

# I-MAG

ENLIGHTEN YOUR "I"

FREE ONLINE NON-PROFIT  
QUARTERLY P.D.F. MAGAZINE

**Women Inheritance  
in Islaam**

**The King Is Dead**

**Sarah Joins I-MAG!**



**Teresa  
Lesher:**  
A Very  
"AWARE"  
Muslim

"Dust Is  
My Bed"  
Video Clip  
Subtitled in English

Exclusive  
for I-MAG  
Readers  
(See page 19)



**Beauty in the  
Cemetery!**

**Meshary Alaradah's Artistic Mission & Ambition in Focus**

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# ABOUT I-MAG

I-MAG is a free online non-profit quarterly magazine. The first issue of the magazine was published in February 2005; three more issue came on a monthly basis. A pause of three months followed for evaluating and renovating the magazine. I-MAG became a quarterly in the Fall (September) of 2005.

I-MAG is an acronym of Islaamic Magazine. I-MAG is pronounced in two syllables; "I" as in "eye" and "mag" as in the first three sounds of magazine.

I-MAG aims at presenting a fair and objective image of Islaam. Our magazine is not a dogmatic one, we believe in critique and critical thinking in hopes of presenting intellectual enlightenment in the areas that we cover while adhering to the code of ethics of journalism.

I-MAG sees itself not merely as an electronic publication but rather as an intellectual enlightenment project that plays a part in the social economy; an economy in which responsible and free (free of charge and free of partality) information is the main merchandise.

I-MAG's slogan "Enlighten Your I" tells a lot about the magazine. "I" stands for Islaam, but it also refers to the first speaker pronoun since we hope that we all would enlighten our "I"s or ourselves. "I" also refers to the "eye" which the design of I-MAG for sure pleases.

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All articles published in I-MAG are the personal opinions of their writers. I-MAG takes no responsibility for the views expressed in the magazine or the website in general.

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© Sarah drawn by Misbah exclusively for I-MAG

SARAH IS A NINE-YEAR-OLD GIRL WITH AN INQUISITIVE MIND. SHE HAS A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAAM. SHE ATTEMPTS TO SORT OUT THE MYTH FROM THE STEREOTYPE FROM THE TRUTH. WHEN IN DOUBT, SHE ASKS.

IN EACH ISSUE, WE WILL PUBLISH ONE OF SARAH'S QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAAM AND THE ANSWER TO IT.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTION ABOUT ISLAAM, DO NOT HESITATE TO EMAIL IT TO SARAH. SHE WILL MAKE SURE THAT YOU RECEIVE THE ANSWER TO IT. :)

SARAH'S E-MAIL ADDRESS IS: SARAH@I-MAG.ORG

## What does the word "Allah" or "Allaah" mean?

To begin with, "al" in Arabic means "the" and "ilaah" means God. In Arabic the definite article "the" is a part of the word and is not a separate part of it as in English, so when putting the two words together "al" and "ilaah" we get the word "Allah" or "Allaah" which mean the God.

The "i", the first letter of "ilaah" has been omitted to facilitate the pronunciation. Note that the "I" in Allaah is a dark one.

Now you must be wondering, what is the difference between the words "Allaah" and "Allah", it's simply a matter of spelling; the spelling "Allah" is more common, but in I-MAG

we adopt the spelling "Allaah" as it represents the true pronunciation of the word in standard Arabic.

It is note worthy that there are two pronunciations of the word, one is a colloquial one to which the spelling "Allah" might be more suitable, and a standard and more correct pronunciation that the spelling "Allaah" best represent.

Yours in humanity,  
I-MAG Team



# TERESA LESHER

## A VERY "AWARE" MUSLIM

**Interviewed by Hayat Alyaqout** ['Hayaat Alyaa'qoot]  
[hayat@i-mag.org](mailto:hayat@i-mag.org)

"Where Minds Meet" is the slogan of "AWARE Center", a centre that chose to plunge into a way that is rarely trodden; cultural exchange to generate understanding and awareness. AWARE (Advocates of Western-Arab Relations) was established in 2003 in Kuwait because "it is through culture that we preserve our heritage, that we express our creativity and that we share our individuality with the world" says Teresa Lesher the general manager of AWARE. Lesher, who is an American with a Kuwaiti nationality, holds a Ph.D. in library and information science, she embraced Islaam 25 years ago. Lesher just like the centre she runs, is a very "AWARE" Muslim.



- You are a professor, a social activist, and a prolific writer. But I am sure many readers would also like to know when and how you embraced Islaam?

When I was in college I had several friends from different countries and we used to compare and contrast our cultures, customs and experiences. During this time I had Muslim friends who told me about Islaam. I found it a very logical religion that also had answers to many questions that I had as a child and young adult – questions about God, the purpose of life, and personal accountability. I found logic and faith totally compatible in Islaam, and very soon embraced it as a wholesome yet very fulfilling way of life. This Rama'daan it will be 25 years, al'hamdu lillaah (thanks to Allaah).

- How do you read the situation after September 11th? Did it really give Islaam “a free advertisement” as some say or did it tarnish all the effort that has been made to present the true image of Islaam?

I believe it's done both. It brought Islaam to the forefront, and caught many people off-guard – people who have been living quiet lives as peaceful Muslims. It's not enough to be good people; we must all be activists in the sense that we strive hard for good in the community with

active participation in all spheres of life. Before September 11, we were less diligent. Now we realise that if we don't stand up for what's good and mutually beneficial, others will be given attention for messages and means that do not represent our values.

- We notice how teenagers spend hours chatting and using the Internet as a means of recreation. Your Ph.D. dissertation was on information literacy in Kuwait. Could you define it to our readers and tell us the main trends you detected. What do we need to have as an information literate generation?

Being able to use the Internet is an important part of information literacy, which can be defined as the ability to access information efficiently and effectively, evaluate information critically and competently, and use information accurately and creatively. It is an essential survival skill in our time, and the level of information literacy among the citizens of a nation will determine, to a large extent, its economic and social prosperity in the future.

Unfortunately, information literacy is not a top priority in education in Kuwait. The curricula and teaching methods are still very traditional. Related problems include

the poor perceptions and attitudes toward school libraries on the part of educational authorities, the lack of planning for information provision and human resource training at all levels, low levels of autonomy in public and school libraries, and general unawareness of the library's potential among decision makers.

Education plays a key role. We need to develop resource-based education with a comprehensive program of instruction for information literacy. Teachers need appropriate training, curricula need to be revised, and supporting materials such as well-stocked libraries with modern equipment and connectivity to worldwide information resources must be in place.

- How do you evaluate volunteering in Kuwait and the Middle East compared to the West?

I volunteered some when I was in high school in the States but not enough to be able to make a comparison. I've been in the Middle East for more than 20 years and have always found ways to volunteer, usually on a personal or small group level. There is no shortage of work to be done - one only needs a degree of personal motivation and the dedication to see a project through.



Gettogethers at AWARE

or small group level. There is no shortage of work to be done - one only needs a degree of personal motivation and the dedication to see a project through.

- **What was the motive behind the establishment of AWARE Centre in 2003? And what are its main aims?**

There are many reasons for the establishment of AWARE: the poor image of Arabs and Muslims in the media, a want of positive interaction between Westerners and Arabs, and a shortage of cultural information and services for Westerners in Kuwait. With the number of Westerners in Kuwait growing, there was a strong desire in the community to take some positive steps to remedy these situations.

The AWARE Centre's mission is to promote positive relations between Westerners and Arabs by organising activities and information services related to Arab and Islaamic culture. We organise social events, classes, lectures, films, exhibitions, tours, and cultural activities, and provide information about Arab and Islaamic culture through our website ([www.aware.com.kw](http://www.aware.com.kw)), our monthly "Together" magazine, leaflets about local culture, and our on-site library.

- **Who are the key persons in the Centre? And how many persons work for AWARE?**

I consider everyone who works and volunteers in AWARE a key person, since each one has contributed to the success of our organisation in an important way. 'Abd Al'azeez Aldu'ajj did the foundation work by managing the centre through the first phases; he gave us a vision and direction for the future. We currently have several full-time and part-time staff, but when you add volunteers, the number fluctuates, depending on our activities.

- **What are the main activities of AWARE?**

In addition to our ongoing Arabic classes, we have many regular activities like lectures, socials, films and tours. We also organise exhibitions, bazaars, desert day-camps, if'taar dinners in Rama'daan, 'Eed celebrations and visits to diwaaniyyahs. Occasionally, local citizens invite groups of Westerners to join them in the desert, fishing, or among their families at home. We also go to schools, clubs and companies, on their request, to present information about different aspects of the culture.



- **AWARE is a non-profit centre. How is it funded?**

From donations of private citizens and local businesses. These generous people realise the importance of our work and support it in many ways. Our volunteers also give generously of their time, and encourage others to participate.

- **Of the different activities that AWARE organises, such as Arabic lessons and cookery demos, which has been the most popular?**

Several classes run throughout the year, and the enrolment is good. As for activities, we recently did a survey, and found that 52% of the respondents enjoy our lectures most. Tours and social events are also popular.

**A WANT OF POSITIVE  
INTERACTION BE-  
TWEEN WESTERNERS  
AND ARABS BROUGHT  
AWARE TO LIFE**



- Who attends AWARE activities? Are they mainly expatriates? What is the ratio of Westerners amongst them? And what is the ratio of men versus women?

Both Arabs and Westerners attend our activities, but the majority are expatriate teachers, businessmen, and oil company employees. Western embassy personnel and Western cultural groups also visit. I would say the ratio of men and women is about equal over the long run.

- Has any of the attendants shown interest in embracing Islaam?

To answer visitors' many questions, we provide information about Islaam through our library, publications and on-site personnel. We also have mentors and instructors for Western Muslims who want more in-depth

information. Some attendees have shown interest in Islaam after a movie, lecture or activity, and some have eventually embraced Islaam as their chosen way of life. Our intention at AWARE is to provide correct and reliable information, and that has helped some Westerners rectify some of the misconceptions they may have had about Islaam.

- Being a specialist in the field of library and information science, what role does the library at AWARE play?

The library, of course, is a way to learn independently according to one's personal interests. It's a good place for research and recreational reading. The AWARE library contains resources on Kuwaiti, Gulf, Arab and Islaamic culture. We have travel guides, cook books, history

books, photo journals, biographies, a small collection of Arabic literature (in English), and many books on regional art and architecture. Our Islaamic section features overviews of Islaam as well as its application in various fields like human rights, family sciences, pure sciences, economy, management, and so forth. We also keep translations of the 'Qura~n in the major European languages, and provide English translations of the 'Qura~n free-of-charge.

- Do you have plans to expand outside Kuwait or have chapters? Any other plans for the future?

We regularly get visitors from around the Arab world and beyond, and many have expressed the intention to incorporate some of our ideas into their local cultural or Islaamic centres. We also hope to open branches of the AWARE Centre in other locations in the Gulf in the future.

## MORE ABOUT AWARE:

**[www.aware.com.kw](http://www.aware.com.kw)**



In  
cooperation  
with  
**Iqta.com**



If you have any  
nice photos that  
you would like  
to share with us,  
please contact:

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Photo by  
**Ahmad A. Almutawa**  
[A'hamd Almu'tawwa']

“An Eye on the Future”



Almutawa was born in 1981. He has a B.A. in mass communication and Islaamic sharee'ah from Kuwait University. His interest in photography began when he was 12. Almutawa is now an editor in several magazines and newspapers.

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Photo by  
**Ashraf Al-Fagih**  
[Ashraf Alfa'qeeh]

**“Arabian Coffee Pots”**

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By  
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## Idea

### Use Exposure!

Using the features of your camera in a different way could always bring out different photos.



photo from: dpreview.com

[ The idea is to shoot the object half the exposure time, and keep the rest of exposure time to shoot the background of the object, the object will be a ghost! See it your self. ]

## Tools

- . A camera (S.L.R. - Semi S.L.R.)
- . A tripod (preferred with rotation angle scale)
- . A cable release (optional)
- . Darkness, with a small source of light

# Shoot a GHOST!



Cable Release

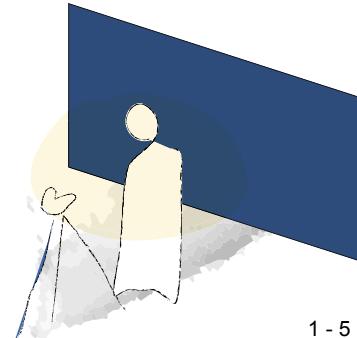


Tripod

# ■ Steps

1. Place the camera on the tripod, and set it to M "manual." Then set the shutter speed to 10 seconds, or above (depending on the brightness).

2. Prepare a dark scene in the background with very low illumination.



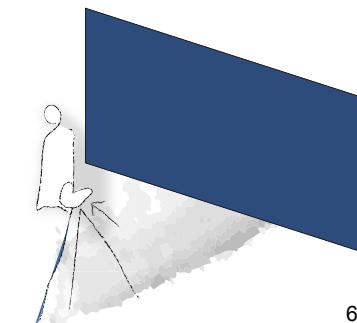
1 - 5

3. put the object infront of the dark scene, and place a small source of light infront of it.

4. If you have a cable release, plug it to the camera. It will enable you to maintain stability 100% to the camera. If you don't have it, just make sure to be gentle when pressing the button, so you don't move the camera.

5. Switch the light on, and shoot.

6. Take the object *very fast* away from the range of the camera after half the time is passed, and wait until the photo is fully taken, and just look at what you've got there! You have got a ghost :)



6



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If u liked this issue's tip, please share your experiments with us. Send your works to: [konash@i-mag.org](mailto:konash@i-mag.org)

# BEAUTY IN THE CEMETERY!

MESHARY ALARADAH'S ARTISTIC  
MISSION & AMBITION IN FOCUS

Interview and translation by I-MAG team.





**"It is a very beautiful video clip; it talks about death," someone told me.**

**Although the previous statement seems to be contradictory, it eventually lead me to reconsider what I have been taught for years; we know that science quests for truth, while art seeks beauty. How can a video clip (a work of art) be beautiful - as it should be - and talks about a gloomy theme such as death?**

**Watching the meticulously well-done video clip, or more precisely nasheed clip, "Farshi Atturaab" (Dust Is My Bed) was an eye-opening experience to me: the clip is a very sad one, yet it is a nice one, a beautiful one to be precise. The clip's beauty comes from the fact that it presents death with reverence rather than with fright. It does not show you rotten degraded bodies as you might expect when watching work that talks about death, but rather talks about what the soul that leaves this world thinks of and**

**says.**

**Juxtaposing two different and seemingly contradictory notions (death and beauty) was a professionally crafted task in this clip, telling us that beauty and innovation in art are not always about depicting the joyous "happy peppy" aspects of life. Many times it is about realistically depicting different feelings that are worth recording even if these feelings are not as delightful as one might expect. The dark sides of life should be portrayed in order for us to appreciate the bright ones, or as Aristotle said: virtue is the means between two vices.**

**Speaking of philosophy, the clip's munshid (singer) and composer Meshary Alaradah [Mishaari Al'araadah] is a student of philosophy and Islamic studies at Kuwait University. Al'araadah, who enjoys composing for others, is seriously considering producing an entirely English nasheed album for he thinks that: "Inshaad is universal in its message and audience."**

- Would you kindly explain to our readers the difference between Inshaad and singing?

