



ENLIGHTEN YOUR "I"

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

**Islaamic  
Consciousness:**  
Nationalism or  
Anti-nationalism?

**Deedat:**  
A Life Dedicated to  
Da'wah

Understanding  
the **Holocaust**

A Book **Without  
Errors!**



**The Three Musketeers of Humorism:**  
**"That's How  
Allaah Made Us Funny!"**

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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 partiality) 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 WONDERS

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

**Q. I recently learnt that the Prophet of Islaam, Mu'hammad, married a nine-year old girl, exactly my age. I cannot possibly imagine a girl my age getting married. Isn't this wrong?**

**A.** Sarah, you are a smart girl, because when you don't understand something, you ask.

My great grandmother, Sarah, was married when she was eleven years old. She was very young indeed. Wasn't she?

I have to admit that when I first learnt this I was appalled, possibly because I was almost eleven when my grandmother told us. My grandmother explained to me that every young woman from her mother's generation were married between the ages of eleven to twelve. This was during the later part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. A woman was considered a spinster then, my grandmother told me, if she reached the age of eighteen

without getting married.

This really got me thinking about whether 'Aa-ishah (the nine-year old wife of the Prophet) was an exception in the sense that she was betrothed (engaged) too young in comparison to her contemporary brides.

I found out, to my surprise, that many a woman was betrothed in Arabia between the ages of six to ten, before and after Islaam. This was common due to the fact that life expectancy of women at that time was relatively short, so they married as early as possible to have as many children as possible.

Three of the Prophet's four daughters were betrothed before the age of ten, and this took place before

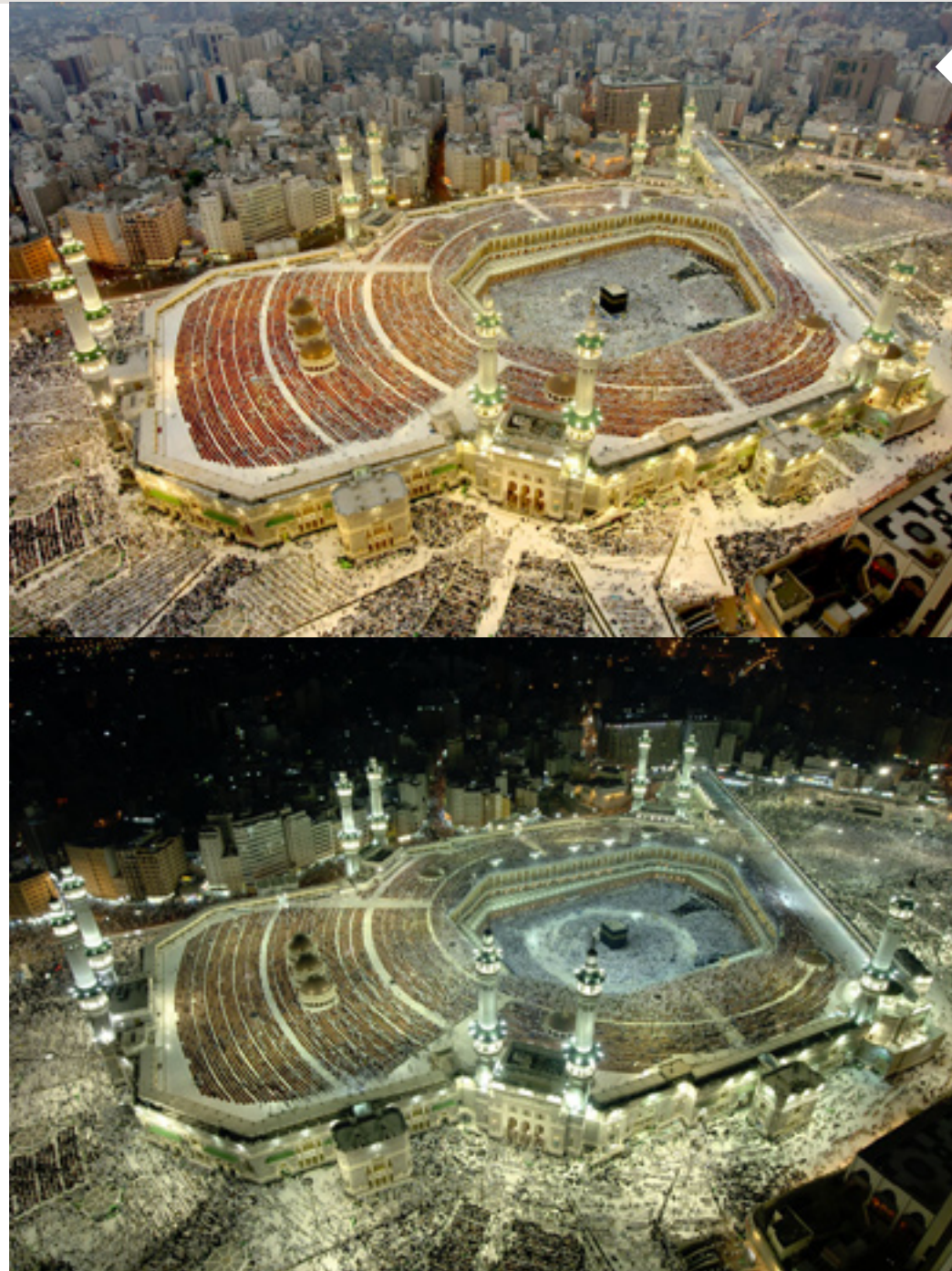
Islaam. His fourth daughter was married at eighteen after Islaam. There are numerous records of other women who were also married very young, both before and after Islaam.

The bottom line at that time was that whenever a girl became pubescent, then she would be wedded. Historical records show that the first betrothal for young women in Arabia – at the advent of Islaam – took place when their age was six to ten years.

'Aa-ishah was undoubtedly very young when she married the Prophet. She was not, however, an exception. That was the norm then.

*Yours in Humanity,  
I-MAG Team*





Photos by  
**Mohammed Babelli\***  
[Mu'hammad Baabily]

**“ Makkan Mosque:**  
Day and Night ”

*\*Mohammed Babelli is an engineer by profession; art lover by choice. He started photography at an early age covering summer camping vacations. He has developed his photography techniques over the years through personal experience and also joining other photographers on photography sessions. He has published a book on Mada'in Saleh (available through Amazon.com), and plans further photography books publications on other contemporary subjects.  
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If you have any nice photos  
that you would like to share  
with us, please contact:

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Photo by  
**Bushra AbdulRaqeeb Taher**  
 [Bushra 'Abd Arra'qeeb 'Taahir]

**“Light Breaks”**

Photo has been taken in  
 Yemen, 2005 Summer.

Bushra is 17 years old and is in her third year in the secondary school, scientific section. She is a member of Life Makers Club, K.S.A.

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# Silhouette IT!

By  
**Ahmad Konash** [A'hmad Konash]  
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## ■ Idea

### Solar Eclipse!

The concept of a silhouette picture is exactly like the scene of a solar eclipse, an eclipse is a natural silhouette.



## ■ Tools

- . A camera (S.L.R. - Semi S.L.R.).
- . An object/person.
- . A source of light.



© Photograph from <http://umbra.nascom.nasa.gov/eclipse>

[ It is all about contrast created by placement. When a light source is exactly behind the object/person you are shooting, an outline of it/him will be captured, that's a silhouette. ]

## ■ Steps

First of all, this can be done in many ways, so let your imagination work. We'll be presenting here one way of doing it.

Understand the concept behind it, and share your experience with us, and who knows, maybe it will end up published in "Photo-Great" :)

1. Switch on your source of light;

2. Try to make the atmosphere as dark as possible. You may switch the room light off as I did;

3. Place the object you want to "silhouette" in front of the source of light;

4. And SHOOT!

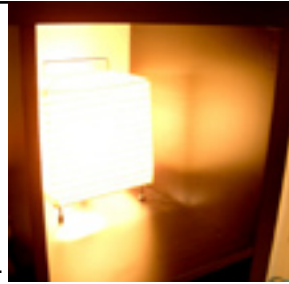
In our case, I had a mug which was between the lamp and the camera. Try to focus on the light source and then move the camera to the object you want to shoot in order to adjust the shutter speed automatically to high speed, if you did not get it, just stop at "and SHOOT!" part :)

If you liked this issue's tips, please share your works with us. Send them to:

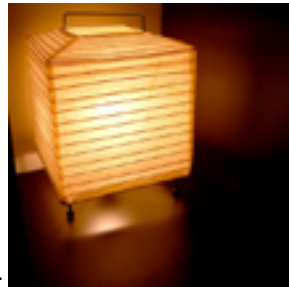
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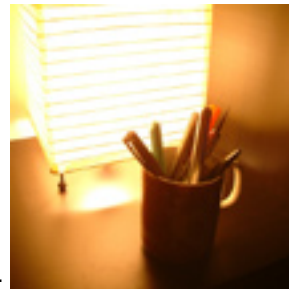
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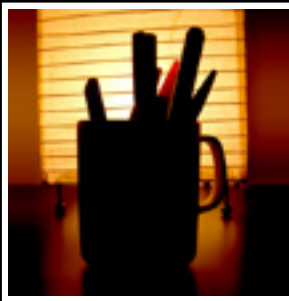
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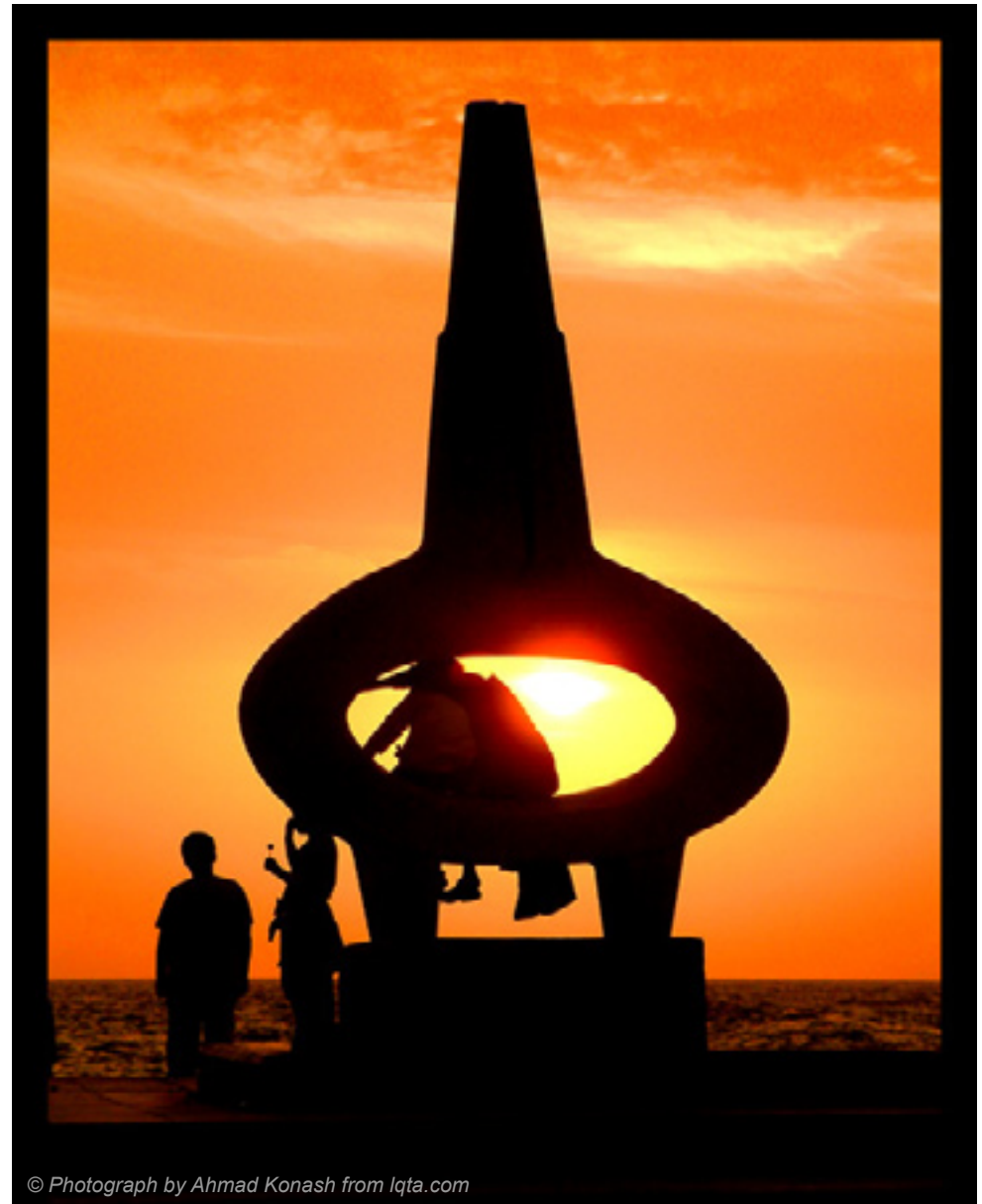
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# The Three Musketeers of *Humorism*!

The Story of How Allaah Made Them Funny!

Interviewed by Hayat Alyaqout [‘Hayaat Alyaa’qoot]

hayat@i-mag.org

In our time, where people know very little about the difference between the prevalent parody and the real comedy, come the three musketeers of humorsim. “Allah Made Me Funny” comedy tour members employ “the word instead of the sword” to make people laugh at the flaws and discrepancies of Muslims but not for the sake of entertainment only but, and most impotently, for the sake of enlightenment.

