

the
revival

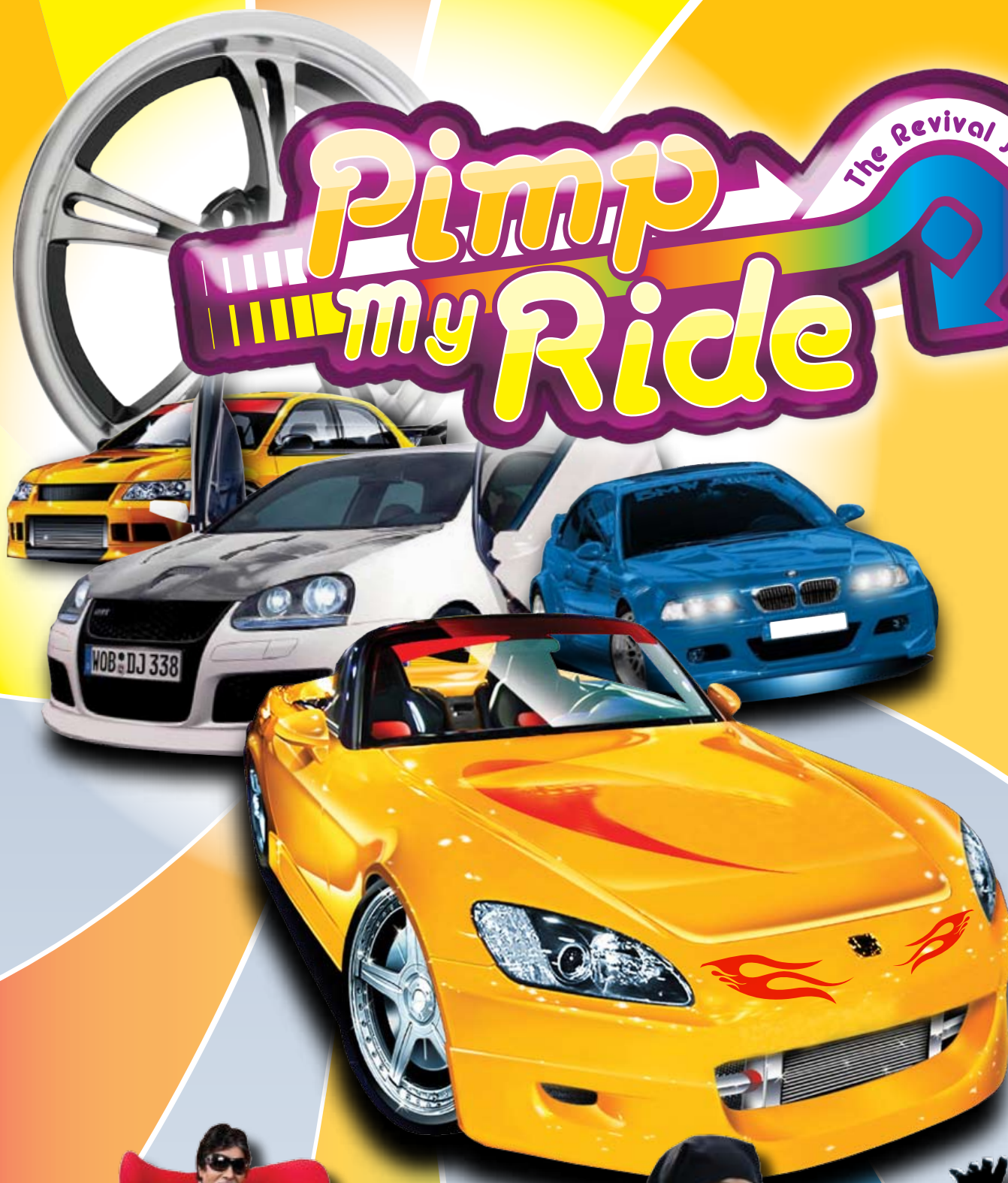
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March/April 07

voice of the muslim youth

Pimp my Ride

The Revival style



In this
Issue



BOLLYWOOD OR BUST



All Eyes on Me



Who will you
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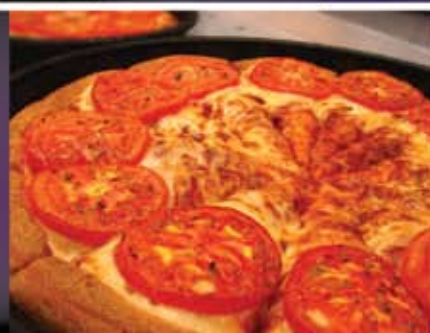


£2.99

chicken boti

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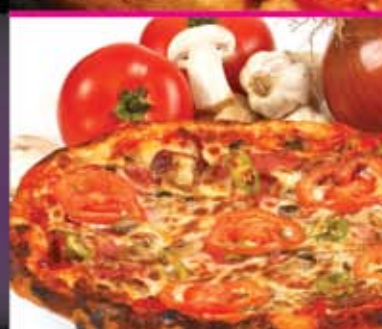
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I don't know about you but I'm sick to death of every Tony, Trevor and David bangin' on about Muslim integration. From the issue of the veil to the bombings of 7/7, from the cartoon hoo haa to the Pope's outburst and from Muslim schools to 'Muslim ghettos'.... yep you've guessed it- it's all because Muslims don't integrate, innit! Yeah didn't you know...these Muslims need to integrate more...if they wanna live in our country then they need to live like we do!'

Over the last couple of months we've heard and read politicians, journalists, so called experts and basically everyone, probably with the exception of Jack Duckworth from Corrie, ranting on about integration, integration, integration!!!! Arrgghhhh!!!!

OK, I need to calm down. As they do in Bad Boys: "Woosaaaaa"...deep breaths...I'm OK Now!

So what's this integration malarkey then huh? And why the big hoo haa?

The events in London of 7th July 2005 have brought the issue of how communities in Britain live side by side to the forefront of public debate. It's argued that because Muslims don't integrate with society and live the British way of life they are therefore isolating themselves, creating ghettos, creating obstacles in society, not learning the language, enforcing their cultures from abroad here blah blah blah....And as a result we had 7/7, race riots, British Muslims hating the country they live in and its values, an increase in fundamentalism and so on...

So what do you say to all that then huh? All I would say is 'hang on a moment mate'. Most of it is utter garbage but some of it is true. Yes- integration is required by all, not just Muslims. And most Muslims are already well integrated in to society and the British way of life like the rest of us - especially second and third generation Muslims- so what's the fuss? I don't hear anyone asking Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, atheists, Buddhists to come forward and integrate- so why the bullying of Muslims?

So how should we integrate?

Muslims need to be well integrated into each and every aspect of society as long as they do not compromise on any Islamic teaching or principle.

So, obeying the law of the land, having a legal job and paying your taxes is definitely a good starter. Speaking English should be a must because it helps us to interact with non-Muslims in our community and building good relations with them is the key to

EDITORIAL:



You Muslims Gotta Integrate!!

integration. Building bridges, respecting others and their beliefs and getting rid of misconceptions about different cultures, races, religions, backgrounds and so on is what integration is all about.

It's also about voting, getting politically involved, not throwing a fit each time someone wishes us 'Happy Xmas' or gives us a Xmas card, and not having a riot when someone disagrees with our faith and so on.

Our identity should be clear: our nationality is British. Our religion and faith is Islam. The two are not contradictory to one another. We should be proud to be British Muslims.

Islam doesn't say NO to integration!

So, wearing a headscarf, veil, jilbaab, salwaar kameez, having a beard, wearing your trendy mosque hat, practising your religion, speaking a second language or your mother tongue, eating Asian/Arab/African food, practising different cultures (as long as its not unIslamic backward culture like the dodgy forced marriages or the sickening honour killings) are all absolutely fine and do not go against integration, because none of the above is illegal, harmful to others, isolat-

ing yourself or even creating any obstacles or barriers within British society.

