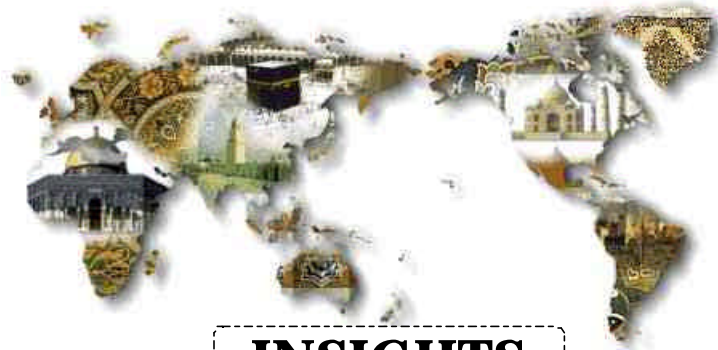




Islamdale



Editorial

The desire to move forward and strive for the best is inherent in human nature. As long as there are plans and visions, there will be hope and victory, inchaa Allah.

I received an email from a reader asking us to write about the purpose of "Islamdale" and the future of our community. The letter raised some questions pertaining mostly to the social future of Muslims in the west, which does not reflect a bright vision. The email also asked the following questions:

"Where we are? Who we are? And where we are going?"

A vision should never be dictated by one single person. It should be discussed within a community and sculptured by a group effort and earned through strives and actions.

Future is no less important than the present. We must prepare for it, using all what we know about it from the present. We have to work hard to earn a better future for our community and all its people.

Even in times of darkness and imperfection, Muslims ought to look to the future with optimism and hope. Our religion requires us to have this attitude for we must be hopeful in the Almighty, at all times. The Qur'an and the history tell us that easier times always follow hard times, and that justice and virtue are the everlasting norm while instances of vice are only temporary interruptions. With such a positive outlook and support resulting from knowledge of the history of the edge-old struggle between vice and virtue, one finds security in being assured that the will of Allah shall prevail.

Short Story (see page 4)

INSIGHTS

Praise be to Allah Who has created Time and has made some times better than others, some months and days and nights better than others, when rewards are multiplied many times, as a mercy towards His slaves. This encourages them to do more righteous deeds and makes them more eager to worship Him, so that the Muslim renews his efforts to gain a greater share of reward, prepare himself for death and supply himself in readiness for the Day of Judgement.

This season of worship brings many benefits, such as the opportunity to correct one's faults and make up for any shortcomings or anything that one might have missed. Every one of these special occasions involves some kind of worship through which the slaves may draw closer to Allah. The happy person is the one who makes the most of these special months, days and hours and draws nearer to his Lord. The Muslim must understand the value of his life, increase his worship of Allah and persist in doing good deeds until the moment of death.

Allah says: "And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty." [15:99].

Among the special seasons of worship are the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, which Allah has preferred over all the other days of the year. Ibn 'Abbas (RA) reported that the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) said: "There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days." The people asked, "Not even jihad for the sake of Allah?" He said, "Not even jihad for the sake of Allah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing." (Bukhari, 2/457). (Continue page 3)

Days of virtue and righteous deeds

MUSLIMS' PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

I have been living in the United States for five years. When I left my homeland as a young man, the important thing on my mind was to leave a land of "lesser opportunity" to go to a land of "greater opportunity" and "to be something." Now that I have achieved that in the sense that I am on my own two feet, a well-established scientist, have a family, I have a moment to pause and ask, "Where I am? Who I am? Where I am going?" As it has been said: "If you don't know where you are going, you are sure to end up in a place where you never wanted to be." I am going to share with you some of my observations and priorities that should be looked at by the members of a small community. (continue page 2)



Youz or "Uzed" Corner

(see page 4)

