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revival

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Nov/Dec 07

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Also in this Issue

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NO TABOO IN ISLAM

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EDITORIAL

I was co-presenting a late night discussion show on my local Radio in the month of Ramadan this year, which I have been doing for quite a few years now. The topic was marriage, which is one of the most popular shows every year... I dunno why! However, every year, a small section of the listeners remind me of one massive ignorance and fault our Muslims communities have across the UK.

It's the fear and ignorance of discussing issues which make us uncomfortable even though we know they are real, they exist and they affect all of us! But we moan and fuss and complain that certain issues should not be discussed, highlighted and talked about openly. In this case, listeners were embarrassed and disgusted that Muslims were openly discussing marriage and sexual matters on the radio after midnight in the presence of a qualified scholar. Shock! Horror!

Now let me make it clear: There is no taboo in Islam. No topic or issue is a taboo, or is 'wrong' or 'shameful' when you are dealing with adults, especially when you have learned and qualified people monitoring the debate or discussion. No-one should be embarrassed to discuss anything which concerns the Muslim community; at home with your parents, at mosques, with your scholars and leaders, at uni's, on media platforms and so on. Of course time, locality, audience and other crucial factors need to be taken into consideration.

Some in the Muslim communities want to hide and brush under the carpet hardcore issues that face you and me. Whether it's forced marriages, etiquettes of sex in Islam, homosexuality, honour killings, drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, and many other issues - they exist, they happen, they affect our Muslim community. Firstly, we HAVE to be big enough to recognise these are issues that affect us and then secondly, we HAVE to discuss them, tackle them and educate our community about them. We can't bury our heads in the sand and expect everything to be hunky dory!

Bringing real issues to the forefront and making them a talking point is a challenge we must face today. If WE don't talk about issues like sex, drugs n rock n roll, dodgy cultural practices or drug and alcohol abuse openly in the light of the Quran and Sunnah with qualified people- then who will? Who will you and I, our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters turn to? Let me guess: Shaykh Google? Our mates? The TV, movies or rap stars? If so, then know one thing for sure; the answers will most definitely not be according to Islam.

If you read and study the life of the Prophet (pbuh) and read the books of Ahadith you will know that there is no taboo in Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) openly discussed all issues with his companions in public and in private. From contraception to sexual etiquettes, from forced marriages to drug abuse - the Prophet (pbuh) has openly discussed it and it is recorded in authentic books of Hadith such as Bukhari and Muslim and many others.

The Prophet (pbuh) and the Sahaba knew there was no taboo in Islam. That is why they openly discussed and highlighted issues that affected them. Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim along with other great Scholars of Hadith collected all kinds of Ahadith concerning sexual matters, marriage, drug and alcohol abuse and so on, for the Ummah to read and learn about because they also knew there was no taboo in Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Blessed are the women of the Ansar (citizens of Madinah), shyness did not stand in their way for seeking knowledge about their religion." [Bukhari & Muslim]

So let me ask you: Who knows better? The Prophet (pbuh), his companions, great Imams like Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim or me, you and any other Tom, Dick and Harry today? You see Islam is a Deen - a complete way of life which deals with each and every aspect of life. Islam doesn't just cover religious matters. It doesn't just bang on about worship and prayers. Oh No! What affects you in your everyday life is covered in Islam and you need to know what Islam says about it.

So individuals, parents and especially scholars need to raise, discuss and highlight all issues that concern us on every platform available. Imams and mosques should be courageous enough to bring the hardcore issues that concern us all in their Friday sermons and regular speeches and lessons. Mosque khutbah's cover mainly Eid debates, issues where there is a difference of opinion on Fiqh issues (i.e. leather socks, size of the beard, hijab, raising hands in dua) and/or Milad and other Aqida debates. However, whilst our Muslim Youth are getting pregnant, having undercover abortions, running away from home, having pre-marital relationships, getting involved in dodgy issues - Imams hardly EVER acknowledge this publicly in their sermons. The likes of you and I need to realise there is no taboo in Islam, and then raise all issues that concern us with our parents and scholars, as the Prophet (pbuh) stated: "There is no shyness in matters of religion".

Sajid Iqbal
editor@therevival.co.uk

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emails to the editor



Assalaamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullaah
I am writing to congratulate you on the Revival Magazine! It's beautiful... mashallah!!!!

According to your website, you started a while back but I only found out a few days ago, actually I found the magazine in my local masjid (Clonskeagh mosque, Dublin 14, Ireland) few days before Eid...alhamdulillah! I was so excited I took it home without asking the owner or anything! May Allah Tala forgive me.

I would also like to get some more copies for the youth here! Ireland's young Muslim population is very little therefore most youth are straying, it will be very good to have a magazine like yours around! I, mashallah really enjoyed reading it. Wassallaam

Muftiah Abiolah
Dublin, Ireland

Salaam
The mag is great! I downloaded it from the web, the April/May issue was a bit ...how should I put it... ASTONISHING!!! EVERY Article within it co-ordinated with the society we live in today and brought more hope that people ARE aware of these things and that there are solutions to these problems. The reminders of Hadith and Quranic verses added to the excellence. So after I read that mag, I passed it onto my family and All praise be to Allah, they loved it too! So, I downloaded all of them and passed them round.

Areefa Menhaj
London

Salaam
I have been reading several issues of the revival magazine on your website. Occasionally I would get a copy from members of the community or at Islamic events, but when the last two were published I didn't receive any magazines so I decided to check your website. That is where I found your new issue and downloaded the PDF version.

I believe that your magazine is designed in a way where it will really relate to the youth. I think it is a great way for Muslim youth to get on top of news and current affairs of the community. I believe the magazine itself is good, but distribution in different areas needs to be improved so that people can get hold of the issues and spread the word. Waslaam
Ruqayyah Fombo
London

Salaam
I am an 18-year-old student currently at college. I am writing to you regarding the latest issue (Aug/Sept '07) of The Revival. I read The Revival on a regular basis and I'm disturbed by some of the contents in this months issue.

My main problem is with pages 12 and 13 where there is a conversation between "Aliyah and Jameela". From reading these pages I think the wrong message is being portrayed. For example the situation with Iky seems to imply that having a relationship is OK as long as it is not in the month of Ramadan – definitely the wrong message. Also the part in which Haleema is termed a "Ho" is totally unacceptable and gossiping is dismissed as a normal conversation. Jameela's parts of the conversation are fine – sending a great message from which I have learnt a lot. However the conversation needs to be put in the right context, I do not think it is appropriate for young people and have prevented my younger sisters from reading it.

Asmah Akhtar
Bradford

Assallamu Allaikum
I like The Revival as I think it communicates with its target audience very well. However, I was reading some comments about the latest issue of the revival on the website, and could understand what some of the people commenting felt, in that a lot of the content focussed on the negative behaviours of the youth, rather than some of their positive endeavours.

I think this is easily remedied, by finding stories which can act as positive influences for the youth, and hence make them feel more positive, while still writing articles which address the negative behaviours that need to be addressed, which are often taboo in our more cultural societies.

Ayesha Khan
Manchester

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

What's He Chattin' About?

Adab – is prescribed etiquette, both inward and outward – a way of living in Islam. It is the deep courtesy observed in acts of worship as the person is aware that he is constantly dependent on and in the presence of Allah (swt).

Akhira – the Next World, what is on the other side of death, the Hereafter, the dimension of existence after this world.

Hira – a cave in a mountain known as Jabal an-Nur or the Mount of Light, two miles north of Makkah. This is where the Prophet (pbuh) used to go to retreat and where he received his first Revelations through the Angel Jibra'il.

Ihram – a sacred state in which one is prohibited to practice certain deeds that are lawful at other times. The

ceremonies of Umrah and Hajj are performed in this state. While in this state a male must wear a white, seamless, two-piece garment and females must wear any Islamic clothing as long as it is white and the face and hands are uncovered.

Muwafat – a person's state of faith at the moment of death.

Muwazin – the scales or balances set up to weigh people's actions on the Day of Judgement.

Raml – the hastening in the Tawaf (the circumambulation of the Ka'ba), a way of walking briskly accompanied by movements of the arms and legs to show one's physical strength. This is to be observed in the first three rounds of Tawaf, and is to be done by the men only and not by the women.

Sirat – also called Sirat al-Jahim (The Bridge of Hell), the narrow bridge which spans the Fire and must be crossed by ever person on the Day of Judgement to enter Paradise. It is described as sharper than a sword and thinner than a hair. People who performed good deeds in their lives will cross it easily but those who sinned will fall and burn.

Talbiya – the chant of the pilgrim, saying "Labbayk" ("At Your Service") during the Hajj or Umrah.

Tawakkul – confidently putting one's unshakeable trust and reliance in Allah (swt). It is trusting absolutely that Allah (swt) will be just and merciful and provide for His servants.

Don't Worry Be Happy

By Imaani Aslam

We will all have moments in our life when we feel a bit down, miserable or in a bit of a mood. It is natural to feel some sort of sadness when we experience disappointments in our everyday life. However, The World Health Organisation estimates that 121 million people worldwide are suffering from 'Depression' - the illness. [1]

The difference between feeling a little low and suffering from a depressive illness is that these low feelings can last for weeks or months and seriously interfere with a person's life. There are different types of depressive illnesses; depression in its mildest form can make everything seem a struggle or pointless, but depression in its most severe form can be life-threatening as it can make a person simply give up the will to live.

Contrary to popular belief, a person suffering from depression can't just 'snap out of it' or 'pull themselves together'. It is important to understand that depression isn't just a state of mind - it is clear that there are definite changes in the way the brain works when a person is depressed. Brain scans show that particular areas of the brain do not work as well as normal and there is an imbalance of chemicals known as neurotransmitters, which carry signals in our brain and nerves. Islam too recognises depression as an illness. An illness which, like all other hardships, has its reasons and for which we are encouraged to seek treatment.

Who Gets Depressed?

Although depression can make you feel alone it is in fact extremely common. Almost anybody can develop the illness. Depression doesn't distinguish between the rich or poor, the young or old - it attacks all kinds of people. However, it has been found that about 1 in 4 women will suffer from depression compared to 1 in 10 men. [2] This higher risk may be linked to hormonal changes, which occur in a female brought on by puberty, menstruation, pregnancy and menopause.

Suffering from depression is certainly NOT a sign of weakness as no particular personality types are more prone to the illness. However, some risk factors have been identified which include genetic factors, i.e. a history of depression in the family, and other factors like traumatic early life experiences, i.e. the death of a parent when young.

Symptoms Of Depression

There isn't an x-ray, scan or blood test that doctors can do to diagnose when someone is suffering from depression. Doctors make a diagnosis of depression from the severity of certain symptoms, the duration of them and the effect they are having on the person's everyday life. Depression can show up in many different ways. These are some symptoms of depression:

- * Feeling unloved, hopeless and worthless - like a waste of space
- * Getting no pleasure from usual hobbies, interests or everyday life
- * Feeling tired and lacking energy
- * Having difficulty sleeping or sleeping more or less than usual

- * A change in appetite resulting in losing or gaining weight
- * Lacking self-confidence, blaming yourself and feeling unnecessarily guilty
- * Feeling restless, tense and anxious
- * Being forgetful or finding it hard to concentrate or make decisions
- * Being unusually irritable or impatient
- * Self-harming/thoughts and attempts of suicide

What Causes Depression?

There is no single cause for depression and it very much varies from person to person, sometimes involving a number of factors. An unwelcome or traumatic event such as being divorced, sacked or physically attacked or raped can bring on depression. Other stressful life events such as the death of a loved one, relationship or financial difficulties or moving house may trigger an episode of depression. It can also be caused by a physical medical illness such as heart disease or cancer and the use of recreational drugs such as cocaine and cannabis can also play a part.

Treatment For Depression

The very nature of depression can make it extremely difficult for the person to actually seek help, as depression brings on a sense of hopelessness and worthlessness. These feelings can make a person feel even more depressed than they were in the first place. The most important thing to remember is that depression is an illness, and it is treatable. So if you think you may be suffering from depression you will need to see your GP, as they are the ones who most commonly treat people with depression.

Antidepressants are the most common medical treatment for depression. These work on the chemical messengers in the brain to lift your mood. They can't cure depression but they alleviate the symptoms so you can then take active steps to help make yourself better. Like most medications, antidepressants take a while to kick in which is normally two to four weeks and the treatment normally lasts six months. As with all medications they have side effects and they do not work for everyone.

Another effective treatment is counselling or psychotherapy (talking treatments), which is more frequent and intensive than counselling. It is hard to talk about painful experiences but healthcare professionals will understand this. It is advisable to see a practitioner of the same sex as yourself so you are able to be as open as possible and thus benefit as much as you can from this form of treatment.

There are various other treatments for depression also, so it is extremely important you discuss all the treatments available to you with your GP before you decide which treatment to take. If you follow and complete your treatment exactly how it is prescribed then you will be able to achieve recovery and live life as it should be lived in Islam - wholesomely, happily and productively.

What You Can Do To Help Yourself

In life there aren't ever any instant solutions to the problems we face. It always takes time, effort and energy to overcome any difficulties and it is the same with overcoming depression. As well as visiting your GP there are also things you can do to help yourself recover.

- * Try to keep your mind occupied by doing good deeds. When you're bored your mind tends to wander and you'll find yourself thinking about your problems. Keep yourself occupied by visiting loved ones, helping others and doing charitable work. Not only will your good deeds help you feel better they will also benefit you in the hereafter as we are reminded in the Quran: "Verily you are returning towards your Lord - with your deeds and actions [good or bad], a sure returning..." (Chapter 84, Verse 6).



* Concentrate on the present, living each day as it comes. When you wake up in the morning don't worry about the night and when the night comes don't worry about the next morning. For all you know you may never see it. Being sad or upset about the past won't change it, erase it or bring it back, and fearing or stressing about the future won't prolong it or bring it forward. Remember that whatever is written for us we will surely receive - "No calamity befalls the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees - before we bring it into existence" (Chapter 57, Verse 22).

