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# the revival

VOICE OF THE MUSLIM YOUTH

Issue 20

## TERROUR HAS NO RELIGION

**SHEESHA- THE MUSLIM  
CLUB OR THE PERFECT HUB?**

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**Quilliam- England's  
first Convert to Islam!**

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**Homeless:  
Life on the streets**

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**Exclusive Interview  
with Imam Asim Hussain**

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**Idiots Guide  
to Marriage**

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# Save the Mothers Trust

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Save the Mothers Trust was formed in 2003 by a group of young people who shared the belief that people in poverty and hardship need the opportunity and support to become self sufficient and independent.

Through the generous support and care of the public, Save the Mothers Trust has provided necessary resources to a number of educational institutes for young children living in South Asian and African regions. Our belief is that a sound education is the key which will open the many doors leading to self sufficiency and independence.

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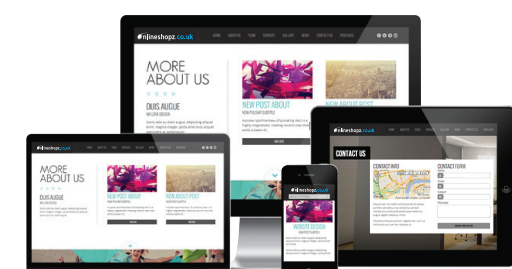
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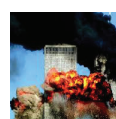


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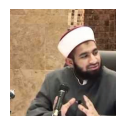
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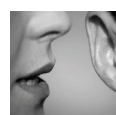
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## What's He Chatten' About?

**Aalim:** An Islamic scholar

**Allahu Akbar:** This means God is Greater and is known as Takbir

**Da'wah:** An invitation usually to Islam or towards any good

**Fatwa:** An Islamic ruling based on evidences from the sources of Islam for a specific situation. They are usually issued by a Mufti only

**Fitnah:** In the Quran it is used to describe the trials and temptations that may face the believers. Now, it is used to describe the forces that cause mischief, chaos and scandal within the Muslim community, disturbing social peace and order

**Hajjis:** Title given to Muslims who have completed the pilgrimage to Makkah

**Hijab:** Generally, it is the head covering worn by females and also a practice of covering including dress as well as behaviour for both males and females

**Iddat:** A period of waiting by a woman, after the death of her husband (four months and ten days) or divorce (three months), during which she may not marry another man and hence must abstain from sexual intercourse

**Jahannam:** Hell

**Jannah:** Paradise

**Jihad:** Means to struggle in the way of Allah, there are many different types

**Madrasah:** An educational institution which many children attend to learn Islam

**Mahram:** Is a person with whom marriage is unlawful. For a female they include her father, grandfather, sons, grandsons, fathers' brothers, mothers' brothers, brothers, nephews and do not include her cousins and brother-in-laws

**Nasheed:** Are chants and Islamic vocal music used for the praise of Allah Almighty and Prophet Muhammad (S)

**Sunnah:** The sayings, actions and approvals of the prophet Muhammad (S)

**Taif:** An area which the prophet Muhammad (S) went to, to invite its people to Islam and convey the message. It is 60-70 miles from Makkah and lies at high elevation

**Taraweeh:** Special evening prayers which are only read during the month of Ramadhan during which usually long portions of the Quran are recited

**Ummah:** The entire Muslim community after the final message had been revealed

**Wali:** A guardian who acts on behalf of another

**Zina:** Fornication, sexual intercourse between a man and woman who are not married to each other. It is a major sin in Islam



# EDITORIAL

## What have we learnt from Woolwich?

By Sajid Iqbal

Just when you thought terror and extremism in the name of religion in Britain had finally died down, it reared its ugly head in Woolwich, which shocked and disgusted the nation. Two crackpots committing a horrific murder happened to be Muslims and apparently did this barbaric act in the name of Islam.

It didn't take long for all eyes to be on the Muslim community and Islam. Pauline Neville Jones, the former Security Minister, stated on the Today programme that Muslims have a special duty to condemn the Woolwich attack. It's stupid comments like these which make a lot of people look at the Muslim community with suspicion and before you know it, Muslims are targeted and mosques bombed by ignorant thugs, mainly from the racist and fascist EDL.

I have no problem condemning any evil done by anyone as the prophet of Islam taught Muslims that if you see any evil then try to stop it with your hands. If you can't, then speak against it and if you can't do that, then at least feel bad about it in your heart - which is said to be the weakest of Iman (faith).

So condemning any act of terror, extremism and evil is not a problem but apologising for it is. Why are Muslims forced to do this? Did I or 99.9% of the 2.7 million Muslims in the UK have anything to do with this? I'm done apologising for things I

haven't done. Cold-blooded murder committed by random Muslims has nothing to do with me, the Muslim community or Islam.

I don't recall the Irish in mainland Britain being forced into collective denunciations following IRA bomb attacks. After the mass murders of right-wing extremist Anders Breivik in Denmark, I don't remember politicians demanding the White community or its followers to come out to condemn it. When mosques are burnt and attacked nationwide by the EDL hooligans, again, I don't see the White community being asked what they are doing to condemn this. So don't ask of us what is never asked of others. Are we not equal citizens in this country?

When terrorism or extremism is carried out by members of any other religion, community or culture, do you see their religion or community blamed or targeted - so why are Muslims and Islam treated differently?



“When terrorism or extremism is carried out by members of any other religion, community or culture, do you see their religion or community blamed or targeted - so why are Muslims and Islam treated differently?”





I thank God for the likes of George Eaton. In the New Statesman he argued that Muslims should not have to distance themselves from the attacks. Well done to Russell Brand for speaking common sense by saying that the two men were nut cases, nothing to do with Islam and that we should stop blaming all Muslims for this. Respect to my dear friends! It was great to see leaders of the Sikh community saying this brutal attack has nothing to do with Muslims and Islam, and shame on the EDL for inciting hatred and dividing our country.

It was pleasing to see Muslims standing shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the nation outraged and in mourning after the Woolwich incident. I can't think of any major organisation or scholar who didn't play their role positively, apart from Anjem Choudary- the Tommy Robinson of the Muslim community- who did his best to incite hatred and divide communities. Despite quite a few mosques being attacked and over 150 incidents against Muslims by Islamophobes and right wing thugs the Muslim reaction can only be praised.

**“ I have no problem condemning any evil done by anyone as the prophet of Islam taught Muslims that if you see any evil then try to stop it with your hands... ”**



**“ Did I or 99.9% of the 2.7 million Muslims in the UK have anything to do with this? I'm done apologising for things I haven't done. ”**



Hats off to the mosque in York for serving tea and biscuits to English Defence League supporters after the far-right group arranged a demonstration there. This is a fantastic way to respond to hate and extremism. Next time I'm confronted by any right wing nutters, I'll just say '...you fancy some Jaffa Cakes mate...!'

Even though the Muslim community were united in their disgust in what they saw, they were divided in why young Muslims turn to extremism and terror. Some argue it was totally down to Foreign policy where Muslims are being killed by British and Western forces in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. Young Muslims see this and get radicalised. They argue that because mosques and Imams don't deal with political issues and how to tackle this anger and frustration, young men turn to extremism and terror.

Others argue that it is only part of the problem. It's also down to youngsters being brainwashed by preachers of hate and that Islam allows you to carry out acts of terror against non-Muslims because they are killing our brothers and sisters. Then they are taught that they will be martyrs and will enter Paradise. I believe it is a combination of the two. Foreign policy makes young Muslims angry and radicalises them; a perversion of Islamic teachings then convinces them that killing 'the enemy' wherever they are, is justified. The big question now is what have we learnt from this? What needs to be done to stop British Muslims from carrying out acts of terror and extremism in the name of Islam?

**1. Teach young Muslims in mosques and institutions what Islam says about Jihad, violence, extremism and terrorism so they don't think being a wannabe-suicide bomber is legit.**

**2. Teach young Muslims to be politically active and to deal and discuss issues of foreign policy, political lobbying and how to play a politically active role in society, so that Muslims don't take out their anger in the form of extremism. Imams can't afford to shy away from this anymore.**

**3. Open mosques to all faiths and people of no faith so we understand each other rather than having the 'them' and 'us' situation. We don't want mosques teaching hatred towards non-Muslims but it should be a platform for all to discuss and tackle issues facing us all.**

**4. Extremism is not just a Muslim problem but occurs in all communities and societies. We need to work closely with all aspects of society to tackle this. Let's avoid segregation and isolation, Muslim v Non-Muslims. This country belongs to us all, so let's contribute to it, to make it a better and safer place.**

**5. We all need to know how to react and behave when the next act of terror is done in the name of Islam. Condemn but don't apologise. Respond with respect and wisdom when required. Learn your Islam so you know what it teaches. Don't show hatred to anyone. Do as our beloved Prophet did. He showed love, forgiveness and compassion even to his enemies.**



Finally, be that 'walking, talking advert for Islam' because if we were, we wouldn't have to condemn any acts of terror because the world would see from our actions and realise that extremism and such attacks don't have anything to do with Islam and the followers of Islam.



# Crimes In The Name of God

By Mark Goodrem

My views on the Woolwich atrocity are exactly the same as the vast majority of the UK population - they are that of utter shock and disgust. The thought that in this day and age people are STILL carrying out these crimes in the name of religion and their "God" is just beyond belief and to this day I still refuse to believe that any religion would sanction this.

I personally believe that this is used as an excuse in today's society and a way of trying to justify what has been done and what people plan to do. I challenge anyone to read any religious scriptures and highlight where in those pages, it tells you to carry out these **crimes in the name of God**.

Growing up in Ireland with a Catholic mother and Protestant father I suffered a lot of religious bullying and loss. The greatest loss I suffered was watching a very close friend of mine being gunned down in front of me just for doing his job. Darren was a reserve Police Officer and a Protestant but like many people in Ireland he was against any kind of religious attacks, on either side of the "divide" but this did not stop the "Real IRA" targeting him JUST because of what he did.

I think those that carry out these crimes are far too quick to hide behind the shield of religion and hope in some strange way that people will understand and agree with what they have done.

This is clearly not the case in the majority of religious groups. The sooner they realise that there are better and non-violent ways to voice opinions and get the message across, then the more likely people will stop and listen.

I can revert back to my childhood and early teen years in Ireland. As I have mentioned, I am from a mixed religious background and it was incredibly difficult growing up at the height of the troubles. No matter what attacks were made on each side, I found that the bullying towards me increased. I also think it was because I tended to speak out no matter what side "started" the whole tick-for-tack killings.

Whilst I am watching the news, all I seem to see is a repeat of the troubles in Ireland - a crime is carried out in the name of religion and even when that religious group slam that atrocity and condemn it you still get the "small minded" group of people, (and I use that term very loosely), who use this as an excuse to attack the hard-working, peaceful remainder of that community. In what way, shape or form is burning a mosque, attacking a Muslim or rioting going to reverse what those two imbeciles did to Lee Rigby? Quite simply put, it's not!

I think a group like the EDL will take any opportunity to start any form of hate crime and in turn give them more publicity that they would not normally

have; even bad publicity adds fuel to the fire and gets more people aware of their methods. It would not matter what size the crime is, the robbery, GBH, or even murder - they will use whatever excuse.

I personally believe that the only way to stop this is to stop giving them the attention that they are getting. At the height of the troubles in Ireland, the Irish Press stopped allowing Gerry Adams to have his voice on TV and when he was in the papers they blacked out his face. This worked to a certain degree and I think the same should be done for the EDL and other groups who are just out to incite race and hate crimes.

Everyone, and I mean everyone has a "God" given right to worship who and how they want, as long as it is done peacefully and does not cause harm to others. For any mere human to stand up and disagree with that right is just wrong. Who gives them the right to say people can't just because they don't agree with that particular religion? I mean, if someone was to turn around and say the same to them then that person would be accused of being racist, it's a two way street folks.

Until we ALL realise that, then there will be constant unrest and to be honest, it's not something I look forward to. We really have had enough - Northern Ireland, 9/11, 7/7, Lee Rigby and all the lives lost on both sides in the name of religion. **Enough is enough!!!**







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# voice of the muslim youth

# THE MUSLIM CLUB OR ANOTHER HUB?

**Name:** Areeba Khalid  
**Age:** 25  
**Location:** Derby

I can't believe some of the fuss that is being made about shisha bars. I think people would have a stronger point if they said shisha is Haram because it is bad for you by backing it up with evidence. Saying it is haram because of the environment (intermixing/music) – in my opinion sounds a little bit ridiculous. It's like saying going to school/town/any other café is Haram because of what COULD happen. We live in a country and a society where intermixing/ background music is pretty normal. We've all been to schools and the majority of us work in such environments.

It all comes down to the intention of the individual. Somebody going to a shisha café to flirt would be the same as going to costa to flirt. Somebody going to a shisha café to enjoy a nice mint tea is the same as going to costa for a nice vanilla latte. My point is that the intention and actions are down to the individual – it doesn't make the place they choose to do them in – Halal or Haram. Some people just go to shisha cafes to enjoy a nice mint tea and hang out with friends. It's not all bad. I was reluctant when I first heard about shisha at University but you have to be a little open-minded to other cultures. In the Middle East, shisha is a part of their culture. Families sit together and have a pipe going. Women sometimes carry their own pipes in their handbags for when they stop in a café. Weddings are set up to have a shisha smoking section. It is all cultural. It's not for everybody but I definitely don't think it's as bad as some people make it sound.

Banning shisha cafes as some people are saying seems like a silly suggestion. For most people it's just a place to chill out with friends. It's like going to the park but warmer and with a bit of a vibe. You can sit in a shisha cafe and read a book or watch a football match if you want to. It's not all about flirting and loud music. I don't think banning shisha cafes would encourage people towards pubs and clubs.

