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EDITORIAL:



I'm a father, a mother, a husband, a wife, a brother, a sister, a son and a daughter. I'm a child, a teenager and an adult. I'm a neighbour, team mate, work colleague and soul mate. I'm a student, a graduate and a teacher. I'm soap mad, a football fan, a food fanatic and a shopaholic. I'm normal, special, ambitious, creative and fun.

So what am I? I'm a Muslim.

Yep that's right. It's me you sit next to on the bus everyday. It's me you see on the train to work. It's me who smiles at you at the coffee shop. It's me that you see bringing my kids from school. It's me that leads the team meetings at work. It's me that celebrates with you when United score.

And I'm still the same Muslim.

Do you recognise me? No. Why not?

Did you think I was the terrorist? Did you think I was a wannabe suicide bomber? Did you think I was the fanatic? Did you think I was the fundamentalist? Did you think I only attended angry marches? Did you think I burnt effigies? Did you think that I hate you? Did you think I was intolerant of others?

Did you not think that I was normal?

But I'm still the same old Muslim I've always been.

When 9/11, 7/7, and the recent bomb threats in Glasgow and London took place did you think it was me? Did you look at me suspiciously? Were you afraid of me? Did you start hating me? Did you think I should 'go home'? Did you think I was the enemy within?

But I'm still the same old Muslim I've always been.

What is it about me that makes you uncomfortable?

Is it my beard or my headscarf? Is it my long robe? Is it my hat or my turban? Is it because I pray? Is it coz I don't drink or go clubbin'? Is it because I'm different to you? Is it because I speak a second language? Is it because you think I've got your job? Is it because my name is foreign to you? Is it because I go to the mosque?

But I'm still the same old Muslim I've always been.

I'm a Muslim like 2 million others in the UK. There are 1.6 billion of us worldwide.

I am human like you. I am normal like you. I work and play like you. I am law abiding like you. So don't fear me but talk to me. Don't judge me but respect me like you respect others. Don't isolate me but rather help me to integrate with you. Don't blame me for what others do. Just like I don't blame you for the actions of others. Don't have misconceptions about me but invite me for tea so I can answer your misconceptions.

You and I may have different beliefs, different ideologies, different dress codes, different tastes in food, different languages, different cultures and different social lives. But I live here and you live here. The law of the land is the same for both of us. We go to the same school, college and uni. We go to the same work place. We both want to have a peaceful and fun life. We both want to see our kids and loved ones safe and happy. We both want to pay off our debts. We both want success.

I'm still the same old Muslim I've always been.

And a word or two to Muslims like me...

Let me ask you: Do you get really hacked off when non-Muslims label you, put you in to categories and stereotype you?

If you don't want to be labelled as a terrorist, a fanatic and extremist by non-Muslims then don't label non-Muslims too. Don't see them all as part of the BNP. Don't brand them all as racist just coz of a few. Don't put them into categories and stereotypes. Treat them as individuals if that's how you want to be treated too.

Don't accuse them of Islamophobia simply because they disagree with you. They have a right to do so just like you do- that doesn't mean they are racist or they hate you- it's called democracy, freedom of speech and expression. If you don't want to be accused of being intolerant of other views then prove you are tolerant by respecting different views without throwing a rage.

Let me ask you again: Do you get really peeved off when you are called an extremist, radical, the enemy within, backward and so on?

So what are you actually doing as a British citizen to make sure non-Muslims don't think of you in a negative or derogatory manner? Do you have the right manners and etiquettes of a Muslim? Do you practice peace and tolerance? Do you practice what you preach? Are you a walking, talking advert for Islam? Or is it because of your behaviour and mentality that you are seen in a negative manner?

Let me ask you finally: Are you desperate to be seen as a good person?

You should never be desperate to please anyone but Allah (swt). Just be yourself. Practice Islam with wisdom and automatically you will be a good advert for your faith and you will not be seen negatively. But you have to do your bit first. If you are still accused of everything under the sun...then don't let it bother you. Show a bit of patience and with the help of Allah (swt) people will see you in a positive light.

How do you see me now? How do I see you now? I am still the same old Muslim I've always been.

Sajid Iqbal
editor@therevival.co.uk



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emails to the editor

Assamualaikum Brother,
I would just like to start by saying we all know you are trying to do a good job in the way of Allah by writing a magazine for the Muslim youth but have you ever really thought about the topics you are writing about?!? Banging on about the youth of this time and pointing out how misguided they are and writing about what you think people get up to these days in not going to want to make youngsters embrace our religion.

In the latest issue all you talked about was online romances and those two silly girls having a conversation. This is not the way to draw youngsters to our religion. I don't think I learnt a single thing by reading your magazine and it's not just this latest issue. It's been the previous few issue too.

I know that I'm not the only one who feels like this but almost all the people I know who read the latest copy were not impressed, which is what prompted me to email you this.

Please do us all a big favour and start writing about our Islam and teaching the youth out there how wonderful and relevant to their everyday life style our Islam is. Showing someone the path and guiding them in this way you will definitely get more people practicing. No one likes it when people keep going on about how bad they think they are, it only makes them more aggressive and moves them further from he truth.

**Shazia Tanveer
Manchester**

Salaam

Overall thumbs up! As general note, personally I believe that if the front cover is eye-catching it will have a different affect on the reader about the overall magazine; this front cover wasn't all that at all. Maybe for future ones, please go bright! Like Pimp my Ride and make it question the reader so they read on.

**Asmah Zahir,
Bradford**

Salaam bro

Read the last issue of The Revival and I think what you're doing is good. It's prob the only Islamic thing I read coz it ain't boring. It's got a good mix of stuff but I think you should have more stuff in there that people can learn from and a quiz or something which tests peoples knowledge, coz I already know a lot of the basic stuff from mosque. Anyway, great mag and I'll look out for the next issue.

**Amir
Derby**

WHAT'S HE CHATTIN' ABOUT?

Awra – the private parts. The body parts that are considered indecent to expose in public. For a man, it is between the navel and the knee, whereas for a woman, all except the face, hands and feet according to some schools of thought.

Fidya – a ransom or compensation paid for rites or acts of worship missed or wrongly performed because of ignorance or ill health.

I'tikaf – to be in seclusion, while fasting, in a mosque, particularly in the last ten days of Ramadan. A Mu'takif is one who is in a state of I'tikaf.

Kaffara – atonement, a prescribed way of making amends for wrong

actions, especially missed obligatory actions. For example the Kaffara for deliberately breaking a fast is to free a slave, if this can't be done then you must fast for 60 days consecutively, and if that can't be done then you must feed 2 meals each to 60 poor people.

Khutba – a speech, and in particular a standing speech given by the Imam before the Jummah prayer and after the two Eid prayers.

Rayyaan – The Holy Prophet said: "There is a gate of paradise called Rayyan through which only those will enter on the Day of Judgement who are regular in observing the fast and no one else." (Bukhari, Muslim)

Salaam

To be frank and perfectly honest...BORING!!! What happened to the types of issues that me and my little sis used to fight over to say who is going to have the first read? The time when I used to almost fall off me chair as it was sooo funny...or distracted with my uni essays coz revival was very interesting and informative...with current update issues/topics that really gripped me as a Muslim sister...what went wrong? Horribly wrong...come on Revival Team go back to what you were and are still good at!!!

You can do it. We will all do dua that Inshallah you all get back on track. I hope this helps u for future articles. I'm very sorry if I was being harsh but that is my own personal opinion and forgive me if I have offended anyone. I know that you are doing this for the sake and pleasure of Allah (swt) so I make Dua that He rewards you abundantly for all your efforts. I make due that future revivals continue for years to come and have a major impact on the Muslim youth to inspire them to see the beautiful light of Islam Inshallah.

**Nadia
Birmingham**

Hi!

I think The Revival is a really good magazine! Me and my sisters have all read it and we all thought it was really funny. That Aliyah n Jameela article was the best coz it was really funny as well as educational. My family isn't really that religious so I did learn a lot from your magazine and this ramzaan I'm def going to try harder and take it more seriously. Definitely going to check out your website. Please can you try and have something about ramzaan in the next issue, because I would like to learn more about it. Thanx and can't wait for the next issue.

**Aisha
Middlesborough**

If you have any comments, suggestions or you just disagree with any opinion or analysis expressed in The Revival please send your email to:

editor@therevival.co.uk

You can also write to us at: The Revival. 370-372 Manchester Road. Oldham. OL9 7PG

Sahaba – the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This is someone who has seen the Prophet, or talked to him, at least once when the Prophet was alive.

Shirk – the unforgivable wrong action of worshipping something or someone other than Allah or associating something or someone as a partner with Him.

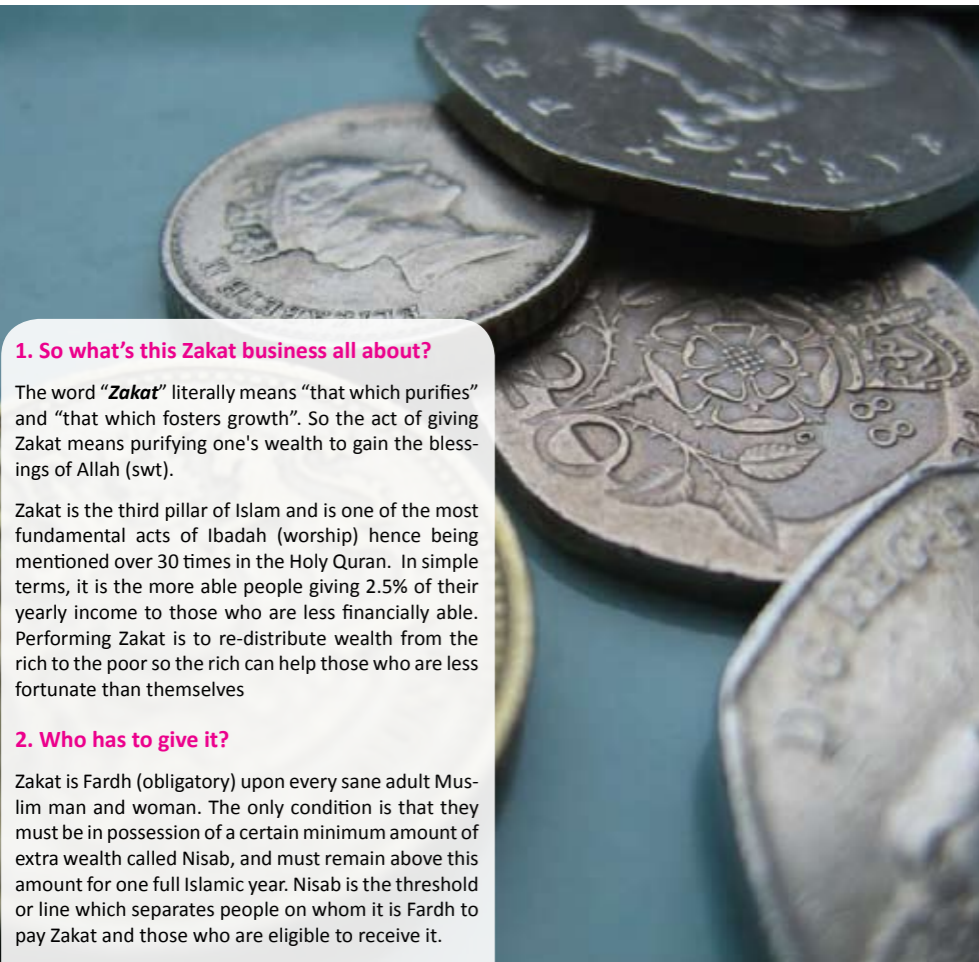
Tajweed – the art of reciting the Qu'ran, giving each consonant its full value.

Tawba – returning to correct action after error, turning away from wrong action to Allah and asking His forgiveness.

BACK TO BASICS

Zakat

By Fatima Zahir



1. So what's this Zakat business all about?

The word "**Zakat**" literally means "that which purifies" and "that which fosters growth". So the act of giving Zakat means purifying one's wealth to gain the blessings of Allah (swt).

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam and is one of the most fundamental acts of Ibadah (worship) hence being mentioned over 30 times in the Holy Quran. In simple terms, it is the more able people giving 2.5% of their yearly income to those who are less financially able. Performing Zakat is to re-distribute wealth from the rich to the poor so the rich can help those who are less fortunate than themselves.

2. Who has to give it?

Zakat is Fardh (obligatory) upon every sane adult Muslim man and woman. The only condition is that they must be in possession of a certain minimum amount of extra wealth called Nisab, and must remain above this amount for one full Islamic year. Nisab is the threshold or line which separates people on whom it is Fardh to pay Zakat and those who are eligible to receive it.

3. But why the hell should I pay Zakat? It's my money!

There are several benefits a person can gain by paying Zakat. It is stated in a Hadith that by giving Zakat the following benefits are derived: pleasure of Allah (swt), increase in wealth and protection from loss, Allah's (swt) forgiveness and blessings, protection from the wrath of Allah (swt) and from a bad death, a shelter on the Day of Judgement and security from seventy misfortunes.