* If you are having trouble sleeping don't lie in bed thinking about your problems, take your mind off your worries by listening to Nasheeds or doing Dhikr (remembrance of Allah (swt)). The Quran reminds us: "Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (Chapter 13, Verse 28). You can also read the Quran, its meaning and biographies and stories of our beloved Prophets and the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

* Don't try to escape your problems by drinking alcohol or taking drugs. This will only make your depression worse and harder to treat.

* Try to keep active. Lying in bed or sitting thinking about your problems will make them worse. Don't just stay locked up in your room all day, go outside and appreciate the splendour and beauty of nature. In the Quran Allah (swt) says of the believers, "And they think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying: 'Our Lord! You have not created [all] this without purpose, glory to You!'" (Chapter 3, Verse 191)

* Although you may not feel like it, do some physical exercise as this will take your mind off your problems and also make you feel good. Playing sports, running or even brisk walking can stimulate chemicals in the brain called endorphins which will make you feel better.

* Pay attention to your physical appearance. Do things that improve the way you feel about yourself, so everyday make an effort to look good so you feel comfortable about yourself. A Hadith tells us: "Verily, Allah (swt) is beautiful and He loves beauty" (Tirmidhi) Also treat yourself and do things that you enjoy.

* There isn't a single prayer that Allah (swt) doesn't hear or answer, so pray to Him to give you the strength to overcome your worries. When you're tossing and turning in the middle of the night get up and pray to Him. When you're struggling to cope with your troubles in the day raise your hands in supplication to Him. It doesn't matter where, when or which language you call on Him - He will respond to your call.

As Muslims our faith in Allah (swt) plays a huge part in dealing with and overcoming the various tests and tribulations we will all face in this world. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was the best of creation, yet even he endured many hardships, as did his Companions and the Prophets before him (peace be upon

them all). There is a Hadith about Urwah ibn Zubayr, the nephew of Aisha (may Allah (swt) be pleased with them both), which relates that in the duration of one day he lost one of his legs and was informed that his son had died. His response was: "O' Allah, to You belongs all praise. If You have taken away, then You have also given. And if You have tested (me) with hardship, You have also saved me and cared (for me). You have bestowed upon me four limbs and have taken only one away. You have blessed me with four sons and have taken only one away."

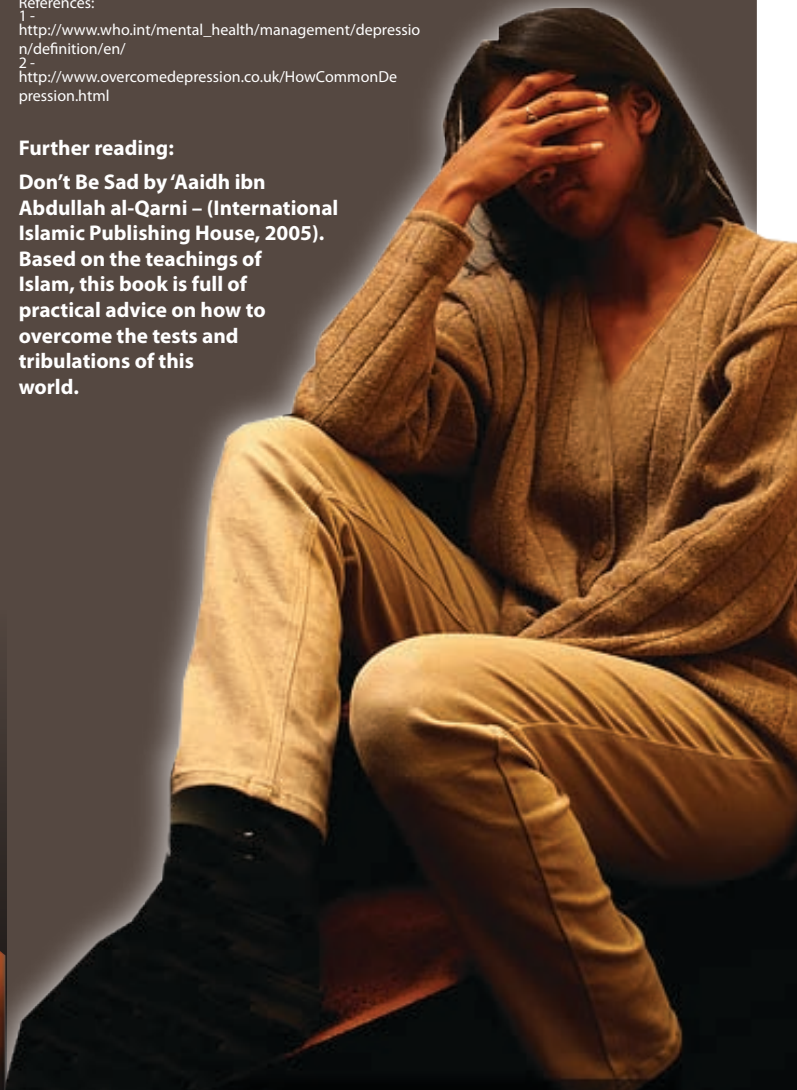
We need to trust our talents and develop them, forget our troubles and concentrate on all Allah (swt) has given us. The Quran, Sunnah and Hadith all provide us with the guidance and solutions needed to overcome any difficulty. Allah (swt) promises never to burden us with more than we can bear, and "Verily, with hardship, there is relief" (Chapter 94, Verse 6).

References:

1 - http://www.who.int/mental_health/management/depression/definition/en/
2 - <http://www.overcomedepression.co.uk/HowCommonDepression.html>

Further reading:

Don't Be Sad by 'Aaidh ibn Abdullah al-Qarni - (International Islamic Publishing House, 2005). Based on the teachings of Islam, this book is full of practical advice on how to overcome the tests and tribulations of this world.



Help Lines:

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THE REVIVAL'S guide to the top

Nasheed Artists

The word "Nasheed" is just an Arabic term meaning Islamic songs. Nasheeds aren't just about Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw), but they cover all sorts of issues concerning the Ummah today. Nasheeds have been around ever since the time of the Holy Prophet (saw), yes that is 1400 years ago! In total there were 45 Munshideen (Nasheed artists) at the time of the Holy Prophet (saw) with Hassan ibn Thabit (ra) being the favourite. The four rightly guided caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Usmaan and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all)) were also amongst the 45. Two of the most well known Nasheeds amongst the Ummah are 'Qasidah Burah' and 'Tala Al Badru Alayna'.

Here's The Revival's guide to the top Nasheed artists out there today:

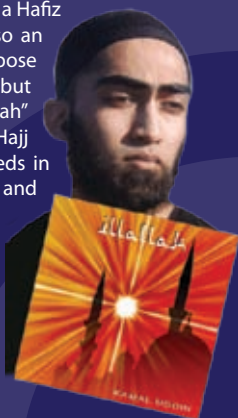
Kamal Uddin

What you need to know... This talented brother grew up in Manchester and is of the Bangladeshi background. He is not only a Hafiz (by the age of 17!) but also an Imam. He started to compose his own lyrics for his debut album "In the Name of Allah" after being inspired by his Hajj experience. He has Nasheeds in Arabic, Urdu, Bengali and English.

Best Album: Illalah

Our favourite track: It's a hard choice but 'His name is Muhammad' is ace!

The Revival verdict: Excellent! Keep the good work up!



Sami Yusuf

What you need to know... Born in Tehran (Iran) but brought up in London, Sami comes from a musical family of the Azeri origin and is now one of the biggest, international Nasheed artists around. Described by Time Magazine as "Islam's Biggest Rock Star" he made his name known in the Nasheed industry with his first album 'Al-Mu'allim'. He sings in Arabic, Urdu, English and Turkish and his music offers a great alternative for the youth. He's sung with many other Nasheed stars but we really liked his collaboration with Outlandish on Try Not To Cry.

Best Album: His debut album My Ummah ...and erm his follow up too Al-Mualim!

Our favourite track:

A real tough one so we'll go for Hasbi Rabbi off My Ummah and Allahu off Al-Mualim, but we love them all really!

The Revival verdict: He's a big hit with Muslims all over the globe... looking forward to his next album!



Native Deen

What you need to know... Abdul Malik, Joshua Salaam and Naem Muhammad from the USA are emerging into one of the leading Islamic hip-hop groups in the world today. Their sound though isn't identical to mainstream hip-hop coming out of the USA today, they have their own style with some good beats too. They've helped spread the uplifting message of Islam which calls to the remembrance of Allah by performing throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Africa often alongside many other big Nasheed artists.

Best Album: Their debut Deen You Know.

Our favourite track:

The upbeat sound of For the Prophets.

The Revival verdict:

They have a good sound and their tracks have some great, simple messages... we'll listen out for their new album which should be out pretty soon.



Seven8Six

What you need to know... Hailing from the USA, Shahaab, Zafar, Saad, Omar and Saeed are 5 guys who are comfortable with their Muslim and Western identities and utilise both cultural influences in their songs. However, they're very often criticised by many, coz of their similarities to Western popstars, what with their boy band looks and sound, coordinated stage outfits and largely female fan-base. Their sound is a mix of song and rap with a bit of beat box here and there too.

Best Album: Their last release Straight Path.

Our favourite track: Allahu ain't bad and neither is Haazir Hain Hum with its urdu lyrics.

The Revival verdict: It depends what you like - a lot of their tracks have that distinct 'boyband' sound to them, which most people either really like or hate.



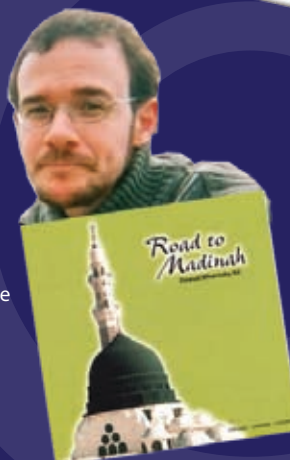
Dawud Wharnsby-Ali

What you need to know... Canadian singer-songwriter and guitarist, known to be the best poet of English Language Nasheeds and has worked along side Zain Bhikha, Yusuf Islam and Shaam. You've got it! It's the ever so unique.

Best Album: Road to Madinah

Our favourite track: Hmmm... There's such a vast variety to choose from, I say 'The Veil'. One for the Muslimahs!

The Revival verdict: Maasha'Allah, brother Dawud is a truly inspirational figure and is loved by many. We think he is great!



Zain Bhikha

What you need to know... Coming from South Africa, Zain Bhikha made his name known in the UK when he was invited by Yusuf Islam to work alongside him. He's one of the oldest and most loved Nasheed artists by Muslims all across the world.

Best Album:

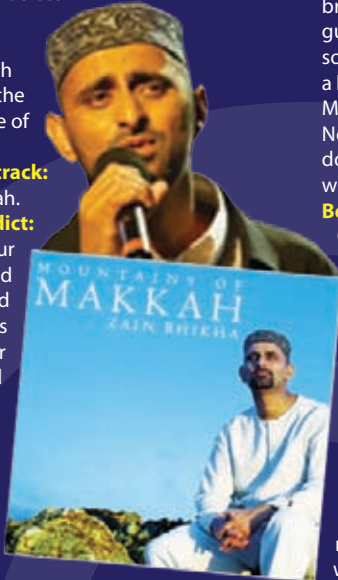
Mountains of Makkah which takes you on the journey to the House of God.

Our favourite track:

Mountains Of Makkah.

The Revival verdict:

Zain's one of our favourite nasheed artist, he's released some top albums which feature other great nasheed artists. We wish him all the best!



Aa'shiq-al-Rasul

What you need to know... All hailing from Birmingham, Amran, Sheraz, Kamran, Tahir and Usman came together to form Aa'shiq-al-Rasul meaning Lovers of the Prophet (saw) in 1998. All classically trained, they perform a mixture of traditional Nasheeds and spiritually uplifting songs in Arabic, Urdu and English.

Best Album: Having been voted by

Q-News as one of the best Nasheed albums of 2005 it has to be The Sultan of Madinah.

Our favourite track:

Jewel of Creation

The Revival verdict: More traditional than modern and sing great nasheeds... not everyone's cup of tea but great at what they do.



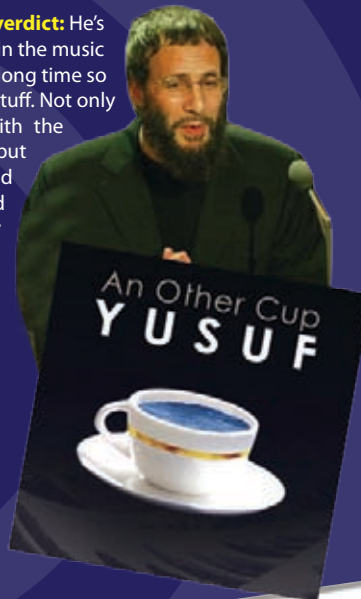
Yusuf Islam

What you need to know... Formerly known as Cat Stevens the huge-selling pop singer of the 60's and 70's, he converted to Islam in 1977. After a 28 year break from the music industry, he's picked up his guitar again and is back with his smooth, mellow sound. His first release as a Muslim 'An Other Cup' was a hit worldwide proving his appeal isn't just limited to Muslims. So is he Islam's answer to Cliff Richard? Noooo!! Well we haven't yet spotted Yusuf at Wimbledon and it certainly ain't fashionable to dislike him, which is great coz we think he's an all round top guy.

Best Album: It has to be his comeback album An Other Cup.

Our favourite track: I think it should be: The chilled out sound of Heaven/Where True Love Goes – his hugely popular first single off An Other Cup.

The Revival verdict: He's been around in the music industry for a long time so he knows his stuff. Not only a huge hit with the Ummah, but respected and recognised worldwide by non-Muslims too – we think he's great!



New kid on the block

Newly into the scene Hamza Robertson is from Greater Manchester and is already hitting the big times. He recently performed at the Sami Yusuf concert in Wembley 07 and has just released his first album 'Something About Life'. Hamza aims to give dawah through producing songs with a positive message. He feels that too many people know too little about Islam and the beauty of its essential values. So girls and boys; you better watch this space, we have a new talent on the streets.



