

FDA Approved Black Seed Oil

In the spring of 1996 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted a patent for drug use as an immune system stimulant. The drug is based on extracts of "Nigella Sativa," more commonly known as the black seed to Muslims or black cumin.

The patent was based on "a pharmaceutical composition containing an extract of the plant Nigella sativa... for treated cancer, preventing the side effects of anticancer chemotherapy, and for increasing the immune functions in humans."

Muslims have been using and promoting the use of the "black seed" or "al-habbatus-sawdaa" for hundreds of years. It has become very popular in recent years and is sold by many Muslim and non-Muslim businesses.

A large part of this herbal preparation's popularity is based on the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh).

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "There is healing in the black seed for all diseases except death."

However, many products that are presently sold as "black seed" may be black cumin, black caraway, or even coriander. As-Suyuti's Medicine of The Prophet (pbuh) has black seed listed as coriander seeds, with arguments presented for black cumin, terebinth, and even mustard. However, research seems to favor "black cumin" or Nigella sativa as the black seed. Black cumin may be referred to as nutmeg flower or roman coriander, and even fennel flower by gardeners.

Black cumin has been used for a variety of medical problems for several thousand years. They range from stomach aches to

asthma, cancer to coughs, and the traditional use as a spice.

Black cumin is also used as: a carminative (rids the body of gas from the intestines), a digestive (aids in digestion), a diuretic (increases urine flow by ridding the body of excess water), an emmenagogue (promotes/regulates menstruation), a galactagogue (increases production of milk), a resolvent (dissolves boils & swelling), a stimulant (increases the flow of adrenaline and energy), a stomachic (relieves stomach disorders), a sudorific (increases perspiration), a tonic (improves bodily functions), and a vermifuge (expels worms).

Caution should be taken when using the black seed to ensure that you are taking the black seed look for the words Nigella sativa. Only this plant, as opposed to true cumin or coriander has the ability to "heal all diseases".

Research suggests that the black seed is an effective anti-tumor treatment for certain types of cancer, including breast cancer and fibrocystic breast disease. The black seed may also be of possible benefit in treating high blood pressure.

Except its potential to cause spontaneous abortions (and only in high doses), there may be little, if any, toxic side effects to using it. There is even some research on the possible contraceptive abilities of the black seed. More research is being done on its effectiveness and research trials are also being planned in various countries to study its actual effects on humans.

However, the Prophet's (pbuh) words tell us there is healing in this plant. However, there is more to be learned regarding the appropriate doses for various medical problems.

Following are some of the common 'folk remedies' using Black Seed:

1. Dizziness and ear infection: use it as a drop for the ears for "infection"; and drink it in tea and rub under your cheek and at the back of your neck for dizziness.
2. For women and delivery: it is the best thing for helping with the pains of labor. Boil the black seed with honey and drink.
3. For skin diseases: mix a unit of the black seeds' oil with a same unit of rose water and 2 units of brown flour. Before you use the mix rub the area with a cloth dipped in vinegar. Lightly apply the mix to the skin and then expose to the sun every day.
4. Rheumatism: Warm black seed oil and massage the oil into the painful areas. Also, make a drink of boiled black seed and mix with honey, drink before going to sleep; and have a lot of yaqeen (full-faith).
5. High blood pressure: Mix the black seed with hot liquids you may drink, such as coffee, tea, etc; and rub your body with the oil and have yaqeen.
6. Chest pains and colds: Add 1 tablespoon of the black seeds in boiling water and inhale the vapor and cover your head before you sleep.
7. Heart burn: add a few drops of black seed oil to a hot cup of milk and add one teaspoon of honey. Also, eat a lot of lettuce.
8. Eye pain: rub the oil around the eyes before you sleep and mix a few drops of the oil with hot drinks.
9. Ulcers: Mix 10 drops of black seed oil with a cup of honey. Eat 1 spoon of this mixture daily, every morning, before you eat or drink anything else. Follow with a glass of milk. Do this for two months.
10. Cancer: Rub the affected area with black seed oil. 3 times a day drink a mixture of a teaspoon of the oil with a glass of carrot juice. Do this for three months.
11. Laziness: Mix 10 drops of black seed oil with a glass of orange juice when waking up for 10 days. Important, do not sleep after Fajr salat.
12. For memorizing: Boil mint and mix it with honey and 7 drops of black seed oil-drink while warm any time of the day. Also, stop drinking coffee and tea.