The message of the tour is “to make a comprehensive effort to provide effective, significant and appropriate comedy with an Islamic perspective, which is both mainstream and cross-cultural”, but when it comes to the action, you will laugh until cheeks will hurt, as one of audience once said.

The stand-up comedy tour has three members: **Azhar Usman**, an

American Muslim from an Indian descent. Azhar always says: “I’m not Osama Bin Laden’s evil twin brother, I’m his cousin! You can just call me Bin Laughin!”

The other two comedians, Preacher Moss and Azeem are African-Americans. **Preacher Moss** actually says: “I’m African American and a Muslim which basically means that when I’m pulled over by the police, I get two tickets instead of one!” **Azeem**, who was once “so green about stand-up comedy” thinks that the challenge is to teach people without making them feel they are in a classroom.

I-MAG met the three talented comedians to learn more about their message and their efforts to vanquish cultural, religious and ethnical stereotypes and prejudices.



Pictures Are Courtesy of "Allah Made Me Funny."

**1. So Allaah made the three of you funny, but the question is when and how did each one of you discover that Allaah gave him this gift, and how did each one of you develop it?**

**P. Moss:** I feel like I could always make people laugh, but the question was if I could do it consistently, and subsequently professionally. I was blessed to have a supportive family, and at the time a very supportive comedy community. I started out working as a comic with a jazz band out of Chicago "PI" (Pre-Islam). I continued to develop the idea of communicating concepts, and being a solid storyteller. Fortunately, Allaah has imparted in my soul the idea of 'sabr (patience) and humility.

**Azeem:** The way I realised that I was funny was when my ex-wife's best friend and my worst enemy (Azeem smiles) and I were at work and she told me that I keep everyone laughing and that I should give stand-up comedy a try. I was so green about comedy that I didn't even realise that there were comedy clubs! So she gave me the name of a club, I went out to their open mic, people laughed, I caught the joke bug, and the rest is history.

**Azhar:** I have always been the class clown and the joker of the group. Once I decided to pursue stand-up comedy seriously, I put my craft first and became a student of the art. Subsequently, I decided to pursue it full-time, as a career, and that required making an even more serious commitment to writing, editing, and growing myself as

a professional comedian.

**2. Inspiration or perspiration? Do you work a lot on your performances and plan for them or is it a piece of cake because of your gift?**

**P. Moss:** It is a combination of both. My favourite saying states: "Everyone has a talent, but it takes skill to get noticed for your talent, and it takes discipline to maintain the skill." I would refer this question to my last answer. Allaah knows the balance of things, and His messenger is the example He gave of how hard we must work to attain any level of excellence.

**Azeem:** I for one have to work at my skill, because although I do have the gift of making people laugh, there is a big difference between making someone laugh versus making someone laugh for a particular purpose. I reflect on the Holy 'Qura~n, wherein Allaah says that He created us complete and yet incomplete, which shows that what He has deposited in each of us is already there but it will take time for it to grow into its perfected state. I believe that we all have a gift that Allaah blessed us with, but it is up to us to cultivate that gift into that which He intended it to become.



**Azhar:** Yes, absolutely. Inspiration is the raw talent part, which is necessary. However, thereafter, one must work very hard to turn talent into skill. And the skill together with discipline is what creates a sustainable career in the entertainment industry.

**3. How did the three of you meet each other? And how was the tour established?**

**P. Moss:** I had known Azeem from five years back. I met him at a comedy club in Madison, Wisconsin. I was headlining, and he was opening. He was very talented, and of course we clicked as Muslims in a non-Muslim environment. I approached him in the formulation stages of the tour. I was introduced to Azhar via a mutual friend. I spoke with him at length about joining the tour and taking up some of the business development aspects of building a tour. He is very astute as a former lawyer, and could provide the business infrastructure

the tour would need to sustain itself. Truthfully, I felt like I had known these brothers all my life. We openly refer to each other as family.

**Azeem:** Well, Preach and I met in a comedy club in Madison, WI, about five years ago, and realised we were both Muslim, and hit it off. Azhar and I met through Preach, and we all agreed that working together under the concept presented by Preacher (Allah Made Me Funny) would be a worthwhile effort.

**Azhar:** Preacher Moss knew Azeem from the comedy club circuit for a few years. Preach reached out to me after hearing my name thrown around the Muslim circles. Once he and I met, we hit it off immediately and the rest, as they say, is history. So far, we've proven to be the brothers no one believed we could be.

**4. What is the philosophy behind the name of the tour "Allah Made Me Funny"?**

**P. Moss:** The philosophy behind the name is ta'qwa. On my best day, Allaah is in control, as Allaah is in control on my worse day. The title is an acknowledgement as to Who has given us our skills, and it serves as a moniker to the Muslim, and non-Muslim communities that we have validated ourselves, and our own self-worth. We have not waited for the media or even the Muslim community. Our self worth comes from Allaah, and we act accordingly. Comedy is a very powerful tool in self-expression. This project is organic because it is from the Muslim community, endorsed by the Muslim community, but appeals to the world community.

**Azeem:** The concept behind "Allah Made Me Funny", is that comedians are always given the praise of being so funny, or "brilliant", or "cutting-edge", or the "king of comedy", but as men who fear Allaah, we know that we are not the originators of our gifts, for we are only the conduit through which that gift is expressed, and therefore we know that to Allaah belongs the praise. So this is why we say that: "Allah Made Me Funny".

**Azhar:** Allaah comes first. Period. And everything we have is a gift from God.

**5. Does each one of you write what he is going to personally perform or do you write for each other too?**

**P. Moss:** We all write our own material, but we do not hesitate to offer suggestions on ideas we think can help another person's act. The team is only as strong as the individuals on it. We want the

overall product to be professional, and express the excellence of this "deen" (religion), and our community.

**Azeem:** Well, we all are creative, and knowing that no one person can see all the angles of an object, we work with each other to add spices to different jokes.



**Azhar:** "Nu'aymaan bin 'Amr was known as 'The Jester of the Prophet'."

**Azhar:** Each comic writes his own act. But then each of us will offer suggestions and critiques to one another. Preacher Moss is the most senior comedian in the group, so his advice is highly sought after and valuable. But I've managed to write a few jokes for him as well, which have actually ended up in his act – so that's a feather in my cap.

**6. You all come from ethnic groups that are not well represented in the American media. Did that arise curiosity and help promoting your message or was it a barrier?**

ments we were not particularly familiar with. We had to introduce ourselves to different aspects of the diversity of Islamic culture. I feel it did help promote our message, and our own personal understanding of Islamic culture.

**Azeem:** I think it actually helped our tour in that America has built its reputation on controversy. So people will always look at ideas that are outside of the norm.

**Azhar:** Generally, it's been a source of great interest for the media.

**P. Moss:** It served as inspiration. We had to overcome some of these issues, but it was in the advocacy of human development and providing a model of unity. It was interesting, as we had to at times put ourselves in environ-

**7. In the beginning it might sound paradoxical, but – and correct me if I'm wrong- your comedy is a "serious" one. You want people to laugh, but I'm sure you want them to laugh in order to ponder over certain issues. What are the main themes that you tend to cover, and the key misconceptions you aspire to dispel?**

**P. Moss:** Again, comedy is a serious tool as self-expression, but it is serious because people are exposed to that expression. Therefore, you must also be responsible. Our themes tend to cover the ideas of how do we bring mutual importance to the aspect of contemporary Islamic life, from all aspects of living, and have them balance out to be relevant. There is a beautiful side to being a Muslim, and the -sometimes - not so glamorous side. We have to be seen as human in either context.

**Azeem:** The fact is that with comedy, you have the opportunity to teach, but you also have the challenge of teaching the people without them knowing that they are in a classroom. I tend to focus my comedy on the everyday issues that go on in a Muslim household, such as marriage, children, etc. This way the person who is listening to the show, on a sub-conscious level, learns that Muslims are just like other people; they have real life issues. Their children drive them crazy, their wives are always right.

**Azhar:** Great comedians have always made audiences laugh and think. I'd love for my audiences to get a window into my mind, what I honestly think



about – and that includes things as important as ethnic profiling, terrorism, or religious fundamentalism, to things as mundane and insignificant as the sign on the mosque's bathroom wall. Anything is fair game.

#### 8. What do Islaamic scholars say about your works? Did anyone object?

**P. Moss:** The scholars we've spoken to have given general approval, and more importantly seen our work as more than just jokes. We've been able to reach a larger audience than just the average Muslim. We have seen that the community has embraced the idea, and given it value we never expected. The support from scholars, and Imaams has been a mercy of Allaah. We are truly blessed in that aspect. Some objected, but never bothered to see the show. We don't fret it; everyone is entitled to his or her opinion.

**Azeem:** We have been blessed to have major support from scholars throughout the Islaamic community.

**Azhar:** All of the religious scholars ('ulamaa-) have all been overwhelmingly supportive of our work. This is a blessing from God.

#### 9. Are there roots for fun and comedy in the Islaamic history that we can use to reply to the gainsayers who oppose using comedy to spread the message?

**P. Moss:** Islaam is a religion of peace

and submission to the excellence of Allaah. There are many related 'hadeeths speaking of the Prophet's smile, and his beautiful sense of humour. He laughed, smiled, and gave us a proper understanding of why we do these things. This is a great religion. It's meant to be enjoyed. Think of the many things we enjoy, and try not to smile. We are beings of emotional dogma. Laughter is an element of our spiritual and Islaamic DNA.

**Azhar:** First of all, comedy need not be used to spread anything. Comedy can simply be acknowledged as a part of life. This is why we find that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) himself laughed and joked, as recorded in all of the blessed collections of traditions ('hadeeths), including specific dedicated chapters in the "Shama-I of Alimaam" Attirmith>y, and elsewhere. Also, the Prophet's companion, Nu'aymaan bin 'Amr (may God be pleased with him), was known as "The Jester of the Prophet" and was known to be a real prankster who regularly made the blessed Prophet laugh. Do we really need to look any further than that?

#### 10. How do you prioritise the issues you wish to campaign? You have the WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon protestant) to relate to, and you also have a commitment to self-critique to the Muslim community in the West that has a lot of maladies. Did the 11th of September make you concentrate more on the "other" than on the "self"?

**P. Moss:** The focus of this tour is raising the awareness of simple things. How we live, grow, and interact as believers, and servants. This is a pre-9/11 issue. We are firm to point out that this tour is not a response to 9/11 but a call to action for Muslim, and non-Muslim communities to take action in bringing humanity to the forefront of daily living. Our tour is for everyone. Our themes are universal enough for everyone to get it. The religion itself emphasises the other over the self so we have simply been consistent in presenting ourselves that way. On and off stage we have modelled this example for ourselves, and our community.



**Azeem:** No. 9/11 actually made me focus more on the "self", because I have come to realise that if I become a better reflection of that which Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) taught, I could affect a change in the world overnight. So introspection is of more importance than try-

ing to define what is wrong with others. And in truth if you find what is wrong within yourself, you will be able to assess the problems outside of yourself.

**Azhar:** Again, I don't really see my work as any sort of campaign. I would generally prioritise self-criticism as the number one goal, because it is my belief that God requires us to rectify ourselves first and foremost, not others. The obsession that some people have with the "Other" is a modern product of nihilistic thought of our age, but has nothing to do with traditional religious piety, which always asked, "What is wrong with me that God has forsaken me?"

#### 11. I learnt that you refuse to perform in places where liquors are served. Has your performance ever been cancelled because of owners' insistence on serving liquors?

**P. Moss:** We have made it a condition of our contracts that no alcohol, or pork be served at our venue. Our performances have never been cancelled due to this stipulation. It is a battle though. Some owners have tried to violate this agreement for different reasons, but Allaah knows best. It has made the tour stronger, and kept it in line with our beliefs.

**Azeem:** No. In fact clubs have been surprised that you can actually make as

Azeem: "That's why Sept. 11th made me focus more on the 'self'."



much money on food, because Muslims can do damage to a grill!

**12. Politics is interwoven in our daily life, how do you choose what political topics to tackle and do you avoid certain topics or people?**

**P. Moss:** It seems the events of the day, or politics choose us. We all have our own influences as to what is relevant, and we express it. We all have our specialties, and it is endorsed on the tour to cater to your strength. We only avoid certain topics, because we may not be informed enough to truthfully speak on the topic. In the end it is an individual decision.

**Azeem:** I choose any political topic that is in contradiction to freedom, justice, and equality. I feel that this is needed because so many people are afraid to say how they really feel, but comics are known for saying what others are afraid of saying. I for one don't see the point of doing comedy if I am going to be the same cookie-cutter comedian who is only interested in what the majority feels or says. If you're looking for a cheerleader, go to a football game. If you want comedy that is a symbol with substance, check out "Allah Made Me Funny."

**Azhar:** No comment. I choose to avoid tackling that topic.

**13. What are the main barriers your tour faced?**

**P. Moss:** We've faced financial hardships at times. Business wise, we are a first year start-up company. Nobody on this tour joined to get rich. We started this tour to make a difference, or be part of

change in the Muslim, and non-Muslim community. We have had the challenges of being professional, business savvy, and still remaining a community project. The expectations are high, as are the risks. We have put a lot on the line by being a voice from the Muslim community...and we're not scared, or intimidated by the current atmosphere. I carry a huge personal responsibility as

"We have made it a condition of our contracts that no alcohol or pork be served at our venue."

the senior member of the tour. I have the responsibility of making sure my younger brothers are protected, healthy, and able to provide for their respective families. We must not only maintain or identity as Muslims, but promote the Muslim identity/concept of self-validation, as well.

**Azeem:** All praise is due to Allaah, we haven't faced any.

**Azhar:** The main struggle is one of the spirit. Can three up-and-coming comics really put ego and pride aside to come together for a greater good? People don't believe it's possible – and when they see us do it, there is a spiritual triumph for all involved.



