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Lowering the Gaze

This Quranic injunction has many benefits

by *Bint-ul-Shaikh Anis*

What exactly does the "gaze" or a "look" signify? Sayings such as "he couldn't take his eyes off her" or "she only has eyes for him" are all too common in literature and media. Thus, without any elaborate research the "gaze/look" is equated with love and desire. The eyes are the medium of a romantic love.

Who knows, maybe Laila and Mujnoon of Saudi, Heer and Rankha of Punjab, and Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet could all have lived to ripe old age if they had just lowered their gazes.

An excerpt from Andrea Dworkin's Introduction from the book *Sexual Harassment: Women speak out* by Sumrall and Taylor illustrates another aspect of the "look" or "gaze": "Each woman may be bound to her husband by the rites and rituals of domesticity, but when she crosses the periphery, exits the door, she belongs to them that see her; a little or a lot, depending on how the men are inclined. The eyes own her first; the gaze that looks her up and down is the first incursion, the first public claim."

Thus, in simple, every day life, a gaze becomes symbolic of disrespect, lust, and invasion of one's privacy.

Psychological studies of children on the ability to voluntarily refuse immediate gratification and to tolerate self-imposed delays of rewards were available to the child: an immediate less preferable reward (e.g. a chocolate bar) and a delayed more preferable reward (e.g. a chocolate cake.) The strategies used by the children who successfully waited

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Islamic Contributions to Medicine

When al-Razi was asked to select a site for a hospital to be built in Baghdad, he hung pieces of raw meat in various places throughout the city and examined the condition of each piece at regular intervals. He recommended that the hospital be built in the area in which the meat sample putrefied (rotted) the most slowly.

By *Abrar Baig*

From the 8th to the 12th centuries, the Muslim world was a thriving center of scholarship and scientific learning. To describe the many accomplishments in all fields of science and art, one could probably fill an entire library with books on the subject. Narrowing down the topic a bit, I thought the contributions of Muslims to the early advances in medicine would be an interesting area for discussion.

Muslims made outstanding advances in the study of anatomy, human illnesses, and other aspects of medicine. Two influential practitioners in this field were the Persian scientists al-Razi and ibn-Sina.

Al-Razi compiled a huge encyclopedia of medicine that included both his own opinions on a variety of diseases, and Greek, Syrian, Persian and Indian knowledge of medicine. Western Europeans had access to translations of this encyclopedia, and their medical practices were influenced by it for many centuries. Many believe al-Razi was also the first to heal wounds with thread made from animal gut and the first to

immobilise fractured limbs using plaster casts. One time, when he was asked to select a site for a hospital to be built in Baghdad, he hung pieces of raw meat in various places throughout the city and examined the condition of each piece at regular intervals. He recommended that the hospital be built in the area in which the meat sample putrefied the most slowly.

Ibn-Sina also compiled a medical encyclopedia which was entitled the "Canon of Medicine."

His most significant accomplishments in the field of medicine included the diagnosis of tu-

berculosis as a contagious disease, and the realization that contaminated water and soil could lead to illness.

Generally physicians were very skilled surgeons. They performed complex cranial and vascular surgery, amputated damaged or diseased limbs, removed soft cataracts from the eyes, and inserted drainage tubes into the body to promote recovery from abdominal incisions.

In general, Muslims had achieved a lot in the field of medicine upon which the modern medicine and surgery is based.

Dr. Muhammad Asad

A Jew who turned a devout Muslim

by *Abdul Malik Quraishi*

Muhammad Asad was born to Jewish parents as Leopold Weiss in July 1900 in Poland. His ancestors were Orthodox Jews of Austria and his family familiarised him with the teachings of Torah and Talmud at an early age.

He embraced Islam seventy years ago in Europe and became

a devoted Muslim at the age of twenty six.

Asad studied at Vienna University, where he excelled in philosophy, literature, history and was awarded a Ph.D. Later on he travelled to the Middle East as a young Arabic speaking journalist.

While there, Asad took a jour-

ney to Mecca to perform the sacred rite of Hajj (pilgrimage) and became a fast friend of Shiekh Abdul Aziz ibn Saud. During the 20's and 30's Asad helped Kuwait to strive for independence against the British colonists. Similarly, He advised the freedom fighters of Libya to get rid of Italian perpetrators who, in their ruthlessness, hanged the inspiring leader of the freedom movement namely, Umar al-Mukhtar.

During World War II, Dr. Asad's father, sister, and other close relatives and friends died in the dreadful Nazi concentration camps. Asad was lucky to have escaped from Austria on a forged German passport.

During this turbulent period
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Resisting the urge

Is compromising our values worth it?

By: *Ibrahim Abu Khalid*

The word Hikmah (wisdom) has been misinterpreted for too long. It means to approach the people in the best way possible, to act in the most appropriate way taking that particular situation into account. It has never meant to give a false image of Islam for personal or community welfare. When Muslims are willing to compromise in all aspects of their life, we lose the favour of Allah, emit an image of weakness to our enemies, and lose that dignity in the sight of our Creator.

The most popular catch-cry of today's generation is the word "compromise". The weak consider it as harmless, the ignorant hold it as beneficial, and the astray count it as essential. It seems too powerful a conclusion, but that's the reality.