Some people say shisha bars are not a safe and Halal environment. I think, just like any other place, Shisha bars are safe if the people you're with are safe – and again it all depends on the person. Some people may just go to a shisha café just to get out of the house, meet up with friends or have an Asian or Arabian tea just like you would go to any other café to do the same. I think if somebody intends to smoke heavier stuff – they would be doing it anyway. You don't need a shisha café for that. I don't think it would encourage alcohol – again you could be doing that in any place. In fact, as far as I know, most shisha places don't allow alcohol anyway. Flirting again, is down to the individual. I think it's each to their own but I don't think shisha cafes encourage these kind of things. These things happen anywhere and everywhere.

So what does a shisha café give you that any other café/Nandos/cinema doesn't give you- I hear you say? Well that's the whole point. Some people just go there as they would go to any of the other places. It's just another place where you can get away, chill and hang out for a while.

**Name:** Muneeb Afzal  
**Age:** 30  
**Location:** Oldham

There are a wide range of opinions regarding shisha, and depending upon who you speak to, they can range from it being evil and un-Islamic to it being a perfectly acceptable method of social interaction. I belong to the latter group. As a young(ish) Muslim who has grown up in a Western society, I see it as one of the few activities that I can take part in with my friends that is Halal. If you take a moment and think about all the non-Halal activities out there, you will realise that shisha is not so bad after all and it can actually lead to better mental health. I feel better socialising with my mates rather than Whatsapp'ing or texting them.

Admittedly, some shisha places are badly run and can attract the wrong crowd i.e. under 18s, and bad boy wannabes. But just like everything else in life, it has good and bad aspects to it and your experience depends on what type of place you choose to go to. I go to a place which has a strict policy on the type of people it will let in and is always quite calm, relaxing and respectable. I've seen males with beards, girls with hijabs, trendy geeks with black plastic glasses (myself included!), and elder gentlemen too. Then again I have been to places where it has been like a club and the environment was definitely not an Islamic one.

You choose your own environment; make sure it is a good one!

**Name:** Aliya Mobeen  
**Age:** 23  
**Location:** Peterborough

I don't have an opinion on Shisha lounges being places that people hang out in. I've never been to one but from what I know they are places that people go to look cool whilst taking pictures of themselves smoking a Shisha pipe.

Yes, couples do go there and yes, there is free mixing but does that not occur at restaurants, parks, shopping centres and all public places too? What makes a Shisha lounge different to other places?


Of course it is wrong for the youth to free mix there, but Shisha lounges are not the only places where these actions occur. So, if you do not believe in Shisha itself being wrong, I don't know why anyone would want to try to crack down on Shisha lounges, alone.

What I am against and the reason why I have never been to a Shisha lounge is because of the actual Shisha smoking itself. I don't want to smoke, my parents wouldn't approve of it and it's definitely not good for health. For that reason, I think the emphasis should be placed on making people more aware of the severe health problems that are associated with smoking Shisha and I would advise you to research what the health effects are.

**SHISHA**  
**The Truth**

# What do you think?





**Name:** Samuel Iqbal  
**Age:** 28  
**Location:** Bradford

In the ever changing world we live in, society as a whole is becoming more and more concerned with keeping us entertained. Entertainment... It's fun, it's relaxing and let's be honest, there's nothing wrong with letting loose and slacking every now and then.

We live fast paced lives, work/study ridiculous hours, have an enormous amount of responsibilities and pay way too much tax and bills. So understandably we all need an outlet. But, as Muslims, we live by a code of conduct, we have a concept of Halal and Haraam, allowed and not allowed, so shouldn't we take care and make sure the activities we partake in our spare time are Shariah compliant?

One such form of letting loose, socialising and entertainment that both the young and old are taking part in at alarmingly growing numbers is Shisha smoking.

Shisha is a large bong-like equipment which contains flavoured tobacco, the tobacco is burned, filtered through water and smoked, for what I assume is entertainment/socialising purposes.

Shisha has been around for many centuries, but recently has had a worldwide rise in popularity, which was brought to the attention of the esteemed Islamic Scholars of al-Azhar, who have given the legal verdict of it being considered Haraam.

My argument today isn't the Islamic legal opinion on the Shisha itself, rather I would like to analyse and bring to your attention the sub-culture surrounding it.

Let us take a look around at the average shisha cafe in the UK. A group of guys walk in, looking all slick with a fresh haircut, neatly ironed jeans, un-creased T-shirts, eyebrows tweezed, subtle make-up on the face, an average group of metrosexual young men trying to act as tough and gangsta as possible to impress everyone in the place. So the guys go to a table, order a few drinks, a shisha or 2, and let the 'scanning' of 'talent' begin (also known as 'perving'). Call me a liar, I dare you Mr. Metrosexual!

Shisha cafes offer a sensory arousing atmosphere, with dim lights, often warm colours, loud music, with a huge amount of free mixing taking place. The girls are looking for a boyfriend; the guys are looking for the next 'gyal' that they can get with, to add to the tally. These places are breeding grounds for Zina; a major sin.

The youth of today are spending an awful lot of valuable time and wasting a lot of money in these shisha cafes/bars. Both of which are looked down upon in the Shariah. Can you imagine what you could have accomplished in that time, or done with that money, both of which are now wasted?

Our primary concern in this temporary life is not self-satisfaction. Sure we can have fun, we don't have to live like robots, but our primary concern should be pleasing the Almighty Lord. We can't achieve that goal by going against his commandments.

I'm not here to take any shisha bars out of business, I'm not here to tell you the fatwas against the smoking of shisha, I'm not here to tell you that the music you listen to in shisha cafes is Haraam, I'm not a health advisor, so I won't bring up the world health organisations' research, nor am I a financial planner here to tell you how to spend your money and I am not a life coach, telling you how to spend your time either.

Think about how many salah times have come and gone while you sat with your friends, flirted with the opposite sex and smoked a flavoured shisha. A day will come when we stand in front of our Lord Almighty and we will have to answer for the things we did, what excuse will we have for missing salah when we were in a shisha bar.

Many people may have noticed that shisha cafes are at their busiest during the nights of Ramadhan. All the youth skip taraweeh prayer and spend time at shisha bars. During the month in which most mercy descends, the months that the Lord Almighty opens the gates of heaven, instead of spending some time in the mosque praying, the youth frequent shisha cafes and effectively they are running away from mercy. Ultimately, if you run away from mercy, you run towards wrath. Let this Ramadhan not be like previous ones where we ignore the call of the Lord.

If you consider me at all, consider me an abstract reminder. The next time you are sat with your friends at a shisha cafe, take a moment to step out of the situation and assess it critically. Ask yourself if the environment is halal, the music, the mixed company of both males and females, the conversation, the health repercussions, the Shariah legality of smoking shisha, the time and the money being wasted.

Is this just another rant, yet again from this Mad Mullah, or do I have a point? I leave you with this food for thought, put it in your shisha pipe and smoke it.

**Name:** Fraaz Rehmaan  
**Age:** 19  
**Location:** Manchester

With the recent rise in popularity of shisha bars the "mullahs" are now finding another reason for criticising the youth. According to many religious scholars shisha is haram whereas others say it's the cafes and bars that are haram and not the shisha itself. I believe this matter to be trivial but for the sake of argument let's entertain this notion.

Let us start by looking at why Shariah has deemed shisha itself to be haram. The reason they say it is haram is because it is worse than cigarettes and very hazardous to health.

It is said that "The tobacco – as well as jiraak (something similar to tobacco) and mu'assal (mild, flavoured tobacco) – which are smoked in the shisha are no different from regular cigarette tobacco that is rolled up in papers".

This similitude is perhaps, the reason why scholars have deemed shisha to be haram and which may be based on the findings of the World Health Organisation.

I have done my own research and I know that shisha is nowhere near as bad for you as cigarettes and where all these articles and opinions about hookah being worse than cigarettes comes from, is the inaccurate propaganda filled World Health Organisation report.

They didn't set up hookah like it is set up in the West but instead, set it up like the old aged Middle Eastern method where the foil is not used to rest the coal rather the coal is placed on top of the tobacco. This is where all the results have been altered.

As a result of this, the tobacco is burned and this causes the tobacco to combust whereas in modern methods of smoking we use a foil piece to separate the flavour and the coal causing the tobacco to be warmed and not burned. This changes things greatly because the tobacco becomes extremely harmful when it is burned as this is when the carcinogens are released. For more information on the inaccuracies of the World Health Organisation report pay a visit to this site - **continued on next page turn over.**



# SHISHA

**Name:** Fraaz Rehmaan  
**Age:** 19  
**Location:** Manchester

[http://www.velvetgloveironfist.com/kamal\\_chaouachi\\_interview.php](http://www.velvetgloveironfist.com/kamal_chaouachi_interview.php) where an expert gives his "take on hookah".

I have given you just one reason as to why shisha is not as harmful to you as cigarettes. There are many more reasons but yes, nonetheless shisha is still not "good for you".

Ladies and gentleman, if we are going to label shisha as haram because it is "not good for you" then we have to label 90% of our diets as haram. We consume way too much meat, consume more E numbers than we actually need to, and drink too many fizzy drinks. To summarise, shisha itself in my humble opinion is not haram.

Now if the argument is that shisha cafés are haram then to a certain extent I agree. Many cafes now have started to resemble clubs or at least are trying to mimic the atmosphere with a DJ playing loud music and a dance floor. Yes I agree that this type of shisha cafés are haram and it is pretty self-explanatory.

The problem I have is when religious people start labelling all shisha cafes as haram because of this. It is unfair to the owners who have tried to stay away from the clubbing atmosphere. There are many on the famous Wilmslow road in Manchester, which are quiet shisha bars that follow the conventional set-ups by being relaxing and mellow. The music is almost always played at sane levels so conversations between friends can occur and most of the time the words are in Arabic so no one can understand a word anyway!

Now let's move on to another reason why it is deemed as haram. Some say "shisha cafes are a breeding ground for the major sin of zina" because of the fact that the environment encourages free mixing. My argument for this would be the fact that this depends entirely upon the individual and not the shisha café.

When you are at work, at a supermarket, an airport lounge or you are walking down the street, you can be approached by the opposite sex. So I guess the same principal applies. Shall we start labelling these everyday activities as haram also?

Continued ----->>>

Some shisha bars cater strictly for females on certain nights and have an all-female staff. Is that haram? Even when there aren't ladies nights available, they make sure it is a respectable environment.

For example, my local Shisha bar is relatively small and caters for about 40 people at the moment and I can recall when some young adults were getting all "touchy feely" with each other, the owner gave them a stern telling off, reminding them that there are other people in the room and what they are doing is morally wrong. There was another instance when a group of girls came in and felt uncomfortable as they realised that they were the only girls in there. The owner noticed this and had a word with the other punters to be respectful and not to approach them. Shisha cafes like this do exist but I guess as "Asians" we like to complain about the easy stuff. Maybe it's in our genes, lol.

To summarise, I think shisha itself is not haram and certain cafes are not haram but I think we need to stop worrying about the smaller issues like shisha that are not really destroying our communities. The fact that our communities are not even communities anymore is more damaging to the youth.

Mosques, back in the golden days used to be the most fundamental aspect for the community but now the single function they provide are for prayer or learning how to read Quran. What mosques should really be doing is providing activities for the youth to prevent them from feeling bored and pursuing other "frowned upon" measures of entertainment. But hey, the elders don't want to talk or tackle these things and would much rather criticise what I call the "frustrated youth" that are stuck in their ways because there are not many opportunities provided for them. Let's teach youth to become critical thinkers. Let's teach the youth to better themselves instead of telling them what to do all the time and what to think.

**Name:** Humayra Mogra  
**Age:** 18  
**Location:** Birmingham

The main reason why I would like to advise the youth, both Muslim and non-Muslim alike regarding Shisha is because of the health risks that are involved. Strangely enough many people believe that Shisha is not as bad as cigarettes because the tobacco is flavoured and passes through water first, but why have we neglected all of the other factors?

Why have we forgotten about the carcinogens? Why have we abandoned the high carbon monoxide levels? And why have we not thought about the nicotine levels? All of these are still present and so you may ask, what's the big deal?

Well, carcinogens, if we can recall from GCSE Biology are cancer causing chemicals. High levels of carbon monoxide can lead to brain damage and unconsciousness and nicotine can lead to addiction, high blood pressure and an increased heart rate, all of which are harmful for our bodies.

Research carried out by the World Health Organisation shows that the volume of smoke inhaled in an hour-long Shisha session is estimated to be the equivalent of between 100 and 200 cigarettes. Findings also suggest that on average a smoker will inhale half a litre of smoke per cigarette, while a Shisha smoker can take in anything from just under a sixth of a litre to a litre of smoke per INHALE.

Also, the Shisha pipe itself is so gross and unhygienic. Do we ever give a thought to the people who have used the Shisha pipe that we are going to place our lips onto? It is most definitely used by people with cold sores, bad breath and unbrushed teeth, all of which make me want to gag.

Even more importantly, if they are not cleaned properly, the risk of spreading infectious diseases increases rapidly. Infectious diseases include tuberculosis which can affect the lungs, aspergillus which is a fungus that can cause lung infection and helicobacter which can cause stomach ulcers. All these fancy words may mean nothing to us, but we should be worried about what can be spread through sharing a pipe and the lack of thorough cleaning involved.

So, why do we still assume that smoking and Shisha are very different to each other and not similar in any way? A regular Shisha smoker can expect to be at the same risks that smoking imposes. I hope that I have highlighted the negative aspects of Shisha itself. Please take what I have mentioned into consideration and I pray that Allah enables us to understand the real health risks that we are knowingly plunging ourselves into.