The Star of the show

Yes, everyone has a favourite and The Revival's favourite is Sami Yusuf! He's released his latest video 'Assmau-Allah' which we think is absolutely fantastic! So keep a look out if you wanna get your hands on that album!

So there you have it, The Revival's guide to Nasheeds. Something for everyone, so get hooked on the Islamic alternative to music and songs. All albums can be purchased at your nearest Islamic book shop





singlemuslim.com Success Story

Mohammed Alam Azad and Safiyyah Azad

On Saturday 7th July 2007, SingleMuslim.com took newlyweds Mohammed Alam Azad and Safiyyah Azad to Akbar's restaurant in Manchester to hear first-hand their experiences of SingleMuslim.com. Safiyyah, who is newly converted to Islam, took her shahada (the Islamic profession of faith) on 21st February 2007 and, after overcoming family opposition, the couple married on 10th June.

Safiyyah is a surgical nurse from Hull. She has two younger sisters and comes from a very strong Christian family. Even so, despite attending Sunday school and church from an early age, she never felt that she had found God. Then, a few years ago when she received her first copy of the Qur'an at her university Freshers' Fair, she realised that she was looking for something more from life. She then spent time on the Internet, learning about Islam and found SingleMuslim.com through Google. She registered on the site before reverting.

"I was desperate to meet other Muslims; I really, really had to," explains Safiyyah. I knew that I wanted to meet somebody Muslim before I turned Muslim, as I wanted to learn about the faith from a potential partner. However, I didn't yet know that I would become a Muslim. SingleMuslim.com assisted me in my decision to revert to Islam."

Afterwards, Safiyyah changed her profile to reflect her new-found faith and to be more specific about what she was looking for. "It was very difficult because I was still very new and still learning a lot and I found that people's attitudes towards me were very different in a good way after I began to wear the Hijab," she says.

"I went through a real low point, when I was really fed up and I thought I'd never find anyone. Then I did Istikarah (prayer for guidance) to see whether this was the best way for me."

The Istikarah gave Safiyyah a much-needed boost and brought new energy to her search. When she first saw Alam's profile, she liked what she had read but, as she felt he might be too young for her, she waited a few months before finally contacting him.

"However," she explains, "as soon as I contacted Alam, we hit it off straight away. I sent him a joke to break the ice and we've never looked back."

Alam had been registered on Single Muslim for about a year. "It's funny," he says, "I'd been on there for a while – I wrote my profile and uploaded my photograph and nothing

happened for a few months. Then I upgraded to Gold Membership and literally a couple of weeks later I received a message from Safiyyah. We have so much in common."

Alam is British born from a traditional Bengali family. He is the eldest of four, having two brothers and a sister, and teaches IT at a Manchester high school. Alam, a divorcee, was looking for a religious partner whom he could work with and who would motivate him to become a better Muslim.

"I was getting a lot of parental pressure to get married, but I knew I wanted to find my own partner as soon as possible."

Ideally, Alam was looking for a revert as he believes that many reverts are well in tune with the values and teaching of Islam but without any cultural holds. This is something he was striving for himself.

"I never thought that I would go on to a website to find myself a marriage partner," continues Alam. "Never in a million years! But what happens? I find my dream girl on the Internet! I have to say that the site was very easy to use and the service was fantastic!"

Safiyyah agrees, "Even though I was registered on other websites, Single Muslim was my favourite by far. I found the service to be very user-friendly and the quality of users was far superior to the other sites I was on. The fact that it's a free service for females is a massive plus, although I did contribute a donation, which I did with pleasure.

"I found Single Muslim very safe to use and, as a female, it was comforting to know that if someone was not welcome, I could block them and that I could use the private gallery to display my photograph to only those I selected. I feel that it is very important to protect women and their chastity and Single Muslim makes this easy.

"It's great that the website is always being updated with new features and improved with user feedback," she adds. "It's also good to see that the service is monitored by the administrator, who is easy to contact and quick to respond. It gives a real feeling of reassurance."

So how did these previous members get together?

"I'm a very direct person," says Safiyyah, "and I will say what's on my mind. If I liked a profile, I would email the user and say so. This is how I initiated the contact with Alam, as I found his profile and accompanying photographs very appealing and he sounded like someone who was in tune with my thinking and vision of an Islamic marriage.

Alam admits, "The big attraction for me by far was the fact that Safiyyah was a practising revert Muslim. She had taken the ultimate step to revert to Islam and had such a thirst and passion to become a good Muslim."

"We started off contacting each other through Single Muslim," recalls Safiyyah. "Then we progressed to MSN and phone calls. Then I was coming to Manchester, chaperoning a female friend who was meeting with a male member on the site, so I thought we might as well meet. From talking to meeting, it was probably about three weeks and from then four months to getting married."

So what makes their relationship special?

"Understanding, patience and dialogue," begins Alam. "If there's a problem, you need to talk about it, not keep it inside you. You should know that your partner is not a mind reader. Alhamdulillah, I'm very blessed that my wife guides me on a lot of things. She takes things in a peaceful way, takes a step back and analyses everything. She always mentions the Sunnah and what the Prophet (saw) did. Patience is a big thing."

"I think you have to keep the respect," continues Safiyyah. "I've gone from not being Muslim so I've had my fair share of western relationships and I can see the difference between being in a western relationship and not having religion in my life and being Muslim and having that religion as a focal point in a relationship. It makes such a difference. Now that I am in Islam, I look at other people's relationships and I can see the lack of respect.

They are keen to give advice to other brothers and sisters who are searching.

"Be honest, be yourself and don't be someone that you're not," advises Alam. "A lot of people try to sell themselves and it doesn't work that way."

"I think the only thing I would say is this: allow yourself to be Islamically guided if that's what you want at the end of the day," adds Safiyyah.

Whatever Alam and Safiyyah decide to do next, there is the not so small matter of an Umrah trip to the Holy Land, courtesy of SingleMuslim.com, providing our latest success story with a fantastic start to married life.

The full version of this story could be read online www.singlemuslim.co.uk

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"I found the right man from your site,
it's the best site in the world!"

Faridi, Leeds

"I have found the woman of my dreams,
your site is the best by far!"

Ali, Manchester

"We will be getting married soon,
another success story for the site!"

Khanom, London

ALI & JAMAL

By Sajid Iqbal & Irfan Khan

EA

EA

Jamal goes to visit Ali in prison...

Ali: Jamaaaa!!!! Holy cow!!!! Is that really you?

Jamal: Salaam Ali. Yep it's me bro... and I ain't no cow.

Ali: I can't believe you's come all the way from Egypt to see me! Raas man! You're not a dodgy Mullah after all!

Jamal: No, not as dodgy as you bro... hahahaha.

Ali: Yo I ain't dodgy aight, I've got style! So how are ya man... you all pimped up and that? you been strutting your stuff on the Taliban catwalks!

Jamal: I'm good, Alhamdulillah, I've had a wicked time, met some really good people. But what about you, how are things bro?

Ali: Life is friggin' beautiful! What do you think it's like man?! Food here tastes like leftover kebabs. I'm locked up with some crackpots. Their idea of having fun is trying to feel me up... and shower time... I'm not dropping that soap EVER again!!! So yeah Jam life is hunki dori!

Jamal: I wish I could do something to help. I could get you shower gel instead of soap if that helps...

Ali: THAT'S NOT FUNNY JAM!!!!

Jamal: I'm sorry to hear that, I'll make Dua for you Inshallah...

Ali: I'm dying in here and you're gonna just do Dua... what the ...

Jamal: I spoke to Big Sam, ya know your solicitor... he said you should be out in 2 months coz of you're good behaviour.

Ali: Two more months!!!! I could make a good few grand in two months...I got time to make up... got bare competition Jam...

Jamal: ...and end up back in here after a month! Wake up Ali! What's it gonna take?! Get rid of all this drugs and gangsta crap! You've got two months to sort your head out before you get out. Have you not learnt anything whilst locked up?

Ali: Course I have, me learnt big time. I has learnt about credit card scams, deals on wheels, and me made enough contacts.

Jamal: WHAT!! That's not what I meant, I was hoping you had changed and learnt your lesson?

Ali: Yeah me learnt how not to get caught next time Jam. Next time...

Jamal: You ain't changed one bit have ya? Still tryna act all gansta! What's it gonna take to sort yourself out? Seriously bro...

Ali: Don't you start your usual lecture about good and bad... and heaven and hell... and love and peace... and flower power... hahahhahahah!

Jamal: Fine... I'm off... you enjoy life when you get out...

Ali: Woah!!!! I didn't mean go... I mean...uh... chill out Jam. You're always telling me to be a good Muslim. I will... one day... not yet... but one day... soon. Why you gotta get your beard in a twist for? You know what people say about me and you? They call us angels. Yeah, angels Jam, angels. You're the angel on my right shoulder...

Jamal: ...And your the angel on my left shoulder!

Ali: That's what I'm sayin', a pair of angels!

Jamal: Ali, somehow I don't think that is what they meant. Listen bro. I'm only here coz I've known you for bare time. You're a mate and my Muslim bro. I don't wanna see you locked up again. You gotta change your way of thinking... from today... coz tomorrow may never come Ali.

Ali: What d'ya mean 'way of thinking'... I don't like thinking too much... you mean not dreaming about Pammy Anderson and Aishwariya Rai...

Jamal: Bro, I mean think about your life. It's purpose. What got you locked up? What kind of life are you living? Dealing drugs, acting like you're some kind of gangsta, playing around with women and all that is no respectable way to live Ali.

Ali: Playing around with the gals gets me bare respect... trust me.

Jamal: That's not respect bro. In the sight of Allah that's the third biggest sin! And that's Who you're forgetting all about! Show Him (swt) some respect and He (swt) will bring so much proper respect and happiness in your life that no drugs or acting like a gangsta can ever bring you!

Ali: How do I show God respect. I can't give Him a high five or hug Him or anything now can I ...ya know what I mean Jam...

Jamal: You respect Him (swt) by respecting His (swt) rules and not the rules of da hood.

Ali: So what are God's rules?

Jamal: They're easy bro. Firstly understand and appreciate that He (swt) is your Creator. He (swt) made you so He (swt) wants you to live according to His (swt) laws...

Ali: Yeah I know God created me... just tell me the rules man...

Jamal: Ok... whatever you do make sure it's Halal and not Haram. So if God and His Prophet (pbuh) have said do this or that is good, then do it! But if God and His Prophet (pbuh) have said no, that's wrong, stay away, it's sinful... then stay right away from it. That's all the rules.

Ali: Raas! Two rules... dat's sick yo... me can act upon two rules Jim! Then God's gonna give me all the respect and good stuff yeah???

Jamal: Let me break it down for you Ali: to do Halal and no Haram means; no drugs, no alcohol, no girlfriends, no dodgy dealings, no tryna be a gangsta...

Ali: Hey...that's cheating Jam... that's loads of rules!! I knew you were a crafty Mullah...

Jamal: Bro, all that is doing Halal and staying away from Haram... the two rules I mentioned.

Ali: I gets ya... but dat's too solid man!

Jamal: Ali... you've not exactly got much to do here apart from playing hide and sick from the lads... so why not use these two months to start acting on these two rules a bit at a time. Now if you make the intention that you wanna start a new life, then God

will help you.

Ali, you get rewarded just for having the intention to do good...before you even do it!

Ali: Can't I just have the intention.... and still chill?

Jamal: Ali....

Ali: Ok... it was worth a try.

Jamal: The more Halal things you do... the more life becomes easier, more meaningful and successful. Now make a list of all the Haram stuff you do and then make a list of all the Halal things you're gonna start doing...

Ali: You mean like 'My name is Earl'?

Jamal: Yeah kind of... but with better facial hair.

Ali: I know bare Haram things I do... but what Halal things am I gonna do?

Jamal: There's loads bro; do Wudhu, start your prayers, read the Quran and these other books on Islam which I've brought you. Try to cut down on your swearing, lying and cheating and try being more respectful to your parents, give charity, get a Halal job and work hard. Ali we can do anything we want as long as it's not Haram.

Ali: Woah!! I'm Ali not Mother Teresa!!!

Jamal: Bro if I can do it and hundreds of other brothers who were just like you, then so can you.

Ali: You really think so...

Jamal: Of course. Just make the intention. Allah (swt) only makes things Halal and Haram for us because it helps and benefits us. It's not to make things difficult for us. And remember Ali you're doing this for YOU. So that you have a happy and peaceful life. So your parents can be proud of you. So your future wife and children love and respect you. That can be all yours bro... if you start from today.

Ali: Yeah man I want all that! Ok Jam, I'm gonna give it a shot. If nothing else it will help me stay away from these sad batty boyz in here!

Jamal: Right then bro I better get going, but before I go, here take some of these books on different Islamic topics and please read them.

Ali: Yeah alright, hows about you bring me some papers next time?

Jamal: Newspapers? Yeah I will do.

Ali: Nah yo, some Rizlas man!

Jamal: Bro, I hope that was a joke. You take care and I'll see you again, Ali can you pass me that pen I just dropped.

Ali: Do one!!! I ain't picking that up... I already fell for that one before! Never again, never again...



THE REVIVAL
MUSLIM PERSONALITY OF 2007...
SAMI YUSUF

Sami Yusuf, largely unknown to the Western world, is dubbed 'Islam's Biggest Rock Star' by Time magazine.

He was born in Tehran but grew up in London in a family of musicians and started composing music at a very young age. He later studied classical oriental music in London, alongside renowned composers and musicians including composers from the Royal Academy of Music in London, which is one of the world's most prestigious music institutions. He has also studied Islam and Arabic from Al-Azhar University in Egypt and is able to sing in Urdu, Arabic, English, Turkish and Persian.