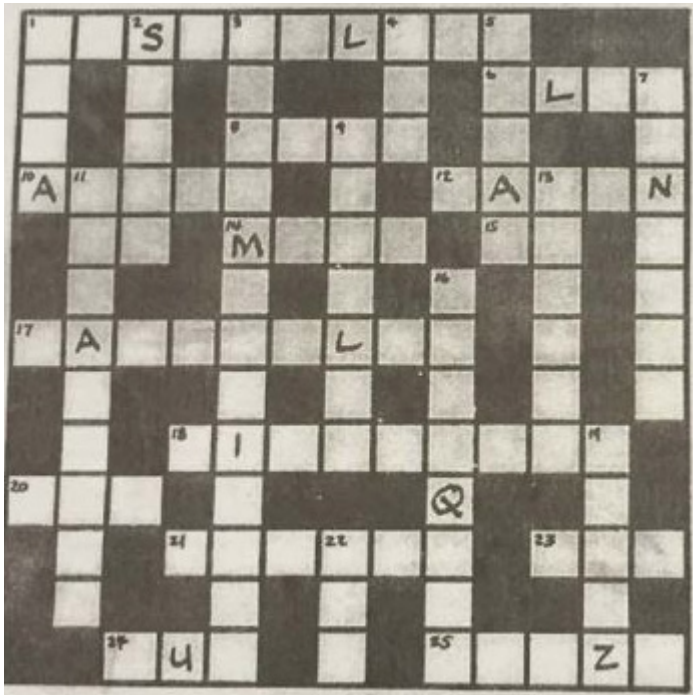
LITTLE QUIZ

88% of kindergarten students got this one within 5 minutes, while only 17% of Stanford seniors did. See how you do!

What is greater than God? More evil than Satan? Poor people have it? Rich people need it? If you eat it you will die!

Look at the bottom for the answer if you must!

CROSSWORD



CLUES

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Across | Down |
| 1. If Allah wishes | 1. Late evening prayer |
| 6. Learned Muslim | 2. European country, once ruled by Muslims |
| 8. It's on the camel's back | 3. All praise is due to Allah |
| 10. Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) mother | 4. Covers your teeth |
| 12. Sura 36 (XXXVI) | 5. Permissible (Arabic) |
| 14. Surrounds a castle | 7. Muezzin's tower |
| 15. No (Arabic) | 9. Pilgrim's host |
| 17. In the name of Allah | 11. Lives in Kuala Lumpur |
| 19. The Islamic way of life | 13. Great North African Desert |
| 20. Islam's first Qibla | 16. Eleventh Islamic month |
| 23. Not on | 19. Memorises Qur'an, Persian poet |
| 24. Soul (Arabic) | 22. Say (Arabic) |

Answer: Nothing

TAKEN FROM "THE ORIGIN OF MAN"
by Dr. Maurice Bucaille

Dr. Maurice Bucaille is an eminent French surgeon, scientist, scholar, and author of "THE BIBLE, THE QUR'AN AND SCIENCE" which contains the result of his research into the Judeo-Christian Revelation and the Qur'an. It is a unique contribution in the field of religion and science.

Being an outstanding Scientist, he was selected to treat the mummy of Merneptah (Pharaoh) which he did. During his visit to Saudi Arabia he was shown the verses of the Holy Qur'an in which Allah says that the dead body of the Pharaoh will be preserved as a "Sign" for posterity. An impartial scientist like Dr. Bucaille, who (being also a Christian) was conversant with the Biblical version of Pharaoh's story as being drowned in pursuit of Prophet Moses. He was pleasantly surprised to learn that unknown to the world till only of late, the Holy Qur'an made definite prediction about the preservation of the body of that same Pharaoh of Moses' time. This led Dr. Bucaille to study the Holy Qur'an thoroughly after learning the Arabic language. The final conclusion of his comparative study of Qur'an and the Bible is that the statements about scientific phenomena in the Holy Qur'an are perfectly in conformity with the modern sciences whereas the Biblical narration's on the same subjects are scientifically entirely unacceptable.

Also watch the video The Book of Signs, which is based on Dr. Maurice Bucaille: "The Bible, The Quran and Science" and "What is the Origin of Man."