As long as you don't keep yourself to yourself and not speak to anyone but mix in, try to build bridges and become a strong part of society by being a role model, then practising the above is no problem at all.

Muslims should only say NO to integration if it means you HAVE to socialise at pubs, clubs, attend parties, drink booze etc. It's only a problem when you have to go against Islamic teachings and you certainly don't have to compromise your faith in order to integrate.

Obstacles to Integration?

Within the Muslim community the main obstacle to integration is the MENTALITY of some people. You know the '...this ain't my home, I'm going home soon so why should I integrate?'. Or the '...why shall I integrate with the 'goray ' or the 'kufaar?'. And the favourite one is '...the non Muslims hate us anyway, so why shall I chat with them.'

The reality is that 95% of Muslims do already happily integrate without compromising their Islamic values. It's the 5% who think 'integration' is either unIslamic, those who hate the west, support the likes of Abu Hamza and co.

The only ones who might be too late to integrate are the first generation Muslims who have come from abroad and have lived here for over 30 years but still can't speak English or associate anything to being British- and still think they live back home. On a positive note they obey and respect the law of the land and don't discourage their children from integrating. Emphasis needs to be on the majority second and third generation Muslims in the UK.

But what's the point of integration?

A lot of Muslims ask this again and again. The bottom line is if Muslims integrate as discussed above then the only ones who WIN are Muslims and if we don't integrate as mentioned then the only ones who LOSE OUT are Muslims. Integration will give Muslims a good image and reputation, it will help us be walking, talking adverts for Islam. It will build bridges amongst communities and it will get rid of misconceptions and ignorance. It will make Muslims influential in British society and it will highlight that Muslims are contributing to British society. It will mean your neighbours, colleagues and the people in your area will not fear you but look up to you. Integration means it's Islam that wins.

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YOU GOT MAIL

By Alveena Salim



Way too many teenagers spend hours locked away in their bedroom, late at night, telling their parents that they are “studying hard” whilst in actual fact they are secretly in an intimate conversation with some stranger in one of thousands of chat-rooms available on the Net. Of course, it’s much easier to keep your online relationship hidden from your parents, however the internet brings a whole new set of problems that we need to be aware of.

When chatting online people reveal a lot more about themselves than they normally would in real life. They lack inhibition and become more open and intimate a lot quicker. MSN/Yahoo Messenger and Chatrooms have supposedly made it “safer and more permissible” to speak with members of the opposite sex while sitting in the safety of our home. Chatting to members of the opposite sex about non-business related matters in privacy is WRONG. In Islam, anything that leads to Haraam is Haraam. So, even if you’re quick to “minimize” or close any windows on your computer as soon as your parents or older siblings walk in the room, you need to know that Allah is watching you at ALL times. The Qur’an says: “It is Allah(swt) Who gives life and death and Allah sees EVERYTHING that you do.” (3:156). He(swt) knows how you’re feeling and can see what you’re doing so be conscious of Him(swt) at all times. There’s no way you can hide your online rendezvous from Him(swt).

We're only chatting What's the big deal?

Many people who chat to members of the opposite sex on-line do so in private, if they really and truly believed that what they were doing is legit, they wouldn’t go out of their way to hide their convo’s from their family.

Nowadays, many “cyber- boy/girlfriends” arrange to meet each other at train stations, town centres, libraries and cinemas etc. The Net has made it possible to meet all sorts of weirdo’s on a scale that was unimaginable in the past, not only is this wrong but it’s incredibly dangerous. Every year, chat users get lured into the trap of an adult posing as a teenager in order to meet young teenagers whom they abuse and occasionally these traps lead to murder. The papers are full of such incidents.

Last October, Patrick Green, 33, a divorced exports clerk from Iver Heath in Buckinghamshire, was sentenced to a five-year jail term for abusing a 13-year-old girl. He had met her in a chat room called Younger Girls for Older Men and exchanged messages with her for two months before meeting her. He was arrested in Cumbria on his way to

SweetGyal says...

Phew, he's gone, dat was close-lol

Romeo007 says...

Wat happnd?

SweetGyal says...

My old man came in, so i had to close the window.

Romeo007 says...

Lol-wat did he want?

SweetGyal says....

He wanted to no why I was on the comp at 2.30am. i told him i was workin on an important college project due in 2moro.

Romeo007 says....

LOL

SweetGyal says....

Trust me, ma folks don't no jack, dey wouldn't no the diff between Microsoft Word and MSN Messenger.

Romeo007 says....

My old man is well chuffed dat i spend up to 4hours a day “studying” on the net.

SweetGyal says....

So r mine, but dey don't understand why i'm failing most of my classes.

Romeo007 says....

So u still wanna meet up 2moro...?

SweetGyal can not reply at the moment because she is set to busy

Romeo007 says....

Hey wer did u go?

SweetGyal says....

Soz about dat, i was being pranked by the weirdo i gave ma number to on chat, i wish i never gave him ma num, the guy never told me he's married with 4 kids!!!!!!!

So wer do u wanna meet up 2moro.....?

meet another 14-year-old girl he had met online and arranged to spend a weekend with.¹ Bradley Webb a 42-year-old Welsh man, who posed as a girl on the internet to persuade a child to talk about sexual acts, was jailed for seven years.²

Mehdi Boudjedra, 31, of Shepherds Bush, west London was charged with child abduction and sexual grooming over the internet following the disappearance of 15-year-old schoolgirl Hannah Rodrigues.³ Lee Costi, 21, from Surrey, was caught through an international police website as he tried to groom his third schoolgirl victim and was jailed for nine years. Costi, a media student, had already enticed and had sex with two girls aged 13 and 14. He was arrested after arranging to meet his third victim, a 14-year-old, at Nottingham railway station for sex.⁴

There are currently 300 men serving prison sentences for sexual offences where the initial contact was made over the internet.⁵ Also when chatting online, it's even possible for people online to brainwash and make you do stuff that you would never have considered before.

Subia Gaur, 18, from Plaistow, East London, and Ashwani Gupta, 21, from India, chatted online for 3 years. Subia's parents opposed their relationship, so the teenager secretly caught a flight to Delhi and abandoned her Islamic upbringing to become a wife in Ghaziabad. Her mother was devastated and said "We could do nothing to protect our daughter from the evil of the internet. While we slept this evil came into our home and has led to our daughter running away and marrying a Hindu boy."⁶

One of the main problems with chatting to people online is that you can't see them; Research has revealed that people are more likely to lie about their sex, age and marital status online. So they can be laughing at you, they could be convicted murderers, compulsive liars or even married with grandchildren and you would never know!

A skirt-chasing playboy Daniel Anceneaux spent weeks talking with a sensual woman on the Internet before arranging a romantic rendezvous at a remote beach -- and discovering that his on-line sweetie of six months was his own mother! "Mom called herself Sweet Juliette and I called myself The Prince of Pleasure, and unfortunately, neither one of us had any idea who the other was," said flabbergasted Daniel.⁷

Even you could fall into this trap if you don't follow the rules. How many times were you told as a kid, not to talk to or accept sweets from strangers? The internet is not any different, its full of weirdo's from all over the world who say what you want

to hear, simply and only so that they can get you where they want. So play it safe, don't mess your dunia (wordly life) and akhirah (hereafter) over some weirdo on the net that you don't even know.