MUSLIMS' PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

1. THE PRACTICE OF THE RELIGION:

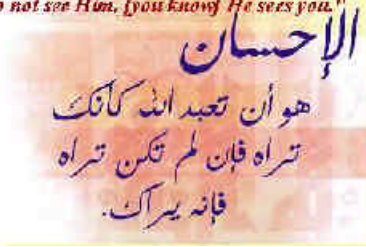
The truth is that very few missionary delegations from overseas, whose sole purpose is the preaching of Islam, become residents of this country. Rather, they come for a week or so and then leave. They do not live here. On the other hand, for many Muslims who do choose to live here, the practice of Islam is merely a habit that they have acquired from their family back home rather than a way of life for the sole purpose of the pleasure of God Almighty. Although, there is no restriction on the practice of religion in this country, the environment is not always as favorable to new faiths as it might seem. For example, offering the noon prescribed prayers at work is difficult for most Muslim employees. Several cases have been recorded in which a Muslim was fired from his job for practicing Islam during lunch hours. Therefore, a Muslim living in a non-Muslim society can practice his or her religion, and may do it with hardships, but the joy of being a Muslim is often not there. The prevailing feeling is more one of a lonesome believer, surviving in a spiritual desert.

2. FOOD CONSUMPTION:

For those Muslims who do want to preserve their faith and follow its dietary laws, life is sometimes difficult. Again it is not due to the non-availability of permissible (halal) food. In big cities permissible meat is available and in smaller towns, if a Muslim wants, the believer can and sometimes does drive to a bigger city to obtain permissible meat. The problem is acute when one has to eat out. Nearly everything is contaminated with lard. This includes vegetable soup, salad, fried chicken, hamburger, cheese, etc. Even if they say they use vegetable shortening, still they might have used the same frying pan and utensils for frying both kinds of food.

**"O you who believe!
Save yourselves and your families
against a Fire (Hell),
whose fuel is men and stones,
over which are (appointed)
angels, stern (and) severe,
who disobey not (from executing)
the commands they receive from
Allah, but do (precisely)
which they are commanded"
(66.6).**

"Al-Ihsan (Goodness) is that you worship Allah as you see Him. And even though you do not see Him, (you know) He sees you."



3. CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

In this highly technological society, it is not difficult to gain a professional education while, at the same time, it is difficult to obtain an Islamic education. Muslim children spend forty hours a week under the care of non-Muslim teachers, surrounded by non-Muslim friends and yet parents expect them to practice Islam. One hour a week of Sunday school's Islamic education or making them recite a few words or verses is not enough to withstand the influence of their peers. Children are greatly influenced by their friend's behavior. In this society, where use of drugs, alcohol, pot, rock music, and illegitimate mixing of sex is so common in high school children, how can we save our children from such influences? Should we stop them from going to school? Should we stop them from mixing with their American neighbors, a serious question for Muslim parents. One answer is to practice our faith ourselves in the best way we know how, constantly learning about things we had not known about Islam. We can then become models for our children if we teach them how to reason and not force religion upon them. By teaching them how to reason, they can reason with themselves that they do not want the results of what they see going on around them.

3. SOCIAL LIFE :

It is said: "the human being is a social animal," and "no human being is an island." Therefore, social encounter is essential for the psychological well being of a person. What opportunities does the non-Muslim society provide? When American men get together, they usually talk about baseball, football, women and interest rates, while drinking beer and wine. These things may not generate interest in a Muslim man who has not grown up in this society. He may feel isolated and alone among them. It is the same case for Muslim women. She is much different from her non-Muslim counterpart whether or not she is a professional or someone who works. Muslims also become isolated from the society in which they live. Thus, it is necessary to form communities or join in with other communities of people who share same interests.

4. THE HOSTILITY OF THE MEDIA :

This is a painful issue for a sensitive Muslim. It is not so much so for someone who is only interested in the sports column of newspapers or in the on-going sales. However, those Muslims looking for new items in American newspapers are disappointed since the media is often anti-Islam, anti-Muslim and frequently publishes fabricated and distorted news about Islam and Muslims. Those who read the columns of Joseph Kraft, Jack Anderson and Paul Harvey know what I am talking about. Even in social gatherings, it is difficult for a sensitive Muslim to listen to all this. All headlines are full of prejudice and stereotypes. It is granted battles for non-Muslims. In conclusion, the agony of Muslims living in a hostile non-Muslim world is great. They are living in a spiritual desert, in a social vacuum, trying to think all by themselves. Someone may ask: "So why do they stay?" The fact is that as Muslims, they believe in the same values for which this country was founded. In other words, they feel closer to the founding fathers than what America has become. Time will tell how important it was that those Muslims who have the strength of character to withstand the agonies remain in America to re-instill the American values of which the Americans themselves have lost.

