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evival

voice of the muslim youth



**NOT IN
OUR NAME!**



Also in this issue



F.R.I.E.N.D.S



**Weapon of
Mass Destruction**



**Muslim contribution
to Britain**

THE REVIVAL STATEMENT:

WE REFUSE TO BE VICTIMS!

Since the London attacks we have seen a substantial increase in Faith Hate Crimes reported in the UK. Islamophobic incidents to date have included some of the following:

* Arson, Bomb hoaxes, Criminal, Damage/Graffiti, Assault, Abuse/Threats *

The Muslim Safety Forum, an umbrella group of Muslim organisations, has been working closely with the police and monitoring the levels of attacks and other Islamophobic incidents. We would like to join their calls for calm and continual vigilance. We also want to continue to encourage members of the community to report Islamophobic incidents and avoid confrontations wherever possible.

What you should do:

1. Form local safety committees involving young people, all the mosques, councillors and the local police.
 - Think about additional security measures for Mosques, homes and Islamic centres.
 - Speak to your local police crime prevention office.
2. Talk to the more vulnerable sections of your community.
3. In the event of being stopped by police please cooperate
 - follow instructions especially if plain-clothed officers shout even if you are in a crowd and are not sure who they are directed at. (always ask for ID)
4. Travel in groups, especially those who dress more traditionally/religiously (i.e. brothers who support a beard and Sisters who wear Hijab). Consider locking the doors of cars when travelling.

Let us send a clear message to all communities, that we refuse to be victims of Islamophobic crime.

The clear messages to the media are:

1. Communities cannot be held responsible for an individual's criminal act.
2. Innocent Muslims were killed in attacks, targeted by backlash, and blamed for attacks. We refuse to be victimised.
3. We, as other communities, can only speculate as to why the incident occurred.
4. Irresponsible reporting of the attacks has a direct impact on the safety of all communities, and will divert police resources.

Contact the Muslim Safety Forum on (Tahir Butt) 07792 507856 or info@muslimsafetyforum.org or The Revival if you require assistance in setting up local safety committees or other info.

List of local police stations:

<http://www.met.police.uk/local>

Telephone Reporting

Some police stations have telephone reporting systems in place during office hours, please ask if appropriate.

In addition, you can use 3rd party reporting facilities such as the **Muslim Line. Call them on: 020 8 840 4 840**

Online Internet reporting of Hate Crime - for non urgent scenarios.

https://www.online.police.uk/secure/english/notifier_status.asp
(This method of reporting can save a few hours attending local police station)

Hate text messages on mobile phones.

Please leave messages in "inbox" do not delete or save elsewhere.

Any spitting incidents.

Please retain clothing with saliva samples for police forensic examination.

More Crime Prevention / Community Safety Advice, and other useful links.

<http://www.met.police.uk/crimeprevention/business.htm>

http://www.online.police.uk/english/useful_sites.asp

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/preventionadvice/>

http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/cp_index.htm

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/crime/prevention/index.shtml>

“Anyone who has killed another person it is as if he has killed the whole of mankind and anyone who saves one life, it is as if he has saved the whole of mankind” •(Chapter 5, verse 32)

EDITORIAL:

The London terror attacks were a nasty piece of work by sick, pathetic, blood-sucking idiots. These attacks were a massive crime against humanity. This was a job carried out by crackpots who have no value for human life. They wanted to kill anyone and everyone- black, white, brown, pink, Muslim, Jew, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Atheist. These kind of people, and those behind them, need to be caught and punished big time!

So 'who-dunnit' is what everyone wants to know. The favourites are always Al-Qaeda whether it was them or not. It seems that British Muslims were behind these terrorist attacks. And you know what that means don't ya? Islam and EVERY SINGLE Muslim is put on trial. We are given the dirty looks, our mosques and centres are attacked, our mothers and sisters in hijab are assaulted and abused- we become the victims!!!! We have to prove to everyone that we're not terrorists, we have to prove that we love England, we have to prove we are normal. Muslims and Islam should not have to pay for these attacks- it should be the terrorists who have no religion.

Lets not forget that an estimated 1 million Muslims live in London. Lets not forget that 1 in 7 people in London is a Muslim. Let's not forget that a lot of the injured from the blasts were Muslims. Let's not forget that a Muslim girl, Shahara Akther Islam, was killed in the bomb blasts. Let's not forget that like the rest of Britons, Muslims have families and friends who have been caught up in these attacks and have had to go through hell worrying about their loved ones. Let's also not forget that almost every mosque, organisation and scholar in the UK have openly condemned the attacks and have aired their anger, shock and sadness. AFTER ALL THIS WE STILL HEAR TERMS SUCH AS 'ISLAMIC TERRORIST' AND 'MUSLIM TERRORIST'. Let me say it again- terrorism has no religion.

I was encouraged to hear DAC Brian Paddick of the Metropolitan Police at the Press conference on the day of the bomb blasts state that 'Islam and terrorism are two different and opposite things. Islam is a peaceful faith and has nothing to do with terrorism. Muslims who are terrorists have nothing to do with Islam.'

Let's get one thing straight right here, right now. Every religion and ideology has its extremists. Now, the Oklahoma bomber was a fundamentalist Christian, so should all Christians and the religion of Christianity have to pay for it? Does it mean Christianity is a violent religion that encourages violence and terrorism? Of course not. The IRA represent the Catholic Christians, so does that mean every time they carry out terrorist attacks then all Catholics should become scapegoats? Should all Catholic churches be

attacked? Of course not! Does it mean when Jews have been carrying out terrorism in the name of Israel, Zionism and Judaism, that all Jews are terrorists, that Judaism promotes violence and encourages terrorism? Of course not.

Terrorism has no Religion

In the same way Islam has absolutely nothing to do with terrorism. Some misguided and extremist individuals have hijacked Islam. Karen Armstrong, a non-Muslim author on Islam confirms this by saying: '*Islamic law outlaws war against any country in which Muslims are allowed to practice their religion freely, and forbids the use of fire, the destruction of buildings and the killing of innocent civilians in a military campaign. So although Muslims, like Christians or Jews, have all too often failed to live up to their ideals, it is not because of the religion per se.*' (The Guardian. July 11, 2005)

If something positive has come out of these attacks then I would say it has created an opportunity for everyone in Britain to have a closer look at the true teachings of Islam. A chance to speak to sincere scholars, to visit the mosques, to pick up a copy of the Quran and discuss Islam with educated Muslims.

Also these attacks should not divide the British public away from Muslims, but it should do the opposite. It should bring us even more closer together. To help each other through these difficult times. To understand each other and to bridge the gap between the communities.

Islam has been hijacked by an extremist minority and the Muslim community in Britain wishes to claim its religion back and demonstrate to our fellow country men and women what the true image of Islam is. To do this we must not listen to the extremists but sit down and talk to one another and build bridges. If we close our selves off this will only alienate us and will give the extremists more ammunition. So please people, lets stand together against these evil people and show that we will not bow to their demands, we are British and a UNITED Kingdom.

Britain is home to almost 2 million Muslims. Muslims have contributed a lot to the British way of life.

Britain is our home too and we will not let the terrorists destroy our country.

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BIG BROTHER

By Sajid Iqbal

Big Brother, a programme where 13 people chosen from thousands of applicants, are asked to live in a house where there are hidden cameras placed throughout the house covering their every move... and I mean every move if you know what I mean.

Every week one guy or girl is evicted by the television viewers, who are given tasks to carry out and then are judged on their success as well as their behaviour, personality and deeds. The successful person at the end of the show is rewarded £100,000.

Well, you're probably thinking what's this got to do with anything? Let me shock you by saying that our life in this world is just like the telly show Big Brother - no fatwa's please, let me explain! Our house is this world - the dunya. Our hidden camera is none other than God Almighty, the creator of the universe who watches our every single move. Allah (swt) gives our tasks in His book, the Qur'an and by His Messenger, Muhammad (saw). The Creator judges us on our deeds and actions and our prize at the end of the show is Paradise and eternal life. Now what do you make of that then? Not bad eh... I know you're shaking your head and saying the blokes lost it but just think about it for a moment and it'll make sense to you ... trust me. The term 'Big Brother is always watching you' has a very important meaning for Muslims.

OK, check this out - the idea that 'Big Brother is always watching you' should become clear:

You're cruising down the road in your Subaru (or your Nissan Micra if you were honest) and you approach the lights. You think I ain't stopping and all of a sudden you see a cop car from a distance. So what do you do? Slam your brakes, put your seat belt on and hope the coppers say nowt. Its true innit... unless you get a buzz out of being fined and visiting the nick! You see we follow the law because we know we are being watched, and if we break the law we will be punished.

Another example: ***will you ever light up a spliff or chat up a girl/guy in front of your parents, older brother or your local molbi (imam)?***

You must be joking! Why? Because you know a higher authority is watching you, so you have to do 'the right thing' otherwise you will be punished big time.

Now, to get to the point- if we 'do the right thing' or follow the law of the land only to please the higher authorities in this world then why not 'do the right thing and obey the law of Allah' - the Creator of the Universe, who is the highest authority and is always watching you?

You see whether we are playing football, watching the telly, in the town center, at uni or college, at work, in the mosque or in the nightclub our every action is watched and recorded. So next time you decide to link up with your undercover girl/boyfriend somewhere that you know that your dad, the local Imam and that big mouth auntie down the road wont see you, always remember that 'Big Brother' - the All-Seeing- is ALWAYS watching you, there is no place on Earth where you can go where you wont get clocked by Him.

'Big Brother' is always watching us so isn't it about time we faced the facts and sorted ourselves out to save our self from the embarrassment in this world and the hereafter. A couple of things might be on your mind. You're thinking: 'OK I know Allah(swt) watches our actions but still I can't stop myself from doing what I do, even though I know its wrong. So, what do I do?'

Fair point. To know something is wrong or haram doesn't take a genius but to stop yourself from committing sin and haram acts is the hardest thing ever. But you see that is the trick. That is the test. The test of life - pass this and you're buzzing. What we need is taqwa-the fear of God.