Not only that, Zakat purifies believers from selfishness and greed of worldly wealth. It also reminds Muslims of the fact that whatever wealth they may possess is a blessing of Allah (swt) and as such it is to be spent according to His commands. Zakat also helps develop love and compassion for the poor and purifies the heart of the one who receives it from any jealousy or bad feeling towards those better off than them, so it strengthens the feeling of brotherhood and lessens the economic divide between the rich and poor.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran: "Whoever spends their wealth in the cause of Allah and doesn't follow their gifts with reminders of how generous they were, nor with hurtful humiliation, they shall have their reward with Allah and they will not be afraid nor will they be sad." (Surah Al-Bakarah, 2:262).

So clearly a Zakat payer will never be a loser in the sight of Allah (swt).

4. Who's getting my dough?

There are eight groups of people on whom Zakat should be spent, as mentioned in the Holy Quran in Surah Tawbah, 9:60:

- The Fuqara (poor) – those who do not have wealth equal to Nisab, i.e. not enough to take care of their basic needs.
- The Al-Masakin (needy) - those who work, but only earn just enough to get by, so by receiving Zakat they don't have to beg.
- The Aamileen - those whose only job is to collect and distribute the Zakat funds.
- The Mu'allafatul Qulub - those who have just newly accepted Islam as their religion or those who are close to accepting Islam and are in need of basic necessities.
- The Riqab – those in captivity, i.e. to buy their freedom and free them from oppression (whether a slave back in the old times, or a prisoner of war in our times).
- The Al-Gharimeen – those that are in debt because they have borrowed money to pay for basic necessities so that they can lead a normal life.
- The Fisabilillah – those who are away from home fighting in Allah (swt)'s cause or seeking knowledge to spread the message of Islam.
- The Ibn as-Sabil - the wayfarer who is stranded in a

foreign land and cannot get enough money to go back to his homeland. Even if he might be rich he should still be given enough money to allow him to return to his homeland.

If you have family members who are eligible to receive Zakat... then priority should be given to them first. The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "The charity to a poor person is a charity, but charity to a relative is a charity and a Silah (an act of strengthening the tie of kinship)". (Tirmidhi)

Zakat cannot be given to the following:

- Zakat cannot be given to the descendants of the Holy Prophet (saw).
- Zakat cannot be given to parents and grandparents. In the same manner one's children and grandchildren cannot be given Zakat. A husband and wife cannot give Zakat to each other.
- A child of a wealthy father cannot be given Zakat. When such a child becomes mature in age, and does not own wealth to the value of Nisab, he may then be given Zakat.
- If a person owns wealth which in value exceeds the amount of Nisab, but this wealth is not intended for business nor does he require it for his daily needs, such a person is regarded as well-to-do and should not be given Zakat.
- Zakat contributions cannot be given to such institutions or organizations that do not give the rightful recipients possession of Zakat, but instead use Zakat funds for constructions, investment or salaries.
- Zakat cannot be given for the construction of Masjid, Madrasah, Hospital, a Well, a Bridge or any other public amenity.

Zakat given to Madrasah: For Zakat to be accepted the recipient must become the owner of the money given. Therefore a Madrasah cannot be given Zakat directly without it being passed on (usually by the Madrasah) to a poor person, who then accepts the money and then gives all of it or part of it to the Madrasah as a donation. This process is called Hila-e-Shara'ih

5. I'm rubbish at maths, how can I work out how much I need to give?

Zakat-al-Mal (Zakat on wealth) can be subdivided into Zakat on: business, rental income, personal income, savings, gold and silver, shares, livestock and crop. A total of 2.5% of that wealth should be given as Zakat. Basic necessities such as food, water, clothes, shelter etc, ain't included.

There seems to be some confusion on the length that wealth has to be held before Zakat is due on it. For example, many people believe that if they came in to possession of £1000 then they would need to have that £1000 for one year before any Zakat is due. This is incorrect. The correct way to ensure that Zakat is given is when a person becomes a Nisab holder and remains a Nisab holder for 1 year then whatever he has at the end of the financial year the Zakat is due on that total amount.

The value of Nisab is 520 grams of silver or 75 grams of gold or its value in money. In current day's calculation 520 grams = £135 and 75 grams of Gold = £750. Therefore if a person has £135 or more in savings for

1 year then he will have to pay Zakat at the end of the financial year on whatever he has.

Here's an example: a person has come into some money and he has £200 in the month of Muharram. He then has enough savings for the whole year which does not drop below the threshold of £135. However in the month of Dhul Hajj he comes into some more money and on the 30th of Dhul Hajj he has £2000. Then on the 1st of Muharram the next year he would have to pay 2.5 % of £2000 i.e. £50 in Zakat.

Zakat isn't imposed on:

- On any metals other than gold or silver
- Fixtures and fittings of a shop, car, trucks or any delivery vehicle etc. which is used in the running of a business.
- Diamonds, pearls, other precious or semi precious stones which are for personal use.
- There is no Zakat on personal residence, household furniture, pots and pans, personal clothing, whether they are in use or not.

6. So when do you want it?

Zakat should be given on a yearly basis. A complete year in the Islamic calendar should pass, starting from the very day you came into possession of Nisab. After that day passes, Zakat becomes obligatory therefore payment should be made.

Many Muslims wait for Ramadan to give their Zakat as every good deed receives extra blessings in that blessed month. However, one shouldn't delay their payment as it is possible for death to occur any time hence failure in fulfilling your obligation.

Zakat doesn't need to be paid by an individual just once a year; it can be paid as many times as the individual wants, if they have the means to do so. This can be an opportunity to reap in more good rewards from Allah (swt).

7. What about the Zakat that I ain't paid over the years?

Ibn Abbas (ra) reported: A woman came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said: 'My mother has died, and fasts of a month are due from her.' Thereupon he said: 'Don't you see that if debt was due from her, would you not pay it?' She said 'Yes (I would pay on her behalf)' Thereupon he said 'The debt of Allah deserves its payment more than (the payment of anyone else)'. (Muslim)

If you've missed your payments over the past years, scholars have deduced that the missed Zakat must be paid as soon as possible even though you didn't know it was Fardh back then.

It's also deduced from the above Hadith that if a family member has deceased without paying Zakat, it is the duty of the living family members to pay the debt that the deceased has left, so to pay Zakat on their behalf.

8. What if I don't pay Zakat?

Allah (swt) says: "... and those who hoard gold and silver and spend them not in the way of Allah announce unto them a most grievous penalty. On the Day, when they (gold and silver) will be heated in the fire of Hell and used to brand their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. This is what you have hoarded for yourselves, taste you then what you have hoarded." (Surah Tawbah, 9:34-35).

The verse above clearly states what the consequence is for those who don't pay their obligatory Zakat, so if you want to receive your book of deeds in your right arm, paying Zakat is a must!

9. So what's Zakat-ul-Fitr all about?

Zakat-ul-Fitr is a different sort of charity that is due at the end of Ramadan. This type of charity is Wajib (necessary) on every Muslim, be it, old, young, sane, insane, slave, freeman, woman or man.

It is obligatory on the head of the family to give Fitr of all persons that take food in his house.

The rich are obliged to come in direct contact with the poor, and the poor are put in contact with the extremely poor. This contact between the various levels of society helps to build real bonds of brotherhood and love within the Islamic community and trains those who have, to be generous to those who do not have.

This form of charity becomes obligatory from sunset on the last day of fasting and remains obligatory until the beginning of Salah al-Eid (i.e. shortly after sunrise on the following day). However, it can be paid prior to the above mentioned period, as many of the companions of the Holy Prophet (saw) used to pay Zakat-ul-Fitr a couple days before the Eid so that the poor could also enjoy Eid.

The amount of Zakat is the same for everyone regardless of their different incomes. The minimum amount is one Saa' (two handfuls) of food, grain or dried fruit for each member of the family. This is usually between £1 and £3.

10. Is there anything else I have to do?

Yes. Since the payment of Zakat is an act of worship, its validity depends upon the expression of your intention. So, at the time of payment or when Zakat money is set aside from one's assets, intention (Niyyah) should be made.

Authority can be delegated to another person or an organization for the distribution of your Zakat so that it can be utilized in accordance with the laws of Zakat. If an agent is given Zakat for distribution, and he does not distribute it, then the Zakat will not be regarded as fulfilled, and the sin for not paying the obligatory Zakat will remain a burden on you. So you must choose an organisation that you know will deliver your Zakat directly or simply give your Zakat directly yourself.

Also when the payment of Zakat is being made, you shouldn't brag about how much you're giving rather give it in secrecy, Allah (swt) says: "If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you; and this will do away with some of your evil deeds; and Allah (swt) is aware of what you do" (Surah Bakarah, 2:271).

Note: If you have any questions or queries regarding Zakat please send an email to editor@therevival.co.uk and it will be answered by a qualified Scholar.



Beat The BULLIES



By Imaani Aslam

Chances are you know someone who is being bullied or that even you yourself have at some time in your life been bullied. A recent report revealed a staggering 69% of young people are bullied. In other words, a shocking 2 out of 3 people [1].

SO WHAT CAN BE CLASSED AS BULLYING?

Well, it normally takes the form of emotional or physical harmful behaviour. So this can include pushing, punching, kicking, spitting, teasing, name-calling, mocking, taunting, gossiping, spreading rumours... etc, etc. Basically, anything that makes someone feel uncomfortable, scared, unhappy or unsafe. A lot of people would like to believe bullying is just limited to the primary school playground, but it isn't. Bullying is just as common in secondary schools, colleges, universities, in the street, at work, and even in the home. The Prophet (pbuh) warned us of this behaviour when he said, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for other's faults, and do not do spying on one another and do not practice Najsh (ie do not offer a high price for a thing which you do not want to buy in order to deceive the people) and do not be jealous of one another and do not hate one another and do not desert (stop talking to) one another" (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

The bully is often seen as 'hard' or 'tough' - the truth couldn't be more different. Those who bully others are weak and cowards, who often put on the whole sweet act when faced with someone capable of putting them in their right place - proving they are anything but tough. Due to their own inadequacies, they can't gain any recognition in a normal civilized manner so resort to aggression to get their way, rather like an im-

mature, attention-seeking child. There is absolutely nothing great about someone who has to make others feel like rubbish in order to make themselves feel good. This also applies to the weak sheep who laugh along and encourage the bully, but don't have the guts to step in and do the right thing and oppose such behaviour. They may not see it as that big deal, but in Islam every wrong act will one day be punished. Once the Prophet (pbuh) passed by two graves and said, "Both of them (persons in the grave) are being tortured, and they are not being tortured for a major sin. This one used not to save himself from being spoiled with his urine, and the other used to go about with calumnies (spreading untrue and malicious statements about a person)" (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

Strangely, it is often the target of the bullying who is thought of as the weak one and even blamed for being bullied, 'coz they can't stick up for themselves'. With bullying so widespread, it is absolutely ridiculous to suggest that over two thirds of all young people are weak or have something wrong with them. More often than not, there is no reason at all for the bullying, and other times, any difference, be it the colour of someone's skin, the way they talk, their size or their name are enough for some sad, envious, insecure person or group to start a hate campaign against them.

MARYAM, 18 . WAS BULLIED AT SCHOOL.

"It started when I had a falling out with this girl in my year. Her sister, who was in the year above, found out and from that day onwards she, along with her friends, started bullying me. It was mainly just name-calling and making fun of me, but they still made my life hell. I just didn't feel like I could speak to anyone about it, coz I felt like such a wimp. My friends did used to stick up for me, but then the girls would start on them as well." The bullying only ended 2 years later when the girls left school. Only then did Maryam feel she could relax and start enjoying school again. However, she tells me, "I used to be really bubbly and confident, but I've changed a lot. I'm a much more private person now."

Bullying is often dismissed as just a part of growing up. Some people even believe it 'toughens' you up or helps you cope better with difficult situations faced later on in life. In fact, the effects of bullying are quite the opposite. Bullying can lead to low self-esteem, lack of confidence, feelings of anger and bitterness, depression, self-harm and even suicidal thoughts and attempts.

KAMRAN, 20. ADMITS TO HAVING BEEN A BULLY.

"I just hated school and used to get chucked out of lessons all the time for messing about and stuff. I used to give this one guy a real hard time. I used to call him queer and two other guys really beat him up once coz of that. I feel really bad about it now, but back then I didn't care. All the other guys used to think I was like dead hard and stuff, and in a way that's why I used to be like that. I ain't blaming them or anything, but you know if any of them had said to me shut up, I probably would have. But I think they were like I might start on them, so no-one said anything. You know what though, I think I messed up my life more than his, I mean he was quite clever so he's probably at uni now." I tell Kamran about Maryam's experience and how it has affected her character and personality, and how bullying can have serious long-term effects on a person, often leading them to self doubt their ability. Kamran tells me, "He had a lot going for him - he was the opposite to me - it's probably why I gave him such a hard time. I just really hope he can move on with his life."

Bullies often have their own issues. I mean, no normal person goes around deliberately trying to ruin other people's lives. Maybe they aren't getting the attention they deserve by other means, or their home life is far from perfect, or maybe they've even been bullied themselves. No matter what the problem, bullying others doesn't solve anything. It may get them the attention they crave or people may do as they want, but let's not fool anybody, it's definitely not because they are liked or respected by their peers. It's just to shut them up and get them off their back.