FROM THE ORIGIN OF MAN

As most people in the West have been brought up on misconceptions concerning Islam and the Qur'an; for a large part of my life, I myself was one such person. Let me cite one or two specific examples to indicate the kind of inaccurate ideas generally current.

MISCONCEPTIONS

As I grew up, I was always taught that 'Mahomet' was the author of the Qur'an; I remember seeing French translations bearing this information. I was invariably told that the 'author' of the Qur'an simply compiled, in a slightly different form, stories of sacred history taken from the Bible; the 'author' was said to have added or removed certain passages, while setting forth the principles and rules of the religion he himself had founded. There are moreover Islamic scholars today in France whose duties include teaching and who express exactly these views, although perhaps in a more subtle form. This description of the origins of the Qur'anic text, which is so out of touch with reality, might lead one immediately to assume that if there are scientific errors in the Bible, there must also be errors of this kind in the Qur'an! This is the natural conclusion to be drawn in such circumstances, but it is based on a misconception. We are well aware that at the time of Muhammad - the Qur'anic Revelation took place between 610 and 632 A.D - scientific obscurantism prevailed, both in the Orient as well as in the West. In France, for example, this period corresponded roughly to the reign of King Dagobert, the last of the Merovingians. This approach to what was supposedly the Qur'anic text may on first sight seem logical, but when one examines the text with an informed and impartial eye, it becomes clear that this approach is not at all in keeping with reality. We shall see in a moment the truth of this statement, which is obvious from the texts.

Whenever there is textual proof of the existence in the Qur'an of statements that are in agreement with modern knowledge, but which in the Bible are related in a manner that is scientifically unacceptable, the stock response is that, during the period separating the two Scriptures, Arab scientists made discoveries in various disciplines which enabled them to arrive at these supposed adaptations. This approach takes no account whatsoever of the history of the sciences. The latter indicates that the great period of Islamic civilizations, during which, as we know, science made considerable progress, came several centuries after the communication of the Qur'an to the communication of the Qur'an to man. Furthermore, scientific history informs us that, as far as the subjects dealt with in this present book are concerned; no discoveries were made during, the period separating the Bible from the Qur'an.

When this aspect of the Qur'an is mentioned in the West, however, we are likely to hear it said that while this may indeed be so, nowhere is this fact referred to in the translations of the Qur'an which we possess today, or in the prefaces and commentaries that accompany them.

This is a very judicious remark. Muslim - and indeed non-Muslim - translators who have produced a French version of the Qur'an are basically men of letters. More often than not, they mistranslate a passage because they do not possess the scientific knowledge required to understand its true meaning. The fact is, however, that in order to translate correctly, one must first understand what one is reading. A further point is that translators - especially those mentioned above - may have been influenced by notes provided by ancient commentators often came to be regarded as highly authoritative, even though they had no scientific knowledge - nor indeed had anybody else at that time. They were incapable of imagining that the texts might contain allusions to secular knowledge, and thus they could not devote attention to a specific passage by comparing it to other verses in the Qur'an dealing with the same subject - a process that often provides the key to the meaning of a word or expression. From this results the fact that any passage in the Qur'an that gives rise to a comparison with modern secular knowledge is likely to be unreliably translated.

Very often, the translations are peppered with inaccurate - if not totally nonsensical - statements. The only way to avoid such errors is to possess a scientific background and to study the Qur'anic text in the original language.

SCIENTIFIC ERRORS

In the subject of man, as well as the other topics mentioned earlier, it is not possible to find any corresponding data in the Bible. Furthermore the scientific errors contained in the Bible - such as those describing man's first appearance on earth, which, as we have seen, may be deduced from the Genealogies that figure in Genesis are not to be found in the Qur'an. It is crucial to understand that such errors could not have been 'edited out' of the Qur'an since the time they first became apparent: well over a thousand years have elapsed since the most ancient manuscripts and today's texts of the Qur'an, but these texts are still absolutely identical.

Thus, if Muhammad were the author of the Qur'an (a theory upheld by some people), it is difficult to see how he could have spotted the scientific errors in the Bible dealing with such a wide variety of subjects and have proceeded to eliminate every single one of them when he came to compose his own text on the same themes. Let us state once again, that no new scientific facts had been discovered since the time the Bible was written that might have helped eliminate such errors.