His music deals with social, humanitarian and religious issues. Having sold one million copies of his first album and four million copies of his second album, he is now preparing for the release of his third album in 2008. He has performed in the UK, United States, Canada, Saudia Arabia, Germany, Egypt, France, Sweden, Turkey, Syria, Yemen, Morocco and many other countries.

The Revival has chosen Sami Yusuf for the Revival Personality of 2007 because he is a practicing Muslim who through his music promotes the message of Islam and encourages the youth to be proud of their religion and identity. His songs also offer a cool and Halaal alternative to the Muslim world.

His recent concert in Wembly which was organised to help the victims of the Darfur crisis gathered more than 10,000 Muslims in the arena. Unlike a lot of other Muslims around the world, Sami Yusuf didn't just think about the victims from the comfort of his own home, but he was part of a Foreign Office-backed Muslim delegation and travelled to Darfur to talk to victims of the violence, refugees, tribal leaders and government officials. According to the Guardian, at least £40,000 was raised in just five minutes!

This sell-out event was the first of its kind to ever take place at the venue and drew artists and fans from all around the world. However, Sami Yusuf doesn't let all his fame get to his head – the Muslim pop scene's biggest star has often spoken about how uncomfortable he feels with hero worship and adulation and describes it as un-Islamic.

He is often criticised by Muslims who perceive his music and concerts as 'un-Islamic' however, he remains unfazed by all these attacks and gets on with what he does best. He has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for oppressed Muslims all over the world, he presents a positive image of Islam and Muslims to the Western World, he's a practising Muslim who doesn't let negative comments faze him and he remains down to Earth despite having released smash hit albums which have sold millions of copies all over the world. So this is why Sami Yusuf gets our award for The Revival Personality of 2007!

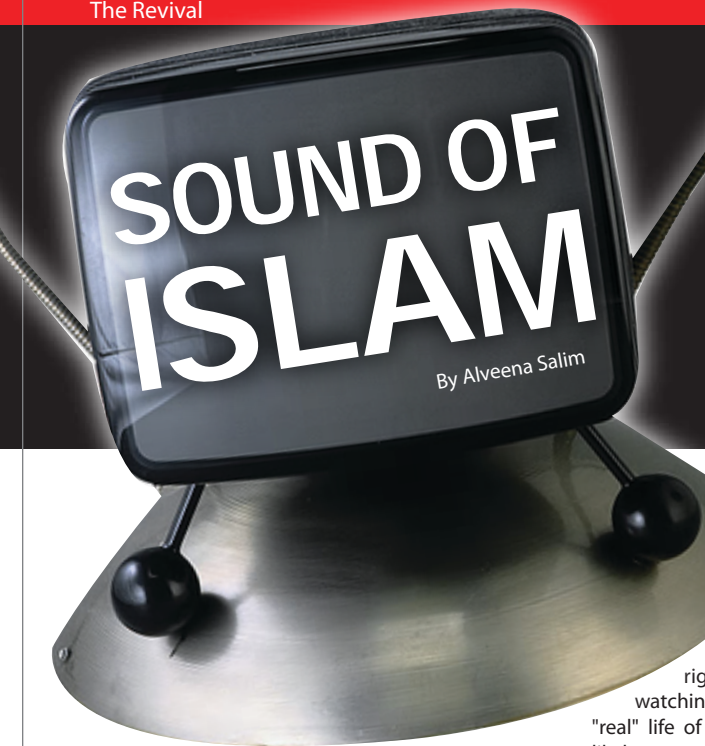



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You pull up to a red light beside a car full of rude-boy wannabes blasting one of the latest RnB/hip-hop/rap tunes, and before the light turns green, you've heard of four different sex acts, someone's mum cussed, you're told to get high on drugs and encouraged to beat up the "ho that steps outta line".

Over on MTV base there are women bumping and grinding, wearing tiny thongs, dancing for men and shaking all they've got – usually to lyrics that refer to them as "b***, ho's or sluts". The likes of Afroman makes light of messing up his life "cos he got high" on drugs. In fact, some of the more popular rap artists glorify the life of a pimp and promote violence against women who disrespect their law. Children as young as five years old are singing such lyrics, not knowing what they mean.

It's not just rap music that is full of suggestive lyrics. Dance and Pop music are also becoming increasingly sexualised and degrading to women. Ex-strippers the Pussy Cat dolls, smash hit songs include "Don't Cha" which is all about enticing another woman's man. In the Black Eyed Peas "My humps", Fergie celebrates the fact that her "lady lumps" get her expensive gifts from men.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL! IT'S ONLY MUSIC!

So just coz Snoop Dogg tells you to "smoke weed every day". It doesn't actually mean that you'll go off and smoke weed. Right? Yeah right! Teens who spend more time watching the sex and violence depicted in the "real" life of "gangsta" rap music videos are more likely to practice these behaviours in real life, suggests one of the first studies to specifically explore how rap videos influence emotional and physical health.

The findings from a three-year study present a worrying picture of how popular music affected the attitudes of boys and girls to sex. Rap music and hip hop, with their particular emphasis on sex and demeaning depictions of women, were blamed for encouraging early sexual behaviour, leading to the spread of disease and under age pregnancies. [1]

Rapping about sex crimes has the effect of desensitizing people to the real pain and trauma suffered by victims and their loved ones. In fact, studies show that people who are repeatedly exposed to violence against women in the media and pornography are more likely to be heartless towards victims and more willing to believe they were "asking for it". [2]

Walk into a fashion retail shop and see what kind of music they're playing. Retailers are aware of the fact that music increases sales, because it has the power to make you feel relaxed, happy, depressed, excited, sexy or angry.

Also, youngsters are incredibly influential and have a tendency to look up to those who seem to have it all – the gals, the bling, the rep and the cribs.

ROLE MODELS?

It is ironic that in a society which claims to give so many rights and respect to women that such genres of music are extremely popular. The song such as "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp", where the artist regularly referred to women in derogatory terms won a academy award for its "originality"!

Numerous rap artists have been arrested for possession of drugs, guns and assault. Marshall Mathers (aka Eminem) was arrested twice in 2000 for gun charges. He has rapped about raping and killing his ex-wife and beating up his mother. Snoop Dogg has been arrested for gun and drug possession. Ja Rule has also been arrested and charged of carrying illegal weapons. Akon, who was nominated for a Grammy award, recently shocked the audience when he abused a 14 year old girl on stage.

Many have fallen into depression, been admitted to rehab and some have had violent deaths. Tupac Shakur, was convicted of sexual abuse and GBH. He was shot four times in a drive by shooting and died 6 days later. Biggie Smalls who was allegedly involved in the shooting was also killed in a drive-by shooting. Are these really the kind of people we should be listening to?

SO, WHAT YOU SAYING? WE CAN'T LISTEN TO ANY KIND OF MUSIC?

There is a difference in opinion in Islam about the legitimacy of music. Some Scholars allow any sort of singing, be it accompanied with musical instruments or not, and even consider it recommended. A second group of scholars allow singing only when is not accompanied with a musical instrument. A third group declare it to be forbidden whether it is accompanied with a musical instrument or not; they even consider it as a major sin.

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The Hadith that some scholars cite against the permissibility of music is as follows, "From among my followers there will be some people who will consider illegal sexual intercourse, the wearing of silk, the drinking of alcoholic drinks and the use of musical instruments, as lawful. Allah will destroy them during the night and will let the mountain fall on them, and He will transform the rest of them into monkeys and pigs and they will remain so till the Day of Resurrection." (Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 69, Number 494v)

There are many well known scholars from the past who have said that music is permissible, such as Qadi Shawkawni, Ibn Hazm, Imam Ghazali and Abú Bakr al-'Arabi. Contemporary scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Shaykh Hamza Yusuf have also decreed that Halaal music is permissible.

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf has mentioned that music is permissible for certain occasions. This is because the Holy Prophet's (saw) army used to beat drums in a war. He (saw) even attended a wedding where music was allowed and also permitted music at Eid Festivals.

The following hadith in Bukhari is used as evidence in favour of music:

The Two Festivals (Eids) - Narrated Aisha: Abu Bakr came to my house while two small Ansari girls were singing beside me the stories of the Ansar concerning the Day of Buath. And they were not singers. Abu Bakr said protestingly, "Musical instruments of Satan in the house of Allah's Apostle!" It happened on the 'Id day and Allah's Apostle said, "O Abu Bakr! There is an 'Id for every nation and this is our 'Id." (Volume 7, Book 69, Number 494v)

Imam Ghazali said in Ihya Ulum Al-Din- The Revival of the Religious Sciences: "The musical instruments and

songs which are typically associated with drunkards are prohibited as they remind of prohibited things and promote the prohibited, such as the consumption of wine and other intoxicants."

Sami Yusuf, one of the leading Islamic Nasheed artists, had this to say on the matter:

'As a Muslim artist, I regularly seek clarification and advice from world-renowned scholars on art, music, singing and culture. Be informed that the subject of music is one of the most controversial topics in Islamic Jurisprudence. I respect those who consider music to be Haram. Yes eminent scholars of our past have opined such. However, I respect and follow the opinion of other eminent scholars – classical and contemporary, who permit singing and the use of musical instruments. The well-established jurisprudential rule states that 'in matters where there is Ikhtilaf (differences of opinion) there is to be no condemnation of either opinion.'

One thing we can say that we all agree is that songs that are about sex, drugs and violence are not legit. Music that bigs up crime, racism, drugs, disrespects women, contains obscene lyrics and pornographic music videos must be avoided coz the Prophet (pbuh) has said: "adultery of the eyes is when it looks at that which is Harâm; adultery of the ears is when it listens to that which is Harâm"

In fact, in order to create an atmosphere of joy and happiness, singing is recommended on festive occasions such as the days of 'Eid, weddings, feasts, births, Aqiqat (the celebration of the birth of a baby) and on the return of a traveller. But, the condition is that the lyrics are clean.

NASHEEDS, THE ISLAMIC ALTERNATIVE?

And anyway, there are more than enough Islamic

alternatives. The likes of Sami Yusuf: an international star, has been described by Time magazine as, Islam's Biggest Rock Star has released many albums that touch on real issues that affect Muslims all around the world. For the RnB/hip-hop fans out there, Muslim rap is big business with annual sales in excess of \$1.8bn in America alone. The likes of Native Deen, Mecca2Medina and Blakstone rap about real issues such as the war in Iraq, Muslim oppression and disunity. Feel free to blast the tunes but choose the decent ones. (For more information about Nasheeds see the Revival Guide to Nasheeds).

Of course, at the same time, not everyone is a fan of this alternative. In fact the likes of Yvonne Ridley describe Islamic boy bands like 786 and Mecca 2 Medina as the subject of the sort of female adulation you expect to see on American Pop Idol or the X-Factor, and recommends Muslims to "Listen not to what is Haram. But to listen to the pain of the global family".

Make up your own decision regarding the Islamic stance on Music. But bear in mind that all scholars unanimously agree that dodgy lyrics and pornographic music videos are not acceptable.

So, next time you're thinking about blasting the latest RnB/hip-hop tune, that's telling you to shoot the white man, rape your partner, beat up your Mum, become a pimp and get high on drugs: please stop and think. If you have any respect for yourself or for the people you love. You'll avoid all 'parental advisory lyrics' and you'll put on a Nasheed or a tune that fits the Islamic teachings.

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What can be said about a man who has been called many things?

He is known as a role model to Muslims. A religious fanatic. A

father for black power. A menace to society. An inspirational leader and a legend.

By Sajid Iqbal

Malcolm X was born in America in 1925, during a time when race relationships were strained. His mother was a housewife and his father was a Baptist Minister who was killed in a fire at a young age - which the family claimed was caused by a white supremacist organisation. After this, his mother had an emotional breakdown and was admitted to a mental institution and the children were split up and sent to various foster homes and orphanages. According to Malcolm, three of his father's brothers also died violently at the hands of white men, and one of his uncles had been lynched.

He was an intelligent student in school and was often at the top of his class. However, when one of his teachers told him that his dreams of becoming a lawyer were 'no realistic goal for a nigger', he dropped out of school and became involved in petty crimes.

He was soon arrested for his crimes and spent seven years in prison reflecting and furthering his education. It was during this time that he received letters from his brother, telling him about the Nation of Islam, to which Malcolm converted. Malcolm X started to gain fame in prison, but the authorities were keen to stamp down on any revolutionary behaviour. Malcolm later reflected on his time in prison: "Months passed without me even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I had never been so truly free in my life."

NATION OF ISLAM

After Malcolm's release from prison he was appointed a minister and national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam. His charisma, drive and inspirational speeches caused the Nation of Islam to increase in members and also established new Mosques across America. It was also Malcolm X who inspired the boxer Cassius Clay to join the Nation Of Islam and to change his name to Muhammad Ali.

Malcolm X went through an angry, bitter period where he condemned all whites as "blue-eyed devils" who would burn in hell for eternity. He decreed that "the common enemy is the white man" - all beliefs held by Nation Of Islam. This anger and hatred was a result of the injustice and inhumane treatment he had personally experienced because of his skin colour. He said in one of his talks: "I've never seen a sincere white man, not when it comes to helping black people. Usually things like this are done by white people to benefit themselves. The white man's primary interest is not to elevate the thinking of black

people, or to waken black people, or white people either. The white man is interested in the black man only to the extent that the black man is of use to him. The white man's interest is to make money, to exploit."

Twelve years into the Nation Of Islam movement, revelations of its leader Elijah Mohammad's private life forced Malcolm to face the facts that the organisation he had helped form could not be represented as morally acceptable to the American public. With this dilemma and the widespread public outcry of Malcolm's own "Chickens coming home to roost" speech Malcolm X was forced to leave the Nation of Islam. Afterwards Malcolm X was in contact with several orthodox Muslims, who encouraged him to learn about orthodox Islam. He soon converted to orthodox Islam, and as a result decided to make his pilgrimage to Mecca. He changed his name to Malik Al Shabazz. Like Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali too later left the Nation Of Islam and joined mainstream Islam.

HAJJ

Malcolm X's trip to Mecca proved to be a life altering experience for him and he said, "America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white, but the white attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all together, irrespective of their colour."