The only way we can do good in this world and have a good hereafter is

if we fear Allah (swt). *The Prophet (saw) said in his final sermon "Fear your Lord, pray your five prayers, fast the month of Ramadan, pay your Zakah, and obey your leaders, in doing so, you will enter your Lord's Paradise."*(Tirmidhi)

Read very carefully the following verses of the Qur'an on the importance of Taqwa:

1. ***"It is only Shaytaan that suggests to you the fear of his friends and supporters, so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are true believers."*** (Surah Ali Imran 3:175)
2. ***"Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him, keep their duty to Him, and those who are doers of good for the sake of Allah only."*** (Surah Nahl 16:128)
3. ***"Whoever fears Allah, Allah will grant him a way out of hardship; and whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will forgive his sins from him and will enlarge his reward."*** (Surah Talaq 65:2, 5)
4. ***"Verily, those who are fearful of Allah are the people who, when an evil thought from Shaytaan comes to them, they remember Allah, and indeed they then see aright."*** (Surah A'raaf 7:20)

So now we know how important taqwa (fear of Allah) is so we should start to have the fear of Allah in our hearts. You're asking but how can I do that? You see taqwa is more than just having fear of Allah (swt). Umar ibn Abdul Aziz (radiyallahu anhu) narrated: "Taqwa is not fasting during the day and it is not praying during the night and it is not the mixing of the two of them, but taqwa is leaving what Allah has made haram (forbidden) and by doing what Allah has made fard (compulsory). After one has done this, Allah will provide good things for that person."

You see once the fear and awareness of Allah hits and enters a person, life is never the same. When a person's heart opens up to Allah (swt), the way we view life, how we see life, our ambitions in life, our expectations in life, our goals in life, all change. After this, every aspect of life is seen with an Islamic viewpoint.

Whatever you do, you know Allah (swt) is watching you yeah. So if you have this thought in your mind all the time, 24/7, then it will help you to live life according to Islam and it will help you from not doing 'dodgy' things!

Now try this out in your life: the next time you're about to steal, lie, do fraud, smoke or sell weed, drink or sell alcohol, go on a date, watch a XXX movie etc then say to yourself 'my Allah (swt) is watching me! I ain't gonna do this. Cos when I leave this world He (swt) is gonna ask me about EVERYTHING I did and I ain't gonna have no answer, no excuses.' The Qur'an says: ***"It is Allah Who gives life and death and Allah sees EVERYTHING that you do."*** (Surah Al-Imran 3:156)

So rather than leading a dodgy life and getting battered in the hereafter, why not live a good life? You see in the telly show Big Brother when the house mates are evicted from the house they just go back to their normal lives or go on to do other things. In the real world when we have to leave the house of this world then thats it my friend, your times up...its time to face 'your Creator'!

You see when a person gets evicted from the house in Big Brother, embarrassing moments from their time in the Big Brother house are replayed and watched by thousands of viewers. In the same way, after you get evicted from the house of this world and are standing in front of the Almighty, embarrassing moments of your life will be replayed in front of Allah and absolutely everyone- No Joke! Stuff that you don't want anyone

What A load of Politics!

By Shaïd Ayoub & Sajid Iqbal

In this regular section The Revival will argue why you should not just know your MP, be aware of what he or she is actually doing... but give 'em hell!

It's YOUR MPs job to represent YOUR views. No MP today can ignore the Muslim voters. So make sure YOUR MP knows what YOUR views are!

Now if you keep in contact with your MP and inform them of the issues that concern you, then it could make all the difference in influencing what issues your MP decides to focus on. This is especially true when MPs are entering parliament for the first time.

Finding out about your MP

So who's your MP? Ermmmm...ain't got a clue? Wakey, wakey...you can't complain your MP is doing jack if you don't even know him or her! You get my drift?

OK. It's time for some action. FIRST STEP

To find out who your MP is, what their party's position is on the issues you would like to raise, the position they may hold in government or their party and their general background. You can always get this by phoning the House of Commons information desk on 020 7219 4272 or by visiting: www.locata.co.uk
www.faxyourmp.com
www.theyworkforyou.com/mps/
www.epolitixs.com

to find out about... stuff that you did when you thought that no one was looking...stuff you did which you'd just die of shame if your mum or dad ever found out about!

The Qur'an sums it up by saying: ***"How do you disbelieve in Allah when He gave you life when you were dead, then He will give you death, then life again, then unto Him you will return?"*** (Surah Baqarah 2:28)

The Prophet (pbuh) said: Everyone will remain standing before Allah on the Day of Judgment until they have answered five questions: his/her age, how they spent it; their knowledge, how much they acted upon it; their money, how did they earn it and how did they spend it; their body and health, how they used it.' (Muslim)

The show Big Brother on Channel 4 seems to be what everyone is talking about at the moment. Is anyone talking or thinking about 'Big Brother' up above? Never forget: Big Brother is always watching you!

For further details see: www.therevival.co.uk/god.htm

What you can ask your MP to do?

MPs receive an average £118,437 a year in expenses and allowances, excluding salary! Oh yeah!! They're stinking rich...so are you gonna let them get away with doing didley skwot? Make them work HARD for their money!

So here goes. SECOND STEP

There are zillions of ways in which you can bring an issue to your MPs attention both using the channels inside of the Westminster process (parliament) or by using external pressure such as campaigning. Check this out:

Inside Parliament

You can get your MP to do this for you:

- Ask a written or oral parliamentary question (PQ)
- Initiate a short debate in the House of Commons
- Speak in a government debate
- Sign an early day motion (EDM) showing support for a particular issue or campaign
- Table an amendment to a bill
- Vote for or against an amendment to a bill
- Propose a private member's or ten minute rule bill
- Join the parliamentary human rights group
- Write to a minister - MPs will receive a response from a minister whilst a member of the public may only receive a letter from a civil servant. The more letters that a minister receives from MPs, the more their attention will be drawn to your concern. For example, an MP may send a cover letter along with your letter to the Foreign Secretary.

Outside Parliament

Get your MP out and about and open their eyes to the real issues that concern you! They can do the following for you:

- Speak at a meeting/conference on human rights - at Westminster, their party conference.
- Participate in local events in the constituency, for example:
- Sign/receive a petition
- Join in a fund-raising event
- Help with publicity - most MPs will be keen to get an article in the local press showing that they care about human rights.
- Deliver a petition or Lead a delegation to the relevant embassy
- Write to the other governments

Making Contact with your MP

OK, now that you know who your MP is, how you can get hold of him/ her and what they can do for you.

THIRD STEP

Now is the time to write to them. You could write a letter, fax or email your local MP on the issues that you want to raise. Key points

1. Identify yourself as a constituent, meaning you are a voter in the area that they are standing as an MP.
2. Keep the letter brief but do enclose any relevant reports.
3. Be clear about what you are asking your MP to do.
4. Request a reply.

FOURTH STEP

Meeting your MP in person

If you really wanna give your MP hell and see if they are doing anything for you then go and see them face to face!

Most MPs hold a surgery for constituents each Friday, or sometimes on Saturdays. Call their office to find out where this surgery is held and whether or not you need to book a specific time.

KNOW YOUR MUSLIM MP'S!

Now we have 4 Muslim MPs - hooray! Make sure they are active and deal with your concerns. Contact them:

Khalid Mahmood MP

Labour- Birmingham Perry Barr
Tel: 020 7219 8141/ 0121 569 1937

Mohammad Sarwar MP

Labour -Glasgow Govan
Tel: 020 7219 5024/0547
www.sarwar.org.uk

Shahid Malik MP

Labour- Dewsbury
020 7219 3000

Sadiq Khan, MP

Labour- Tooting.
Tel: 020 8767 9660

Know your MP. Contact them. Keep a track on what they have been doing throughout the year.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT THE REVIVAL or visit our Politics Page on The Revival website: www.therevival.co.uk/islam_politics.htm

Text your postcode to the Revival and we will send you your MPs details
the revival text 07968315523

MUSLIM CONTRIBUTION TO BRITAIN

By Zarin Khan

When did it all begin?

There has been a Muslim presence in Britain for at least 300 years. Yes 300 years! However, migration of Muslims to Britain on a large scale began in the 1950's and ended in the 1970's. It has taken over 30 years for the Muslim community to mature and settle in a Western environment. It was done slowly but surely.

Number of Muslims in Britain

In 1951 the Muslim population in Britain was about 23,000. Ten years later, it was about 82,000 and by 1971 it was 369,000.¹ At present, there are an estimated 1.8 million Muslims in the UK, making Muslims the largest religious minority in Britain.²

Number of Muslims growing!

The age profile of Muslims in Britain is different from that of the majority population. A higher proportion is under twenty five and a lower proportion is under sixty. Because of these demographic facts, the Muslim Community is set to increase in size over the next twenty years. In fact, the Muslim population in the European Union is set to double by 2015 from 15 million people in 2003.³

Mosques in Britain

As far back as 1889, Britain's first mosque was established at Woking in Surrey. In the 1980's many purpose-built mosque's were built in Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester. Some mosque's have become tourist landmarks for visitors to Britain. There are at current, approximately 900 mosques in the UK.⁴

How do Muslims make a difference in Britain? Now that we know when we arrived here, and how many Muslims are here – have you ever wondered what we do here?

Well sit back and relax, for a guided tour of what Muslims have been getting up to in Britain and be prepared for quite a few pleasant surprises on the way!

Muslims can be found participating in all walks of British life:-

Muslim Doctors/Health care Professionals

There is a significant number of Muslim doctors serving in the NHS, in fact a third of medical students are from ethnic minorities, many of whom are Muslims.⁵

There are an even larger number of Muslims in other health care professions⁵. Many Muslims are becoming experts in their medical/scientific fields, and are progressing to consultancy levels in leading hospitals around the UK.



Muslims in Sports

You don't have to reach back very far to remember our pride at the success of Amir Khan, 17. Boxing silver medallist at the Athens Olympics. He has become the youngest Olympic boxing champion since Floyd Patterson, won Gold at the Olympics in 1952.

Naseem Hamed, 28, has also made a tremendous impact on the global stage, as well as British Muslim converts Chris Eubank and Danny Williams.

Muslim Schools

Muslim Schools are setting standards of all-round excellence and nurturing a new generation of high achievers. The Leicester Islamic Academy, has achieved a 100% success rate in getting its GCSE candidates to obtain at least five A* to C grade passes.⁶

Islamia Girls Secondary School, opened by Yusuf Islam in 1989, topped the examination league table for the London borough of Brent two years in succession in 1994 and 1995. In 1999/2000 it achieved a 96% pass rate.⁷

Muslim primary Schools are achieving better than national average. In 2004, Muslim primary schools achieved an average 89% pass rate, 10% higher than the national average of 79%.⁸ According to figures from Ofsted, Muslim schools are growing rapidly, in September 2003, there were 53 Muslim schools. In January 2005 there are 118.