UZMA, 18 . OFTEN MISSED SCHOOL TO ESCAPE HER BULLIES.

"I used to cry myself to sleep every night knowing that tomorrow I'd have to go to school and face them all over again. I was fed up with them treating me like crap everyday - the only way I could stop it was by not going to school. I'd just tell my mum I was feeling ill, if I thought she was getting tired of my excuses I'd take headache tablets in front of her to convince her. A few times when that didn't work, I forced myself to throw up just to prove to her I really was ill. Sitting at home, I just got more and more depressed, knowing that I was ruining my chances of making something of myself. I totally hated myself for allowing them to ruin my life."

Like Uzma, many others too fake illnesses or skip lessons to escape being bullied. 20,000 young people truant every day because of bullying, which means a third of all truancies are actually down to bullying [2]. Why should the one being bullied be the one to miss out on an education when it's the bully who's in the wrong? Why let the bullies ruin your opportunities in life and not let you reach your potential? They may be ruining things for you at the moment, but that doesn't mean you have to let them ruin your whole life.

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

- The most important thing to do is to believe in yourself. YOU are NOT the problem. The bully is. Nobody has the right to make you feel insecure about yourself. If you're different in any way, be proud of it.

- Don't ignore the bullying - it WON'T go away. The bully wants a reaction, so if you ignore it, the bully will only think of different ways to get a response from you. The best thing to do is to keep a record of the bullying, noting down the exact details of things said and done to you. Also, save any abusive or threatening texts or emails you receive.

- Then... tell someone you trust about what is happening. This can be anyone you feel comfortable talking to, so a teacher, a parent, another member of your family or a friend's parent. A lot of people find it really difficult to speak to someone they know, that's why there are various organisations you can contact to speak to someone about what you're going through - they are there to help you and listen to you so give them a call. Thousands upon thousands of young people contact them knowing that everything they say will be in confidence.

Most important of all...DON'T LOSE FAITH!!

Let me guess that you have often thought, 'Why me? What have I done to deserve this? If God cared about me, then He wouldn't let this happen.' Well let me tell you, Allah (swt) DOES care about you. There isn't a single person in this world who isn't tested by Him - Muslims believe that is the whole purpose of this life. Only, we're all tested according to our ability... yes, that's right - you CAN overcome this. Allah (swt) won't ever burden you with more than you can bear.

SHAZIA, 20. STRUGGLED TO DEAL WITH BEING BULLIED.

"I feel embarrassed to say it, but at the time I felt like I needed someone to blame and I couldn't think of anyone better than God Himself. I just felt so hurt and so angry. I remember thinking about committing suicide. They just made me hate myself and my life that much. The worse things got, the more I moved away from Islam." Even after the bullying had stopped, Shazia still struggled to get on with her life, still bitter about what had happened. She says, "The thing is, I didn't know that much about Islam in the first place and I think that had a lot to do with all the hate. I remember telling myself sarcastically that I would try things God's way - I mean I had tried everything else. It wasn't like everything changed overnight or anything, actually it was nothing like that, just slowly I started learning about Islam, and actually, I'm still learning." I ask Shazia what she thinks about the girls who made her want to kill herself. "I honestly don't think anything about them. I really don't. I trust in Allah (swt) enough to know He'll take care of it - we're all going to have to answer to Him one day. This is about me... my life. And I'm going to make the most of it."

Bullying of any sort is WRONG. It is NEVER justifiable and nobody ever deserves or 'asks for it'. "None of you truly believes (in Allah (swt) and His religion) until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself" (Sahih Al-Bukhari). As Muslims we are instructed to treat others how we desire to be treated ourselves.

Help Lines
Muslim Youth Help Line Tel: 0808 808 2008
Sakinah (Muslim Help Line) Tel: 0870 005 3084
Samaritans Tel: 08457 90 90 90
www.bullying.co.uk
www.bullyonline.org
www.beatbullying.org

References

1 & 2: <http://www.beatbullying.org/reports/bullying-truancy-report-2006.pdf>

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Nearly 90% of adult smokers take up the habit as teenagers – before they were old enough to realise the implications.

By middle-age, some have learned the truth in the hardest way possible. 50% of all smokers can expect to die prematurely of a smoking related disease.

Resisting taking that first drag will dramatically improve anyone's chance of a long and healthy life.

What's the attraction?

Adolescents turn to tobacco for a variety of reasons. Perhaps it is a form of rebellion or, they want to 'fit in' with a particular group of friends. Some believe it will reduce stress or help them lose weight. They may feel more macho, or see smoking as part of their identity, looking cool and grown up.

When teenagers start smoking, this can be seen as the 'glamour' phase, but all the time the physical addiction is building up. At some point the 'glamour' wears off, but the smoker is hooked. The tobacco companies have a new lifelong smoker.

It is true the smoking does make you look grown up, but only because smoking causes wrinkles, especially around the eyes, from squinting because of smoke in the face, also around the mouth from pursing the lips when inhaling.

So, if you were thinking of smoking to impress, don't bother. Overall, people prefer to be in the company of non-smokers.

How does smoking help you to fit in? Is it really necessary to smoke to have friends?

Smoking does not control stress. In fact, research has shown that smokers have higher levels of stress compared to non-smokers. Physically, cigarette smoke has a stimulant effect on the body, rather than a calming one. It increases the heart rate and raises the blood pressure, both putting stress on the body.

Furthermore, smoking can also cause stress because of its 'addictive' nature. For example, smokers have to constantly think about not running out of cigarettes, having enough money to buy more and looking for opportunities to smoke, especially if they're in situations where this is not allowed.

No wonder non-smokers feel less stressed. They don't need to bother with all of this nonsense.

Research shows that teenagers' weight is not affected by smoking, or by quitting. However, smokers are more likely to have a 'smokers' belly' This is because they store more fat around the waist.

It is true that some people might put on weight when they quit smoking. There are two possible reasons for this. Firstly, food now tastes much better. Secondly, food might be a replacement for cigarette smoking.

The solution for those worried about putting on weight is to eat a healthy, balanced diet. This should include lots of fruit and vegetables, and a reduction in fatty food intake. An increase in exercise should also burn off excess calories.

What makes cigarettes harmful?

Cigarettes are a highly engineered nicotine delivery device. There will never be a 'safe' cigarette, because the process of combustion of the tobacco gives of a host of toxic components.

There are 599 chemical substances in one cigarette. These make over 4,000 other chemical compounds when they burn and are inhaled and exhaled. More than 50 are known to cause cancer. Here are some of the poisonous chemicals that are found in cigarettes.

Poison

Acetone
Acetic acid
Ammonia
Arsenic
Benzene
Carbon monoxide
Carbon tetrachloride
DDT
Formaldehyde
Hydrogen cyanide
Hydrogen sulphide
Lead
Methanol
Polonium
Radon
Sulphuric acid
Tars
Caesium
Ethanol

Found in / use

Nail polish remover
Vinegar
Cleaning agent / dissolves fat
Ant poison
Petrol fumes
Car exhaust fumes
Dry cleaning fluid
Insecticide
Embalming fluid
Industrial pollutant
Stink bombs
Batteries
Rocket fuel
Radioactive fallout
Radioactive gas
Power station emissions
Road surface
Heavy metal
Anti freeze in cars



These are added to cigarettes to make them taste, smell and burn better. Tar and carbon monoxide, in the cigarette smoke, are known to be responsible for adverse effects on every part of the body, from the brain to the feet.

Smoking is the biggest killer in the UK. Over 120,000 people die each year because of disease caused by smoking – that's equivalent to 360 every day. One out of two teenage smokers will die from smoking tobacco, if they continue. Half will die in middle-age (35 – 69) Nearly 10,000 hospital beds are taken up everyday by people who are ill because of smoking.

Second-hand smoke

There is no safe level of second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke is made up of 85% of the smoke, which is released from the end of the burning cigarette and the smoke the smoker exhales.

The smoke from a burning cigarette is a pronounced problem for those who do not smoke, especially for children. They have no say when exposed to adults who smoke around them.

Children breathe more rapidly than adults, therefore are taking in excessive amounts of smoke. This puts them at an increased risk of developing health problems, which can continue into adulthood. A child living with a smoker of 20 per day, over a 1 year period will inhale the same amount of chemicals as if they had smoked 150 cigarettes.

Cost

Smoking is a self-destruct behaviour that tends to trickle into other parts of your life, including the financial aspect.

A smoker of 20 per day will spend :-

£31.50 per week

£126.00 per month

£1,512 per year

£15,120 over ten years

£60,480 over 40 years

These figures are based on a packet of 20 costing £4.50p.

What else could smokers spend that money on?

At present it is only legal for people over the age of 16 years to buy cigarettes and tobacco products. However, from the 1st October 07 the age limit will increase to 18 years.

Is it too late?

Once you quit smoking positive things start to happen. When you become smoke free the body starts to heal within 20 minutes, however long you've smoked for.

20 minutes	Circulation improves
8 hours	Blood oxygen levels return to normal, lessening the chance of a heart attack
24 hours	Carbon monoxide is not detected in the body
48 hours	The body is nicotine free
72 hours	Breathing becomes easier
2 –12 weeks	It becomes easier to walk and exercise now
3- 9 months	Breathing problems start to diminish. Lung efficiency increases by 5 –10%
5 years	The risk of a heart attack is halved compared to that of a smoker
10 years	The chance of a heart attack is now the same as someone who has never smoked. The chance of getting lung cancer is now half of that of a smoker.

Addiction

Smoking changes people, gradually, over a period of time. In fact, some personality shifts are so subtle, most people don't realise that cigarettes are responsible for them. The biggest change is that they become addicted to nicotine, and completely lose their independence.

Nicotine is present naturally in tobacco. It has been shown to be more addictive than heroin or cocaine.

Within 7 seconds of that first puff, nicotine arrives at the brain's reward pathways where it generates a flood of a chemical called dopamine, resulting in an immediate 'reward sensation'. Experiencing this causes the smoker to want more. In addition, when abstinent from nicotine unpleasant withdrawal symptoms can occur. Historically, nicotine is one of the hardest addictions to break.

Many people don't realise they are addicted to smoking. They think they can easily quit, but forget it is extremely difficult. Even if you only smoke 1 or 2 a day, you're at risk.

A young smoker can begin to feel a powerful desire for nicotine within 2 days of first inhaling. Because an adolescent brain is still developing they are more vulnerable to addiction than adults. Half of teenagers who become addicted report symptoms of dependence by the time they smoke only 7 cigarettes a month.



Quitting

Giving up smoking is the most beneficial thing any smoker can do for themselves, and those around them.

To ensure making any quit attempt is successful and comfortable, the Oldham Primary Care Trust Stop Smoking Service will help.

The team works with other professionals, including nurses and pharmacists to deliver a Stop Smoking service tailored to the individual need of the client. The success of the service reflects the team's ability to listen to clients to find rapid and effective solutions to their problems.

The Stop Smoking Service can be contacted on 0161 621 5937

ALIYAH JAMEELA

By Sara Salim and Imaani Aslam

Jameela: As'salaam alaikum Sis. How you doin'?

Aliyah: Alright Jameela, where you at?

Jameela: Er... I'm good Alhamdulillah. What you been up to?

Aliyah: Not much, not much. Listen yeah, Ramadan's starting soon in-nit?!

Jameela: Yep Sis, I can't wait!!

Aliyah: Great!!! Not long now then. Iky says he wants to cool it during Ramadan. He says his Dad's gonna be watching him like a hawk and he can't risk gettin' caught. Plus he says I'm gonna distract him, but I told him straight, look it ain't my fault I'm so fit.

Jameela: I just love the whole atmosphere in Ramadan, I've been really looking forward to it.

Aliyah: Well I ain't fat, so I'm not bovvered.

Jameela: Hey I'm not fat either!! I'm still bothered though, coz Ramadan isn't about losing weight.

Aliyah: Well it should be for some. You seen that fatty Faiza lately? She could do with fasting all year round if you ask me. The girls dress sense just makes her look even more like a hippo. If I ain't careful, Mum's munch at Iftar time is gonna make me look like her too! My Iky won't want me then!

Jameela: True love has got nothing to do with someone's dress size, but anyway, Iftar is actually the time when Allah (swt) accepts more prayers but most of us are too busy stuffing our faces to make the most of that. Iftar isn't about making up for all you've missed during the day, it's about eating in moderation and appreciating all the blessings Allah (swt) has given us. If you pig out in the evenings, that just defeats the purpose of fasting.

Aliyah: AND it makes you go up a dress size too.

Jameela: Yep being greedy does have that affect. But Ramadan isn't about losing or gaining weight it's about improving our relationship with Allah (swt). Fasting increases our God consciousness (Taqwa) because keeping away from food, drink and other wrong behaviour is a sign of our submission to Allah (swt). We are aware Allah (swt) is watching us so we try to control our desires and not commit sin which helps us to become closer to Allah (swt).

Aliyah: Well I don't know 'bout all that, but fasting does make me think

about all them poor people starvin' in Africa. Anyway, I make sure I eat a share for them too. My stomach's proper rumbling by Iftar time, but my Mum still does my head in to go give food round the block minutes before it's time to open the fast! There's no way I can handle Mum's grub in the middle of the night so I be well starvin' during the day.