The DO'S and DON'TS of Chatting Online

With Members of the Opposite Sex:

- DON'T** give personal details such as your telephone number and home/school address to people you chat to online. You don't know what kind of weirdo's are out there, so unless you want to be pranked and stalked, keep personal information to yourself.
- DON'T** agree to meet strangers online. You have no idea who they are, where they're from or if they have a criminal record.
- DON'T** give out pictures of yourself. Pictures are not necessary. The written word is more than enough. You don't want members of the opposite sex checking you out saying, "you're well fit". Also, **DON'T** describe the way you look, this is haraam as well as dangerous.
- DON'T** waffle. If you're chatting to members of the opposite sex regarding work or school, stick to the topic and do not get side tracked. There is no need to tell them your life story.
- DON'T** flirt. There's no need to flatter or have flirtatious user names, it makes you seem up for it and gives you a bad reputation.
- DO** be vigilant. Don't be so naïve and trusting. Research shows that when chatting online people are more likely to lie about their age, sex and marital status, so don't believe everything you hear.
- Lastly, **DON'T** let your guard down. Behave with members of the opposite sex the way you would in real life in front of your elders and religious members of the community. So even when you're typing away in the privacy of your own room when everyone else is asleep always remember that Allah (swt) can see what you're typing and what you're thinking.

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Ali has been sent down for 18 months for selling Cannabis and Jamal has gone to Egypt to study Islam. In their place we have:

Jameela: Asalaam alaikum sister. I haven't seen you in time.

Aliyah: You'll never guess who just asked me out!!!

Jameela: Who?

Aliyah: Iky baby!!!!!!

Jameela: Ikram? The one who looks like Sonic the Hedgehog? Why you messing around with that good- for- nothing unemployed dosser. All he does is drive round the same block 50 times a day!

Aliyah: What-ever! You're just jealous innit. I'm meeting him in 'Tasty Chicken' tonight so I need you to do me a favour. I've told my old man that I'm at your yardz tonight, so if he bells ya just say that I'm with you yeh.

Jameela: Sorry sis, there's no way I can get involved in something like that.

Aliyah: Why? What's your problem girl? You know I'd do the same thing for you - any time you wanna link up a mad mullah - or whatever it is that you're into. I'd cover up for ya.

Jameela: If I covered up for you, I'd be sinning too. And dating is strictly FORBIDDEN in Islam. There's lots of verses in the Qur'an that talk about this.

Aliyah: Nah, you don't understand. My baby's different innit. We went to get some munch once from the chippie and he let me share his chips. He also thinks I'm a boff. That's why he makes me do his homework. He is SO romantic too, he makes me top up his phone every week so that he can speak to me every night. I know he's the one I'm gonna marry.

Jameela: And what if you don't marry him? God Forbid, say you both died in a car accident - which ain't that unlikely given the way the boy drives - and you were both standing in front of Allah(swt) on the Day of Judgment. Do you really believe that Allah(swt) would accept the excuse that "you were gonna marry but you died before you could do that?"

Aliyah: Why you gotta be so friggin' negative for? I'm way too young and buff to die innit. I AM gonna marry him. We'll have beautiful kids, he's gonna buy me bare bling, we'll live in a massive house, my wardrobe will be full of designer garms... we'll be the next Posh n Becks - everyone will be so jealous of us!!

Jameela: People die at all ages. It ain't just old people who die. Don't assume that you're gonna live till the old age of 80. Death can come knocking on your door any time. The Qur'an says 'Wherever you are, death will find you out, even if you are in towers built up strong and high!' (4:78). And how exactly is your unemployed boyfriend who only passed 2 GCSE's gonna fund your extravagant lifestyle? How do you even know that he's gonna stick around and not dump you?

Aliyah: Coz he loves me in-nit.

Jameela: Look Sis, if he RE-ALLY loved you, he'd respect you. He wouldn't meet you on the sly. The first thing he'd do is knock on your door and ask for your hand in marriage. If he's always refusing or making lame excuses then you should know that he doesn't give a damn about you and only considers you a time-pass. You're worth a lot more than that, so don't allow yourself to be messed about like that. Don't ruin your rep in society over a dosser.

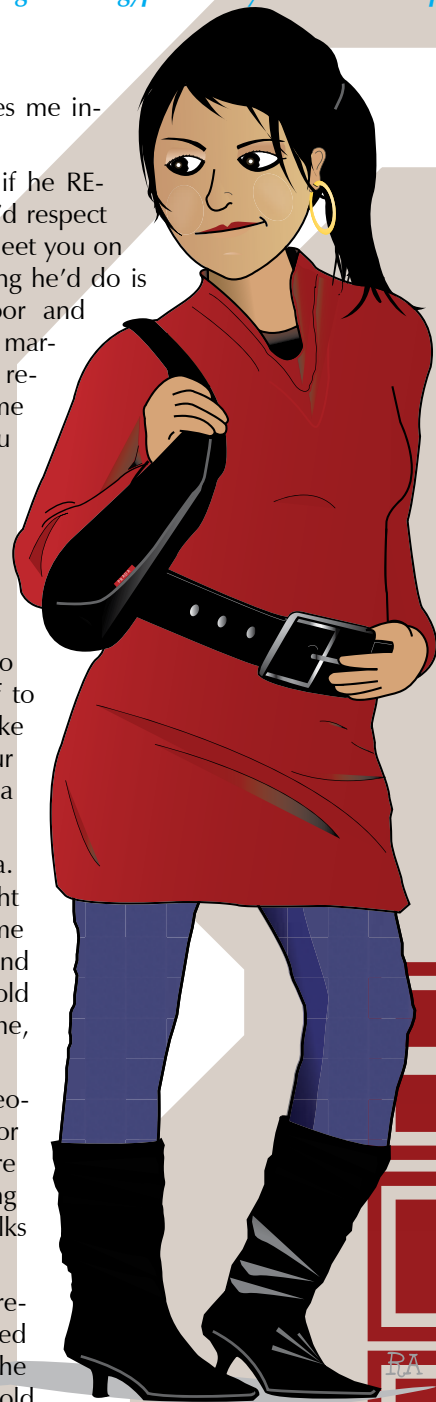
Aliyah: Yeh, I get ya. When I see Iky tonight I'll force him to come around this weekend and speak to my old man. If he don't come, he's well DUMPED!

Jameela: Also Sis, people lose all respect for girls and guys who're involved in the dating game. Everyone talks about such people.

Aliyah: That just reminded me. You need to help me smash the windows of the silly old cow who lives at number 25. That old witch G'd me up to my mum and told her that she saw me flirting with boys outside the library. Mum smacked me on the head with her chuppal cos of her...dozy cow, why can't she look at her own mingin' daughters. I saw the middle one in town last week, flirting with some rudeboys in town -WITHOUT her hijaab ...I'm gonna spit in her tea next time she comes to my house.

Jameela: Why you stressing for? It's your own fault. If you weren't flirting with guys in the first place none of this would've happened. Next time you decide to flirt with the local rudeboys somewhere that you know your dad, the local Imam and that big mouth aunty down the road wont see you, always remember Allah(swt) is ALWAYS watching you. There is no place on Earth where you can go where you wont get clocked by Him(swt).

Aliyah: Nah, she's just a dozy cow who has nothing better to do than chat crap about other peeps daughters. She's just jealous that I'm so beautiful



By Sara Salim
and Imaani Aslam

and she has hairy moles all over her mingin' face, and a big fat...

Jameela: How comes no one ever talks about me?

Aliyah: Probably coz you know of some dodgy, secret, undercover alleyway that you ain't told me about...hahahahahahaha.

Jameela: You know why. It's coz I don't do dodgy stuff in private that I wish to hide from others. If I did, I'd have people talking about me too.

Aliyah: Forget about the lady from number 25 for a moment and check out that guy across the street... don't make it obvious...but don't he look exactly like Jay Sean innit? Don't you wish you had a man just as fit as him?

Jameela: Astagfirullah!! What you on?!

Aliyah: Chill. Don't get your Hijaab in a twist. Don't you swing that way? I'm only looking. Don't tell me looking is haraam too?

Jameela: 'Just looking' ain't a minor thing. It's a sin and ALL sins bring about the punishment of Allah. The Holy Prophet (saw) said: "The adultery of the eyes is looking (at [that] which is not allowed)..." (Bukhari, Muslim).

Aliyah: Easy...I didn't know that. But guys are always checking me out. So are they sinning 24/7 too?

Jameela: How comes guys don't check me out?