In Islam, there is absolutely no room for compromise. There is

no evidence that the Prophet (pbuh) ever did so, nor did his companions, nor does the Qur'an provide scope for it. This stance also makes rational sense to those who sincerely dwell upon this topic. A person suffering from a heart condition would be foolish if he chose to consume half of the medicine prescribed, and then take sugar lollies as substitutes for the rest of the tablets. Who is he cheating? Not the doctor, who sought the best possible solution for his condition, nor the pharmacist, who supplied the medicine. The patient is the one at loss.

Surely, Allah, in His Wisdom and Mercy chose Islam as the medicine for the ills of our society: the cancer of interest and woes of politics, the mistreatment of women and the division of society, the stinginess of man and his insatiable desires.

WHY DO WE COMPROMISE?

There appears to be three

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Editorial

Rights of Children

In Islam, there is no concept of Rights without Responsibilities. In the last editorial, I wrote about the rights of parents. Now let's see what are their responsibilities or in other words the rights of children according to the Islamic teachings.

When a child is born, he should be named with a good name and parents should do the Aqiqa. In some traditions it is said that the Aqiqa should be done in seven days from the birth. The mother is supposed to breast feed her child for 2 years. It is also allowed to have a foster mother (wet nurse) if both parents agree.

A child has the right to be maintained according to his parent's means. Allah says in the Quran "Let the man of means spend according to his means and the man whose resources are restricted let him spend according to what God has given him..." (65:7) and also "...and nothing do you spend in the least (in His cause) but He replaces it" (34: 39) Allah's Messenger said when a Muslim spends something on his family intending to receive Allah's reward, it is regarded as Sadaqa (act of charity) for him.

Once a woman with two little daughters came to Aisha (ra) and asked for something to eat. They looked very hungry. Aisha (ra) had only three dates at home which she gave to the woman. The woman gave one each to her daughters and was about to eat the third one when the girls asked for more. She split the third date in half and gave each of them a piece and stayed hungry herself. When Aisha (ra) related the incidence to the prophet (pbuh) he said that this act of generosity got the woman her paradise.

Children have a right to a well rounded education. Luqman, a wise man educated his son saying "O my son, worship only one God. Remember that nothing is hidden from Him and He is All-Knowing. Establish your regular prayers, enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong. Be patient and firm in affairs. Do not be proud or arrogant. Be moderate in all things, in walking, talking or dealing with friends or enemies. Be soft spoken and do not try to dominate others with your loud voice but with reason and determination." (read the full account in sura Luqman, 13-19).

The prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said: "order your children to regular prayers at the age of seven and at ten separate their beds and apprehend them if they do not pray." (Abu Dawd and Tirmidi)

Children have a right to be trained in good manners. Abu Hafsa (son of Um Salama) who was under the guardianship of the prophet (pbuh) says "I was a child and my hand used to wander in the plate while eating. He (Pbuh) said to me: Say In the name of Allah before eating, eat with your right hand and eat from your front (not to wander in the whole dish)." Good table manners are not the only manners that a child be taught. Among others are respecting their elders and loving their youngers, forgiveness, politeness, willingness to share, and so on; and parents should emphasize this by practising themselves.

Children have a right to parental guidance in making friends and choosing a life partner. According to a prophetic tradition, we should choose our friends carefully because our friends have influence on us. Parents should encourage their children to make friends with people of high moral and values and if at all possible, meet their friends to get a feel of the company they are keeping. Choosing a spouse is of even a greater importance and parental input is of utmost value. Children should not be left alone to carry on this duty in the name of absolute freedom. Or otherwise, parents should not marry their children off with someone the children do not like. Taqwa and the level of Iman should be the first preference while choosing a life partner. The Quran clearly guides not to marry a believing man to a non-believer and a believing woman to a non-believer man (2:221) and parents are responsible to instill these values into their children at a younger age if they want to avoid problems later.

Children have a right to inherit their parents's possession and the Quran has clearly spelled out the amount that a child gets. Nobody is supposed to transgress the limits set by Allah.

All children need love and care. They don't have to be our own offsprings to receive our affection. Islam has put a lot of stress on taking care of orphans. Muslims are ordered to look after orphans' affairs with Taqwa (God consciousness) and tempering with their wealth or property (if they possess any) is like feeding oneself with the Hellfire.

In summation, Muslim children have all the rights needed to raise good citizens and a good society because they are the future of Islam.

Asma Warsi

The Treaty of Hdaybiya

This treaty proved to be the beginning of the great victory Allah had promised

by Um Zafar

In the year 6 Hijra, the prophet (pbuh) had a vision that he is making Tawwaf (circum-ambulation) of Kaaba with other Muslims. upon hearing this, Muslims who had left their motherland due to persecution were eager and anxious to return and perform Hajj in Makkah, started preparing for the pilgrimage. In the month of Dhul Quaddah, they marched towards Makkah with no intention of making war. They took their sacrifice animals with them and dressed in the special garb (Ihram) so that everyone would know that they have no intention of war but of pilgrimage. Traditionally, Dhul Quaddah was considered a sacred month and any tribe could go to Makkah to offer Hajj.