The number of Muslim schools along with their successful pass rates, are thus providing Britain with young educated Muslims, who will in turn, be in a better position to contribute towards Britain in primary fields of work.

Muslims in Law

There are a growing number of Muslims in the field of Law, many of whom have set up their own successful law firms, throughout the UK. A prominent Muslim solicitor often appearing in the media is Imran Khan, 37. He has undertaken many high profile cases. He has become one of the most important and high profile solicitors in Britain. He made his name in the Stephen Lawrence case.⁹

Muslims in Politics

Muslims are participating in the very heart of matters by becoming more politically active. There are currently over 200 Muslim councillors, four elected members of parliament, one elected member of the European parliament and five members of the House of Lords including the well known Lord Nazir Ahmad.⁹

Muslims have also served and continue to serve as mayors of British cities and boroughs. And that's not all – the number of Muslims councillors and lord mayors is set to increase.

Muslim Small Businesses

The Muslim community is increasingly affluent and comprises a substantial small businesses component.

The small businesses component is of great importance to the economy of Britain, as it generates employment, and also benefits the economy in the form of business taxes.

The Muslim run businesses are more often than not, family run businesses; hence the younger members of the family are encouraged to run businesses, thus, playing active roles in society and contributing towards Britain.

Muslim Millionaires

There are currently 5,400 Muslim millionaires in the UK⁹. Yes, you read that correctly. This clearly indicates the fact that Muslims have excellent entrepreneurial skills and abilities. The number of Muslim millionaires in the UK thus helps to create jobs/employment in all fields of work.

They also help Britain's economy, as they bring valuable foreign exchange, when they export their goods, thus aiding Britain's GDP.

Muslim Teachers

Nawazish Bukhari, who leads the Muslim Teachers Association, was the first Muslim Head Teacher of a state school in Britain. There are many Muslims teachers in senior positions throughout the UK in state schools. Muslims are taking leading roles in shaping the future of Britain.

Abdal Hakim Murad- known as T J Winters before he embraced Islam- graduated from Cambridge University with a double-first in Arabic in 1983. He is a lecturer at the Center of Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge University.

Muslims in the Media

So Rahman, is one of the main faces of Granada TV Regional programmes. He presents Granada Reports, Granada News and Crime file. He has also undertaken many Islamic programmes such as "Pathways of Belief" and "Sharia TV". He has won many awards such as, Best Television Presenter award 2003, for his works on Granada reports and Crime file¹⁰. Samira Ahmed has been a Muslim Channel 4 news presenter since 1999.¹¹

Muslims in the Police Force

Tarique Ghafoor, is joint third in command of Britain's biggest and most important police force. He has been one of four assistant commissioners in the metropolitan police. He is the most senior Muslim officer.⁹

Muslims changing Britain's taste buds

Who could imagine what British life would be like without sugar, tea or coffee? What would the traditional British Christmas cake taste like without the thick layer of marzipan underneath that frosted icing? Indeed, where would the

marzipan be without the almonds? And what about marmalade on toast? In fact, in terms of food, Britain would still be in the Dark Ages had it not started its trade with the Muslims.¹²

The range of food available here in Britain has never been greater and the British people's range of tastes have never been wider. Today it is impossible to imagine a high street in the UK without an Indian/Pakistani restaurant offering curry.

Chicken Tikka Masala (CTM) is Britain's most popular dish and is considered by many to be the "National dish of the Nation".¹³ The stats:-

-Sainsbury's sell 1.6 million CTM meals every year and stock 16 CTM – related products including CTM pasta sauce.

-Marks & Spencer's, famous CTM sandwiches, 18 tonnes are devoured every week.

-23 million portions a year are sold in Indian/Pakistani restaurants.

-CTM has created 14.6% of the sale of the almost half a million curries consumed on average in the restaurants and homes of the UK everyday of the year.¹³

The Queen herself is a convert to the new British way of eating, her favourite being one of the oldest Indian restaurant.¹³

Islam playing a part

A survey in the 1990's, found that two thirds of self-employed Muslims, mentioned that being their own boss meant it was easier for them to perform their religious duties, and suggested that their strong religious faith gave them confidence to set up on their own despite a lack of formal qualifications and poor access to finance.¹

This is backed up by the fact that Muslims are more likely to be self-employed (2000/01) than any other ethnic group.¹⁴

Believe it or not, but approximately 20,000 British Muslims travel to Mecca for Hajj, annually.⁴

Muslims have found that by adopting an Islamic lifestyle, they find peace of mind, which further helps them to put thing into focus, which means that they deal better with issues related to work and business. Islam to Muslims acts like a guiding force.

Conclusion

From corner shops to Tandoori restaurants, from law and accountancy to information technology, from the National Health Service and education to transport and public services, from politics and media to the arts, fashion and sports- the Muslim presence is strong, promising and it's growing.

We're here to stay – and we've made a big difference to Britain!

References:
13.www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice.
14.Office of National Statistics.

Sameer Alam-President BT Muslim Group Profile

Sameer was born in Kenya and spent most of his life in Uganda, where his family still live. He came to England to study for his A-Levels and completed a degree at Royal Holloway, University of London. Alhamdulillah after graduating he was employed by BT and has lived in London since.

Sameer, along with other muslim colleagues, has played an instrumental part in the establishment of the BT Muslim Group. The group's aim is to have a voice for Muslims in BT and help them in the growth at work.

Who are you most inspired by?

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him). He (PBUH) is unarguably the most influential man this world has ever seen and had a deep impact on everyone he met. He was the best of creation and was able to raise a generation of people the likes of which this world has not seen again.

How do you think Muslims should develop professionally?

Through both commitment and Education! With extra emphasis on Education and the gaining of knowledge which is probably the first step. This needs to begin with the youth though and needs to be highlighted, since without Education, Muslims will continue to struggle to develop. The Majority of other communities have gone out and educated themselves and are focused on using professionalism to make greater strides in the workplace. We also need to understand our religion better as this places a great emphasis on doing things with Excellence. We need to understand that the striving of knowledge and working are acts of worship for us if done with the right intentions InshAllah.

This realisation and understanding of this will lead to greater commitment and excellence in everything we do. Mentoring is also essential, in order to remain humble, seek knowledge and advice from those that have more experience InshAllah. I pray that we make sincere Dua and achieve great successes in the future InshAllah.

What continues to drive you to furthering your success?

The desire to want to have a positive impact on Society. I love to learn and to use what I have learned to better myself and InshAllah have a positive impact on those I interact with. As Muslims we should aim to be the best at whatever we do, InshAllah helping us to have a greater impact in this world. May Allah (SWT) grant us success in this life and the next. [Ameen]

What are your Islamic goals for the future?

I aim to continue studying Islam and trying to better myself as a person as well as do whatever I can to improve the state of whichever Society I am living in InshAllah. My ultimate goal is to complete the tafsir of the whole Quran with a teacher InshAllah, this I am certain will have a profound impact on my own development as well as those around me. I have found that in order to develop the community, commitment is essential, it is sadly scarcely found however, I embrace the challenge. Therefore, InshAllah I intend to play a crucial part in helping others to recognize their potential. Particularly amongst the youth, who will constitute the future generation.

Courtesy of Muslim Professionals UK

Full interview at therevival.co.uk

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ALI WANNABE & JAMAL

By Irfan Khan and Sajid Iqbal

Jamal: [Jamal spots Ali in the street and walks over to him] Salaam bro, how are you?

Ali Wannabe: [Nah man its him again!] Yeah I'm buzzin' Jam. How is you?

Jamal: Alhamdulillah, I'm good. It's been a month or so since we had a chat. What you been up to Ali?

Ali: I've been flexin', chillin and dat.

Jamal: Did you give any thought to what we spoke about last time Ali

Ali: mmm.....Yeah, yeah I have been thinking about it and I know your right but....

Jamal: Mashallah. So you ain't gonna sell drugs anymore?

Ali: Woah woah easy bro...no need to chat like dat, some uncle might hears you and grass up to me old man innit. You gets me?

Jamal: Well I'm happy you're thinking about stopping that haram business and inshallah make money in a halal way. What about your other habits bro?

Ali: Well me only got mashed a few times this month and I haven't pulled a bird in bare time (not that I ain't been tryin'). Da boys think I've become a batty boy and that!

Jamal: Bro, its good to see you are trying. I know its not easy but make sure you try to completely stop the alcohol, weed and fornication. Because you know it's haram and its not what Muslims do.

Ali: It's so hard Jam, you's won't understand. Temptation is everywhere. Now dat the sun is out, da gals is lookin' fine and you cant help but wanna get jiggy with it. The weed and booze I can try to end but da gals...I dunno bro.

Jamal: Ali, you are talking about zina (sex outside marriage). It is the third biggest sin in Islam. Let me ask you, who do you want to do zina with?

Ali: Raas man! I thought you're the molbi-type. What is you's asking me? If you want me to get you's a bird, just let me know. I'll sort you out. I know bare gals.

Jamal: Astagfirullah! I was asking do you want to do zina with your sister? Your mum? Your daughter? Your auntie? Your niece?

Ali: What the heck is you chatting 'bout. You better watch it Jam. I'll get da boys to mash you up big time. Don't say things like that about my sis and mum. You ain't no religious guy!

Jamal: Listen bro, listen very carefully. When you 'pull a bird', she will be someone's sister, mother, daughter, auntie, niece. OK, how would you like it if someone chatted up and tried to pull your sister, daughter or mother? Just think about that bro. How would you feel?

Ali: I would bloody rip their goolies out and feed em to me pit bull!

Jamal: Exactly! That's how other people will be feeling as well when you and your mates do the same.

Ali: I is sorry about what I said. Me didn't think about it like dat before, but Bro its not just us guys that is thinking like this. You don't know gals these days Jam they is worse than some of us guys.

Jamal: Forget about others bro you have to answer for yourself in front of Allah (swt). So as a friend and as a Muslim, leave zina for good. If you want to be with a girl then get married to a good Muslim girl.

Ali: GET MARRIED ha ha ha you is a funny guy Jam, me got me whole life ahead of me I is too young to get married I wanna do all me chillin first.

Jamal: My advice to you would be to sort your education out, get a proper halal job and then get married. It is said that marriage is half of your deen -that's how important marriage is.

Ali: But dat would mean marrying me cousin Yasmin and she is mingin! I ain't marrying no paki from back home...

Jamal: You don't worry about that bro. When you're ready I will speak to your dad and we will look for a good Muslim girl for you inshallah. But bro a good Muslim girl will be looking for a good Muslim boy so if you want a good wife you gotta be a good husband.