Aliyah: Well maybe if you made an effort every now and again...let your hair down, sorted out your nails, sorted out them gorilla eyebrows of yours...guys would check you out too innit...hahahaha-haha.

Jameela: You know why guys don't check me out. It's coz I don't dress like you. My clothes are always loose and my hair is always covered. People know that I'm a Muslim so they don't even go there...but with you, how do I even know that you're a Muslim? You could be a Sikh or Hindu girl...

Aliyah: You tryin' to say that I look like a Hindu? I don't worship bare Gods....

Jameela: No, I'm trying to say that as a Muslim your identity is important. When you cover up, people know that you're a Muslim without even having to ask you. Guys stop flirting with you and actually listen to what you have to say. They begin to take you seriously and you won't have to put up with their hands on your waist or shoulders coz they'll have bare respect for you.

Aliyah: I can't help it if I'm so fit! I don't walk around with a massive sign on my backside that tells guys to bog at me do I?

Jameela: When you get decked up like a Bollywood heroine and go out, guys check you out. You KNOW that – you ain't thick. It's irrelevant whether or not you're a decent girl. Most people judge others based on their appearance, so do you really want to be judged on your size, shape and beauty? Guys will not wake up one day and have a new sexual orientation. How you dress can either put off or encourage unwanted attention from guys. So why play the game?

Aliyah: OK I get you now...I really respect you and that. But I ain't really into this holy moly malarkey. It's coz of Islam that Sonia, who used to date some fit white man, was forced into marriage to some stupid farm boy from a village back home. He had no teeth and was always spitting and burping in public. Sick man. And then there was Marina, you know the one who used to take her scarf off at the top of the road. She was forced to marry some asylum seeker who was hairier than a gorilla, didn't know what the hell deodorant was and would always greet his guests by farting...

Jameela: OK I get the picture...I know where you're coming from but you're mixing up Islam with culture. In our religion forced marriages are strictly against Islam. The issue of forced marriages is not one that is limited to only Muslims, but Hindus, Sikhs and other religions also acknowledge it as a problem. If a woman or a man were forced into marriage then the marriage would not be valid and would therefore need to be cancelled.

Aliyah: I didn't know that. Wait till I tell my mum, she can't get off my case about my mingin' cousin from back home. Like I'd marry someone who wasn't as fit as Jay Sean. As if....I'm too good for him. I'm pretty enough to become Britain's Next Top Model, whilst he's so fat he could cover up the hole in the ozone layer. He's so ugly that...

Jameela: Anyways, you gonna think about what I said?

Aliyah: Yeh, I ain't gonna link my baby tonight. You've talked me outta it. I'm gonna stand the boy up. It ain't like he ain't skanked me a trillion times before...Oh crap! Is that my dad across the road?! I better leg it, he'd kill me if he catches me in this top!



RA

Cottoning On Oldham Primary Care Trust

The Cottoning On – improving health in Oldham programme is made up of four health development teams. They aim to reduce health inequalities by delivering a range of health activities in the community.

Cottoning On works with communities to raise awareness of the root causes of mental and physical ill health. It empowers local communities to address their own health issues and supports volunteers to work alongside health services to improve access.

Mental Health Community Development Team

The Community Mental Health Development Team (part of the Delivering Race Equality, community development scheme) was established in May 2006, and currently comprises of a senior mental health development worker, a mental health development worker, elders development worker, and a trainee mental health development worker.

The team works within the context of the national Delivering Race Equality programme and has interpreted and prioritised the programmes work locally into 5 specific areas of activity, these are:

Stigma Reduction

To develop, manage and support the delivery of the mental health community development team as part of the multi agency Cottoning On programme. The team will deliver innovative approaches to promoting health, mental well being and reducing stigma among Black and Minority Ethnic groups in the Oldham area.

Communication

Improve communication between community groups, services and specialist mental health services.

To provide effective support for treatment and care to deliver better mental health outcomes for people from a BME community.

Engagement

To engage with local communities to identify community concerns and needs and to identify local solutions and mental health issues.

Strategic

Develop strategies to address health inequalities, particularly in mental health, in partnership with health and social care agencies.



Himmat & Saharah supports Black and Minority ethnic women and young girls to develop and sustain healthier communities. The team has successfully developed on-going activities and long term activities, which positively impact on the lives of BME women. The team also enable women to develop social networks to reduce isolation, and help improve their understanding of physical and mental well-being. The Himmat and Saharah team are currently delivering the My identity My Lyf drama participation group which has been developed to address a range of health issues affecting young BME women. (In particular mental health) The aims of the project are:

- Raising awareness on health and mental well-being
- To develop an approach to signposting to existing health and mental health services in the borough
- To identify what impact performing arts has on health and mental well-being

For further information contact the team on (0161) 622 6619

***"What do I do?
Who do I turn to?
Where do I go?
What is she thinking?
What was i thinking?
Worried. worried..
For who?
For me or for her?
Why am I stressed?
Why am I confused?"***

(Himmat & Saharah, My Identity My Lyf,)



"...my nerves and fears made me isolated, but now i have changed and i have become a new person with plenty of confidence and energy after one special lesson"

(Himmat & Saharah, My Identity My Lyf,)

Energize

The energize team works to improve the health and well-being of people living in the New Deal for Communities area (Hathershaw and Fitton Hill areas). The team has a programme of activities based on developing healthier communities and supporting people to sustain healthy lifestyle choices.

Passport to Outdoor leisure – is a new programme of organised outdoor sports activities designed to get more people participating and enjoying outdoor sports.

For further information contact the Energize team on: (0161) 785 3770

Food and Physical Activity Together Team

The Food and Physical Activity Together project aims to increase the number of people eating a healthy diet and increase their levels of physical activity.

The team delivers a number of group activities such as walking, cook and taste and physical activity sessions. The team also develops new initiatives, which the community has identified as a need for example setting up of a walking groups.

For more information contact (0161) 626 7041



Pimp my Ride

The Revival Style

By Zahid Maqbool

Well the car, phatt whip, ride, ma wheels or 'gadhi' is the star. To have a mad bad car is THE priority coz on the streets true respect is born by the badness of ya car. The faster, the higher the brake horse power, the bigger the wheels, the meaner the better.

Ya phatt whip can't be one that every Tom, Daud or Haroon has. So, what do you do? You pimp your ride of course and start by spending more money on say the rims. These are changed to 21" or if you have pockets big enough to take a JCB down, then you get gold plated custom 23". Oh by the way if we are gonna do it then do it proper eh.

OK then, lets fit a new sound system to get the bass in ya face. You want to be seen and heard. OK, what's next? DVD screens, the mini plasma, the subs, the built in Xbox 360 and the touch screen sat nav. Have I finished? Probably not... what about a plate on the car. I like H4JJ but not J1 H4D.

Life is about being seen and heard. So... you're wearing your finest dapper – you look the bomb. You climb into your very shiny, very glossy super car that you spent all day cleaning, ready to hit the streets- dammm right! Cruzin Green Street or Alum Rock Road, not forgetting the curry mile on Wimpy Road –Manchester's finest. Remember: drive slow so everyone can see your flow. I think about 20 laps up and down should do it. No, make that 30 laps.

Rolling down any major high street you are getting admiring looks from all that see you. Little homies in the streets on stand by wait till you cruise by to read the CV on the boot lid, is it a M5 wow or SL65 AMG wow x2 . Bentley GT Mulliner too dark, you know the score. Nuff respect eh? So you're the king of the hill, the king of sting. The main man.

But wait just one minute. Let's rewind a touch. How does someone who is barely old enough to pass his or her driving test, and is just about visible behind the wheel, drive a flash car that's worth more than their house? How do they afford the petrol to fuel that monster? Recently I got an insurance quote for a BMW M5. My quote was based on 9 years full no claims, no accidents in the past 5 years, no convictions – guess how much it was? £500? No. £1000? Oh NO! £5700 squid. Wow!!!