When they were about 20 miles from Makkah, the prophet (pbuh) sent Othman (ra) as his ambassador to let the Quraish know about their intention. News spread in the Muslims that Othman has been killed. Upon hearing this, the prophet said they would not leave until they fought the enemy and took the revenge. He took an oath from the Muslims. Since this oath took place under a tree called Rizwan, this is known as "Bait Rizwan". The Quran describes this occasion in these words : *God's good pleasure was on the believers when they swore undertaking to thee under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down tranquillity to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy victory*". (48:18) Later it was noted that the news about Othman was only a rumour, but this Bait left an impression of fear on the hearts of unbelievers and they agreed to hold talks with Muslims and sent their men for this purpose. This was the first victory for Muslims.

One of the Quraish's ambassadors, Urwa b Masood, went back to them and told them how the companions treated Muhammad. He reported that he had never seen such respect for one man as the companions had respect for Muhammad. He didn't think they would ever abandon him and it was better to sign a treaty with him.

After a lot of thinking and discussion, Quraish sent Suhail bin Umroo to make a pact between them and Muslims. The condi-

tions of peace were as follows:

1. Muslims have to return this year without making the pilgrimage.

2. They come next year and stay for only 3 days.

3. They can only bring their swords and even those should be in their cases.

4. Any Muslim migrating from Makkah to Madina must be returned.

5. Any Muslim coming from Madina will not be returned.

6. All the Arab tribes are free to make alliance with either of the sides (i.e. Muslims or Quraish)

7. There will be peace for ten years.

These conditions were quite humiliating for Muslims and they were reluctant to agree upon them but the prophet agreed to all.

The prophet told Ali (ra) to write "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful" but Suhail insisted on writing only "In thy name, O Allah." The prophet agreed to do so. Then he said to Ali (ra) to write: "This is what Muhammad the messenger of God has agreed with Suhail bin Umroo." Suhail said "If I witnessed that you were a messenger of God then I would not have fought you. write your name and your father's name." And the prophet agreed upon that too.

When the document had finished, representatives from both sides signed. The prophet sacrificed his animals and took off his

Ihram and the Muslims followed.

This pact is declared in the Quran as "We have given you a plain victory that Gad may forgive you your past sin and the sin which is to come and may complete his favour upon you and guide you on an upright path." (48:1) (read the sura for detailed account)

This peace treaty proved to be the beginning of the great victory Allah had promised. Some of the effects are summed up here:

1. People who had accepted Islam in Makkah but were not allowed to go to Madina started preaching and many others came into Islam.

2. One of the Muslims who was tortured by the unbelievers ran to a place near Syria. Soon others joined him and made a strong group and started to bother the Quraish's caravans so much so that Makkans had to request the prophet to cancel that part of the treaty.

3. This treaty gave Muslims a relief from wars and the prophet started inviting rulers and kings from other countries to Islam. It helped Islam to set its feet into other parts of the world.

4. All Arab tribes witnessed the peaceful nature of Islam and the patience of Muslims and it helped change their opinion towards Islam.

5. It led to the opening of Makkah for Muslims (Fatah Makkah).

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From The Quran

"Those who eschew evil, and fall not into its worship, and turn to God (in repentance), for them is good news: So announce the good news to my servants

Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best (meaning) in it; those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding."

(39:17-18)

From The Hadith

And be careful of newly begotten things, because verily every innovation is misguidance.

(Muslim and others)

And every innovation is straying and every straying is in the fire.

(Irbad Ibn Sariyah)

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- * Stearic acid

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"O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that we have provided for you, and be grateful to God, it is Him you worship"

Asad: From Jew to Muslim

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he was invited to India by Dr. Allama Iqbal who was trying to awaken the Muslims to free themselves from the clutches of British imperialism. While there Iqbal persuaded Asad to translate Sahi Bukhari from Arabic to English.

Asad's commitment to serve Muslims did not fade away. In India he used the power of his pen to openly attack the British Raj. In response the British Government raided Asad's house and found the forged German passport, which unfortunately resulted in an automatic seven years jail term.

After the completion of the sentence, Asad went to live in

Tangier, Morocco, where he spent late years of his life translating the Quran, under the title of "The Message of the Quran." He commenced this colossal undertaking in 1954. It took Asad 26 years to translate the Quran with profuse commentary and was duly published by "Darul Andulas" in Gibraltar in 1980.

Besides translating the Quran he also wrote articles on Islam for various publications. He was able to complete another book, "Islami at the Crossroads", before his death in Malaga, Spain in 1992. May Allah bless him and reward him for his contributions to Islam.

It took Asad 26 years to translate the Quran with profuse commentary

Your Questions

Answered by Shabir Ally

Q: Does the Qur'an have the story of the Fall of Man as told in the Bible? Are the stories similar or different?

A: They are similar in a basic outline, but different on a few important points. First, let us consider the basic outline. Adam and Eve were placed in a garden in a state of happiness. God instructed them to eat from any tree except one tree. Eventually, they were deceived into eating from the forbidden tree and their nakedness became apparent to them. God then expelled them from the garden. Now the disagreements.

1. Neither book names the fruit, but the Bible alone calls it the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The Qur'an does not call it such, but teaches that humans are already inspired with the knowledge of good and evil at creation in order to enable them to exercise choice between good and evil. This knowledge did not come as a result of eating from a forbidden tree.

2. The Bible says the deceiver was a serpent, but the Qur'an says it was Satan.

3. The Bible says that Adam was not deceived, but only Eve was deceived; it says that Eve then gave the fruit to Adam and he ate. On the other hand, more than one Quranic passages mention that they were both deceived. One passage specifically says that Satan approached Adam and deceived him. The Qur'an does not single out Eve for blame in any passage.