From a semantic point of view, there is very little difference. Traditionally, however, nasheed is associated with those songs that tackle religious themes. The carefully selected poems and the meanings that nasheed emphasises, in addition to its simple and unaffected style, set nasheed apart from other types of singing. It is at odds with dissolute attitude and with lewd singing, and it is very different from deviant chants of some Sufis. Inshaad is a type of singing that fulfils a divine vocation and appeals to the beauty-loving human nature. It does not have to be religious only; it includes all noble pursuits of humanity.

- Why did Meshary Alaradah opt for inshaad in lieu of singing? In other words, what mission do you find yourself carrying?



Prior to me getting involved in inshaad, which is a combination of message propagation and artistic performance, I appreciated and enjoyed beauty and art. I also came to notice that I was somewhat talented, so I wanted to, correctly, make use of this talent in the service of the da'wah (propagating the message of the Prophet Mu'hammad peace be upon him); a message that I, and many others, live to propagate. This message was entrusted to us (young preachers of faith) and we need to convey it to those who are in need of receiving it via a suitable vehicle. And since inshaad is positively received and is capable of conveying the message, then developing it artistically is required.

- You started performing at the tender age of twelve. How and who helped you hone your talent?

I really did not start inshaad at that tender age; it was only a hobby then.

Things started to change in 1997 when, at a recording studio in Kuwait, I recorded few rehearsals. They, mind you, were more of a flop than a success, but the experience was invaluable. Learning from those experiences, and from the experience of other munshids (inshaad artists) paved the road for my first official recording that was released in 1999; that was the first step in my journey. My first tentative steps in inshaad benefited greatly from the sound engineer 'Imaraan Albunny and the Kuwaiti munshid Mu'hammad Al'husayyaan.

- How did you become a composer, and where did you learn the musical modes (ma'qaams)?

My knowledge of music is rather limited, and it is self-learnt for the most part. I learnt modes and harmonies on my own, and despite attending a multitude of courses; hardly anything was added to what I already knew. Therefore, I combined my earlier experiences with that of others, in addition to actual practice, until I developed the necessary talent to compose for my nasheed.

- How do you engage your creative process? In light of the fact that you compose your own melodies, do you first develop the melody and then choose the poem, or do you start the other way around?

In general, I first select the poem, study it carefully until I have a full grasp of the message it conveys, and then I decide on the melody.

Alternately, in a desire to improvise and innovate, I decide on a melody and develop it and then search for words that match it. A munshid is like a painter, in a sense, where he paints from an already developed idea, but occasionally he starts painting in hope that this will inspire the idea.

- In addition to composing your own melodies, you have composed for other munshids as well, as in the three-parts of the nasheed album "Ya Rajaa-i." (O My Hope) Would you tell us about this experience and about your composition for the munshid



Ousaamah A's'saafy. And what elements do you take into considerations when you compose for others?

I enjoy composing for others, especially when I am intimately knowledgeable of their vocal and artistic abilities. This gives me the chance to dive into their vocal spaces and to retrieve from within suitable tunes for the poems. Other times, I find that my vocal range is limited so I find another munshid, who could perform what I could not, which gives me the freedom to compose. In particular, this was the case in "Ya Rajaa-i" when I selected the most suitable tune for the children's little voices. Similarly, I set two poems of the munshid Ousaamah A's'saafy to melody in the albums "Khaleejy I" and "Khaleejy II", which was a valuable experience. I am cooperating currently with other composers who will be releasing their

**“ INSHAAD IS A TYPE OF SINGING THAT FULFILS A DIVINE VOCATION AND APPEALS TO THE BEAUTY-LOVING HUMAN NATURE.**

work in the near future.

- Do you have any plans to perform in English in the foreseeable future? If the answer is in the affirmative, then what message will you incorporate in your nasheed?

As a matter of fact, I am seriously considering producing an entirely English nasheed album. In my opinion, mixing Arabic and English nasheed in one album released for audience of either language fulfills the objective of conveying the message of nasheed to the audience only partially, since every audience would not fully understand or grasp the meaning of nasheed in the other language.

When Allaah permits, we will release albums in English that address various religious topics, including issues of the fundamental tenets of faith (monotheism, Paradise, Hell, death, the Day of judgement, etc.), moral issues ('hijaab, benefaction, good mannerism, etc.), and issues of global nature (peace, love, fraternity, etc.).

- "Farshi Atturaab" (Dust Is My Bed) video clip was very successful, in addition to it being one of the very early professional nasheed-clips. Tell us the story of making a video clip out of this poem and how did the audience perceive it? And how did you relate the concept of death, which is

so frightening, in a way that inspired humility and reverence rather than fear?

That video clip, as you saw it, was not intended that way; it evolved as such somewhat unintentionally. What happened was that the poet [A'hmud Alkandiry] showed me the poem and I liked it, so I decided to include it in the third album of "Ya Rajaa-i". It so happened that when I was humming the tune for it, one of my closest relatives passed away. That nasheed became the outlet of my unpretentious sad melodies. When we were finished with it, the cast and others who listened to it liked it. The poem itself had so many vivid images that were easily transferable to a video clip. And by the grace of Allaah, we were blessed during the entire process of producing this clip, starting from writing the poem and ending with airing



A MUNSHID IS LIKE A PAINTER, IN A SENSE, WHERE HE PAINTS FROM AN ALREADY DEVELOPED IDEA,  
BUT OCCASIONALLY HE STARTS PAINTING IN HOPE THAT THIS WILL INSPIRE THE IDEA.





the clip on satellite T.V. channels. What made this nasheed very special was its theme, which was rather general in the sense that it talked about an issue of global nature, which is not particular to Muslims, or even believers for that matter.

- Do you see the nasheed clip being directed more towards the pious and religiously committed individuals or to those who are not as committed? Which group is your priority?

This distinction is outdated. When nasheed had one style and one message only, it was by default targeting only one group. Nowadays, inshaad is universal in its message and audience, as the "Farshi Atturaab" clip was. It helped significantly that we addressed an issue of general interest in the poem that is sung.

- Composing and playing music to accompany nasheed is a very controversial issue as scholars have different opinions on the issue. What is your take on this issue?

The religion of Islaam is a middle-of-the-road religion; a tenet based on the 'Qura~nic approach, which rejects extremism in either way concerning the use of music. From a jurisprudence point of view, scholars had varying opinions on the subject of music. Aside from the differences in jurisprudential views, some regard music as a noble art but others regard it as a lascivious means that encourages lewdness. The later opinion causes many munshids to avoid using music in their performances. In my personal opinion, I feel no qualms about music with inshaad, as long as we stay away from the ways of lewd

ONE POTENTIAL PITFALL OF PERFORMING IN ENGLISH FOR A WESTERN AUDIENCE IS THAT THE PERFORMER MAY BECOME DRIVEN BY WHAT IS "COOL" AND "SWELL" IN THAT SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT.

young and aspiring munshids, who were incapable of putting together an album on their own, an opportunity to perform and be heard. This practice persisted up till now and it served a great cause in cleansing the inshaad circles from insincere fame seekers. Therefore, collective efforts helped young munshids when, say, some of their nasheed was good but some was not up to par. The fact that he performed with others who were already established munshids helped in honing the skills, of those whose skill was genuine, and propelled them to producing their own albums thereafter when they became known and accepted by nasheed audience.

• More and more munshids and inshaad groups are writing and performing nasheed in English. How do you read into this new wave, what are the positives, and what would be some of the pitfalls that must be avoided?

By Allaah's grace, the West has witnessed the emergence of many



SOME MEDIA OUTLETS ARE PURELY COMMERCIAL AND HAVE NOT INTEREST IN THE SUBSTANCE AND VALUES OF THE NASHEED ITSELF, EXCEPT WHERE IT IS PROFITABLE AND POPULAR.



munshids who presented a relatively unknown façade of Islaamic art to the art-loving audience in the West. Inshaad in English was enthusiastically received in the West and it broadened the base of followers of this type of performance. It is important to remember here that one should indulge in the artistic part of nasheed only to a certain limit, which is the limit of putting the importance of the message ahead of the means of conveying it. One potential pitfall of performing in English for a Western audience is that the performer may become driven by what is "cool" and "swell" in that specific environment, when he should guard the Islaamic roots and identity of his nasheed; the same identity that gave nasheed in English the acceptance it received.

**• What are the major obstacles you see for Inshaad: obstacles facing munshids and obstacles limiting the widespread acceptance of the art of inshaad?**

The most significant obstacles are the jurisprudential disagreements and the intolerance, which hinders a lot of munshids. How receptive the media is to nasheed and to the message it conveys is another obstacle, because some media outlets are purely commercial and have no interest in the substance and values of the nasheed itself, except where it is profitable and popular. We are hopeful that, with Allaah's help, the Islaamic satellite

T.V. channels would support nasheed and cause it to spread, through them, to other channels. Obstacles, notwithstanding the ones mentioned above, are many, but time and persistence will help us overcome them, for noble goals deserve the sacrifice.

**• In light of the vast improvement in**

### THIS IS THE STORY OF 8 HOURS OF FEAR AND TEARS!

the quality and professionalism that inshaad witnessed during the sixth Kuwaiti Inshaad festival (March, 2005), and hosting a non-Arab inshaad band, how do you assess the frequency, quality and diversity of inshaad festivals throughout the Muslim world, and what do you hope for? The sixth Kuwaiti Inshaad festival indeed took nasheed a major step forward in the Arab world. Nowhere before such a festival was held with similar resources and professionalism. The festival lasted five days, of which three were held in a theatre and the remaining days were held in two shopping malls. Financial support and official endorsement combined to interest the media in this festival and to ensure its quality and professionalism. Public attendance of this last festival broke every record of attendance in past inshaad festivals. The actual performance of nasheed

was also new to this festival where nasheed was previously recorded and then played back, except for the munshid himself and the chorus. Diversity of nasheed was another major element in the success of this festival. We thank Allaah that this festival was really like ten steps forward in the right direction, and we hope to do the encores throughout the Arab world in the near future, which will help enriching the artistic quality of our Inshaad festivals.

**• "Ya Rajaa-i IV" album is forthcoming. What should we expect? And did you fix the release date?**

We sincerely hope that this album will match our expectations. We will only

### JOINT PERFORMANCES HELPED CLEANSING INSHAAD CIRCLES FROM FAME SEEKERS.

do our best, and we will make sure to take into account the criteria necessary for success. As for its planned release, we have not fixed a date yet, but it will take some time.

**• Who does Meshary Alaradah listen to?**

The cliché here would be: any beautiful voice that creates harmony between verse and tune. If you are asking about specific names, however, then I enjoy listening to the munshids Mu'hammad Al'husayaan and 'Abd Arra'hmaan Al'hawwaal and to the [Qura~n] Reciter Mishaari Al'afaassy,

in addition to most munshids whose beautiful creations I do value.

**• Do you remember any thing curious or funny that you encountered during your preparation or recording of your nasheeds? What brought tears to your eyes?**

A strange and curious thing happened while shooting "Farshi Atturaab". Shooting was scheduled to take place at three a.m. in A'sulaybeekhaat cemetery in Kuwait, where the time and location were both scary. I was hearing strange voices (possibly caused by wind) while I was waiting for my turn to record at eleven a.m., but very strong wind prevented us from shooting. Finally, after eight

hours of wait and fear, we had to cancel the activities. We eventually recorded the necessary scenes but inside a studio; we avoided the graveyard. That same curious situation made me cry when I was thinking about the words of that nasheed and contemplating the graves and their inhabitants lying there under rocks and dust. I was telling myself: today I can make others hear me chanting "Farshi Atturaab" and relate to them the suffering with which the poem is imbued, but tomorrow nobody will hear me and nobody will answer me back.

# DUST IS MY BED

Dust is my bed, embracing me, and is my cover.  
 The sands are around me, engulfing me from all directions.  
 And the tomb recounts [the story of] the darkness of my calamity.  
 And the light has destined that my pleasure is in meeting [Allaah].

Where is the kindness of kin? They relinquished fidelity.  
 Where are the scores of friends? They dispensed with my brotherhood.  
 Where is the bliss of money? I left it behind.  
 And where is the glory of fame and compliments?  
 That's my end; dust is my bed.

The beloved bade farewell to his love, and cried my elegy.  
 The tears flow dried out, after crying.  
 The vast universe shrank, narrowing my space.  
 The tomb to my corpse became both my land and my sky.  
 That's my end; dust is my bed.

Fear overwhelms my estrangement and sadness is my ailment.  
 Hoping for steadfastness, which is - I swear - my remedy.  
 Sincerely supplicating to the Lord; You are my hope.  
 Hoping - O Allaah - for a paradise, in which my bliss shall be attained.

Performed & composed by:  
**Mishaari Al'araadah**  
 Lyrics by: A'hmud Alkandiry  
 Directed by: 'Abd Allaah Al'hamad  
 Produced by: Gulf Media  
 Translated into English by: I-MAG



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**3rd of September, 2005**



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Caroline Lucas - MEP  
Shami Chakrabati - LIBERTY  
Eman Penny - Association of Muslim Psychologists  
Ismail Patel - author: 'Islam the choice of thinking women'  
Millena Buyum - NAAR  
Raghad Altikriti - Muslim Association of Britain  
Salma Yaqoob - RESPECT  
Sheikh Haitham Haddad - Al-Muntada Al-Islami  
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Shaykh Shabir Ally - Islamic Information Da'awah Centre TBC



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# THE KING IS DEAD

## Dirge for King Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz [Fahd Ibn 'Abd Al'azeez]

By Ibrahim Babelli [Ibraaheem Baabily]

[babelli@i-mag.org](mailto:babelli@i-mag.org)

The King is dead.

Writing a dirge for a king is not a difficult task. It suffices to list the important dates of his reign, in addition to a list of his most important accomplishments.

This dirge, however, is not about a king, for it is not concerned with the majesty of the late sovereign. This dirge is about a "Servant."

At face value, it is not as easy to write a dirge about a servant, unless of course, what this servant served was greater than the majesty of kingdoms.

The late King Fahd was not the first sovereign who was referred to as the "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques". The Ottoman Sultan Selim [Saleem] I was known as the "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" among his many titles. An inscription on the door of the Ka'bah states that this door was erected during the reign of the "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" King Khaled Ibn Abdulaziz [Kaalid Ibn 'Abd Al'azeez.] This title was bestowed upon several leaders in the past.

King Fahd official and only title was the

"Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques". This was actually a mistranslation, for his choice of title that replaced "His Majesty" was more humble than "Custodian"; it was "Servant". His title should have been translated into the "Servant of the Two Holy Mosques", the same way it was translated into French "Le Serviteur des Deux Saintes Mosquées."

But let us not dwell on semantics; what matters, in the final analysis, is the service he rendered the Holy Sites in and around Makkah and Madeenah.

In my opinion, the legacy of the late King will always be the service he rendered the Holy Sites. In a fashion similar to other past leaders of the Muslim world, the late King was directly responsible for building mosques all around the Muslim globe, and even the non-Muslim globe. In contrast to all other past leaders of the Muslim world who ruled over the Holy Sites, however, the late King's most glorious legacy was not a grand mosque that he built in the capital city of his kingdom; his legacy was the largest and most thorough service to the Holy Sites in and around Makkah and Madeenah in

the history of Islaam.