# Abdullah Quilliam

## England's First Convert to Islam

By Afzal Kaduji

*An Englishman entered, dressed in the traditional robes and turban of an Ottoman Aalim. Five Hundred Indian troops who had arrived in Liverpool in 1902 stood and shouted "Allahu Akbar"*

When the Abdullah Quilliam Society approached me to create a website about a man called Abdullah Quilliam little did I realise the significance of this Victorian English convert to Islam. The more material that was given to me, the more fascinated I became with this forgotten champion of Islam. William Henry Quilliam was born in 1856 and was part of a respectable family and a religious background in Christian Methodism.

Originally from the Isle of Man, he moved to Liverpool at an early age. He became a well-known criminal lawyer and was involved in many high profile cases in Liverpool at the time. He embraced Islam in 1887 and changed his name to **Abdullah Quilliam**.

The question is; **what prompted this English Victorian gentleman from a strong Christian family to research Islam and become a Muslim?** He explains this in his famous Cairo speech:

"...I boarded a ship to Tangier to see the lands of Morocco. While I was on the ferry, I saw some Moroccan Hajjis scooping up water from the sea and using it carefully and scrupulously to wash themselves. The ship set sail and as soon as it left the port, these Hajjis stood neatly together in a line and started to do the prayer, in full submission and tranquillity – they were not at all troubled by the force of the strong wind, or by the swaying of the ship. I was deeply touched by the look on their faces and their expressions, which displayed complete trust and sincerity. I was intrigued and became very interested to acquire knowledge and learn about their religion and those who believe in it."

**When he arrived back in England, did this new convert shy away from the public the fact that he had embraced Islam?** On the contrary, he established England's First Mosque – The Liverpool Muslim Institute. This fact was very surprising to me and in no doubt will be for many who had previously considered Woking Mosque in London to be the first in the UK. The mosque was used by

worshippers of all nationalities including Indian sailors. Part of the building was known as Madina House: an orphanage and a centre for feeding the impoverished and children from the local community.

We learn that Abdullah Quilliam was extensively involved in Politics. Due to his strong defence of Muslims in the international arena coupled with his Islamic work in England, the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hameed II, gave Abdullah Quilliam the title and position of **'Sheikh of The British Isles'**: a position that has not been held by anyone since.

Abdullah Quilliam produced many publications. Islamic World was a monthly journal published by Abdullah Quilliam that had world-wide circulation. The Crescent, a weekly record of Islam in England, edited by Abdullah Quilliam represents Muslims in England between 1893 and 1908. These unique documents are a historic record of the situation of Islam and of a growing convert community in British colonial times. The result of Abdullah Quilliams Da'wah resulted in almost 600 converts to Islam in Britain alone. One of the converts was called Elizabeth Murray Cates.

Abdullah Quilliam gave a copy of the Quran to her in 1887. She says:

"I accordingly took it home and commenced carefully reading it. My mother on perceiving this asked me what I was reading. I answered 'The Muhammedan Bible' She replied, angrily, 'How dare you read such a vile and wicked book? Give it to me this minute and let me burn it...' I answered, 'No... How can I know whether it is a wicked book or not until I read it?' She tried to take the book from me, but I escaped to my bedroom and locked myself in it, and went on reading what I now consider the most precious book that could be bought."

Thereafter she became a Muslim and changed her name to Fatima Murray Cates.

On the 23rd April 1932, Abdullah Quilliam died. He was buried at Brookwood Cemetery, Woking, close to other famous personalities like Lord Headly and Marmaduke Picktall. Muslims, especially those who reside in countries like Great Britain yearn for a role model who can represent them. This person has to be honest and just; does not dilute the principles of Islam or apologise for them. Equally, he does not call for isolation or segregation from the non-Muslim population. I believe that Abdullah Quilliam was such a person.

This article is not associated with the Quilliam Foundation.

**You can find more information about Abdullah Quilliam and the Abdullah Quilliam Society by visiting:**  
**Website:** [www.abdullahquilliam.com](http://www.abdullahquilliam.com)  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/AbdullahQuilliam](https://www.facebook.com/AbdullahQuilliam)  
**Twitter:** @quilliamsociety



# Homeless: LIFE on the streets

**With thousands of people living rough on the streets in the UK, Sajid Iqbal and Moheeb Ali, spoke to one man who has been homeless for the last 15 years across the UK speaking of what life is really like living on the streets.**

## How did you become homeless?

I was going through a difficult period in my life and I turned to drugs and alcohol. As a result, I lost my house, my friends and unfortunately my family too. When I first hit the streets I only had the clothes on my back and if you're not streetwise, you're done for!

From being homeless, I've learnt that blankets are absolutely useless and the ones Red Cross gives out are no good either. Sleeping bags are a lot better and did keep me warm. There are places like Cornerstone in Manchester but you need to know how to make your way there. You actually need a 'homeless buddy' – someone to show you the ropes otherwise you'll stay hungry all night.

## What was being homeless for the first time like?

When I was 15 I ran away from home and within 48 hours I was in France. I had one rucksack with a set of dry clothes, a sleeping bag, a knife, fork, spoon, tin opener, passport and obviously a much needed map!

## Describe your everyday life.

When you begin to realise that you're living on the streets, your main priority is looking for a place and somewhere to sleep during the night. I sleep in a bin, often a charity clothing collection one, as they are warm, comfy and waterproof.

I wake up in the morning between the hours of 7 and 8. You don't want people to know where you are because it becomes easier for them to rob you or abuse you and parks are no good because people can do whatever they want.

Cornerstone opens at 9AM which is a drop-in centre on Oldham Road. I visit it every morning to get warm brew, porridge and jam on toast. Hair dressers and other professionals come there too!

Oxford, Plymouth and Dover have good services for the homeless. In Royton, they don't have an extended service but they do provide coffee and food.



Cornerstone and other centres in Manchester help you to find accommodation. All you have to do is approach them, tell them you're homeless and then they make a record in their books. However, some would rather live on the streets because they don't like the strict rules like being in at 8PM and being out by 8AM.

These places don't charge you unless you had a bedsit that was being paid for and you were thrown out. Cornerstone gives you provisions during the day and a sandwich pack at night.

You can opt for begging for money, but if you're caught by the 'begging squad', you're banned from setting your foot in the town centre. Other homeless people begin to steal. They don't steal from shops because the police are involved if you're caught, but if, for example, there was a lady with an open bag, they'd help themselves to it.

## Are there people of all backgrounds on the streets?

Yes there is. I was actually so surprised when I met Asians on the streets and I know of at least three in Manchester. There's some Spanish and Russian too.

At one time in Calais in France, all the people were English guys, hitch hikers, but now they deport you or put you into big camps. I was deported a few times, but I came straight back.

## Is there a lot of help available?

There is a lot of help to get you off the streets but there is not much help beyond that.

Cornerstone need to find you on the streets otherwise they won't believe your circumstances. Then once they know your situation, they try to help you to claim some money.

If you have a 'care of' address like Cornerstone, then you can claim, failing that you have to go to the job centre every day between 9 and 9.30.

You can receive approximately £60 every fortnight. What tends to happen is that you are absolutely legless for the first two –three days and then you struggle until the next batch of £60.

## You identified that there isn't a lot of support for homeless people. What more do you think the charities who work with homeless need to do?

More than anything else, it's the aftercare. It's fine for them to help you to get off the streets and into a bedsit – That's brilliant and I acknowledge that but it's so easy for any homeless person to be back on the streets. The hardest bit isn't coming off the streets – it's staying off the streets and finding a job.

Everyone else is out there getting drunk and if you're in a hostel, you feel like you're missing out on all the fun, wondering why you're not allowed to be out there with them.





It's not that bad. I know people who go to a shop, break its windows, wait for the police to arrive, steal something and then wait to be arrested. The police actually help you by putting you in a bail hostel. You can enrol on courses. The courses aren't great but they can help you to apply for a job.

I wanted to speak to a psychiatrist about my problems but because I'm not on probation I would have to pay £200 per hour. If I was in court, I would have had that for free!

### How easy is it to get a house if you're homeless?

It's not easy at all and if you're in a hostel, it could take you between 2 months to a year. When I was living in Plymouth, the only way I could have a house was by paying a £800 deposit, but where was I supposed to get the money from to pay that? If I tried getting a house in London, they would send me up north.

### Are you supported by your family? Surely there must be someone willing to look after you?

I'd say that in about 90% of cases, a homeless person will tell you that their families have turned their backs on them. I've heard of cases when people have stayed with one of their parents, but then sooner or later, they get kicked out and are back on the streets again.

I didn't stay with my parents because I knew they would turn their backs on me. The only person who had the heart to not do that, was my 92 year old grandmother. She was in her 60s when I first became homeless.

She made me realise that I wouldn't need to worry about where I was sleeping and where I kept my belongings but at times, because she was aging, I didn't want to burden her. Everyone saw me as the black sheep of the family and it took me 17 years to get over that.

### To what extent has your daughter helped you?

I have three daughters all together. They don't want me to be on the streets and I think about my family all the time.

### In Manchester, you see Big Issues being sold. What's all that about?

Selling big issues is a way of helping the homeless. But there's a catch – Homeless people don't want to sell the issue because unlike 10 years ago when you earned some money from selling, it now depends on how many people will buy from you.

They give you 10 for free and ask you to sell them. With that money you buy more issues and sell them on. Effectively, you're starting your own business. But because you're on the streets already, the little money that you do earn is for food and beer for the night. That's how a lot of homeless people see it. Now Polish people are selling Big Issues too. They're taking but not giving back. The English don't want to

sell them because they can't be bothered. A lot of the people selling the Big Issue aren't officially homeless - They have their own flats and bedsits. You won't find them walking in the city centre at daft o'clock, nor see them in doorways because they're all sleeping peacefully in their own homes.

Some homeless people go to derelict high rise flats because they're dry and may still have the water supply on. It's also very near to a soup kitchen called The Mustard Tree.

### What do you think is the perception of homeless people by the general public?

That's a hard question. Most people will walk past a homeless person because they think that the money will be used to buy alcohol and drugs but that isn't always the case. A lot of times, money is needed to buy basic foods to survive.

### How are the general public supposed to know who is genuine?

You wouldn't know that a person is homeless unless you're with them. You may have 2 or 3 genuine people who want some loose change to buy food, but there are others who want £5. The minute they have it, they head down to Aldi to buy some alcohol. Once they've sobered up a little, the entire process is repeated.

### What have you missed the most whilst living on the streets?

I miss being at home and I miss all those things that I once took for granted. I begin to wonder what I did to deserve this and at time it feels like I'm constantly walking into a ten tonne wall. The nights are the worst. When I'm alone I think of the times when I had it easy, when I had everything, when I had a TV and when I could walk over to the cupboard and eat as much as I liked. It's times on the streets that made me realise how much of the home life I'm missing out on and now I can't do any of that anymore.

### You need a lot of willpower to survive out there. What keeps you going through the day?

It's tough, you just have to put a fake grin on and cope. I had my daughters and partners support most of the time.

### What would you say is the future for you?

I definitely want to get back into work. After working for so many years, I find it difficult to live on what I'm earning now.

I was offered many jobs when I was working with my dad and some of them even offered more money. But, because I was going through a tough time, I didn't want to take on any of them and commit. My head wasn't in the right state. I could get a job with a cleaning company but it's too far from where my daughter lives.

### What message would you give to people who are living with their parents?

I'd tell them never to take anything for granted, even the small things. One minute you have everything and the next minute it could all be gone. Open your eyes and appreciate what you DO have.

### Many people would say: 'Why don't you get a job?' What would your response be to that?

Most homeless people who are living on the streets have a criminal record. Some can qualify for the requirements of certain jobs, but employees are conscious about the previous convictions that homeless people have.

### Have you tried looking for a job?

I was lucky at times. I worked with my dad and can do demolition, so I'd help out. I'm on a rebound now, but was on a low for a long time, even as recent as 6 months ago. It's like being on a roundabout. You could be there for a very long time. You do need help from outside agencies.

### Do you think that other homeless people may not have the motivation to find a job?

There are some people who don't have the motivation but if you really do want to get out of your situation then you need to try your best to do something about it. Some people, to have the motivation. I know of a man who found himself a job through an agency. It was a temporary to permanent job but he only lasted for two weeks. Had he stayed there for longer he would have definitely got a job by the end of it.

### Is being arrested such a bad thing? After all, they do give you somewhere to stay for the night and give you free meals too.



# How should Muslims respond when Islam is insulted?



## Irfan Makki

*A global nasheed artist and songwriter, born in Pakistan and living in Canada. He offers vibrant imagery with the innocence of a child-like observer and the wisdom of an elderly man through his unique musical style.*

As Muslims, we need to understand that there will always be some individuals or groups of people who intend to hurt Islam and try to instigate and harass Muslims and good people in general. It has always been this way in the history of humanity. We can look no further than our beloved prophet Muhammad (S). How did he respond when he was targeted and made the centre of ridicule and torture? Our prophet (S) always incorporated the peaceful element and only in matters where there was no other choice did he defend Islam and himself with force.

There were many incidences where he was persecuted and ridiculed but he responded with love and harmony. There was an incident when he noticed that a lady, who would usually throw rubbish at him whilst he would pass her residence, was absent and no longer carrying out her daily practice. A few days passed and so the Prophet (S) decided to visit her and found that she was ill and bedridden. He made Dua for her and she was astonished that a man whom she hated and harassed would care for her well-being and pray for her. This led to her embracing Islam.