4. The Bible says that when the couple heard the sound of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they hid from him among the trees. So God called out to Adam asking where he was, and asking if he ate from the forbidden tree. On the other hand the Qur'an does not depict God in limited human form. The Qur'an and the Bible both teach that God knows everything always.

5. According to the Bible, when the couple was confronted with their mistake, they blamed each other, and Adam even blamed God because God gave him the woman who gave him the fruit. According to the Qur'an they did not pass the blame. Instead, both repented.

6. According to the Bible, God cursed them. According to the Qur'an, God forgave them and guided them.

7. According to the Bible, they were driven out of the garden because God was afraid that they may eat from the tree of life and live forever. According to the Qur'an, God's plan was to educate our first parents in paradise, then send them into the world for a limited time to resist Satan, the enemy. They were sent to earth, as part of God's plan for them; not as a way of preventing them access to the tree of life, but as a test to distinguish those deserving of everlasting enjoyment in God's paradise.

8. According to the Bible, God had said that when Adam eats from the tree he would surely die, and the serpent said they will not surely die. The serpent was right - they did not die. Contrary to this, in the Qur'an, God said that if Adam and Eve eat from the tree they will become wrongdoers, then they will have to leave the garden and come out to where they will have to labour. Satan, however, promised them that if they eat from the tree they will live forever, Satan was wrong - they did not live forever.

9. According to the Bible, because of God's curse, serpents have to crawl and eat dust, women have to suffer in childbirth and men have to sweat for a living. According to the Qur'an, no such curse was issued. The difficulties of life on earth are what make it different from life in paradise.

(Do you have questions? Please write to Shabir Ally c/o The Ambition)

Journey to Islam

Highlighting the experiences of new Muslims

A Canadian-born embraces Islam

In Islam rational thinking is not divorced from human emotion

Mary Lemanski is a Registered Nurse at the Hospital for Sick Children. In an interview with Mehran Banaei, she elaborates on her journey to Islam.

Can you start by telling us about your family and religious background?

I am a Canadian, born and raised in Kitchener, Ontario. My father is Catholic and my mother is Baptist. My parents are both practising Christians, though not heavily. I was brought up as Catholic, went to Catholic school and attended church every Sunday. I always believed in God and worshipped Him. I thought that there was no other realistic alternative to Christianity.

What triggered your departure from Christianity?

For a long time, I was aware of some contradictions in the Bible, and knew that many have left Christianity for this reason. At the beginning this did not bother me so much. I ignored the discrepancies which I felt to be irrelevant to my life and focused on things which seemed meaningful. Parts of the Bible were very comforting and helpful to me.

However, when I started to read the Bible more rigorously, I discovered that many things in the Bible are impractical and inapplicable to present day. I began to realize that so many things in the Bible are not related to my life. I began to feel discontent, and felt that the path I was in, was not the right path. I was at the time generally unhappy with my life. I prayed to God for guidance and fulfilment. I prayed that God would show me the way. I was not at all looking for a new religion, since I did not think that other religions had anything better to offer.

What attracted you to Islam?

Some years ago, I was working with a woman who was married to a Muslim. I socialized with this couple for about five years. I used to have numerous discussions with my friend's husband on many issues related to God and religion. I found him to be extremely knowledgeable, particularly well-

informed about Christianity. In those days, my impression of Islam was a typically Western version. Yet, I felt inappropriate that this man knew so much about my religion and I knew nothing about his. I became interested in educating myself about his religion. He gave me some books to read. The one which influenced me most was: "Jesus the Prophet of Islam". I find that to be an excellent book for someone who comes from a Christian background. Then I read "The Quran, the Bible and Science".

When I finished reading them, a lot of things began to make sense to me. It was then that I became convinced that the Bible contains so many serious flaws. I came to recognize the implication of such a recognition.

What convinced you of the truthfulness of the Quran?

The very first few lines in the opening chapter al-Fatiha. I found the sayings so clear, so pure and appealing: all leading to worship one God. I was particularly struck by two verses: 'In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful', and 'Show us the straight way'. It became very clear to me that this is the straight way. After reading the first chapter, I had no doubt that this was the right path, this was the Truth. I read most of the Quran in one week. In fact, just like the Bible, I looked to see whether there were any inconsistencies in the Quran. Far from that, I found nothing in it to be ambiguous, but reasonable. I found in Islam man is expected to think and question things, and there is nothing which one cannot examine. This is a religion, where rational thinking is not divorced from human emotion (a combination which is lacking in Christianity).

How soon after, did you embrace Islam?

Right away, I was ready for this change. I felt that saying the Shahada was a formality, because I was already a Muslim in my heart. Within a week I started to wear Hijab. I wanted to meet with other Muslims, but I did not know any Muslim in Toronto, or whether there are any Mosques around. I had no idea where to find information about the Muslim community.

How old were you at this time?

I was 29.

How did your family and friends react to this change?

At work, no problem. Regarding Hijab, everybody thought that I was under chemotherapy or had a bad hair colour. Basically at work, you are judged by your professional conduct. On the streets occasionally there were some hostilities. Still, sometimes people do ask me: where do you come from, just because I am wearing Hijab. Ironically the idea of being a Canadian and Muslim is perceived as mutually exclusive. Overall, I felt that people respect you more when you are dressed Islamically.