The expansion project of the Holy Mosque in Makkah, the tunnels -looking like giant wormholes- that were cut through the bellies of the granite mountains that encircle the Holy Mosque to ease the transfer of pilgrims to and from Makkah, and making available Zamzam water to everyone are great achievements by themselves. Those projects, however great, were dwarfed by the expansion project of the Holy Mosque in Madeenah; the magnitude of which is simply mind-boggling.

The service rendered by the late King was not limited to grand structures and beautiful white marble that remained cool even during the hottest summer days when pilgrims circumambulate the Holy Ka'bah. He extended the services to the visitors of the Holy Sites. He spared no efforts in his attempt to better the safety and health conditions of the pilgrims, and to make their Holy Journey as safe, serene, and spiritual as humanly possible. I could go on and on, but there is really no need to do so.

The legacy of the late King will always be that he was the "Servant of the Two



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Holy Mosques", and for that alone, I daresay, he will be remembered.

The King is dead, for death is greater even than his majesty.

The "Servant" lives, however, for what he served is greater even than death.

We pray that Allaah the Merciful accepts the services of the "Servant of the Two Holy Mosques."

# Why I Did not Observe Britain's 2-Minute Interlude

SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS HAS TO BE PRECEDED BY FAMILIAL UNCONSCIOUSNESS

By Edwin Anthony

redwind0@yahoo.com

The propensity to conduct observances such as "2-minute silences", particularly in the face of national tragedies, lies at the root of social evils that depend on nationally familial contradistinctions to exist.

The 2ms, amongst others, is a symptom of the (nation-centred) paradigmatic malaise that is necessary to realise those conditions that had culminated in the London bombings. In other words, if it was not for the perspective underlying the 2ms, the bombings might never have occurred. Ironically,

the observance of the event serves to further reinforce the paradigm necessary to ensure the escalation of this global crisis. Thus, whilst attempting to value human life through the observance of the 2ms, it reinforces the paradigmatic conditions for the further devaluation and destruction of human life. This is most pronounced in the contradiction between the slogan, "One City, One World", which aims to promote global solidarity, whilst paying its 2 minutes worth of reflection and bereavement for those considered to be "their own" - a natural corol-

lary of the nation-centred paradigm. This event, by its mass practice and the absence of significant criticism, serves as a simultaneous validation of both the naturalness of such sentiments, and consequently, the naturalness of the paradigm itself from which it, amongst other divisive practices, emerges.

Underlying this practice is a conception of the "self", appreciated in "national" terms, that is incongruent with the transnational "self" of the imperialists or bourgeoisie. The citizenry is confined within a con-

ception of the "self" that draws its attitudinal and behavioural impetus from the idea of national familialarity and patriotism whilst the imperial and bourgeois collective relies on such global human dislocation to pursue their interests abroad unhampered in any significant way from their subjects at home.

The combination of familialarity and patriotism dictate the means and methods that may be legitimately utilised in the national registration of dissatisfaction with either local or "foreign" events. In fact, the idea of



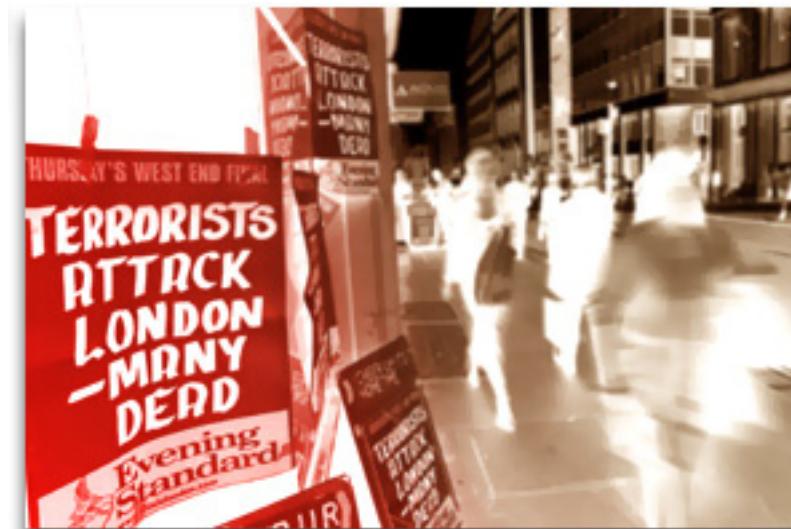
"locality" as it is understood today is itself a function of the nation-centred paradigm. This immediately installs a continuum within the nationally-confined minds that has placardism and violence occupying opposite ends. It is the degree of national familialarity with the sufferer that will determine which end of the continuum ought to dictate the attitudinal and behavioural reactions of the great brainwashed.

Thus, the nationally retarded mind depreciates the significance of the evil it confronts prior to determining the appropriateness of either placardism or violence. How can one say that she recognises the significance of an evil if she reacts differently when it occurs to one as opposed to another? Well, the nation-centred mind is most adept at performing this feat.

For instance, the use of placardistic techniques to register disapproval when local governments butcher people in "foreign" lands is deemed to be "appropriate" as these "foreigners" occupy the less familial end of the continuum dichotomising the "divine family" and the "holy family". All humanity, since that suspiciously happy time when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued, has been deemed "Holy." Human life is precious. However,

the existence of the antiquated nation-state ensures that Holiness is hierarchically subdivided in a manner not unlike the Great Chain of being in "Catholic" medieval Europe which created divisions between the terrestrial and celestial and other subdivisions that determined

the type of value that was to be legitimately apportioned between them. The "Great Chain of Being", at present, whilst illustrated in a variety of dimensions, is largely divided in a way that places a greater value, and thus, "divinity", within the local nation-state, whilst "holiness", in



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**“ THE VALUE OF EVIL CAN NEVER BE OBJECTIVELY APPRECIATED AND EFFECTIVELY COUNTERED UNLESS IT IS PRECEDED BY AN OBJECTIVE APPRECIATION OF THE VALUE OF HUMANITY REGARDLESS OF ANY ARTIFICIAL OR INCIDENTAL BOUNDARIES. ”**

respect of the U.N. Declaration, is magnanimously accorded to "the rest of" humanity. This is one of those instances that render any claims that the "church" and "state" have been separated one of the greatest lies of the era and surest signs of global naïveté. A substitution of idols is not evidence of the disappearance of the altar. Thus, in contrast to the utility of placardistic techniques, allegedly "socially conscious" "activists" would instinctively and vigorously agree that waving placards and chanting slogans in rhythm with a bongo-player in a colourful hat in a festival-like atmosphere would be highly inappropriate if it was their own nation that was being assailed by forces licensed by their counterparts in other states. In such an event, the cry goes out, "self-defence!", and the placard is hurriedly, and reflexively, cast aside for that which does more than ruffle hairs. Placardism, however, is reserved for the "holy family", who, being "foreigners", are still expected to be grateful for their placardistic and token "defence" of them even when it is their government which is subjecting them to various forms of assault.

In this we may recognise the propensity underlying the 2-minute silence. Perhaps, a "2-minute Interlude" would be a more accurate

## THE ONLY DEFENCE AGAINST “TERRORISM” IS REFRAINING FROM CAUSING HARM TO OTHERS.



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term - an “interlude” serving as a respite in the mass-sanctioned continuous butchering of “foreigners.” I say that this is mass-sanctioned because of their failure to register effective opposition as they most certainly would have if it was them who were on the smoking end of a

gun.

It is this very propensity, a natural corollary of socialisation and indoctrination within the nation-state that sees different responses – placardism vs. violence - to the same murderous action. A transcendent

sense of morality does not only distinguish right from wrong but does so in responding in a selfsame manner regardless of who the perpetrator or victim is. The value of evil can never be objectively appreciated and effectively countered unless it is preceded by an objective appreciation of the value of humanity regardless of any artificial or incidental boundaries. The failure of the allegedly “socially conscious” whom had taken part in the mass festival “opposition” to the government prior to aggression in the Middle East enabled the respective governments to do unto others that which the local populace would not have done unto to themselves by recourse to means other than placards, which at a distance, inevitably seem like the white flags of non-resistance to the government.

As I had stated initially, it is this divisive approach and the state-sponsored depreciation of the significance of evil that has enabled governments to do as they will to the nationally disparate. It is unfortunate that when we allow our servant to do harm to others, we cannot simultaneously dictate how these injured and maimed others ought to respond. Perhaps the Londoners thought that the parents of dismembered children and the children of murdered parents in the Middle East, and elsewhere, should also have availed themselves

of placards. The only defence against “terrorism” is refraining from causing harm to others. When we have adhered to this rule, and have simultaneously ensured such adherence amongst those who purport to represent our interests, than we can go on to pursue a “war on terror”, as it can only then refer to the exceptionally pathological. As this has never been significantly effected, with much thanks to the antiquated nation-state, the consternation and incredulity exhibited by Londoners, and much around the world, at the London bombings is itself deserving of consternation, incredulity and utter disgust.

Those allegedly “socially conscious” individuals straining their triceps under the weight of placards in London would do better channelling and concentrating their efforts with the aim of turning their nationally located “centre of placardistic opposition” to a globally familial “centre of effective defence.”

Till then, I’ll reserve my silent participation for those observances that bereaves the loss of life. Regardless of nationality.

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Edwin Anthony's Webiste:  
<http://the-heretic.blogspot.com>



# IDEA THAT U.S.A. IS God's Chosen IS DANGEROUS



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**By Robert Jensen\***

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"For all my flaws, I believe I have been chosen by God and commissioned by history to be the model to the world of justice and inclusion and diversity without division."

If I dared utter such words in public, people rightly would laugh at the absurdity of the claim or angrily chastise me for my arrogance, or both. On the surface, the hubris of the statement suggests I am the person least likely to be chosen by God to do anything but embarrass myself.

Yet when George W. Bush -- trying to recover from his association with the painfully public bigotry of Bob Jones University -- boldly proclaimed last week that the United States had been so chosen and commissioned, it was dutifully reported in the press without a hint of irony or sarcasm.

Forget about the obvious problems with his statement as it applies to race and ethnicity -- that those "flaws," which include a brutal history of genocide of in-

digenous people, African slavery and the legalized subordination of non-whites, and an ongoing social and economic apartheid, render the claim absurd. The deeper problem with Bush's remarks is what we might call the pathology of the anointed.

The invocation of a direct connection to God and truth is a peculiar, and particularly dangerous, feature of American history. The story we tell ourselves goes something like this:

Other nations throughout history have acted out of greed and self-interest, seeking territory, wealth and power. They often did bad things in the world. Then came the United States, touched by God, a shining city on the hill, whose leaders created the first real democracy and went on to be the beacon of freedom for people around the world. Unlike the rest of the world, we act out of a cause nobler than greed; we are both the model and the vehicle for bringing peace, freedom and democracy to the world.

That is a story that can be believed only in the United States -- and there only by a certain privileged segment of the population -- by people sufficiently

insulated from the reality of U.S. actions abroad to maintain such illusions.

But try selling the idea to the people of Guatemala, still rebuilding their country from the legacy of four decades of terror at the hands of a military government installed and funded by the United States. Try explaining the United States' chosen status to the children of Iraq, who were dying at the rate of 5,000 a month because this country continued to back the harshest economic embargo in modern history.

Try defending the thesis to the people of Vietnam, who for a decade stood up to U.S. bombs, bullets and chemical warfare because they wouldn't accept "freedom" managed by a U.S. puppet government.

The United States, in short, acts like a nation-state, and nation-states are not benevolent institutions. For much of its history, the United States also has been a great power, and the record of great powers is even less savoury. Now, as what folks like to call "the lone superpower," the future behaviour of U.S. policymakers is unlikely to suddenly become saintly.

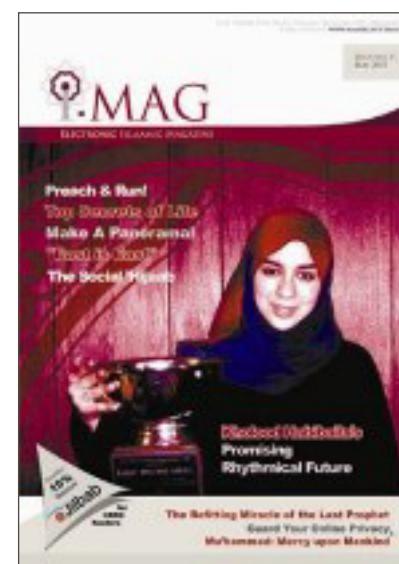
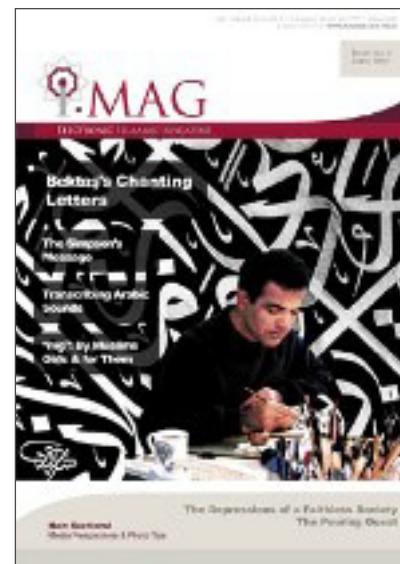
We expect individuals who proclaim

themselves chosen by God or commissioned by history either to be hucksters, cloaking themselves in a higher calling to cover crasser motives, or simply psychotic. There is no reason to think anything else when such claims are made at the level of the nation-state. It is tempting to laugh at and dismiss these rhetorical flourishes of pandering politicians, but the commonness of the chosen-by-God assertions and the lack of outrage or amusement at them suggests that the claims are taken seriously both by significant segments of the public and the politicians. Just as it has been in the past, the consequences of this pathology of the anointed will be borne not by those chosen by God, but by those against whom God's-chosen decide to take aim.

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\*Robert Jensen is a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin, a founding member of the *Nowar Collective*, and a member of the board of the *Third Coast Activist Resource Centre*. He is the author of *Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim Our Humanity*. His website: <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rjensen/home.htm>

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# AL'QURA~N:

## THE ULTIMATE OPEN-SOURCE CODE

By Ibrahim Babelli [Ibraaheem Baabilly]

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I still remember the very first time I read the user's manual of my first personal computer, which was a gift from my family following a knee surgery that I underwent at King Khaled [‘Kaalid] University Hospital in Riyadh [Riyaa'd], Saudi Arabia. That computer was a Commodore AT machine with a math-coprocessor, which was installed therein because I was taking computer-based engineering drafting classes.

I read the user's manual for the first time in bed at the hospital. I understood nothing. I read it again at home after being released from the hospital while recuperating. Once again, I understood nothing. For some reason, that manual was devoid of tutorials and examples.

I only started understanding how the system works when I started reading and applying examples. The very first command I learnt was the 'format c:' command. The expression on my brother's face was priceless when I asked him to check if I was executing the command appropriately before hitting 'return'.

The most valuable lesson I learnt from that experience was the absolute necessity of illustrative teaching, i.e., showing by way of an example how to reproduce an existing text, drawing, or a code (code refers to a multitude of lines written in a specific programming language for the purpose of performing a calculation, producing a graphic interface, or writing software; to name a few examples). I also learnt that the more complex and intricate the final product is, the more difficult it is to emulate.