Jameela: Sis you can eat whatever you like at Sehri time. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Partake of Sehri before dawn because in this Sehri there is Barakah (blessing)." So it is Sunnah to eat something at Sehri time even if it's only a little bit. Eating Suhoor (pre-dawn meal) distinguishes the fasts we Muslims keep from the fasts that are a part of other religions and Suhoor also acts as a Niyaah (intention) to keep a fast, something which should be made for every fast in Ramadan.

Aliyah: Listen I do my bit you know, just ask my Mum. She even forces me to wake up when I CAN'T fast, so my bro's don't ask no dumb questions. You gotta admit, that is HARDCORE. Don't know why the thick boys don't just use their brain.

Jameela: Well Sis, that's really respectful and modest of you. There's no reason for everyone to know about your private business.

Aliyah: Yeah well I ain't bovvered coz they learn about it in school anyway. Nah, I ain't looking forward to Ramadan - my Mum's proper dredd, she hides my ipod and turns off Sky for a month! My house is bare dead! Don't know how I'm gonna live without B4U for a whole month!

Jameela: Nah Sis, you'll be fine. It's much easier to do good in Ramadan and give up bad habits coz it's the month that the devils are all locked up so there is less temptation to commit sin. Fasting isn't just about not eating and drinking, but stuff like back chatting, gossiping, arguing and swearing also invalidate the fast. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "If a person does not avoid false talk and false conduct during the fast, Allah (swt) does not care if he abstains from his food and drink."

Aliyah: You serious? That's well dredd! Ok, I might just survive without my tunes, but I dunno how I'm gonna live without my baby. Iky's told me that he won't be able to chat to me or text me through the night during Ramadan, coz he'll be shattered after Tarawih. I'm gonna miss my baby - there's no way I'm gonna be able to go to sleep without my Iky wishin' me good night.

Jameela: Sis why don't you come read Tarawih with me and the girls this year? It'll help take your mind of him too.

Aliyah: No offence, but chillin' with you and your ninja mates down at the mosque ain't really my scene.

Jameela: Well you don't have to come to the mosque if you don't want to - us girls get just as much reward praying at home.

Aliyah: Actually, on second thoughts, maybe going to the mosque will take my mind off Iky - I've heard bare fit guys go to Tarawih! Maybe if I hang around the Mosque one of them will ask for my number. That'll teach Iky for neglecting me! That's a wicked plan. I'll just tell Mum I'm going to read Tarawih every night with you, she'll get bare happy! And who knows, maybe you'll find the mad mullah of your dreams too!!

Jameela: Erm, no Sis, that's not what I meant. And acting desperate isn't really my style. I meant you could come to Tarawih with me in the LADIES section and actually read the Tarawih prayer.

Aliyah: Me? Read Tarawih?! You must be joking! Tarawih is bare missions! It always gets really hot and stuffy with all those fat aunties who just pong the place out. I ain't joking, they just sit there burping the Iftar they pigged out on. And reading Tarawih takes FOREVER!! Plus, that's the time Eastenders is on!

Jameela: Sis, sure some people find Tarawih tough, but that is nothing compared to the great reward we get from reading it. Ramadan is the month that Allah (swt) accepts any of our prayers, fulfils any of our desires and forgives any of our sins. All we have to do is be sincere in our worship to Him (swt). And Sis, Eastenders is on nearly every day! Ramadan only comes once a year.

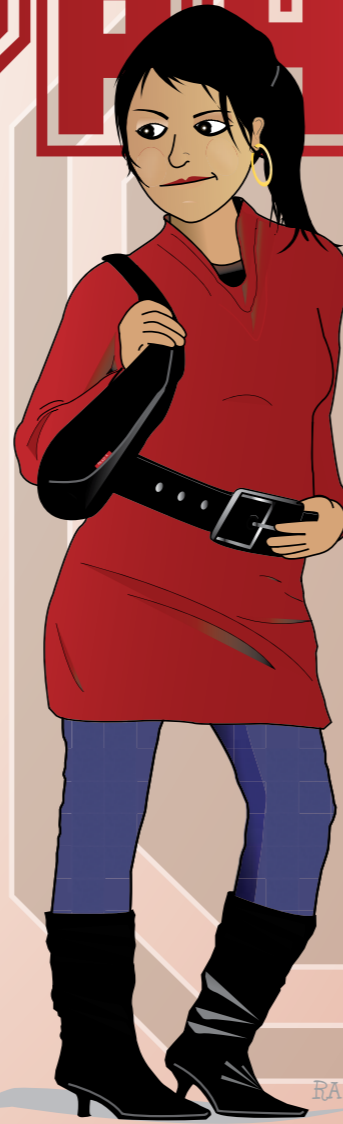
Aliyah: You know you're beginning to sound like my Gran now, but alright, I'll try readin' some this year.

Jameela: And Sis you will have heard of Lailatul Qadr...

Aliyah: Laila who? Nah, don't think I know her. Is she gonna be at the mosque as well?

Jameela: Lailatul Qadr Sis. The Night Of Power. It is one of the nights in the last ten days of Ramadan.

Aliyah: Hey I know what you're talking about, that's when you're supposed to stay up all night praying and stuff innit?



Jameela: Yeah Sis, Lailatul Qadr is the night when all our sins and mistakes can be erased. Just imagine that: Allah (swt) forgiving all the wrong we've done in our life and giving us the chance to start afresh.

Aliyah: Gotta say that sounds pretty cool... but what's the catch?

Jameela: There isn't one Aliyah. Anyone who looks out for this night and spends it reading the Quran, remembering Allah (swt), making dua for themselves and others, and asking for forgiveness, then their sins will be erased. In the Quran it tells us that worship during this night is equivalent to a thousand months of worship! That's over 80 years of worship!!

Aliyah: What, just in one night?!

Jameela: Yep, just in one night. That's why it's called The Night Of Power. It is this night that the Angels write down all that has been predestined for the coming year - who will die, who will be born etc. It is also during this night that Jibrail (a.s) and the other Angels descend on earth.

Aliyah: You're joking right?! That sounds well freaky!

Jameela: And for anyone spending their time remembering Allah (swt), the Angels will ask Allah (swt) for their forgiveness.

Aliyah: That's propa cool innit. That means I can do what I want all year round, but when Ramadan comes. I just ask for forgiveness and my slate is wiped clean!

Jameela: Erm...no. It doesn't quite work like that.

Aliyah: But why not?

Jameela: Because Allah (swt) knows what's in all of our hearts and our true intentions. We need to sincerely repent to Allah (swt) and then try our best to not go back to doing all the wrong things.

Aliyah: You should tell that to that hypocrite Haleema from down the road. All year round that girl dresses like a five-dollar 'ho, and suddenly when Ramadan comes the girl pulls out her Hijaab and acts all holy moly. Mum's always biggin her up, if only she knew what a tart that girl really is!

Jameela: Sis it's not our place to pass judgement on others. None of us have that right - only Allah (swt) does. We should all just concentrate on improving ourselves. That's what Ramadan is all about - to be better Muslims at the end of it. Even the Holy Prophet (pbuh) did more worship in Ramadan than any other time of the year.

Aliyah: Yeah, but she's such a fake. Everyone knows that.

Jameela: No, none of us do. Even when a Muslim thinks about doing the right thing Allah (swt) rewards that person for that intention, regardless of whether they carry it through or not. So who are we to talk about other people and judge them? We should all take a good look at ourselves and rectify our characters because on The Day Of Judgement we will all stand alone before Allah (swt), and have to answer for our own deeds and not those of others.

Aliyah: Yeah I suppose we all gotta have fun some time. I know I am on Eid day. Green Street was having a sale so I've already got my outfit, so ain't got much to sort out now, just gotta get matching heels, jewellery, make-up and a handbag, that's all. I'm gonna look well fit, my Iky won't know what's hit him! He's hired a beamer so we're just gonna go cruisin' all day. Haleema's gonna be SO jealous of me, that tart has always had her eye on my man. Yeah right, like Iky would ever check her, she looks like the dog's dinner compared to me!

Jameela: Sis, you're seriously not going to blow a whole months worth of worship in one day are you? Eid's the day when the good deeds collected throughout Ramadan ascend to the heavens.

Aliyah: What you sayin'?! That I can't even chill out on Eid?! You really expect me to spend the day all decked up, stuck at home, serving food and washing dishes all day? I don't fink so. Gosh you're real sad if that's your idea of fun. What's the point of get-

ting all dressed up if there's no one to appreciate it?

Jameela: Sis, nowhere does it say that you can't have fun on Eid day. Yeah it's all good wearing new clothes and that, but Eid's about displaying a few other things too, such as thanks to Allah (swt) for all His blessings, kindness towards family, friends, relatives and neighbours, and showing compassion and empathy for the poor or those worse off than us. Eid signifies the end of Ramadan, but it shouldn't signify the end of our good deeds. It's after the fasting is over that the real challenge begins, coz that's when the devils are unshackled. Eid shouldn't be boring, you can have loads of fun, just as long as it's Halal.

Aliyah: I suppose, and I bet Dad will propa flip if I'm out all day. Hey every bit is gonna count on that Judgement Day innit Jameela?

Jameela: Yeah every good deed will help us on that day. Ramadan is the month when the gates to Paradise are opened and the gates to Hell are closed. Fasting weakens our desires and temptations to do wrong, so it's a great time to change for the better.

Aliyah: I guess I won't miss too much on Eastenders... it's been a bit dead lately anyway.

Jameela: So you're thinking about coming to read Tarawih this Ramadan?

Aliyah: Yeah I'll give it a go. But I'm telling you, if I even get one whiff of those aunties' smelly feet or bad breath I'm outta there!



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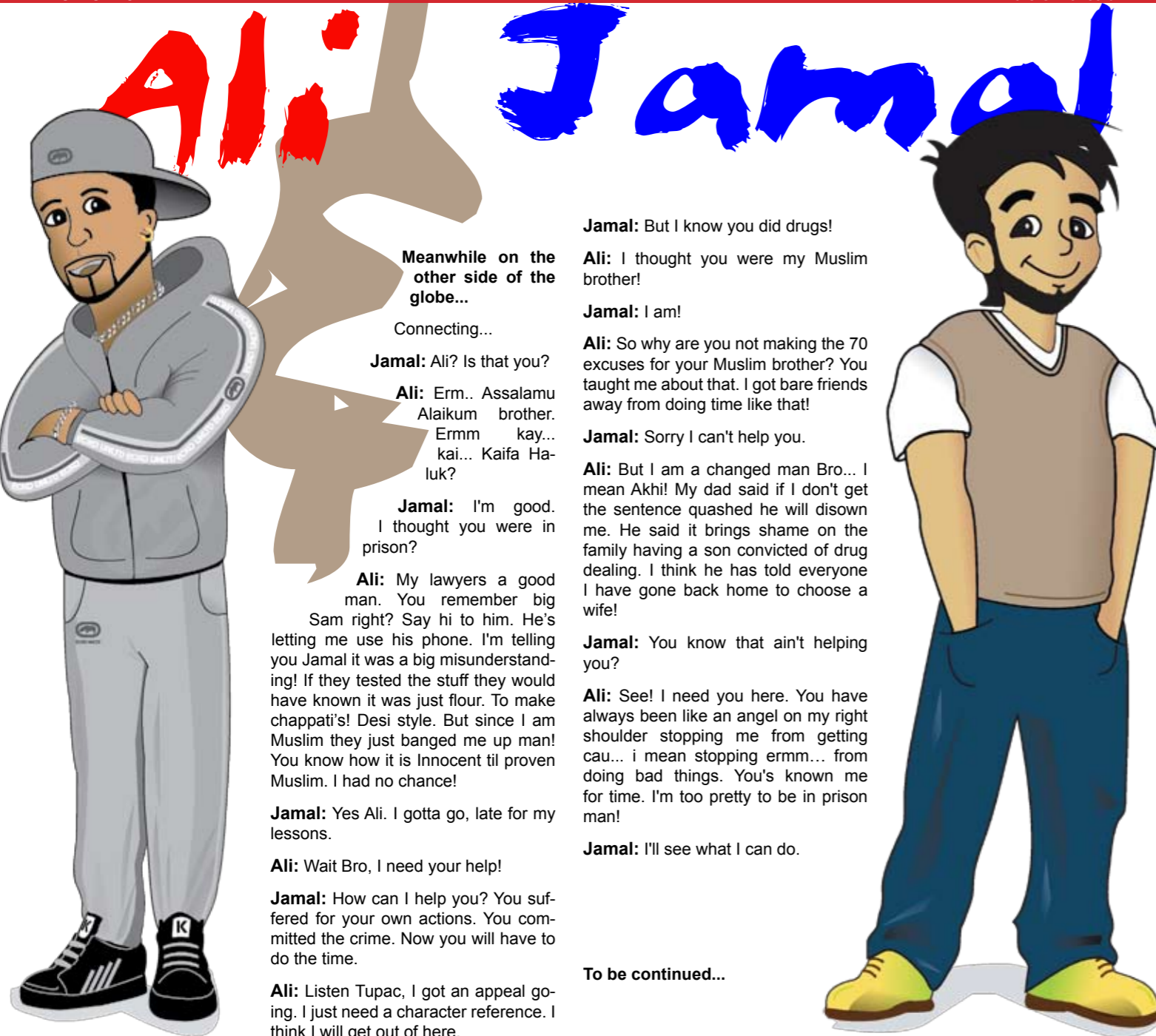
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Ali Jamal



Meanwhile on the other side of the globe...