In view of the above, it is imperative to know the history of the texts, just as it is essential to our understanding of certain aspects of the Bible for us to be aware, of the conditions in which it was written. As we have noted earlier, experts in Biblical exegesis consider the books of Old and New Testaments to be divinely inspired works. Let us now examine, however, the teachings of Muslim exegetes, who present the Qur'an in quite a different fashion.

When Muhammad was roughly forty years old, it was his custom to retire to a retreat just outside Mecca in order to meditate. It was here that he received a first message from God via the Angel Gabriel, at a date that corresponds to 610 A.D. After a long period of silence, this first message was followed by successive revelations spread over some twenty years. During the Prophet's lifetime, they were both written down and recited by heart among his first followers. Similarly, the revelations were divided into suras (chapters) and collected together after the Prophet's death (in 632 A.D.) in a book: the Qur'an.

The Book contains the Word of God, to the exclusion of any human additions. Manuscripts dating from the first century of Islam authenticate today's text, the other form of authentication being the recitation by heart of the Qur'an, a practice that has continued unbroken from the time of the Prophet down to the present day.

Answers for crossword puzzle

Across: 1. Inshallah; 6. Alim; 8. Hump; 10. Amina; 12. Yasin; 14. Moat; 15. La; 17. Baitullah; 19. Din; 20. Al Aqsa; 13. Off; 24. Ruh; 25. Amaze.

Down: 1. Isha; 2. Spain; 3. Alhamdulillah; 4. Lip; 5. Halal; 7. Minaret; 8. Muallim; 11. Malaysian; 13. Sahara; 16. Dhul Qada; 19. Hafiz; 22. Qul.

UNCORRUPTED NATURE OF THE QUR'AN

In contrast to the Bible, therefore, we are presented with a text that is none other than the transcript of the Revelation itself; the only way it can be received and interpreted is literally. The purity of the revealed text has been greatly emphasized, and the uncorrupted nature of the Qur'an stems from the following factors:

First, as stated above, fragments of the text were written down during the Prophet's lifetime; inscribed on tablets, parchments and other materials current at the time. The Qur'an itself refers to the fact that the text was set down in writing. We find this in several suras dating from before and after the Hejira (Muhammad's departure from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D.) In addition to the transcription of the text, however, there was also the fact that it was learned by heart. The text of the Qur'an is much shorter than the Old Testament and slightly longer than the New Testament. Since it took twenty years for the Qur'an to be revealed, however, it was easy for the Prophet's followers to recite it by heart, sura by sura. This process of recitation afforded a considerable advantage as far as an uncorrupted text was concerned, for it provided a system of double-checking at the time the definitive text was written down. This took place several years after the Prophet's death; first under the caliphate of Abu Bakr, his first successor, and later under the caliphate of Omar and in particular that of Uthman (644 to 655 A.D.) The latter ordered an extremely strict recension of the text, which involved checking it against the recited versions.

TEXT OF QUR'AN UNCORRUPTED

After Muhammad's death, Islam rapidly expanded far beyond the limits of the area in which it was born. Soon, it included many peoples whose native language was not Arabic. Very strict steps were taken to ensure that the text of the Qur'an did not suffer from this expansion of Islam: Uthman sent copies of his entire recension to the principal centers of the vast Islamic empire. Some copies still exist today, in more or less complete form, in such places as Tashkent (U.S.S.R) and Istanbul. Copies have also been discovered that date from the very first centuries after the Hejira; they are all identical, and all of them correspond to the earliest manuscripts.

Today's editions of the Qur'an are all faithful reproductions of the original copies. In the case of the Qur'an, there are no instances of rewriting or corruption of the text over the course of time. If the origin of the Qur'an had been similar to those of the Bible, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the subjects it raised would be presented in the light of the ideas influenced by certain opinions of the time, often derived from myth and superstition. If this were the case, one might argue that there were untold opportunities for inaccurate assertions, based on such sources, to find their way into the many and varied subjects briefly summarized above. In actual fact, however, we find nothing of the kind in the Qur'an.

But having said this, we should note that the Qur'an is a religious book par excellence. We should not use statements that have a bearing on secular knowledge as a pretext to go hunting after any expression of scientific laws. As stated earlier, all we should seek are reflections on natural phenomena, phrases occasioned by references to divine omnipotence and designed to emphasize that omnipotence in the eyes of mankind throughout the ages.