A person skilled in the art of painting, for example, would not find it difficult to produce a facsimile of the Mona Lisa. This person must be very talented, adequately schooled, and should have accumulated vast experience. He would necessarily be of the same caliber as Leonardo da Vinci in order for the facsimile Mona Lisa to be identical to the original Mona Lisa.

But we have noticed over the centuries that, albeit many facsimiles of the Mona Lisa, no painting genius bothered to



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produce facsimiles of the Mona Lisa or of the frescoes adorning the famous Sistine Chapel. Genius painters paint their own masterpieces, genius musicians compose their own masterpieces, and genius physicists theorize and prove their own masterpieces; they all strive to do better and to go further.

Beethoven's ninth symphony was so powerfully beautiful, but Mozart's Requi-

em was, for many, more captivating. The General Relativity theory of Einstein with all its awe could not help but welcome the arrival of the Super Strings theory of Feynman.

For every first place prize, there are many contenders. It almost always suffices to announce the challenge in order for those who are true contenders, and even some who are not; to take on the

challenge seriously without even bothering with the trophy. Beating the challenge is, for many, is in itself its biggest trophy.

Therefore, I wonder.

I wonder why was it then so impossibly difficult to respond to a very simple challenge put forth more than fourteen hundred years ago to anyone fluent in Arabic?

"Or do they say [about the Prophet, peace be upon him], 'He invented it?' Say, 'Then bring forth a Soorah (chapter) like it (Al'qura~n) and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Al-laah, if you should be truthful.' (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Yoonus, verse 38)

The challenge is to come up with one Soorah (chapter) similar to what is found in the 'Qura~n; the language is Arabic; the style is prose; metrical sometimes but definitely not poetic; and the shortest Soorah therein is made up of only ten words.

Wow! This can't be serious.  
Or...Can it?

Arabs and others who excelled in the Arabic language have had ample chances to take a stab at responding to this challenge; after all, it has been around for more than one thousand four hundred years. Not only that, but the essence of the Soorah, any Soorah, is a composition of words that everybody knows and the Arabic style in which they, i.e., any and every Soorah, are worded is also known.

Let me reword this challenge: Here is the Arabic language that you, Arabs,



## IF NO HUMAN CAN MUSTER AN ANSWER TO THIS CHALLENGE, THEN IT IS LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT THE TEXT THAT FORMS THE BASIS FOR THIS CHALLENGE IS MIRACULOUS.

master and speak so eloquently, and are so proud of that you held annual literary fairs and Olympics; the winners of which were made immortal heroes. And here is a text in Arabic; a claim the text itself makes: "In a clear Arabic language." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Ashshu'araa-, verse 195)

So, produce one Soorah the like of which is found in Al' qura~n.

The words are the same words used by Arabs and the style is no different than their styles. The challenge does not stop at that: Those who are challenged to produce one Soorah are given more examples and more examples and yet more examples. One Soorah is made up of only ten words, while another is made up of more than one thousand. Easy examples were given and more difficult ones were given.

The challenge remains standing: "Then bring forth a Soorah like it..." Al'qura~n (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Yoonus, verse 38)

If no human can muster an answer to this challenge, then it is logical to assume that the text that forms the basis for this challenge is miraculous. It is collectively a miracle.

But, what a strange and extraordinary miracle this one is!

Miracles involve three types of action. The first type is fundamentally and logically impossible to humans, such as changing Moses' rod into a living serpent, i.e., bringing life to what is fundamentally lifeless.

The second action is beyond human ability of the contemporary people of the prophet who performed the miracle, but may be, logically arguing, feasible in the future. Parting the Red Sea is, theoretically, possible by applying an appropriately strong electric field to repel the water where the parting is desired. The energy required for such a gigantic electric field would, seemingly, be unavailable to humans unless they can plug their power supply into the sun directly. Put differently, the second type of action is logically possible but practically impossible or close, especially to the people to whom miracles that involved this second type of action were produced. One could, in principle, walk on water with suitably chosen magnetic levitation devices, but the technology to do that was, and still is, very far off.

The third type of miraculous action was within human capacity at the time of

the prophet and thereafter, and it is this particular type of action that makes its miracle so unique. The only example of the last type is Al'qura~n.

The miracle that became the legacy of the Prophet of Islam is made up of simple building blocks with known assembly instructions. Many of the chronicles found therein were previously known and some were new. The length of text that formed distinct chapters of Al'qura~n varied considerably to make it diverse enough for any serious attempt at emulating; had emulation been possible.

That uniqueness, that impressive and strange uniqueness of this miracle; should give anyone reflecting carefully on this matter some serious goose bumps. On one hand, all previous miracles were mysteries to the observers; they knew not how they were produced. People watched in awe and, some, in reverence. On the other hand, there is one sole miracle that stands alone in its openness and lack of mysteries behind it.

Not too many IT specialists know how to write the code of Windows XP due to its closed nature, but any IT specialist who wishes to learn and expand Linux could. The latter is an open-source code. You can produce one like it, or even a better one.

You cannot do the same with the Ultimate Open-Source Code that makes up Al'qura~n.

The challenge stands; it makes the fabric of the final and eternal miracle.

# WOMEN Inheritance IN ISLAAM

By Machael Alfayez\* [Masha'a'il Alfaayiz]

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Inventing a lie and repeating it very often results in those who invented it believing it. And by continuously bolstering the invented lie with more lies, the origin of the story becomes so hazy that it would take a real expert, armed with unwavering integrity, to sift through the rubble of the shattered myths; and only then the truth will reveal itself.

The truth we are talking about here is the issue of women inheritance in Islaam.

If I were to defend a loosing cause, just because I happen to sympathise with this cause, then I would spare no flow of eloquence to win you over, fellow reader. But I need not do this, for fact speaks louder than eloquent myths.

In pre-Islaamic Arabia, those who fought and won the spoils of war were eligible for inheritance. Women, therefore, in addition to children and old men who could not fight in battle were denied any share in the patrimony. The rationale was: How could money be given to

those who cannot protect it. Ibn 'Abbaas narrated: "The custom [in old days] was that the property of the deceased would be inherited by his [male] offspring; as for the parents (of the deceased), they would inherit [only] by the will of the deceased." (Albu'kaary)

Islaam annulled this practice once and for all. Allah ordained in the 'Qura~n: "For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much – an obligatory share." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Annisaa-, verse 7) It is of great significance to note that the laws of inheritance make up the only chapter in Islaamic jurisprudence that is based completely on verdicts elaborated explicitly in the 'Qura~n. Except in a couple of situations, which were addressed very early on by the second Caliphate 'Umar, the statute laws of inheritance, which described all permutations and possibilities, were not left open to human interpretation. The Supreme Legislator ordained the laws of

inheritance and fixed them, thus curtailing any possible attempt at depriving the weaker inheritor, normally being female, from her share in inheritance; and no interpretation or reassessment would be admissible: case closed.

Another interesting aspect of the statute laws of inheritance is that they, i.e., the laws, mandated that heirs with fixed shares must receive their fixed shares prior to the distribution of the patrimony between the remaining inheritors. The overwhelming majority of the fixed shares inheritors are heiresses, such as the mother, sister(s) without brother(s), daughter(s) without son(s), and granddaughter(s). The father and the husband are the only males with fixed shares in the inheritance. This approach guaranteed that no matter how many inheritors there are, the relatives with fixed shares are guaranteed their shares in the patrimony.

Take for example the following scenario: A man is survived by his mother, wife, daughter and brothers. His daughter



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inherits half the patrimony, his mother one sixth, his widow one eighth, and the remaining sum is divided equally between his brothers. The inheritors with fixed shares, all being heiresses here, received their guaranteed shares prior to distributing the remaining portion of the patrimony among the brothers.

Before we discuss the issue of women inheritance in Islaam, it would help to shed some light on the categories of heirs according to Islaamic jurisprudence.

- 1- Heirs with fixed shares: The offspring, spouse, and parents of the deceased all have fixed shares in the patrimony, as prescribed in the 'Qura~n.
- 2- Heirs with analogous inheritance:

When all the heirs with fixed shares have received their shares of the patrimony, and when there is nobody else (from the list given below) to inherit, the remaining portion of the patrimony is divided once again as per the distribution of the fixed shares.

3- Agnates: Male relations, for the most part, receive, according to set rules, the remaining portion of the patrimony, after distributing the fixed shares.

4- Heirs through allegiance: Manumission (during the times when slavery was still practiced) was encouraged to gradually eradicate slavery. As a bonus, whatever remained from the patrimony after distributing the fixed shares was given to the former slave owner who had set free the deceased former slave, when there would be nobody else to inherit other than the former slave owner.

5- Heirs through kinship: Relatives through maternal side of the deceased would inherit whatever remains after distributing the fixed shares, if there were no agnates living at the time of patrimony distribution.

Now that we have discussed the different types of inheritance, let us see how heiresses fare according to Islaamic law.

Generally speaking, only one inheritance statute law is ever quoted by critiques of Islaam, which allots to the daughter of the deceased half of what her brother inherits. I am not denying that this is truly the statute law of inheritance in this particular case, but this is not the only scenario. Let us entertain the following scenarios and use the statute laws of inheritance to distribute the patrimony:

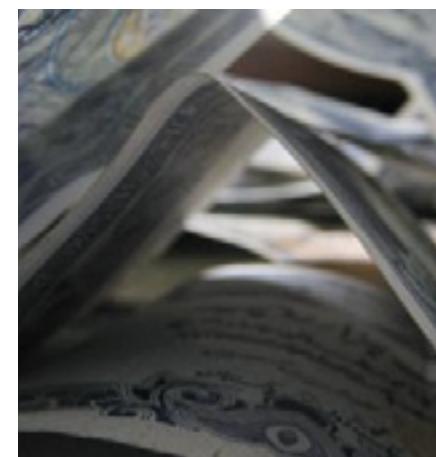
I. A man is survived by one son and one daughter. The daughter inherits one third of the patrimony whereas the son inherits two thirds.

II. A woman is survived by her daughter, husband and father. The daughter inherits half of the patrimony, the husband one fourth and the father what remains.

III. A man is survived by his daughter, a full sister, and a half brother from the father's side. The daughter inherits half of the patrimony and the full sister the remaining half. The half brother is blocked from inheritance by the full sister.

IV. A man is survived by his mother, a full brother, a half brother, and a half sister both from the mother's side. His mother inherits one sixth of the patrimony, the half brother and the half sister divide between themselves one third, and the full brother inherits the remaining portion of the patrimony which amounts to one half.

We have seen above four different



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statute laws for women inheritance. The first, which happens to be the most well known, is when the woman inherits half of her brother's share. In the second case, her inheritance is double that of the male heirs. In the third case, the full sister blocked the half brother from any inheritance. And in the fourth case, both the half brother and half sister shared equally one third of the patrimony.

Since the share of women inheritors differs significantly from one case to the other, then what is the rationale behind allotting half the share of their male counterpart in certain inheritance scenarios? Upon closer inspection, we find that in all cases of inheritance where the woman inherits half of the share of her male equal, the male equal is legally responsible for the sustenance of the woman in question. When the father of the deceased inherits twice as much as the mother, he has to provide for her, and she is under no obligation whatsoever to partake in any spending. The same applies when a full brother inherits twice as much as the full sister of a deceased. The brother is legally responsible for the sustenance of his sister, and she has no financial obligation whatsoever neither towards him nor towards herself.

The woman's share is hers alone, but the share of her male equal is not his alone; he has to provide for his female co-inheritor.

We mentioned earlier that there are a couple of exceptional cases in which the second Caliph, 'Umar, resolved a

dispute among the scholars with respect to two inheritance scenarios.

Those two scenarios are:

- 1- A man is survived by a widow, a mother and a father. His widow takes one fourth of the patrimony, his mother one third of the remaining three quarters, and the rest belong to the father.
- 2- A woman is survived by a wife, a mother and a father. The widower takes half of the patrimony, his mother one third of the remaining half, and the father takes what remains.

In both scenarios given above, the point of contention was that if the mother were to take one third of what remains after the spouse of the deceased receives his/her share, then the fixed share statute law of the mother's inheritance is violated. Ibn 'Abbaas (the Prophet's cousin) and one of the most respected scholars of Islaam opposed this opinion and insisted on the mother receiving the fixed share allotted to her.

The argument in favor of the distribution according to the second Caliph 'Umar is that the mother has no financial obligations but the father does, and since both inherit from the deceased son/daughter then the person who is responsible for the sustenance of both should have a larger share.

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# THE OTHERS WHO HATES WHO?

**By Hicham Maged [Hishaam Maajid]**

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*“Only two things are infinite; the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not sure about the former.”*

This is one of Albert Einstein’s famous quotes with which I totally agree; as I found it still valid for describing the current situation of humanity despite the fact that it was said since more than fifty years ago.

During the last decade, the western media used its propaganda arm to single out Islaam as the future enemy of the western culture. The varied audience, however, did not attempt to pause for some time and to reflect on the truth behind this propaganda.

Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, a stereotypical image of Muslims in the western media became very simple: as long as you, the man, are breaded or as long as you, the woman, are veiled, then you are simply a terrorist, no matter what!

In this article I am just trying to speak up, in a loud voice, so excuse

me if anyone hears this loud voice while reading.

Sometime you can not find anything better than shouting loud so the people can hear your voice, especially today in the midst of the noise of globalisation which I think has already exceeded 220 decibel.

First of all, terrorism is definitely something not acceptable from any normal person worldwide. From my own point of view, I consider terrorists – whomever they are and wherever they live – to be people with dark and black souls without the light of faith or, put better, without the Light of Allaah.

Terrorism has no religion or race; it is all about the ugly face of some sick and miserable human creatures, no matter who they are.

I never defend Islaam; simply because Islaam is much greater than any words to defend, and obviously Islaam – as a system – does not require any kind of defence.

Islaam – as the last message from Allaah to mankind via the last prophet Mu’hammad – came to make life better for mankind via the mission of urbanising the Earth.

## So, What Is the Problem?

I believe that the problem has two faces which can’t be ignored:

1. First is how Muslims themselves apply Islaam. I elaborated this point in an earlier article that appeared in I-MAG’s third issue under the title “Islaam: Between Ideology and Application.”
2. And second is the way Westerns perceive Islaam.

Ok, I am not that kind of person who hides behind a global conspiracy theory against Muslims; even if I can not deny that it partially exists. However, I can reasonably not blame everything on such a conspiracy

Meanwhile I cannot ignore the other side of the coin; as I see very clearly that there is a significant misunderstanding of Islaam and hence its reduction into some wrong acts that are not related to real Islaamic values in addition to totally ignoring Muslims’ own culture and identity. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, the problems with this perception started getting bigger and bigger without bothering to reserve some time to see where the real truth is. The actions that westerns wrongly attributed to Islaam and Muslims, reflecting

the their deep misunderstanding of Islaam, and their actions vacated the playground to other players who successfully abused the misconceptions westerns have against Islaam until the situation exploded in the faces of everyone.

**Sub’haan Allaah! (Glorify Allaah)**  
How can I reduce Islaam to random acts of terror and totally ignore the real concept of Islaam?!

Where was the West when Egypt – for example – was facing real terrorism during the past decade while other people were simply watching?! Why is it that random acts of terror are highlighted while other benevolent acts from Muslims – worldwide – that reflect the real image of Islaam are totally ignored?!