Connecting...

Jamal: Ali? Is that you?

Ali: Erm.. Assalamu Alaikum brother. Ermm kay... kai... Kaifa Haluk?

Jamal: I'm good. I thought you were in prison?

Ali: My lawyers a good man. You remember big Sam right? Say hi to him. He's letting me use his phone. I'm telling you Jamal it was a big misunderstanding! If they tested the stuff they would have known it was just flour. To make chappati's! Desi style. But since I am Muslim they just banged me up man! You know how it is Innocent til proven Muslim. I had no chance!

Jamal: Yes Ali. I gotta go, late for my lessons.

Ali: Wait Bro, I need your help!

Jamal: How can I help you? You suffered for your own actions. You committed the crime. Now you will have to do the time.

Ali: Listen Tupac, I got an appeal going. I just need a character reference. I think I will get out of here.

Jamal: But I know you did drugs!

Ali: I thought you were my Muslim brother!

Jamal: I am!

Ali: So why are you not making the 70 excuses for your Muslim brother? You taught me about that. I got bare friends away from doing time like that!

Jamal: Sorry I can't help you.

Ali: But I am a changed man Bro... I mean Akhi! My dad said if I don't get the sentence quashed he will disown me. He said it brings shame on the family having a son convicted of drug dealing. I think he has told everyone I have gone back home to choose a wife!

Jamal: You know that ain't helping you?

Ali: See! I need you here. You have always been like an angel on my right shoulder stopping me from getting cau... i mean stopping ermm... from doing bad things. You's known me for time. I'm too pretty to be in prison man!

Jamal: I'll see what I can do.

To be continued...

'Ain't Fasting Bad For Ya?'

By Saima Iqbal

As the fourth pillar of Islam fasting is mostly observed during the month of Ramadan. Although technically you can fast at various other times of the year too, the month of Ramadan is the most well known for it. Fasting is a means of abstaining from not only food and drink but also putting in more effort in following the teachings of Islam.

As well as the spiritual benefits of fasting, there are also many other benefits that can be gained from fasting.

1. Most people are surprised at how little desire for food they have while fasting. That's because the body is working on stored energy reserves such as fats. As a result fasting initiates rapid weight loss with little or no hunger. However, fasting should never be used as a primary weight loss strategy. Successful and lasting weight loss can only be achieved through a healthy balanced diet and regular exercise.

2. Fasting promotes detoxification. As the body breaks down its fat reserves, it mobilizes and eliminates stored toxins.

3. Fasting gives the digestive system a much-needed rest. After fasting, both digestion and immune system are invigorated.

4. Fasting promotes the resolution of inflammatory processes, such as in rheumatoid arthritis.

5. Fasting eases allergic reactions, including asthma and hay fever.

6. Fasting promotes the drying up of abnormal fluid accumulations, such as edema in the ankles and legs and swelling in the abdomen.

7. Fasting corrects high blood pressure without drugs. Fasting will normalize blood pressure in the vast majority of cases, the blood pressure will remain low after the fast, provided the person follows a health-supporting diet and lifestyle.

8. Fasting makes it easy to overcome bad habits and addictions. While fasting cravings for nicotine, alcohol and other drugs rapidly disappear. Many people have overcome tobacco and alcohol addictions by fasting, and even drug addictions.

9. Fasting clears the skin and whitens the eyes. It is common to see skin eruptions clear while fasting, and the whites of the eyes never look so clear and bright as they do after fasting.

10. Fasting restores taste appreciation for wholesome natural foods. People say that their taste buds come alive after fasting and that food never tasted so good. Even if all they're eating is chapatti and chips.

We live in the 21st Century where the majority of our food has been highly processed with additives and all sorts of chemicals. Whether it's drinking coffee, fizzy drinks, chocolate bars or microwave pizza, it's full of synthetic chemicals. And if that wasn't bad enough we



breathe polluted air. All these toxins build up in the body and will start to have a negative affect until they can be eliminated.

Fasting is the perfect gateway to a healthful diet and lifestyle. Fasting gives you the motivation and enthusiasm to make a fresh start. However, fasting must be done within the rules of Islam and not be seen as another binge diet. Although some may see little difference between the two, there is in fact a Great Wall of China with armed sentries posted every twenty feet of a difference between dieting and fasting. The effects on the body are quite different.

Is fasting safe?

Fasting is about as safe as walking down the street. Of course that all depends on what kind of neighbourhood you live in, coupled with what the chances are of you getting run over by a crazy taxi driver. It's the same with fasting (except without the crazy taxi driver); most people can do it without any ill effects at all.

However as with all things there are exceptions: Pregnant women or nursing mothers for example shouldn't really fast as their growing child needs as much nutrition for normal growth and development as possible. And lets face it, the NHS has seen better days.

Another example is young children who shouldn't fast for the simple reason... they're idiots. They have little or no understanding of fasting not to mention they're still growing and their bodies require a great deal of nutrition. So, it's best to leave them to their gummy bears, jelly beans and stickers, at least until their in their teens and have a better understanding of fasting. At which point, bribing them to fast works wonders.

The other example is the old and the ill. Although fasting helps with the detoxing of the body it's generally not recommended for the elderly. Because let's face it, anyone who has to get up to go the bathroom six times in the night really shouldn't go all day without food or drink.

When it comes to the sick, fasting does help with eliminating toxins as well as promoting healing, however the aim of anyone who's sick should be to get better as fast as possible. In such cases it's recommended that they listen to their doctor and take whatever necessary medicine they are required to take.

Abstaining from water all day may sound like its bad for your health but in fact it causes a concentration of all fluids within the body, producing only slight dehydration. The human body has its own water conservation mechanism; in fact, it has been shown that slight dehydration and water conservation, at least in plant life, improve their longevity.

Fasting is the perfect gateway to a healthful diet and lifestyle. Going on a fast gives you the motivation and enthusiasm to make a fresh start. As well as easing certain medical conditions it should also be noted in all medical experiments with fasting carried out it has never damaged or harmed the health of anyone. However fasting must be done within the rules of Islam and not be seen as another binge diet.

In the end it should be remembered that fasting is a form of worship between man and Allah (swt) as an exercise in self-control. Without self-control and awareness we are no different to animals. Within fasting there is nothing but benefits to anyone who practices it. Spiritually, it's a way to purify and cleanse a person's soul in an attempt to make them a better person. Scientifically the changes that occur serve to rejuvenate and purify the body ensuring a long and healthy life.

But it must be noted that for Muslims a fast is not merely abstinence from food and drink but an opportunity to better oneself by also abstaining from the sins of the world. It was noted that the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) once said, "If one does not give up falsehood in words and actions, God has no need of him giving up food and drink".

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Lethal Weapon

By Zahid Maqbool



Walking down the street it is no longer enough to speak in rap. The gold rings mean nothing. Nor do the chains. There are two types of people out there. Those that carry and those that are dead. Bang bang.

La pistola. The Ultimate Badge of Honour. It says more than anything else. Who cares about the police? I own the streets and people fear me. And they should. I am the law. Disrespect me at your own peril. Bang bang.

I have the feeling of power. I am indestructible. No one will cross my way. I am packing a heavy punch. This is a badge that has to be earned. Bang bang.

Gun crime has been sharply brought into focus by crimes committed up and down the country. This year we have seen in our news reports on the TV, and heard on the radio about the rise and rise of gun crime. The story of yet another person losing their life to the gun.

There seems no letting go of the fact that gun crime is here on the streets of the UK and it's here to stay. The statistics are stacking up as yet another loved one is dispatched to the morgue. Another number in the book of death as the victim of gun violence.

New figures reveal that half of all firearm incidents in Manchester are committed by men aged between fifteen and twenty, and there are an average of five firearm offences every two days. In London, shootings are running at almost one a day and there are about two fatalities every month. **A new generation of British-born gunmen**, who have developed a notion of 'disrespect', justify shooting over the smallest squabble. Offenders are using firearms over trivial disputes such as arguments over spilt drinks, bumping into one another or even the smoking ban [1].

More than thirty firearms offences occur every day, according to latest Home Office figures, with a record 10,990 incidents a year in England and Wales - more than double the total at the end of the Nineties [2].

So what's the fascination about guns?

Let's take a look:

The bang bang slang:

Glok, piece, gauge, shooter, Purdy, oozy, or just simply packing heat.

'Guns Are Cool'

Everyone knows guns are cool to have and be seen with coz even 007 Bond has one. Check out the baddest rappers on the planet and they are all packed with gloks and oozies. Believe me when I tell ya that it's all about what you got. If MTV Base shows the hippest new joints on the block and those

slammin' tunes are rammed to the maxi million of major hefty fire power then it shows how glamorous, slick and cool having a piece is.

So you have got your designer glad rags on, you're dressed in black and ready to roll. Your chain is thicker than the anchor chain of the Titanic and you got more ice than the iceberg that sunk it. You've got a phat whip parked outside your yard. But what's missing? You might say 'nothing at all, pal'. Sadly you're wrong because some of the O.G's hustlers, enforcers, drug dealers and even plain Joe homies wanna be carrying a gun too. It's a fashion accessory. There are lads around town who brag about not leaving home without it and I am not referring to an American Express.

The image of a gun conjures up lots of ideas, at a basic level you think of it as your Ultimate Tool of Justice, so that you can protect your family. But rappers in the USA first started "gangsta rap" with the likes of NWA who glamorised the use of guns and created a new genre of music. Then of course there were the tit-for-tat gunning-downs of Biggie and Tupac. In the USA gun crime sells records: Notorious BIG wrote a song called 'You're Nobody 'til Somebody Kills You.' Take a look at the bling and you see chains with guns around them. Here in the UK they're following the Americans. Sway says in one of his songs: "When you're doin' rapping, it seems to take a shooting or stabbing to go platinum." Crews such as So Solid have had members arrested for carrying a gun and even served prison sentences. Recently Ja Rule and Lil Wayne have been sent down for possession of a firearm. Has this slowed down gun crime? Well no, it's

seen more fatalities in the capital city.

So okay dokey music is to blame for glamorising guns?

Well not quite, look at any list of top ten films and I bet Scarface, The Godfather Trilogy or Goodfellas is somewhere there. So who can resist saying "say hello to my little friend" or "make me an offer I can't refuse" as long as we don't get "whacked". Let's get spicy and think of our Bolly or Lolly friends who tote guns like a Rolex, flashing it to everyone and they are so very proud. Shah Rukh can walk about with two guns at a time, even the Bolly babes are packed. Big fat slob Sanjay "my eyes are like lady Penelope's Butler" Dhutt from Thunderbirds has been sentenced to six years in the tin.

With our ears and our eyes we are being conditioned to accept oozies and gloks as a norm. So we accept this and are only brought back down to reality when we see the victims of gun crime and stand up to pay your respects at the next funeral.

But what's all this gotta do with Muslims?

Teenagers have resorted to arming themselves with guns in cities such as Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Coventry, London, Manchester and Reading. They buy shotguns for as little as £50 from Asian and white illegal dealers in London and Birmingham - with some splashing out £40 on a bullet-proof vest.

Saeed Irfan was a former member of a Thames Valley gang made up of Bangladeshi's. Mr Irfan is now a volunteer for a group that offers advice to ethnic minority gang members. He said: "There are insecurities and a need to protect yourself. I am Muslim and live on a council estate and feel the neighbours might do something and the police can't or won't protect me."

Ali is a British Pakistani from Birmingham who carries a handgun. He said: "It's been a hard trek to get a bit of respect here. I mean, all we have is the way people treat us on the street. Where we gonna get a job? I mean, they all

think we are terrorists."

Gang member Az, a 15-year-old from Lozells in Birmingham, said: "This is all we have got for our protection. If we haven't got street cred, we will get done over."(3)

Leave the gun-stick to Islam

There is no room for crime and violence in Islam. If you really want respect, power and success then it's not through the gun or crime. It's through Islam. Listen to the words of the Prophet (pbuh):

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

Some people asked Allah's messenger (pbuh): **'Who is a good Muslim?'** He replied:

'One who avoids harming the people with his tongue and hands.'