On another occasion the prophet (S) helped an old lady transport her belongings out of the city of Madinah to a neighbouring city. She said that she wanted to get away from a man named Muhammad, who was leading the Arabs astray and away from their forefathers' polytheism practices. He carried the weight of her belongings the entire distance and politely listened to her criticisms and harsh words for him. In the end she found out that he was the very same man who had helped her the entire distance and had not said a word in his defence. She was amazed at his patience and she too, accepted Islam after this experience.

If the man who was entrusted and chosen by Allah to spread the word of Islam to the entire world could be so bearing and forgiving, then that should suffice for all of us, as Muslims. We should be patient and in turn we should educate people and their misconceptions with morality and with our own actions of peace and morality too. At Taif, the prophet (S) had the choice to have Taif destroyed by the will of Allah but he chose to have it protected and forgiven for maybe it would be a place where Islam would flourish and that is exactly what happened. We have numerous examples of how Allah and Muhammad (S) are merciful and show love and peace even though the transgressors are ruthless.

We need to acknowledge the wrong done by whomever and then we need to act accordingly to that wrong. We do that with love, knowledge and fairness. I believe that is how the Prophet (S) and any personality that stood for justice, morality and peace dealt with difficult and testing times. In the end, Allah always comforted the matter with peace and the vibrant uprising of growth and understanding.

## Shaykh Shady Al-Suleiman:

*An Islamic scholar from a Palestinian family who is heavily active and involved with the Muslim youth in Australia, his country of residence. He*

*obtained an Ijaza with Sanad (complete chain back to the Prophet (S)) in Pakistan and then spent 6 years in Damascus, Syria to continue his Islamic and Arabic studies.*

Laws have been set, laid down and legislated under and against anyone who is Anti-Semitic, which means that you are not allowed to attack Jews or any Jewish beliefs because you would be inciting hatred towards 17 million Jews around the world. But what makes it ok for people to incite hatred to 1.5 billion Muslims around the world?

For people who commit such a criminal act, by attacking our beloved prophet (S) and by humiliating him, there are two messages which should be made clear. The first is that the Muslims are not going to remain silent. Rather, they will defend their beliefs.

The second is that the more insults and attacks the Muslims face, the more the Muslims will want to support one another as well as the prophet (S), increase their love for him, follow his teachings and imitate him. People are free to do whatever they wish, but we should also remember that Allah is watching their every move and there are 1.6 billion Muslims around the world who will not take insults so lightly and will most likely react in different ways.

Reacting in ways which break the laws of the country is wrong. We must remember that we are allowed to let our voices be heard and we do have the right to speak out and defend the prophet Muhammad (S).

## Khalid Yasin:

*An American convert from Christianity to Islam who spent the last thirty-five years of his life removing misconceptions and distortions about Islam and Muslims and illuminating the Earth with a message of truth.*

There are many people who do not have the true knowledge to make the right estimations regarding Islam and Muslims because of their ignorance. They have no idea of the love that 1.6 billion Muslims have for Allah and his messenger. So how can we blame them and hold them responsible for their ignorance?

Those Muslims who did not expound, who did not clarify and who did not indicate towards the teachings of Islam are those who should be held responsible. Had the rest of the world known, they would have gained a better insight and would not have such dislike or hatred instilled in their hearts. I encourage all young Muslims whether they are in school or working to talk to people in their neighbourhood about the Quran, but first start off by understanding what the Quran is. They should talk about the prophet (S) and Islam but should first learn more about who the prophet (S) is and what Islam is really about.

I would advise all the non-Muslims to look up the name Muhammad ibn Abdullah in their search engines and see if they can find a human being whose life has been more documented in detail than his. They will not be able to find such a person. They can compare the prophet Muhammad (S)'s life with 100 great inventors, historians and leaders and they will find, without a doubt, irrefutable evidence that his behaviour was the most profound. He was an example through his many roles, as a father, husband, leader, brother and merchant. Take a look at the



character of the prophet (S) during every aspect of his life; during war, oppression, starvation, leadership, legislation and adjudication.

**Yasir Qadhi:**

*An influential cleric who completed his primary and secondary education in Saudi Arabia. He is currently the Dean of Academic Affairs at AlMaghrib Institute and his expertise lies in Theology.*

When the prophet Muhammad (S) was ridiculed and mocked by his own people, Allah comforted him by reminding him of the prophets who had come before him who had also faced such difficulty and struggles in spreading the word of Islam.

**Shaykh Hamza Yusuf:**

*A prominent American scholar who travelled the Muslim world and studied for ten years in UAE, Saudi Arabia and Africa. He is the co-founder of Zaytuna College which has established an international reputation for presenting a classical picture of Islam in the West.*

During the prophet (S)'s life, the rulers and the people of the desert areas were rude to him and showed him bad manners. But he (S) never returned their rudeness with rudeness. He returned their bad manners with good character and this is what he has taught us to do. When we see people who are not following the religion of Islam, we should pray that they are guided.

The prophet (S) said: 'None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself'. (Bukhari).

This love encompasses the Jews and the Christians and we shouldn't hate those who haven't come into the fold of Islam and neither should we desire their destruction. The prophet (S) also said: 'He who does not show mercy (to others) will not be shown mercy (by Allah)'. Hence, as Muslims we should have compassion for those who do not have hope in Allah.

**Shaykh Habib Ali Al Jifri:**

*Born in the city of Jeddah from parents who are both descendants of Imam Hussein, the son of Ali (R). He has strong connections with many centres and academies involved with international dialogue in religions and civilisations.*

Let's learn how to look with the eye of mercy to the people who hurt us the most. Even when blood was pouring from the blessed body of the messenger of Allah (S), he wanted Allah to guide those who hadn't been guided even though they harmed him and his people. Despite the damage and aggression they showed him, his heart pounded with mercy whilst dealing with them.

**Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad:**

*A British Muslim thinker, professor and translator who has written about the interaction between Islam and secular issues. A former student and at present, a lecturer at Cambridge University.*

The response of some young, untrained souls is to jump up and down, mouthing nonsense about Islam being in danger. The message of Islam was the final message of Allah, so how can it be in danger? Allah would never let this happen. In the past, Islam has been persecuted in many ways and through the will of Allah it has always prevailed. Muslims should be brave and not yell on the streets.

We should abide by the Quranic principle of 'push with something better'. If we did this, then the enmity between Muslims and non-Muslims would lessen to a great degree. If we are to push the ugliness with something beautiful, then we need to have patience in order to succeed. Yelling and screaming and giving the media the reaction and image that they want to associate with Islam

is simply playing into their hands and we shouldn't allow ourselves to get into their hands.

**Ibrahim Hooper:**

*A convert to Islam who is the National Communications Director and spokesperson for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim civil rights and advocacy organisation.*

I think the best way to respond to controversy between Muslims and non-Muslims is to step up efforts to promote mutual understanding between faiths and to boost interfaith dialogue. People want to create divisions so the best response would be to create unity between faiths.

**Nouman Ali Khan:**

*He has dedicated himself to a seven-year-long project of conducting a linguistic and literary focus Quranic Tafseer series in English. He is also the founder of Bayyinah Institute.*

Many times Allah has mentioned that all of us, without a doubt will be tested in our wealth and our own selves. Sometimes our wealth and our worldly possessions will be in danger and sometimes we will be in danger. We will feel threatened, a loss of people and the trials will be felt, financially and socially. We'll also hear many painful words from those who do not believe.

Ask yourself if this is happening today? Are we hearing painful things from those lost communities? Are they saying horrendous things about the book of Allah, the messenger of Allah and the Muslims in general?

They'll come out to say that all Muslims are terrorists. But as Muslims we do not believe in crimes against innocent people, so how can all Muslims be terrorists? They'll say unbearable things about Allah's messenger (S) and they'll make us listen to what they say.

Now that we have heard the things that the non-Muslims have said, how should we respond? This is when we need to be harsh and tough upon ourselves. We have become emotional puppets and the non-Muslims know exactly how we are going to respond and they do certain things to provoke us. Some Muslims burn a couple of cars, take part in protests and scream and yell. However, we should be acting in a calm, collected and calculated fashion, just like the messenger (S) did.

Allah Almighty says that being patient by controlling our emotions, holding back ourselves and fearing Allah are some of the noblest of acts that we can do. Our patience speaks volumes and our yelling and screaming is more detrimental. In addition to being patient we should have Taqwa in Allah (God-consciousness).

We talk about how important it is for our Masaajid to represent the teachings of our religion and to educate the local community, but it is also the responsibility of every Muslim to represent the teachings of Islam in their vicinity, amongst their co-workers, business partners, friends, and neighbours. We need to educate the people and remove the fear that Shaytan has placed inside them of our religion.

Shaytan also did this during the life of the messenger (S). The people of Quraysh would say – don't listen to this man, you'll go crazy if you do, if you listen to his words, your family will be destroyed, and he'll do magic on you. So, the people who haven't embraced Islam will continue to fear Islam. We can't blame the population for this because this is the work of Shaytan. We need to do a better job and clarify our religion and the message which was sent to us.



# THE TRUTH ABOUT BEING A SINGLE MUSLIM MOTHER

By Misbah Akhtar

The issue of single Muslim mothers is fast becoming a prevalent one; with divorce on the rise it seems only logical that some of these statistics would also apply to Muslim households. Why then are they not revered as they deserve to be and instead looked down upon and scorned by many communities? Is it really seen as so contagious that girls from 'respectable' families should stay away from these women in case they too, catch it? Why are these women made to feel humiliated and isolated from their community as if they chose this path for themselves? Being left with no option but to walk is not the same as breaking up a perfectly happy marriage for selfish reasons; only Allah knows the whole truth and what is in someone's heart, so why then do people assume?

No-one asks to be a single mother, it's a relentless job; working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; no pay; and no training is given. You cannot quit and are expected to play the role of both a mother and a father. The pressure that you face from society is massive. You feel that everyone is waiting for you to make a wrong move which, if you make, will lead to them pouncing on you saying that your child has turned out faulty because of a lack of mothering skills that you possess - which is why you are a single mum.

It is due to this reason that many single mothers feel isolated from their community; they are not encouraged to speak up about their

struggles in an attempt to console other women, rather, they are warned to keep quiet and suffer alone so as to not bring shame on their families. There is no organisation in place for them where they can go to for help or just to meet other single Muslim mothers.

There are organisations for revert sisters, people wanting to know about Islam, da'wah giving charities for Muslims, even organisations for people suffering from drug abuse but ironically nothing for sisters born into a Muslim household who are single mothers. Society assumes that if you are a single Muslim mother that your family will automatically take the initiative to help out; that you have a baby-sitter for when you are forced into work and that you live at home with your parents and that your father takes over your financial burden.

This is not always the case. Some women are not allowed to return to their parent's home. They are told to lie in the bed they made because they could have stayed with their husband even if it meant tolerating domestic violence and having their mental health suffer. These women are not just defined by their role as mothers; they are human beings too and people tend to forget this.

Being a single Muslim mother is so different to being a single mother, the latter will do anything to make

sure their child fits in as they do not want their child to be singled out any further; a Muslim mother has to remain within the boundaries set by Allah at all times.

There is no united front from a husband and therefore no 'good cop, bad cop'; there is only her. Children may rebel against this and then a mother has to be both firm like a father but soft and loving like a mother; it must get confusing for a child. They may wonder why their mother is all of a sudden behaving like 'daddy' too.

It is a father's role to protect his family but now a mother has to adopt that role and try and provide physical safety and security; she cannot show fear in front of her children. It's not safe for women to be out after dark, but this now, cannot be helped if children need picking up from mosque or other activities.





A Muslim woman is not allowed to be alone with a non-mahram (non-related) man as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "No woman should travel except with a mahram, and no man should enter upon her unless a mahram of hers is present." (Bukhari) Now if her landlord is a man and wants to come round, or a builder or plumber she has to let him in; if she has no support she won't have a brother to be there with her.

They may have no guardian to help them find a new husband and sadly not all masjid's are dedicated to helping find spouses for women; besides which, single Muslim mothers are seen too often as 'damaged goods'. A vulnerable woman attempting to find her own husband therefore may be preyed upon by evil men or and may not be above the whisperings of Shaytaan.

Whilst there are a lot of good brothers out there willing to accept the responsibility of a ready-made family, a lot of them honestly admit that their mothers would not be happy with this because as one brother put it "Which mother would want her son to marry a divorcee when he could marry a virgin and have his own children with her?"

We have role models from Islamic history of single mothers (or mothers who raised their children alone) whose children went on to become great men and prophets; Hajar, the mother of Prophet Ismail (pbuh), Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isa (pbuh), and Amina, the mother of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who all raised their sons alone. Also, the mothers of Imam al-Shafi', Imam Ahmed and Imam Bukhari raised their sons alone, all of whom later became renowned figures that left a major impact on the world.

Many single mothers are lonely and in need of support; it is the Ummah's responsibility to help them, because they are still our sisters in Islam. But if everyone shirks away from this responsibility then who is left to help these women? They have been left alone to do the job of two people and deserve double the praise.

Organisations and charities need to be introduced where help can be administered or maybe a key worker can come round and sit with the mother and offer advice. Support groups are a good start; one such group can be found on Facebook: single Muslim mums – a group dedicated to providing support to mothers globally who feel depressed, isolated and alone.

We need your help in promoting awareness for the struggles that many single Muslim mothers face globally, let's make a change and be the change we want to see.

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*[Saheeh al-Bukhaari]*

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# EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH IMAM ASIM HUSSAIN



Imam Muhammad Asim Hussain, is a graduate of Jamia Al-Karam in Nottingham and has been tirelessly serving the needs of the British Muslim community. He is renowned for his nationwide public lectures which focus on contemporary issues and his 'down to earth' and 'on a level' approach allows him to relate to all age groups. Imam Asim is only 23 and currently lectures in Manchester Central Mosque as Jummah Khateeb. The Revival Editor, Sajid Iqbal, spoke to him about many issues including his life and what he thinks are the biggest challenges facing Muslims today.