So how do our younger bro's and sista's chill out in these cars? Is it because:

- A. They work really hard, and are phenomenally gifted?
- B. The have rich parents?
- C. They are hustlers. Big pimpers, you know OG's, gangsters. Criminals?!! No... no astagfirullah. He can't be because he has lovely centre hair parting, rich in brylcreem or she is a nice little baybee baji.

A, B or C. Answers on a postcard please!

Let's look at option A:

They are really phenomenally gifted. Some are... they work multiple jobs. Taking risks with their health and wealth often working a 15 hour day. Let's not take any thing away from these brothers and sisters. Sadly most don't fall into this category. There are not many who are so willing and able or have the tenacity and drive to work hard and earn their keep.

Option B:

What about rich parents? Again it's on the cards because working for your pops means you don't have to put in the sweat and tears 'coz you've got it on a nice shiny plate. You could ask how the parents got rich. You know the old joke. My uncle came here with only 5 pound but boy was his 5lb the purest on the block? Oops. Let's save that one for another topic.

What about option C:

The gangster route. The way of the world. You can deal, beg, borrow, skank your family or steal. Sadly some turn to this route as their first choice because cocaine gives you the opportunity to make the needy into the greedy and your success comes speedy.

Now we are not saying that all Muslims who have an interest, passion or love for cars are up to something wrong. Far from it.



But let's look at the struggle it will take to get into that big bad car. Brothers will be tapping up credit cards...the patta scam. They use false IDs. Then there's the hood on the street pushin' drugs to anyone and everyone. The nept-out shnarlies are low lifes that hide behind the counter of their corner shops with more alcohol than food right near a local mosque- nasty pushers.

You know what brothers and sisters? This is not success.

This is not the path of our dear beloved Holy Prophet who used to cry all night asking the Almighty to forgive his Ummah, is it? We think that it's a struggle to get into the seat of the latest car, but let me tell you about the real struggle and what it brings you. You see, a real struggle does not give you a few well chosen laps of your favourite high street in ya crude car. The real struggle is within yourself and the reward will last far longer than the fuel in the tank of the latest scam you're spinning. This world is a small stepping stone. A test. The reward is better and sweeter than a fleet of Enzo's and far more rewarding than a garage full of super cars.

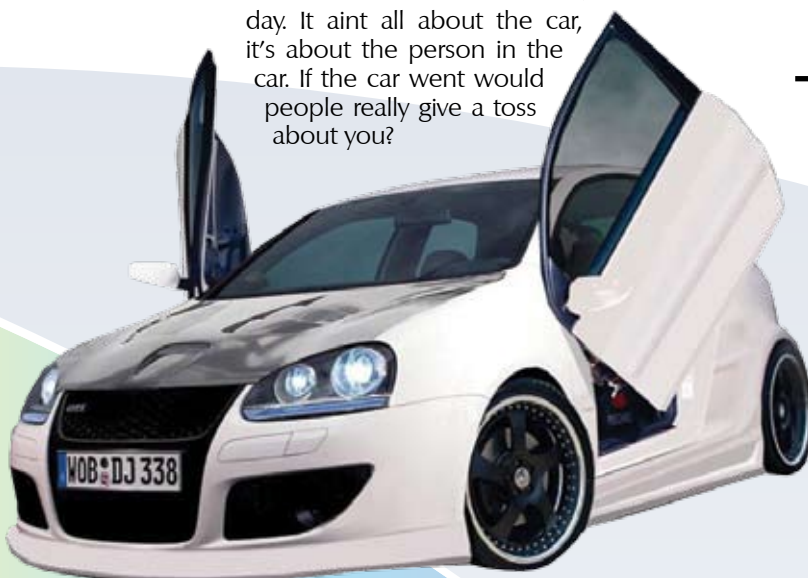
Still in doubt?

Well let me tell you from the experiences of some of my friends who used to walk on the wild side. They had it all, the cars, the clothes, the watches, the girls...the ruff respect. Late night diners at the best eateries, they lived life in the fast lane. Sounds good eh? But here's their reward, they're banged up in a cell. Good eh? Guess what these hard boys do when they're banged up? They cry. Yes, if you could only see them truly in the big dark cell then you would ask yourself: nuff respect or I have had enough of this type of respect?



Having a sick ride doesn't bring you nuff respect, people laugh at the good-for-nothing unemployed dosser with no qualifications who wastes time driving round the same block 50 times a

day. It aint all about the car, it's about the person in the car. If the car went would people really give a toss about you?



True respect is earned by our actions - by what we have done in the world - and the reward is in the hereafter.

Let me tell you a bit more: the bro's in the hood never really sleep, enjoy a good meal or feel that the fake lifestyle is worth much. Like a sister once said, they are plastic gangsters -do you know why? Because they have no peace of mind. They're paranoid. They think everyone is out to get them. Deep down they just wish they could turn back the clock.

The good news is that Allah the Almighty is so merciful that He never gives up on the believers no matter who they are or where they are, as this hadith explains:

A man committed 99 murders and began to feel a bit guilty, so he decided to ask a religious leader if Allah would ever forgive him. The religious leader told him that there's no way that Allah could ever forgive him. This angered the murderer so he killed him too. Now he had committed 100 murders and again he began to feel guilty so he asked another religious leader if Allah would ever forgive him. This religious leader told him that he should go to the next town and sit amongst a group of God-fearing men and seek forgiveness from Allah sitting amongst them. On the way to the town the murderer passed away and his soul was collected by both the angel of hell and the angel of heaven. They argued amongst themselves and could not decide who should take his soul. They took this matter up to Allah who decreed that the angel of heaven should take his soul to heaven as the murderer had the sincere intention to repent.

Now... how's that for a chance?

To conclude, the cars may be the stars but it's better to aspire to be a better Muslim by focusing our energies on following the teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Does Allah really care how pimped up our ride is, how many heads turn when we cruise down the road or the nuff respect our ride brings us? No. Allah doesn't care about what we look like on the outside, it's the inside that counts.

So, why don't we spend our time kitting ourselves up? Why don't we make heads turn because we're fantastic Muslims? Why don't we spend less time driving around the same block and spend more time preparing for the journey that is eternal (the hereafter)? Why don't we aim for the nuff respect that comes from living our lives as God fearing Muslims?

Don't give up on your dream of driving that M6. Don't be put off from pulling over in a Porsche 911. Don't even give up the ghost of an idea that you may one day drive a Rolls Royce Phantom. Oh no, simply think of it this way: should I drive my dodgy car down Green Street, Wilmslow Road Alum Rock Road looking over my shoulder or should I drive my Islamically earned car, after a satisfying meal, without a care in the world, to the mosque and pray my salat in peace. You decide. But the respect is parked up at the mosque at Fajr.

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ALL EYES ON ME

By Hafsa bint Sayeed al-Awlaqi

I would never have thought a piece of cloth could cause so much fuss. But Jack Straw decides to pull a publicity stunt, Holland does away with the Human Right's Act, and the next thing you know, pictures of veiled women are plastered across the front pages of almost every newspaper in England. According to Mr. Straw, those of us who choose to wear the niqaab make "better, positive relations" between communities "more difficult".¹

I first wore the niqaab three years ago in my sixth-form college. Out of approximately 400 students, there were only a handful of Muslims. And I was the only 'niqaabi'. I began wearing the veil half-way through my AS year, so my teachers and peers had seen me without it. Those who knew me respected my choice; I remember my head of sixth form just smiled when she saw me for the first time in niqaab. A friend of mine asked me why I was wearing it, I said it was too complex an issue to discuss during break time and a string of emails followed. **A year 10 boy asked me if I was wearing it because I was married, prompting a laugh from me.**

I was in a rush to get to class so I said "no" and turned to carry on down the corridor. But as I did so, I heard the girl sitting next to him whisper: 'Would you want your wife to dress like that?!' I felt compelled to turn back and explain myself. I got in trouble for missing half the lesson, but I'd say it was well worth it if I left those two youngsters with a better view of Muslim women in general.