Ali: You is the Don. Bare Respect to you Jam.

Jamal: Bro, if you really want to make something of your life then the solution is Islam. Be a proper Muslim. Learn about Islam and then follow its teachings. Believe me your life will be so much better. You won't need to rely on sex, drugs and rock 'n roll to get your buzz. Don't waste your life bro.

Ali: The ting is Jam I don't know jack about Islam. No one has told me anything. I went mosque as a kid and I was messin' about so I was always in the Kukar position. How can I be a proper Muslim?

Jamal: You see my friend, Islam isn't just a religion. It's a complete way of life. It

tells you how to live your life. It gives you the solutions to all the problems we face today. You need to start with the basics and take it from there. Slowly you will start to become a good Muslim and keep improving.

Ali: So what are the basics Jam?

Jamal: Well bro to be a Muslim you have to believe in 7 things, these are known as the articles of faith. They are: 1. Belief in One God -Allah, 2. Angels of God, 3. Books of God, 4. Prophets of God, 5. Day of Judgment, 6. Destiny 7. Life after death

Ali: What do ya mean books of God there's only 1 book the Qur'an, innit? See I do know sometin'.

Jamal: Yes Ali but Muslims also believe in the Psalms, Torah, Injeel (Old Testament of bible) and the Qur'an.

Ali: Wat you on a 'bout we believe in da Bible (Old Testament), that belong to da Christians!

Jamal: Bro the original revelations all told the same message to worship and believe in the one God and they are our holy books, but people have unfortunately changed them over time but we still believe in the originals revelations.

Ali: So ain't they got no copyright ting on dem, this counterfeits is bad business innit? I wonder if I could flog some to da bruvvas?

Jamal: Once you believe in these you're a Muslim. Now there are things you have to do. They're known as the five pillars:

1. declaration of faith, 2. pray 5 times a day, 3. zakat, 4. fast in Ramadan and 5. perform Hajj once in a lifetime.

Ali: So what's this Jacket I have to wear?

Jamal: No bro its Zakat it involves cleansing your wealth by giving 2.5% of your earnings/savings to the poor.

Ali: 2.5% raaaas! Bro how do I register as being poor cos me could do with all that dollars. I'm gonna move to Arab land hear they is well rich so that me can get loads of dollars and retire. Dats da Masta Plan.

Jamal: Sorry bro I don't think you would qualify.

Ali: You know what Jam, me didn't even know most of dis. What it is Jam I can read da Qur'an and that but I ain't got a clue what it means. So what's da Qur'an about Jam? Is it about namaz and dat?

Jamal: The Qur'an is the word of God. It was sent to us for guidance for all times. The Qur'an is here to give us guidelines, so when ever we need help, we can turn to the Qur'an for our problems.

Ali: So what d'ya mean guidance. How will it help me?

Jamal: Well Ali, to put it in simple terms. Think of the Qu'ran as the instruction manual for life. If you follow it you will never go wrong.

Ali: So what's in it den?

Jamal: Ali there is nothing that is not covered in the Qur'an. The Qu'ran teaches us how to live a family life, how to marry, who to get married to, what to eat, how to eat, how to do business, it covers almost all branches of science, about hell, heaven and the last day, about the life of the prophets. The Qu'ran outlines the rights of women, rights of parents, rights of the husband, rights of the wife, rights of neighbours, rights of children.....

Ali: Naah man, is you sure you is talking about the same book...

Jamal: It's the Qu'ran I'm talking about. Why, you surprised? Also the Qu'ran has strict rules for governors so they can rule justly and rules of war and peace. The Qu'ran answers the questions of life like evolution, purpose of creation, life after death....and much much more.

Ali: Raas man! Me had no idea all dat stuff is in da Qur'an. I could be well clever and know loads of stuff if I read it properly

then. Now tell me a bit about da Prophet. What was so great about him? Why should me follow him?

Jamal: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the greatest man in history. He was the Prophet of God. He brought the deen of Islam. He gave the world religious, social, economic, political rights, laws and solutions. He is the perfect role model for us all to follow. He taught us how to live our lives, to get the success in this world and in the hereafter.

Ali: Dis is all cool stuff Jam. One ting I'm not sure about is dat as a Muslim what is da purpose of my life? To do jihad and dat? To kill the Kafits?

Jamal: Do you know what the purpose of life is Ali ?

Ali: Purpose of life?...I dunno...people is always sayin' us only live once so chill. I wanna be filthy rich, have bare sick cars, house made from Gold and just flex man.

Jamal: For a Muslim the purpose of life is to worship Allah. As the Qur'an says: "I have only created jinns and humans, that they worship Me." (Qur'an 51:56) That doesn't mean you just do your prayers and bob's your uncle. Oh no, to live each and every aspect of your life according to the teachings of Islam. So if you have a halal job - that's worship. Obeying your parents, elders- that's worship. Gaining an education- that's worship. Learning and spreading the deen - that's worship. So basically everything that you do that is halal and you have the intention to please your Creator is WORSHIP. This my friend is the purpose of life for a Muslim.

Ali: Wat so I'm worshiping God no matter what I do as long as it's Halal and for Allah, is dat what you're saying?

Jamal: Exactly!

Ali: Woah! So dis worship ting isn't that hard is it, me thought u gotta take tests and do loads of boring stuff at the mosque.

Jamal: Well bro you can do your ibadat (worship) at home as well or at work or anywhere... but did you know that by praying in jamaat (congregation) at the mosque you get 40 times more reward for it?

Ali: Dats like bonus points, cos I think me is gonna need plenty of them innit.

Jamal: We all do bro.

Ali: Nah not YOU Jam you is the molvi type. YOU is a good lad.. not a bad boy like me?

Jamal: No bro I also have to be worried. I will also be asked about my actions. So we're in the same boat.

Ali: Na man me ain't from no banana boat like you...ha ha ha...only jokin Jam. One ting dat me and da boys are scared about is what will happen to us when we die?

Jamal: Every single person in this world is gonna die bro. Once we die, that is not the end because there will be a life after death....

Ali: What d'ya mean life after death, so is me gonna come back lookin' like a monkey?

Jamal: No bro that's reincarnation. Muslims don't believe in that. What I am talking about is that after you die you get brought back to life on the Day of Judgment.

Ali: Like the Arnie movie.....?I'll be back'.

Jamal: No Ali, once you die you will rest in your grave. We won't just remain asleep in our graves and then be woken up when the Day of Judgment begins. Oh no...The PUNISHMENT or REWARD, will start on the day we die, in our graves!

Ali: Stop it, you is scaring me Jam...

Jamal: Well in the grave, you're on your own bro. Your friends, weed, booze, gals, money, cars.. ain't gonna be any use to you. The only thing that will help you in the grave is your deen- your good actions. This is the reason why it's time you stop messing around and wasting your life bro - otherwise you will have to pay for it in the grave- big time!

Ali: Tell me more 'bout what happens next Jam?

Jamal: Then everyone will be brought back to life on the Day of Judgment where we must all account for our deeds, and depending on our deeds we get heaven or hell. If you're a good Muslim with good deeds you get Heaven inshallah; and if you have bad deeds you is going DOWN bro, not for life but eternity.

Ali: But bro can I get a day release?

Jamal: No

Ali: What if they tag me? They is doin' it in prisons now letting u out on tag.

Jamal: No. No tags, no nothing just pain, so be afraid of hell bro it's a nasty place.

Ali: I tink you has opened me eyes Jam. I is gonna pop down to your yard and learn about Islam some time. You can tell me more about Hell and Judgment Day cos they is wicked tings to tell da boys, they is gonna be well scared man.

Jamal: No problem at all bro. You are welcome anytime.

ISLAM SAYS 'NO' TO TERRORISM

By Sajid Iqbal

After the terrible terrorist attacks in London, everyone is pointing the finger at Islam and Muslims. So does Islam promote violence? Does Islam support terrorism? Is Islam a religion of extremists and fanatics?

The following traditions of Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace, will clarify that Islam is a faith that promotes peace and harmony and one that is against violence:

“A perfect Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe.”

‘It is unworthy of a Muslim to injure people’s reputations: and it is unworthy to curse any one: and it is unworthy to abuse any one: and it is unworthy of a Muslim to talk arrogantly.’

‘Faith is a restraint against all violence, let no Muslim commit violence.’

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked; ‘what actions are most excellent in Islam?’ He replied: **‘To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the injured.’**

Some people asked Allah’s messenger : ‘who is a good Muslim?’ He replied: **‘one who avoids harming the people with his tongue and hands.’ ‘A believer remains within the scope of his religion as long as he doesn’t kill another person illegally.’**

The Qur’an sums it up by saying: **“Anyone who has killed another person it is as if he has killed the whole of mankind and anyone who saves one life, it is as if he has saved the whole of mankind”** .(Chapter 5, verse 32)

Hey, I don’t know about you but you get the feeling that Islam is a peaceful religion. Its basic teaching is the promotion of peace between individuals and the implementation of peace within society. Islamic teaching is totally against violence, terror and chaos.

Jihad

So, the 60 million dollar question is that if Islam teaches peace and is absolutely against violence and terrorism then why the heck do these individuals and organisations carry out these violent acts in the name of Islam? Is it in the name of JIHAD?

You’re probably thinking isn’t fighting, violence and killing people all part of jihad? Well, that’s the trap that most people fall into. You see the word “Jihad” means struggle, or to be specific, striving in the cause of God. Any struggle done in day-to-day life to please God can be considered Jihad. One of the highest levels of Jihad is to stand up to a tyrant and speak a word of truth. Control of the self from wrong doings is also a great Jihad. One of the forms of Jihad is to take up arms in defence of Islam or a Muslim country when Islam is attacked. This kind of Jihad has to be declared by the religious leadership or by a Muslim head of state that is following the Quran and Sunnah.

Karen Armstrong explains it further by stating: *‘In the Koran, therefore, the only permissible war is one of self-defence. Muslims may not begin hostilities (Quran, 2:190). Warfare is always evil. but sometimes you have to fight in order to avoid this kind of persecution that Mecca inflicted on the Muslims at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Quran 2:191; 2:217) or to preserve decent values (Quran 4:75; 22:40). The Koran quotes the Torah, the Jewish scriptures, which permits people to retaliate eye for*

eye, tooth for tooth, but like the Gospels, the Koran suggests that it is meritorious to forgo revenge in a spirit of charity (Quran 5:45).