**14. When are we going to see the tour in the Arab world? And what subjects will your performance tackled?**

**P. Moss:** In shaa- Allaah, we will see this tour in the Arab world soon. Our subjects will still be on the aspect of defining the concept of contemporary Muslim identity, and a sense of unity around the identity. They often ask about our American Muslim identity, and we have to be willing to share that with them, but they also want to see a project like this because it represents a lot of the values they hold important.

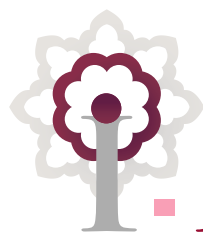
In shaa- Allaah we will be able to do that tour soon. The topics will be the same for the most part, but I will work on dealing with the oppression of women and with females in Islaam.

**Azhar:** God willing, soon, I plan to talk about Arab greatness of the past and Arab backwardness of the present.

I speak the truth, as the 'Qura~n instructs me to, as a witness for God, even if it be against my own self. The truth can sometimes be a real bitter pill – so the comedy helps people swallow it. Let's hope so.

Preacher Moss: "Laughter is an element of our spiritual and Islaamic D.N.A."

To learn more about the tour:  
[www.Allahmademefunny.com](http://www.Allahmademefunny.com)



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# Deedat:

## A LIFE DEDICATED TO DA'WAH

By **Rym Aoudia** [Reem Awdee']  
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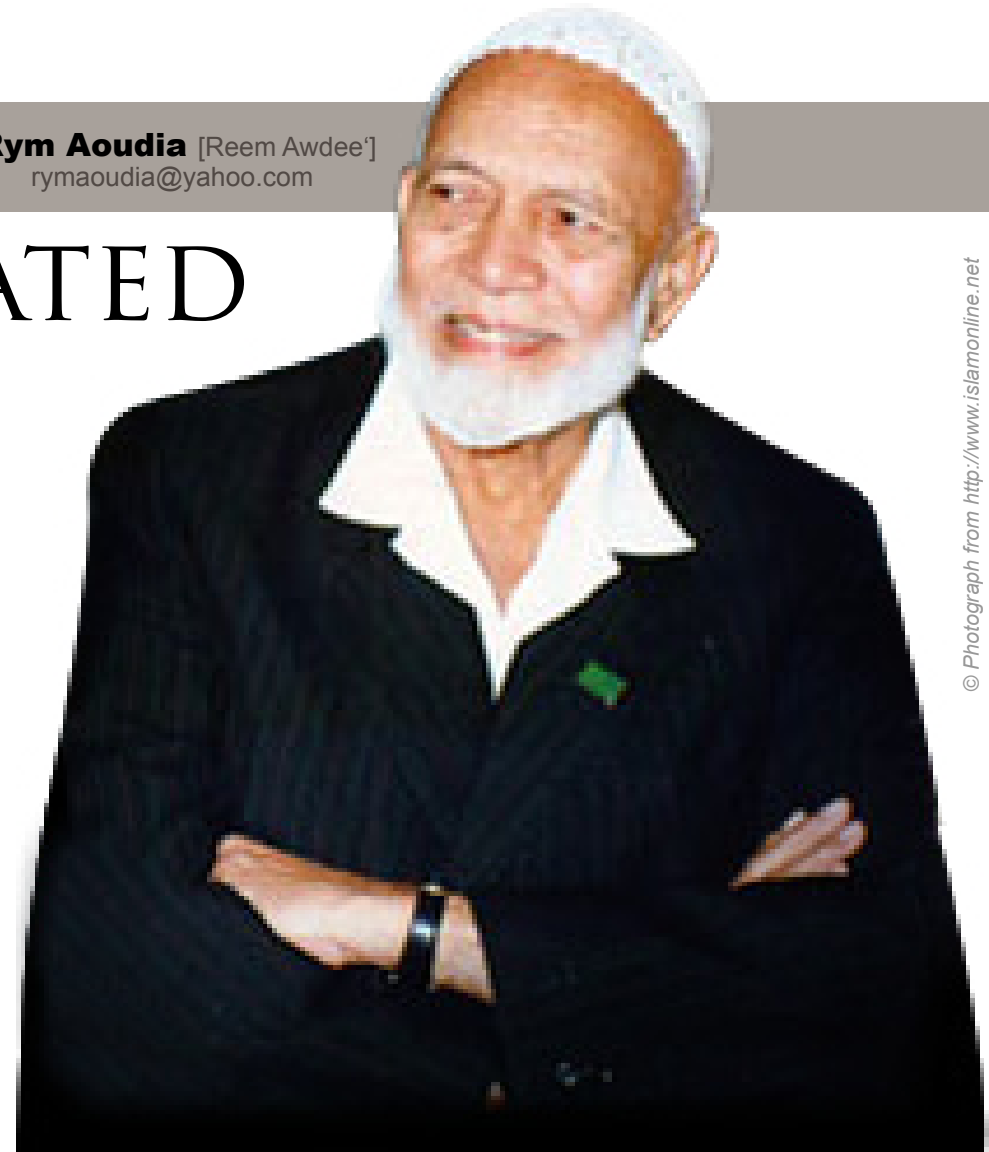
While surfing aimlessly through the T.V. channels, I finally found something worth seeing. A particular channel presented a documentary about a distinguished Muslim. It was unfolding the story of his life that was sincerely dedicated to revealing the truth of Islaam and spreading the message. My heart and mind were immersed in the documentary as I was amazed by this person's vast knowledge and generous contributions. I wondered, however, why I haven't heard of him before.

The documentary was about Ahmad Deedat [A'hmad Deedaat] from South Africa. Although I didn't come across the documentary from the start, I saw enough to become interested and to start learning more about him and his work. I saw his dedication to the message, I saw

his expertise in Islaam and Christianity, I saw his fluency in speaking and I saw a confident pious Muslim.

Born in 1918 in the Surat district of India, Ahmad Deedat lived with his mother while his father moved to South Africa shortly after his birth. Due to extreme poverty and lack of formal schooling, Deedat moved to South Africa to be with his father at the age of nine in 1927. That was also the last time that he would see his mother as she passed away a few months later in India.

Life in South Africa brought many challenges to Deedat but from these challenges opportunities emerged. With no formal education and incompetence in the English language, Deedat strived to excel in school and he certainly did. The



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challenge of living in a new country and learning English did not hinder him from succeeding as he continued to prove his capabilities. Yet only one thing hindered this chain of success in school. It was the financial situation that led him to leave school at a young age.

It was therefore at the age of 16 that Deedat left school and worked at various jobs to earn money. His first jobs were in retailing. The job experience that mostly affected him was while working at a Muslim owned store in the Natal South Coast near a Christian seminary. There, Deedat would encounter different ideologies and his belief would be challenged. It was also there that he would take the first serious step towards Islaamic propagation.

The trainee missionaries from the Christian seminary would constantly insult Islaam during their visits to the store. Deedat was not the kind of person who would passively listen without speaking up for what he believed in. The more they insulted, the more he desired to prove them wrong. It was then unexpectedly that Deedat found a book that inspired him greatly entitled *I'thaarr Al'ha'q*, which can be translated as *The Truth Revealed*. It was this book that helped set the foundation of Deedat's discussions and debates with the trainee missionaries.

*I'thaarr Al'ha'q* is a book that presents the successful methods of the Muslims in India in communicating with the Christians. It was in particular about the period of the British rule in India and the Muslim's techniques in dealing with the Christian missionaries. Deedat was influenced by the skill of debating to spread the message and interact with the Christians. With

this exciting personal discovery, Deedat purchased his first Bible and began to debate with the trainees.

Holding debates and discussions with the trainee missionaries soon became less challenging. They would often walk out while Deedat would call on their teachers and some priests near by. He began stepping forward with da'wah and dedicated himself to defending Islaam and revealing its truth. This enthusiasm never faded, as he was aware of the importance and need to dispel the distortions of Islaam created by the Christian missionaries.

Ahmed Deedat's devotion to da'wah kept growing over the years as he began to give lectures, such as on Bible studies, and also established *As-alam* [Assalaam] institute to train Muslim propagators. With his marriage and the birth of his children, the zeal for da'wah was passed on to his family. Together with his family, Deedat set up the buildings of the institute and the masjid (mosque).

Deedat was also a founding member of the Islaamic Propagation Centre International (I.C.P.I.) in 1957 and became its president. The Centre has a strong presence in the Muslim community in South Africa and has also extended its services worldwide. The Centre's role in da'wah is evident in the many courses and lectures it delivers and in the free Islaamic publications it makes available to all.

Deedat wrote many books, including: "Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction", "Al-Qura'n the Miracle of Miracles", "What the Bible Says about Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him.)", and "Is the Bible God's Word?" He also presented numerous lectures all over

the world and debated many Christian evangelists. One of the most remembered debates is that with Jimmy Swaggart held in the United States on the topic "Is the Bible the Word of God?" Another famous debate was entitled, "Was Christ Crucified", in which he impressively debated Bishop Josh McDowell in Durban in 1981. The last lecture he gave was held in Sydney, Australia in 1996 and was known to be one of his most influential talks. It was in the same year that Deedat became ill.

By Allaah's will, Ahmed Deedat suffered a serious stroke in 1996 and was confined to bed since then. During those years Deedat received many letters of support and personal visits. His memory was still sharp and he communicated using eye movements. Even while being bedridden, Deedat continued to influence others as some entered Islaam through his talks or publications.

It was also Allaah's will for Ahmed Deedat to leave this world on August 8, 2005 at the age of 87. Some knew this was coming while some hoped that he would return to contribute to our oummah (nation). He was a voice that was greatly needed. His style of da'wah was unique in that he relied on detailed analysis of the Bible rather than the traditional method of using the 'Qura'n and 'Hadeeth to propagate. This method proved to be successful as the Christian missionaries he debated would often overlook certain Biblical verses that Deedat would highlight.

A few words would not do justice to what Ahmed Deedat achieved and to the vast knowledge he incredibly self-taught himself to become a scholar of comparative religion. Many people have entered

Islaam having been inspired by Deedat. In 1986, he was awarded the eminent and prestigious King Faisal International Prize by the King Faisal Foundation for Service to Islaam, which was the first to be awarded to a South African. Deedat was focused on his mission and on the goals he strived to achieve. He also raised Islaamic propagation to a higher and international level.

What I have learnt about Ahmad Deedat had a profound effect on me. I was inspired by his knowledge. I saw his dedication to his goal and how he was focused on achieving it. I prayed that he would get better and return to us. I wanted to hear his voice again. I wanted to hear his opinion of what was happening in our society. I wanted to meet his wonderful wife who stood by his side. And I mainly wished that I could one day meet Deedat and simply say, "Thank you for your productive efforts."

Recently, as I was surfing once again through the T.V. channels, I finally came across something worth seeing. To my surprise, this particular channel was broadcasting Ahmed Deedat's lectures and debates as a tribute to his work and efforts in da'wah after he passed away. I soon became immersed in the lecture, listening attentively to his every word. I then wondered: will we have more Deedats?

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**By Robert Jensen\***  
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# THE PATRIOTIC Press

In the United States it can seem as if any event - no matter how tragic - creates a public-relations opportunity for the self-proclaimed guardians of patriotism.

And there seems to be no patriotic public-relations gambit that the U.S. news media won't swallow.

So, there's nothing unusual about either the Pentagon's plans to pump up support for a failed war in Iraq by holding a Sept. 11 "Freedom Walk" in Washington, DC, or the Washington Post's initial decision to be a sponsor of the event.

But the Post's eventual withdrawal of that sponsorship highlights the fundamental problem with U.S. journalism's intellectually incoherent claim to neutrality.

First, more about the event, the full title of which is the "America Supports You Freedom Walk." Technically the "you" is U.S. soldiers and sailors. Americans are asked to honour military personnel and veterans, remember those who died in the 9/11 attacks, and understand how all this is linked to our freedom.

Just how are they linked? Well, they (the terrorists) hate us for our

freedoms, which we love. That's why they (again, the terrorists) attacked us on 9/11. There are terrorists (maybe not the terrorists, but terrorists all the same) in Iraq. Fighting those terrorists in Iraq are U.S. troops - our brothers and sisters, friends and neighbours - and we obviously support them in whatever they are doing. So, we should all want to flock to the nation's capital to express our support - no matter how transparent the political motivations.

If some of the factual assertions and all of the logic in that seem a little off, well, just go to [www.asy-freedomwalk.com](http://www.asy-freedomwalk.com) for answers. Then

click on "Register" and remember to include your t-shirt size so that you can be a walking billboard for years to come.

It's not that freedom isn't worth celebrating, or that people killed in terrorist attacks don't deserve to be remembered, or that we shouldn't care about people in the armed forces. But this whole charade is motivated by a simple fact: Polls show a majority of people in the United States believe not only that the war is going badly at the moment but that it was a mistake. This shabby attempt at emotional-political manipulation would barely rise to the level



of a bad joke if it weren't being taken seriously by people outside Pentagon propaganda office.

That included Washington Post executives who signed up as a sponsor. When journalists and antiwar activists suggested there might be a problem with a news media company being identified with such an event, the newspaper dropped out. According to a company spokesman, "it appears that this event could become politicized" and "it is The Post's practice to avoid activities that might lead readers to question the objectivity of The Post's news coverage."

Could become politicized? Is there any way a literate adult could look at the Freedom Walk and not realize it's a political PR stunt? But the real problem lies deeper. The implication of the Post's response is that a generic patriotic event - one not so clearly constructed to build support for disastrous policy decisions - would be politically neutral and acceptable.