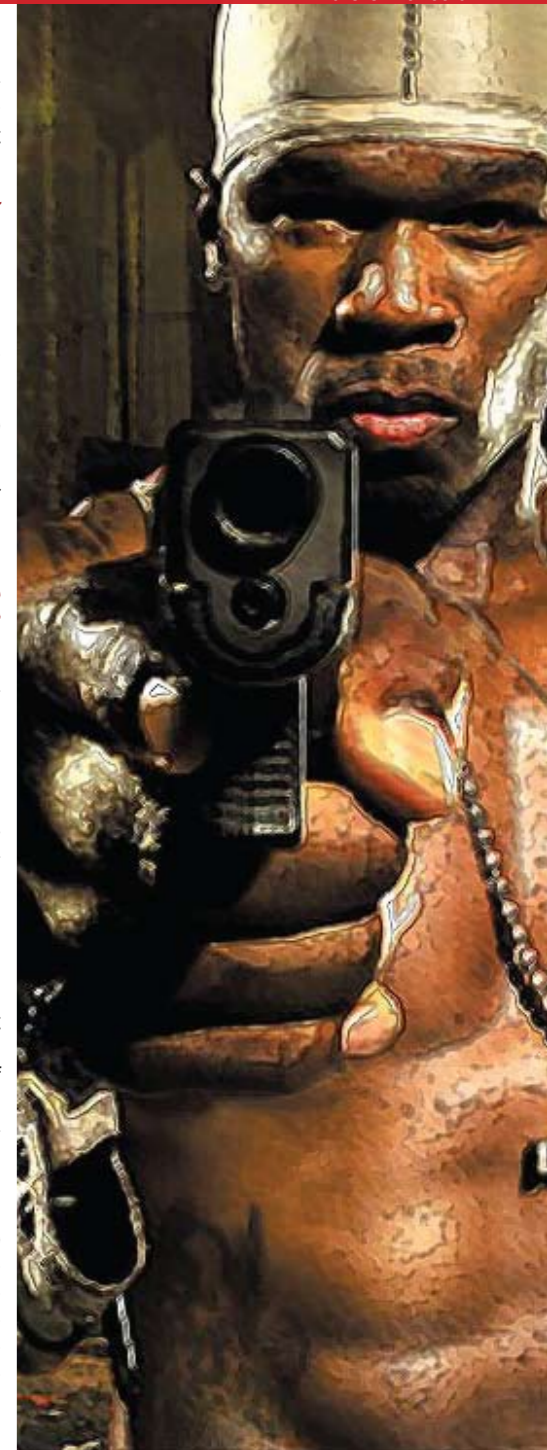
'A believer remains within the scope of his religion as long as he doesn't kill another person illegally.'

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 one who saves one life, it is as if he has saved the whole of mankind.'(Chapter 5, Verse 32)

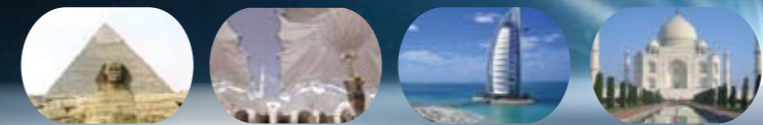
A personal account: From Crime to Islam

We spoke to a revert brother who wishes not to be named due in part because of his own set of street rules of respect and his fear of appraisals from his ex crew. So let's call him Bilal. He was a member of one of the most notorious gangs in the UK the notorious Gooch Boys. He started gang life as a runner on his bike shunting gear for his dealer around town. Almost everyone he met liked him, so Bilal grew in confidence and popularity. He thought life was good because his crew gave him respect ruled by fear. As he became more exposed to the Manchester gang scene he became aware of how people only feared the bigger gang bosses and felt he wanted extra respect.



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So he took it to the next level and became an enforcer. The first thing he had to prove was his loyalty and so he was given a name and told to dish out some ruff respect. This involved the use of a metal bar and ambush to the victim. Piece of cake. Suddenly, doors opened for him: at night clubs the bouncers paid him respect and shop owners seemed extra polite. Life was good. He then felt the need to go to spot. Getting a piece is easier than getting road tax, he told me, and cheaper too. So he walked around proud, packed and ready to gun someone down, on the strength of a text message or over a none payment of a couple of hundred quid. Bilal says a hit to teach shows your hefty rep, and is a daily occurrence. He noted that while sitting in a club most of his crew openly displayed the wearing of kelver jackets and vests: a clear confidence sign coz of their ownership of a gun. And when someone got "popped", "clipped" or "wasted" there would be the double standard of attending the funeral wearing a french coat so that in the open face of friend or foe, you can still show your might.

"So if crime pays, why did you change then Bilal?" I ask. Not through choice but coz of reality. As Brother Bilal was doing a drive by in someone else's pit, his younger brother who had been steered by his doting Grandmother had six cartridges removed from his bullet riddled body lying on a slab in the morgue.

As Timberlake eloquently voices "what goes around comes all the back around". Bilal felt physically sick. Frightened, not for his own safety, but what would his Mum think of him? How will Grandmother take the loss? Is he next? What shocked him most was the attitude of mistrust. Paranoia and disrespect from the very people who he looked up to. Bilal felt that his own guys had set his brother up so that Bilal would retaliate and get to become a lifer to the street of Gunchester.

"How did you get out?" I asked. "Got myself arrested and got sent down for carrying the oozy. Got 7 years so the gang could not use me as a mule."

While in the klink you think and realise who you mates are. Also met a revert brother from the Congo who had real respect. Told me of a code of the warrior who was undefeated in battle, of a sword that was mythical. This drew me in; this was the Hadrat Ali effect on me. The Congo brother was a smart cookie he knew what made me tick."

I asked him what message does he have for the new era of gunslingers, who may think its either fashionable to be packed or want to rule with the power of the gun?

"Well bro, there is a thing that does not discriminate against race, creed or even colour. It is not bothered who, this thing does not bother why. This thing has no feelings, it does not think for its self. It does not feel guilt, remorse or a sense of shame. If you are a man or a woman it does not bother it. If you are young or old it makes no difference. Not even your status can effect it, no matter how wadded you are or if you are a doley. Believe me brethern, it does not have a religion. It gets straight to the point quick. Who is it? What is it? Well the answer is of course a bullet. A bullet is all of the above and then some, innit. Bullets have no discretion or choice. But Allah (swt) has given us the choice and we should use our discretion not to use them."

What happens if I'm caught with a gun?

To tackle the problem of gun-related crime, sentences for people convicted of crimes involving a gun or other firearm have been made a lot tougher:

Anyone who is found guilty of illegally possessing a prohibited firearm faces a minimum sentence of five years in prison. Also, you now have to be at least 17 years old before you can buy an air rifle. There are plans to make the sale of realistic imitation guns illegal, even if they could never be turned into weapons that fire real ammunition [4].

If you or any of your family are victims of gun crime or violence help is available. You can contact:

**Gun Crime Team
Home Office
5th Fry
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF**

If you experience any gun crime contact your local police force or phone

**Crime stoppers
0800 555 111**

If you really want to carry something heavy, which has ultimate power that no force can stop or resist, something that will keep you and your family protected and never runs out of ammunition, then try the pocket size Holy Quran with an English translation.

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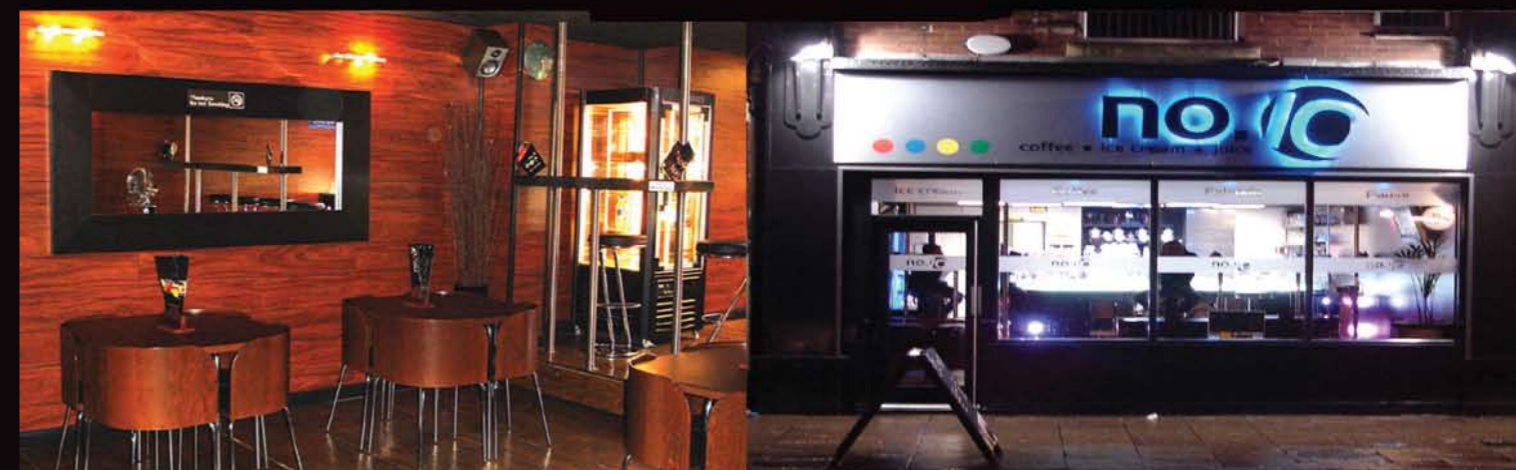
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IDIOTS GUIDE TO THE QURAN

By Sajid Iqbal



1. What is the Quran?

The Quran is the Muslim holy book, ya' know like the Bible is to Christianity and the Torah is to Judaism. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through the Angel Gabriel. The Quran is the record of the exact words revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Did you know that the Quran is a 'first-person' revelation, and is the authentic expression of the divine voice of the Almighty? The Quran offers a revelation from the point of view of God Himself.

2. Why was it revealed?

The Quran was sent to the whole of mankind for all times and not just for Muslims. The Quran is an instruction manual for life. If you follow it you will never go wrong. God says in the Quran:

"This Quran guides to that which is most right, and gives good tidings to believers who do deeds of righteousness, that theirs will be a great reward." (Chapter 17, Verse 9)

3. How was it compiled?

The Quran was revealed in the cities of Mecca and Madinah over a period of 23 years, according to the needs of the time. Angel Gabriel brought it to the Prophet (pbuh) who would memorise it. Afterwards, it was preserved in two ways.

First, through memorisation, there were a number of early Muslims who would memorise each revelation as soon as it was revealed and thus had the whole Quran memorised at the time of the final revelation. The tradition of memorizing the entire Quran still continues, and a person who does so is called a Hafiz.

Second, the Quran was preserved through writing. Whenever any revelation took place, it was written at once on tablets, palm branches, shorn of leaves, or animal skin. This was done primarily by Zaid bin Thabit (ra), who was the main scribe out of the 42 scribes of the revelation. The Prophet (pbuh) set the order of the chapters under the guidance of Angel Gabriel and ordered his companions to maintain that order. Abu Bakr (ra), the first caliph of Islam, compiled the Quran, and Usman (ra), the third caliph, made numerous copies and sent one copy to each state capital.

4. Is the Quran we have today exactly the same as the words revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)?

In the time of the third Caliph Usman (ra), differences in reading the Quran amongst the various different tribes became obvious. So Usman (ra) made an official copy in the Quraishi dialect, the dialect in which the Quran was revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) and was memorised by his companions.

Thus this compilation by Usman (ra)'s committee is not a different version of the Quran (like the Biblical versions) but the same original revelation given to the Prophet (pbuh) by one God, Allah.

You can find this original copy made by Usman (ra) in Tashkent in Uzbekistan and in Istanbul in Turkey today. Their text and arrangement can be compared, by anyone who cares to do so, with any other copy of the Quran, be it in print or written from any place or period of time. They will be found identical!

God says in the Quran: "We have sent down the Reminder, and We will preserve it." (Chapter 15, Verse 9)

5. How is the Quran different to other books revealed by God?

Don't forget none of the other scriptures were memorised word by word or written down word by word. These scriptures have many additions, deletions and plenty of errors from the time they were revealed to the present day. The Holy Quran is unique to all the other scriptures, also by the fact that the language in which it was revealed in is widely in use today and understood by millions of people. On the other hand, the languages in which the other scriptures were originally revealed are now dead and ancient, so as a result they are not in use today.

6. How do I know its from God and not written by man?

The Quran is scientifically proven to be the word of God. The Quran talks about astronomy, cosmology, astrophysics, cardiology, medicine, embryology and many field of science. Here are just a few examples:

human embryonic development (chapter 23, Verse 12-14), *layers of the womb* (Chapter 39, Verse 6), *black hole* (Chapter 39, Verse 68), *speed of light* (Chapter 10, Verse 5), *cure of honey* (Chapter 16, Verse 68-69), *deep sea currents* (Chapter 24, Verse 40), *thread of the spider* (Chapter 29, Verse 41), *the speed of time* (Chapter 70, Verse 4), *fingerprints* (Chapter 75, Verse 4), *the phases of the moon* (Chapter 36, Verse 39), *reversal of gravity* (Chapter 99, Verse 2), *Earth's movement in space* (Chapter 27, Verse 88), *life on other planets* (Chapter 42, Verse 29), *DNA* (Chapter 10, Verse 34), *the water cycle* (Chapter 30, Verse 48)... and the list is endless.

Pick up the Quran right now and check out these amazing facts!

Now you tell me this: how the heck can a market trader from a small town with no formal education 1400 years ago, at a time when science and technology didn't exist and the best form of transport was a camel, make such detailed and accurate statements about things which were only discovered in the last few decades? Simple: Coz it's not from man but it's from God!