NO

Hostilities must be brought to an end as quickly as possible and must cease the minute the enemy calls for peace (Quran 2:192-3).’ (The True, Peaceful face of Islam)

So there you have it. Jihad, has got nothing to do with violence and killing people willy nilly. You see even in war, according to Islam a Muslim is still not allowed to harm or kill traders, merchants and contractors if they do not take part in actual fighting. It is totally against Islam for a Muslim to kill non-combatants, women, minors, servants, the blind, monks, the very old, those physically incapable of fighting and the insane and delirious.

Come on now, be real- if Islam is going out of its way to protect the rights of everyone even in war then how can it possibly be in favour of violence and terrorism?

Suicide Bombings

Now that brings me on to the issue of suicide bombing. As soon as it is mentioned it’s always Muslims and Islam who are the guilty ones. So just in case you’re still a bit unsure, let’s see what Islam says about suicide.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: **‘He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling himself in the hellfire and**

he who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the hellfire.’ (Bukhari)

NO

‘And if somebody commits suicide with anything in this world, he will be tortured with that very thing on the Day of Resurrection.’ (Bukhari)

Hamza Yusuf Hanson, an American Muslim scholar states: ‘Suicide is haram (forbidden) in Islam. It’s prohibited, like a mortal sin. And murder is haram. And to kill civilians is murder.’ Regarding Muslims who carry out suicide attacks he quoted the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, who said; **‘there are people who kill in the name of Islam and go to hell.’ When he was asked why, he said: ‘..Because they weren’t fighting for the sake of God.’**

So its clear as daylight that suicide is totally forbidden in Islam.

What Do The Scholars Say?

To sum up, let’s see what the Muslim scholars have to say about the reasons for EXTREMISM in the world.

T J Winters, a English convert to Islam who is lecturer of Islamic Studies at Cambridge University states: ‘Certainly, neither Bin Ladin nor his principal associate, Ayman-al-Zawahiri, are graduates of Islamic uni-

versities or seminaries. And so their proclamations ignore 14 centuries of Muslim scholarship, and instead take the form of lists of anti-American grievances and of Koranic

quotations referring to early Muslim wars against Arab idolaters. These are followed by the conclusions that all Americans, civilians and military, are to be wiped off the face of the Earth.’

Yusuf Islam, formerly known as the pop star Cat Stevens states: ‘..Some extremists take elements of the sacred scriptures out of context. They act as individuals, and when they can’t come together as part of a political structure or consultative process, you find these dissident factions creating their own rules, contrary to the spirit of the Koran- which demands that those recognised as being in charge of Muslims must consult together regarding society’s affairs.’

Yusuf Al Qaradawi, the well-known Egyptian scholar, said ‘..the world must make a distinction between what Islam says and what some misguided individuals do in its name.’ Qaradawi recognised though that there was no easy remedy for the problem of terrorism. “Terrorism thrives on oppression and injustice, you can’t uproot terrorism if you don’t uproot oppression.”

Finally Hamza Yusuf sums it up by saying: ‘The Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) over fourteen hundred years ago said “beware of extremism, for it is that which destroyed the peoples before you.” In the light of the present situation it is indeed wise advice. He also said. “My way is the middle way.” Moderation is in fact the way of thinking people everywhere. The vast majority of humanity is not extremist but in key times can easily be driven so.’

Now we should all be crystal clear that Islam is totally against violence, terrorism, suicide attacks and extremism. Islam is a beautiful faith that teaches peace and tolerance.

For further information visit The Revival website.



DEALER:

'G', 30, is a dealer in the UK and has been dealing for almost 10 years.

The Revival: Why do you sell/deal drugs? What made you start dealing?

G: I'm a dealer so I can become rich quick, its as simple as that. After watching movies like 'Scarface' and 'Godfather' I decided I wanted to be a gangster too!

The Revival: You know its illegal and haram- doesn't that bother you at all?

G: Its illegal- so what? Who said its haram, I don't sell it to Muslims do I, so how can it be haram? Anyway if I didn't do it, someone else will.

The Revival: It's Haram no matter who you sell it to. Your drugs will get in the hands of Muslims, therefore you are destroying the Muslim community, does that not bother you?

G: No, not really. Like I said if I didn't sell it, someone else will.

The Revival: What will make you stop dealing?

G: The only thing that will stop me dealing is if I get caught by the cops or if I get tapped by other big dealers which will mean violence and a big shoot-out.

The Revival: Does the fear of God not bother you? When you die you will have to ANSWER TO HIM?

G: I don't fear anyone. You know what, I am a God cos I can do whatever I want. I make my own rules.

A REFORMED DEALER:

'Hasan', 35, was a dealer for 9 years now but is now clean and trying to be a proper Muslim.

The Revival: What made you start dealing in drugs?

Hasan: I saw it as a quick way to make some fast money.

The Revival: So why did you stop dealing?

Hasan: I knew what I was doing was wrong and I didn't want it to come back to me...and it sure did. Cos of my dealing my bro-in-law was shot dead in a shoot out. I didn't want any more harm coming to my family so I had to get out. I asked Allah to get me out of this mess. He answered my calls and made it easier for me to leave the drug business all together

The Revival: What was life like as a dealer?

Hasan: Well, you think you're God and you don't have no fear for anyone. You think you're untouchable. It was a buzz but very dangerous and a reckless way of life. Cos of drugs I have been in prison twice, on many times I had guns pointing at me...so people may think it's a glamorous business but I tell you summat-it's not. Life now is a lot more better, peaceful and meaningful.

The Revival: What's your message to the Muslim youth?

Hasan: Simple, stay away from cigarettes cos that's what will take you on to weed. Smoking weed and dealing it dangers your life and your families lives. It's not cool. It's damn destructive! If you don't stop it will come back to haunt you. Believe me I know.

Drugs: weapon of mass destruction

The biggest Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) today is drugs. The most popular and easily available drug for youngsters today is cannabis, you might know it as "weed", "grass", "pot", "reefer", "joint", "hashish", "Mary Jane", "puff", "skunk" and "wacky backy". The Revival takes you on a journey in the life cycle of a joint. We have spoken to people who are involved and affected by drugs. The following are real life accounts of real people and they reflect the views of many people in similar situations.

THOSE WHO SMOKE WEED

Mohammed, 21. Customer service Advisor

The Revival: Why do you smoke weed? What made you start?

Mohammed: I smoke weed cos it gives you a buzz, you just chill out and forget about things. I started smoking because my friends started smoking and every one else does it as well. You see all the older guys that people respect smoking and chilling out so it all looks good. The first time I tried a spliff was with my friends, one of my mates brought a spliff into school and after school finished we had a smoke.

The Revival: What's the buzz in smoking weed?

Mohammed: Its hard to explain what the buzz is but its mainly that you feel really chilled out, you forget all the worries and problems in your life.

The Revival: But don't the worries come back when you get sober?

Mohammed: Yeah they do so you have another spliff, and you can still do your work and everyday things whilst you're stoned.

The Revival: Doesn't it effect your thinking and responses?

Mohammed: Yeah it makes you a bit slow but that's the good thing... you just relax and do things slowly.

The Revival: How much do you spend on weed in a week? How long have you been smoking it?

Mohammed: It depends on what u smoke, solids are cheaper but give you a headache and takes longer to make a spliff and skunk is more expensive but it gets you proper mashed. I don't smoke on my own cos that's just sad, smoking weed is a social thing done with friends, so we normally chip in together and get a deal and smoke it in the flat or in the car. I guess I spend about £50 quid a week on weed. I've been smoking it for 9 years now.

The Revival: Weed is illegal and haram- doesn't that stop or make you wanna quit?

Mohammed: Yeah its illegal but that's only cos the government can't tax it like they can with alcohol. Any way they have been downgrading it so its

alright to smoke, they know loads of people do it and there's nothing wrong with it. I know its haram as well but it's the only thing I do wrong. I don't drink alcohol like other guys do, and it's a natural thing and one day I will stop and ask to be forgiven, until then I'm gonna keep smoking.

The Revival: But when do you think that will be.? You been smoking for 9 years now.

Mohammed: I don't know I guess when I get married and have kids or something like that.

The Revival: What would you do if you're kid smoked weed?

Mohammed: I would kick the crap out of him cos I have been there, done it and ok its alright but I know its not good either.

The Revival: What illegal and haram things do you have to do to keep buying the weed?

Mohammed: I don't do nothing illegal bro. I do my job and that pays for my weed. I'm not a smack head bro, those guys are messed up big time. They would rob their own mothers if they could. That stuff is proper addictive. I had a good friend who got into that and it messed up his life big time, messed up his family and everything. He used to be a big lad and now he's just so messed up, smack head!

The Revival: How addicted are you to smoking weed?

Mohammed: I don't know? I must admit I do get a craving for weed at times but when that happens I just smoke it. I did try to stop once but it didn't last long, I just had to have a spliff. But I think I can stop. I know of a lot of guys that have stopped and become all religious.

The Revival: How does it affect your family?

Mohammed: My parents get angry at me cos I come home late all the time, I know that's not good but you just get stoned and forget about everything including your family and what time it is as well. I go home and try and hide it. I don't think my parents know I smoke weed, they think I smoke fags. My eyes are red and mashed so I just don't look at my parents, I just look away.

THOSE WHO HAVE STOPPED SMOKING WEED

Yasser, 26. Former heavy weed smoker who is now a practising Muslim brother.

The Revival: What made you stop smoking weed? What was the main reason?

Yasser: It was my friends first, one guy stopped smoking weed and became religious and he would talk to us and tell us to stop smoking it. We all knew it was wrong to smoke weed but we all did it anyway. It didn't happen overnight; our friend was trying for ages... over a year he would give us a proper bad buzz, the rest of us would be stoned. He would be sober and he would wait till we got stoned and then he would start saying stop smoking its just like alcohol etc. We even tried staying away from him, we told him to get lost, swore at him and all sorts, but I have so much respect for him. He just kept telling us to stop. We also began to feel guilty because we would get stoned and he would stay sober and not smoke and say look I stopped I don't smoke and I still can have a good time! He is a real friend, only a true friend will want what's good for you, the rest are just your mates cos your another guy who will chip in for a deal.

The Revival: How long did you used to smoke weed?

Yasser: For years... about 9 years or something.

The Revival: How much did you smoke in a day/week?

Yasser: A few spliffs a day sometimes, as little as 3 spliffs a day and sometimes we got proper mashed; you never count your spliffs.

The Revival: Hows life now since you stopped? How has life changed? Better or worse?