That is simply unfair!  
I really believe that the package of unjust actions from the westerns against Muslims – which started long time ago and increased after September 11<sup>th</sup> – offered terrorists – whomever they are – a golden opportunity to hide behind the curtains of ignorance and pin everything bad on Islaam.

Such unjust actions include ignoring Muslims’ culture and identity, not trying to understand real Islaam, forcing changes among them and finally wrong definition or, put better, the confusion between the unlawful act of “terrorism” and the lawful act

of “resistance”.

This package leads to the wrong stereotypical image that we all see today; as any bearded person involved in a terrorist attack worldwide would immediately be pronounced Muslim even if it is discovered later that it was something carried out by E.T.A .or I.R.A., for example.

I am not generalising because I do not like this type of discourse. It is very, very, very easy to generalise and pass a judgement that all westerns are bad people because of the pornography for example. Generalising is very easy because it draws people away from bothering themselves looking for the truth.

I did not deny that Muslims have their own problems, however those problems cannot simply be solved by applying external pressure by other people who do not even know about our culture and identity, and who simply imagine that force will make people change to the better

No way! The contrast will happen simply because each part of the world has its own culture and its own local identity, which include various contexts that can only be understood and updated by the people of the community, i.e., by themselves.

I definitely know that utopia is not found on earth; I, however, really believe that there are always meeting points for different cultures simply because we all descended from one unique progenitor, whose Creator is Allaah, so definitely we have common parts in between.

Since the dawn of history, cultures flourished on earth in a process of succession. We had the old Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Roman, and Arab/Islamic. Today we have the western culture. In the future we will have another one because this is the way of life: succession not collision.

People are called upon to communicate and interact with each other in a better way than what I see today in order to find better solutions for the real problems that humanity faces, such as poverty, child abuse, women abuse, sexual abuse, drugs, global warming, terrorism, which are but a sample of what we are facing.

### Just a Thought:

Imagine that one day we would be visited by guests from beyond the space frontiers, and they take a guided tour through different parts of this planet and they see the situation of humans who are supposed to live on this planet. They will, most certainly, be utterly surprised by all those contradictions and conflicts currently found on planet earth.

### Final Words:

Islaam is a great system which was - and still is - capable of dealing with people no matter what. Muslims make up a global community of various and rich cultures which represents now 25% of the earth population. And as Muslims seek to understand Westerns better, I think Westerns too must try their best to understand Islaam and Muslims before dealing with them in a manner that really reflects total misunderstanding of Islaam.

Look at this example: Assume that I am going to visit India, so obviously I'll look for an Indian person/source to learn more about India; I will not ask a Mexican for example.

### People can learn more about Islaam via:

- Reading the Holy 'Qura~n in addition to thousands of fair books that talk about Islaam. I wonder why do people read about anti-Islaam and do not read about Islaam itself! Sub'haan Allaah again.
- Visiting Internet sites that offer real information about Islaam and not stopping at the anti-Islaam ones Again I wonder why do people visit anti-Islamic sites and do not visit sites which talk about Islaam itself! Sub'haan Allaah for the third time.
- Visiting various Islamic centres that are found worldwide.
- Interacting with Muslims to learn more about Islaam.

Anyway, mass media in order for it to be fair – everywhere – are required to introduce things the way they really are, positives and negatives, for any and every people and race.



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### Quotes:

- “To build may have to be the slow and laborious task of years. To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day.”
- “The power of man has grown in every sphere, except over himself.”
- “A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject.”  
*Sir Winston Churchill*

- “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”  
*Martin Luther King Jr.*

# The Smelliest Plant on the PLANET



By Ali A. Naser [Ali Naa'sir]

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The biggest flower in the world is blooming, causing a most incredible stink!

Known as a Titan Arum, this extremely rare botanical freak, shown below, has been planted in a giant pot within the lush depths for the Humid Tropics Biome.



The Titan originates within the tropical rainforests of Sumatra,

Indonesia, where it is also known as the corpse flower because of its putrid stench. It is a distant cousin of the lilies known as lords and ladies found in British hedgerows.



The Titan flower stands at a mighty 222 cm ( just over 7ft 4in)

Visitors have been flocking to see this wonder of the plant world, but were warned that when it fully blossoms, it would give off a sickening odor.

The plant (Latin name is *amorphophallus titanium*) is distinguished



Botany graduate students measure the temperature of Titan Arum

by its yellow, fleshy spike known as a spadix. This is wrapped in a single cream leaf which, when opened, reveals a deep crimson inside.

When it is ready to attract pollinators, the spike heats up and gives off the smell which revolts humans but is very alluring to insects. It then develops a fruit which attracts birds.

Tim Gregg, the gardener who has lovingly nurtured Eden's Titan from a small tuber, said: "It is famous for

its sheer size, shape and revolting smell. This has been likened to dead rats, decaying fish and burnt sugar."

A rare corpse flower (titan arum) bears a blooming in the botany greenhouse.



Paul Berry, director of the University of Wisconsin- Madison Herbarium, manually pollinates the Titan Arum after its spathe opened up. Berry cut a hole in the base of the spathe to access the female flowers, then used pollen shipped from a second Titan Arum

The other wonder is that the Titan Arum blooms only two or three times during an average 40-years life span.

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# WHAT IS ISLAAM

**By Muhammad Abdul Wahid** [Muhammad 'Abd Alwaa'hid]

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Islaam is an Arabic word. People residing in Western countries may not know the exact meaning and exact denotation of the word "Islaam". So I would like to talk about: "What is Islaam?"

The beautiful world, which we see around us, carries in its bosom the testimony that it is the creation of a Great Creator. The existence of order and design in the universe, which modern science teaches us, leads to the belief in the existence of a Supreme Power; a Supreme Intelligence that is responsible for this complex but orderly design. The Supreme One brought this universe into existence and provided it with all that it needed for life and

growth.

The universe, as it is described in science, is an organic whole; of which all of its parts are beautifully and harmoniously interrelated. It is further a domain in which every particle exists and moves following a prescribed and immutable law. Neither the huge planets that swim in space nor the tiny particles of sand that lie scattered on the seashores can deviate even slightly from that course. Their life is a complete life of submission to the laws of nature in the language of science, and to the laws of God in the language of religion. So, really speaking, their life is the life of Islaam, which means

submission and obedience to divine commands. Submission is acceptance of God's commands. Obedience means putting God's commands into practice. These both bring peace. That is why Islaam also means peace. The holy 'Qura~n' mentions this truth in the following words:

"While all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, bowed to His Will (accepted Islaam), and to Him shall they all be brought back." (The Holy 'Qura~n', chapter of A~l 'Imraan, verse 83)

The sole exception to the general rule is man. He is unique in the whole domain of creation in as much as he possesses not only the faculty of reasoning but also his free will. This makes his course of action and the pattern of his behaviour unpredictable. You can predict the action of the sun because it functions under an immutable law and possess no freedom to deviate from it, but you cannot do this same thing in the case of man. The activity of all things in the universe is mechanical; not so of man.

Man can choose his ends and he can prescribe the means. For this purpose he relies on his reason, and because of that also, he commits mistakes. By reasoning, he will achieve great things, but ultimately reason could take him to confusion. The same faculty, which is his asset, can become the instrument

of his undoing if he puts it to wrong use. The human intellect has its limits. It can serve efficiently to some extent in the domain of the physical reality but when it enters the realm of fundamental truth where the first requirement is the possession of a comprehensive knowledge of the past, the present and the future, it can give him only conjectures and inference.

In its very nature, man's intellect is incapable of discovering ultimate truths of life. The human soul is, however, dead earnest to learn those ultimate truths because without them the real meaning of life remains unexplained and the true code of human endeavour remains unfixed.

Science cannot supply us with that, because it deals only with the immediate physical reality; philosophy cannot give it either because it works on postulates and inference.

It is the stage where the human soul cries for guidance from the Great beyond the unknown. Humanity needs sure and comprehensive guidance and the same loving Creator who created us and sustains the universe in the matter of physical needs has also taken it upon Himself to supply this vital need of learning the truth.

Human history bears witness to the fact that religion has existed since the beginning of life of humanity in this earth. This shows that the Beneficent

God provided mankind with guidance immediately upon their creation, so that they would not have to grope in the dark and that they would conform with the law. Those who are appointed by God to deliver that message and guidance are known in the religious terminology as prophets, messengers and apostles. They (peace be upon all of them) received that guidance in the form of divine revelation and when they presented it to the people in a written form it was known as the scriptures or revealed books. The contents of those scriptures have always been laws, which the Creator and Sustainer of the universe had appointed for the right life of man.

The aim of guidance had always been to teach man to submit to the divine law; an attitude expressed in Arabic by the term "Islaam". God wants man to act and behave in accordance with the law in his true nature as a free being, when the rest of creation conforms to the laws of nature in a mechanical way. In simple words we can say that divine guidance wants us to be Muslims. Allaah (God) says in the Holy 'Qura~n:

"Allaah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Arroom, verse 30)

This guidance from Allaah was not

meant only for one group or community but was sent to all nations and races of the world. The blessing of Allaah was bestowed universally, as the Holy 'Qura~n says:

"...and there never was a people,

forgotten. Among those whose names are still remembered are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them). And the last of them was Mu'hammad, peace be upon him. The great prophet, Mu'hammad,



\* Photographs by Majed S.I. Ali, from iqta.com

without a warner having lived among them (in the past)." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Faa'tir, 24)

History has preserved the names of some of the warers while the names and works of many others have been

(peace be upon him) received the revelation in the seventh century of the Christian era, called humanity back to the path of the former prophets and presented to the world the 'Qura~n which contains the law taught by the former prophets in its perfect and most comprehensive form. People had

named the teachings of the previous teachers as Judaism and Christianity. The last prophet, Mu'hammad, (peace be upon him) reminded them of the real and original and meaningful name: Islaam. He declared in the words of Allaah in the Holy 'Qura~n:

"The religion before Allah is Islam." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of A'l 'Imraan, verse 19)

That is the surrender to His will and guidance. Then again Almighty Allaah says:

"...it is the faith of your father Abraham. It is He Who has named you Muslims." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Al'haj, verse 78)

Again Allaah more emphatically says:

"Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian; but he was true in Faith, and bowed his will to Allah's (which is Islam), and he joined not gods with Allaah." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of A'l 'Imraan, verse 67)

The final prophet of Allaah raised religion from the level of sectarianism and taught that the divine religion wherever found and whoever preached it had always been Islaam which, as has already emphasized in this article, means submission to and conformity with the laws appointed by Allaah.

# Oh CIVILISED WORLD!

A TYRANNISED PALESTINIAN CRY IN EXILE



By Lutfi Zaghlul\* [Lu'tfy Za'glool]  
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Translation from Arabic by:  
Kholood Habiballa [Kulood 'Habeeb Allaah]



## Oh Civilised World!

I appeal to your conscience in hopes  
that you may hear me,  
In hopes that you may fathom the  
length of my sadness and my de-  
spair.

I am a human being, like all other  
humans!

I used to have a country too,  
I used to have land, and a home,  
In which love was like a sun,  
Brightening my days and my nights,  
In which hope in the future used to  
colour my days.

And on that black day,  
Undeserving to even be counted in  
the history of humankind,  
A black storm violently uprooted me,  
Throwing me into the hell of exile...  
Without land , without home, with-  
out love, without hope.  
Into days without sunlight.

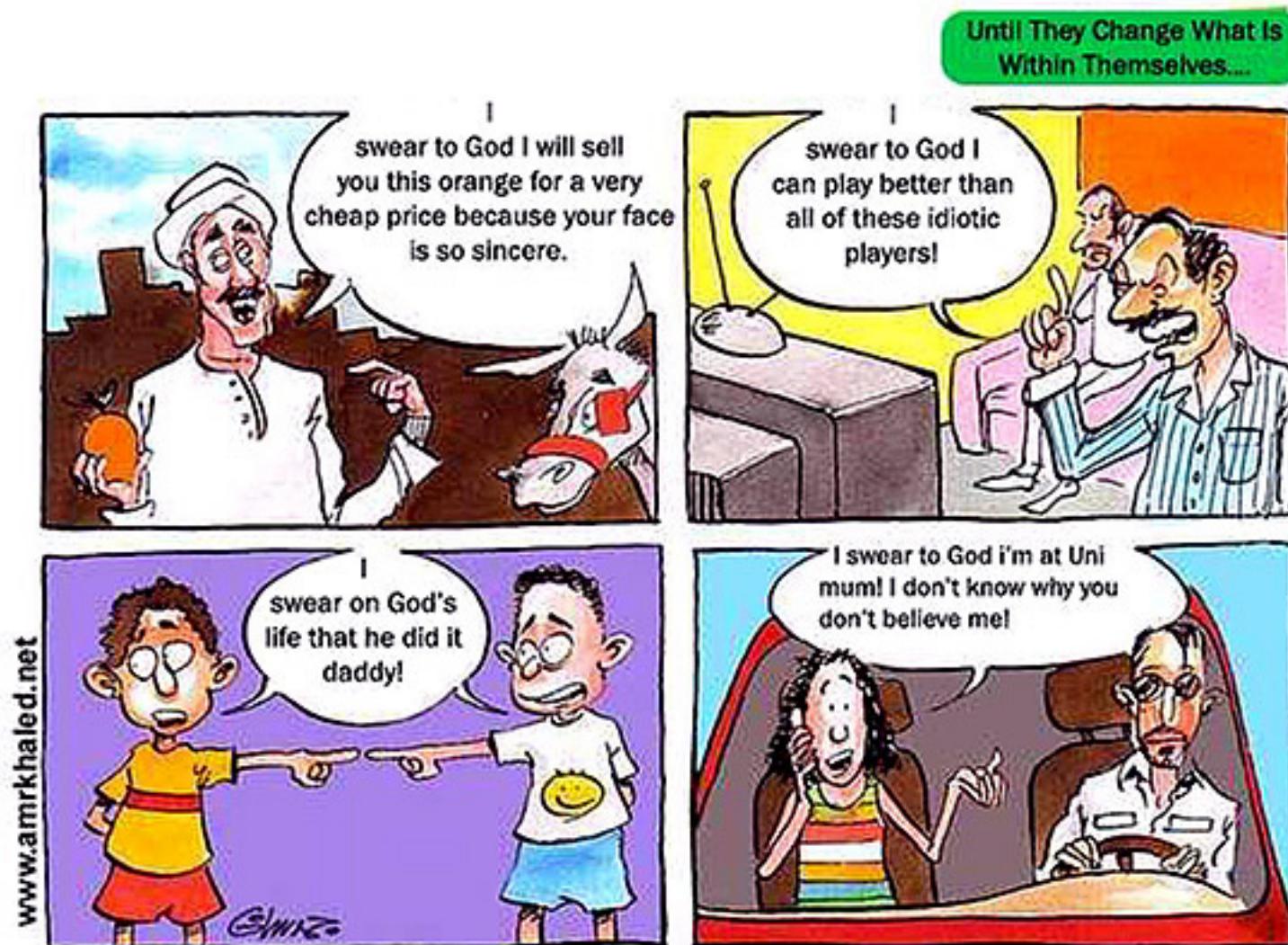
Oh Civilised World!  
Do not be so harsh on me.