**Ed: Asalaamu Alaikum Shaykh, how are you?**

**Imam: Wa Alaikumus Salaam, very well.**

**Ed: You're a young Imam followed by thousands of youngsters across the country, with 17,000 followers on Facebook and over 4000 on Twitter. You're a bit of a celebrity, right?**

**Imam: (Big smile) I don't know about that. Allah gives and Allah takes away.**

**Ed: So when you were a young lad what did you do to chill out?**

**Imam: I was brought up very well by my parents. I had a keen interest in football and I still do. As any typical youngster growing up in Bradford, we had a lot of negative influences surrounding us but I'm glad to say that I stayed away from most of them. I also played a lot of PlayStation 2, Pro-Evolution and Fifa back then.**

**Ed: You mentioned football, so I have to ask- do you support Manchester United or Liverpool?**

**Imam: I'm actually against United completely. (Ed shaking his head).**

**Ed: Come on Imam... What's that about?**

**Imam: (Cheeky laugh) I'm a fan of good football players and the beautiful game, rather than a particular team. If I do have allegiance with anyone, where there is money there is a Sheikh- so I would say Man City!**

**Ed: That's terrible Shaykh (Imam laughs his head off)**

**Ed: When you were young did you not want to be a 'Bad Boy' and live life as a gangster as a lot of youngsters do today?**

**Imam: There were times in my life when I thought 'Yes, I wanna be a bad boy. I wanna try this and that out'. However, I had a strong brother who kept me on the straight path. My parents were very strict and especially my mother who brought me up very well. So, therefore it didn't influence or affect me that much. I had a very sharp brain and was clued on. I did see a lot around me but it didn't influence me to do anything bad.**

**Ed: A lot of youngsters nowadays are involved in a boy/girlfriend relationship which we all know is against Islam - So what is your take on this?**

**Imam: Young people are heavily influenced by having too much freedom, free mixing, movies, the music lifestyle and following the way the world is moving by keeping up with the latest societal trends. Some feel that if you don't have a boy/girlfriend then you are a weirdo and that something must be wrong with you and so they are pressured into having such a relationship.**

**Ed: So how would you advise individuals who are involved in a boy/girlfriend relationship?**

**Imam: It's not easy. You will need a lot of will power. Does one have enough strength around them to be able to curb or control this desire? It's a problem of the ego, I say. If you are mature enough you should marry to overcome the desire of sexual feelings. If not, then we should avoid those scenarios and circumstances which we put ourselves into, in order to avoid us having half of the problems that we do.**

**Ed: What was the turning point in your life that made you become religious and then go onto study Islam?**

**Imam: I was 15, it was during Ramadhan and just before my GCSE's in 2005. I was 10 days into Itikaaf at the masjid, and that's what made me change. I switched then.**

**Ed: So what actually happened that made you change?**

**Imam: It was the company of a pious man of Allah. He had an overwhelming, profound influence and effect on me which made me connect to the Deen, practise it and then gave me the interest and motivation to study. This made me who I am today.**

**Ed: You've mentioned a few times about having good company. A lot of youngsters go astray because they hang around with the wrong guys. So how do you make sure you choose good mates?**

**Imam: Youngsters today set the criterion of good company as somebody who looks good, walks well, dresses well, who fights well, who has a lot of money or is popular. We base our friendship on popularity and other not very important things. We have forgotten the essence of what our friendship should be. Is that person actually good? Is he good for me? Do they have good manners and behaviours? Are they pious? Are they religious? Is that person going to take me closer to Allah or away from Allah? If we base our friendship on these principles we will get very far in life and that's the reality.**

**Ed: What about those who already hang around with the wrong crowd and can't seem to get away from them?**



**Imam:** I would say to them that rather than roaming the streets, it will be good for them to spend some time in the masjid and learn some very good morals; and generally morals should first come from their parents. Taking this love of materialism out of us is quite difficult especially in this day and age. The key is to control it and knowing our limits. So by having that link with the masjid, one can get the right company and learn the right morals which can help them to become a better person inshaAllah.

**Ed:** Regarding mosques, do you think they actually cater for the youngsters of today?

**Imam:** Mosques are starting to change now, maybe not as quickly as we want them to, but they are changing. Mosques need to look at themselves and see how they can involve and interact the next generation to move the mosque forward.

**Ed:** What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the youth?

**Imam:** The biggest challenge is identity. They really don't know who they are. Islam for them consists of Ramadan and Friday's only. They are facing many challenges from forced marriages to drugs and alcohol abuse. These are just a few.

**Ed:** You said earlier that youngsters need to overcome their desires in order to overcome issues of drugs, alcohol and so on. How do they do this?

**Imam:** For drugs and alcohol we need to find a new intoxicant for them and an alternative. This is the zikr/remembrance of Allah. Once they taste this and fall in love with it, it will definitely help them to overcome their materialistic desires. This is the way forward and I've seen many lads change like this.

**Ed:** So those who are being forced to marry against their will- what can they do?

**Imam:** It's important to try to make your parents understand through wisdom and patience and by using positive influences to convince them. Secondly, one should give examples in the community where forced marriages have taken place and where it hasn't worked and what damage it has caused.

Parents need to understand what the needs of the times are and try to understand what their children want. They are not living back in the village now. There has to be a compromise as we can't go from one extreme to another in the form of fornication to forced marriages. Parents need to be clear that forcing your children to marry against their will is totally unIslamic.

**Ed:** Due to forced marriages some youngsters get married secretly. What do you say to that?

**Imam:** Well, they don't remain secret for long do they? Are they allowed in Islam? You'll have to ask a Mufti as it's all circumstantial. I mean if it's a circumstance where they can easily convince their parents then why are they secretly married?

**Ed:** Another big challenge today is extremism and how it is reported in the media. Regarding the Woolwich murder, what is your reaction and what should be the reactions of Muslims?

**Imam:** The main thing is that we shouldn't react to it in an abusive or aggressive manner, whether that's on social network sites or generally in the community. Also, two people don't represent me or my religion. More facts will come out of who these people are and why they did this. Remember that it is not from Islam. It has absolutely nothing to do with Islam. Remember that just because two individuals do a wrong action, it doesn't make the religion wrong. It's as simple as that. If the IRA or other Christian extremists do acts of terrorism it doesn't mean Christianity is wrong or evil, now does it? So those with common sense will know that this is just an act of two people and not the entire religion.

**Ed:** So is it best not to do or say anything at all or should we speak out against it?

**Imam:** As Muslims if we see anything bad or evil then we should speak out against it with wisdom, respect and with tolerance. If we can, we should stop evil physically or the least we should do is feel bad about it in our hearts. This is the teaching of our Prophet (pbuh). Muslims and non-Muslims are one big family of humanity and we should play our role to do good and forbid evil.

**Ed:** Going back to the Imams (who I love with a passion...hahahaha) what is their role today? A lot don't tackle issues we face today and a lot of them can't even speak the language!

**Imam:** The Imam's role is to guide his community, to advice and counsel his community, not to stir and create tensions. If there are differences in the community then the Imam should deal with them and resolve them. A key point is that the Imam should practise what he preaches- this is crucial. If you see Imams doing this then you will see people changing.

**Ed:** But if the Imam can't speak English then how can he cater for the youth?

**Imam:** If he can't speak English then he should learn. If he has lived here for 40 years then he should be able to speak English so he can communicate in English and understand the youth.

**Ed:** And if he doesn't?

**Imam:** Well, he needs to cater for the community or otherwise allow the likes of myself to cater for the youth.

**Ed:** An increasing number of young practising Muslims and especially a lot of Imams I know, are very sectarian. How can we stay away from this and what is the cure?

**Imam:** There will always be differences and it's important to deal with them with respect, tolerance and etiquettes. That is the key. If we did this then we will not be sectarian or have any hatred for anyone.

**Ed:** A lot of young people don't have positive role models today, so who can they look up to?

**Imam:** Somebody who is positive and who will draw them closer to Allah.

**Ed:** Finally, what is your advice to the readers of The Revival magazine?

**Imam:** Play hard, work hard, enjoy yourself in the limits, and keep Allah happy as in the end we will have to show our face to Him. Hang around with good people, make time for Allah and look after your parents. Learn your rights and learn what Islam teaches you. Educate yourself about Islam properly from the right sources and not extremists.

**IMAM ASIM'S FAVOURITES:**

Footballer- Zinadine Zidane

Food- Burgers

Car- Nissan Skyline GTi

Book- The Qur'an

Scholar- Too many and unfair to name a favourite.

Saying- Live in this dunya (world) but don't let the dunya live inside you

Game console/game - PlayStation 3

Fifa 13





# THE REVIVAL'S GUIDE TO RAMADHAN

## What is Ramadhan?

Ramadhan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. During this month which is either 29 or 30 days, Muslims all over the world fast by abstaining from food and water from dawn until the sun sets.

Ramadhan is a blessed month in which the Holy Quran was first sent down as a guide to mankind with clear signs for guidance and judgement between right and wrong. It is also a time when the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell-Fire are closed and the devils are chained up.

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S) addressed his companions on the last day of the 8th month, Sha'baan, by saying: 'O people! A great month has come over you; a blessed month; a month in which is a night better than a thousand months; month in which Allah has made it compulsory upon you to fast by day, and voluntary to pray by night. Whoever draws nearer (to Allah) by performing any of the (optional) good deeds in (this month) shall receive the same reward as performing an obligatory deed at any other time, and whoever discharges an obligatory deed in (this month) shall receive the reward of performing seventy obligations at any other time. It is the month of patience, and the reward of patience is Heaven...'

## Why do Muslims fast in Ramadhan?

Fasting in the month of Ramadhan has been prescribed by Allah Almighty and is one of the five pillars of Islam. Muslims fast to show their submission, commitment and worship to their Lord. The purpose of fasting is to achieve Taqwa (God-consciousness).

## So what is 'taqwa' all about?

Taqwa refers to God-consciousness and piety. Ramadhan does bring about an extraordinary sense of emotional enthusiasm and religious eagerness amongst everyone. Many leave behind their bad traits and habits and cut down on their everyday enjoyment and focus their day around bringing themselves closer to their Lord and attaining His pleasure and reward. Many pray for direction and assistance in abstaining from everyday troubles and they endeavour to cleanse themselves through self-control and great, rewarding acts of faith.

## Is fasting just about staying hungry?

There is SO much more to Ramadhan than being hungry and hearing your stomach growl. We should use this as an opportunity to cleanse our souls, focus our attention on our Lord and amend our sins, faults and mistakes by requesting forgiveness and by repenting. We should work on our humility, spirituality and patience and this is what fasting or 'staying hungry' can achieve.

## Who needs to fast?

Fasting has been prescribed for every sane, healthy and

mature male and female. Although fasting is not obligatory for young children, it is encouraged. The child will be rewarded for fasting and the parents for guiding them towards doing good actions.

## What happens if I miss or break my fast?

If you deliberately miss or break your fast in the month of Ramadhan without a valid reason then there is a compensation to be made. It is known as Kaffara. The compensation involves fasting continuously for 60 days or feeding 60 poor people.

## What is Fidyah?

When someone cannot fast in Ramadan and there is absolutely no way that a person can make them up afterwards due to the above mentioned reasons, they should pay for someone else to be fed. For each fast that is missed, a person should give 3lbs (1.6kg) of wheat or 7lbs (3.2kg) of barley or they can give the equivalent of that in cash. It should provide one person with two meals, or two people with one meal each.

## Are there any exceptions?

As Allah does not like to burden His worshipers and is the Most Merciful, there are a few exceptions. A women in post natal bleeding (Nifas) or one who is menstruating (Haidh) cannot fast and should make up for her missed fasts as soon as possible.

Fasting is optional for those who are travelling (for more than 48 miles according to the Hanafi Madhab). However, if the fast does not pose any excessive hardship and the journey is not demanding then it would be better to fast.

For those who are ill, they should continue to fast. If the illness is severe and through fasting one may cause more harm to oneself, he/she should make up for them too.

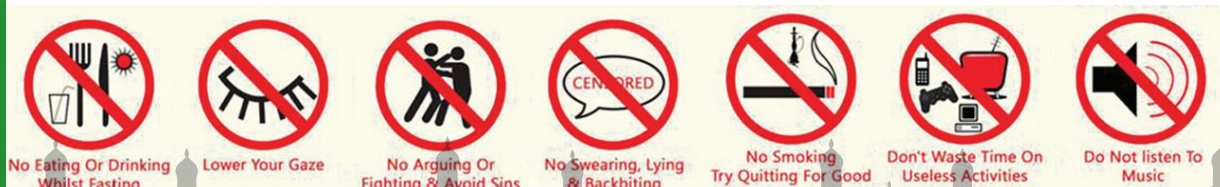
A very old person who does not have the strength to fast, a very sickly person or a diseased person who has no hope of recovering after Ramadhan must make an expiatory payment (Fidyah) for each fast that was missed.

## How should Muslims spend their time in Ramadan?

Anything which pleases Allah should be done and anything which displeases Allah should be refrained from. True fasting is when the limbs fast from sin too. There is SO much that we can all do and SO much that we can avoid doing, but I'll mention just a few.

We should:

- Recite the Quran in abundance
- Perform optional prayers
- Do Dhikr, the remembrance of Allah
- Supplicate to Allah through making Dua





- **Send Salaat and Salaam on the Prophet Muhammad (S)**
- **Make Istikhaara for important matters**
- **Sincerely ask for forgiveness**

### So what's banned in Ramadhan?

There are the obvious restrictions like eating and drinking and just like every other day in the year we should not backbite and slander anyone, neither should we argue unnecessarily. We should avoid wasting precious time that we can't get back and avoid watching useless TV programmes and listening to music.