This indicates just how narrow and naïve is mainstream corporate journalism's political worldview.

In that mainstream, journalists make a promise: The public can trust us, because we're neutral on political questions; we'll be objective. Putting aside the fact that much of the public doesn't believe such claims, the as-

sertion is absurd. Nowhere is it more painfully obvious than in the discussion of patriotism.

Many people believe that patriotism - defined as love of, or loyalty to, a nation-state - is a moral virtue. Others argue for adherence to universal principles applied without loyalty to any particular political entity. A few folks even take the Christian Bible seriously, believing ultimate loyalty belongs to God and patriotism is idolatry.

Whatever we believe, the position we take is - in the deepest sense of the term - a political position. No matter how common patriotic declarations are, endorsing patriotism is not neutral.

So, no amount of rhetorical gymnastics could render the Freedom Walk an apolitical patriotic event. Patriotic events are, by definition, politicized.

Yet U.S. journalists constantly assert that one can be patriotic and neutral. After 9/11, journalists fell over themselves to proclaim their patriotism. When attacked by administration pit-bulls for raising even tepid questions about government policy in the run-up to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, journalists explained that being a sceptical journalist was the highest form of patriotism.

So, U.S. journalists are neutral on all political questions except the political questions on which they aren't neutral. Beyond the question of patriotism, the core issues on which most U.S. journalists are not neutral are (1) the naturalness of capitalism as the only possible economic system; (2) the inherent benevolence of U.S. foreign policy; and (3) the acceptance of the Republican and Democratic parties as the definers of relevant political positions.

U.S. journalists don't openly endorse these political positions, but these ideas form the common sense on which mainstream reporting, even when critical, is based. If capitalism produces grotesque inequality and suffering, it's just a matter of tinkering with the rules to improve things. Policies that cause hundreds of thousands deaths abroad are the result of good-faith efforts of U.S. policymakers, who sometimes make mistakes as they strive to improve the world. If social movements present political proposals that the main parties reject, such dissident positions are not "practical" and hence irrelevant.

Journalists can strive for independence, especially from concentrated centres of power such as the state or the corporation. Journalists can try to be open-minded about political positions they find distasteful and sceptical of those in which they believe.

But one thing journalists cannot be is neutral, because there is no neutral ground on which to stand - for journalists or anyone else in this world.

The U.S. public would be better served if the illusory neutrality and objectivity on which the corporate commercial news media claim to rest were abandoned for an honest accounting of the political positions in which they are rooted. Such an accounting would help expose corporate media's systematic subordination to state and corporate power, one important step toward creating meaningful democracy in the United States.

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# Islaamic RADICALISM or Defensive MECHANISM?

## MUSLIM “RAGE VIRUS” SPREADING BEYOND FRANCE

By **Edwin Anthony**

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There are quite a number of state-ments - the above is one example - that are laying the blame for the most recent of the uprisings in France on Islaamic radicalism.

Islaamic radicalism is essentially indistinguishable from national radicalism. Of course, national radicalism is not known as such. This is because national radicalism springs from the “state”, which basically means, “that which is” or “that which is allowed or recognised to be a legitimate first cause. In other words, the state becomes that from which all actions and thoughts can emerge. Thus, national radicalism becomes a seemingly high-sounding “patriotism” – at least to

those who, like our juvenile cousins across the straits of the Atlantic like to say, “get with the program”.

Islaamic radicalism, however, is action and thought not coming from a state even if its community may be as numerous as any particular U.N.-endorsed state or even larger than the state that endorses the U.N. Thus, without a “state” – or “body” – its actions are understood in itself and stripped of cause. It is like the traditional “God” that creates itself. Of course, we have to cast aside any scientific notions we might have that would undermine our faith in the allegation that it creates itself, or risk sanctions which all scientifically or

rationally inclined persons, from Copernicus onward to the present had to endure in the face of the ecclesiastical inclinations of the powers of the day.

“Radicalism” is basically a “reaction to”, though it is commonly perceived to be a phenomenon in itself because its consequences are more salient than its causes - at least to the observer or victim of radicalism. When we call Islaamic radicals, “radicals”, we generally do so not because of what they do, but because they don’t have a state from which what they do can be given another name.

Islaamic patriotism, like national patriotism, or, Islaamic radicalism,

like national radicalism, is a paradigm through which self-defence is articulated. Offence, however, is the grounds from whence emerges the propensity to engage in defence. Before we use the “R” word, and allege that Islaamic, Hindu, Christian or Buddhist “radicalism” is behind acts of violence, we have to first inquire after the grounds upon which offence might be caused, lest we mistake the means via which defence is articulated for the cause. The burden of proof must be placed on the prosecution.

Unless, of course, one has good reason to believe that the self-defence mechanism has its origins in Islaam.

# LOFTY ToOns



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# A BOOK **Without** ERRORS

By **Ibrahim Babelli** [Ibraaheem Baabilly]

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To Roger Williams belongs the famous quote "To err is human, to forgive is divine." Hereafter, we will concern ourselves with the first half of his famous saying.

To err is, undoubtedly, human. This succinct expression sums up the third and final aspect of the last miracle, namely, the 'Qura~n. If to err is human, then not to err must be divine.

Muslims claim that the 'Qura~n is a book without errors. And this is one of the major tents of Muslim dogma, especially in relation to the authenticity of the prophethood of Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.). The funda-

mental argument for this tenet is actually found in the 'Qura~n itself: "Then do they not reflect upon the 'Qura~n? If it had been from [any] other than Allaah, they would have found within it much contradiction." (Chapter of Annisaa-, verse 82)

The 'Qura~n claims that none of the information found therein are erroneous, contradictory, or false. For Arabs of the time of the message of Islaam, the claim of error-free text implicitly meant that this verbose text had no grammar, style, or linguistic errors or weaknesses. This claim extends, however, beyond linguistics to other areas which include history and science, to name a few.



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IF TO ERR IS HUMAN,  
THEN NOT TO ERR MUST BE DIVINE

But let us take a step back and ask ourselves: What is the 'Qura~n?

The 'Qura~n is a revealed book that champions one cause only, namely, the oneness of God, and in doing so it relates to us stories of people from the past and what happened to them, in addition to information about the future and what will become of creation, plus a short list of rules and regulations, few of which are explicit and the majority are of general nature.

In championing monotheism, the 'Qura~n tells us the stories of many people who lived long time ago and who were called upon by prophets of God to worship Him alone. The details vary from one story to the other, but since the purpose of the 'Qura~n was not to tell stories per se, but to champion monotheism, the text invokes necessary references whenever the need calls for such. Therefore, a significant body of historical data is dispersed within the 'Qura~n, some of which may be scrutinized against proven historical facts, while some still await scrutiny.

Similarly, in describing behaviours of individuals or in bringing forth examples from nature to illustrate divine mandates or interventions, the 'Qura~nic text refers to scientific information. Most scientific references in the 'Qura~n are used to encour-

age people to distinguish between what the Creator did and does and how He cannot be emulated.

The 'Qura~n is neither a history

does not believe in the divine origin of the 'Qura~n, it remains that the 'Qura~nic text started with a couple of verses, which were immediately communicated to a close circle of rel-

Twenty-three years is a long period of time for the compilation of any work. And even though it gives the author, had the author been human, ample time to review the material, it would most likely introduce a measure of error and contradiction, however small.

Let us consider an example that illustrates this point.

The story of Joseph (the son of Jacob) is told in great detail in the chapter the bears Joseph's name in the 'Qura~n. It relates the story of the forced journey he took to Egypt and how he eventually ascended to power there, following a period of incarceration. The title of the Egyptian monarch explicitly given – several times – in the chapter of Joseph is “King”. The story of Moses in Egypt, as told in the 'Qura~n, clearly states that the title of the Egyptian monarch at the time of Moses was “Pharaoh”. Historical records prove that the title “Pharaoh” was never used prior to 1490 BC, whereas Joseph lived in Egypt during the reign of the Hyksos dynasty circa 1700 BC when the title of the monarch, as confirmed by historical records, was “King”. The author of the 'Qura~nic text either knew this (highly unlikely for a man during the seventh century AD) or was lucky not to make this mistake. The Old Testament, however, made no distinction between



book nor a science book. It is a book that asks you to believe in the oneness of God. The verses of the 'Qura~n, Muslims believe, were revealed to the prophet over a period of twenty-three years. Even if one

atives and friends, and then as more text became available, it was further communicated to more people and ordered to be written on parchments and other boards for inscription.

the monarchs of Joseph and Moses; both were labelled "Pharaoh".

There are many examples in the 'Qura~n that attest to the divine origin of its text. The crux of its claim to divinity and miraculous nature is evidenced by its lack of errors and contradictions. When the text was revealed, the knowledge of Arabs was limited – mainly – to linguistics, and we can safely assume that had there been any linguistic error, it would have surfaced. But the 'Qura~n includes many other references to historical, geographical and scientific issues, cited in the context of calling people to the true religion of God. People have scrutinized the 'Qura~n for errors and contradictions in these areas, such as in the famous work of Maurice Bucaille, which compared scientific references found in the 'Qura~n and in the Bible to modern data. He found no errors in the 'Qura~n.

The same cannot be said about either the Old or the New Testaments. Luke (3:23) claimed that Jesus began his ministry at the age of thirty. Historical evidence refutes this claim. Jesus was born during the reign of King Herod the Great of Judaea and began his ministry following the imprisonment of John the Baptist, who was incarcerated for rebuking Antipas for marrying his own niece. This amounts to – at least – thirty-

eight years of age when Jesus began his ministry.

The dates fixed for creation in the Old Testament are simply wrong. Jesus's genealogy is not the same between the Gospels. The reason for those contradictions and errors in the Bible (only eluded to here but can be found in details in the refer-

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ences given below) is really simple. To quote the 'Qura~n again: "If it had been from [any] other than Allaah, they would have found within it much contradiction."

The number of gospels known to exist or to have existed is far greater than four; the number of the canonical gospels found in the Bible. Each gospel has its unique traits and details, which – quite often – contradict other gospels. The Old Testament is a collection of several texts; with the "Yahvist", "Elohism", and "Sacerdotal" versions being the recognized ones. The "Yahvist" and "Sacerdotal" texts intertwine in the first eleven chapters

of Genesis. This intertwining of the text resulted in many contradictions between parts of the text itself, in addition to significant historical and scientific errors.

You will not find this in the 'Qura~n, because it is the preserved and authentic revelation from God.

There remains one point that needs to be addressed. The scriptures, whether we are speaking about the 'Qura~n or the Bible, are neither science books nor history references. One should not go head-over-heels to find scientific data therein. It is true that the reader of the Bible or the 'Qura~n would find references to scientific information, for such information accompanied the call to monotheism in its pure form. If we believe, however, that the scriptures' author is none other than God, at least prior to human manipulation, then one should naturally expect to find scientific and historic data that cannot be explained by human knowledge at the time of revelation; such is miraculous.

The test of truthfulness and authenticity was outlined by the 'Qura~n itself to test the veracity of scriptures, starting with its own veracity being submitted to the test: "If it had been from [any] other than Allaah, they would have found within it much contradiction."

Many believers in Judaism, Christianity and Islaam have sifted through their scriptures with zealous efforts to obtain scientific theories and proofs thereof. Each one of those believers, undoubtedly honest in his or her attempt to establish the divine link to their respective scriptures, overlooked the two axioms for the true scriptures:

First: God's revelation would enjoin people to worship Him alone. All scriptures are but an elaborate call for monotheism.

Second: The test of veracity and authenticity is simple and easily applicable to any text claimed to have originated from God: "If it had been from [any] other than Allaah, they would have found within it much contradiction."

The only text that passes this test is the 'Qura~n.

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# Welcoming MUSLIM HUMOR

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We all enjoy a good hearty laugh now and then. A home with laughter is cheerful and happy. It is this friendly environment at home that makes it healthy and strong. A light-hearted Muslim is also enjoyable to be with, and joking with the people close to us is a bonding experience. Humour has the power of bringing people closer, lifting their spirits, and relieving them from the pressures of daily life.

Being funny or laughing at something funny is part of human nature and creates a balance in our life. There are times when we are serious and times when we are humorous. When we are serious we should not go to extreme of

being harsh, and when we are humorous we should not go to extreme of being foolish. Islaam is a way of life that is balanced and it permits and understands the need for laughter and humour. Yes, Islaam welcomes humour.

The Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) was cheerful with his family and there were times when he joked with the companions. The stories are various and this includes a particular story with his wife 'Aa-ishah. The Prophet raced 'Aa-ishah when she was young and she won the race. Later, after she put on some weight, he wanted to race her again. This time the Prophet won. He laughed and said, "This one is for that one." (Re-

ported by Aboo Daawood)  
The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) also used to joke with a child of one of the companions. As reported in "Hayaat A's'sa'haabah" (3/149), the young child was called Aboo 'Umayr and he had a small bird that he used to play with. The Prophet noticed one day that Aboo 'Umayr was sad and he questioned why. The companions told him, "The nu'gar [a small bird, like a sparrow] which he used to play with has died, O Messenger of Allaah." The Prophet went to the child and gently started to joke with him saying, "O Aboo 'Umayr, what happened to the nu'gayr?" [Nu'gayr is the diminutive of nu'gar. In Arabic, this is a play on words, because of the rhyme between the boy's name and

that of the bird.] The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) humorously used the technique of play on words to make the child smile. Another example is when an old woman came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and she asked him to pray for her to enter Paradise. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) joked with her and informed her that no old women will enter Paradise. Upon hearing this, the woman cried but she was then told that she will not enter Paradise as an old woman because the people of Paradise will be young and that is how she will enter Paradise (Reported by Attirmidh>y). The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) therefore joked and Aboo Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet was told, "O Messenger of Allaah, you are joking with us." He said,



"I only say what is true." (Reported by Attirmidh>y). This indicates that while the Prophet joked his jokes were descent and truthful and this serves as a lesson for us.