I find it peculiar that Jack Straw chose to pinpoint veiled Muslim women as those who hinder community cohesion. Would language not be the greatest barrier? Why didn't he comment on those who can't speak English and yet are leaders of their local Muslim community? Or the parents who don't know if their child is mistranslating and making things up at the parent-teacher meeting at school because they can't speak English? If Mr. Straw had mentioned language as a factor affecting community cohesion, or even the increasing ghetto-isation of certain communities (he need not look far from home), I would have wholeheartedly agreed. But instead he chose veiled Muslim women, who make up a tiny minority of Muslims across the UK.

Most Muslim women who choose to wear the niqaab do so due to an accepted interpretation of the Islamic sources of law; they feel it is a compulsory religious requirement. Another opinion does exist, which majority of the Muslims follow, according to which women may leave their face uncovered. But one thing's for sure:

Jack Straw is the last person to be telling Muslim women which interpretation he would prefer them to follow - what qualifications does he have to say the niqaab isn't necessary; isn't that for a Muslim woman to decide on her own? Even non-Muslim women would consider it unacceptable for an MP to suggest what they wear to his surgery. It's a basic human right for people to wear what they want, whatever happened to freedom of expression and freedom of religious practice?

The Rt. Hon. **Jack Straw** said that he **"felt uncomfortable talking to someone...who [he] could not see"** ². Some may feel uncomfortable talking to people who have tattoos or a tongue piercing. If only we could all go around making requests for others to remove certain pieces of clothing or jewellery which made us feel uncomfortable, but alas, I fear it would make life a whole lot more complicated - wouldn't it be easier and more harmonious to accept one another for who they are, and overcome our own prejudices to accommodate them? This sentiment is perfectly expressed by Timothy Garton Ash in a Guardian article: "The most tiresome argument in this whole debate is that the niqaab makes white, middle-class English people feel "uncomfortable" or "threatened". Well, I want to say, what a load of whingeing wusses. Threatened by drunken football hooligans or muggers - that I can understand. But threatened by a woman quietly going about her business in a veil?" ³

Mr. Straw also noted that the niqaab is "such a visible statement of separation and of difference"⁴ and what do you know, Tony Blair decided to chip in too, saying the niqaab was a "mark of separation"⁵. Couldn't one say the same about Rastafarian hats, Sikh turbans, nuns' habits, Buddhists' robes, gothic attire etc? As these are not the norm, they inevitably make a person stand out. But I would say this is simply the beauty of British multiculturalism - the colours of many different cultures together make the British landscape a whole lot more interesting.

Unfortunately Jack Straw's eagerness for the limelight resulted in racists across the country acting like they had a free reign to insult Muslim women. In the week following Mr. Straw's comments, I was verbally abused regarding my niqaab on four separate occasions. My reaction was at first shock, and then sadness that it had to come to this. A friend of mine who also wears the face veil mentioned that she is so fed up with the racism she has to put up with, that she has considered removing the niqaab, but the only thing that stopped her from doing so was her refusal to give in to the racists.

I am not questioning Jack Straw's right to express his opinion - of course everyone has the right to express their opinion, but words are not something to be thrown around without caution. MPs and people in the spotlight have to be especially responsible with words because everything they say has an impact on the rest of us. So in my list of things which hinder community cohesion, it looks like I'm going to have to put 'irresponsible MPs' right there at the top.

Holland added fuel to the fire when it announced its proposal to ban the niqaab in public places. Not so surprisingly, this ban is likely to be in breach of Dutch religious freedom laws. Here are some of the arguments we've heard over the past few months regarding the niqaab:

****The niqaab is a hindrance to communication because it's hard to hear what a niqaabi is saying.***

You've gotta be kidding me! The face veil does not muffle my voice or any other niqaabis' voice. Contrary to insulting opinions it is not a mouth gag. Some people are genuinely quiet, you won't hear them regardless of whether they've got a piece of cloth in front of their mouth or not. And trust me, those of us who want to be heard, will be. Besides, the eyes are the window to the soul, as the proverb goes. A person's emotions can definitely be seen through their eyes, and one's body language and tone of voice also play a big part in communication. I know of Oxbridge graduates who wear the niqaab, one is currently a practicing lawyer; I doubt she would have got to where she is now if people found it so difficult to communicate with her. In my opinion this is the most ridiculous argument outta the lot.

****It's a security issue.***

Women have been wearing the niqaab for a good few decades in the UK and they have never posed a security risk, so what's the issue? How many niqaabis have refused to take their veils off when asked by security guards? At most, they'd ask to be checked by a female. Most niqaabis are very willing to reveal their face for ID purposes, it is allowed in these situations, just as it is allowed in court if you attend as a witness. If anything I'd think they were getting a bit lax on security if they didn't bother checking that I am who I say I am. Besides, if one was to say the niqaab is a security risk, well then so are trannies. Even if they pull out their ID card, the pic won't match the woman standing before you. What are they gonna do, start stripping their wig, make-up and clothes off to get down to the real man beneath? It could be argued that they're more of a security risk than women in veils, but no one is complaining about them: live and let live as they say.

****We are imposing our 'culture' on others. If we want to follow our culture, we should go 'home'.***

But this IS my home, I was born here! And what on Earth is 'British' culture anyway? My parents are Indian, if I go back there, do you want me to take the curry and tea with me? Some of the things we now consider 'British' were adopted from the cultures of our old colonies. We've always been accepting of other cultures, so why the sudden change? By wearing a niqaab, I am simply expressing a religious belief, a right given to me in this country - I do not expect all women to follow my dress code. All I ask for is a bit of tolerance in this 'free' society of ours.

****Non-Muslims can't wear what they want in Muslim countries.***

I would say 'so-called' Muslim countries. Unfortunately many of them are very far from the true Islam. But people who complain about not having the right to dress the way they wish in a Muslim country completely miss the point. Yes, that's not at all fair, but we're talking about the UK here, a country which boasts about its free and tolerant society, where people are now saying it should be against the law to wear something. It's ridiculous. To ban someone from wearing the niqaab makes us just as oppressive as the Middle Eastern regimes we claim to have the moral high ground over.

****It is a symbol of oppression and subjugation.***

Deary me. This argument must go back to Adam and Eve, that's how old it is! Women who wear just the headscarf were once called 'oppressed' till they came out and made their voices heard. It's the same with the niqaab. Anyone who was to meet an educated young girl who happens to wear the niqaab would know that there is so much more to her than just the veil. It is a conscious decision made out of subjugation to God, NOT to man.

As other countries in Europe move to ban the niqaab and limit our religious rights and freedom of expression, as a Muslim I appeal to the Ummah to remain united on this issue - regardless of the way you view niqaab, the fact remains that it holds a place in Islamic history and in Islamic law. And as a British citizen I appeal to my country's sense of multiculturalism and diversity - let's keep it alive; continue having such discussions whilst accepting each other for who we are.

To read Jack Straw's original article which prompted the debate, go to:
1, 2, 4 <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/labour/story/0,,1888847,00.html>
To read Timothy Garton Ash's article, go to:
3 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,1920075,00.html>
To read Tony Blair's views on the subject, go to:
5 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6058672.stm

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Bollywood

OR BUST

By Alveena Salim

Meera had an incurable brain tumour. The villains found where she lived and shot her in the head. Luckily for her the bullet passed through her ears taking away the tumour along with it, thus curing her in the process.....Raja lost his true love after she choked to death on a chicken leg, he thought he could never love again until he was confronted with a girl who was the EXACT same replica of his dead lover, but how come she didn't want to know him? Luckily for him a song and dance in the rain in the London Eye easily won her overFour men claimed to be Jeena's estranged brother whom she was separated from at birth but how did she know which one to believe? Dev solved that dilemma when he dived in front of Jeena and heroically took 21 bullets in the chest for her, miraculously surviving the ordeal....