### How about sex? No sex in Ramadhan? That's a bit extreme innit?

Sexual intercourse with one's partner (obviously you need to be married to them) is allowed during Ramadhan but not whilst the couple are fasting. If done so, this will break their fast.

### Why do some Muslims act religious in Ramadhan but then go back to their dodgy ways straight after?

Although it is important to stay consistent, it is very tempting to go back and do the things that we once did before Ramadhan began. Temptations and distractions make us lose focus and perhaps that's the reason why some of us do go back to our dodgy ways.

Also, many people go to extremes in worship during Ramadhan and find it extremely difficult to maintain such actions and keep up with it. For example, a person could aim to recite the entire Quran thrice, whereas in a normal month they would hardly recite the Quran at all. Of course we'll be rewarded for whatever worship we do, but it will only benefit us in the long run if we make little changes at a time and are more reasonable in our approach.

Going to extremes was not liked by the Prophet (S) and it is also a way of Shaytan trying to burn us out quickly as we pressurise ourselves and it does not have a positive effect after Ramadhan has finished.

### Why are mosques jam packed in Ramadhan- do they give free money out?

Mosques are usually jam packed during Ramadhan because of prayers, Taraweeh and special lectures tailored for the audience. There is a lot of blessing and rewards are multiplied immensely. Muslim males should be praying five times in congregation every day but because Ramadhan is a month that highlights Muslim brotherhood and brings about a special feeling of closeness, more and more people will attend the mosque.

### What if you play sports, you would need to drink water yeah?

No, you wouldn't be able to quench your thirst by drinking water because that would break your fast. It would be advisable to not indulge yourself in rigorous and demanding sports and perhaps take part in light exercises and those which don't tire you out.

### Doesn't fasting give you bad breath, headaches and bad temper?

Fasting may cause bad breath but you are allowed to use a Miswaak/Siwaak whilst you are fasting to maintain oral hygiene. Abu Hurairah (R) narrates from the blessed prophet Muhammad (S) as part of a longer Hadith that 'The smell coming from the mouth of the one fasting is more pleasant to Allah than the scent of musk' (Tirmidhi).

Headaches can be caused by a lack of water and several other reasons so to avoid the likelihood of having a headache, ensure that you have sufficient sleep, eat healthily and drink plenty during the hours in which you can.

Fasting doesn't cause bad temper and in fact that comes as a result of not being able to control one's self. We should try our best to remain patient and calm and avoid diving into such situations.

### Is the best bit about fasting stuffing yourself when it's time to open your fast?

For anyone who hasn't eaten any food or drunken any water for several hours, hearing the word 'food' causes eyes to lighten up and a person's nose can detect the waft of freshly

cooked food from far off. Everyone looks forward to the thrill of eating meals with their parents, siblings, relatives and neighbours.

The prophet Muhammad (S) said: 'Whoever gives food to a fasting person to break his fast, shall have his sins forgiven, and he will be saved from the Fire of Hell, and he shall have the same reward as the fasting person, without his reward being diminished at all'.

Ideally we shouldn't stuff ourselves with food because Ramadhan is about fasting. We need to learn to control our excessive eating and cravings so as to not waste the effort of fasting for many hours. Eating healthily and ensuring you have a balanced diet is just as important.

### Do Muslims have to give a lot to charity in Ramadan?

Muslims aren't supposed to be stingy and if they have the means to give charity anytime during the year then they should. As Ramadhan is a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased, many take this as an opportunity to empty their pockets out and help those who are less fortunate.

### What is Eid ul-Fitr?

Eid ul-Fitr is a festival and celebration which marks the end of Ramadhan and the beginning of Shawaal (the 10th month). It was practised during the lifetime of the prophet Muhammad (S) and allows Muslims to recognise and appreciate the favours that Allah has blessed His creation with. There is an Eid prayer and a sermon which usually takes place in the morning. During the day, Muslims visit people that they know, partake in feasts and just enjoy themselves.

### What is Sadaqatul Fitr?

Ibn Abbas (R) has narrated that the Messenger of Allah (S) prescribed Sadaqatul Fitr as an obligatory duty upon everybody, both male and female in order to purify those who fast from useless and obscene activities and to provide food for the poor. Every person should pay this small amount before the Eid prayer, not only for himself, but also for his dependents, such as his children.



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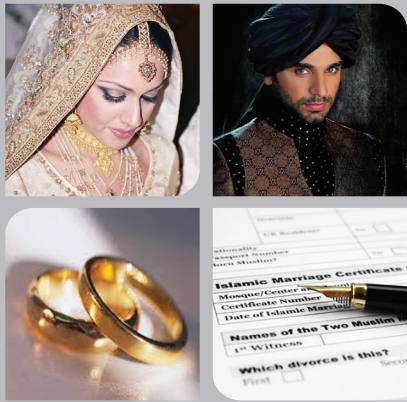
Make Lots Of Duaa



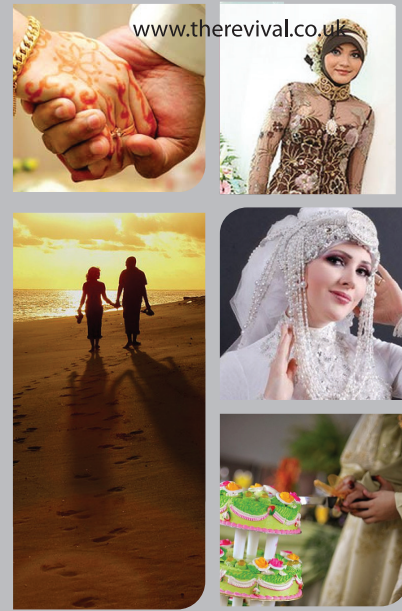
Give In Charity & Help The Poor



# IDIOTS GUIDE TO MARRIAGE IN ISLAM



BY SHAYKH SALIM GHISA



## What is the purpose of marriage in Islam? What are the benefits?

Marriage is a bond that makes it permissible for a man and a woman to have an intimate relationship. This would then allow a child to be born from that relationship and to have its name linked to both the mother and the father.

## Can a boy/girl choose their own marriage partner?

Yes a boy or girl can choose their own marriage partners so long as it meets the criteria of Shariah (Islamic law). This means that they should be Muslim and their beliefs should not be of those that take them out of the fold of Islam. (1)

## Do you need the consent of your parents to get married?

For marriage to be permissible, consent from one's parents is not necessary, however, for it to be a success, it is better to obtain permission from one's parents. The reason for this is that in some situations parents may want to force their child to marry someone and if she denies, they may refuse to marry her elsewhere and this is not correct. (2)

## Are love marriages allowed in Islam?

Love marriage refers to when a person has either become attracted to a potential partner or has proposed to someone. Islam does not allow pre marital dating or any room of physical contact prior to marriage. If they fear that it is possible that they may commit sin, they should arrange for a marriage to take place.

Parents should not refuse unless they have

a valid reason to oppose which is for their children's benefit. The Prophet of Allah said 'If there comes to you one with whose religion and attitude you are satisfied, then give your daughter to him in marriage, for if you do not do so, fitnah and mischief will become widespread on earth'. (Tirmidhi 2/274).

## What is the difference between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage?

An arranged marriage is one in which the parents, relatives or members in the community introduce a male or female to a potential spouse. From that point on it is up to the children to make a decision and have the final say. This type of marriage is allowed and recommended. On the other hand, forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both of the parties is married without his or her consent or will. This violates principles of freedom and this type of marriage is a sin.

## Can parents force their children to marry against their wishes?

Forced marriages are forbidden in Islam and are regarded as a sin because consent from both parties has not been given. If one of the partners refuses to be married then the marriage cannot take place.

## Some parents use emotional blackmail to force their children to marry their cousin from back home- surely this is not right?

Parents should not emotionally blackmail their children into such a marriage. Parents have been entrusted to guide, look after their children and to search for a suitable partner which is in their best interests. When parents desire to have their children married in their home country, they should not be doing it for personal gain.

## What should we look for when choosing a marriage partner?

The Prophet of Allah (S) said "There are four things a person looks for when they want a partner; Wealth, Beauty, Lineage and Religion, Choose religion and you will be successful". Therefore, when looking for a partner, ensure they have an attachment to Islam and are practising Muslims.

## Are you allowed to marry your cousins?

Cousin marriages are allowed. However some scholars have recommended against it. Major figures such as Imam Ghazali (citing Sayyidina Umar, no less) have cautioned against excessiveness in this - precisely because it 'weakens the offspring'. [Ghazali: Ihya XII]

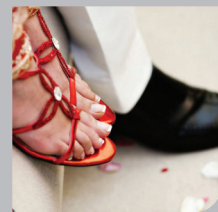
## What are the rituals or customs of marriage?

The Nikah is mandatory and to feed the guests from the groom's side is Sunnah. Other practices such as music and dancing are all Haram. Cultural customs such as a henna party, hiding the groom's shoes and lighting candles are only allowed if they are not against Islam.

## What is the nikah?

The nikah is the essence of marriage whereby a girl gives permission to her guardian (Wali) and this permission is obtained by an Imam who then asks for the boys consent and acceptance. If it is accepted and heard by at least two Muslim male witnesses then that marriage will be approved. The Nikah does not need to be a written contract and a verbal contract is suffice. However to enable absolute proof, it would be better to have a written contract.





### What is the purpose of the waleemah and how should it be performed?

Organising a banquet (Walima feast) was a tradition before the advent of Islam and was carried out by the Prophet (S) and thus, became a Sunnah. He therefore, organised a Walima for his wedding with Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) and then also organised Walima's with his other wives. (3)

### What is dowry?

Dowry is anything of value which can be money, gold, or valuable goods. It is given to the bride from the groom and it is an obligatory act and also known as Mahr. The minimum Mahr value is 10 dirhams which is the equivalent of approximately £25. However, asking for money as a way of blackmailing or obtaining financial income is all Haram. If the boy's family is asking for money then this is unacceptable.

### Are honeymoons allowed in Islam?

Honeymoons allow a married couple to have some time to get to know each other better and to create a bond. Although, honeymoons are not an act that is known within the Muslim way of life, it speeds up time spent with each other and allows for privacy which is regarded as a good deed and for that reason is encouraged.

### What is the key to a successful marriage?

Mutual love, a healthy communication and respect from both partners. Allah says in the Quran 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more strength than the other, and because They support them from their means (4:34).

### What are the rights and responsibilities of the husband and wife?

There are many rights and responsibilities but ultimately the husband has a right to be respected and obeyed. The wife has a right to be protected and looked after. More importantly both have a duty to keep each other happy.

### Is it the wife's responsibility simply to cook, clean and produce kids?

The wife's role is to ensure that she fulfils her duties in and out of the home, just like the husband has a similar role. The husband also can help with cooking, cleaning and maintaining the welfare of the children and the Prophet of Allah also used to do the household chores.

### Can a wife work?

Working is not something that Islam would disapprove of and it is allowed as long as the work does not compromise her safety and modesty. Also by working, the children should not be neglected. Islam gives the wife a unique right that any money earned by her belongs to her, alone.

### Should the wife live with her in-laws or live separately with her husband- what does Islam say about this?

A wife has a right to live separately and have her independence. However, women should understand that her in-laws are her husband's parents and they should be looked after too. A husband cannot force his wife to live with his parents and if this is the case then he should gain consent and agree to this prior to the marriage and if the wife agrees then this is fine otherwise they should think whether the marriage would be suitable for one another.

### What Islamic advice can you give to a husband and wife if they have a serious disagreement or issues between them?

They should try and understand each other's requirements and use Islam as a way of moving forward. If they can't do this themselves, they should use a mutual party who has an insight into Islam and is respected by both parties to try and resolve the matter.

### References:

1) Also, in case of a girl, she should not be in a marriage or still be within her iddat period (probationary period after divorce or death of a previous husband).

2) Abdullah ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: 'A non-married woman (virgin or non-virgin) has more right in managing her own affairs (i.e. marriage) than her guardian and a virgin's consent must be sought concerning herself and her silence implies her consent'. (Sahih Muslim: 4121). Ali ibn Abi Talib (Allah be pleased with him) would strongly advise against marrying without the guardian's approval, but if someone was to go ahead and marry, he would consider their marriage to be valid. (Kanz al-Ummal: 45775). According to the Hanafi school of thought, a Wali (guardian) should be appointed on behalf of the bride but is not necessary for the Nikah to be valid (See Hidayah and Qudoori). Also, a substitute Wali can be appointed (a close relative or even the Imam).

3) The Prophet (S) said: 'Giving a banquet on the first day is rightful; on the second day, it is nice but giving a banquet on the third day is an outward show and propaganda'. (Abu Dawood 2/307). Moreover, poor people should be invited to such occasions along with the rich. For the feasts where the poor are not invited, the Prophet said: 'The worst banquet of all is the one to which rich people are invited while the poor are not'. (Ibn Majah: 1913). Furthermore, the Prophet (S) gave advice to the believers on this issue. When he heard Abdurrahman bin Awf was getting married, he advised him: 'Arrange a banquet even if it is only one sheep's meat'. (Sunan Ibn Majah: 1907).



# BACKBITING

## GOSSIPING AND SLANDERING

Written by Sabah Khalil and Humayra Mogra

**Have you ever been in a situation where your best friend or your worst enemy is being talked about and suddenly you decide to join in?**

In society, people disapprove of some traits and behaviours so that feelings are not hurt. One of those is 'backbiting', a major sin in Islam. It is absolutely rife within our communities, amongst both men and women (regardless of age!). It is effortlessly destroying the unity and sense of brotherhood that the Muslim Ummah is in desperate need of, during these difficult times.