He returned to America with new hope for integration and a new message - instead of just preaching to the African Americans, he had a message for all races. His articulate, powerful speeches transformed the hearts of thousands of people.

After his Hajj pilgrimage we saw a new Malcolm X. It was a Malcolm without the racism and the hatred for the 'white man'. He said famously some time after the pilgrimage:

"I am not a racist.... In the past I permitted myself to be used...to make sweeping indictments of all white people, the entire white race and these generalizations have caused injuries to some whites who perhaps did not deserve to be hurt. Because of the spiritual enlightenment which I was blessed to receive as a result of my recent pilgrimage to the Holy city of Mecca, I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of any one race. I am now striving to live the life of a true...Muslim. I must repeat that I am not

a racist nor do I subscribe to the tenants of racism. I can state in all sincerity that I wish nothing but freedom, justice and equality, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all people."

Regarding the Nation of Islam and its leader Elijah Muhammad he said:

"For 12 long years I lived within the narrow-minded confines of the 'straitjacket world' created by my strong belief that Elijah Muhammad was a messenger direct from God Himself, and my faith in what I now see to be a pseudo-religious philosophy that he preaches.... I shall never rest until I have undone the harm I did to so many well-meaning, innocent Negroes who through my own evangelistic zeal now believe in him even more fanatically and more blindly than I did."

DEATH

After he officially left Nation of Islam, the relationship between him and the organization became tense. After repeated attempts on his life, his enemies were finally successful in their ruthless attempt and Malcolm X was rushed by three masked gunmen during a talk and was shot 15 times at close range. He was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital. Fifteen hundred people attended his funeral and his assassins, who were members of the Nation of Islam, were convicted of first-degree murder.

This is how Malcolm X viewed his life and wished to be remembered:

"For the freedom of my 22 million black brothers and sisters here in America, I do believe that I have fought the best that I know how, and the best that I could, with the shortcomings that I have had...I know that societies often have killed people who have helped to change those societies. And if I can die having brought any light, having exposed any meaningful truth that will help destroy the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America then, all of the credit is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been mine."

Years down the line the legacy of Malcolm X has inspired numerous books, documentaries and movies. He has touched the lives of millions of people - black and white, Muslims and non-Muslims who consider him their role model. The Muslim youth today, need to appreciate Malcolm X's greatness. We need to keep his remembrance alive by fighting for freedom, speaking up against the injustices of oppressed people, fighting domination and exploitation and eliminating racism. There is a part of Malcolm X in all of us.

Malcolm X & Hajj

Many Muslims who have been blessed to make Hajj often speak of how the journey is a life-changing experience. This is more the case for some than others. Malcolm X is one Muslim who saw the light of true Islam through his Hajj in April 1964. As a former member and speaker for the Nation of Islam, a black spiritual and nationalist movement, he believed that the white man was the devil and the black man superior. After leaving the Nation of Islam in March 1964, he made Hajj, which helped change his perspective on whites and racism completely.

Here is an excerpt of a letter El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (his Muslim name) wrote to his loyal assistants in Harlem... from his heart, when he was in Makkah, about his Hajj experience. In it, he explains what it was during this blessed journey that made him so profoundly shift his perspective on race and racism.

"Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colours and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colours.

"I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Mecca, I have made my seven circuits around the Ka'ba, led by a young Mutawaf named Muhammad, I drank water from the well of the Zam Zam. I ran seven times back and forth between the hills of Mt. Al-Safa and Al Marwah. I have prayed in the ancient city of Mina, and I have prayed on Mt. Arafat."

"There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colours, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and non-white."

"America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white - but the white attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colours together, irrespective of their colour."

"You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth."

"During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept on the same rug - while praying to the same God - with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was

the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the deeds of the white Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana."

"We were truly all the same (brothers) - because their belief in one God had removed the white from their minds, the white from their behaviour, and the white from their attitude."

"I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man - and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in colour."

"With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called 'Christian' white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster - the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves."

"Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black and white. The American Negro never can be blamed for his racial animosities - he is only reacting to four hundred years of the conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path, I do believe, from the experiences that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the walls and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth - the only way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to."

"Never have I been so highly honoured. Never have I been made to feel more humble and unworthy.

Who would believe the blessings that have been heaped upon an American Negro? A few nights ago, a man who would be called in America a white man, a United Nations diplomat, an ambassador, a companion of kings, gave me his hotel suite, his bed. Never would I have even thought of dreaming that I would ever be a recipient of such honours - honours that in America would be bestowed upon a King - not a Negro."

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds."

Sincerely,
Al-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X)
(From the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X with assistance from Alex Haley, the author of ROOTS)

Malcolm X saw and experienced many positive things. Generosity and open heartedness were qualities which were impressed on him by the welcome which he received in many places. He saw brotherhood and the brotherhood of different races and this led him to disclaim racism and to say:

"I am not a racist... In the past I permitted myself to be used... to make sweeping indictments of all white people, the entire white race, and these generalizations have caused injuries to some whites who perhaps did not deserve to be hurt. Because of the spiritual enlightenment which I was blessed to receive as the result of my recent pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca, I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of any one race. I am now striving to live the life of a true Sunni Muslim. I must repeat that I am not a racist nor do I subscribe to the tenets of racism. I can state in all sincerity that I wish nothing but freedom, justice and equality, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all people."

(The preceding material was excerpted from The Autobiography of Malcolm X quoted in an article written by the Institute for Islamic Education.)



Fatal Attraction

By Alveena Salim

Hey, check him out! He must be the fittest boy I've ever seen... let's sit closer to get a better view. Gwaan check him out, but don't be too obvious..."

"Phwoarr! Did you see her walk by? I swear she was eyeing me up, innit! My mate reckons she's well easy!"

Sound familiar? Rating the 'fitness' of others is one of the most common time-pass in most schools, colleges, uni's and work places. "We're only looking - it's minor" is the defensive response of most. So the question arises "Is it really not a big deal?"

"Lowering the gaze" is an Islamic command. Why? Coz a lustful glance can lead to wrong thoughts. These thoughts then turn into desires, the desires become firm intentions and then these firm intentions are transformed into actions which lead to the flirty conversations, the lies, the deceit, the sneaking about, and then the secret meetings. A Muslim poet once said "First a look, then a smile, then the nod of the head, then a kiss, then a hug, then the warmth of the bed." In other words prevention is better than cure.

The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "The adultery of the eyes is looking (at [that] which is not allowed) " (Bukhari, Muslim).

This does not only refer to those people you may encounter in person. It also means lowering your gaze when viewing members of the opposite sex that you may see on films, adverts or billboards. It means changing the channel when you come across images of nakedness or intimate scenes (even though you shouldn't be watching such programmes in the first place), and if you find yourself bogging at the fit news reporter or weather girl-change the channel!

Temptations, temptations...

Obviously, this is not easy. After all, it seems shameless behaviour amongst youth today is almost a competition. We are confronted with many tempting situations such as the endless choice of cable/satellite channels, dirty billboards that are plastered all over the place and the minimal clothing that women adopt as soon as temperatures increase. But, you need to remember that moral degeneration of society is an excuse that will not be valid on the Day of Judgement in the court of Allah (swt).

Over the years attitudes towards promiscuous behaviour has somewhat changed. The 60's brought about the sexual revolution where the widespread availability of birth control led to dramatic changes in attitudes towards sex and marriage. The connection between sex and pregnancy was finally broken, which meant that many women were now able to pursue the same desires and enjoy the same opportunities as men.

'Am I bovvered?'

Today's society encourages equality between men and women in all aspects of life: including immorality. This has also given birth to the 'Am I bovvered?' ladette culture, where girls as young as 13 are smoking, swearing, fighting, drinking, disrupting lessons and some are even sexually active.'

[1] The 'anything you can do, I can do better' mentality is the main reason why in the UK 15- 16 year old girls for the first time ever have overtaken boys in levels of binge drinking [2].

Men and women are different. That's a fact. Men by nature can walk away from a sexual encounter and not give it a second thought. However, the emotional make up of women makes it impossible for them to have an indifferent attitude towards sex. The women who act as if they can separate sex from emotion are just fronting it, as it's biologically impossible to do so. So, when a woman sleeps around, the one she harms the most is herself. So, just because a girl can, it doesn't mean she should or that it's right.

This doesn't mean that in Islam only women should keep their behaviour in check, whilst men can do as they please. Both men and women are ordered to be modest in their dress and behaviour, the Prophet (pbuh) was described as being "Shyer than a virgin behind a veil". Islam is not full of double standards, the verses in the Qur'an refer to the "believing men AND women".



Playa V's 'Ho

Even though we have now moved to a more liberal and sexually 'equal' society, some things have still not changed. Men and women are still treated differently when it comes to sleeping around. The guy is still bigged up as a 'playa', whilst the girl is regarded a 'ho'. However, in the eyes of Allah (swt) the punishment for premarital and extra marital sex is equal. In the West strong emphasis is placed on 'looks', and women are valued for their shape, size and beauty: a woman's sexuality is used to sell cars, clothes and even cat food! In Islam, women are required to dress modestly, so that they aren't judged on their beauty.

Many girls and guys dress to impress. They pass off signals that seem to imply that they WANT people to check them out. Even so, we are only accountable for our own actions and we will be held accountable for every single forbidden glance; regardless of how fit the guy/girl was looking.

And girls, come on. When you get decked up like Bollywood heroines and go out, guys check you out. You KNOW that. It's irrelevant whether or not you're a decent girl. Most people judge others based on

their appearance, and do you really want to be judged on your size, shape and beauty? Guys will not wake up one day and have a new sexual orientation and how you dress can either put off or encourage unwanted attention from guys. So, why play the game?

If you are involved with someone, then make your situation Halal by asking your man to come to your house with his parents with a proposal of marriage. If he refuses or makes lame excuses then you should know that he doesn't give a damn about you and only considers you as a time-pass. You're worth a lot more than that; don't allow yourself to be messed about.

And guys, honking or whistling at girls, making incoherent noises at them and driving round and round the same block at least 20 times in order to get a better view of girls makes you seem pathetic. No decent girl can respect such a guy. Would you like it if some guy leered at your mother or sister like that? I doubt it. So don't try it on with other people's sisters.

So what happens when you do fall in love with someone?

It's true that you cannot control your feelings, but you CAN control your actions. Do not ring up, or chat on msn, or secretly meet the person you have fallen for. Trust me; no good can come out of sneaking about behind your parents back. You may initially get your kicks out of your undercover relationship but when you get clocked (which you will, sooner or later) and your relationship comes out in the open; you'll feel disgusted and ashamed with yourself. On top of that, people in the community may treat you differently and it could put off someone who had genuinely wanted to marry you.

Staying on the straight path is not easy of course, but we weren't put on this Earth to behave like spoilt teenagers. Keeping away from temptation may be difficult or even frustrating at times but trust me, it's well worth it in the end. As Muslims we try to live modestly and fulfil our lusts and desires only in Halal manners... and that is through marriage.

Reference:

1. <http://domino.lancs.ac.uk/info/lunews.nsf/I/D9A0525F9BC3430B80256F1000448601>
2. <http://society.guardian.co.uk/drugsandalcohol/story/0,8150,1360230,00.html>



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Jesus is a Christian though isn't he?

Jesus (peace be upon him) isn't just exclusive to Christianity. Muslims believe Jesus (called 'Isa in Arabic) is a prophet - a messenger of Allah (swt) who was sent to mankind with a revelation from Allah (swt). In the Quran, stories about the life and teachings of Jesus (pbuh) are abundant. In fact, Jesus (pbuh) is mentioned more times in the Quran than Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Moses (Musa), Noah (Nuh), Adam, John (Yahya), David (Da'ud), and many other key figures in the Bible, (peace be upon them all) are also prophets in Islam.

So do Muslims believe Jesus is the Son of God?

No, absolutely not. In the Quran, Jesus is often referred to as 'Isa ibn Maryam, which translates as Jesus, son of Mary, and the Quran repeatedly asserts that Jesus, like all the other prophets, was only a human, who worshipped Allah (swt) and taught his followers to do the same. Allah (swt) tells us Himself, "It is not for God to take a son unto Him" (Chapter 19, Verse 34). Muslims also reject the concept of the Trinity, the belief that God exists eternally and simultaneously as God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, as a blasphemous denial of Tawhid (monotheism). This is because GOD IS ONE. Three cannot be one. Believing otherwise in Islam is known as Shirk - the unforgivable act of worshipping something or someone other than Allah (swt) or associating something or someone as a partner with Him.

What else does the Quran say about Mary, the mother of Jesus?

Mary (called Maryam in Arabic) (may Allah (swt) be pleased with her) is the only female mentioned by name in the Quran. In fact, she has a whole chapter named after her - chapter 19 - one of only eight people to have this honour in the Quran. As a matter of fact, there is more information in the Quran about Mary's life than in the Bible. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) described Mary as one of the most perfect women to have ever lived. Not only is she a perfect role model for women, but because of her sincerity, piety, purity and pure devotion to Allah (swt) she is an outstanding example to all who believe.

Do Muslims also believe Mary was a virgin?

Yes, Muslims too believe in the miraculous conception of Jesus (pbuh). Mary's elderly father Imran and barren mother Hannah (may Allah (swt) be pleased with them both) desperately longed for a child, so much so that Hannah in her prayers vowed to dedicate the child to Allah (swt) if she ever became pregnant. When she gave birth to Mary, Hannah stuck to her promise and left Mary in the care of the priest Prophet Zakariyya (pbuh). It was here that the Angel Gabriel came to Mary with the news that she would give birth to Jesus (pbuh). "The Angels said to Mary, 'O Maryam! Verily, Allah (swt) has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the worlds'" (Chapter 3, Verse 42). She replied. "How can I have a son when no man has touched me, and when I have never been immoral?" He said, 'Just like that - Allah creates whatever He wants. When He decrees something, then all He says to it is "Be!" and it is'" (Chapter 3, Verse 47). Muslims though reject the Christian view that the virgin birth of Jesus (pbuh) implies he is divine, as Prophet Adam (pbuh) was born without both a mother and a father, yet no such assertion is directed at him.