Yasser: Better.. a lot better. I miss smoking cos I remember the chill but I have so much more time to spend with my friends and family. My daughter was born and I was still smoking weed. I would leave wife and daughter at home and go out with the boys to get stoned. I missed the early years of my daughter growing up... I feel bad for that, but I'm making up for it now. I get on with my wife more now as well than before... she would make me mad asking questions and that all the time. But now things are so much better I have more time to do things and the days just seem longer, and I get to do my prayers as well as look after my parents. For the first time in ages I can look at my parents in the eye and speak to them. Before cos my eyes were red and I was stoned I would try and avoid my parents.

The Revival: What's your message to the dealers and smokers?

Yasser: No message to the dealers; those guys don't give a crap about you. They want you to smoke. They just want your money, that's all they interested in. There are so many dealers about these days its become like a shopping centre with good customer service.

WHY I STOPPED SMOKING WEED

Abdul, 25. Former junkie but is now a father, studying Islam and active in dawah work.

I started listening to some religious cassettes by people like Hamza Yusuf and other scholars and they would say things that began to make me think about my religion. I have always been a bit religious when I was young and my dad is a religious man as well. I guess I just needed a kick start to get me going. It took a while over a year of trying and wanting to stop it eventually happened. But I had to change my friends that was the hardest part to do. Guys that I have been around for years, my brothers they are, but I tried to speak to them about stopping the weed but they just wouldn't listen; eventually I thought if I want to stop I need to stay away from my friends.

I used to think yeah I should stop smoking weed its haram then I would meet up with my friends and when it was my turn on the spliff I couldn't resist and would smoke it. The problem is it has become natural. You think there's nothing wrong with it its like eating, drinking and sleeping. You just do them as an every day thing, that's what weed became for me. Its only when you stop that you realise how much of your life you wasted away. I went to uni as well and I smoked so much weed it was shocking but everyone does it at uni. I think if I wasn't smoking weed I would have done better in my exams. I look back and think about all the time I wasted getting stoned and sitting in front of the TV with my mates. Yeah we had good times but to be honest with you the times I remember are the ones where I wasn't stoned everything else is a haze.

I look back and think of what I could have done with my time I could have learnt more

about my religion, met more people done so many more things instead of monging out in front of the TV. But I guess you learn from your mistakes.

Sometimes I regret smoking the weed but sometimes I don't, I regret it because I will get punished for it by Allah, then I don't regret it because it was an experience ; ok it was a bad one but I feel I'm better for it. I've been there done that, got the T shirt so I can look back and say my life is better now that I have stopped smoking weed.

Things are a lot better at home as well, I'm spending more time with family I have also got married and have a kid as well now. Before I would argue with my parents staying out late at night doing what I wanted not listening to them. But now things are a lot better with my parents they are a lot more happier and more peaceful now, so that's good.

I spend a lot of time with my son, if I was still smoking weed I would be out all the time with the boys instead of spending time with my wife and son.

I know guys who are married and have kids they still smoke weed and they are out all the out on your child's life, missing out on them growing up.

More than all that I have stopped smoking weed and have started to read my namaaz (salaah). I would use the weed to forget about all the messed up things in my life but what I didn't realise is that it was the weed that was causing things to get messed up in my life. Now my namaaz gives me peace and has helped me realise what is important in my life.

STEPS TO QUIT

1. Understand your habit first, when do you go for a joint? After food? When you're stressed? To join in with friends? Avoid these triggers. Try to get help from family, friends and ex-smokers.

2. Replace the bad habit with a good one. Try new exercises, keep your money separate that you would have spent on weed and see it grow

3. If your friends smoke weed then you have to stay away from them if you really wanna quit. Replace your weed smoking friends with good non smokers and it will make a massive difference.

4. The best way to quit cannabis is to stop straight away, instead of gradually reducing it. Pick a day when you are going to stop smoking weed. If you give in to temptation, don't get angry about it, try again, it may take a few attempts before you kick this habit.

5. If you need help, contact your local G.P., who can advise you or may refer you for counselling.

6. Contact your local CDAT- community drugs and alcohol team- which is a confi-

dential service, phone them and organise an appointment. Contact self help agencies, e.g.- Marijuana anonymous, Turning point, Release, FRANK:

Muslim Youth Helpline:
www.myh.org.uk
0808 808 2008
e-mail: help@myh.org.uk

The National Drugs Helpline (Frank)
Tel: 0800 77 66 00 (24 hours a day)
Text phone: 0800 917 8765
Email: frank@talktofrank.com
Web: http://talktofrank.com

Marijuana anonymous
http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org
Turning Point
Tel: 020 7702 2300
info@turning-point.co.uk
www.turning-point.co.uk

Release
HELPLINE: 0845 4500 215
ask@release.org.uk
www.release.org.uk

For further details contact THE REVIVAL

Drugs: Weapon of Mass Destruction continued

PARENTS

Parents in their 40's and are practising Muslims. Son has been smoking weed for years.

The Revival: Is your son normal/ happy at home? Any problems?

Mum: Yeah he's a good boy, things are not good at home because he comes home late all the time and we don't know where he is or who his friends are. We ask him where he goes and he says he's with friends. We tried everything his dad locked him out of the house but I let him in. We tell him to be in by 11pm latest and that lasts a couple of days and he's back to coming back at 2 or 3 in the morning. We have just given up on him.

The Revival: Why do you think your son/daughter smokes weed? how long for?

Dad: No my son doesn't smoke weed he's not like the others.

Mum: Yeah he does smoke weed, I smell it from his clothes I don't tell his dad cos it would really upset his dad and what can we do, these days the parents have to just be quiet. We're scared- what if he runs away or something, what if he turns round and hits us or something when he's under the influence (Nasha). I also found bags of the 'chars' (weed) in his clothes. I don't know what to do. I'm scared so

I just lie to his dad and stay quiet and pray to Allah(swt) that he changes himself and his friends.

The Revival: How has it affected your life/ family's life?

Mum: More problems in the house, his dad gets angry and shouts at him but he doesn't seem to listen to him and doesn't seem to care.

Dad: His mother tries to help her son and then there are arguments between us because I say it's her fault and that she has spoilt him and allowed him to become like this.

Mum: His dad shouts at him but he's my son and a mother will always think good of her son and when I say he's not like that his father gets angry and mad at me. I'm scared of my son and my husband, what do I do, I just can't win.

The Revival: What have you done to encourage him to quit?

Mum: Nothing, we don't talk about it at home. It will bring shame to the family if people find out and his dad will kill him or himself if he finds out! His dad is a respectable member of the community.

The Revival: What will make him/ her stop/ quit smoking weed?

Mum: His friends! He spends more

time with them than he does with his own family, so I guess its his friends that will change him.

The Revival: Have you taken any professional help/ advice in helping your son/daughter in quitting weed?

Mum: NO

The Revival: What's your message to dealers/ smokers and to other parents?

Mum: We need to do something, the problem is they are other people's kids as well and I'm sure their parents are going through the same thing, we need to first recognise there is a problem at the moment we know our kids are doing drugs but we don't want to accept it we just wish and hope they aren't but in reality we are just kidding ourselves. They are smoking and dealing.

The parents of dealers don't care, they just get loads of money from their son and they are happy- they don't care if the money is halal or haram. How can people live like that- everything they eat and wear is haram? You can't give the money to a mosque or to charity. You can't go to Hajj and worst of all you will go to your grave knowing that the money that paid for your grave and your kafan (coffin) is all HARAM. How can you live with that?

Weed- A weapon of mass destruction!

Weed is a weapon of mass destruction which destroys the life of the user and everyone else... but the addict is so out of his head - he or she doesn't even notice the effect it has on close ones. 3.2 million people in Britain smoke cannabis. We have to wake up and smell the coffee. Muslim youth today smoke weed - so what can we do?

We need to know the danger and harm of drugs as well as the legal and Islamic viewpoints.

DANGERS OF SMOKING WEED:

- 5-10% of cannabis users eventually become dependent.
- Thirty thousand Britons a year might eventually die from cannabis smoking.
- All forms of cannabis are mind-altering and people can become physically and psychologically dependant on cannabis.
- Cannabis impairs concentration, short-term memory, affects rational thought and impairs driving.
- People are 4 times more likely to have a heart attack within an hour of smoking cannabis
- Cannabis contains more than 400 chemicals and 60 carcinogens (cancer causing chemicals)

•Studies show that someone who smokes five joints per day may be taking in as many cancer-causing chemicals as someone who smokes a full pack of cigarettes every day.

•Cannabis can cause anxiety and depression, psychosis and an increased risk of developing schizophrenia Reference: British Medical Journal 2003;326:942-943 (3 May)



SMOKING AND POSSESSION OF DRUGS IS ILLEGAL AND YOU COULD BE SENT DOWN:

Possession: 2 years in jail plus an unlimited fine.

Supplying/Dealing: 14 years in jail plus an unlimited fine

Possession with intent to supply: 14 years in jail plus an unlimited fine.

WEED IS HARAM AND CAN TAKE YOU TO THE HELL FIRE!

Weed stays in your bodies for 40 days and in that time your prayers will not be accepted. So if your mum died and you were stoned, you couldn't even pray at your own mum's funeral - just think about that for a sec!

The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'Every intoxicant is unlawful. Allah has promised the one who drinks or uses intoxicating drugs that He will make him/her drink from the sweat or the pus (of impurities) of the inmates of hell.' (Muslim) Also the Prophet (pbuh) said: 'That which intoxicates in large quantities is unlawful also in small quantities.' (Tirmidhi)

It is absolutely clear that smoking or selling weed and other drugs is totally haram. If you don't stop and ask for forgiveness it could certainly take you to the hell fire and you will receive punishment for it in the grave!

One is the best crosser of a football in the world today. One is the most influential man in history.

One shows no mercy in a dead ball situation. One is a mercy to all of mankind.

One is recognised as a famous celebrity in the world today. One is recognised as the greatest leader in world history.

One has thousands of adoring fans. One has almost 2 billion followers today who follow his every practice and teaching.

The 60 million dollar question is: Who do you REALLY know?

Whose life story have you read? Whose life do you follow? Who do you imitate? Who inspires you? Who's your role model?

Is it a football celebrity known as David Beckham or the Prophet Muhammad-peace be upon him?