We hear and use the words 'gossip' and 'backbiting' infinitely, so much so, that the definition seems to have eroded. Unfortunately, the real damage that these actions cause and the effect that they may bring into society are no longer taken seriously.

**So, what is the real meaning behind backbiting? What is the difference between backbiting and slandering? Why is it seen as a bad thing? What are the consequences of taking part and, most importantly, Why is it so common?**

Backbiting, which in Arabic is known as **Gheebah** is to talk about others in their absence. Even though what is said may be a fact, these are facts that people hope are not said about them behind their backs. **Slandering on the other hand, is to make false and damaging statements about someone.**

Now, undeniably, no-one would want to find themselves in such a position, nor be the culprit of backbiting and slander, right?

***"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak a good word or remain silent"* [Sahih al-Bukhari]**

This Hadith was specifically mentioned by the Prophet (S) himself, as an instruction to prevent people from the harms of the tongue. The tongue can get involved in slandering, backbiting and gossiping which all show signs of weakness in a person's character and faith.

We might think that a few words here and there, won't matter, but, read this following verse mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

***"He does not utter a (single) word, except that there is, with him, (an angel) ready and waiting (to record it)"* [Qur'an 50:18]**

This means that for every held responsible. In faith is having 'Taqwa' accountable, for all your say, should surely make uttering such words.

word that we utter, we will be other words, the essence of (fear). Knowing that you are actions, including what you a believer think twice before

A scholar advised: "I never regretted remaining silent even once. But I regretted several times for speaking". Therefore, it is better to live in content and peace rather than regret and



guilt, through not speaking ill of someone else. After all, isn't the tongue sharper than the sword? The words spoken out of hate, malice or jealousy, shall always leave a scar behind.

When someone commits a crime, they tend to not think of the justice done shortly after. Similarly, with regards to backbiting and slandering the punishments in the Hereafter are brushed away as people indulge in these dreadful acts without thinking of both the present harms and future consequences.

The Prophet (S) said; ***"When I was taken up to the Heaven (during Mi'raaj), I passed by people who had nails of copper with which they were scratching their faces and their breasts. I said, 'Who are they, O Jibraeel?' He replied: 'They are those who consumed the flesh of people (i.e. slander, backbite, gossip) and aspersed their honour'"* [Abu Dawud]**

This type of punishment may be beyond the human mind because a person's nails are not made of copper and neither is cannibalism an acceptable act. However, these are matters of the unseen world. Nevertheless, not a single soul would want to consume the flesh of other people, so backbiting should be hated amongst the Muslim brotherhood, just like eating the flesh of another human being.

Everyone on Earth is 'equal'. To look down or insult another individual as being inferior to you and abolishing his honour- is greatly forbidden. Many of the reasons being: it's a sign of weakness again, and a cowardly act which leads to slandering and gossiping. This does not benefit anyone, whatsoever, rather it shows a lack of morality and respect for other people, making the backbiter subject to severe punishment.

**So, now that you know the facts and the role Islam plays to keep our hearts and the community together, what could YOU do to refrain from indulging in this low deed and prevent it from happening again in the future?**

### 1) Asking For Forgiveness:

- You must be aware that gossiping is a sin by now; therefore the first and foremost thing you ought to do is ask Allah Almighty for his forgiveness! No matter how much or how little you may have participated in this sin, you should still ask for forgiveness. After all - Allah is the All-Loving and the Most Merciful, so with genuine regret and by making a firm and sincere intention to avoid it, you will, hopefully, be forgiven.

- However it should be remembered that "The backbiter will not be forgiven by Allah until his [backbited] companion forgives him" [Al-Jami' as-Saghir]. So, ask the person you have backbitten to forgive you. See, it is easy to backbite but not as easy to own up to it.

- If you think someone has backbitten about you, then, pray for their forgiveness and ask Allah to guide them.

- No matter how many times people have gossiped about you, insulted you or ruined your reputation, you should forgive them.

### 2) Controlling Your Tongue:

- It is always easier, and in some cases, better, to listen more and talk less. After all Allah Almighty has blessed us with only one tongue and two ears for a REASON. It is much better to remain quiet, than to talk unnecessarily about something we do not know. Whatever happens in another Muslims' life is hidden from us, whereas, we tend to judge alone from what we see, hear or are told through the grapevine.

- We should not talk about others, let alone judge them. Just like a verdict cannot be reached without all the evidence, arguments and intricate details, how can we so readily comment on a situation without





knowing all the information related to it? Therefore, stop commenting, agreeing, disagreeing, and fuelling what you hear. Remember, once something has been said, it's out there in the open- and very difficult to undo.

### 3) Supporting Other Muslims:

• The Prophet (S) said, **"Whoever is present while a Muslim is humiliated before him, and is able to assist him (and yet does not), Allah will humiliate him before (all of) creation"** [Ahmad]. If you hear someone backbiting about someone else, then you should advise them to stop.

• Covering up another Muslims faults will only benefit you, as Allah Almighty will undoubtedly cover your faults on the day of resurrection. **"Whoever avoids (an attack) on the honour of his brother, Allah will prevent the fire from his face on the Day of Arising"** [Tirmidhi]. This is another reason why we should not spread gossip especially by spreading the faults of others and we should not backbite nor slander either.

• We should try to make excuses for people being discussed. As Muslims, it is our duty to make at least 70 excuses for another Muslim, even if we KNOW that he or she has done something wrong.

### 4) Avoiding Bad Company

• When we know that we are in the company of people who enjoy exchanging gossip, we should try our utmost best to change the subject. If making excuses for that person proves to be unsuccessful, then it is best to leave that place and avoid the company of those people who can easily lure you astray.

• The Prophet (S) implemented Islam, in ALL aspects of his life; this was clear through his words and actions. If we make obvious our dislike of gossip by following the example of the Prophet (S), in speech, then with the will of God, it will rub off on others. Admittedly, throughout time, gossip has usually been associated with women (who seem to have too much time on their hands!), but today, we find that men are equally just as guilty. Therefore everyone should be known and taught about the fate of engaging in gossip, slander and backbiting.

### 5) Having Taqwa (Fear):

• Bearing in mind that Allah Almighty is always watching you, we are brought back to the harsh reality that this life is just a test, an exam that we need to pass before it's too late to implement Islam into our lives.

• No-one wants to be facing a difficult punishment on the Day of judgement for backbiting fellow Muslims and more importantly - you don't want to be spending eternity in the fires of Hell. Allah Almighty is full of mercy, but we need to frequently remind ourselves that the punishments can also be severe.

Finally, if you still can't resist- if you know it's a fact that the person is committing sins or having a difficult time- then instead of telling these intimate and confidential details to every Tom, Dick and Harry- you need to take action the way a confident yet true Muslim would.

You need to have a true and real concern for the welfare of our brothers and sisters, and no, this doesn't just mean those that are blood relatives, rather we should approach a person in the way we would like to be approached in a similar situation.

We should fight tirelessly for the sake of Allah Almighty to help people through the harsh or sinful periods in their lives. It could be that you are EXACTLY what this person needs to stay away from a particular sin or to make amendments in their lives.

How many times can we say that as a result of our actions, influences and prayers, we have managed to transform someone's life, even in a very small way? Ultimately, the decision and judgment is for Allah to decide, but that does not mean that we should not play our part.

Just remember, no one is perfect in this temporary world. Everyone makes small and big mistakes. It's just a matter of rectifying them and learning from them- as they bring experience and improvements in life and realisation of the Hereafter.

**At the end of the day, the choice will always be up to you as an individual; and the decisions you take in life, will determine your fate in the Hereafter.**

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# Depression

## What depression?

Written By Khadija Tai

*Having worked as a social worker for the last 8 years in Birmingham, I have come across depression almost on a daily basis. With my experience and real life exposure to this illness, I write the following:  
So what is depression?*

The general definition of depression is a psychological disorder that affects a person's mood changes, physical functions and social interactions.

We can all feel sad and low from time to time. Many times when you have these feelings you stop enjoying life and lose interest in doing the things that you usually enjoy doing because you may be depressed. Depression is a serious illness which can make it hard to cope with everyday life. Getting support and the right type of help can make a difference.

### Who gets depressed?

Depression is the most common mental health problem for young people. About one in five young people will have experienced depression by the time they are 25. But many will not try to get help for it because they don't understand it, feel bad about it or don't know how to talk about it. Young women get depressed more often than young men, but both men and women suffer from depression.

### How do you know if you're depressed?

You may be depressed if you:

- Feel sad, down, miserable, bad-tempered or irritable most of the time
- Have lost interest in things that you usually enjoy
- Have troubles with relationships, feel lonely, unloved or misunderstood
- Have trouble concentrating with your studies or work
- Feel tired much of the time, or have lower energy than usual
- Feel more worried and anxious
- Have problems sleeping or want to sleep all the time
- Lose a lot of weight because you are not interested in eating or you put on a lot of weight because you want to eat much more than usual
- Feel guilty or worthless and that life is not worth living
- Feel like harming yourself or feel suicidal

Often someone who is depressed does not realise that they are depressed, they just feel bad. They can feel embarrassed and guilty and won't ask for help because of this.

It may be hard for others to realise you are depressed. They may think you are just in a bad mood, angry, wanting to cause trouble or even just lazy which can make it harder to get help.

### What causes depression?

When something goes wrong, such as trouble at school, college or work, most people feel sad and often they are said to be 'depressed'. But usually these feelings get better with time and people get on with doing the things they want to do.

These factors can trigger depression, but usually there is more than one reason for a person to become depressed and there may not be an obvious 'trigger' for depression. It is not easy to say why people become depressed – it is different for each person.

- There may have been a difficult time in life which makes it more likely to become depressed
- A breakup of a personal or family relationship, the loss or death of someone close such as a parent or sibling
- Bullying, abuse, violence or conflict in your family, school or workplace
- Having had a major injury or illness, can make it more likely that someone can become depressed
- There can be an inherited tendency to get depressed or have another mental illness. However even if you have a family history of depression,

- this does not necessarily mean that you will experience depression too
- Bullying, abuse, violence or conflict in your family, school or workplace
- Stress due to unemployment, loss of a job, lack of success with study or work, homelessness
- Some people seem more likely to become depressed – worriers, perfectionists, very sensitive people, self critical and shy people
- Big changes in life such as having a baby can lead to depression for both women and men (Postnatal depression)

Some people turn towards illegal substances and other harmful routes. They may behave in risky ways, or 'act out' – being angry, aggressive or behaving badly. Depression can also have long term effects such as dropping out of education, quitting a job and the break up friendships and marriages.

### How do you deal with depression?

Depression is like any other illness – you need to find ways to get through it and ways to stop it coming back. Depression is not a sign of weakness – you can't just 'pull yourself together'. Without help, depression usually does get better eventually, but often there has been damage to the person's life and relationships which could possibly not be repaired.

Some of the following suggestions can be very helpful:

- Talk to a person you trust such as a friend, parent, school or work counsellor – keeping it to yourself will only makes matters worse.
- See your doctor – who can give you information and support and who may refer you to a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist
- Your doctor may think that anti-depressant medicines may help - but they should be used with regular check ups and counselling support. Most doctors will be reluctant to prescribe medication to people under the age of 18.
- Exercise and maintain a healthy diet
- Have sufficient sleep
- Practise relaxation exercises, yoga or meditation
- Do some goal setting
- Write down all the causes of your feelings and what you can do about each. Make small steps so that you can see the progress you are making to deal with depression.

Other really important things

- Stay active and connected with those who care
- Even 'little' things like talking with a friend and going for a walk
- Keep praying to Allah
- Have faith and build your relationship with your Lord
- Don't stay in bed, nap or lie around all day
- Do not block out depression. This doesn't make things better and can have very bad side effects if left untreated.

### If my friend is depressed, what can I do to help them?

You can help your friend by taking their feelings seriously. Let your friend know that you care and will listen wholeheartedly. Although it may be hard for your friend to talk at first, let them know that you're around because you care. Spend time with your friend and do things that your friend wants to do. If your friend wants support when he/she visits a counsellor, community health worker or doctor, offer to join them if they wish for you to be with them. Yes it may be hard for you too, because you'll witness the tears and distressing moments of your friend but you don't have to try to 'fix' it – listening and caring is the most important thing. Help your friend to work out the causes of his/her depression and do some goal setting to deal with it.



# DEPRESSED?

## A Personal Account

**Those who know me often describe me as being loud, opinionated and feisty. "Nothing seems to get you down" they say. "I admire the fact that you're such a strong woman who doesn't give a damn about what people think."**

If only they knew.

Sometimes I feel like such a fraud because that is no longer who I am – at least that is no longer how I feel at the moment. I have been depressed for a good few months now. Part of the reason is due to the fact that I have not been working for six months and I have been finding it difficult to get another job. On top of that my savings are running out so I am struggling financially.

The term, 'depression' is used so lightly in daily conversations. How often do you hear people exhale, "God I'm so depressed today" over something very trivial. Now, whenever someone is truly depressed, we very rarely take them seriously.

While it is normal to feel a bit low at times, depression is much more than that, and it is actually one of the most common illnesses in Britain today. According to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, one in five people become depressed at some point in their lives. Sometimes there is an obvious reason why people become depressed – bereavement, end of relationship – sometimes not.

### What does it feel like to be depressed?

Depression can range from mild, which does not stop you living your daily life – to severe, which makes daily activities almost impossible. There are certain traits that are common in those who suffer from depression. Not everybody that has depression will have the exact same symptoms, as it depends on how severe your illness is.