Since humour is a positive and necessary part of life and is seen in the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), why hasn't it been welcomed properly within the Muslim community?

Taking the road of humour can be a bumpy ride, and because of this the Muslim community might have chosen to keep away from it. Some rarely smile and when asked for the reason they would reply that there's too much to worry about and laughing is unsuitable when our fellow Muslims are suffering. It's true that each and every one of us should be concerned with what is happening, but smiling is an act of charity and laughing is a blessing from Allaah. We express our concern by helping out and not by being passively disappointed. The Prophet, who was concerned about all Muslims and carried the big responsibility of conveying the message, knew when to be serious and when to be light-hearted.

Another reason for keeping distant from humour is that it can be considered a risky act that might involve inappropriate jokes, being hurtful to others, or conveying lies through it. Humour that complies with Islaamic guidelines is not common. The mainstream humour we see either uses unsuitable content or mocks our religion. Islaam calls for healthy humour that will not in any way challenge or go

against Islaamic teachings and brings with it fruitful results. We need humour that is not offensive, has no foul language, and does not poke fun at our religion. Not welcoming humour properly therefore comes as no surprise. However, while the path of humour is a road that must be treaded carefully, many Muslims nowadays have taken up the challenge and are welcoming humour to the community. The humour that has been welcomed brings with it promising fruits as it either serves our faith or enlightens us.

The talented American Muslim comedian Azhar Usman, in a Rising Star interview, said "it takes greater skill, more talent and craft to deliver clean material and get the same amount of laughs." He adds, "I have a filtering process. I ask myself, 'A - is it acceptable by Sharee'ah (Islaamic law, ethics, and theology)?' and, 'B - is it appropriate and inoffensive?'" And I regularly consult with Islaamic scholars." Azhar Usman is popularly known as part of the "Allah Made Me Funny" comedy tour with other exceptional American Muslim comedians, Preacher Moss and Azeem.

In their "Allah Made Me Funny" website, Preacher Moss talks about their aim, saying "the concept of this tour is to make a comprehensive effort to provide effective, significant, and appropriate comedy with an Islaamic perspective, which is both mainstream and cross-cultural. The idea is to provide a venue whereby Muslims and non-Muslims can feel safe, relevant, and inclusive of an

experience where humour is used to bridge gaps of bias, intolerance, and other social ills that are pre and post 9/11 relevant."

The humour welcomed by such Muslim comedians has brought an experience of social growth in the community. It is great entertainment as well by Muslims to both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Humour also takes different forms. To our benefit, humour is being welcomed in various means within the Muslim community to suit various tastes. It has come in the form of stand-up comedy, as previously mentioned, and also in comic strips and humour writing.

Linda (Widad) Delgado, Author-Publisher-American Muslim, Arizona, USA, is working on a comic strip called "Grandma and Hijab-ez" based on her Islamic Rose children's books. In her endeavour to do so, Delgado informed us that "it takes a lot of effort and time to get the main point across in a way that will be funny to many people." Regarding her aim in delivering funny material to the Muslim community, she says, "People learn in different ways. For some, it is by reading written words. For others, it is visual images that create the necessary connection between information and learning...[and]s a good comic strip can get your message across. Prophet Mu'hammad (P.B.U.H.) had a wonderful sense of humour and his example shows us that cultivating one for ourselves is good and Islaamic. Good comic humour puts smiles on people's faces and makes

them feel good, and that makes me feel good, too!"

Nancy E. Biddle, a Canadian-Muslim writer, is stepping into humour writing and has started by writing about her personal experiences from being a convert to getting married, and the "bumps along the way." She wants to produce work that is "humorous, but also touching and useful." Those words probably sum up what most Muslim humorists aim for by striving to present work that is beneficial.

Azhar Usman, Linda Delgado, and Nancy E. Biddle are all examples of practicing Muslims who have entered the humour arena and are aiming to take it to a professional level. They are properly welcoming the art of Muslim humour and are overcoming the challenges on their way. In my comic strip writing experience, I could relate to them and to how this path is a constant learning process by learning what the audience likes, what to present, and how to present it. It is also important for the audience to interact with this work and to provide feedback that would help blossom this needed art according to Islaamic guidelines.

Humour is healthy and refreshing. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had a sense of humour. The companions often laughed together. Humour is no stranger to Islaam but simply needs to be welcomed properly and could even benefit people from different religions and culture groups. So let's welcome clean Muslim humour that is sparkly clean and sparkly funny!

# A New Logic for SUICIDE TERRORISM

By **Saadeh Khalil** [Sa'aadah 'Kaleel]

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The US president and his administration constantly justify the “War on Terrorism” as being a holy war and that the invasion of Iraq was upon God’s orders. Such belief in divine commandment to wage war leaves little doubt about the similarity between the US administration, headed by George W. Bush, and the extreme fundamentalists with their demeaning views of other races and religions.

In one of his recent speeches, the US president argued that terrorism

is based on extremist ideology that does not tolerate opposition, and justifies killing innocent people as one of the best means to a goal. The US president accused others of utilizing ideologies to achieve their goals and forgot himself and his claim that God commanded him to invade Iraq. He also forgot that the roots of his “War on Terrorism” are based on a neo-conservative ideology that he both believes in and implements. His many slips of the tongue speak volumes on this issue. And nowhere the ideological

racism of this administration has been clearer than in its reaction to the plight of US citizens whose lives were shattered in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

Warmongers, in advocating war on terrorism, as well as the majority of Western political analysts and their Arab cohorts, base violence, in general, and suicide bombing, in particular, on religious ideology, without bothering themselves with a clear definition of what they mean by violence. The real reasons of vio-

lence, such as occupation, injustice, oppression, poverty and humiliation, are never considered, and the fact that violence is not restricted to a single religion or a single race would never be discussed, let alone admitted.

Recently, and four years after 9/11, a new logic for “terrorism” and “suicide terrorism” emerged in the US. The most notable work that represents this new logic is a book by Robert Pape, associate professor of political science at the University

of Chicago and the director of the "Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism". The book is entitled "Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism."

The importance of this book stems from its academic professionalism, and its detachment from any alliance with ideologies and partisanship. It builds on facts and evidences and arrives at logical conclusions.

The book is centered around a thorough study of suicide bombings, and clearly shows that Bush's war on terrorism is both futile and is based on wrong strategy, because it does not deal with the strategic goals of terrorism.

The author starts from where the wrong decisions of the US administration ended, namely, ruinous disasters. The misguided strategy used by the US administration to stop terrorism and block its spread in the future is built on a fallacy. The US administration squared their counter-terrorism efforts on the claim that Muslims all over the world are against the US because of Islaam's innate hatred of Western values in general and US values in particular. The overwhelming evidence put forth in the book clearly shows that the foreign and military policies of the US administration are the real

reason behind the alienation of Muslims, not their dislike of Western economic and political values.

The author counted suicide terrorism bombings from 1980 to 2003; he found 315 such attacks. The percentage of attacks perpetrated by Islaamic groups was lower than those perpetrated by non-Muslim groups. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka (Marxist-Leninist group drawn from Hindu families) claimed 76 attacks, while 36 were recorded in Lebanon by Hezbollah and other nationalist (non-Islaamic) groups targeting both US and Israeli presence in Lebanon. Next on the list of total attacks are unknown Iraqis who targeted US occupation forces and their allies, then comes Al'qaa'idah. Chechen Muslims, Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members and Sikh loyalists complete the list.

One of the most important conclusions the author arrives at is the refutation of the claims that suicide bombing is a random act of meaningless terror without strategic goals. Every suicide terrorist campaign has had a clear goal, which is generally both secular and strategic: to compel an occupier (ironically enough the occupier being a modern democracy) to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists

view as their homeland. With data from more than 460 such attackers – including the names of 333 – we now know that these individuals are not mainly poor, desperate criminals or uneducated religious fanatics but are often well-educated, middle-class political activists.

In what follows, we will give a brief overview of this important book that attracted the attention of many experts both within the US and without, mainly due to the extensive database of figures and facts that the author compiled spanning more than 23 years.

The book is divided into three major parts: The first is devoted to strategic logic, the second to social logic and the third to individual logic. The book, with its three parts, attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- Why is suicide terrorism used?
- 2- What are the conditions that beget suicide attacks?
- 3- What is the nature of the individuals who perpetrate suicide bombing?

In the first part of the book, the author stresses that suicide terrorism is the most lethal of all, because it causes the largest number of fatalities. Suicide terrorism is direct,

according to the author, almost exclusively towards democratic states because they are uniquely vulnerable to terrorist attacks; the most lethal attack is, therefore, used where it is most effective to forcibly yield what the terrorists want. The author claims that suicide terrorism is a strategically logical phenomenon rather than it being irrational, religiously fanatic, or hateful. He bases his arguments on three reasons:

- 1- Timing. The majority of all attacks are coordinated and coherent. They are neither isolated nor random, as is commonly reported.
- 2- Nationalistic goals. Suicide attacks aim to regain control over their homeland by driving the foreign occupier out of the targeted areas.
- 3- Target selection. All suicide attacks, during the past two decades, targeted democracies; easy targets from the terrorists' perspective. Resistance movements facing non-democratic foes never resort to suicide attacks to apply pressure.

As for the first reason given above, the author emphasizes that 95% of all suicide attacks since 1980 were orchestrated and organized attacks. He also expounded on the second reason by giving examples of 'Hamaas and Al'qaa'idah attacks that were related to the occupying presence of Israelis settlers for the

former and due to increased military presence of US during the Gulf war for the latter. The author also claims that suicide terrorism succeeded in obtaining concessions from targeted states, which triggered further attacks since the perpetrators saw that this method works.

The second part of the book gives a detailed discussion of the social conditions that instigate suicide attacks. The author claims that foreign occupation by democratic states (whose religion is different than that of the occupied nation) fueled suicide attacks, especially after all peaceful uprisings and civil resistances failed to secure any concessions or gains. The differing religions between the occupied and the occupier plays a crucial role in fermenting national identity and facilitates targeting the forces of occupation, which has become an easy target for hatred and, henceforth, suicide attacks.

According to the analysis in the second part of the book, suicide terrorism follows a strategic logic that is not ultimately resorted to unless all other means have been exhausted. The second chapter of the part two deals specifically with Al'qaa'idah. The author compares, therein, between the influence of the US occupation and that of Islaamic fundamentalism, as the root cause

behind Al'qaa'idah's terrorism. Fundamentally, fundamentalism, to the author, is not a one and single thing. He distinguishes between fundamentalism, Islaamic fundamentalism, and Salafist fundamentalism [considered to be the most extreme form of fundamentalism in Western media jargon]. The author assesses the influence of Salafism on Middle Eastern countries and compares it with the influence of the US military presence. He finds no meaningful statistical correlation between US presence and terrorism, and further notices that a mere alliance with the US military ignites suicide terrorism. The last chapter of the second part – the longest in the book – deals with a multitude of terrorist organizations whose attacks are weighed on the scale of the author's theories. Most notable of the findings is that those organizations have a wide base of support in their respective societies.

The last part of the book addresses the reasons that make the individuals perpetrate suicide terrorism; the crux of the matter, in my opinion. Suicide bombers are normal people; they are neither isolated nor out-cast. Building on this, the first chapter of the third part discusses the altruistic nature of suicide bombers.

With the exception of Sri Lanka per-

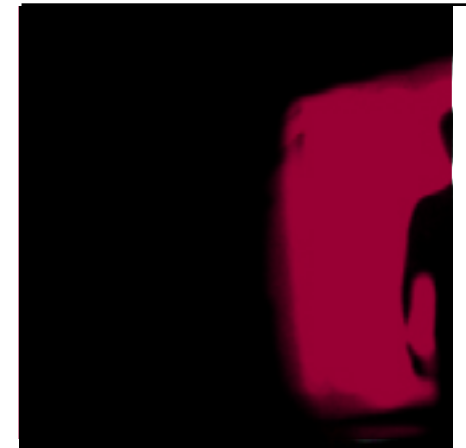
haps, the authors finds that individual suicides are very rare in societies that produced suicide bombers. And this point is further expounded by the author in proving that those who perpetrate suicide bombing are not suicidal by nature; they work in cohesive groups that rarely experience individual suicides. Suicide bombers always justify their actions on the premise that they are defending their societies, hence the societal support.

In the second chapter of the last part, the author builds on the database he collected by analyzing the demographic information of the individual suicide bombers. In Lebanon, for example, the majority of individuals who perpetrated the attacks were members in social, communist and/or secular movements, and some of them were even Christians. These demographic details were surprising, to put it mildly.

The average age of suicide bombers ranged between 22.9 and 30 years, depending on the locality, and the majority of them were secular rather than religious. And to top this up, the author noticed that suicide bombers, in general were educated (high school at least), came from middle class families and most of them had stable careers.

The author concludes by proposing a

solution to this dilemma. He considers polls of Arabs who hate the US administration because of its imperialist foreign policies, and not as the neo-conservatives claim, especially the likes of David Frum and Richard Perle in their propagandist claim of "Terror Against Americans." The author adds that the democratization of the Middle East is not the answer to terrorism and that the further the military presence would increase the further the suicide attacks would increase. Therefore, the author recommends withdrawing the US occupying forces from the Arabian Peninsula and from Iraq, while he insists on improving US national security in certain areas, including taking precautionary measures such as building a wall along the US-Mexican border.