Is the Quranic version of Jesus' birth similar to the Biblical version?

The two versions couldn't be more different. In the Quran, Mary retreats to a secluded place, and gives birth all alone. Jesus (pbuh) isn't born in a stable and Joseph doesn't feature in the story at all. While in the throes of labour, the Quran tells us, "And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree. She cried [in her pain]: 'Ah! Would that I had died before this! Would that I had been forgotten!'" (Chapter 19, Verse 23).

As a Prophet, what was the message Jesus was sent to mankind with?

Muslims believe that Allah (swt) gave a Direct Revelation to Jesus (pbuh) - the Gospel (called the Injil in Arabic). His purpose was also to re-establish the original teachings of Prophet Moses (pbuh) in the revelation he had been given - the Torah (called Taurah in Arabic), which had been significantly changed and corrupted by the time of Jesus' (pbuh) miraculous birth. So much so that Jesus (pbuh) was rejected by the very people who claimed to be following the Torah! Muslims believe that the Gospel or New Testament has also been misinterpreted, misrepresented, mistranslated and textually distorted over time, so therefore no longer represents the original revelation, which the Quran calls a "Light", guidance, and a divine scripture (Chapter 5, Verse 45).

In the Bible, Jesus performed loads of miracles, is that true in Islam too?

Yes, the Quran also details miracles performed by Jesus (pbuh), on the leave of Allah, to confirm his prophetic mission. In comparison to the Bible which reports Jesus (pbuh) performed his first miracle when he was 30 years old, the first miracle in the Quran was when Jesus (pbuh) spoke to defend his mother when she returned after giving birth. When accused of being deceitful, immoral and unchaste, such as Mary's faith and trust in Allah (swt) that she simply pointed to her baby, who by the permission of Allah (swt), spoke in her defence! Other miracles performed by Jesus (pbuh) included healing those born blind, reviving the dead, walking on water and breathing life into a bird made of clay. However, all these too only occurred on the leave of Allah (swt).

THE MUSLIM JESUS

By Imaani Aslam

What else do we know about Jesus?

We know that Jesus (pbuh) lived a life free from sin, but that is not to say he wasn't ever tempted. He also lived a very humble life and didn't own very much at all. It is said he only carried with him a comb and a jug, but after seeing a man combing his beard with his fingers, he gave it away and after seeing another man drinking water from a river with the palms of his hands he gave away the jug too. He warned his followers to beware of greed: "He who seeks after the world is like one who drinks sea water; the more he drinks, the more his thirst increases, until it kills him".

Do Muslims believe Jesus was crucified?

No. It was certainly the plan of his enemies the Jewish priesthood and the Romans who opposed his teachings, to put him to death on the cross, but the Quran is clear on this: "They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did" (Quran 4:156). And also, "God lifted him up to His presence. God is Almighty, All-Wise" (Quran 4:157). As these verses indicate, Jesus (pbuh) was taken and raised to heaven. He was not crucified, but Allah (swt) saved him and someone else was crucified in his place.

So Jesus didn't actually die?

No. Muslims believe Jesus (pbuh) is still alive. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on his miraculous night journey through the seven heavens (Mi'raj) saw Jesus (pbuh), so we know Jesus (pbuh) is in one of the seven heavens. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also confirmed that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth. It has been related by Abu Hurayra (may Allah (swt) be pleased with him) that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "He will come again, and when you see him, you will recognize him. He is of medium height and his colouring his reddish-white. He will be wearing two garments, and his hair will look wet." (Ahmad ibn Hanbal: Musnad, 2,406).

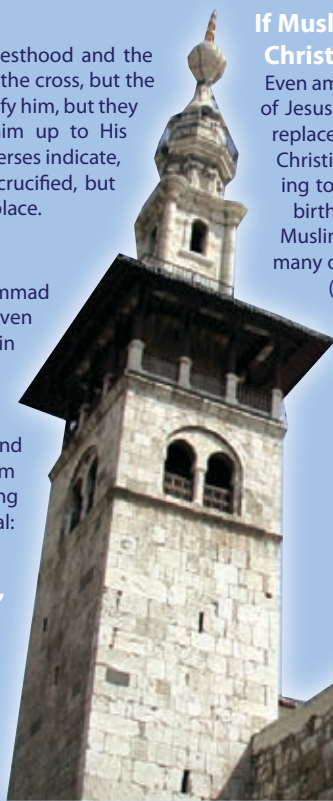
Do we know anything else about Jesus' return?

He will return to destroy the antichrist (called Dajjal in Arabic), a false messiah whose appearance will mark the imminent end of the world. Abu Hurayra (may Allah (swt) be pleased with him) relates that the Prophet Muhammad

(pbuh) said, "By the One in Whose hand my soul is, the son of Maryam will soon descend among you as a just judge, and he will break the crosses, and kill pigs, and abolish the Jizya (a protection tax payable on non-Muslims to a Muslim ruler), and wealth will pour forth to such an extent that no-one will accept it, and one Sajda (prostration) will be better than the world and what it contains" (Al-Bukhari). We also know that Jesus (pbuh) will marry, have children and live for forty-five years, after which he will die and be buried next to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Madinah.

If Muslims believe in Jesus then why don't they celebrate Christmas?

Even among Christians, there is no agreement on the exact date of the birth of Jesus (pbuh). The Catholic Church's observance was originally timed to replace the pagan winter solstice festival and appease converts. Most Christians in the Middle East and North Africa observed Christmas according to other calendars. Among Muslims, the anniversary of Jesus' (pbuh) birth falls on Ashura Night, the 10th night of the 1st month of the Muslim lunar calendar. This auspicious night is the anniversary of many other events that happened in the lives of many Prophets (peace be upon them all) and this holy-night is observed worldwide.



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BARZAKH

REST IN PIECE OR RIPPED INTO PIECES!

By Naheem Zafar

Have you ever wondered what happens after death? What happens to your soul? What happens in the grave? What you are about to read is not from any sci-fi movie or horror novel. This is nothing but the truth based on Islamic teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. So sit back, fasten your seat belt as we're going on one heck of a ride!

There's a saying that there are two certainties in life: death and taxes. Enterprising people have managed to find a way around the taxes, but death is a bigger problem.

What is death?

Death is the act of leaving the world of the living. On the way to being dead. Think zombies, but not walking, or eating other people. Just the dead bit will do. (But ain't they the undead?)

It occurs when the soul permanently leaves the body. This is known as death. Upon leaving the body, the soul does not vanish. It enters a state we call 'Barzakh' - a dark devious place... or not. In any situation the soul does not die or disintegrate but remains unchanged. Whatever its position and whatever its state is, it maintains a connection to the body, being able to feel whatever happens to the physical remains of the body. So if the body has pain the soul also feels pain, and if the body is relaxed then the soul is also relaxed.

When someone visits the grave, the soul can see the person and recognise them. It can listen to what they are saying, but probably not haunt them. The dead also speaks. Its voice is heard by animals, but not by humans and Jinn.

What happens at death?

Like I said, the soul leaves the body. Next.

No. Really. what happens?

For arguments sake let's just say a person is hit by a bus. The soul will depart the body. If the person was pious, this should be a relatively painless process, where the soul does not mind returning to the Creator -Allah (swt). On the other hand, if the person is not pious... well things get a little interesting. The soul may not want to leave. It will be ripped out of the body. Separated forcefully. After all everyone's time is allotted. You cannot live longer than what has been proscribed for you. After that the body will probably get taken to hospital... tests performed... donor card checked... Yeah I get that. No need to be so gory.

Then we get to Judgement Day right? is it gonna be anything like Terminator II?

Between the time of death and Judgement day, the soul will remain in Barzakh - the interspace. The body will also enter a grave.

What happens in the grave?

Two Angels will visit you (called "Munkar" and "Nakeer" if you are interested...). The ghosts of the past, the present and the fut... oops wrong story.

You will be asked three questions.:

"Who is your lord?"

"What is your faith?"

"What did you used to say about this person (The Prophet (saw))?"

If you pass this simple (just like nuclear physics is simple...) test, a voice will be heard saying "My servant has said the truth, lay the tablecloth of Paradise for him, give him clothes from Paradise to wear and open the doors of Paradise for him."

The cool air and the sweet fragrance of Paradise will continue to come and wherever the eyesight can reach the grave will be made wide and large. Angels will say, "Sleep like a groom sleeps". All this will be for the good pious Muslims.

On the other hand, the sinful will not know the answers. For them there will be punishment according to their sins.

The grave will tighten up and press the dead. It presses the good Muslim like a mother holds a child and the infidel and sinful Muslim to the extent that it crushes them, so as though the bones on the left side end up on the right side.

Punishment!! What punishment?? What do ya mean punishment?!

The punishment for the sinful Muslim is mentioned by the Prophet (pbuh). It's not for the faint hearted:

...His spirit will be restored to his body, two angels will come to him, make him sit up and ask him: Who is your Lord? He will reply: I do not know. They will ask him: What is your religion? He will reply: I do not know. They will ask: Who is this man who was sent on a mission among you? He will reply: I do not know. Then a crier will call from the Heaven: He has lied, so spread a bed for him from Hell, clothe him from Hell and open for him a door into Hell. Then some of its heat and wind will come to him, and his grave will become restricted, so his ribs will be pressed together. One who is blind and dumb will then be placed in charge of him, having a sledgehammer such that if a mountain were struck with it, it would become dust. He will give him a blow with it which will be heard by everything between the east and the west except by men and jinn, and he will become dust. Then his spirit will be restored to him...' [Ahmad, Abu Dawud (3/4735)]

And then Judgement Day right?

Eventually we get there. Judgement day will be a big test for us all. It will be a big gruelling day where people will suffer in accordance to their sins. For the sinful it will be a looong long day. For the pious it may pass in the blink of an eye. Eventually people will ask the Prophet (saw) to intercede on their behalf, and the reckoning will begin.

All deeds will be stacked. Questions will be asked. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said:

"The son of Adam will not pass away from Allah (swt) until he is asked about five things: how he lived his life, and how he utilized his youth, with what means did he earn his wealth, how did he spend his wealth, and what did he do with his knowledge." (Tirmizi)

Notice 2 questions on finance, so those enterprising individuals mentioned at the start may be in for a thrill. Some people will go to hell. Others by the grace of Allah will be permitted to heaven. Others will take the scenic route to heaven. One very important thing to remember is that while Allah (swt) may outright forgive any indiscretions against Him, if the person has wronged another creation, he will need to get the creation's forgiveness before Allah (swt) will forgive.

So are YOU ready to go?

You know what's gonna happen when you die, so are you ready? You prepared? You ready to face your Lord? You ready to answer the questions in the grave? You sure you done enough to be saved from the punishment in the grave? You sure your actions will save you from the fire of hell? If we're honest...I don't think we are... so start now to work for the life hereafter. Death is gonna come knocking soon...



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So what's the deal with Hajj? Why is it that millions of people all over the world make this journey every year? Isn't it something that only old people do? What if I get squashed by an Arab? Isn't it hard? And why is it that Will Smith the infamous Fresh Prince of Bel Air, reportedly told USA Today that he'd love to go to Hajj! I mean come on, the man isn't even a Muslim and even he's interested in performing the journey of a lifetime!

The Revival presents to you five things that Hajj can offer YOU!

1. International feeling of the Ummah

London is always banging on about how international and multicultural it is. However, despite this claim, race related problems are rife. Most ethnicities prefer to live in ghettoised communities. And most mosques are unofficially labelled as 'Paki', 'Guji' or 'Bengali' Mosques. However, the pilgrimage to Makkah makes you realise just how diverse and large our Ummah (community) really is. During hajj you can see millions of people from all over the world gathered in one place, many different languages all functioning at once and large number of different cultures. It's possible to read your Salaah next to someone from every corner of the globe. What other country in the world can honestly claim to always having someone representing every country in the world?

2. Elimination of Racism

During Hajj it doesn't matter what you look like. Everyone is required to wear the same clothes. Men must wear white, unstitched garments whilst women must make sure their body is covered whilst leaving their hands, face and feet exposed. Pilgrims – regardless of their ethnicity must share tents, walk or drive to Mina together, eat together, visit the

5 things Hajj Can Offer You

By Alveena Salim

mountain of Arafat, spend the night side by side under the open sky in Muzdalifah, run between the mountains of Safa and Marwa, stone the devils and perform seven rounds around the Kabah. It doesn't matter what colour you are. Everyone must walk shoulder to shoulder to fulfil these obligations. It is only when one performs the pilgrimage to Makkah, the words of the Prophet (saw) are put into effect when he said 'white is not superior over black and black is not superior over white.' (Bukhari). In the house of Allah (the Kabah), all that matters is the condition of your heart. Not the colour of your skin.

3. Unlimited Reward

The Prophet (saw) said that there is no reward for a accepted Hajj, other than Paradise. He also said that the one who performs Hajj returns as sinless as a newborn baby. In fact, Hajj for women brings the same reward as Jihad: fighting in the way of Allah! A single prayer in the Prophets (saw) Mosque is worth 1000. A single prayer in the main Mosque in Makkah is worth 100,000. Performing all the rites of Hajj brings many rewards; heck even just looking at the Kabah brings immense reward! So if you want to rack 'em up. Do your Hajj.

4. Gets you in touch with Islamic history

Imagine walking in the same streets that the Prophet (saw) walked. Imagine standing on a mountain where the Prophet (saw) delivered a powerful sermon, where he spoke out against all of society's problems. Imagine walking around the blessed house of Allah which has been touched by numerous Prophets from the past. Imagine standing on the Mountains where courageous battles were fought. Imagine visiting the graves where numerous companions and wives of the Prophet (saw) are buried. Its one thing to read all



about it in books or listen to lectures about our Islamic history. But its whole different experience altogether personally walking, touching and looking at the sites that have a link with our Prophets.