Those who suffer are told to seek help from their GP immediately. Yet I've still not chosen to do so and that is partially because I feel embarrassed to admit that I have this problem (pride has always been my downfall). Another reason is that I feel as though this is a temporary blip in my life, that it will go away by itself. Just the other day, I was walking down the street, music blaring in my ears, singing along, feeling elated and by nightfall the jubilation gave way to despair.

The days have turned into a blur. I wake up and have nothing to do – no job, no social life. So I stay in my room or in my bed for most of the day. I'm constantly tired and lethargic, finding it difficult to do anything. Some people seem to think I'm merely being lazy.

My confidence levels have dropped rapidly. I have developed severe acne on my face and my hair is falling out, so I feel ugly, useless and worthless pretty much all the time.

I usually pride myself on my writing – if there's one thing I stand by, it is my writing. But it has been a while since I've

written anything (this article notwithstanding), because every word and sentence just drains my energy; it takes too much effort to write even the simplest of things.

I compare myself to my contemporaries and it makes me feel even worse. They are working, earning money, going on holiday and seem to have it all, while I am the complete opposite. It feels as though there is a ticking time-bomb, that I should have achieved my dreams and ambitions by now, or at least been halfway there. For that reason, I try to minimise any socialising because I seem to have nothing going on in my life. As a result, I've withdrawn into a shell somewhat. Some people have started to notice the change.

I do realise just how lucky I am compared to some people out there. I have a roof over my head and food on the table. But when you are depressed you lose sight of that. You forget to be grateful for what you have and wallow in your own despair.

### A problem shared is a problem halved

Talking really does help. I have two friends in whom I confide, as they are really understanding and, most importantly, do not judge me. I dread to think what state I would be in without them. I have had trouble sleeping; my mind never seems to stop. So I ensure that I call one friend – we will talk for hours until I'm feeling much calmer, relaxed and too tired to think, resulting in a good night's sleep.

However, I have managed to come up with a way of coping. While reading a website on depression, a friend of mine came across a phrase, a 'critical inner voice', which, according to the PhD expert, is the negative voice inside you that brings you down.

*"We need to ridicule this inner voice of yours" said my friend. "Ridicule it to the point where you don't listen to it."*

But how do you ridicule it? I thought of some names and settled on calling my 'critical inner voice' Pervez (I've always disliked that name). My inner voice is an Asian man named Pervez who hates strong women and stops at nothing until he brings them all down. This was perfect, as it appealed to the feminist in me.

So whenever that little voice inside says that I cannot do something, I actually shout "Shut up Pervez!" in my head – it really does work. Of course, I don't say it out loud, that would be a sign of madness, but then again it might guarantee an empty seat beside me on the bus.

I don't usually give advice, seeing as I'm so bad at taking it, but one thing I suggest to anyone suffering from depression is to talk to someone. Anyone. There's nothing worse than bottling it up – it does more harm than good. We all need help with that 'inner Pervez'.



# KASHMIR

## THE FORGOTTEN TRAGEDY

Sajid Iqbal speaks to Shams Rehman, author of *Azad Kashmir and British Kashmiris*

Since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the region of Kashmir has been disputed by India and Pakistan. Not surprisingly, it remains a contentious issue for many Muslims in the UK, the majority of whom can trace their origins to Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

'Azad Kashmir and British Kashmiris' is a collection of articles on different aspects of Kashmir. The book introduces the reader to the government, politics, economy, language and religion in this part of the divided Kashmir. It also touches upon some controversial issues and to what extent Azad Kashmir is 'Azad', meaning free.

It then goes on to outline what author Shams Rehman calls the "politics of independence" in Azad Kashmir and then subsequently offers a summary of the Kashmiri problem and if there can be a democratic and inclusive solution.

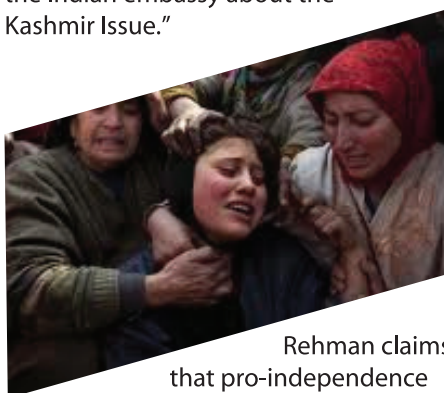
Rehman, an activist from Akalgarh near Mirpur (Azad Kashmir), said he took interest in the subject after the execution of Maqbool Bhatt in 1984, a pro-independence leader and co-founder of the guerrilla group Jammu Kashmir National Liberation Front. That day, he said, put him "on the road of learning" about Kashmir and he



continued even after migrating to Britain in 1989.

"I thought of writing a book about Kashmir and Kashmiris because all other communities had their identities, languages and histories recognised, but Kashmiris seemed to be confused and always reluctant to own up their identity and language."

"I noticed that Muslim Kashmiris here in Britain, from Mirpur, were made to believe that their Kashmiri identity somehow was in contradiction with their religious (Islamic) identity. However, at the same time they were made to protest against the Indian embassy about the Kashmir Issue."

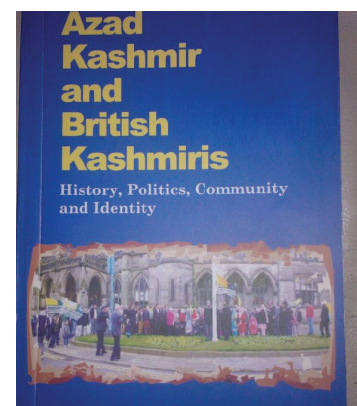


Rehman claims that pro-independence activists were accused by the British Pakistani media as 'divisive' and 'Indian agents', which then motivated him to put forth his views in writing.

"I wrote on different aspects at different occasions for different purposes but due to the lack of organisation and demands of everyday living and practices, I could not write the book I have in me" he said.

The book is intended for those interested in the subject, particularly those of Kashmiri origin. Rehman hopes that it will help British Kashmiris engage in the campaign for raising awareness about their heritage, identity and contribution to British society.

Rehman believes that the Kashmiri question in the media is told "mostly from



the Indian perspective" when it receives coverage. To him, the fault lies with Kashmiris themselves.

He said: "Kashmiris have failed to present it as their issue. At times willingly and sometimes unknowingly they have been used and abused by the Pakistani rulers and of course through Kashmiri leaders to trap India.

"This of course does not mean that Kashmiris in the Indian occupied Kashmir had no issues with India. They did have them and still have them and they have actually become very complicated and serious.

"But the manipulation of these issues and sentiments of Kashmiris in the IOK distorted the Kashmiri struggle from the one for justice and freedom to communal and terrorism."

This led the issue to become a political "hot potato" at the international level, though some media outlets try to keep Kashmir on the agenda, such as Channel 4's 'Kashmir's Torture Trail'.

The core issue, Rehman believes, is of the military occupation on both sides.

"It is the right of Kashmiri people regardless of their language, religion or region to decide the future of Kashmir in a free and fair environment," he said.



Kashmir is not a question of Hindu-Muslim rivalry or of a two nation theory but of unification and independence of Kashmir. In fact it is an issue of democracy, I mean the real democracy where people wanted to democratise the autocratic system and it was that struggle which was crushed by the armies of India and Pakistan in 1947 and it is that process which is continuously suppressed and distorted by the occupying forces of India and Pakistan in Kashmir."

He added: "There are increasing numbers of Indians and Pakistanis who are realising that their rulers' obsession with Kashmir is costing them peace and development so now, they are waking up to the calls of modern times that we have to cooperate and co-exist and grow out of narrow nationalism.

Kashmir is still on the UN's agenda today, but rarely discussed. It can be taken to the World Court of Justice but for that both India and Pakistan has to agree or at least one has to take the required actions.

But in Rehman's view, India and Pakistan can only agree if all or an overwhelming majority of Kashmiris unanimously ask both India and Pakistan to leave Kashmir and to let the people of the state decide their future.

In the closing article of his book, Rehman has outlined what he believes is a democratic solution of the Kashmir issue that includes and recognises the diversity of viewpoints within Kashmir and Kashmiris.

He explains: "It has recently become common amongst many Indian and Pakistani politicians and intellectuals to emphasise that Kashmir is composed of a diversity of views, regions, religions and cultures and that therefore there cannot be one self-determination here but many.

"However, what they often fail to recognise is that almost all countries are multi-ethnic including India and Pakistan so will there be a second round of self-determination for different provinces of Pakistan and states of India?"

Rehman goes on to say that British Kashmiris have a role to play in helping with this issue, the first one being to have their Kashmiri identity recognised at all levels of British society. This, he believes, will help Kashmiris "get out of marginalisation and exclusion and invisibility and give young Kashmiris a positive identity along with their British and religious/Muslim identity."

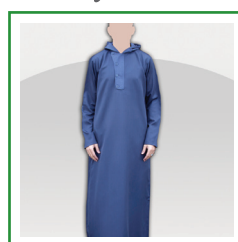
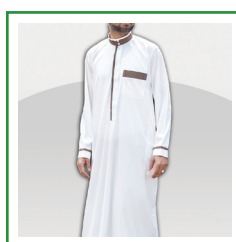
As well as that, he suggests forming non-partisan networks of British Kashmiris and making relevant bodies and institutions in the UK and abroad aware of the issue and garner support.

"We need to have a positive dialogue here between Kashmiris, Pakistani and Indian diaspora communities to find ways of helping the Indian, Pakistani and Kashmiri governments to work together to resolve this and other issues rather than work against each other and destroy the development opportunities and resources."



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# THE REVIVAL FEAST

Chicken Biryani



Moroccan Lamb Kebabs



## Moroccan Lamb Kebabs

By Saadia Iqbal

Accompany your spicy grilled lamb kebabs with pitta for a mouthwatering sensation. Serve with fresh green vegetables and tzatziki sauce.

Prep Time: 20 Minutes - Cooking Time: 10 Minutes - Ready In: 30 Minutes - Servings: 6

### INGREDIENTS:

**2 pounds ground lamb**  
**1 cup raisins**  
**5 ounces goat cheese**  
**1/3 cup mayonnaise**  
**1 red onion, finely chopped**  
**2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**  
**2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro**  
**3/4 tablespoon ground cayenne pepper**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground cumin**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground coriander**  
**Salt**  
**Ground pepper**

### METHOD:

1. Preheat an outdoor grill for high heat and lightly oil the grate.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together ground lamb, raisins, goat cheese, mayonnaise, red onion, garlic, cilantro, cayenne pepper, cumin, ground coriander, salt and black pepper. Divide the mixture into approximately 6 even portions, and press around skewers.
3. Place skewers on the grill. Cook approximately 4 minutes per side, or until the cheese has melted, the raisins are tender and lamb has reached desired doneness.



### Tropical Mango Mousse

Servings: 6

### INGREDIENTS:

**2 mangos - peeled, seeded, and cubed**  
**1 banana**  
**2/3 cup nonfat plain yogurt**  
**2 teaspoons honey**  
**6 cubes ice**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

### METHOD:

**1. In a blender, combine mangoes, bananas, yogurt, honey, ice cubes, and vanilla extract until smooth. Refrigerate for 3 hours. Pour into individual dishes and serve.**

## Chicken Biryani

For a traditional Pakistani/Indian dish, simmer tender morsels of chicken in a creamy, spicy blend of onion, garlic, ginger, turmeric, cumin, tomatoes, yogurt, mint, cardamom and cinnamon. Finish by steaming with fragrant saffron rice and potatoes.

Servings: 7

### INGREDIENTS:

**4 tablespoons vegetable oil**  
**4 small potatoes, peeled and halved**  
**2 large onions, finely chopped**  
**2 cloves garlic, minced**  
**1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger root**  
**1/2 teaspoon chili powder**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric**  
**1 teaspoon ground cumin**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped**  
**2 tablespoons plain yogurt**  
**2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves**

### METHOD:

**1. In a large skillet, in 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil (or ghee) fry potatoes until brown. Drain and reserve the potatoes. Add remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to the skillet and fry onions, garlic and ginger until onions are soft and golden. Add chili, pepper, turmeric, cumin, salt and tomatoes.**

**2. Fry, stirring constantly for 5 minutes. Add yogurt, mint, cardamom and cinnamon stick. Cover and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally until the tomatoes are cooked to a pulp. If necessary, add a little bit of hot water if the mixture becomes too dry and starts to stick to the pan.**

**1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom**  
**1 (2 inch) piece cinnamon stick**  
**3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken**  
**2 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil**  
**1 large onion, diced**  
**1 pinch powdered saffron**  
**5 pods cardamom**  
**3 whole cloves**  
**1 (1 inch) piece cinnamon stick**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground ginger**  
**1 pound basmati rice**  
**4 cups chicken stock**  
**1 1/2 teaspoons salt**

**3. When the mixture is thick and smooth, add the chicken pieces and stir well to coat them with the spice mixture. Cover and cook over very low heat until the chicken is tender, approximately 35 to 45 minutes. There should only be thick gravy left behind when the chicken is cooked completely. If necessary, cook uncovered for a few minutes to reduce the gravy.**

**4. Wash rice well and drain in colander for at least 30 minutes.**

**5. In a large skillet, heat vegetable oil (or ghee) and fry the onions until they are golden. Add saffron, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon stick, ginger and rice. Stir continuously until the rice is coated with the spices.**

**6. In a medium-size pot, heat the chicken stock and salt. When the mixture is hot pour it over the rice and stir well. Add the chicken mixture and the potatoes; gently mix them into the rice. Bring to boil. Cover the saucepan tightly, turn heat to very low and steam for 20 minutes. Do not lift lid or stir while cooking. Spoon biryani onto a warm serving dish.**



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