Ah Bollywood. Who can forget the songs and dances, star-crossed lovers, angry parents, love triangles, corrupt politicians, romantic heroes, conniving villains, courtesans with hearts of gold, long-lost relatives and unrealistic stunts all jam packed in a 4hour long extravaganza?

Indian films (AKA "Bollywood") are very popular. The Indian film industry churns out more films in one year than any other industry in the whole world. Many Muslims all over the world enjoy spending their evenings watching a new Bollywood movie with their family. Whilst many families would have a serious issue allowing their children to watch any English films rated 15 or above, they have no problem whatsoever allowing their children to watch indecent Bollywood movies, why? Coz Bollywood films are of an Asian origin, so unlike English movies, "...they aint dirty with kissing and stuff innit".

So What's Wrong with Watching Bollywood Movies?

1. Sells unrealistic dreams and fantasies

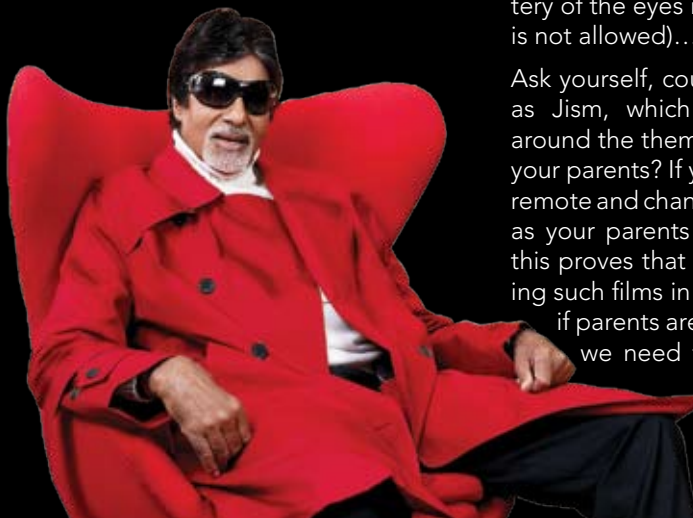
Many people watch Bollywood movies to escape the harsh reality of everyday life. How many times have women watched Bollywood films only to wish that their partner was as romantic and sensitive as the hero in the film? How many times have men watched Bollywood films only to wish that their wife was as fit as Aishwarya Rai? And how many times have teenagers run away from home with their lover, because their parents were against their relationship – just like in the movies? Last year's hit film starring Shah Rukh Khan, Rani Mukherji, Abhishek Bachan and Preity Zinta was about falling out of love with partners who were perfect in every way and finding 'true love' in the arms of another person's partner - in other words, justifying extramarital affair and adultery. Real life is NOTHING like Bollywood. Men and women are NOT perfect, problems do not get solved by running away from home or having affairs, parents are not the 'enemy' standing in the way of 'true love' and men do not win the hearts of their crush by breaking into a song and

dance in the park. The directors of Bollywood movies have no sense of realism whatsoever. The unrealistic storylines of Bollywood movies make people dissatisfied with their lives and ungratefulness with one's state is a sin in Islam.

2. One loses their sense of shame

Just over 10 years ago, Bollywood films were famous for their depiction and promotion of decent traditional Indian culture and values. Nowadays, Bollywood films have become a LOT more sexually explicit in content. Only a few years ago kissing in Bollywood movies was taboo. Bollywood leading lady Priyanka Chopra was quoted as saying "In Indian films, kissing is becoming more acceptable and I wouldn't give it a second thought." Today, some of the 'hit' movies are centred around storylines of extramarital/premarital affairs and homosexuality. Heroines clothes have become a lot skimpier and suggestive comments of a highly sexual nature run throughout most films. And when people watch such films in the presence of their entire family without any feelings of embarrassment then this shows how shameful and indecent they have become. Some hold the opinion that 'looking is minor – it aint no biggie'. The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "The adultery of the eyes is looking (at [that] which is not allowed)..." (Bukhari, Muslim).

Ask yourself, could you watch films such as Jism, which was primarily centred around the theme of sexuality, in front of your parents? If you're scrambling for the remote and changing the channel as soon as your parents walk in the room, then this proves that you shouldn't be watching such films in the first place, and even if parents are not in the room with us, we need to remember that Allah (swt) is watching as at ALL times. The Qur'an



says: "It is Allah Who gives life and death and Allah sees EVERYTHING that you do." (3:156). He knows how you're feeling and can see what you're doing so be conscious of Him at all times. There's no way you can hide your dodgy films from Him. Also, Bollywood films are watched in the presence of young kids, so parents need to wake up and realise that kids

brothels. Actresses are viewed as sex-symbols, dancing to excite and tantalise the heroes in the film. Not only is this incredibly degrading to the actresses but Islamically forbidden for us to watch.

4. Issues with Culture

Most Bollywood films highlight practices of the Hindu religion and culture, such as the strong belief in the caste system, ignoring religious boundaries i.e. Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims are shown to overcome differences

deen Khan was arrested for possession of cocaine.

In October 2002 Salman Khan was arrested for killing one person and badly injuring three. He has also been accused of physically abusing his ex-girlfriend Aishwarya Rai. Womanizer Akshay Kumar is famous for being a heart breaker and despite being happily married, he still faces speculation from the press about his love life. Other Bollywood stars are also regularly in the papers for bribery, extra-marital affairs and self-harm. So are these so called "stars" who we really want to be like? The Holy Prophet (saw) said that in the hereafter "One will be with the one they love", in other words, if you harbour ex-



are like sponges who absorb absolutely everything that they are exposed to. Watching Bollywood films has a negative affect on childrens' character, behaviour and the way they think. We should also bear in mind that modesty is a branch of faith, if you've lost your sense of shame, then you've lost everything.

3. Why you making a song and dance about it?

Bollywood films are FULL of singing and dancing against a number of backdrops showing various sceneries from all over the world. Every film will contain at least 3-7 songs. Not only is this off putting but totally unrealistic (since when do people in real life break into a song and dance and become surrounded by a number of backup dancers identically dressed, at the drop of a hat ???!!). Nowadays actresses are expected to dance in wet saris, pole dance and dance for men in

by love alone, the celebration of weddings i.e. throwing rice at weddings, oiling the door hinges before the bride arrives home, encircling the bride and groom with candles and jacking the poor grooms shoes !!!

Long term exposure to Hindu culture, which contradicts the teachings of Islam, results in some Muslims copying their actions, especially if they are not educated in their own religion.

5. Role Models?

Many Bollywood fans are also regular subscribers to Bollywood magazines such as CineBlitz and StarDust. As a result they know the comings and goings of the main Bollywood stars and look up to them. This is a ridiculous waste of time and is also very dangerous. The likes of Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan and Rani Mukerji should NOT be our idols. Far-

treme

love and admiration for the Bollywood stars, their destiny in the hereafter will also be yours...

To sum up, ANY film full of anti-Islamic storylines and dodgy scenes that you can't watch in front of your parents or elders is not allowed. If you're ever concerned about the content of the films you watch, just always ask yourself if you could watch this film in the presence of your parents – if not, then you KNOW that you shouldn't be watching it! The Bollywood AND Hollywood industries promote values that are completely alien to Islam. They promote a lifestyle, which is based on illusion. And subconsciously people DO become affected with what they watch. We need to remember that the way of life shown in such films can only lead to misery in this life and the hereafter.

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"...and then one day when the air is still and the night has fallen, they come for you. It's only then you realise while you are talking about organising and committees, the extermination has already begun. Make no mistake my brothers, they will draw first blood. They will force their cure upon us. The only question is will you join my brotherhood and fight? Or wait for the inevitable genocide? Who will you stand with...?"

No, that isn't another speech by Osama Bin Laden doing rounds over the 'net, but a quote from Magneto in the latest 'X Men' Film.