5. SOME IDEAS:

These are some of the items that I feel can help the community to stand up and survive for the time being:

(1) Permanent imam for the Mosque. This imam would carry the five times prayers, lectures and remainders. We have enough professionals (doctors, university staffs and businessmen ...) that can share easily the expenses for recruiting a permanent imam.

(2) Establishment of an Islamic school for kids. The same imam may offer classes for the kids not only on weekends but also a few hours during the weekdays. We need our kids to grow up as Muslims. Islam has to be sculptured and shined in their minds and hearts at an early age.

(3) Monthly gathering that make us know each other. It would be beneficial if the people from the same country would interact with others. Otherwise the purpose of gathering would be lost through the ethnical gathering.

(4) Provide halal meat and other items...

These are only few ideas. I would like to hear your inputs and priorities. End

**"Whoever strives hard, he in fact strives for himself"
(29:6)**

Days of virtue and righteous deeds

These texts and others indicate that these ten days are better than all the other days of the year, with no exceptions, not even the last ten days of Ramadan. But the last ten nights of Ramadaan are better, because they include Laylat al-Qadr ("the Night of Power"), which is better than a thousand months.

Among the good deeds we should strive to do during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah are:

1. Fasting. It is Sunnah to fast on the ninth day of Dhu'l-Hijjah.

2. Takbeer. It is Sunnah to say Takbeer ("Allahu akbar"), Tahmeed ("Al-hamdu Lillah"), Tahleel ("La ilaha ill-Allah") and Tasbeeh ("Subhan Allah") during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, and to say it loudly in the mosque, the home, the street and every place where it is permitted to remember Allaah and mention His name out loud, as an act of worship and as a proclamation of the greatness of Allah, may He be exalted. Men should recite these phrases out loud, and women should recite them quietly.

3. Performing Hajj & 'Umrah. One of the best deeds that one can do during these ten days is to perform Hajj to the Sacred House of Allah.

4. Doing more good deeds in general, because good deeds are beloved by Allah and will bring a great reward from Him. Whoever is not able to go to Hajj should occupy himself at this blessed time by worshipping Allah, praying (salat), reading Qur'an, remembering Allah, making supplication (du'aa'), giving charity, honouring his parents, upholding the ties of kinship, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and other good deeds and acts of worship.

firmly to the Truth by doing what Allah loves.

5. Sacrifice. One of the good deeds that will bring a person closer to Allah during these ten days is offering a sacrifice by choosing a high-quality animal and fattening it, spending money for the sake of Allah.

6. Sincere repentance. One of the most important things to do during these ten days is to repent sincerely to Allah and to give up all kinds of disobedience and sin. Repentance means coming back to Allah and foregoing all the deeds, open and secret, that He dislikes, out of regret for what has passed, giving it up immediately and being determined never to return to it, but to adhere

The Muslim should make sure that he does not miss any of these important occasion, because time is passing quickly. Let him prepare himself by doing good deeds which will bring him reward when he is most in need of it, for no matter how much reward he earns, he will find it is less than he needs; the time of departure is at hand, the journey is frightening, delusions are widespread, and the road is long, but Allah is ever watchful, and to Him will we return and render account. As the Qur'an says: "So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it, And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it." [99:7-8]

There is much to be gained, so make the most of the opportunity afforded by these invaluable and irreplaceable ten days. Hasten to do good works, before death strikes, before one can regret one's negligence and failure to act, before one is asked to return to a place where no prayers will be answered, before death intervenes between the hopeful one and the things he hopes for, before you are trapped with your deeds in the grave.



The 7 shaded people

The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said, "Seven people will be shaded by Allah under His shade on the day when there will be no shade except His. They are:

(1) a just ruler;

(2) a young man who has been brought up in the worship of Allah, (i.e. worship Allah (Alone) sincerely from his childhood),

(3) a man whose heart is attached to the mosque (who offers the five compulsory congregational prayers in the mosque);

(4) two persons who love each other only for Allah's sake and they meet and part in Allah's cause only;

(5) a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth for an illegal sexual intercourse with her and says: I am afraid of Allah;

(6) a person who practices charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given (i.e. nobody knows how much he has given in charity).