# Beyond Enemy Lines

AN EXTRAORDINARY MISSION

By  
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On October 24th, 2005, the world celebrated the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, which was established near the end of World War II (1939-1945), to be an effective successor for the League of Nations, which was founded after the World War I (1914-1918).

## Brief History

On June 26th, 1945, representatives of 50 states signed in San Francisco the United Nations Charter as the outcome of the United Nations Conference on International Organisation. Thereafter, on declaring the casualties of World War II, humanity found that 50 million people – representing 3% of world population at that time – were lost during this bloody and insane war; 20 million soldiers and 30 million civilians, including the 120,000 people who were killed during the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and August 9th, 1945 respectively. Following this bitter

reality, the charter came into force on October 24th, 1945.

## Mission

The Charter organises the framework of the U.N. which is summarised within the Preamble in the following main points:

- To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind;
  - To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small;
  - To establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained;
  - To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.
- Therefore, we simply can conclude that U.N was/is willing to sustain co-operation among its members for the

sake of humanity welfare.

## Quick Review (1945-2005)

By tracing the world situation during this period, we can see both successes and failures. However, today – in the 21st century – many places are still facing the problems of poverty, ignorance and serious diseases. Other major problems like nuclear disarmament, environmental issues, hate, misunderstanding, and miscommunication among different nations – either poor or rich – can be clearly seen. Another serious problem, which cannot be ignored, is the absence of justice in different places, especially after the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

## Humanity Challenges

I see that we – humans – need to stop for a while in order to make a real evaluation of the whole situation humanity is facing right now; such an evaluation must be honestly done on different levels in order to plan real

approaches in order to solve those problems.

In spite of the failure in many situations, I still do believe that the U.N. is the meeting point; it is the best place for different nations to gather in order to cooperate. However, we need to ponder on how such cooperation could take place.

I believe that a good step on reforming U.N. role was the “Millennium Declaration”. It was the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, which took place between 14th-16th of September. It is an ambitious eight-point plan that nations are willing to fulfil by the year 2015. The points are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;

5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

## Finding the Way to the Light

In order to maintain such goals, it is important to emphasise the U.N. role within a collection of acts; where the priority should be and always be for working within the umbrella of the U.N. and not to legitimize unilateral acts from any country under any circumstances, like the invasion of Iraq in 2003; not only because this contradicts the U.N. mission, but also because this opens the door for duplicating the same mistake in the future – wherever and by whoever– and this will increase tension indeed.

No one accepts terrorism, no matter what. The war on terrorism is important, but not like what we see today. I believe that this war should be targeted towards the real problems that produce such terrorist rise everywhere, under different ideologies and religions. In parallel, people should not confuse the definitions of the illegal acts of “terrorism” and the legal acts of “resistance”.

I’m not looking for Utopia, it will never exist on Earth, simply because we are humans; good and evil will always be there. However, what I am calling for is simply Justice. This is what Mar-



tin Luther King, Jr. said before: “True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.”

For any chemical reaction to take place it needs a medium. I believe that peace is the best medium for maintaining welfare on this planet. This peace, however, will not occur until real justice can be achieved in different places worldwide, in a respectable way for every human.

Justice, which I am calling for, is not only in the global relations; rather it must begin in between the citizens of the same community of every nation,

and the radius of this circle should thereafter dynamically expand to cover the world. It must also highlight one very important point, which is respecting every nation’s culture, and not to force a special life style according to what others think.

## Muslims and the Humanity

Muslims are part of humanity, as we are representing about 23% of the world population today. So obviously we are looking forward to make the world a better place. However, this can only happen when people understand what Islaam and Muslims are – those who live in Muslim countries as well as the

minorities in other countries. We have our problems but we are trying to solve them (as I discussed in a past article entitled “The Others: Who Hates Who” In the 5th issue of I-MAG).

## Final Words

Technology never guarantees welfare for humanity unless it is adapted for helping people to be better, whatever the colour of their skin might be.

It is important to be honest in our approach as we will not succeed unless we pass through the barriers of fear, and this could only come by trying to understand and respect each other more than what I see today worldwide in 2005.

Allaah Almighty did not create us to fight each other for no particular reason; rather He Almighty created us to cooperate and maintain what is better for mankind. “O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allaah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allaah is Knower, Aware.” (Chapter of Al’hujuraat, verse 13)

Shall we see progress in the future? I do not have an answer right now. However, via true acts, we may be able to avoid waking up one day to World War III or IV.

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

OTHERS

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

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

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# 'Hijaab Scrutinised

(Part 4 of 4)

## THE BEAUTY OF 'HIJAAB IN CONCEALING "BEAUTY"

**By Hayat Alyaqout** [Hayaat Alyaa'qoot]  
 hayat@i-mag.org

*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 last part of the series, she talks the two types of beauty and how the 'hijaab beautifully conceals the right type of the two.*

Is it not bitter to be evaluated according to how you look regardless of who you are? What is even bitterer is that when it comes to women, evaluation according to looks seems to be the status quo; it has been prevalent throughout history to the point that made it an unquestionable axiom, unfortunately.

Some legitimate questions impose themselves:

### 1- Why is it wrong to be judged by the appearance?

We should understand that external beauty and internal beauty (character, manners, knowledge ...etc) can very well coexist; they are not antagonistic or mutually exclusive.

The one and only fair judgment would be according to your self-achieved qualities; external beauty is a gift not an achievement. Judging women according to their looks is nothing but a systematic process of dehumanization, or as the French proverb says "sois belle et tais toi" or "be beautiful and shut up." In this case, the utmost



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achievement for a woman is to look nice, and then she is captivated in the vicious cycle of beauty products.

'Hijaab comes here, as a declaration of emancipation in which women clearly declare that they are determined to have a role in this life that goes beyond cashing in on their beauties. Actually, this dispels the stereotype that Islaam came to oppress women and to prevent them from contributing to the society. Had this been true, there would have been no need for 'hijaab since women were going to be confined away from public spheres.

## 2- What is the problem of looking good? Is it not, after all, a natural disposition?

To answer this question, we need to define what beauty is. We know that every word has a denotation and a connotation; denotations are straightforward meanings of words, while connotations come in at a later stage where a word might suggest meanings that are not totally within the borders of the word's denotations. So, the denotation of beauty – while avoiding the aesthetical debates – is “that quality or combination of qualities which delights the senses or mental faculties” according to Oxford dictionary. Nevertheless, the connotation of the word is “sexually attractive”, “tempting” or “seductive.” Many men would call a normal looking woman “beautiful” only because she is half-naked. So, this illusiveness of terms should be also born in mind to

know which type of “beauty” we are talking about.

In a prophetic narration ('hadeeth), the Prophet tells us that “Allaah is beautiful and loves beauty.” Moreover, beautification is urged in the holy 'Qura~n; “O Children of Adam! Take your (zeenah) adornment (by wearing your neat clothes) at every mosque...” (Chapter of Ala'raaf, verse 31) “Say (O Muhammad) ‘Who has forbidden the (zeenah) adoration given by Allaah, which He has produced for his servants...” (Chapter of Ala'raaf, verse 21)

So, beauty – or in the 'Qura~nic terms “zeenah” – is never fought against in Islaam; it's just being put in the right frame, where beauty as sexual attraction is not supposed to be revealed. These two levels are clearly manifested in these verses:

“And say to the believing women ... that they should not display their (zeenah) except that which **appears of it**; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their zeenah except to their husbands ...and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their **hidden zeenah**.” (Chapter of Annoor, verse 31)

In these verses, there are two types of “zeenah”, namely, appearing, i.e., allowed to appear, and hidden, i.e., should be hidden. Appearing zeenah is looking beautiful and presentable which is totally lawful and this is the reason behind allowing women to show



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their faces and hands although they have beauty in them, because they are not sexually attractive. Meanwhile, the rest of the body should be covered because it is the stem of seduction. Note that the second type of zeenah should be hidden – not annihilated – which again accentuates that Islaam is not against beauty, it's just putting it in the right context.

'Hijaab thus does not try to cover the beauty of a woman but rather covers her lust-ignition capability, and had Islaam been concerned with concealing beauty, Allaah would have asked children to cover all their bodies and

even faces since children are the most beautiful of humans.

The prophet of Islaam was known to take good care of his looks, and he said that perfume was one of things he loved most. So, we should not feel guilty if we want to look presentable and be encircled with beauty, but we should be ashamed of turning ourselves into merchandises in the market of lust. And this is the beauty of 'hijaab; concealing the type of beauty that should be concealed, while keeping open all avenues for women to be productive and powerful creatures just like their brothers.

# UNDERSTANDING the HOLOCAUST



By **Abdelwahab Elmessiri\*** [*Abd Alwahhaab Almiseery*]

In his controversial book *The Holocaust Industry*, the Jewish American historian Norman Finkelstein deals with the business of the Holocaust and its relation to Israeli strategic interests.

Western attitudes to members of Jewish communities have been characterised by an apparent dualism that borders on schizophrenia. Jews are seen not as different minorities with their ordinary human quota of good and evil, but as a collective entity called "Jewry," or the Jewish people, which is also a chosen, sacred, or spiritual people. However they have also simultaneously been seen as traders, money lenders, human matter that can be transferred from one place to another according to the needs of the ruling class -- in short, as a functional group.

This dualism has a long genealogy. The Catholic concept of the Jews as a witness people postulates that the Jews, being the vector for one of Christianity's holy books, have to be defended by the Church to the extent that the Church barred their forced conversion. However the Jews were viewed as an unintelligent people carrying an intelligent book. Their very survival in a mean and humble condition, which stood in contrast to that of the saved within the folds of Christianity, was considered to be living testimony to the greatness and glory of the Catholic Church.

The same dualism is manifest in the Protestant restorationist myth that postulated that the restoration of the Jews to the Promised Land was a precondition of the Second Coming and hence of the final salvation. But their restoration was

also seen as a means to facilitate their conversion to Christianity, final salvation becoming final solution. The same dualism has coloured modern Western secular attitudes to the Jews, attitudes which inherited, in modified forms, the theological baggage of earlier times. The Jews were viewed in 19th-century Europe, for example, as a hard-working, talented, unique people, *ein Volk*, an organic people that had a distinct identity and that was organically related to their promised land. But, by that very same token, they do not fit in European society. Therefore, the argument ran, they should be transferred to Palestine, serving Western interests in the bargain.

Thus, ironically, the bestowal of the quality of sacredness upon "the Jewish people" -- this process of immanentisation (making the Jews unique and self-referential) -- has facilitated their instrumentalisation. The dualism colouring western attitudes to the Jews turns out to be more apparent than real, for to sacralise and immanentise someone is also to put him outside the pale of common humanity, and therefore to instrumentalise him becomes an easy matter. Philo-Semitism (Zionism) and anti-Semitism are revealed to be one and the same thing.

The same apparent dualism colours or determines the Western

and Western Jewish attitude to an important event in the history of modern Western civilisation, namely, the extermination of millions of Western Jews at the hands of the Nazi regime. The event is referred to not simply as "extermination" or "genocide," but as "holocaust." The Greek word "holocaust" does not simply mean "destruction by fire" as is suggested by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Rather, it means an offering to the Lord that is not partly burnt (then eaten by the servants of the Temple), but one that is completely burnt so no part of it remains. Theologically, a holocaust offering is considered the most sacred of all offerings, given in atonement for the sin of pride. In Hebrew the event is referred to not only using the term "shoah," which means simply burning, but also using the term "hurban," which means "destruction," a term used to refer to the destruction of the Temple. Thus, in the very choice of loaded terms, whether in English or in Hebrew, to name a historical event, the genocide of European Jews is set apart as something sacred.

But the same ironic instrumentalising of what has been set apart as sacred has happened with the holocaust. The term "holocaust" is used today in our secular, de-sanctifying times with self-defeating abandon. Zionists refer to the intermarriage of Jews and non-Jews as a "silent

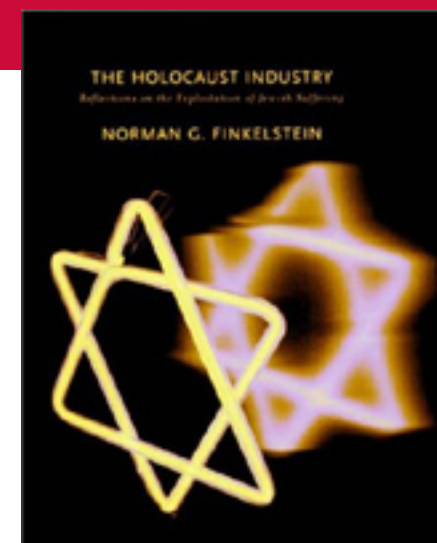
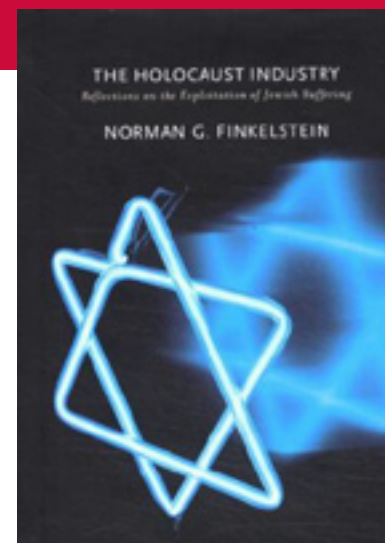
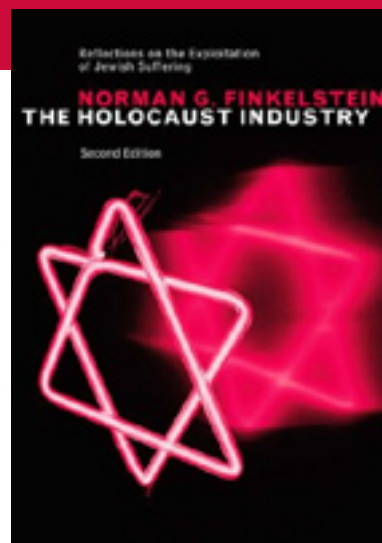
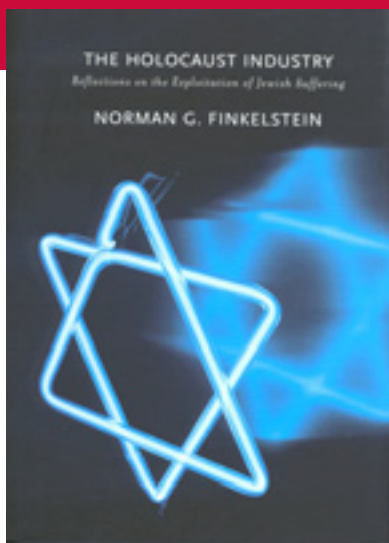
holocaust." Rabin described the film *Schindler's List* as not "holocausty enough." As a result of the total instrumentalisation of the holocaust to serve political agendas and economic interests, critics like Norman Finkelstein register their protest and refer to "holokitsch," "holocash" and "holocaust mania." Finkelstein's book is a well-researched protest against the instrumentalisation of the Holocaust, its transformation into an industry designed to serve the political interests of American-Jewish elites acting in tandem with the US government's foreign policy interests. Drawing a distinction between "the Nazi holocaust" as a historical event and "The Holocaust," which is the ideological presentation thereof, he points out that the holocaust has been turned into something without parallel in human history, that "its uniqueness is held to be absolutely decisive" and, hence, it "cannot be rationally apprehended."