X Men 3 returned last year for the third - possibly final - instalment, 'The Last Stand' in which a pharmaceutical company has developed a way to suppress the mutant 'X-gene'. Permanently. They're calling it a cure. A way for mutants to conform. Be normal. They can give up their uniqueness and gain acceptance.

Naturally the mutants are divided. Some see this as the holy grail. Something they have always wanted. A way to fit in.

Others are deeply offended, and want to lash out, take up arms, and destroy this 'cure'. They are not a disease. They do not need a cure. They shall be the cure.

There is a middle path taken by some 'heroic' X-Men, who - while being offended - are working within the system against this 'cure'. They will fight tooth and nail for their rights, but will not fight humanity to get what they want. They will embrace it, and make humanity fight for them.

Now why is an Islamic publication discussing X-Men? Is it 'coz we are nerds? Or is there a hidden depth to X Men which is not seen at first glance? You see, this movie brings up dilemma's that are faced in real life by many people.

No, there are no 'mutants' with superhuman powers. (Sorry to disappoint you, but superman does not exist! He is just as real as the tooth-fairy, or father Christmas). But there are Muslims. Me. You. Us. What if there was a cure for Muslims to be fully assimilated into society? A way to be the same as the next man. Or woman.

Well there is a 'cure'. Rather simple too. Just forget about Islam. Remove the veil. Go on the pull. Have a pint. Or two. Just forget about Islam, God or the messages of the Prophets (saw). It's far easier than a

X-MEN



WHO WILL YOU STAND WITH?

By Naheem Zaffar

pharmaceutical cure as mentioned in the comic book adaptation and unfortunately some Muslims are attracted by it.

But just as mutants found their cure offensive, Muslims (should) find this 'cure' to be just as (if not more) offensive. Being Muslim is not a disease, but it can be a cure. More importantly it can show diseased minds who find small things like a piece of clothing offensive. Find those who are whimsical in the brainpan.

However, there are divisions among Muslims as well. Some are attracted by this 'cure'. Others are offended. Quite rightly too.



Some want to work within the system to better it, make Muslims more accepted for who they are, what they believe, and explain our principles to others. Some don't.

The last group is militantly against a 'cure'. They will fight against it. Just as in the movie, this group can and will give others a bad name. Make them feared instead of celebrated.

There are people who are working to eradicate the Muslim way of life. Now it's your choice to decide where you make your stand. Do you wait 'til Islamic principles are criminalised? Do you allow stigma to be attached to Muslims? Do you allow your brothers and sisters to be tempted away by the 'cure'? It's your choice.

Make no mistake, the Islamic way of life is under attack. You only have to ask yourself... who will YOU stand with?

Answers by Shaykh Salim Ghisa

To what extent are Muslims allowed to take part in non-Islamic festivals such as Christmas, Halloween, Easter etc? For example, can Muslims give Christmas cards to non-Muslim neighbours, colleagues and friends or attend Christmas dinners if invited by the local church?

There are different rulings for Muslims participating in non Islamic festivals and this depends on whether the

festival is a religious cultural or habitual practice.

The following therefore applies; It is Haram for a person to take part in a religious festival belonging to other faiths where practices of Kufr or Shirk take place, i.e. singing statements which worship other deities e.g. 'Jesus is the son of God'. Or where the act would mean going into a religious place of worship such as Church, Synagogue, Temple etc and then being part of their worship. It is also forbidden to take part in festivals such as Halloween as it entails a medieval pagan festival of the coming of winter.

It is Makrooh (disliked) to participate in festivals where there is no benefit to an individual and money is wasted.

It is permissible for a person to take part in an event which does not entail Haram activities and enables unity and love amongst each other.

A Muslim may not be allowed to take part in another person's religious festival but must respect other people's belief and therefore cannot criticise to cause offence to other faiths.

Also, Muslim leaders and scholars may be involved in activities such as multi faith events where the intention is to give the position of the Muslims and to provide Muslims with a positive view in front of other faiths.

Where Muslims take part in dinners or a get together especially if it involves members of their family who are Christians then this is perfectly allowed as long as Haram activities as drinking or the presence of Alcohol or Music are not involved. It is important for Muslims to maintain family ties and show love and respect for others. Shaykh Gibril Haddad writes 'Keeping family ties is an obligation on every Muslim, i.e. with one's parents. If wine is served then such meals or gatherings are devoid of blessing and one should neither condone nor participate in them except for the minimum presence that filial respect demands'.

Sending Christmas cards to non-Muslims can be permissible if the intention is to promote good character of a Muslim but again this should not be done in general circumstances as it is a waste of money and time.

Of course Allah knows best.



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Is it permissible for a Muslim to 'go out' with a prospective marriage partner in order to find out if they are compatible? What about going out with your fiancé?

It is not permissible for a Muslim man and woman to 'go out' with each other even if they are engaged. The main reason for this ruling is;

A person remains a 'ghair me-hrum' (non-permissible) until a valid marriage according to Shariah is performed (i.e. Nikah). The reason for this is that Islam promotes segregation between men and women in order that piety and chastity remain protected. Until marriage takes place they are not legally allowed for each other. If they are engaged then they are spoken for each other but all the restrictions that apply for a non-permissible man and woman still apply. Simple questions on email or the phone with the permission of their Mehrams (i.e. the girls parents etc) can be asked but nothing intimate as this leads to unlawful conversations and sometimes the marriage does not go to completion either because of what has been discussed or for other reasons, which can leave a stigma attached especially on the girl's side.

The Prophet of Allah (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) had given the permission for a man and a woman to look at each other to ensure that they find each other attractive.

It is stated in a Hadith; Mughira bin Shu'ba (Allah be pleased with him) reported: I told the Holy Prophet about my proposed marriage. He asked 'have you seen her? I replied 'No'. Allah's messenger said 'cast a glance at that woman as it is appropriate for mutual love to exist between the two'. (Tirmidhi). This Hadith clearly clarifies the limit of what prospective partners can do. The reason for this is that if a couple were to break off their engagement the man and woman would remain still chaste and free from any sort of accusation for another prospective partner.

Therefore, some may ask how can you marry a person who you do not know?

The answer is that compatibility should be checked by both parties before both prospective partners see each other. I.e. Are they both like minded, are they both educated at the same level and if not are they aware and happy about it. There are many ways this can be done;

1. The respectable people within the community, i.e. the imam, teachers, pious people should be consulted and asked about their potential partners background and family.
2. Girls/Boys need to speak to their friends and find out more about the individual, i.e. where does he/she work, who are his/her friends, who are his/her relatives, is he a practising Muslim etc
3. Are they educated and to what extent? If the girl has a degree,

is the boy just a manual worker and if this is the case how do they feel about it? If the boy has a degree but the girl is simple has not had further secondary education but is a pious girl who is more than happy to stay at home with his parents, is this something that is acceptable to them?

4. Are they looking to live with their extended family after marriage or are have they bought their own home? If the answer is staying with parents then is the girl happy with this arrangement.

The key answer to this lies in the Hadith of the Prophet of Allah as follows;

Marriage with a woman is contracted for the sake of four things: for her wealth, for her family lineage, for her beauty and for her piety, but you should only succeed (marry) for her piety. (Bukhari) The same ruling applies for a woman looking for a man.

If a prospective partner is pious and has religious knowledge then they will know how to treat their partners, they will know what makes each other happy and how to take care of each other. During difficult times they will put their trust in Allah and will believe it is a test and will therefore ask Allah for help. During happy times they will not become complacent and arrogant but thank Allah for the gifts He has given them. A person's beauty may disappear, their wealth may be lost, their lineage may be of no use but their piety will always be there and consequently be passed on to their offspring. Both prospective partners should study the religious obligations of marriage before they marry each other.

Of course Allah knows best.

For further reading on this issue please visit the 'Marriage' section on The Revival website and read the following articles:

'How to find a marriage partner' (The Revival Magazine Issue 3 - September / October 2005)

'Pointers on choosing marriage partners'

'Q's to ask a prospective marriage partner'

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