However, my family reacted badly, because I left Christianity and on top of that I chose Islam and started to wear Hijab. I was very isolated at the beginning. Every visit with my family was stressful. They couldn't understand what Islam was all about. This was very hard on me, but I had to live my own life.

What can be done to make Islam more accessible to people with your background?

People usually do not go out of their way to find out more about Islam. It is quite important that a person who seeks accurate information about Islam knows where to obtain it easily. The media tends to be biased against Islam, Hollywood movies project Islam badly. There are many misunderstandings which ought to be clarified. To present Islam, Muslims usually work in isolation. This is unfortunate, since our effort becomes less efficient. We should be able to use each other as resources and be open to non-Muslims.

Muslim Role Models

Um Salama (ra)

Mother of Believers

by Asma Warsi

Um Salama and first husband, Abu Salama were among the early Muslims who migrated to Habasha, and then to Medina.

While they were attempting to travel to Medina they faced many difficulties. When they were about to leave, her husband's family snatched their child from them saying that he was from their family and they could not take him along. Then Um Salama's family held her back saying she was from *their* family and could not go with her husband. Her husband had to leave alone in order to obey the order from the prophet to make Hijra.

Um Salama was left alone and despondent in Makkah without her husband or son. After about a year, one of her relatives pleaded with her family to let her go and meet her husband. Her in-laws then brought her child to her and she prepared to go to Medina by herself.

In those days, women from noble families did not usually travel alone. But the love of her husband, the desire to follow the instructions of the prophet and the hope to get away from the persecution of the Makkans made her take off on a camel. On her way, she met a person named Othman bin Talha who helped her get to Medina safely where at last she

met her husband.

Um Salama's husband took part in the battles of Badar and then Uhud where he was badly wounded and eventually died. The prophet (pbuh) led his funeral prayers and made a supplication for his salvation. Um Salama was pregnant, grief stricken and very depressed. The prophet advised her to make dua for her husband and ask Allah for a better reward.

After she delivered her child, Abu Bakr was concerned about her suffering and proposed to her. She, however, refused. After that the prophet (pbuh) himself offered to marry her. At first she refused but she eventually agreed. She was married to the prophet (pbuh) at the age of 24 in the fourth year of Hijra.

Um Salama was quiet beautiful and equally modest. In the beginning of her marriage with the prophet, when he would come to her quarter, she used to start feeding her baby and the prophet would go back. When Ammar bin Yasir, her foster brother found out, he took the baby to his house so that the prophet could come and spend time with her. This practice, though, didn't last long and she became such a real companion of her husband that scholars have placed her second to Aisha.

She was very wise and used to give authentic and precise advice. After the Hdaybia Pact, the prophet ordered Muslims to take off Ihram and sacrifice the animals. Muslims were so dejected with the terms of the pact that, for the first and only time, they were reluctant to obey the prophet's order. At this time, the prophet (pbuh) came in and told Um Salama about it. She said: "Don't say anything more. Do your sacrifice, shave your head and take off the Ihram." He did that and everybody followed him.

Her life was very simple and she preferred abstinence over indulgence. She used to observe fasting every Monday, Thursday and Friday. She was very generous. A person never returned empty-handed from her door. She had no children from the prophet (pbuh) but had 4 children from her first husband, Abu Salama. She used to take very good care of them.

Um Salama had a great knowledge of Sharia. After the death of the prophet (pbuh), at many occasions the Sahabah used to turn to her about ahadith. There are a total of 378 ahadith related by her.

She died at the age of 84 in Medina and Abu Huraira offered the funeral prayers.

The Gaze

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for the delayed reward were observed. One of the strategies used in waiting was this: Rather than focusing on prolonged attention on the objects for which they were waiting, they avoided looking at them. Some of these children covered their eyes with their hands, rested their heads on their arms, or found other similar techniques for averting their eyes from the reward objects."

These studies indicate the power of "out of sight out of mind." Averting the eyes or the gaze is a subtle

Averting the eyes or the gaze is a subtle yet one of the most powerful ways of curbing desire or distracting oneself.

yet one of the most powerful ways of curbing desire or distracting oneself. In the Quran the command is: "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them; and Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do." (Sura Nur, v. 30)

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty.." (Sura Nur, v. 31).

The command is for believing women regardless of how pure their thoughts are and how inno-

cent their gaze is, whether they have degrees in Islamic studies, or whether they are in a Muslim country.

It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and his apostle, to have any option about their decision. If anyone disobeys Allah and his apostle, he is indeed in a clearly wrong path." (Surah Ahzab, v. 36)

Too often we allow our God-set standards to be overruled by those of an individual or a soci-

ety. Too often the pleasure of Allah is forsaken under the pre-text of living in a non-Muslim society in the 20th

century. What exactly is it that some of us are afraid of? Do we think Allah is going to be unjust to us? Perhaps some of us are, as Jamal Badawi says in his book *The Muslim woman's Dress According to the Quran and Sunnah*, "...responding to Allah's guidance saying: "O my Creator! Your Law is Your own opinion. I have my own opinion, and I know best what is good for me."

Pass this copy of The Ambition to a friend after reading!

Compromising values not a solution

Continued from page 1

main reasons why people will willingly compromise the elements of Islam.