The presence of such reflections in the Qur'an has become particularly significant in modern times, for their meaning is clearly explained by the data of contemporary knowledge. This characteristic is specific to the Qur'an.

UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES

It was not until I had learnt Arabic and read the Qur'an in the original that I realized the precise meaning of certain verses. Only then did I make certain discoveries that were astounding. With my basic ideas on the Qur'an - which to begin with were inaccurate, just as those of most people in the West - I certainly did not expect to find in the text the statements that I in fact uncovered. With each new discovery, I was beset with doubt lest I might be mistaken in my translation or perhaps have provided an interpretation rather than a true rendering of the Arabic text.

Only after consultations with several specialists in linguistics and exegesis, both Muslim and non-Muslim, was I convinced that a new concept might be formed from such a study: the compatibility between the statements in the Qur'an and firmly established data of modern science with regard to subjects on which nobody at the time of Muhammad - not even the Prophet himself - could have had access to the knowledge we possess today. Since then, I have not found in the Qur'an any support given to the myths or superstitions present at the time the text was communicated to man. This is not the case for the Bible, whose authors expressed themselves in the language of their period.

In 'La Bible le Coran et la Science' (The Bible, the Qur'an and Science), which first appeared in the original French in 1976 and which subsequently appeared in English in 1978, I set forth the main points of these findings.

On November 9, 1976, I gave a lecture to the Academia de Medecine (French academy of Medicine) in which I explored the statements of the origins of man contained in the Qur'an; the title of the lecture was 'Donnees physiologiques et embryologiques de Coran' (Physiological and Embryological Data in the Qur'an). I emphasised the fact that these data - which I shall summarize below - formed part of a much wider study. The following are some of the points which arise from a reading of the Qur'an:

A concept of the creation of the world which, while different from the ideas contained in the Bible, is fully in keeping with today's general theories on the formations of the universe; Statements that are in perfect agreement with today's ideas concerning the movements and evolution of the heavenly bodies; A prediction of the conquest of space; Notions concerning the water cycle in nature and the earth's relief, which were not proven correct until many centuries later.

All of these data are bound to amaze anyone who approaches them in an objective spirit. They add a much wider dimension to the problem studied in the present work. The basic point remains the same, however: we must surely be in the presence of facts which place a heavy strain on our natural propensity for explaining everything in materialistic terms, for the existence in the Qur'an of these scientific statements appears as a challenge to human explanations.

That does not mean to say, however, that the statements in the Qur'an - especially those concerning man - may all of them be examined in the light of the findings of modern science. The creation of man, as described in both the Bible and the Qur'an totally eludes scientific investigation of the event per se.

Similarly, when the New Testament or the Qur'an informs us that Jesus was not born of a father, in the biological sense of the term, we cannot counter this Scriptural statement by saying that there is no example in the human species of an individual having been formed without receiving the paternal chromosomes that make up one half of its genetic inheritance.

Science does not explain miracles, for by definition miracles are inexplicable, thus, when we read in both the Qur'an and the Bible that man was molded from the ground, we are in fact learning a fundamental religious principle: Man returns from where he came, for from the place he is buried, he will rise again on the judgment.

Side by side with the main religious aspect of such reflections on man, we find in the Qur'an statements on man that refer to strictly material facts. They are quite amazing when one approaches them for the first time.

For example, the Qur'an describes the origins of life in general and devotes a great deal of space to the morphological transformation undergone by man, repeatedly emphasizing the fact that God fashioned him as He willed. We likewise discover statements on human reproduction that are expressed in precise terms that lend themselves to comparison with the secular knowledge we today possess on the subject.

INTEREST TO MEN OF SCIENCE

The many statements in the Qur'an that may thus be compared with modern knowledge are by no means easy to find. In preparing the study published in 1976, I was unable to draw on any previous works known in the West, for there were none. All I could refer to were a few works in Arabic dealing with themes treated in the Qur'an that were of interest to men of science - there was, however, no overall study.

Over and above this, research of this kind requires scientific knowledge covering many different disciplines. It is not easy, however, for Islamologists to acquire such knowledge, for they possess a mainly literary background. Indeed, such questions hardly seem to occupy a place in their field of classic Islamology, at least as far as the West is concerned.

Only a scientist, thoroughly acquainted with Arabic literature, can draw comparisons between the Qur'anic text - for which he must be able to read Arabic - and the data supplied by modern knowledge.