My children are in the heart of a  
heartless storm,  
Whose age is a sole chapter of end-  
less misery,  
Do not interpret their dreams the  
way the devil wishes.

Oh Civilised World!  
I long to have a country and a land  
and a home,  
Where days are filled with the sun's  
laughter,  
And where moons swim in the  
twilight.  
I long for a world coloured with love  
and hope,  
I long to meet all of my loved ones  
On a handful of earth that used to  
be mine,  
So that I may feel like a human be-  
ing  
In this "civilised" world.  
Oh Civilised World!

---

\*Lutfi Zaghlul is a Palestinian poet.  
His website:  
<http://www.lutfi-zaghlul.com/>



The first defence line: To sacrifice Allah's name by swearing by His name to get out of a bad situation.

Cartoon by Mohamed Sami (samistudio.com), published in amrkhaled.net and translated by daralsialmlive.com  
Republished in I-MAG in cooperation with Daralsialmlive.com

samistudio  
com

# 'Hijaab Scrutinised

## MEN'S HIJAB: JUSTICE NOT EQUALITY

By Hayat Alyaqout [Hayaat Alyaa'qoot]

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*In this series, Hayat Alyaqout scrutinises the 'hijaab and touches upon several themes such as the religious authenticity of the 'hijaab, the overlap between the 'hijaab as a religious practice and the 'hijaab as a social practice, how men have their own 'hijaab too, and the philosophy of the 'hijaab in relation to the social notion of beauty. In this part, she talks how men have their own 'hijaab if things are taken from justice not equality point of view.*

Do you remember the proverb that says "handsome is as handsome does"? Have you ever wondered why is there not a comparable proverb such as "beautiful is as beautiful does"?

Pick up a name of a well-known supermodel and ask a group of men if they feel attracted to her. The answer, I guess, is known. Now tell them she is not very smart and she is also a chatterbox. Would what they think change? Most likely no. Now do the same with a group of ladies, and you will find that their answers will range between "It depends on many things", "I have to meet him", and in the worst case "maybe." Now add some details such as that he is a miser or not very brave and get ready to receive your punishment from the angry ladies for wasting their time.

I am not trying here to make fun of men or say that they can be easily

(Part 3 of 4)



© Photograph by muidlatif from www.sxc.hu

fooled by looks (although they do most, if not all, of the time!). I am only trying to draw attention to a rule of thumb, viz. that men and women are different when it comes to the weight they give to the looks of the other sex. To be more scientific, David Wilson (a biologist from Binghamton University, U.K.) conducted a study in which he asked individuals to tell how "good-looking" people are according to their photographs. The photographs were of people known and unknown to the individuals tested. The study revealed that knowing the person previously affects the rating. In the case of women, it was found that "personality had a much greater effect on women's perception

of good looks than men." (The Guardian, April 22, 2004).

One of the ladies deemed that an average looking man was "extremely ugly", it later appeared that the lady knows the "foul-mouthed jerk" person, as she described him, which tells us that to women, attraction to the other sex is a mental rather than a physical one.

Now what does this have to do with the 'hijaab?

First of all, in Islaam each sex has a dress code, women when seen by men (other than their close relatives) are supposed to cover themselves in

## "HANDSOME IS WHO HANDSOME DOES," BUT IS IT EVER "BEAUTIFUL IS WHO BEAUTIFUL DOES"?

undescriptive clothes with the exception of the face and hands. Men on the other hand, when seen by women, have to cover the area between the knees and the navel. The dress code becomes also more sophisticated when it forbids men of wearing silk and gold; two things associated with women, making sure that men do not become women and women do not become men, thus safeguarding each sex's identity. Another aspect of the dress code in Islaam is the forbiddance of "libaas ash-shuhrah", which literally translates as the dress of fame. The dress of fame is a symbol of both extravagance and austerity; a too fancy dress or a too ragged dress are both forbidden if dressed for the sake of attracting people's attention and boasting that the person is rich or is ascetic. Therefore, an identical dress worn by two persons can be lawful in one case and forbidden in another, depending on the person's intention.

Since it is clear that men are attracted to what is physical while women tend to create a mental image of the personality in the first place, then the dress code of each sex should be different. Women, then, have a lot to cover, but having understood the psychology of males, this does not seem strange at all. Karl Marx once said "from each, ac-

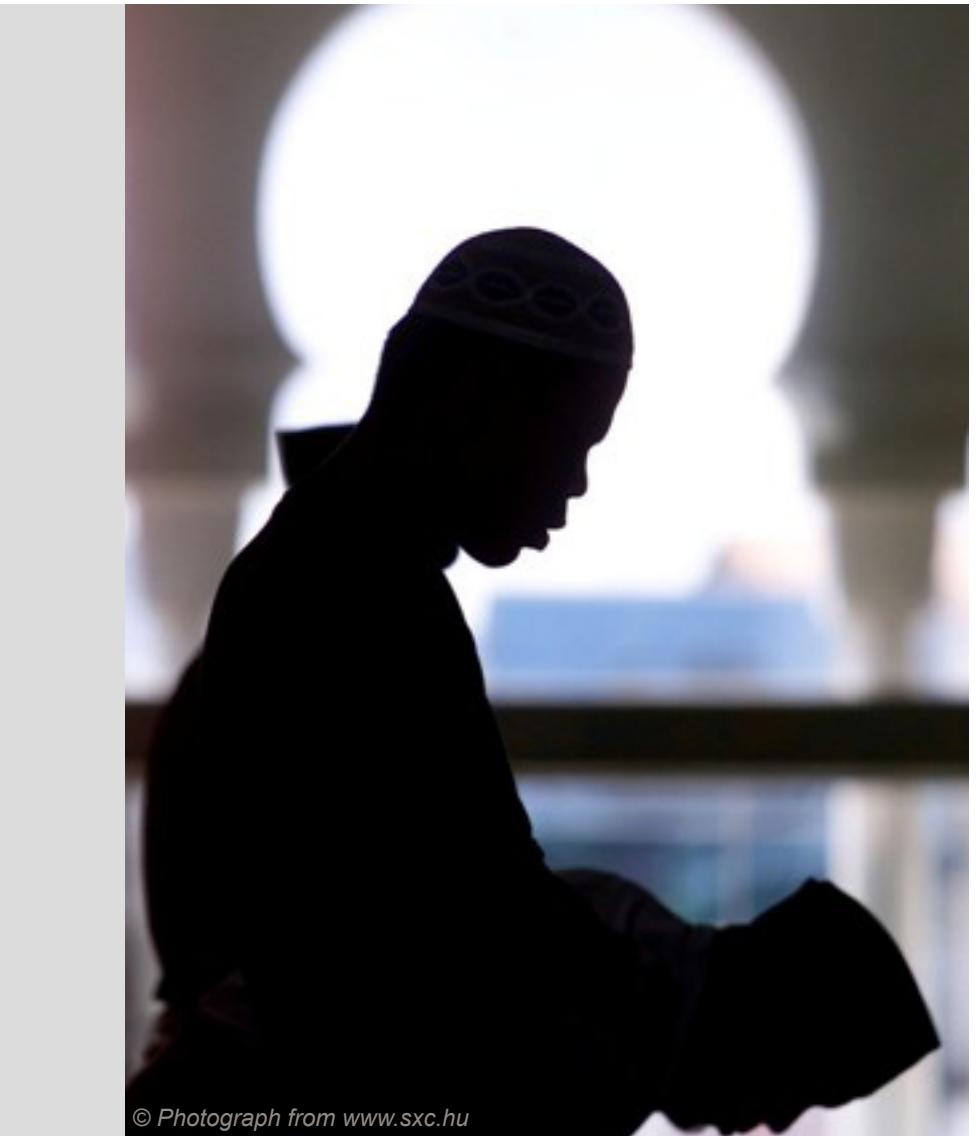
cording to his ability; to each, according to his need"? Since each sex was given what suits it, then this is sheer justice, since justice is not always about equality but about catering for each side's individuality.

So, for those who said that men do not have a 'hijaab, the answer is that they certainly do not wear the 'hijaab literally, but are treated according to their needs, and the 'hijaab is about justice, so they have their own 'hijaab. (You need to explain here further. I am afraid the meaning is still not crystal clear).

Mind you that the "good looks" I am talking about here is not about looking nice or presentable which is a thing Islaam urges and commands us to do; looking "attractive" to the other sex is what I am talking about. And that is why a woman is asked to cover her body, which is sexually attractive, and is not asked to cover her face, which is "beautiful" but is not a lust igniter. This idea will be discussed in the next issue in shaa- Allaah.

### In the Next Issue:

Part 4: The Beauty of Hijab in Concealing "Beauty"



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# ARABS, MUSLIMS and the NAZI GENOCIDE OF THE JEWS



**By Abdelwahab Elmessiri\*** [‘Abd Alwahhaab Almisseery]

It is important that we, as Arabs - both Muslims and Christians -, examine our position towards the Nazi genocide of the Jews. As Muslims and Christians, our stance is incontrovertibly clear. Our religions (Islaam, Christianity and Judaism) all contain strong prohibitions against murder. The 'Qur'a~n says, "... that whosoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land, it is as if he had slain mankind entirely." (The Holy 'Qur'a~n, chapter of Almaa-idah, verse 32) The West has attempted to taint Arab history with the Nazi crime as a way of justifying implanting the Zionist settler state at the centre of the Arab World, in order to compensate the Jews for the injustices they suffered within the Western cultural formation and the geographical boundaries of Europe. Zionist propaganda, with Western collaboration, employs certain fundamental techniques to accomplish this.

Firstly, Zionist propaganda portrays Arab resistance to the Zionist invasion of Palestine as a form of direct or indirect support for Nazi genocide, on the grounds that the resistance sometimes hampered the entrance of Jewish immigrants into Palestine. This argument is entirely baseless. The Arab resistance was not directed against immigrants in need of refuge; it was directed against settlers who had come to usurp the land and expel its native inhabitants. Many settlers came under Western flags and received the support of the British

mandate government (as well as support from the Nazis themselves, a point to which we will return below) at a time when many countries of the West had closed their doors to Jewish refugees. However the Zionists acted towards the original inhabitants (with unreserved Western support), the right to resist them was and remains a legitimate human right, indeed a duty incumbent upon every human being who reveres humanity. Men and women's fight against oppression will always be an indication of their dignity, their greatness and their humanity.

Zionist propaganda is also quick to depict several Arab leaders as Nazi sympathizers. This is another myth. Most Arab governments during the war sided with the Allied powers (since in any case the Arab World fell within their colonial sphere). Moreover, Nazi racist theory put the Arabs and Muslims on a par with the Jews. Therefore, any putative alliance there might have been would have been as pragmatic and temporary as that between Hitler and Stalin. Any sympathy for the Nazis on the part of certain Arab leaders and of certain segments of the Arab public was not motivated by hatred for the Jews nor by any love for the Nazis, but by hostility towards British colonial rule and Zionist colonisation. In all events, it was a naive sympathy, uninformed, lacking adequate knowledge of the nature of the Nazi project, its grounding in Western imperial culture and the extent of its racist contempt for Muslims and Arabs. In no way was

such sympathy as existed translated into active participation in the Nazi crime, which remained throughout a properly and exclusively Western phenomenon.

These Western and Zionist aspersions do not alter the geographical, historic, moral, religious and humanitarian facts. Nazi genocide was never a part of Arab or Muslim history. The Arabs and Muslims did not taint their hands with the blood of the Nazis' victims, whether Jews, Slavs or Gypsies. Rather, these attempts to distort the Arab and Muslim image ultimately demonstrate the extent to which the West is consistent with itself. In doing penance for the crime of genocide committed in Germany, it is perpetuating a no less atrocious crime against the Arab World.

Whenever the Muslims and Arabs did come into direct contact with the fact of Nazi genocide, their actions were above reproach. The Muslims in Bulgaria, for example, were very active in protecting Jewish groups from persecution, and King Hussein V of Morocco refused to hand over his Jewish subjects to the Vichy government in France.

In the course of my research for the Encyclopaedia of Jews, Judaism and Zionism, I was surprised to find how frequently the word "Muselmann" (Muslim) appeared in the Auschwitz concentration camp lists. According to one source, the victims who were led off to the gas chambers were called "aliens" and according to

other sources, "Muselmann". In the Encyclopaedia Judaica, I came across the following entry:

"Muselmann (Muslim in German) was a commonly used term in the concentration camps, used to refer to the prisoners who were on the brink of death, that is to say those who began to show the final symptoms of starvation, disease, mental apathy and physical weakness. The term was primarily used in Auschwitz, but was also used in other camps."

We see here an epitome of one central dimension of the Western mentality. Whenever it destroys its victims it perceives them as "other," and the other, since the time of the Crusades, has always been the Muslim. In the Middle Ages, moreover, Muslims and Jews were closely linked in the Western mind. One can find, for instance, many paintings which portray the Prophet flogging Christ.

The Nazi experience is an authentic product of this Western mindset. The Nazis were the standard bearers of this vision. They epitomised the Western confrontation with the oriental civilisation closest to Europe: the Islamic civilisation. They never forgot this burden, even when annihilating millions of inhabitants of Europe. The connotation of the term "Muselmann" was simply extended to include the "other" in general, whether Slavs, Jews or Gypsies (as has occurred in a similar manner with the word "Arab"

in Zionist discourse). The writer of the preceding entry in the Encyclopaedia Judaica attempted to explain how this term came into currency in the camps. The Nazis' victims, he said, would crouch cross-legged in the "oriental" manner and the expression on their faces would be wooden, as lifeless as a mask. One notes that the writer, in his definition, made no attempt to avoid the customary Western stereotype of Muslims. He simply substituted the word "oriental" for "Muselmann".

The term "Muselmann" as applied to the victims of the Nazi gas chambers brings to the fore two issues, the first practical, and the second a question of historical understanding. With regard to the first issue, various news agencies in the Arab/Muslim world should disseminate this piece of information, in order to drive home how the West perceives us. Knowing this can also help us explain why the West felt a compulsion to "compensate" for the crime of Auschwitz with the crimes of Dayr Yaaseen, Kafr 'Qaasim and other Palestinian villages. It is important to stress that this knowledge of the history of the term "Muselmann", as it has been used to signify the "other" in Nazi Germany and in Palestine, will serve to undermine the monopoly the Jews pretend to as the only victims of fascist brutality. This issue also simultaneously gives rise to another question, concerning the dissemination of information. Information is a powerful tool that can be used to serve the interests of a particular party. Why,

one wonders, has the use of the term "Muselmann" in the Nazi concentration camps received such little attention in the press?

Turning to the question of historical understanding, this is a domain in which we are clearly at the mercy of the West. We do not read Western history from our perspective, but rather from their perspective, just as it is fed to us. That is our fault, not the fault of the West. The history books and references are there for all of us to consult. It is up to us to examine these sources and reinterpret the facts, in the light of careful scrutiny of the subtext of their contents and in the light also of newly discovered information, or information that has not previously been accorded the centrality it deserves.