5. Sorts your priorities out

Living in the West, we often get bogged down with petty matters. We spend half of our time worrying about our careers or our exams. If we're not complaining about the traffic or the weather, we're stressing over parking tickets. We're more concerned with Britney's bald head than we are with the condition of our hearts! We spend little time focusing on our relationship with Allah. However, when you're doing Hajj, you have plenty of time to strengthen your relationship with Allah. Think about others. Remember our pious predecessors. Reflect on the condition of your hearts and focus on doing as many things as you can that'll bring you closer to Allah. In fact, the entire day revolves around reading the five daily prayers in the main Mosques. You couldn't spend your time out missing your prayers even if you wanted to cos shopkeepers close their shops and all business stops whenever its Salaah time!

Hajj recharges your batteries and prepares you to live life better as a practising Muslim.

So there you have it. Five things Hajj – the journey of a lifetime can offer you! If you want to rack up your good deeds. Recharge your spiritual batteries. Become a more practising Muslim. Wipe your slate clean. Start a new life. Strengthen your relationship with Allah and become as sinless as a newborn baby. Don't miss out and don't delay. Book your ticket today!

1. http://www.usatoday.com/life/people/2006-12-06-will-smith_x.htm

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Ever since the PACE Act 1984 (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) all officers of the law were given new special powers in the fight against crime. Officers would don a bright coloured uniform and transform into large beasts called "Zords" to battle the evil minions of the uber-villain known as Crime Lord. In a desperate bid to reduce crime officers could "frisk" the people of Britain in order to weed out the evil minions.

Well... not quite. But officers of the law were given the power to stop and search anyone they thought was acting "suspiciously". Which means if it looks like you're hiding something "suspicious" like a weapon or anything illegal and the police see you... they gonna bust a cap in your a\$\$... and by that I mean they're gonna stop and search you.

So what's it all about?

Stop and search is when the police stop you in a public place and search you, your clothes and anything you're carrying, as long as they have "reasonable" grounds for suspecting you of illegal activity.

So what counts as "suspicious" behaviour?

Well the officers who search you have to have some sort of 'reasonable belief' that you are carrying illegal substances (yeah... you know what I'm talking about: crack, smack, spit... nic nacs

paddy wack give the candyman the finger) prohibited items like a weapon and finally stolen items, hot gear... stuff some bloke sold you out of the trunk of his car (you know who you are!).

However, this reasonable belief can't be based on a 'hunch', instinct, any past history, the colour of your skin, your clothes (not all Muslims carrying rucksacks are terrorists you know), age, hairstyle (although some people should be arrested for their hairstyles), or simply because you look dodgy. But it can sometimes be based on a level of generalisation based on your behaviour. Meaning if an officer encounters someone on the street at night obviously trying to hide something, then that's gonna be enough for him to reasonably believe your doing something or carrying something you're not supposed to be.

The Search

Even before a search can take place officers have to:

- * Provide proof that they are officers of the law (if not in uniform).
- * Provide their names and that of their police station.
- * Tell you the object of the search.
- * Tell you the reasons for the search.
- * Give you a record of the search, or tell you where you can obtain one.

You can only be searched in a public place, which means they can't come into your house and search you (not without a warrant anyway... yeah

you've seen the movies). At which point they can only "ask" you to remove any outer layer of clothing e.g. your jacket, coat, gloves etc. They can at no point ask you to remove anything more than that (scream bloody murder if they do).

On the other hand if they need to carry out a more detailed search (coz they suspect there's more than long-johns in your pants), they have to take you to a private place nearby (like the friendly police van where they promise you funny stories and candy), as NO search can take place that exposes 'intimate' parts of the body and you can request to have someone of the same sex present and not the members of the opposite sex... unless you request otherwise (you dirty, dirty boy).

Although they can't force you to remove any clothing... if you're gonna act like a horse's a\$\$ then this may give them reasons to take you in and forcibly search you at the local bobby station. In which case, exercise your right to shut up.

Officers can also search your ride. Anything inside or on your car is open to being searched. But they still must provide the above information first. If the car is unattended they have to leave a note stating the police station the officer is attached to, and any damage (if they had to break something to get in) can be claimed against the police station.



STOP & SEARCH: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

By Adnan Adrees

So what are your rights?

Although the police at this point are only "asking" you to co-operate in a stop and search it is not voluntary. Also beware, the police can use reasonable force to detain you so they can conduct a search. Anything more than reasonable force IS 'Police Brutality' which means where there's a blame... there's a claim.

Any officer who conducts the search must have a reason to suspect you. If you're not given a reason then the search is illegal. EXCEPT in the extreme case where you're a suspected terrorist (Mr Al/Qaeda I hope you're paying attention), when they do not need reasonable cause to suspect you before they search you. Under that they can pretty much search anybody (surprising how Human Rights go right out of the window as soon as you need them). Anti-terrorism stop and searches usually only take place in crowded public areas like in the train/tube station or near public landmarks e.g. Parliament, Downing Street... McDonalds, as a means of deterring terrorist attacks.

If English is NOT your first language and you don't understand why you've been stopped, the police searching you must take steps to inform you in

your own language (so practice with me now: What's up doc? Me no speak English... good... okay?). For all those who can speak English (allegedly), listen carefully to what they tell you. If, for some reason they haven't given you the information above then no matter what they find on you, the search and the arrest is illegal (so make sure you tell your solicitor.... because that is your 'Get Out of Jail' card).

In all circumstances remember to remain calm. DON'T give them a reason to forcibly search you. Co-operate as best as you can and make sure you listen out for the information they provide.

DO NOT FREAK OUT. The fact that you've been stopped and searched does NOT mean that you are under arrest or have done anything wrong (yet). The Dibble probably thought you were acting suspiciously and in the interest of crime prevention carried out the stop and search. Or it was simply part of a wide-range effort to catch criminals. The stop and search does not automatically mean that you have a police record.

How can I complain?

If they provide you with ANY reason to complain (used excessive force, mistreated you or another

brother or you were targeted unfairly), you need to

file a complaint at any police station. But if you don't wanna do it in person (and lets face it who would?) you can write an angry letter of complaint (excessive use of the exclamation mark is recommended). Or you can write to the Chief Constable or Commissioner of Police. But remember you have to submit your complaint within 12 months of the stop and search.

Remember when your out on the street be safe and watch out for the police, the cops, the dibles, the pigs, the panda's, the black and whites. They may be powerless to help you when you're robbed or mugged, but they're not powerless to arrest you.

References:
Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
<http://www.stopandsearch.com/>
http://www.met.police.uk/stopandsearch/what_is.htm

For further info see:
<http://www.mpa.gov.uk/issues/stop-search/default.htm>
<http://www.theite.org/homelawandmoney/law/introable/stopandsearch>
<http://www.yourrights.org.uk/your-rights/chapters/the-rights-of-suspects/stop-and-search/index.shtml>

"The media" eh? God bless it. It's normally a popular subject at the sheesha joints. We can blame it for all the ills of the world.

We'd love to have a good old bash, but someone realised that we, "The Revival", are part of the media too. The magazine. The website. The interviews. It's all a part of the media. So we toned it all down and decided to concentrate on other media outlets.

The media has a strong influence on public opinion. It provides not only information but ways of looking at the world. It informs and influences. Issues about Muslims are very often shaped by the media.

In Britain, the newspapers are divided into tabloids and broadsheets. The tabloids focus on dramatic content, alluring imagery and entertainment value. Complex situations are reduced by the tabloids to simple generalisations with only superficial explanations. The broadsheets, or "quality" papers, go in for more complex details. They use bigger words and give you a lot more information.

Left or Right wing?

Almost all media outlets have a political bias. However, media bias is more apparent in newspapers than on the television. Newspapers are generally either right wing or left wing. The papers on the right tend to be more reactionary than those on the left. They tend to be tougher on crime and meting out punishment. A welfare state may be seen as important, but not to the extent that the more left wing papers see it. Where right-wing papers emphasise the importance of the individual, left-wing newspapers are associated with more liberal values, the role of society, and the community as a whole. As more and more newspapers come to be owned by fewer and fewer people there is the very real danger that editorial perspectives and biases will conform to a narrow set of right-wing values.

Television stations in this country are expected to follow tight rules so that they remain as objective as possible in their reporting. Complaints are more likely to be taken seriously by television news outlets than they are by newspapers.

The Tabloids

Sun

The Sun is the biggest-selling newspaper in the country. It is believed that the Sun had a close relationship with former PM Tony Blair. Sun's target audience is mostly the working-class. However, it is pro-business and pro-war.

Mirror

The Mirror considers itself to be the Sun's main competitor. The Mirror is more left leaning than the Sun but it's not as left as the Guardian or Independent. In 2003 it opposed the Iraq War.

Daily Mail

The Daily Mail sees itself as more than just a tabloid and tries to appeal to a middle class audience. This newspaper often focuses on immigration and house prices. The Daily Mail's owners also own the London Evening Standard and the free Metro. Melanie Phillips and Richard Littlejohn are Daily Mail columnists whose writing is often anti-Muslim.

Daily Express

The Express sees itself as a rival to the Daily Mail. As a result of this, it often tries to be more anti-immigrant and more anti-Muslim than the Mail. The readership for this paper is steadily falling. The owner of the Express is a former pornographer and also owns the Daily Star.

BLAME IT ON THE MEDIA

By Irfan Jalil

Metro

The Metro is a tabloid which is always short on detail because it is targeted at people who want to have a quick glance at a newspaper on their way to work. It's not taken seriously - well, only by advertisers. As such, the Metro does not have a left or right slant. It has no Op/Ed page preferring to carry readers letters rather than columns and editorials. Because it is so lightweight, it doesn't have a stance on major issues be it Muslims, Europe, or gay rights.

The Broadsheets

Telegraph

The Telegraph is the biggest selling broadsheet newspaper in the UK. It is the most right-wing of the broadsheets and is considered to be a strong Conservative Party supporter. It is also pro-Israel.

Times

The Times tries to target the same audience as the Telegraph and is similarly pro-Israel. Currently the Times is owned by Rupert Murdoch - he also owns the Sun and Sky News in the UK and the New York Post and the Fox News channel in the US. Michael Gove and Rod Liddle often write columns for the Times which arouse fears and suspicion of Muslims.

Guardian

The Guardian is a liberal left-leaning newspaper. The Iraq War was opposed by both the Guardian and the Independent. It is owned by a not-for-profit trust which ensures that the editorial stance of the paper remains independent.

Independent

Independent is similar to the Guardian in that it attracts a left-leaning liberal readership. The

Independent and Guardian take a generally objective approach towards issues about ethnic minorities.

Television news

BBC News

The BBC is funded by your license fee, and, because it's funded by you, it has to be free of any political influence. It is the largest news broadcaster in the world. Radio 4 and Radio 5 are the BBC's major news and speech radio stations. Radio 4's programming carries in-depth documentaries and news, as well as comedy and drama. Radio 5 has 24-hour news, talk and sport.

Sky News

Sky News is the BBC's main UK competitor. It is owned by Rupert Murdoch - the guy who also owns Fox News.

CNN

CNN was the world's first 24-hour news channel. Grainy coverage of US bombing raids in the first Gulf War is what made CNN a household name worldwide.

Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera has Arabic and English 24-hour news channels. It's based in Qatar, a small country in the Middle East. It first became famous because it presented a wide-range of political views in a region where the media tends to be heavily government-controlled. Al Jazeera has had its HQs in Kabul and Baghdad bombed by the US. One of its reporters, Sami Al-Hajj, is being held at Guantanamo Bay.

Islamophobia

Muslims are invariably presented in the press as people who are a problem. Negative stories about Muslims are sensationalised by being placed on the front page and other prominent places in a newspaper. Such stories are often exaggerated, unreliable or just plain false. In June 2006 newspaper front pages aroused fears when police raided a Muslim home looking for a chemical bomb device. No device was found – however when a BNP member was arrested after chemicals were found at his house the papers made no mention of it. Last year the Sun, on its front page, wrote about how Muslim asylum seekers had been harassing and abusing soldiers who had returned from Iraq. Four months later it printed a short apology at the bottom of page 4 to say that the story was false. (1)



Rolling 24 hour news channels usually don't have a lot to talk about. It's the same thing over and over. This means that if the police raid a Muslim family home or business, it's what's gonna be on the news for the most part of the day. You'll hear the words 'Muslim', 'terrorists', 'attack' and 'bomb' for hours on end.

The opinion and comment pages of a newspaper are used to give columnists and prominent people a platform from which to advance their views and influence attitudes. However, there are several columnists in today's British press who put forward anti-Muslim views. These columnists question the notion of a multicultural society, they challenge definitions of Islamophobia and offer their own portrayals of what a "good" Muslim should be. They pepper their articles with denials of Islamophobia

but also demand that Muslims change their opinions to conform with those of the columnists'. For example Melanie Phillips says that to be a "moderate" a Muslim has to see Israel as a victim and not as an aggressor.

However, media distortion of minority communities is nothing new. Muslims are not the first group of people to be treated in this way by the press. The press has aroused hatred and artificial scares before. During the 1930s the Daily Mail supported Hitler and fascism. During the 1970s and 1980s the press featured stories about "floods" of black and Asian immigrants and it gave exaggerated attention to Enoch Powell, a racist MP. The press justified police harassment of minorities by linking black youngsters to crime and the right-wing papers have in the past opposed government and local authority attempts to tackle racist attitudes.

What you can do?

The media is not at all completely opposed to Muslims. There is often explicit anti-Muslim prejudice in the Sun and Daily Mail, however, liberal and humane ideas of tolerance and open-mindedness are found regularly in the Independent and Guardian. Prominent Muslims are often given the opportunity to put forward their views on television and in the press – whether right-wing or left. And just as anti-black reporting has now almost disappeared, there will be a time when anti-Muslim reporting too is pushed out. However, you can do your bit to make that possible. First off, educate yourself – find out about how the media misrepresents Muslims. Read books such as *Analysing Newspapers* by John E Richardson. Also, check out the following websites:

www.islamophobia-watch.com

Islamophobia Watch documents Islamophobic stories and commentary in the public domain and especially in the media.

www.mpacuk.org

MPACUK highlights and challenges discriminatory and prejudicial reporting about Muslim issues in the press and wider media.

www.arabmediawatch.com

Arab Media Watch aims to get the British media to give objective coverage to Arab issues.