I call this iconisation, where a human phenomenon is stripped of its historical nature, then presented as *sui generis*, a *mysterium tremendum* to be discussed, if at all, only in the grandest of eschatological terms. Jewish death-of-God theologians, for example, not only interpret Jewish dispersion and extermination as analogues for Christ's suffering and crucifixion, but they view the establishment of the State of Israel as the analogue of the

resurrection. Thus the sanctification of the Jewish people is transferred, via the Holocaust, with the lines between history and eschatology becoming fuzzier and fuzzier, to a colonial settler state.

In this way we move from historical time to cosmic timelessness. "If The Holocaust is unprecedented in history," Finkelstein writes, following the line of reasoning that underpins the Holocaust industry, "it must stand above and hence cannot be grasped by history." Denial of the sanctity of cosmic events is sheer blasphemy from the standpoint of the fervent believer: "Rationally comprehending The Holocaust amounts, in this view, to denying it. For rationality denies The Holocaust's uniqueness and mystery."

"Holocaust denial" becomes not simply "denying the Holocaust" altogether as some revisionist historians do, but, as the French intellectual Roger Garaudy, who was recently prosecuted for just this, learned, a blanket term to cover any number of responses or rational approaches to the historical Nazi holocaust. Garaudy never denied the Holocaust; he simply questioned the figure of six million dead (as some American Jewish and Israeli historians do). Finkelstein provides an almost exhaustive survey of what, according to those in whose interest it is that the Holo-



© The Holocaust Industry book cover's.

caust industry thrives, constitutes “Holocaust denial.” Denying the absolute uniqueness and incomparability of the Holocaust is the one form from which all other forms of “Holocaust denial” follow like an avalanche: “To question a survivor’s testimony, to denounce the role of Jewish collaborators, to suggest Germans suffered during the bombing of Dresden or that any state except Germany committed crimes in World War II -- this is all evidence, according to [the American historian] Lipstadt, of Holocaust denial. And to suggest that Wiesel has profited from the Holocaust industry, or even to question him, amounts to Holocaust denial.”

Finkelstein argues that the Holocaust could be approached in a more humane way. To this effect he quotes the words of Raul Hilberg, a leading historian of the Nazi genocide of Western Jewry: “If these people [Holocaust deniers] want to speak, let them... It only leads those of us who do research to re-examine what we might have considered as obvious. And that’s useful for us.” Such a levelheaded approach cannot be maintained vis-à-vis the sacred, however. For to iconise something is also to dehumanise it, and once something is stripped of its humanity, it can be instrumentalised. And that is precisely what has happened to the *mysterium tremendum* it has

become Holocaust business.

As the industry grew, Finkelstein points out, the manipulators of the Holocaust have juggled the figures of Holocaust survivors in order to claim more compensation; but, as Finkelstein demonstrates, if the mathematics are worked out, in so doing they have wound up actually diminishing the number of those who were killed: the six million figure winds up becoming untenable. Finkelstein sarcastically says that the perpetrators of the Holocaust industry are gradually becoming Holocaust deniers.

They also manipulate facts. The Holocaust Memorial Museum in

Washington, for example, “downplays the discriminatory US immigration quotas before the war, exaggerates the US role in liberating the concentration camps, and silently passes over the massive US recruitment of Nazi war criminals at the war’s end.” Finkelstein also refers to the museum’s failure to underscore the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies, communists and handicapped. He also devotes a large section of his book to the issue of dormant Holocaust-era accounts in Swiss banks -- and then raises the question of similar accounts in American banks, about which there has been no uproar. Is, one may ask in the spirit of speculative enquiry, the US using Jewish



organisations, via the question of dormant Holocaust accounts in European banks, to mount pressure on European countries so that they would be forced to help subsidise the Zionist state?

Finkelstein does not lapse into a mere small deconstructive "narrative" of events. Rather, he tries to provide a history and sociology of the holocaust industry, situating it firmly within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. "By virtually all accounts," he shows, "it was only after this conflict [the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War] that the Holocaust became a fixture in American-Jewish life." Before 1967 the Jewish establishment tended to downplay the Nazi holocaust in order to conform to the US government's Cold War priorities, which entailed support for a rearmed Germany and even recruitment of Nazi SS veterans. Moreover, "remembrance of the Nazi holocaust was tagged a Communist cause" because leftists opposed to the Cold War alignment with Germany kept "harping on it."

However, in the mid-sixties, things, as Finkelstein shows, began to change. The rise of identity or ethnic politics, on the one hand, and the culture of victimisation, on the other, coupled with the growing assimilation of the Jews into American society and their gradual moving from the left and the left-centre to the right, all helped to give

prominence to the holocaust as a source of Jewish ethnicity that set the Jews apart from other ethnic or religious groups and also became a source of Jewish "moral capital" that bestowed a halo of secular chosenness on them.

Finkelstein views the total assimilation of the Zionist state into American international security arrangements and the "strategic alliance" between the USA and Israel as a decisive factor. I might also add that the growing rivalry between Europe and the USA put an end to any inhibitions regarding the manipulation and exploitation of the holocaust. The holocaust, as mentioned earlier, could be used as a club to blackmail some European countries into subsidising Israel. It could also be used as a way of justifying Israeli conduct vis-à-vis the Palestinians. As Peter Baldwin, quoted by Finkelstein, writes: "The singularity of the Jewish suffering adds to the moral and emotional claims that Israel can make... on other nations."

The same uniqueness also produces a smoke screen that hides other atrocities committed elsewhere by Western man, like, for (obvious) example, the genocide of the Native Americans, in the name of Manifest Destiny, which, Finkelstein writes, "anticipated all the ideological and programmatic elements of Hitler's Lebensraum policy." In connection

with another American genocide, Finkelstein, in his conclusion to *The Holocaust Industry*, notes: "Hardly a week passes without a major Holocaust-related story in *The New York Times*. The number of scholarly studies devoted to the Nazi Final Solution is conservatively estimated at over 10,000. Consider by comparison scholarship on the hecatomb in the Congo. Between 1891 and 1911 some 10 million Africans perished in the course of Europe's exploitation of Congolese ivory and rubber resources. Yet, the first and only scholarly volume in English directly devoted to this topic was published two years ago. The destruction (for which the Hebrew term "hurban" could aptly be used) wreaked by the Americans on Vietnam during the same decade that saw the securing of US-Israeli relations -- and the inception of the Holocaust industry -- is also brought into the picture by Finkelstein: "Some 4-5 million men, women and children died as a result of the US wars in Indochina. After the American withdrawal, a historian recalls, Vietnam desperately needed aid. 'In the South, 9,000 out of 15,000 hamlets, 25 million acres of farmland, 12 million acres of forest were destroyed, and 1.5 million farm animals had been killed; there were an estimated 200,000 prostitutes, 879,000 orphans, 181,000 disabled people, and 1 million widows; all six of the industrial cities in the North had been badly damaged, as were

provincial and district towns, and 4,000 out of 5,800 agricultural communes." And, yet, former US President Carter flatly refused to pay reparations.

The Nazi holocaust, instead of deepening our understanding of the evil (and the good) within us, instead of being pursued as "a rational subject of inquiry" as Finkelstein counsels, and instead of serving as a concrete image of what could happen to the human individual in a totalitarian society dominated by a materialistic, utilitarian set of "values," has thus been turned into an icon unrelated to man's suffering and into a smoke screen that conceals atrocities committed by man against man.

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*This article is published in cooperation with:*  
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**DAVUD BEKTAŞ**

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"DOES MAN THINK THAT HE WILL BE LEFT UNCONTROLLED, (WITHOUT PURPOSE)?"

**(The Holy 'Qur~an, Chapter of Al'qiyaamah, verse 36)**

**In thuluth script by Davud Bektaş.**

**The verse talks about personal accountability.**

# Islaamic Consciousness: NATIONALISM or ANTI-NATIONALISM?

(Part 1 of 2)

**By Edwin Anthony**

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Some commentators have suggested that Islaamic Consciousness is evidence of nationalistic tendencies.

However, what most of these commentators have overlooked is the inadequacy of the concept of nationalism itself, and its derivatives, in providing an institutional and paradigmatic framework to adequately facilitate the phenomenon of Islaamic Consciousness. This inadequacy escapes the nation-centred mind of the global masses that have been trained to see the nation-state as the only body from

which actions may be expected. Such a perception in turn lays the foundation for the rise of Transnational Militancy and whose “terroristic” component is seen as an evil in itself and without a prior cause.

Perhaps many Muslims who are involved in Transnational Militancy also don’t realise the geopolitical significance of such a self-consciousness as some of them are inevitably urging an address of their concerns from a viewpoint that takes the global national, institutional and infrastructural status quo as a given,

and evidenced by their subsequent demands for a “state”. (It is unfortunate that humanity, time and again, tends to reach into a paradigmatic cauldron for solutions to problems that arise from the very same abysmal depths.) Insofar as the nation-state is taken to be natural, Islaamic Consciousness, in its various manifestations, is set to collide with the established orders of the nation-state based status quo.

This brief discussion proposes that Islaamic Consciousness is a “next-generation” form of “nationalism”, or perhaps “consciousness” would be a better term, that transcends the current idea of nation-centred consciousness. In this sense, it is both nationalist and anti-nationalist. It is nationalist in that there is an increasing tendency by Muslims to perceive themselves as part of a global body. It is anti-nationalist in that the UN-endorsed and nationally enforced coincidence between the current idea of nationalism and geographical contiguity does not enable it to assert itself in a manner as significant as the nation-state.

Nationalism, Technology and Psychological Dialecticism

The idea of Nationalism and its current manifestation is a corollary of a previous state of technology that

confined and defined consciousness within physical limits.

Traditionally, unity and shared consciousness was a function of physical proximity or contiguity. While the nation-state was easier to maintain militarily, politically and economically if it was contiguous, an important factor that contributed to the coincidence of locality and familial consciousness was the absence of technology that enabled individuals comprising a geographically located state to even imagine questioning the legitimacy or reality of this basis of consciousness. We can understand this as Technology-Dependent Cultural Space. “Oneness” was thus gradually associated with physical proximity whilst the National and Capitalist Projects later determined the extent to which consciousness was allowed to transcend whatever boundaries it deemed appropriate.

Various forms of consciousness had been created and destroyed by the technologies of transport and communication throughout history. The camel and horse, for instance, aided in the expansion of the Islaamic Empire and brought about the Arabisation of what is now generally seen as Arabia. Printed media aided the creation of shared consciousness through the spread of nationalistic and cultural literature in Europe,



and railway networks and telegraph lines facilitated the formation of national consciousness within India and other colonised states. However, in all these periods, a shared consciousness still required shared physical locality. In diasporic circumstances, peoples generally integrated with local conditions as shared consciousness with their respective "homelands" were compromised by their inability to avail themselves of the requisite amount of social support, pressure and similarity in circumstances that would enable them to maintain a singular view of themselves.

One of the main factors contributing to the encapsulation, insulation and harnessing of consciousness historically, and in the above instances, lay in not only (1) the state of technology, but also on, amongst others, variance in the (2) population's technological literacy, and, the (3) extent to which the access to, and control of communicative media is monopolised.

Borrowing Marxian terms, we can view these 3 factors as comprising the "Forces of Consciousness Reproduction". In other words, these, in an abstract sense, determine the direction and propensities of collective consciousness. They in turn determine the "Relations of Con-



sciousness", or how people relate to each other and assume, create or pursue shared identities. Both the Forces of Consciousness and the Relations of Consciousness in turn collude to determine the "Locality of Consciousness", or where consciousness is located, i.e. nationally, supranationally, etc.