1. "We are living in hard times, in a difficult society, and thus Allah permits us to compromise, because." Islam is easy, not hard. A Hadith also quoted is that narrated by Aisha, who said that when the Prophet (pbuh) had the choice between two actions, he chose the easiest course.

True, Islam is easy to follow, but not to the extent that we are permitted to change the rules set by Allah for our own convenience. When asked what their proof is that we can compromise, they claim that our condition today is similar to that during the Makkan period of the Prophet's mission. We should bear patiently like he did then, and act as he did in those circumstances.

The fallacy of this argument stands clear when we study the reasons why the Prophet (pbuh) acted as he did back then, and how later on he acted differently. We are now living in the Madinah era, the era where the Qur'an was completed. The Makkan period could be seen as a temporary stage where the companions were trained and prepared in that special environment. But Islam was completed, finalised with the ayah: "This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." Islam was then perfected, so by retracing our steps all the way back to the Makkan era is illogical.

A cup full of fresh milk will be spoilt if only a drop of blood were to fall in it. Allah has never asked us to go beyond our capacity to please him, thus arguments such as "I must work in a Haram field because I have no choice" is an invalid argument. If we eat food which is declared Haram, don't expect automatic forgiveness, because no excuse remains.

Whereas most people use their own rationale to substantiate their weak claims, I have the Word of Allah:

"Such is Allah, your Lord in truth. So after the truth, what else can there be, save error" (10:32)

It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error" (10:33, 10:36).

Do you consider our current situation to be much worse than that suffered by the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions, or the other prophets before him? Surely this is the same code enjoined upon the Prophet (pbuh) and upon us. Yusuf (pbuh) went through many tortures, and never compromised, but instead turned to his Creator: "O my Lord! Prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me" (12:33).

It was not in the nature of

It was not in the nature of Yusuf, nor in any of the righteous servants of Allah, to compromise in order to gain some worldly benefit. Yusuf preferred jail to falling for the lusts of the women.

Yusuf, nor in any of the Prophets, nor in any of the righteous servants of Allah, to compromise in order to gain some worldly benefit. Yusuf preferred jail to falling for the lusts of women.

2. Another false argument is the apologetic one: "We want to show people a religion which is easy and doesn't require much effort, not to make people run away from Islam."

In truth, people have been running to Islam because, when shown in its real light, Islam provides the solutions people have been seeking. They do not want a mixture of Islam with the Kufri they fled. Showing Islam in a "moderate" or "soft" light will only give the wrong image of an already perfect religion.

3. The third argument is that we must compromise in order to strengthen Islam. We must enter and join these institutions, join hands with the non-Muslims who are our partners in this life. This way, we can spread Islam, and live happily ever after.

WRONG!!! Again, there is no proof in the Shariah for this view, but rather to the contrary. Surah al-Kafirun is a prime example of this:

"Say: "Disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship nor do you worship what I worship. I shall never worship what you worship neither will you worship what I worship. You have your own religion and I have mine." Muhammad (pbuh) declared his religion to be that of Ibrahim. The unbelievers thus argued that there was no reason for them to leave their own beliefs and take up that of Muhammads (pbuh), seeing

they were of the same religion. They sought to compromise with him, proposing that he should prostrate before their gods in exchange for them prostrating before Allah, and he could demand whatever he wanted from them. This Surah was revealed in an uncompromising tone, clearly dividing tawheed (monotheism) from shirk (polytheism), establishing a true criterion, allowing for no further wrangling.

This wasn't the only situation. When the Prophet's uncles felt

that he was getting too powerful, they tried to bribe him with the gifts of this world. They offered him the leadership of Makkah, wealth, and the most charming wife, yet he refused all of these, because he only desired that only the truth prevailed. Under such harsh and luring circumstances, he commented that if the sun were to be given in his right hand, and the moon in his left, never would he give up his cause. This was his prime opportunity; if it were in his nature to compromise, he could have accepted the leadership, while secretly hiding his true convictions, and then later spread Islam after being confident and powerful enough.

The prophet (pbuh) was known as the Trustworthy. He would have been able to kindle the fire of Arab nationalism and would thus have united them. They would have responded gladly to his call, tired of their tribal warfares. Thereafter, he could free the Arab lands from the domination of the Romans and the Persians. He could have easily established an Arab state in this way, instead of bearing thirteen years of pain and torture. He could have made the people bow initially before his authority, then he could have used his position of authority to impose the belief in the unity of Allah, and bow before the True God.

This was not what Allah desired though, and that is not Islam. Islam seeks the destruction of all forms of evil, through pure ways, not the manipulation of evil to reach a pure goal. This is not possible, nor permissible.

Even in a life or death situa-

tion, we are told of the rewards if we persevere and bear patiently. Ibrahim (a.s) chose to burn in the fire prepared by his own father, rather than to hide his religion, leave the area, and spread the Word of Allah.

NO EXCUSE

Alhumdu-Lillah, we are given all the necessities of life. We have enough money to purchase halal products and these are available everywhere, so we need not compromise in terms of our food. We can freely wear the required clothing asked by Allah, so we have no excuse not to. Indeed, we never initially had an excuse, and we certainly do not now, so stick to the path chosen by Allah, to all of it, for that is the only way we can dig ourselves from this rotten trough we have fallen in, because we prefer to attribute orders to Allah which He never asked for.