Let's find out who you really know shall we. Answer the following questions and put yourself to the test. Be honest. No cheating...and no Google searches allowed thank you very much:

DAVID BECKHAM

- 1.What is David Beckham's wife called?
- 2.Name two sons of Beckham?
- 3.Where was Beckham born?
- 4.When did Beckham leave Man Utd?
- 5.How many footballs teams has Beckham played for? Who are they?
- 6.How old is Beckham?
- 7.Who was Beckham's best friend at Man Utd?
- 8.How long did Beckham stay at Man Utd?
- 9.What number shirt did Beckham wear at Man Utd and Real Madrid?

Do you REALLY know him?

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (Peace Be Upon Him)

- 1.Name two wives of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)?
- 2.Name two daughters of the Prophet (pbuh)?
- 3.Where was the Prophet (pbuh) born?
- 4.At what age did the Prophet (pbuh) migrate to Madina?
- 5.How many battles did the Prophet (pbuh) take part in?
- 6.What age did the Prophet (pbuh) pass away?
- 7.Who was the Prophets (pbuh) closest friend and companion?
- 8.How long did the Prophet (pbuh) live in Makkah and Madina?
- 9.What was the 'stamp of Prophethood' on the Prophets (pbuh) shoulder blades?

OK, so whose questions did you answer easily? On whose questions did you pull a funny face and look a bit thick? Beckham or Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)? Now if you're a Muslim and you know more about Beckham than the Prophet (pbuh) then what does that tell you? How sad is that! If you know more about a football celebrity than the personality who gave us a code and system of life, rights for every one and changed the world- then you should be ashamed. Don't you think it's time you read up on the life of the greatest man in history? What was his mission in life? What are his teachings? Follow his example and practice.

You see we all need a role model in life, someone who we look up to and aspire to be like. As Muslims our role model should be the Prophet (pbuh). If you want to follow

the Prophet (pbuh) then you need to know more about him. What were the Prophet's (pbuh) likes and dislikes? How did he sleep? How did he eat? How did he treat his wives? How did he behave with the non Muslims? How did he treat his neighbours? If you don't know how our Prophet (pbuh) lived his life, how can you follow his example?

Trying to find out the truth behind Beckham's alleged affair or whether Victoria will ever release a new single, is information which is of no benefit to us, but knowing more about the Prophet (pbuh) will help us to answer the third question that is asked in the grave "Who is this man?".

By following a football celebrity you will get 5 minutes of pleasure and happiness. By following the Prophet (pbuh) you will get a purpose in life, a code of life, a perfect

role model, a peace of mind and a ticket to paradise!

So grab hold of a copy of the Seerah (biography) of the Prophet (pbuh) today! Know your Prophet (pbuh) and follow his way of life. Get hold of the following books/CDs on the Prophet (pbuh) and find out about your Prophet (pbuh):

- 1- Muhammad, His Life Based on the Earliest Sources by Martin Lings
- 2-The Life of The Last Prophet - by Yusuf Islam.
- 3- Life of Muhammad by Taha Ismail
- 4- Muhammad, Messenger of Islam by Amina Adil

These are available from all good book-shops.

For further details see: www.therevival.co.uk/muhammad.htm

Turkey(s) of the Month!

By Naheem Zaffar

This months honorable award goes to EXTREMIST, RADICAL AND FANATICAL so-called scholars and Imams.

Individuals who brainwash young naive Muslims and promote hatred and violence. So-called scholars who have a misguided and fanatical understanding of Islam. Imams who turn innocent young peaceful Muslims into extremists, fanatics and even terrorists. Those who have an incorrect and dangerous understanding of Jihad. Those Mullahs who believe killing non Muslim civilians through bomb blasts, suicide bombings is Jihad. Imams who are damaging the name of Islam, who are destroying the Muslim youth and making life hell for ordinary Muslims in the west.

Now if the four British Muslims actually did carry out the suicide attacks in London, then they only did so because of these extremist so called

scholars. These kind of dangerous Imams need to be named and shamed, held accountable by the Muslim community and the law. There is no room for dodgy Imams like these. We cant allow dangerous people like these to come anywhere near any mosque or the Muslim youth.

An overwhelming majority of scholars and Imams in the UK and across the world have a true understanding of Islam. Scholars who promote peace and openly condemn terrorism and extremism. Scholars who try to bridge the gap between different communities without compromising the teachings of Islam.

The spotlight now after the London terrorist attacks is on Scholars and Imams of mosques. Now is the time to make sure our scholars deal with the real issues concerning our youth in the west. Now is the time to make sure our mosques have a proper education system. Now is the time our Imams make sure they speak the

language of their youth and get through to the Muslim youth.

Imams need to teach clearly and openly what Islam says about peace, jihad, violence, extremism, suicide bombings etc. Also Imams need to give solutions to confused and angry Muslims of how to deal and let out their emotions in a proper, peaceful and constructive way. Emphasis needs to be put on proper education of Islam in the mosques, encouragement of political lobbying and to be role models to everyone in society.

If we ignore these issues then we are to blame if young Muslim youths do not have a proper understanding of Islam. We will be to blame if our Muslim youth turn into extremists and fanatics.

So, the Turkey of the Month for July 2005 goes to EXTREMIST, RADICAL AND FANATICAL so-called scholars and Imams

F.R.I.E.N.D.S

By Alveena Salim

Have you ever actually sat down and thought about the people you hang around with (your bredrins!) Who are they? Are they alcoholics, drug dealers/addicts, wannabe G's, playa's? Do they regularly go clubbing? Are they involved in dodgy scams? Do they have lots of girls/boys on the line? Do they treat their parents like crap? Are they regularly involved in fights? Are they dodgy geezers?

You might be thinking "Who cares what they're on or what they get up to- that don't matter! We have a laugh when we get together".

What your mates do isn't minor at all- and it DOES matter! Friends have an enormous influence on your life. They can change your lifestyle and can make you do things that you probably haven't ever considered doing before (and they can do all that without holding a gun to your head!)

There's a well known saying that goes "If you want to know what kind of a person someone is, just check out his/her friends". And that makes sense, obviously a person would only befriend a like-minded individual, someone who understands them, and thinks the same way that they do, after all that's the basic criteria of choosing a friend.

Why on earth would a person be mates with someone whom they had nothing in common with?

So if you want to know what kind of person you are, you should take a good hard look at your close mates because this should give you a rough idea.

This is because its human nature to copy the actions of those who are around us. So if you have a close friendship with people, who are shameless or evil, you will most definitely pick up their bad habits. This is a slow, subconscious process, in other words a person does not even realise that he/she is picking up bad habits! If someone believes that they will be totally unaffected by bad company then they are only kidding themselves.

The Prophet (saw) said: **"A person is likely to follow the faith of his friend, so look (carefully) at whom you choose as a friend."** [Ahmad]

This means that if your mates don't pray, fast, are involved in dodgy stuff, are bad to their parents and can't speak without swearing then sooner or later you're going to start acting in the same way. In the same way, if your friends are decent and are living their life according to the laws of the Qur'an and Sunnah then they could help you in becoming better Muslims.

"The day will come when the transgressor will bite his hands (in anguish) and say, "I wish I had followed the path with the messenger. Shame on me, I wish I did not take

that person as a friend. He has led me away from the message after it came to me". Indeed, the devil lets down his human victims." [25:27-29]

Our friends can either be the rope that ties us to our faith in Allah, or the knife that cuts any connection we had with our Creator. They are blessings, they are tests. Ask yourself, who are your friends? And more importantly, what kind of friend are you?

We should also realise that if our aim in life was to become a model, then we would hang around models or at least those interested in fashion. If our aim in life was to become an artist we would hang around those who are interested in art. In the same way if we wanted to pursue a career in teaching, medicine, or engineering we would for obvious reasons hang around with those who share the same goals as ourselves.

In the same way as Muslims our goal should be Paradise. So it only makes sense that we should try to arrange our life and activities around those who also share the same goal. We should hang around those people who support and encourage us into becoming better Muslims and increase our love for Allah (swt) and His Prophet (saw).

This does not mean that we should totally lock off from those who may be far from Islam, of course not, but a friend is someone who has a very important place in a person's life, which is why it makes sense to choose our friends wisely.

If your friends don't come under the "good friend" category, then trust me when they mess up in life and go down they'll take you down with them. Totally cutting off with bad friends isn't what you should do either, no one likes a snob who thinks he/she is "too good" to hang around with bad people. Just have some space from your mates for a while and start hanging around good Muslim people who will most definitely change your ways for the better, and then when you've sorted yourself out, get back into contact with your not-so religious friends and start to influence them into living their lives as better Muslims.

So how do we know if someone fits the "good friend" category or not? Well, they're easy to spot if you know what you're looking for. Once the Prophet was asked, "What person can be the best friend?". He replied: "He who helps you remember Allah, and reminds you when you forget Him." He was then asked, "And which friend is the worst?". He replied: "He who does not help you remember God and does not remind you of God when you forget."

The Prophet (saw) has made it very easy for us to spot good people a mile away. He has said that the first sign of a good person is that

1. When you see him/her they remind you of Allah (swt)-How's that? By the way they look.

If she's a girl she would be modestly dressed according to the teachings of Islam and if he's a boy, he would have a beard and dressed modestly with the intention of following the sunnah and teachings of the Prophet (saw).

2. The second sign of a good person is that when you look at the way they live their life, you'd notice that they are careful about living their life according to the teachings of Islam.

3. The third sign of a good Muslim is that when you sit with them, you start to feel bad and guilty about all the dodgy stuff that you're involved in, and make a promise that from now on you'll live your life as a better person. They are a good influence on you.

So a good friend should not merely be judged on their appearance (i.e. scarf/beard). They should possess the other two signs as well.... its a full package.

Before making friends with anyone, we should ask ourselves if this friendship would benefit us in any way in the hereafter? This is because Allah (swt) has promised seven types of people His shade on the Day of Judgement, as a mark of distinction and honour. Two people who befriend and love each other for the sake of Allah (swt) are one of those people. In other words, just by befriending someone who is living their life according to the laws of the Qur'an and Sunnah could become our shortcut to Paradise.

OK, so now you're probably thinking that you need to hook up with some decent friends ASAP (I hope!), but where are they all? Well, let me help you, you're not exactly gonna find them parked up in street corners in a kitted up Subaru (checking out the gals/guys!), nor are you going to find them in clubs dancing to the latest bhangra beat, nor will you find them smoking sheesha in a dodgy run-down snooker centre..... and you definitely won't find them at the back of your school's bike shed getting high on weed.

But you might find them in Islamic study circles, you'll find them in the mosque and you'll definitely find them in Islamic programmes. So regularly show your face in such places and you will be lucky enough to hook up with some decent friends.