If when you finally get down to reading the Qur'an, the Bible and the Torah, which is pretty much just the Old Testament, you find that the Qur'an is just an affirmation of what is correct and isn't correct within those books (the Bible and the Torah). And then you say to yourself, "How did that go down when these cats were all from different parts of the world?" But they are all confirming each other's story.

I'm reading a book right now called Muhammad: The Life of the Prophet, by Karen Armstrong. It was written by a non-Muslim. So far, I'm only about a quarter of the way through; but it starts out telling you how they originally tried to make Muhammad look like the most evil man on the earth; that he established Islam under the sword. But then you learn that Muhammad only fought when he had to. Muhammad only fought to defend Islam. It's a very good book about the man. It just lets you know that he was a man. We ain't trying to tell you that he was anything else but a man. We're telling you as Muslims that he was the most perfect example of a man to walk the earth so far. And from what I've read he is the last one to come of his kind.

When you get beyond being scared of Farrakhan and what he's sayin' - and here as a white person I'm speaking - when you get beyond the ignorance of believing that Islam has anything to do with just people that are blowing up things, that doesn't have anything to do with Islam. They might do it in the name of Islam. But it has nothing to do with Islam. You can't argue with it.

When I explain Jesus to a Christian, he can't argue with me. And I don't mean argue, saying, "Jesus isn't God!" I mean, how much more sense does it make that he's a man? If I was Christian, which to me means to be Christ-like, and God asks me, "Hey how come you weren't more like Jesus?" I'll say, I wasn't more like Jesus because you made him half of a God [and] I'm only a man?" That doesn't make any sense.

God doesn't want things hard on us. God wants things easy as possible. Allah is going to make it as easy as possible. If you ask and you are sincere, Allah will bring it to you. He might throw some rocks on your path, to make you trip and stumble. But it's gonna come to you.

Talk to me about the first and second time you took your Shahada (profession of faith).

Well the first time, it was right after I had heard a tape from Warith Deen Muhammad (son of Nation of Islam founder, Elijah Muhammad, who took most of the Nation of Islam into mainstream Islam). That just kinda broke down the whole Jesus thing. He explained that we (Muslims) do Christians a great favor by bringing Jesus down to the level of a man. Why would God create a man who is half a God and compare us to him? And it just sent off a bomb in my head. So I took Shahada. And then the initial high wore off.

It was almost like a Christian who says that they accept Jesus. Then they say, "No matter what I do now I'm saved." 'Cause I was raised with that kinda mentality. Like, "OK, I accept the truth so let me just go out here and sin my butt off and I'm saved."

I didn't really claim to be Muslim though at that time. I picked and chose what I wanted to believe. Allah gave me leeway for a time. But eventually it was time to fish or cut the line. I was coming to a point where I was unsatisfied emotionally, and spiritually. I had money in the bank and a \$100,000 car, women left and right - everything that you think you want. And then just sitting there being like, "Why am I unhappy?" Finally that voice that talks to you - not the whisper (of Satan) - the voice said, "Well, basically you're unhappy because you're living foul and you're not trying to do anything about it." My stubbornness at that time wouldn't allow me to talk about it at that time. You get in that state of mind where you're like, "I can figure this out all by myself." I finally got humble enough to talk to Divine and Abdullah about it. They asked me, "How do you feel? What do you think it is?" So finally I'm sittin' there taking Shahada again.

From that point on I've made a commitment where I'm going to try my best. I'm gonna do my best to make my prayers, let's start there. Let's not beat ourselves up because we went out last night and had a drink. Let's make our prayers and pray for the strength to stop doing one thing at a time. That's what I'm still dealing with.

You know, once you get over the big things, it becomes very subtle. It can be as subtle as looking a man, and not even speaking bad about him, but back-biting him in your mind. The easy ones to beat - well I shouldn't say easy - the big ones are easy to notice. It's the subtle psychological stuff that helps you get into who really you are. You gotta be able to face the truth of who you are. If you are not able to face that truth of who you are, you're gonna crumble, man.

People question me and go, "You're Muslim?" And I'm like, "Yeah I'm Muslim, but I'm also a professional sinner." I'm tryin' to get over it, tryin' to retire. I won't front and say I'm better than you. I just believe that I've been shown the truth and hopefully that will save me."