God states in the Quran:

"And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed (the Quran) to Muhammad, then produce a chapter like it, and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides God if you are truthful." (Chapter 2, Verse 23-25)

7. Ain't the Quran an outdated book though? Get with the times man!

The Quran is not confined by time, but is relevant to all ages, times and societies. The Quran was revealed by Allah who has knowledge of everything - the past and the future. The problems faced by societies and people who lived many years ago are problems that many of us face today. If you actually read the Quran you'd find that it has the answers to many of the key issues that trouble mankind today such as racism, women's rights, terrorism, war, famine, poverty etc. Till this very day scientists are discovering things that were mentioned in the Quran almost 1400 years ago! So it is anything but outdated!

8. What is the Quran all about then? How will I benefit from it?

The Quran teaches us how to live a family life, how to marry, who to get married to, what to eat and how to do business. It covers almost all branches of science. It talks about hell, heaven and the last day and about the life of the Prophets. The Quran outlines the rights of women, rights of parents, rights of the husband, rights of the wife, rights of neighbours, and the rights of children. Also the Quran has strict rules for governors so they can rule justly and strict rules for war and peace. The Quran answers the questions of life like evolution, purpose of creation, life after death... and much, much more.

The Quran states how you will benefit:

"This is the book (The Quran) in which there is no doubt, a guidance for those with Taqwa [God-conscious]." (Chapter 2, Verse 2)

The Prophet also mentioned how the Quran will benefit you:

"Read the Quran, for it will come as an intercessor for its reciters on the Day of Resurrection." [Muslim]

"The best of you is the one who learns the Quran and teaches it." [Al Bukhari]

9. So does the Quran tell us what the purpose of life is?

Yes it does. For a Muslim the purpose of life is to worship Allah. As the Quran says:

"I have only created Jinns and humans, so that they worship Me." (Chapter 51, Verse 56)

That doesn't mean you just do your prayers and Bob's your uncle. Oh no, you have 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 and 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 if your intention is to please your Creator then that is WORSHIP. This, my friend, is the purpose of life for a Muslim.

10. Doesn't the Quran promote violence and terrorism?

You can only say that if you haven't read the Quran. Coz when you read it, it's crystal clear violence and terrorism are massive crimes in the eyes of God. Here is what God says about this:

"If anyone kills a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed the whole of mankind anyone saves a life, it would be as if he saved the whole of mankind." (Chapter 5, Verse 32)

In another place God says:

"Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching. And argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious." (Chapter 16, Verse 125)

And again:

"Oh you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor, for God can best protect both."

Follow not the cravings of your hearts, lest you swerve, and if you distort justice or decline to do justice, verily God is well acquainted with all that you do." (Chapter 4, Verse 135)



11. Doesn't the Quran say women are second-class citizens?

Come on dude, don't make me laugh now! Islam elevated the status of women 1400 years ago by declaring them equal to men, giving them the right to work, a right to an education to the highest level, the right to vote, the right to take public office, the right to join the army, the right to divorce, the right to inheritance, the right to marry who she wishes, and a lot more too!

Regarding the equality of men and women the Quran states:

"And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women." (Chapter 2, Verse 226)

"Enter into Paradise, you and your wives, with delight." (Chapter 43, Verse 70)

"Who so does that which is right, and believes, whether male or female, him or her will We quicken to happy life." (Chapter 16, Verse 97)

The Quran warns those men who oppress or ill-treat women:

"O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have given them - except when they have become guilty of open lewdness. On the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike something and Allah will bring about through it a great deal of good." (Chapter 4, Verse 19)

12. What does the Quran say about racism?

The Quran's message and appeal is so massive because in the eyes of God the colour of your skin counts for absolutely nothing. God says:

"O Mankind! Most certainly, it is We (God Almighty) who have Created you all from a single (pair) of a male and a female. And it is We who have made you into nations and tribes, that you may recognise each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you." (Chapter 49, Verse 13)

In another verse God says:

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours; verily in that are signs for those who know." (Chapter 30, Verse 22)

13. I don't understand Arabic, so can I read the Quran in another language?

Yes, the Quran is now translated in almost every language today.

14. Is an English translation of the Quran same as the original revelations in Arabic?

No matter how good the translation is it falls far short of the original. A translation may be helpful and necessary for non-Arabic speaking Muslims and others who are interested in the Holy Book, but it shouldn't be confused with the Quran itself. So that means we should all try to learn Arabic I'm afraid!



15. What's the best English translation to read?

There are many translations in English but one of the best is The Noble Quran - A New Rendering of its Meaning in English by Abdal haqq and Aisha Bewley.

This is a translation into English of the Quran which is easy to read and which gives easy access to the meanings of the original Arabic without compromising them in any way. In short, it is a new rendering of its meaning which is not only trustworthy but also a pleasure to read.

Or if you love the English language and are looking for something more poetic and philosophical then Yusuf Ali's and Marmaduke Pickthall's translations will be your cup of tea. Sometimes these can be difficult to understand as they can be a bit Shakespearean if you know what I mean.

The Quran is like an ocean: You can stand at the edge looking over it and on the surface its very beautiful, but it's not until you dive in and search that you find its hidden pearls and truly experience its wonder. So pick up your copy today and read it... trust me, it's better and more life changing than any Harry Potter book!

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THE REVIVAL FEAST

CHICKEN JALFREZI

- What you'll need:**
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
 - 1 onion, grated
 - 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
 - 1 1/2 pounds of boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut in half
 - 3 teaspoons of ground turmeric
 - 1 teaspoon of chilli powder
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons of salt
 - 1 (14.5 ounce) can peeled and diced tomatoes
 - 2 tablespoons of butter
 - 3 teaspoons of ground cumin
 - 3 teaspoons of ground coriander
 - 2 tablespoons of grated fresh ginger root

What to do:

Heat the oil in a large deep skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and garlic, and cook for about 2 minutes. Add the chicken, and season with turmeric, chilli powder and salt. Fry gently, scraping the bottom of the pan frequently and turning the chicken.

Pour in the tomatoes with their juice, cover the pan, and simmer over medium heat for 20 minutes. Uncover, and simmer for another 10 minutes to let the excess liquid evaporate.

Add the butter, cumin, ground coriander, ginger and cilantro, and simmer for another 5 to 7 minutes. Serve the chicken pieces with sauce spooned over the top.



Bon appetite!

SPAGHETTI BOLOGNAISE

- What you'll need:**
- 500g of Pasta
 - 2 Pounds of mince lamb
 - Olive Oil
 - A small Onion
 - Garlic
 - Tinned Tomato (blend it before starting)
 - Red Chilli Powder
 - Garam Masala & Coriander Mix
 - 1 Jar of Ragu Sauce (or equivalent)

- What to do:**
- The Pasta**
1. Add 2 tablespoons to a saucepan of water and then add the pasta. This will prevent the pasta from sticking together.
 2. Heat until the pasta becomes soft and easily broken. Don't check this with your bare hands its still going to be piping hot. Use a spoon or a fork to check the pasta is soft.
 3. Rinse thoroughly while being careful not to get hit by the steam from the boiling water. Add another tablespoon of olive oil and if you like a 1/4 tablespoon of black pepper.
 4. Its now ready for the sauce!



- The Sauce**
1. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil to a saucepan (alternatively you may also use vegetable oil or Ghee) and then finely chop a small onion and add to the saucepan.
 2. Chop 2 cloves of garlic and add to the pan. Try to keep the heat steady and keep stirring till the onions are light brown.
 3. Add the pre-blended tinned tomato along with half a tablespoon of salt. Stir thoroughly for 5 minutes.
 4. Add 1/2 a teaspoon of red chilli powder. Continue stirring.
 5. Add 1 teaspoon of Garam masala along with 1/2 a teaspoon of coriander. Stir well till boiling hot.
 6. Add the mince lamb along with an entire Jar of Ragu Sauce to the contents. Then refill the Ragu jar with water and add to the pan. Stir well and leave to cook for 15 minutes till nice and thick (although NOT too thick).
- Leave to cool for a few minutes and then serve with the pasta. You may also add a little grated Reggiano cheese along with some chopped basil. There should be plenty for the entire family.

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Answers By Shaykh Salim Ghisa

Are Muslims allowed to go to the pub even if they do not drink, especially if it is work related?

No. In Islam places which are allocated for the use of Haram activities are forbidden to enter even if it is not for consuming the Haram. The reason for this is that these are places which gain the wrath and the curse of Allah and also as a Muslim one must ensure that their outwardly actions do not lead others to doubt them, therefore going in to Pubs, Clubs, Casinos, dance bars etc could make a person who sees this individual think that they are going in for the wrong reasons.

Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) cursed ten people in connection with alcohol: '...the one who distils it, the one for whom it has been distilled, the one who drinks it, the one who transports it, the one to whom it has been brought, the one who serves it, the one who sells it, the one who utilizes money from it, the one who buys it and the one who buys it for someone else.' (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah transmitted it).

Animal Rennet. When is it acceptable to consume and for whom. Is the rennet of an animal killed with a bolt to the head Halal? Is this the same ruling as for slaughter?

First of all one must understand the definition of Animal rennet. Also this ruling is according to the Hanafi school of thought and is as follows;

The lawfulness of rennet does not depend on the slaughterer being a Muslim or non-Muslim, in fact it depends upon whether there is life in it or not. The circulation of blood in an organ is the cause of life. No blood flows through rennet; therefore rennet is not a living thing. Therefore, it cannot 'die' and it is thus permissible to consume rennet like dairy products.

Therefore whether the animal is slaughtered according to the Halal method or bolted the Rennet is permissible to eat. However the exception to this rule is that rennet produced from Pig is Haram and definitely unlawful. Therefore, one must ascertain whether the rennet used is not derived from pig. If it is not then it is permissible to eat.

However, where there is doubt (as is in this case between the four Mad-habs) then one must err on the side of caution as children may not understand the difference between rennet and fat and may conclude that animal fat is also Halal and this is certainly not the case.



The purpose of fasting in Ramadan is to achieve Taqwa, i.e. to become God-fearing and pious etc. But I fast year in, year out and see no change...especially when Ramadan is over! So what can I do to help become and remain a God-fearing and pious person?

In the name of Allah the Most Beneficent and Merciful.

Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala says: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become pious." (Al-Baqarah, 2:183).

Fasting has many benefits and grades. People believe that just by staying hungry and thirsty from dawn 'til dusk it will make them a pious person. The reality is that when the time comes to open the fast they will probably eat more than normal and during the day still continue to behave in their normal way. This is why they don't truly benefit from fasting in the month of Ramadan.

Fasting is not just for the body but also for the soul. One's eyes, ears, tongue and all other bodily parts should perform the fast too. The fasting of the eyes is to lower them and not look at anything which would lead to sin. The fasting of the ears is to abstain from listening to anything which is Haram or could lead to Haram. In this day and age when we fast we certainly abstain from food, drink and conjugal relations but do we fast for the spiritual well being of ourselves? If the answer is no then how can one expect to obtain piety and Taqwa. To ensure that absolute Taqwa would be practised the Holy Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) himself used to perform I'tikaf (seclusion) in the Masjid.

The Holy Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: "Whoever has not left untruthful talk and acting upon it: Allah has no need of him putting aside his food and drink." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

The etiquette of the fast of the pious includes lowering the gaze, protecting the tongue from unlawful or offensive speech which is hurtful, or which simply offers no benefit, and guarding the remaining physical faculties. Jabir relates from Anas that the Holy Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: "Five things break a man's fast: lying, backbiting, gossiping, perjury and a lustful gaze."

There is also the Hadith where two women came to the Prophet of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and he instructed them not to open their fast after sunset. He then advised them that they had not been fasting but had eaten meat. They denied this and the Holy Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked for a container to be bought and instructed them to vomit into the container. They did this and chunks of meat came out. He then told them that although they had fasted from food and drink they had eaten the flesh of their brother by backbiting and this was the cause for their fast not being counted.

Other etiquettes of fasting in Ramadan include not filling up with food




and drink at night, but rather eating small portions since Mankind fills no container more evil than his stomach - since whenever one eats his fill at the beginning of the night will not be of use to himself for the rest of the night. It is the same regarding eating one's fill before beginning the fast; he will be of no use to himself until near noon, since too much food leads to laziness and abatement. And besides, the whole purpose of fasting is missed by eating too much, since the point is that one taste hunger and forgo what he desires.

An important part of achieving taqwa through fasting is to do more Ibadah in Ramadan as there is increased reward in this month. One should firstly read the five daily prayers and then try to make up for missed prayers in the past. We should try spending time in Dhikr (the remembrance of Allah), reading and understanding the Qu'ran and learning about the Deen.

If one is to fast how Islam prescribes us to do so, then we can't not benefit from the month of Ramadan. It will insha Allah help us to become a God-fearing and pious person.

I would recommend all readers to study the detailed analysis of fasting in Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship by Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, trans. from the Ihya' by Mukhtar Holland.

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Why would anyone in the 21st Century willingly practise Islam? I mean, ain't it a backwards, sexist, violent, and out-dated religion? Ain't it the religion that's always on the news? And why the hell is Islam the fastest growing religion in the world? What does it offer anyway?