We should realise that we will be raised up in the hereafter with the kind of people we hanged around with in this life, which is why it makes sense to associate ourselves with good people. So choose your mates wisely, because good Islamic friends could most definitely become our shortcut to paradise. So once again I will say to you that our friends can either be the rope that ties us to our faith in Allah, or the knife that cuts any connection we had with our Creator. They are blessings, they are tests. Ask yourself, who are your friends? And more importantly, what kind of friend are you?

Q I'm a single Muslim girl. Is it allowed for me to trim, shape or pluck my eyebrows?

A The problem of living in the West is to try and keep up with the Western phenomena and this is done whether it means its Haram or Halal. We find sisters with perfectly formed eyebrows wanting to reshape them so that they will be part of the picture.

According to the Shariah (Islamic Law) it is not permissible for a Muslim girl to pluck, trim or shape her eyebrows as this is against the natural beauty that Allah (swt) has given to her. This has been clarified in the following Hadith: "The Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: **Allah has cursed those women who modify their eyebrows or ask others to do it for them.** (Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim).

As we can see the warning from the Prophet (pbuh) is a very strong one. This is why great scholars like Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tabari, Nawawi, among others have actually prohibited (forbidden) any kind of modification to the eyebrows, even removing hair from in between linked eye-brows. Tabari has considered it to be changing the creation of Allah. However, they have permitted the removal of hair for women from the chin and above the upper lip (if a beard or a moustache develops), since this is to avoid resembling men.

Exceptions

We learn from this that it is not permissible for women to remove any hair from the eyebrows for the sake of just beautifying themselves. However, it would be permissible for a woman to remove the hair from above the nose (if the eyebrows have become linked) as this is considered to be not-normal. It may also be considered permissible to clip off one or two stray hairs from around the eyebrows or for very bushy eyebrows to be reduced to normal size and moderation. This type of concession (i.e. to remove hair for the sake of eliminating a defective appearance) can be found in the following:

Ibn 'Abidin al-Shami(1) writes in his commentary on the al-Durr al-Mukhtar(2) concerning the prohibition of plucking hair from the face:

It is possible that the prohibition mentioned [in the hadith] is if this is done for the sake of beautifying oneself for the sake of strangers, otherwise, if she has some hair on her face which her husband dislikes, then the prohibition of removing such hair seems to be far-fetched. This is because [self-] beautification for women is recommended for the sake of chastity.... It states in the Tabyin al-Maharim(3) that removing facial hair is unlawful, unless a beard or moustache grows on a women, in which case it will not be unlawful to remove it, but would actually be recommended. It is related in the Tatarhaniyya(4) from al-Mudmarat that there is no objection in removing the hair from eyebrows and face so long as it does not cause one to resemble a man. The same is mentioned in the Mujtaba (Radd al-Muhtar 5:239).

Conclusion

Taking the hadith and the various statements of the Hanafi jurists into consideration the following could be concluded:

1. It would be permitted for a woman to remove a beard or a moustache that appears on her face. Even though it is facial hair, but since it is to stop women from resembling men, it is

permitted. This is the opinion of the majority of scholars, in fact they have said that it is recommended, not just permitted. The same will be to bleach this hair instead.

2. If the eyebrows are linked in between, it would be permissible to remove the excess hair from in between to separate them [i.e. the hair above the nose], this can be done by clipping them off, plucking, trimming or shaving. The reason for this is that linked eyebrows are looked upon as a defect, hence it would be permissible to remove it.

3. A 'few' stray hairs around the eyebrows would be permissible to remove by clipping them off, plucking, trimming or shaving is acceptable if it looks defective, or for married women creates abhorrence in their husband. This does not mean it is permitted to remove a whole line or two of fine hair from around the eyebrows [as is the case nowadays].

4. Dense bushy eyebrows may be trimmed down to a more normal size. However, one must exercise great caution in this regard, since one does not want it to fall under the warning of the hadith. If one is not sure how to determine the normal size they should not act on the benefit of the doubt, but rather follow the more cautionary approach and trim less. What so-called 'regular' [especially non-Muslim] people consider nowadays as the norm i.e. eyebrows that are shaped in particular unnatural or reduced to thin lines can not be considered as acceptable in Islamic law due to the severity of the hadith.

5. Great caution has to be exercised in this regard, since the hadith is very strict and there are some Hanafi scholars who have taken more strict position. For instance, Mullah Ali al-Qari (Allah be pleased with him) comments [relating from Imam Nawawi] that plucking of the facial hair is haram (unlawful) for a woman with the exception of moustache or beard hairs (Mirqat al-Mafatih 8:218). The concessions mentioned above are for the removal of a defective appearance and not for purely beautification purpose, hence, caution in this matters is the way.

Of course Allah knows best.

References:

1. Shaykh Ibn Abidin is one of the highest Authorities of the Hanafi Fiqh. He was known for his brilliance in Hanafi Fiqh and Hadith. His most famous works are used as the complete authority of the Hanafi school of thought which is Raddul Mukhtar the explanation documentary for the great Hanafi scholar Imam Haskafi's Durr-e-Mukhtar. He lived in Syria (8th century Islam) and hence his title As-Shami.
2. Durr-al-Mukhtar was written in 1070 (6th century Islam) by Imam Haskafi who was the main Mufti and complete authority of Syria. His works are regarded as the masterpiece of Hanafi Fiqh by all.
3. Tabyin Al Maharim was written in the 8th century by Sinan Ad Din Yusuf Al Hanafi an Egyptian scholar. The works are on Islamic Ethical and Moral codes and law. Again accepted by Hanafis throughout.
4. Tatarhaniyyah is a very important work of Fatwas released in the 7th century. All Hanafi jurist regard it as authentic and use it in their works.

Q How can reading Salaah>Namaaz help us in this world?

A After submission to the faith of Islam, Salaah is the most important form of worship for the believers. The purpose behind the Salaah is to remember the creator within regular intervals during the day. This will lead to a believer putting his/her full trust in Allah for all their day to day necessities. There are many Hadith advising the believers of the true benefits of Salaah and the beauty it holds for both this world and the hereafter.

During our day we commit many sins without even realising their consequences. However, we cannot always remember to perform repentance to Allah and hence justifiably we should await our punishment. However, how great is the mercy of Allah who forgives these sins just by us performing our daily prayers, as narrated in the following Hadith;

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) say", "What would you think if there were a river running by the door of any of you, and he bathed in it five times every day, would any trace of dirt be left on him?" The people said "There would be no trace of dirt on him". He said "this is like the five daily prayers through which Allah erases (minor) sins." (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: "**The five daily prayers are like a deep river flowing by the door of any of you, in which he bathes five times a day.**" (Muslim)

Ibn Mas'ud said: "A man kissed a woman, and then he came to the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) and told him what he had done. Then Allah revealed the verse **"And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night: For those things that are good remove those that are evil...."**(11:114). The man said "does it apply to me?" The Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied **"it applies to all of my Ummah.** (Bukhari and Muslim)

Uthman Ibn Affan said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying **"There is no Muslim who, when the time for prayer comes, performs ablution properly, concentrates on his prayer and bows correctly, but the prayer will be an expiation for the sins committed prior to it, so as long as no major sin has been committed. This is the case until the end of time."** (Muslim)

Benefit in this world

From the above few Hadith we can understand the benefit of Salaah for us and our after life. However one may ask how it can benefit me in this world? The fact of the matter is that when a Muslim devotes himself to prayer he gains such closeness to his creator that all that he does is always accepted and becomes spiritual. Therefore when he asks for something Allah grants it, when he needs something Allah gives it even before he requests it. Allah has said that he becomes the power in the hand that he uses or the step he takes, meaning he only does with the absolute will of Allah. This is when a person becomes the friend of Allah and Allah loves him so much that He will wage war against his servant's enemies. Who needs any defence when Allah will protect them?

Abu Hurairah narrated from the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) that Allah said **"Whoever is hostile to my friends I declare war against him. A man does not come close to me with anything more dearly than what**

I have made obligatory upon them (Salaah, saum etc). Man continues to come nearer to me through voluntary deeds until I love him, and when I love him, I become his ears with which he hears, I become his sight with which he sees. I become his hands with which he strikes and I become his legs with which he strides. If he asks me I shall surely grant his request. If he seeks my refuge I shall protect him. I do not hesitate in what I intend to do, as I hesitate to take the soul of My faithful servant; he hates death whilst I hate for any harm to come to him (through pain of death). [Bukhari]

From the above hadith we can see how powerful man can become when he becomes close to Allah. This can only be done by performing regular Salaah.

Here's a few more benefits of prayer in this world:

- 1.It helps you from doing evil deeds and makes you a better person.
- 2.It gives you peace, tranquillity and meditation.
- 3.Prayer gives you stress-relief because you shut everything else out.
- 4.Prayer in congregation (jamaat) builds your bond with other Muslims.
- 5.It gives you a timetable for the day. It gives you discipline.

Salaah in times of difficulty

When we face difficulties we try and find remedy in various different aspects, such as finance, medicine, friendship etc. However, whenever our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) would face difficulty he would always turn to prayer.

Huzaiifa narrates that whenever the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) faced any difficulty, he would at once resort to Salaah. (Ahmad, Abu Dawood)

Salaah is a great blessing of Allah. To resort to Salaah at the time of worry is to hasten to His mercy, and when Allah's mercy comes to the rescue there can be no trace of any worry. When Ibn Abbas heard the news of the death of his son, he came off his camel and performed two cycles of prayer and said this is what Allah has commanded us to do in the following verse **"Seek Allah's help with patience and Salaah"**(2:45)

There are many other reports of when Allah's Messenger and his companions used to resort to Salaah. We unfortunately find that our youth resort to Haram such as alcohol and drugs to drown their worries, and then we wonder why we as an Ummah are in such a state.

Other benefits of Salaah

There are numerous benefits for Salaah both physically and mentally, here are some that our scholars have highlighted:

- The love of Allah will start to increase.
- The body will stay free from illness.
- You will stay in the protection of the angels.
- You will gain blessing in the home.
- Your face and body will become illuminated.
- Allah will protect you from the punishment of the grave.
- Allah will protect you from the fire of Hell.
- There will be ease in the questioning on the day of judgement.
- The Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) will intercede for you.
- You will be with the friends of Allah without fear.
- The greatest benefit for the believer will be the vision of Allah.

May Allah guide us all and keep us steadfast in prayer and worship. Of course Allah knows best

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