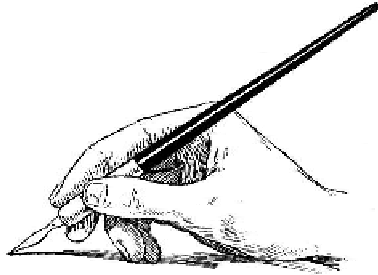
(7) a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes get flooded with tears." Narrated Abu Huraira Vol.2, Book 24, Number 504 Bukhari)

**O you whose hard heart is as dark as the night,
is it not time that your heart was filled with
light and became soft?**

**Expose yourself to the gentle breeze of your Lord's
mercy during these ten days, for Allah will cause this
breeze to touch whomever He wills, and whoever is
touched by it will be happy on the Day of Judgement..**



Freelance Writer Youth Corner



Some time ago I received a call from a colleague, who asked if I would be the referee on the grading of an examination question. He was about to give a student a zero for his answer to a physics question, while the student claimed he should receive a perfect score and would if the system were not set up against the student. The instructor and the student agreed to an impartial arbiter, and I was selected. I went to my colleague's office and read the examination question:

"Show how it is possible to determine the height of a tall building with the aid of a barometer."

The student had answered: "Take the barometer to the top of the building, attach a long rope to it, lower it to the street, and then bring it up, measuring the length of the rope. The length of the rope is the height of the building."

I pointed out that the student really had a strong case for full credit since he had really answered the question completely and correctly. On the other hand, if full credit were given, it could well contribute to a high grade in his physics course. A high grade is supposed to certify competence in physics, but the answer did not confirm this.

I suggested that the student have another try at answering the question. I was not surprised that my colleague agreed, but I was surprised when the student did. I gave the student six minutes to answer the question with the warning that the answer should show some knowledge of physics. At the end of five minutes, he had not written anything. I asked if he wished to give up, but he said no. He had many answers to this problem; he was just thinking of the best one. I excused myself for interrupting him and asked him to please go on.

In the next minute, he dashed off his answer which read: "Take the barometer to the top of the building and lean over the edge of the roof. Drop the barometer, timing its fall with a stopwatch. Then, using the formula $S=0.5*a*t^2$, calculate the height of the building." At this point, I asked my colleague if he would give up. He conceded, and gave the student almost full credit. In leaving my colleague's office, I recalled that the student had said that he had other answers to the problem, so I asked him what they were. "Oh, yes," said the student...

Short Story

The Poor Man Said ...

It was a usual meeting. The Prophet (PBUH) was in his place and his companions gathered around him to hear the words of wisdom and guidance. Suddenly a poor man in rags appeared, saluted the assembly: "Salamu Alaikum" and finding a vacant place, comfortably sat down. The Prophet (PBUH) had taught them that all Muslims were brothers and in an assembly one should sit wherever one finds a place, regardless of any status. Now, it so happened that this poor man sat next to a very rich man. The rich man felt disturbed and tried to collect the edges of his dress around himself, so that the poor man did not touch them. The Prophet (PBUH) observed this and addressing the rich man he said:

"Perhaps you were afraid that his poverty would affect you?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah," he said

"Then perhaps you were apprehensive about some of your wealth flying away to him?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah."

"Or you feared that your clothes would become dirty if he touched them?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah."

"Then why did you draw yourself and your clothes away from him?"

The rich man said: "I admit that was the most undesirable thing to do. It was an error and I confess. Now to make amends for it, I will give away half of my wealth to this Muslim brother so that I may be forgiven. "

Just as he said this, the poor man rose and said: "O Prophet of Allah, I do not accept his offer."

People present were all taken by surprise. They thought the poor man was a fool. But he explained: "O Prophet of Allah, I refuse to accept his offer because I fear that I might then become arrogant and ill treat my Muslim brothers the way he did to me."

**Can you think of other solutions ?
plz email ur answers**



For your Information

1. Electronic version of "Islamdale" can be downloaded or viewed at www.icc-islamicenter.org
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