THE REVIVAL PRESENTS TO YOU 10 THINGS THAT ISLAM CAN OFFER YOU IF YOU FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM:

1. Direction

All humans by nature need a sense of purpose in life. We need to know where we came from, where we're going and how we can get there. A lack of direction results in a careless attitude towards life which can lead to feeling dissatisfied and depressed. Islam gives people a sense of direction and a purpose in life so we're not just wondering about aimlessly. Muslims have a clear destination in life- Jannah (Heaven), an eternity of bliss and happiness. Muslims know that if they live their lives according to the laws of Islam, there's no reason why they shouldn't get there. Without Islam, it's as if you are in a boat in the middle of the sea with no idea which direction to go. However, if you have Islam, although it's still difficult because you have to paddle, at least you have a map of where you're trying to get to.

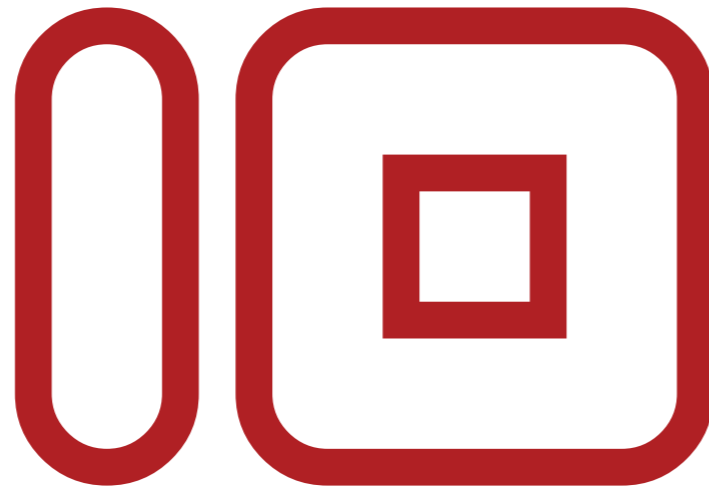


2. Belonging

Islam is a religion for all people from whatever race or background they may come from. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and the second largest religion in the world. Among every four humans, one of them is Muslim. Muslims have increased by over 235 percent in the last fifty years up to around 1.6 billion in the world today! The Muslim community (Ummah) has been likened to one body, when one part feels pain the rest of the Ummah suffers as a result. Islam stresses a sense of sisterhood and brotherhood and places fulfilling the rights of Mankind even higher than the rights of God! This is because, if you don't fulfil the rights of mankind, God won't accept any of your worship!

3. Responsibility

How many times have you seen someone in trouble, whether it was a beggar in the street or someone being bullied in school, and thought 'It ain't my problem'? Islam stresses responsibility to others on ALL levels. When these clear guidelines are followed properly, everyone is treated fairly, their needs are fulfilled and no one has any reason to complain. Islam makes sure that everyone's rights are fulfilled. Muslims have an obligation to reach out to the poor, the sick, the needy, the orphans and those who are oppressed or unfairly detained. The Prophet (saw) said that if you see any injustice, you should try to change it with your hand and if you can't do that, at least change it with your tongue (speak out against it). Muslims individually and collectively have a part to play in being there for others in times in need: socially, emotionally or financially. Plus, you benefit too! When you help someone in need, your needs



THINGS ISLAM CAN OFFER YOU

By Alveena Salim



get fulfilled too! When you give charity to others, Allah (swt) multiplies it by 10, 70 or 100 before giving it back to you!

4. Strength

Islam gives you the strength and patience to deal with whatever life throws at you. With Islam anything is possible and there's nothing you can't hack. Islam gives you strength because if you have true belief you will know that all good and bad is from Allah (swt). The bad times are a test to make us better, wiser and stronger Muslims and any hardship we encounter in this world we will be rewarded in the next life. The true Muslims are ALWAYS at peace, are NEVER stressed out and are content in ALL situations. After all, how can you stress when you have God on your side? Furthermore, stress and difficulties, however minor, can serve as expiation for your sins, so it's a win-win situation at all times!

5. Humility

Before you ever start getting too big for your boots Islam will bring you back down to reality and keep your feet firmly on the ground, keeping you humble and selfless in your actions. Islam makes us less self-ish and pretentious and more grateful and humble. Islam makes us a much better person, friend, son/daughter, brother/sister, husband/wife etc. When your forehead touches the ground five times a day in prayer you're humbled and reminded of the One whom you're totally dependent on. When you fast in the 30 days of Ramadan, you're made to think of the less fortunate who are not blessed with as much as you are, when you give charity, you're reminded of the poor, the orphans and the detained. And when you're a face amongst millions, wearing the Ihram during the pilgrimage to Makkah, you experience the international sense of the Ummah, and are reminded that you're just a simple Muslim amongst many.

6. A Perfect Role Model

It is human nature to imitate. We all need someone to look up to, aspire to be like and follow in their footsteps. The uniqueness of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) is that he was not only a great person in his own time, but he is a great person for all times, for all people of any race, colour, nationality or gender. He is such a fantastic role model that his example worked for the 7th century pagan Arabs and also works for us living in the 21st century. In fact, he was voted the most influential man ever! He is an excellent example for the rich and poor, for the young and old and for the rulers and the ruled. Prophet Muhammad (saw) practiced what he preached and was perfection personified.

7. Peace Of Mind

Everyone is searching for peace of mind. Some try to achieve it by earning money, others try to gain it through fame, and some try to gain it through their education or their career. However, complete peace of mind can ONLY be gained through the remembrance of God. Through the remembrance of Allah (swt) your soul gains fulfilment just as your body needs food for nourishment. The nourishment of the soul is the remembrance of its Creator. True peace can only be gained once you satisfy the soul as well as the body. You can have all the fame, wealth and success in the world, but if you haven't got peace of mind then you haven't got anything. Many celebrities have attempted suicide, suffered from bulimia/anorexia and some have even been successful in their attempt to kill themselves. If they were truly at peace within themselves – why would they be so self-destructive?

8. Keeps You On The Right Track

Every society needs law and order; this is so that society does not fall to pieces. Living without laws is not only unfulfilling but would result in huge problems in society. And coz we don't always necessarily know what is good for us, and what will bring us harm, we have laws in Islam to help us. Without Islamic guidelines, alcohol related problems, premarital and extramarital sexual relationships, gambling, stealing, drugs and crime would destroy the Muslim society. By following the guidance from the Qur'an and the Sunnah you aim to stay on the straight path: law abiding and righteous. Plus, the belief that no action is unaccounted for and no deed is left unchecked is enough to keep anyone on the straight and narrow!

9. The Solution To All Your Problems

Whatever the nature of the problems that you face, Islam has a solution. This is because Islam caters for both the spiritual and practical aspects of human life. Islam is a complete system for life. Islam has a financial system, an education system, a government system, a social system and a legal system, all of which have been perfectly designed for us. This system of Islam can comprehensively solve the problems of the world today, such as famine, homelessness, crime, terrorism, war, oppression, racism, ignorance etc, etc. So whatever problem you may be facing, Islam has the perfect solution for it.

10. Happy Endings

The concept 'what goes around comes around' is a strong fact in Islam. Every one will get what's coming to them, not only in this world but also in the hereafter. Islam promises a lifetime of eternal bliss in the next life and a lifetime of peace and happiness here on Earth for those who sincerely submit to Allah (swt). No deed will ever go to waste and everything will be accounted for. On the Day of Judgement, we will all be handed our book of deeds, and the people who sinned in this life will be shocked to see that it doesn't leave anything out, no matter how small the action seemed to be.

So there you have it, 10 things Islam can offer YOU if you live your life according to Islamic guidance. Millions of people all over the world, appreciate all that Islam has to offer, that's why Islam is the second largest religion in the world AND the fastest growing religion in the world today. Islam has so much to offer each and every person. So isn't it time YOU took a serious look at Islam to see what it offers you?

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Tech Guide

By Naheem Zaffar

PHONE-O-RAMA

Where were you when you read about the iPhone being announced? I will hazard a guess: On the internet. Or reading the paper. Or talking to a geek "mate" of yours. (Well that does just about cover the options doesn't it?)

Apparently, the iPhone is not the only phone to be launched this year. Shock horror!

So in this tech guide I will have a quick look at some pretenders to the throne. They will all be high end "Smart phones". So let's see what we have here:

Nokia N93i BLACK

The cons first: It's a Nokia. Next!

What? Some people actually like Nokia's? (Grumbles...) Ok then... to the details. As the name suggests, it is in black. Black is the new black, so it is kewl. Because I said so. It is also as sleek as a baby elephant.

For the gadget freak in you it has a 3.2 Meg camera with Carl Zeiss Optics. For the normal person, just say that with a slight nod. It makes you look 200% more clever. For the normal person it means it has a good quality camera which supports 3x optical zoom (nod your head in a knowing manner again). It also has decent quality video recording. The phone supports min-SD memory cards, so you can add a ton of memory if you want to.

For the lyrical gangster in you, it has support for MP3. You know for the nasheds. Yeah that must be it. And the obligatory full screen video support.

If that is not enough, it has the Symbian operating system allowing you to install software, and also has wifi support (wireless internet - most likely crippled by the network providers as they do not like it if you can do useful things with your phone and not pay them for the privilege.)

Nokia N93i



The Revival verdict: IT'S A NOKIA!

Samsung F700

Aka the iPhone rip off merchant. This is due around the October time frame (so before the phone is copied...) and has a touch screen interface. Who needs buttons. They are soooo 2005! (Let's forget for a moment the full slide out keyboard...) It has a whopping 5 mega pixel camera (it's a bigger number, so it must be better right? right?), but no wifi (saving the network the "effort" of disabling it). It is also has the Symbian operating system, allowing you to install other programs.

Once again this is another smart phone, so size matters. Smaller than the N93, but bigger than a butterfly.

Samsung F700



The Revival Verdict: Looking good. Shame about the lack of wifi.

Apple iPhone

Aka will sell a shed load. Why? Because it is made by Apple. This has the vanity angle fully covered. If you are into your designer gear, stop reading this thing and get yourself one of these pronto! (teehee it's not out in the UK yet. Rumours point to November. But it's a top secret. Sshh!! If you can't wait on the vanity front, get the LGs Prada. Come on it is by Prada. The LG bit is really a misnomer... Which self-respecting manufacture would call itself LG?)

For those not into vanity in a big way, this phone still may be for you. It is a phone and iPod all in one, with a massive amount of memory to boot. Just remember that it will cost an arm and a leg. Maybe more. It has an ok-ish 2 meg camera, but it (potentially) has unhindered wifi. And it is cool. It has a multi touch interface. Once again buttons are so passé. Multi touch means you can use two hands to touch the screen. Woo!

One major drawback is that the current (US) version of this phone does not have 3g, so it may be a little slow if you use it for internet browsing. Oh, I forgot to mention it contains a full web browser, and a youtube app allowing you to play youtube videos in full screen. For those nasheds. Honestly.

Since it is a smart phone you can install more programs. Actually, no you can't. It is pretty much locked down so unless the program is built-in or can run in a browser, you are out of luck. The price of vanity eh? But how many people actually do install such things?

Possible price point? It costs \$500 in the US with a 2-year contract. Considering £1 is about \$2, I would say around... £350 plus a possibly expensive contract. (Yeah most companies are pretty bad at maths when it comes to currency conversions. Or are greedy? I can never decide...)

iPhone



The Revival Verdict: What you already pre ordered? It is looking good. May even be decent as a phone.

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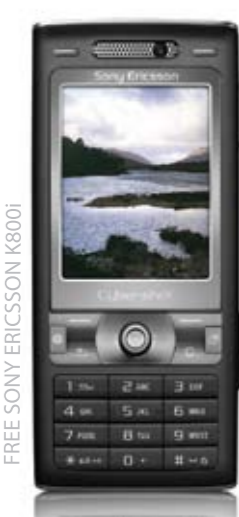
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1. Over how many years was the Quran revealed?
2. Name the 7 articles of faith
3. Name the 12 months of the Islamic calendar
4. Name at least 5 Prophets mentioned in the Quran?
5. What was the first MOSQUE built by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)?

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NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE?

Let's find out shall we! Answer these simple Brain teasers:

1. Three women each have two daughters. They are having lunch at a restaurant. There are only seven chairs in the restaurant. All the women are seated.
Question: How is this possible?

2. Suppose 6 monkeys take 6 minutes to eat 6 bananas.
(a) How many minutes would it take 3 monkeys to eat 3 bananas?
(b) How many monkeys would it take to eat 54 bananas in 54 minutes?

3. A crime has been committed. A life has been taken. The name, address and personal information are known by police. However, this person shall never go to trial or jail.
Question: Why?

4. If the difference of two numbers is 8 and their product is 17, what is the sum of their squares?

WHAT A JOKER!

- *Why did the monkey fall off the tree?"
"Coz it was DEAD !!!"
- *What did the fire engine say to the police car?
"Nothing, fire engines can't talk"

WHERE IS OBL?



SUDOKU

Arrange the numbers 1 to 9 so that every number only appears once in every row, column or 3x3 square.

	8			2	9		
1	9		6				3
2			3				
9	3		8	5			
	4		1	7		5	
			3	2		9	8
			5				4
4				1		3	6
		3	8			7	

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