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*\*Abdelwahab Elmessiri is an Arab thinker and writer. He has a Ph.D. in English and comparative literature from Rutgers University, U.S.A. He published scores of books and articles amongst which is "The Encyclopaedia of Jews, Judaism, and Zionism" which has eight volumes and is a result of 25 years research and critical inquiry with a team of 30 researchers.*

*This article is published in cooperation with:  
[www.elmessiri.com](http://www.elmessiri.com)*

# JUST BLOG IT!

**By Marwah El-Azhary** [Marwah Alazhary]

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"Whether it's world hunger, marketing problems, or marital issues, blogging is the solution", a faithful blogger expresses. But what exactly is blogging, how many of us have decided to try it out, how successful is it and why are so many companies investing their money on providing this service?

Before we begin, we must understand what the word "blog" means, so that we are one step closer to understanding why Internet companies have termed it "blog" and not a simple term like "online journal" or "online diary" that more people will understand and immediately identify with.

Our faithful dictionary, Webster, describes a **blog** as:

An online diary; a personal chronological log of thoughts published on a Web page; also called Weblog, Web log.

**Example:**

Typically updated daily, blogs often reflect the personality of the author.

**Etymology:**

Shortened form of Weblog.

**Usage:**

Blog, blogged, blogging v, blogger n  
So from this explanation we learn that it was originally called a Weblog and now fashionably termed in its acronym form, "blog."

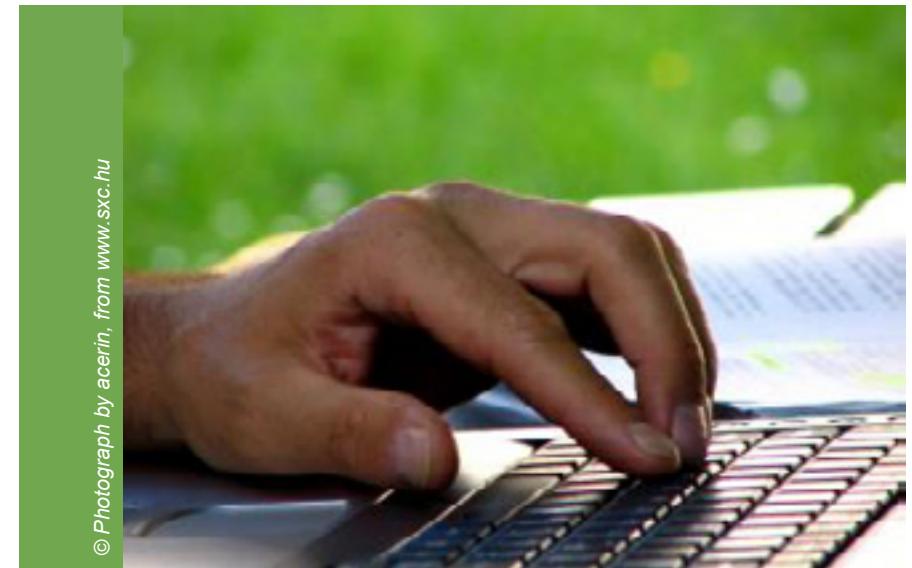
**So what do people exactly do on a blog?**

Those familiar with Freud and his theories will acknowledge the fact that he discovered the "talking cure." Through the talking cure, patients would embark on a journey of self-discovery while a trained therapist patiently listened and analysed the session. The talking cure, according to Freud, allowed patients to release and identify their subconscious thoughts and desires, and therefore "dig" and discover repressed material. Not only do psychoanalytical therapists use this technique till today, those who cannot afford the expenses or time of such treatments can simply use the listening ear of a good friend, since society uses the well-known phrase, which reflects their belief in it, "a problem shared is a problem halved." But what if you don't have a "good"

friend to confide in? What if you cannot find a listening ear in a world that is increasingly self-obsessed? What if you cannot trust people with your thoughts and feelings and therefore repress them deeper into your subconscious? Surely this will do you more harm than good in the long run. We are complex beings and will suffer the consequences of suppressing everything into the abyss of our souls. So what could a person in this situation do? It seems obvious that blogging is the perfect solution for the computer and Internet 21st century generation. Blogging is almost like owning a diary, but in this ever increasing technological-Internet world, an online one seems more attractive and convenient, and the user won't have to

worry about misplacing or losing it. Blogging comes in many different shapes and sizes, depending on what company you decide to sign up with. It offers you free membership, choice of your own template, layout and other interesting features depending on which company you sign up with. Once you are done, you have your very own personal website/online diary/blog. It is all fairly easy to use and there are many help features if in difficulty. From there, the posting is left to you, leaving you to think of the words to write.

Browsing through the blogging community and the statistics (apparently, according to padawn.info, there are 7 million bloggers out there on the Internet), I realised that there is indeed



a "blog craze." Just recently the Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair, decided to have a blog to "connect" with his people, presumably attempting to portray to the public that he is just an ordinary man and tactfully gain votes from these sympathisers. Other various politicians have also decided to follow suit and signed up to have a personal blog for themselves. Not only politicians are using this medium to express their opinions to the general Internet audience; a numerous amount of U.S. soldiers in Iraq have their own blogs and discuss their daily activities in the Middle East. Then there are the non-political civilians, people with marital problems, school problems, parent problems, weight problems: through scanning these blogs there increasingly seems to be a huge noise coming from the Internet (and not just the noise that dial-up users hear when connecting to the Internet) from the ever increasing blogging community who express their worries, joys, problems, solutions, etc. It is true that there are companies who use these blogs to advertise their products, but it is obvious that the majority of people are using a blog the way it is meant to be used, as the dictionary so kindly put it. One thing that must be agreed on, in each blog the word "I" is used more than any other word; reflecting the nature of these blogs: ordinary human beings, be it politicians or at the other end of the spectrum sharing their souls and indeed searching for their souls. It is interesting that out of the hun-

dreds of blogs I scanned over the past few months, two out of three bloggers (person who has a blog) wrote their first entry describing why they decided to use a blog. One may assume the notion that these individuals subconsciously believe that there needs to be a self-justification to resorting to the "talking cure." Perhaps only those who resorted to the talking cure back in the 1960s were classified as "crazy" and taken to seek psychiatric help in a mental institution as many documents, books and films have illustrated. Perhaps society has conditioned people from a young age to believe that sharing our deepest thoughts, no matter how disturbing or intriguing to others, is something negative and should be ignored or marginalised. Whatever the case, there is a definite break through in the way people communicate with each other, with more people needing to express themselves, to purge their thoughts and experiences on to the white screen, and to have access to a distant faceless online community that can do them no harm. People do feel safer behind a screen, talking about their problems without reveal-



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ing their entire identity, as opposed to sharing their problems to a mass of people who know who they are and will ultimately judge them. Some may argue that if strangers on the internet judged, at least they won't be judging "you" so much since they do not know you in reality, but they can claim to judge your words, words which can be misunderstood according to the reader's mentality. I believe it is this comfortable distance between users on the Internet that also has made the blogging experience successful thus far.

It is apparent that the blogging community has grown (last year there was only 4.7 million according to padawan.info, currently there are 7 million) since the world heads more into chaos and uncertainty. Clearly people just want to make sense of everything around them and put things into perspective in the best way they can through Freud's talking (in this case writing) cure. Bloggers can also find other bloggers who share the same views and experiences.

### **But what if I don't want to share my life story with strangers on the Internet?**

What is convenient is that if a user does not wish to share their blog with strangers, some blogging companies have given users privacy preferences in order to decide who can view their blog. Furthermore, a person can share their life story anonymously without revealing their personal information, that

way no one would be able to identify them.

To summarise, advantages to having a blog is that you can express yourself, you can hide your real identity so that it makes your blogging an even more enjoyable experience if you don't want people to know who you are and therefore makes you express yourself more freely without worrying about people judging you. You can get readers in, commenting on what you have written, thereby getting objective thoughts, constructive criticisms and perhaps advice, support and encouragement. You can gain online friends through this experience and meet people with the same thoughts and lifestyle. Friends and relatives who live far away can keep in touch with each other's latest news, and so on. Since some bloggers are busy, you have the freedom to post whenever you can; it can be every six days or every six months, your blog will always faithfully wait for you (some companies may require you to log in every 30 days, read terms and conditions before signing up). The list goes on, which is why blogging has become successful and is apparently spreading like wild fire. It isn't surprising to see that more Internet companies are investing their money in providing this service, since they obviously see a potential market. So for those readers who have not yet got themselves a blog, what are you waiting for? The blogging world awaits you, so just blog it!

# CALLIGRAPHY



davudbektas@yahoo.com

44



"THE UPPER  
HAND IS  
BETTER  
THAN THE  
LOWER  
HAND"

('HADEETH  
BY PROPHET  
MU'HAMMAD  
P.B.U.H.)  
IN THULUTH SCRIPT  
BY DAVUD BEKTAŞ.

THE UPPER HAND IS  
THE HAND THAT GIVES  
WHILE THE LOWER  
HAND IS THE HAND  
THAT TAKES.

**DAVUD BEKTAŞ** is a Turkish calligrapher who won several national and international prizes and participated in more than 15 exhibitions worldwide. He was born in the village Akoluk near Adana in 1963 and has a degree in law from Istanbul University. He took calligraphy lessons with several calligraphers such as Yusuf Ergun Erzincani and Hasan Celebi. Bektaş has a deep interest in the thuluth script but is now also exploring the avenues of other scripts, such as the 'tali'q and the deewaany scripts. Bektaş teaches Islaamic calligraphy classes in Istanbul.

# THE Islaam COMING FROM THE West

Enter the term “Islaam” in the search box of amazon.com, and the titles that would top your search list are works by Bernard Lewis, Reza Aslan and Asra Nomani.

Walk in the streets of North America and ask people about the first Muslim character that comes to their minds, and you will definitely hear the names of Bin Laden [Ibn Laadin] and Azzar’qaawy You may also hear the names of Irshad Manji and Amina Wadud [Ameenah Wadood]. In Europe, people will probably talk about Yusuf Islam [Yoosuf Islaam] and maybe Ayan Hersi.

When the twin towers of the World Trade Centre collapsed in the fall of 2001, many Muslims assumed naïvely that many Americans would embrace Islaam. What really happened was that the events of September 11th surprised many

Muslims with their worst identity crises since the colonial era. And the so-called “battle of Manhattan” that some hoped to trigger sympathy towards our causes, or even curiosity about the innate tolerance of our faith, backfired. Instead, we –became the target of a barrage of suspicious and accusatory questions; a feat that is easily understood in light of what has happened. The real problem, however, was that many Muslims discovered that they had never entertained such questions, let alone having any answers.

The nature of this uncertainty, which Muslims face now, varies considerably from one country to the other and it is significantly influenced by factors linked to the interests of communities. In Arabia, the birthplace of Islaam, it is very unlikely to hear questions that Muslims in other societies are entertaining. The

major questions with which Muslims elsewhere are squabbling would be brushed aside here as frivolous if not heretical; we are not have no place for them in the rush of our daily rituals.

But in the West, where language is more of a barrier sometimes than a means of communication, and where inquiry had progressed beyond being a luxury and became the culture and the means to decide one’s fate. There, religion and its derivatives became a legitimate target for questioning, as did the believers; a situation so unique that one could only liken it to the time when the message was very young in Makkah.

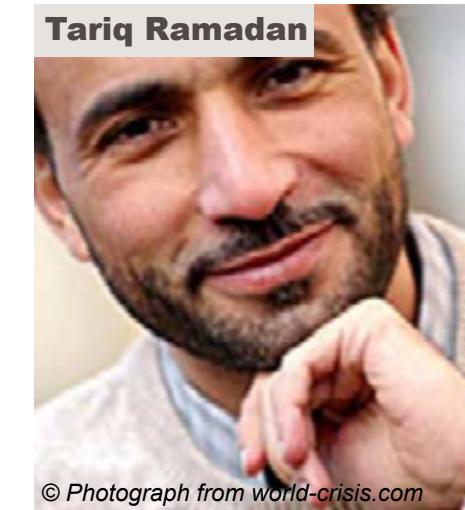
What would happen if the questioning mentality -thirsty for answers- were faced with a cold and absolute rejection of the concept of question-

**By Ashraf Al-Fagih** [Ashraf Alfa’qeeh]  
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ing? What if the same cold rejection was the answer to each and every query? Would it not be tempting for the inquisitive mind to rebel and seek other options?

During the last month, very sharp criticism was directed towards the



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Indo-American Asra Nomani and her autobiography: "Standing Alone in Mecca." Asra was the maestro behind the Friday (Jumu'ah) prayer that was lead by Amina Wadud whom received herself some loads of harsh commentary for that action. Asra, from her side, didn't hastate to further shock Muslim commentators by her plain admittance of having an illegitimate child whom she accompanied with her to pilgrimage; a journey, she claimed, that made her more confident of her vision of reviving Islam. One such revival attempt that resulted from her vision was the infamous New York Jumu'ah prayer.

Asra's call for a more feminine Islaam, with examples abound in

her more recent book, is not at all shocking when we consider what she wrote in her first book "Tantrika" that describes her journey in search for "sacred sex secrets."

Asra's call for feminine Islaam, though, pales in comparison with the suggestions of the Indo-Canadian Irshad Manji who introduces herself as a "Lesbian Muslim" with a vision of an American revolution in Islaam!

The position of those two women is nothing when compared with the philosophy of Ayan Hersi Ali, the Dutch senator of Somali descent who shunned Islaam until such a time when it would evolve to fit with

her innovative viewpoints; those which director Theo Van-Gough lost his life for.

All those women, along with many men, are not alone in the flock of this "New Western Islaam." They, regardless of the true value of their ideas, are taking advantage of the post September 11th chaos to achieve better popularity as establishers of a new Islaamic image that suits their lifestyles and their liberal societies. The discussion is not necessarily about who is pulling their strings from behind the scene. Rather, it should be about the circumstances that thrusted them to the public and gave them a media outlet.

There are plenty of Muslim experts in America and Europe. It is possible that the religious leaders of the Muslim societies there inherited some of the rigidity of their peers in their countries of origin; or perhaps they are deliberately acting so! And as Mansoor Alnu'qaydaan wrote in his article "The Islam that's coming from the West": "Europe and America are in need of an Islaam that matches their culture and environment which is full of energy, ambition and human rights." These values are either not accepted by migrant Muslim leaderships or seen as unessential for securing their positions in the adopted country. "...which results in local



**Asra Nomani****Reza Aslan****Amina Wadud**

Muslim being hijacked by those new migrant religious leaders" as put by Alnu'qaydaan.

The indolence of the Arab Muslim scholars and intellectuals in supporting their brethren in the West has always been manifested in the lack of dynamic jurisprudence efforts that could address the unique and novel situations that Muslims in the West face. In place of this required dynamic thinking, a stream of canned fataawa (religious opinions) that were produced under and for a completely different spectrum of conditions and interests. This indolence is equally manifested by the almost complete absence of con-

temporary Arabic Islamic intellectual works from Western libraries, which -in a way- explains why Bernard Lewis is the most acclaimed expert on Islaam in America, with the late Edward Sa'eed being the most significant voice that represented the alternative views.

The modernising voices, of the types we mentioned above, are certainly becoming louder in light of the support they are receiving nowadays, and in light of the particular lack of reaction from the Arab Muslim scholars. Those scholars have traditionally rejected significantly more sincere proposals that addressed the challenges facing

**POSSING QUESTIONS, A LOT OF QUESTIONS IN FACT, REGARDING THIS FAITH. THIS IS THE GREATEST QUALITY EVER INTRODUCED BY ISLAAM THAT IS COMING FROM THE WEST.**

Muslims by the Western civilisation. Such sincere proposals were disregarded and accused of being off the main stream! This created a void that is being successfully filled by the fake preachers of modernisation.