"Say you (O Muhammad): 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah with sure

knowledge, I and whosoever follows me with sure knowledge. And Glorified and Exalted be Allah. And I am not of the Mushrikun.' " (12:10)

"And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not other paths, for they will separate you away from His path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious." (6:153).

(This article was published in the 9th issue of Nida'ul Islam magazine, August-September 1995) (<http://www.speednet.com.au/~nida>)

Matrimonials

Sunni Muslim family invites Sunni sister to join their family as a second wife. Inquiry #65.

The Ambition needs writers

We need writers, interviewers, community news reporters, story writers for children, etc. etc.

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Asma Warsi - at (416) 740-1491

Kid's Korner

Why not Muslim School Holidays?

By: *Shaheef Nabi*
Grade 9, Weston C.I.

I am going to talk about the fact that there are only Christian/Cultural Holidays during the school year. The main holidays during the school year are Thanksgiving, Christmas break, Victoria Day, Good Friday, and Easter Monday.

When it is time for these holidays there is no school so you don't miss any classes. When time comes for a Muslim holiday, as a Muslim I have to miss school, so that means I have to come in

on my own time and make up for any work, test, or homework missed. I just think that it is not very fair. Why can't the board make at least one Muslim holiday for the whole school?

I have one major argument to back me up and that is that no matter what public school you go to nowadays there will be a fairly substantial population of Muslim students. If Christian students can have all these different holidays, then we Muslims should get at least one. It would be very greatly appreciated.

About the Prophet

A speech to the Makkans

by *Zrreen Warsi*
Gr. 6, Elmbank M.S.

After Muhammad (pbuh) received the first revelations time passed away and still only a few close people believed the Prophet (pbuh) about Islam. So Allah asked Muhammad (pbuh) to invite all the Makkans to come to accept Islam.

Rasulullah (pbuh) told the Makkans that he had something very important to tell them. The Makkans trusted and respected him so they came. He asked them to join him at the hill of Safa.

When they came, Rasulullah climbed up

the hill and asked, "Do you know who I am?"

"Yes," they replied. "You are Muhammad (pbuh) the son of Abdullah. You are as-Sadiq and al-Amin."

"Do you believe what I say?" he asked.

"Yes," they said. "We believe you."

"Would you believe me if I told you there was an army behind this hill ready to attack you?" Asked the Prophet.

"Yes we would believe you."

"Then if you believe me, listen!" Rasulullah (pbuh) said. "I warn you that the Day of Judgment is coming. I am the prophet of Allah. Allah is One. Allah alone is God. None of your idols and images are gods. Allah alone is the Creator. He gave us life. We will return to him after death. Then Allah will bring us back to life again and judge us. So believe in him alone. Give up your idols and your evil ways and do what's right."

The Makkans had never heard anything like this ever before. They cherished their idols and definitely didn't believe in the Day of Judgment. They thought that they were free to do anything they wanted. They were very furious with what he had told him.

"There's something wrong with your brain!" The Makkans taunted. "You're possessed by spirits! We've always worshiped our idols, and we'll continue to worship them. We're not going to believe what you say!"

Abu Lahab was one of

Rasulullah (pbuh) uncles. He did not believe in Allah. "You've wasted our time," he shouted angrily. And all the Makkans went home.

Most of the people remained unbelievers. As Waraqa had warned, they became Rasulullah's enemies.

But Rasulullah (pbuh) had received an order from Allah. He would obey his Lord no matter what. So he started preaching Islam openly. He met people and told them, "Your idols are not gods. They have no minds, no power. They can't do anything for themselves or for you! Allah is the only God. You'll return to Him when you die. You must fear the Day of Judgment. Because that is when Allah is going to deal with you. Nothing can save you except your belief in him and your good deeds."

The rich and powerful Quarash were very angry with him. They didn't want to hear what he was saying. Only a few Makkans believed him and became Muslims.

Many of the early Muslims were weak and poor, so the unbelievers started to persecute the Muslims because of their faith. But these early Muslims had great courage. They stood up to the powerful Quarash. They were ready to suffer and even die for the sake of Allah.

Besides that, there were also some people from outside Makkah who met the prophet and accepted Islam. Slowly, slowly the call to Islam was being heard.

Word Search of the Names of Prophets of Islam

Joke

A man was suffering from a very bad cold. He went to the doctor who suggested the man to drink "liver juice" every day. "Buy a kilo of liver from your butcher, and make the juice. Do this every day," he said.

"How would it help my cold?" Asked the surprised patient.

"I don't know about you, but it will certainly help my brother who has a meat shop in your neighbourhood," came the reply.

Big Kid's Korner

Islamic Sites

by Moukhtar Zein
Gr. 9,
Weston C.I.

In some of the countries where Muslims live there are great, beautiful places. Places like Macca, and Madina that are located west of Saudi Arabia, east of the Red Sea. Although these places are very popular

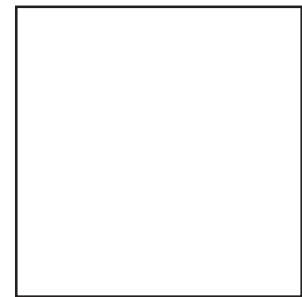
places that play a big part in our religion, I think that we should also recognize other Islamic places.