Secondly, complain to newspapers and television stations whenever you think that their reporting is unfair, unreliable, and prejudiced. But remember, it's also important to give positive feedback whenever you see a good piece of reporting. You can make a complaint or send feedback by post, telephone or email.

References:

- (1) This is the original article about Muslims attacking soldiers:
<http://www.thesun.co.uk/article/0,,2-2006460631,00.html>
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 This is the correction:
<http://www.thesun.co.uk/article/0,,2-2007020335,00.html>
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THE REVIVAL FEAST

Fish Pie (Serves 6)



Ingredients

225g/8oz of cod fillet, skinned & boned
lemon juice
900g/2lb of potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
55g/2oz of butter
150ml/¼ pint of cream
salt and white pepper
a sprinkle of grated cheddar cheese

Parsley sauce:

85g/3oz butter
30g/1oz plain flour
570ml/1 pint milk
150ml/¼ pint cream
large bunch of parsley, leaves snipped and finely chopped

What to do:

1. First of all make the mash. Cook the potatoes in boiling salted water until soft. Then drain well and mash. Add the cream and butter, and season with salt and pepper, mixing really well so the mash is really smooth and creamy.

2. Prepare the sauce by heating the butter over a very low heat then stir in the

parsley. Cook for about ten minutes. Then add the plain flour and cook this mixture, without browning, for about 3 minutes, stirring a few times.

3. In another pan, bring the milk and cream to the boil. Pour this into the "roux" (the butter and flour mixture) a little at a time, whisking or beating it. Bring the sauce to the boil and then let it cook over a very low heat for 5-6 minutes.

4. While the sauce is cooking, pre-heat the oven to 200C or Gas mark 6 and generously butter a deep ovenproof dish. Cut the raw fish into pieces and lay it in the dish, season lightly with salt and pepper and add a little lemon juice too.

5. Pour the hot sauce over the top and then cover by spooning over the potatoes and sprinkle on the grated cheese. Bake for 35-40 minutes by which time the top should be crisp and brown and the fish perfectly cooked in its sauce.

What to do:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease an 18cm cake tin or 6 individual ramekin bowls. Put the dates and baking soda in a heatproof bowl and then pour over the boiling water. Stir and then let it stand for 15 minutes.

2. Beat the butter and sugar until creamy and then add the eggs one at a time, beating until the mixture is light and fluffy. Gently fold in the flour and then stir in the date mixture.

3. Pour into the prepared cake tin or ramekin bowls, and bake for 30-40 minutes until cooked through. (You can test this by sticking a skewer into the middle of the cake; if it comes out clean then the cake is ready.)

4. While the cake is baking you can make the toffee sauce. Combine all the ingredients for the sauce and while stirring bring them to the boil. Then let the sauce simmer for about 5 minutes. Pour the hot sauce over the cake when ready.

(Alternatively, when the cake is ready, you can pour over some of the sauce, coating the top lightly, and return it to the oven for another 3 minutes. This will make the pudding stickier. You can pour additional sauce over the cake before serving.)

Serve with fresh cream or vanilla ice cream.

Ingredients

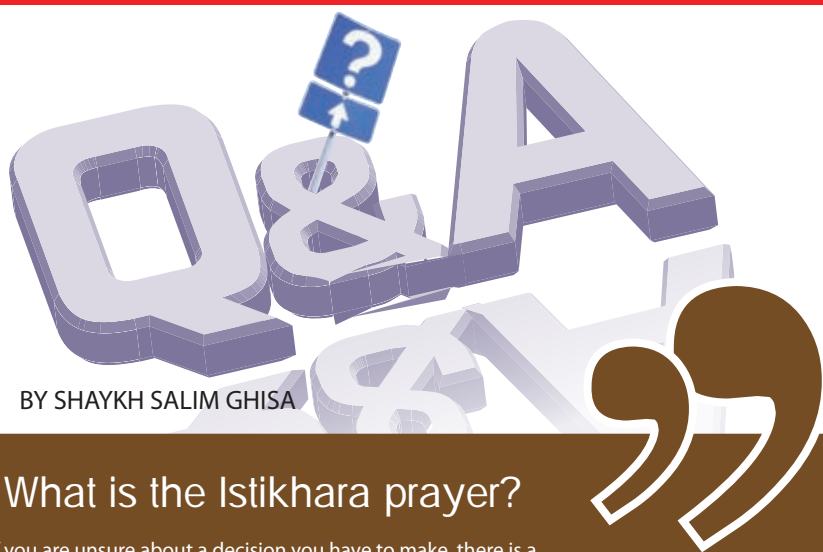
180g of dates, pitted and chopped
1 teaspoon of baking soda
1 cup of boiling water
80g of butter, plus extra to grease
150g of brown sugar
2 eggs
180g of self raising flour, sifted

Toffee Sauce

150g of brown sugar
200ml of cream
80g of butter

Sticky Date & Toffee Pudding (Serves 6)





BY SHAYKH SALIM GHISA

What is the Istikhara prayer?

If you are unsure about a decision you have to make, there is a specific prayer that you can do to ask for Allah's help in making your decision. This prayer is called Salaat-ul- Istikhara (Prayer of guidance).

Istikhara is Sunnah and should be performed for all permissible acts which are not obligatory i.e. Salaah. Meaning one cannot perform Istikhara to see whether they should pray their Salaah five times a day or not, because Salaah is a direct obligation and an order from Allah. In the same way Istikhara cannot be done to see whether they should do something Haram or not.

Istikhara should be done when a person needs to know whether the decision they are about to make is going to be better for them or not, i.e. marriage or going on a journey or starting a business etc. One should be aware that Istikhara is a permissible act and therefore if a person does Istikhara but neglects their obligations etc., then this may be of no avail to them. (For more details on Istikhara and how to perform it visit www.therevival.co.uk)



If I wear a Hijab with Western clothing that is fashionable is that wrong?

Wearing Hijab is an obligation in Islam. The purpose of the Hijab is to show modesty. The same principle applies to all the clothing and therefore any clothing which would either reveal the body or is tight whereby the curves of the figure would be displayed then this would

not be allowed, whether the clothing is Western or Eastern. If the clothing does not contravene the Shariah then it is allowed. For example, many girls wear the Hijab but then wear tight jeans whereby the shape of their posterior, hips and thighs is clearly visible - this would not be allowed. However, if a sister wore jeans but then had a long top on or a Jilbab covering the curves of her body then this would be perfectly acceptable.



Can I have a girl/boyfriend if I am going to marry her/him later?

It is not permissible to have a girl/boyfriend even if you are going to marry them or are engaged to them. Only a Nikkah (Marriage) makes it permissible for a man and woman to see each other and intermix with each other. (For a detailed answer on this topic read The Revival Magazine - Issue 1 (May/June 2005), Q & A section - it is available on www.therevival.co.uk)

Can we keep animals?

It is permissible to keep animals for many different reasons.

Livestock can be kept for business or livelihood purposes.

Dogs can be kept for protection of goods or property as long as the dog is kept outside the home. The reason for this is that the saliva and perspiration of a dog is impure and as it has a habit of slathering, the home would become impure and the angels of Mercy would not attend. If the dog is kept in a separate area i.e. a kennel or side building then this is fine. Abu Talha (Allah be well pleased with him) relates that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The angels do not enter a house that has a dog or a 'Surat' (picture or statue)" [Reported by Bukhari and Muslim]. If the purpose for keeping a dog is to protect the property then it is permissible as alarms sometimes fail or are not as effective, and a guard dog can be a better deterrent. It is Makrooh (undesirable) to keep a dog as a pet and not for guarding or protection purposes. It is related by Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever acquires a dog, with the exception of a dog for hunting, or guarding sheep, or protecting the harvest, then a large portion of his reward will be diminished every day" [Reported by Bukhari and Muslim].

It is proven in the Sunnah to keep a cat and many Sahaba (companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)) also kept cats. Cats can be kept to keep the property free from rodents and also for company and as they are not filthy and there is no harm in them being in the home.

Animals such as gerbils or mice etc are of no real use or benefit, but if someone does keep such an animal then they should look after it and ensure that they are fed and given their rights. Whilst there may be no benefit to keeping them (unless for company), if it was kept then they need to be looked after and also ensure they do not spread impurity in the home.

Animals such as birds, fish, cats or animals which are needed for livelihood purposes i.e. to guard, livestock etc can all be kept. Also horses, donkeys, camels etc. are all allowed.

Animals which are impure or their saliva is impure such as dogs would not be allowed as they are Makrooh Tahrimi (major offence), unless for the reasons mentioned above. Pigs would not be allowed not even for livestock as the whole body of a pig is impure. Animals that can cause you harm such as lion/tiger cubs etc. would also not be allowed due to their very nature. Animals which need wildlife to live, or animals which by trapping them indoors would cause them harm cannot be kept also.



SUDOKU

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



What a Joker!

9 THINGS I HATE

1. People who point at their wrist while asking for the time.... I know where my watch is pal, where the hell is yours? Do I point at my crotch when I ask where the toilet is?

2. People who are willing to get off their backsides to search the entire room for the T.V. remote because they refuse to walk to the T.V. and change the channel manually.

3. When people say "Oh you just want to have your cake and eat it too". Damn right! What good is cake if you can't eat it?

4. When people say "it's always the last place you look". Of course it is. Why the hell would you keep looking after you've found it? Do people do this? Who and where are they? Gonna Kick their ass!

5. When people say while watching a film "did you see that?". No Loser, I paid £10 to come to the cinema and stare at the damn floor.

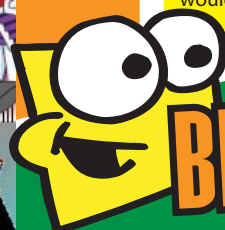
6. People who ask "Can I ask you a question?".... Didn't really give me a choice there, did ya sunshine?

7. When something is 'new and improved!'. Which is it? If it's new, then there has never been anything before it. If it's an improvement, then there must have been something before it, couldn't be new.

8. When people say "life is short". What the hell?? Life is the longest damn thing anyone ever does!! What can you do that's longer?

9. When you are waiting for the bus and someone asks "Has the bus come yet?". If the bus came I wouldn't be standing here, now would I?

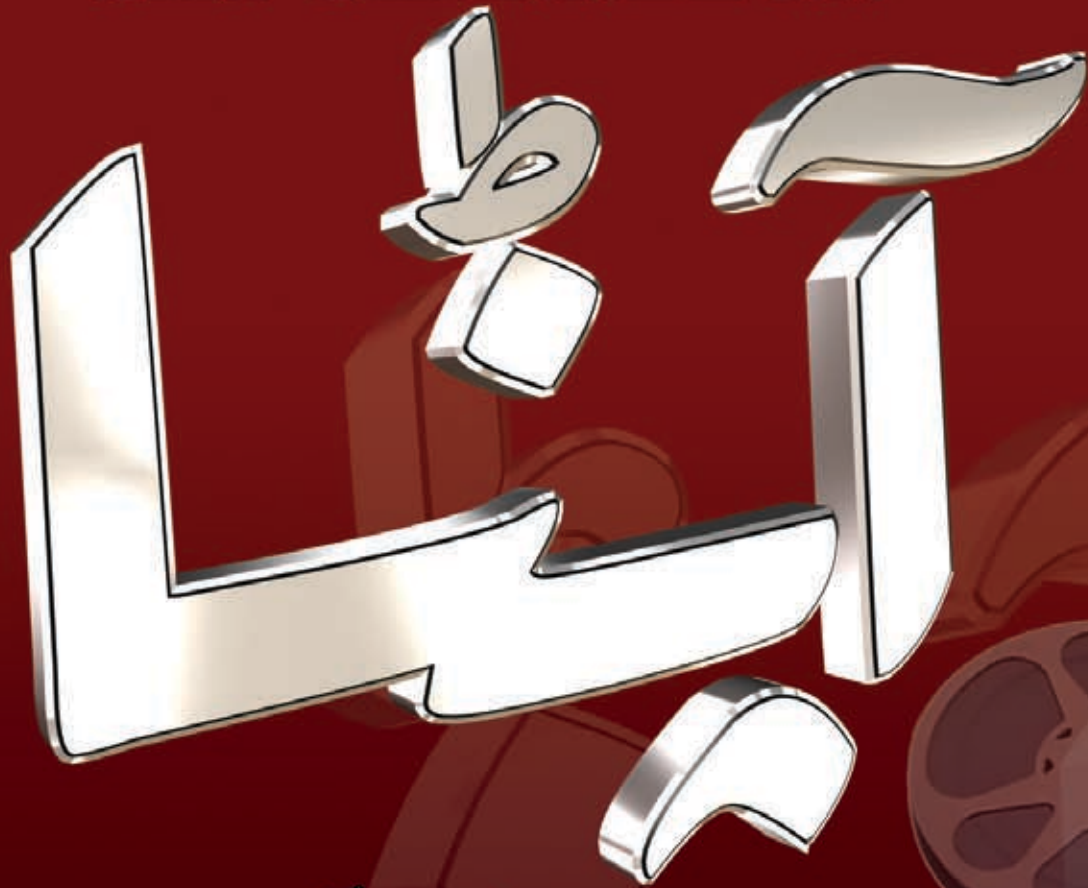
Where is OBL?



BRAIN TEASER

I'm a 6 letter word. Letter 6, 5 and 2 spell out a drink. Letters 4, 5, 2 and 3 spell out a fruit. Letters 1, 2 and 6 spell out a pet. Letters 3, 2 and 6 spell out a pest eaten by 1, 2 and 6. WHAT AM I?

SKY CHANNEL 817



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