There are, however, many efforts within Europe and the U.S.A. that represent better faces of Islam. There are Tariq Ramadan ['Taariq Rama'daan], Hamzah Yusuf

[Hamzah Yoosuf], Ingrid Matson, Michael Wolf and others. They are presenting a truer version of Islaam notwithstanding the accusations and suspicions that are intentionally levied at them. They, however, share with the names mentioned earlier the inquisitive quality that is deriving them to pose questions, a lot of questions in fact, regarding this faith. This is the greatest quality ever introduced by Islaam that is coming from the West.

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# Do you **wonder** WHY WE **spell** **ARABIC WORDS** **Different** THAN OTHER PUBLICATIONS?

[ DO YOU WONDER WHY SOME ARABIC NAMES HAVE ANOTHER SPELLING BETWEEN SQUARE BRACKETS? ]

I-MAG

Allaah  
Islaam  
Mu'hammad  
'Hijaab  
'Qura~n  
Madeenah  
Makkah  
In Shaa- Allaah  
Oummah  
'Hadeeth

OTHERS

Allah  
Islam  
Mohamad  
Hijab  
Qur'an  
Madinah  
Mecca  
Insha'Allah  
Ummah  
Hadith



Check our Arabic phonemes transcription guide to learn how we transcribe Arabic sounds in to the English writing system:

[WWW.I-MAG.ORG/ARABIC.PDF](http://WWW.I-MAG.ORG/ARABIC.PDF)

# I.A.A.

## THE ISLAMIC Association of Australia

### **Establishment**

The Islamic Association of Australia was established on July 15, 1999 in Melbourne, Australia with the sole purpose of uplifting the Muslim ummah both academically and spiritually. The chief founder and current President ('Kaadim) of the organisation is Hafiz Muhammad Abdul Wahid [Muhammad 'Abd Alwaa'hid] who holds a B.A. Islamic Studies, and a Master's degree in I.T. and a graduate of Islamic University, Jamia Naqshbandia Pakpattan Shareef.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The Islamic Association of Australia (I.A.A.) is a non-profit, charitable organisation dedicated to the promotion of the Islamic religion, culture and social welfare. I.A.A. provides Islamic education and encourages understanding of Islam among other faiths and fosters better relations with other sections of Australian and worldwide communities.

### **Activities**

#### **A. Fataawa Department**

This department is involved in the issuing of legal Islamic opinions (fataawa) in all matters pertaining to Islamic beliefs ('Aqaa'id), marriage, divorce, business practices, inheritance, and 'Halaal/'Haraam issues, as well as many other subjects that affect the Muslim community.

#### **Academy ('Qura'n School)**

Traditionally, in Islamic societies, the first education that children received was memorising the 'Qura'n. In an effort to revive and preserve this tradition, the I.A.A., has started the *Tayiba* ['Taybah] School of 'Qura'n memorisation. They are currently in their third year and we have over eighty regular students.

#### **Foundation 'Aalim Diploma (2 years program)**

*Tayiba* Institute is dedicated to the traditional curriculum that was common in the great teaching institu-

tions of the past. The curriculum includes 'Qura'n, 'hadeeth, jurisprudence, and spiritual psychology. The Foundation 'Aalim Diploma lasts for two years and is the introduction to the seven years 'Aalim course. The purpose of this course is to provide students with intensive basic Islamic Studies which will give them an academic working knowledge of 'Ilm Addeen (Studies of Religion). Students concentrate on learning Arabic language tools such as 'sarf and na'hu (morphology and syntax) that will enable them to study a series of classic texts found in all traditional 'Aalim courses.

**Periodical courses - Public and Adult Education Programs (Short intensive courses 6 to 12 weeks)**  
 From time to time, *Tayiba* Institute has been conducting intensive short courses in areas that are in public demand. Several intensive programs have been completed and the participants of these courses are awarded with a certificate of attend-



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ance at the end of each course.

#### **School of Languages**

School of Languages (Arabic) has been approved by the Department of Education, Employment and Training Australia (D.E.E.T.A.) and runs in conjunction with the C.S.F. II (Curriculum Standards Framework II). Children aged from 7 to 12 years are eligible to study Levels 1, 2 and 3 modern standard Arabic.

#### **B. The Social Welfare Department**

Zakaah and 'Sadaqah (alms and charitable donations) received by the organisation are also distributed to the needy and deserving. In addition to local and regional support, I.A.A. is supporting many overseas charity projects, including a 70 bed charity hospital.

#### **Marriage Counselling Services and Advice Centre**

The organisation has thus far provided free counselling to Muslim

# NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

couples experiencing marital problems and is also serving as an advice centre in other fields. It is also liaising with professional services or social workers to handle complex problems.

## Local and International Correspondences

Numerous correspondences, both local and from other countries, have been received and relationships were established with other organisations from both religious and non-religious fields.

## The I.A.A. Library

The IAA library houses hundreds of Islaamic books in several languages. The library also houses numerous audio, videotapes and software. These can be borrowed free of charge.



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## Lecture Tours

Organised within Australia, Pakistan, Fiji and wherever Islaam calls.

## Overseas Guests

The IAA regularly invites distinguished 'ulamaa- (scholars) to Australia on lecture tours organised by IAA. The organisation has also been blessed with the visit of many prominent 'ulamaa- from overseas.

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# THE LESSONS FROM Death

**By Harun Yahya\*** [Haaroon Ya'hyaa]  
 info@harunyahya.com

Life slips away second by second. Are you aware that every day brings you closer to death or that death is as close to you as it is to other people?

As we are told in the verse "Every soul will taste death. Then to Us shall you be returned," (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Al'ankaboot, verse 57) everyone who has ever appeared on this earth was destined to die. Without exception they all died, every one. Today, we hardly come across the traces of many of these people who passed away. Those currently living and those who will ever live will also face death on a predestined day. Despite this fact, people tend to see death as an unlikely incident.

Think of a baby who has just opened

its eyes to the world and a man who is about to breathe his last. Both had no influence on their individual birth or death whatsoever. Only God possesses the power to inspire the breath of life or to take it away.

All human beings will live until a certain day and then die; God in the 'Qura~n gives an account of the attitude commonly shown towards death in the following verse:

"Say: Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do" (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Aljumu'ah, verse 8)

The majority of people avoid thinking about death. In the rapid flow of daily events, a person usually occupies himself with totally different subjects: what college to enrol in, which company to work for, what colour of clothing to wear next morning, what to cook for supper; these are the kinds of major issues that we usually consider. Life is perceived as a routine process of such minor matters. Attempts to talk about death are always interrupted by those who do not feel comfortable hearing about it. Assuming death will come only when one grows older, one does not want to concern himself with such an unpleasant subject. Yet it should be kept in mind that living for even one further hour is never guaranteed. Everyday, man witnesses the deaths of people around him but thinks

little about the day when others will witness his own death. He never supposes that such an end is awaiting him!

Nevertheless, when death comes to man, all the "realities" of life suddenly vanish. No reminder of the "good old days" endures in this world. Think of everything that you are able to do right now: you can blink your eyes, move your body, speak, laugh; all these are functions of your body. Now think about the state and shape your body will assume after your death.

From the moment you breathe for the last time, you will become nothing but a "heap of flesh". Your body, silent and motionless, will be carried to the morgue. There, it will be washed for the

last time. Wrapped in a shroud, your corpse will be carried in a coffin to the graveyard. Once your remains are in the grave, soil will cover you. This is the end of your story. From now on, you are simply one of the names represented in the graveyard by a marble stone.

During the first months or years, your grave will be visited frequently. As time passes, fewer people will come. Decades later, there will be no one.

Meanwhile, your immediate family members will experience a different aspect of your death. At home, your room and bed will be empty. After the funeral, little of what belongs to you will be kept at home: most of your clothes, shoes, etc, will be given to those who need them. Your file at the public registration office will be deleted or archived. During the first years, some will mourn for you. Yet, time will work against the memories you left behind. Four or five decades later, there will remain only a few who remember you. Before long, new generations will come and none of your generation will exist any longer on earth. Whether you are remembered or not will be worthless to you.

While all this is taking place in the world, the corpse under the soil will go through a rapid process of decay. Soon after you are placed in the grave, the bacteria and insects proliferating in the corpse due to the absence of oxygen will start to function. The gasses released from these organisms will inflate the body, starting from the abdomen, altering its shape and appearance. Bloody froth will

pop out the mouth and nose due to the pressure of gasses on the diaphragm. As corruption proceeds, body hair, nails, soles, and palms will fall off. Accompanying this outer alteration in the body, internal organs such as lungs, heart and liver will also decay. In the meantime, the most horrible scene takes place in the abdomen, where the skin can no longer bear the pressure of gasses and suddenly bursts, spreading an unendurably disgusting smell. Starting from the skull, muscles will detach from their particular places. Skin and soft tissues will completely disintegrate. The brain will decay and start looking like clay. This process will go on until the whole body is reduced to a skeleton.

There is no chance of going back to the old life again. Gathering around the supper table with family members, socializing or to having an honourable job will never again be possible.

In short, the "heap of flesh and bones" to which we assign an identity faces a quite nasty end. On the other hand, you - or rather, your soul - will leave this body as soon as you breathe your last. The remainder of you - your body - will become part of the soil.

Yes, but what is the reason for all these things happening?

If God willed, the body would never have decayed in such a way. That it does so actually carries a very important inner message in itself.

The tremendous end awaiting man

should make him acknowledge that he is not a body himself, but a soul "encased" within a body. In other words, man has to acknowledge that he has an existence beyond his body. Furthermore, man should understand the death of his body which he tries to possess as if he is to remain eternally in this temporal world. However, this body, which he deems so important, will decay and become worm-eaten one day and finally be reduced to a skeleton. That day might be very soon.

Despite all these facts, man's mental process is inclined to disregard what he does not like or want. He is even inclined to deny the existence of things he avoids confronting. This tendency seems to be most apparent when death is the issue. Only a funeral or the sudden death of an immediate family member brings this reality to mind. Almost everybody sees death far from himself. The assumption is that those who die while sleeping or in an accident are different people and what they face will never befall us! Everybody thinks it is too early to die and that there are always years ahead to live.

Yet most probably, people who die on the way to school or hurrying to attend a business meeting shared the same thought. They probably never thought that the next day's newspapers would publish news of their deaths. It is entirely possible that, as you read these lines, you still do not expect to die soon after you have finished them or even entertain the possibility that it might happen. Probably you feel that it is too early

to die because there are many things to accomplish. However, this is just an avoidance of death and these are only vain endeavours to escape it:

"Say [O Mu'hammad]: Never will fleeing benefit you if you should flee from death or killing; and then [if you did], you would not be given enjoyment [of life] except for a little." (The Holy 'Qura~n, chapter of Ala'hzaab, verse 16)

Man who is created alone should be aware that he would also die alone. Yet during his life, he lives almost addicted to possessions. His sole purpose in life becomes to possess more. Yet, no one can take his goods with him to the grave. The body is buried wrapped in a shroud made from the cheapest of fabrics. The body comes into this world alone and departs from it in the same way. The only asset one can take with him when one dies is one's belief or disbelief.

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\*The author, under the pen-name Harun Yahya, has written more than 200 books which are published in 37 languages all over the world. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race and nationality, as they centre around one goal: to open the readers' mind by presenting the signs of God's eternal existence to them.

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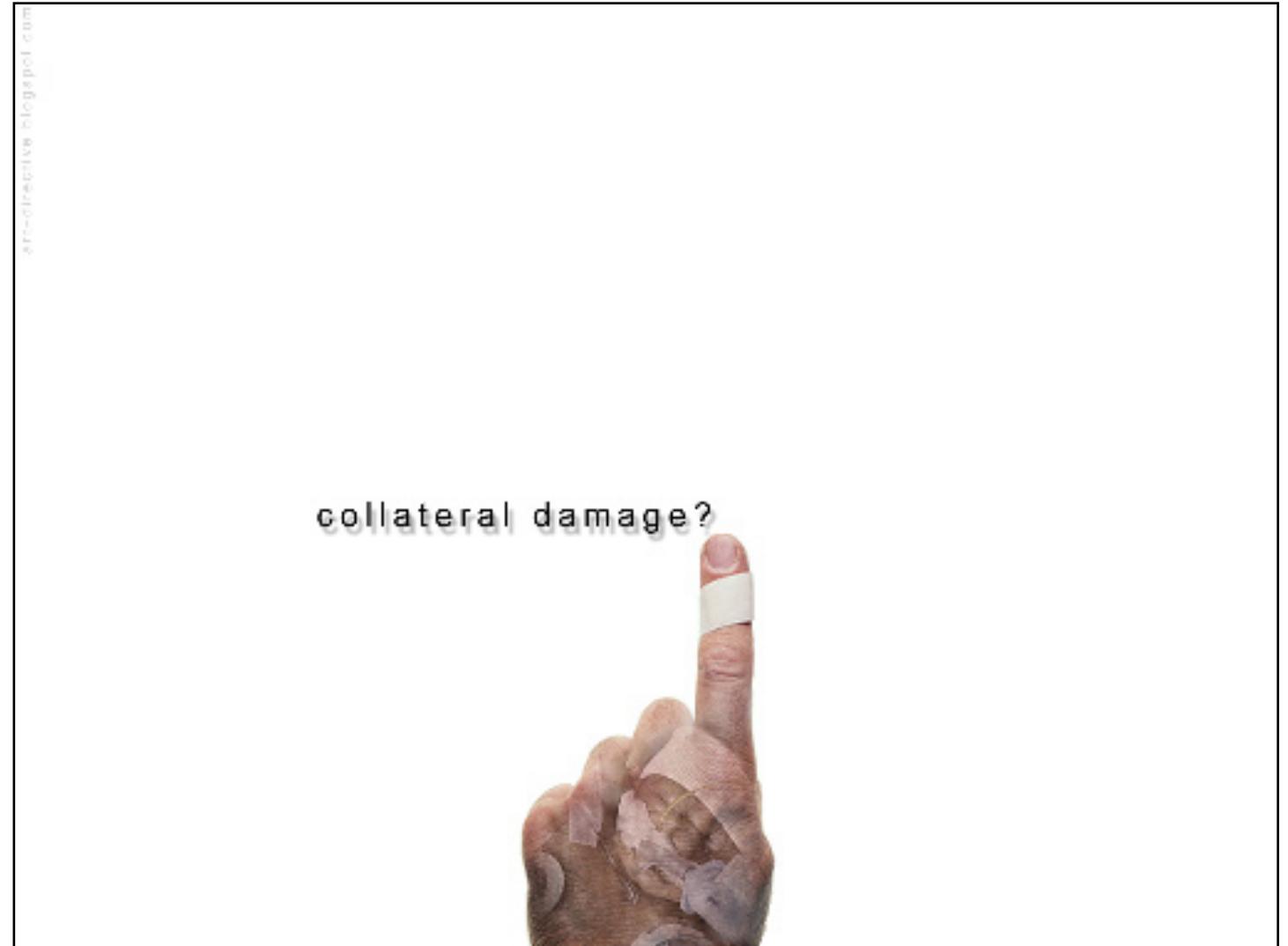
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