The Dome of the Rock stands on the rock in Jerusalem where the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ascended to heaven. The minaret of the Great Mosque at Sainarra is the only surviving feature of the

Great Mosque at Samarra, Iraq. At the time of construction (848-852), the Great Mosque at Samarra was the largest Islamic mosque in the world.

In conclusion all Muslims should research about these places so that when we can go on a vacation we go to an Islamic site.

Why?



Wondering when will I die
How would I feel.
Would I live long enough to see my grandfather?
Would I have the happiness that I want.
All of a sudden these feelings, why?

When will there be freedom in Afghanistan?
When would my worries go away?
Will my future be dark or bright?
All of a sudden these feelings, why?

Will my parents be proud of me?
What kind of person am I to others.
Am I good enough.
All of a sudden these feelings, why?

Am I going to get the honour roll?
Will I try hard enough.
Would I even care?
Does it make a difference or does it matter?
All of a sudden these feelings, why?

by Basima Roshan Afghani

Brain Teasers

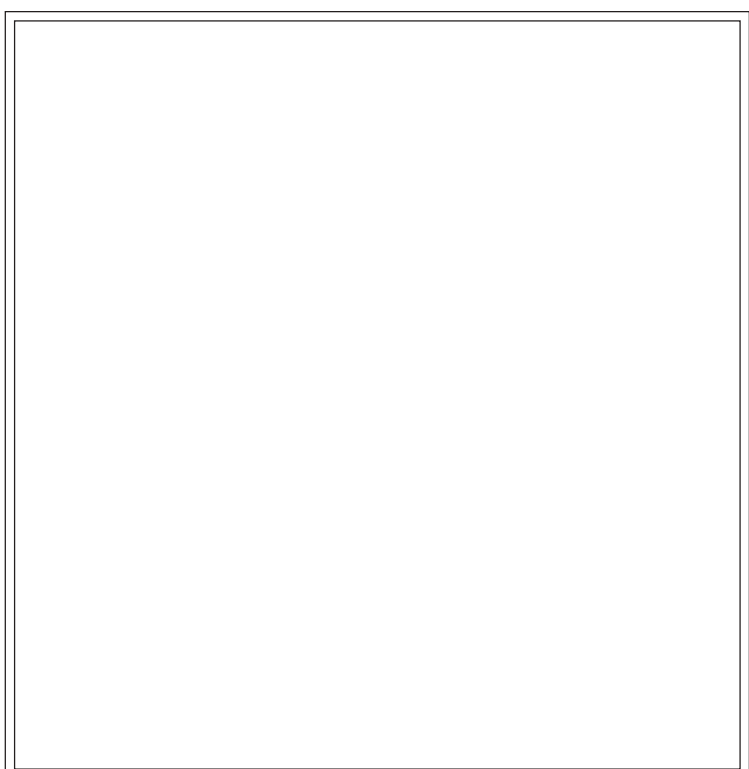
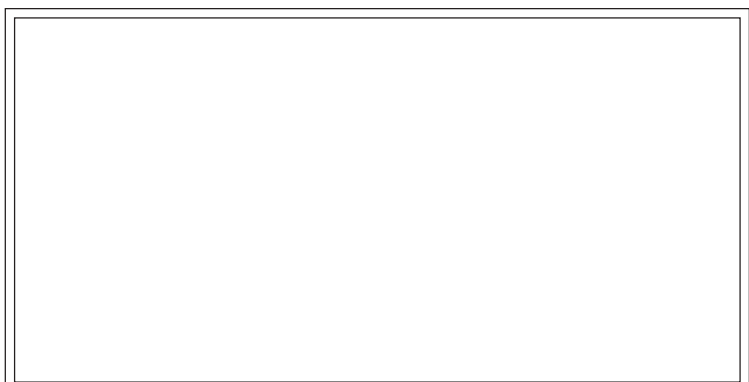
1. What are the questions that nobody can answer in "yes". If somebody does answer in "yes" it means he is lying.
2. What is it that we throw away when it is needed but keep when not needed?
3. A cat fell in a 30 feet deep ditch. It jumps up 3 feet every day and falls back 2 feet. How many days will it take to come out?
5. Write the number 8 three times so the answer equals 7.
6. Sajid says that his brother and he were born on the same day and date. His brother says they have the same parents too but they are not twins. Why does he say that? Are the brothers lying?
7. The price of a one yard by one yard piece of cloth is eight dollars. What is the price of the same material 1/2 yard by 1/2 yard?
8. How will you write eleven thousand eleven hundred and eleven dollars in figures?
9. What is heavier; a litre of milk, a litre of blood or a litre of water?

Naming a child

by Hassan, Gr. 10

It is in an infant's vested right to be hooured with a good name. When choosing a name for the shild it should be done with the intention that the child will be blessed with the "barakah" of that name.

10. In which area will the snow melt faster; (a) city, (b) country (c) will take equal time?



Answers:
1. (a) Are you sleeping? (b) Are you dead?
2. The anchor of a ship. 3. After 28 days. It will climb 27 feet in 27 days. The remainin 3 feet it will jump the 28th day. 5. 8 - 8/8 = 7 6. They are triplets; they have another brother. 7. 2 dollars 8. 12111 9. Blood. It is 6 times thicker than water. 10. City. Pollution in the city gathers on the snow and it can absorb heat from the sun more readily than the clear country snow.