We can term the dynamic interaction between these as technology-dependent Familial Dialecticism. In other words, when the Forces of Consciousness change or advance, existing Relations of Consciousness will evolve or face significant challenge. For instance, the current Relations of Consciousness are being unnaturally confined within the walls

of the nation-state which is serving as fetters on the consequences of the advance in the Forces of Consciousness. The "dialectical" component comes in when existing Relations of Consciousness – i.e. National patriotism - and the Relations of Consciousness being produced by global advances in the Forces of Consciousness – transnationalism - interact. "Familial" is relevant here as variances in the changing world-view of those who are transcending the existing Relations of Consciousness inevitably conflict with the citizen's sense of the collective "family".

Ironically, the global "coalition against terror" is itself a transnational force brought about by transnational militancy which in turn was brought about by the counterpositional existence of nation-states. In this sense, we can say that the western-led "war on terror" is a response to a "war on terror". The former is a response to the evils perpetrated by Transnational Militants whilst the latter is response to the evils a transnational nation had to endure because they did not have a singular state to represent their interests as they were transnationally dislocated.

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# Solidarity on the 'Hijaab

## HIJAB UNVEILED: A DAY OF REFLECTION

By Mozammel Haque

To mark International Hijab ['Hijaab] Solidarity Day 2005, Protect-Hijab hosted a conference on Hijab Unveiled: A Day of Reflection' at the Kensington Town Hall, London, on September 9.

"Despite a huge growth in the number of Muslim women who choose to wear the 'hijaab in Britain today, there are still many stereotypes and misconceptions that surround this piece of clothing.

One of the aims of Protect-Hijab is to educate and raise awareness and the Conference did both of these", said Chair of Protect Hijab, Rajnaara Akhtar.

Sheyk Haitham Alhuddad, a member of the Islaamic Sharee'ah Council, argued that the'hijaab was "waajib" (obligatory) using various verses from the 'Qura~n and sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Alhuddad said, "It is clear that it is a matter of obligation according to 'Qura~n and according to the Prophetic traditions and the practice of the companions. That's why all Muslims with their various affiliations and inclinations agree upon the obligation of the 'hijaab.

I can challenge anyone to bring me a single scholar, Sunni, Shia, Mu'tazila, Khwarij, whatever - all of them have agreed on the principles of the'hijaab and the principles of jilbaab." Shayk Alhuddad said that: "We Muslims are part of the society and according to the obligation imposed on us by Allaah the Almighty; we have to work for the betterment

of this society.

### How can we do that?

By being good Muslims and by passing the message of Islaam. Part of passing the message of Islaam is passing the Principles of 'hijaab. We as Muslims promote 'hijaab."

The former President of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), Dr. Anas Al-Tikriti, said that he supported the campaign of Protect-hijab. "People are quite familiar with and recognize it. Wherever I go, whether in Malaysia, Australia or South Africa, people recognize and admire the 'hijaab campaign and try to emulate it. This campaign, which is driven 100% by women, is a testimony to the fact that gives them far more credibility than we do some time."

"Inequality is not just a Muslim thing; inequality is a universal global problem. But enemies of Islaam will seize upon the inequalities within the Muslim world and use them to demonise us," said Yvonne Ridley, a journalist and Editor of the Islaam Channel. "These very same enemies attack the'hijaab and say this is a sign of oppression and subjugation.

The presence of so many sisters with the 'hijaab here today simply proves that is not true," she said. Ridley argued that the'hijaab was not the mark of oppression, rather it is "part of the Muslim woman's business suit. It says that I am a Muslim; therefore you will treat me with respect.

This business suit tells you that I am in business and you have to take it seriously. And so



the 'hijaab tells the non-Muslims I am a Muslim woman." Ridley agreed with Sheyk Alhuddad that the'hijaab is an obligation.

"It does not matter how you interpret the 'Qura~n, the'hijaab is an obligation. If it is the symbol of oppression as Cherie Booth and Laura Bush said, then shouldn't they say to the Vatican to liberate all of those Roman Catholic nuns?"

Ridley was alluding to the international press conferences in November 2001 following the invasion and bombing of Afghanistan where Laura Bush and Cherie Booth "tried to justify their husbands' actions by talking about this veiled oppression of Afghan women" and added that Laura and Cherie were "horribly exploited by their powerful husbands to go in front of the camera and try and justify the obscenity of the bombing in Afghanistan."

MAB member, Raghad Osama [Ra'gad Ousaamah], spoke about the rights accorded to women by Islaam.

She said that women had a right of inheritance, the right to choose their spouse and their equality with men. Osama said the reason behind the 'Hijaab was to "protect the basic unit of society in Islaam, and that's to protect family not individual.

The whole society works to protect that unit, wife and children. In Islaam sexual relationship before marriage is forbidden. So Allaah asks us not to indulge in adultery and not to have illegal relationships. He has given us a

tool to survive. To show a sign of modesty."

Respect Party member, Salma Yaqoob [Salma Ya'qoob], said that every religion, whether it is Judaism, Buddhism or Christianity, stands for modesty. She quoted both from Old and New Testament about covering of the head. "There is also a verse in the 'Qura~n (Chapter 24, verse 30) which says to the believing men to lower their gaze and maintain their modesty. It also says to the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty."

"hijaab is protection, it is a part of our social structure. Islaam is moderation with limits, freedom with limits. I am not suppressed.

For me that is liberation," said Salma Yaqoob. She added that Islam has given a social system about protecting the family unit.

"This is how the concept of the 'hijaab works. Protection is better than cure. Wedding band or wedding ring is a signal to the people that I am attached. As the western society does it by wearing wedding ring, for us it is our 'hijaab, by wearing the 'hijaab means we are not available."

Caroline Lucas, the Member of the European Parliament from the Green Party, said she has tried to raise awareness on the issues of the 'hijaab in the European Parliament and with the EU policymakers across party platform.

"We worked together and put forward the resolution, saying it is an infringement of human rights (to ban wearing of the 'hijaab), particularly the European Convention of Human Rights."

She urged the French Government to "eliminate the ban and investigate to improve the opportunity of religious as well racial minorities."

• Originally published in Muslim News.  
• Republished in cooperation with  
Protect-Hijab: [www.prohijab.net](http://www.prohijab.net)



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# THE TRUE ISLAAMIC Morals

Some people who say they are acting in the name of religion may misunderstand their religion or practice it wrongly. For this reason, it is a mistake to form any idea of that religion from the activities of these people. The best way to understand Islaam is through its holy source.

The holy source of Islaam is the 'Qur~an; and the model of morality in the 'Qur~an is completely different from the image of it formed in the minds of some westerners. The 'Qur~an is based on the concepts of morality, love, compassion, mercy, modesty, self-sacrifice, tolerance and peace, and a Muslim who truly lives according to these moral precepts is highly refined, thoughtful, tolerant, trustworthy and accommodating. To those around him he gives love, respect, peace of mind and a sense of the joy of life.

## **Islaam Is a Religion of Peace and**

### **Well-being**

The word Islaam has the same meaning as "peace" in Arabic. Islaam is a religion that came down to offer humanity a life filled with the peace and well-being in which God's eternal mercy and compassion is manifested in the world. God invites all people to accept the moral teachings of the 'Qur~an as a model whereby mercy, compassion, tolerance and peace may be experienced in the world. In Chapter of Alba'qarah verse 208, this command is given:

You who believe! Enter absolutely into peace (Islaam). Do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. He is an outright enemy to you.

As we see in this verse, people will experience well-being and happiness by living according to the moral teaching of the 'Qur~an.

### **God Condemns Mischief**

God has commanded humanity to avoid evil; he has forbidden immorality, rebellion, cruelty, aggressiveness, murder and bloodshed. Those who do not obey this command of God are walking in the steps of Satan, as it says in the verse above, and have adopted an attitude that God has clearly declared unlawful. Of the many verses that bear on this subject, here are only two:

But as for those who break God's contract after it has been agreed and sever what God has commanded to be joined, and cause corruption in the earth, the curse will be upon them. They will have the Evil Abode. (Chapter of Arra'd, verse 25)  
 Seek the abode of the hereafter with what God has given you, without forgetting your portion of the world. And do good as God has been good to you. And do not seek to cause mischief on earth. God does not love mischief makers.' (Chapter of Al'qa'sa's, verse 77)

As we can see, God has forbidden every kind of mischievous acts in the religion of

Islaam including terrorism and violence, and condemned those who commit such deeds. A Muslim lends beauty to the world and improves it.

### **Islaam Defends Tolerance and Freedom of Speech**

Islaam is a religion which fosters freedom of life, ideas and thought. It has forbidden tension and conflict among people, calumny, suspicion and even having negative thoughts about another individual.

Islaam has not only forbidden terror and violence, but also even the slightest imposition of any idea on another human being. There is no compulsion in religion. Right guidance has become clearly distinct from error. Anyone who rejects false gods and believes in God has grasped the Firmest Handhold, which will never give way. God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Chapter of Alba'qarah, verse 256)

So remind, you need only to remind. You cannot compel them to believe. (Chapter of Al'gaashiyah, verse 22)

To force anyone to believe in a religion or to

practice it, is against the spirit and essence of Islaam. Because it is necessary that faith be accepted with free will and conscience. Of course, Muslims may urge one another to keep the moral precepts taught in the 'Qur~an, but they never use compulsion. In any case, an individual cannot be induced to the practice of religion by either threat or offering him a worldly privilege.

Let us imagine a completely opposite model of society. For example, a world in which people are forced by law to practice religion. Such a model of society is completely contrary to Islaam because faith and worship have value only when they are directed toward God. If there were a system that forced people to believe and worship, people would be religious only out of fear of the system. What is acceptable from the point of view of religion is that religion be practiced in an environment where freedom of conscience is permitted, and that it be practiced only for the approval of God.

### **God has Made the Killing of Innocent People Unlawful**

According to the 'Qur~an, one of the greatest sins is to kill a human being who has committed no fault:

...If someone kills another person - unless it is in retaliation for someone else or for causing corruption in the earth - it is as if he had murdered all mankind. And if anyone gives life to another person, it is as if he had given life to all mankind. Our Messengers came to them with Clear Signs but even after that many of them committed outrages in the earth. (Chapter of Almaa'idah, verse 32)

Those who do not call on any other deity together with God and do not kill anyone God has made inviolate, except with the right to do so, and do not fornicate; anyone who does that will receive an evil punishment. (Chapter of Alfur'qaan, verse 68)

As we can see in the verses above, those who kill innocent human beings without a cause are threatened with evil punishment. God has revealed that killing one person is as great a sin as killing all mankind. Anyone who respected the prerogatives of God would not do harm to even one individual, let alone murdering thousands of innocent people. Those who think that they will escape justice and punishment in this world will never escape the account they must give in the Presence of God on the Last Day. So, those believers who know they will give an account to God after their death, will be very careful about respecting the limits God has established.

### **God Commands Believers to Be Compassionate and Merciful**

In this verse, Muslim morality is explained: ...To be one of those who believe and urge each other to steadfastness and urge each other to compassion. Those are the Companions of the Right. (Chapter of Albalad, verses 17-18)

As we see in this verse, one of the most important moral precepts that God has sent down to His servants so that they may receive salvation and mercy and attain Paradise, is to "urge each other to compassion".

Islaam as described in the 'Qur~an is a modern, enlightened, progressive religion. A Muslim is above all a person of peace; he is tolerant with a democratic spirit, cultured, enlightened, honest, knowledgeable about art and science and civilized. A Muslim educated in the fine moral teaching of the 'Qur~an, approaches everyone with the love that Islaam expects. He shows respect for every idea and he values art and aesthetics. He is conciliatory in the face of every event, diminishing tension and restoring amity. In societies composed of individuals such as this, there will be a

higher civilization, a higher social morality, more joy, happiness, justice, security, abundance and blessings than in the most modern nations of the world today.

### **God Has Commanded Tolerance and Forgiveness**

Chapter of Ala'raaf, verse 199, which says "practice forgiveness", expresses the concept of forgiveness and tolerance which is one of the basic principles of the religion of Islaam.

When we look at Islaamic history, we can see clearly how Muslims established this important precept of the moral teaching of the 'Qur~an in their social life. At every point in their advance, Muslims destroyed unlawful practices and created a free and tolerant environment. In the areas of religion, language and culture, they made it possible for people totally opposite to each other to live under the same roof in freedom and peace, thereby giving to those subject to them the advantages of knowledge, wealth and position. Likewise, one of the most important reasons that the large and widespread Ottoman Empire was able to sustain its existence for so many centuries was that its way of life was directed by the tolerance and understanding brought by Islaam. For centuries Muslims have been characterized by their tolerance and compassion. In every period of time they have been the most just and merciful of people. All ethnic groups within this multi-national community freely practiced the religions they have followed for years and enjoyed every opportunity to live in their own cultures and worship in their own way. Indeed, the particular tolerance of Muslims, when practiced as commanded in the 'Qur~an, can alone bring peace and well-being to the whole world. The 'Qur~an refers to this particular kind of tolerance: A good action and a bad action are not

the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend. (Chapter of Fu'silat, verse 34)

### **Conclusion**

All this shows that the moral teaching offered to humanity by Islaam is one that will bring peace, happiness and justice to the world. The barbarism that is happening in the world today under the name of "Islaamic Terrorism" is completely removed from the moral teachings of the 'Qur~an; it is the work of ignorant, bigoted people, criminals who have nothing to do with religion. The solution which will be applied against these individuals and groups that are trying to commit their deeds of savagery under the guise of Islaam, will be the instruction of people in the true moral teaching of Islaam.

In other words, the religion of Islaam and the moral teachings of the 'Qur~an are not the supporters of terrorism and the terrorists, but the remedy by which the world can be saved from the scourge of terrorism.

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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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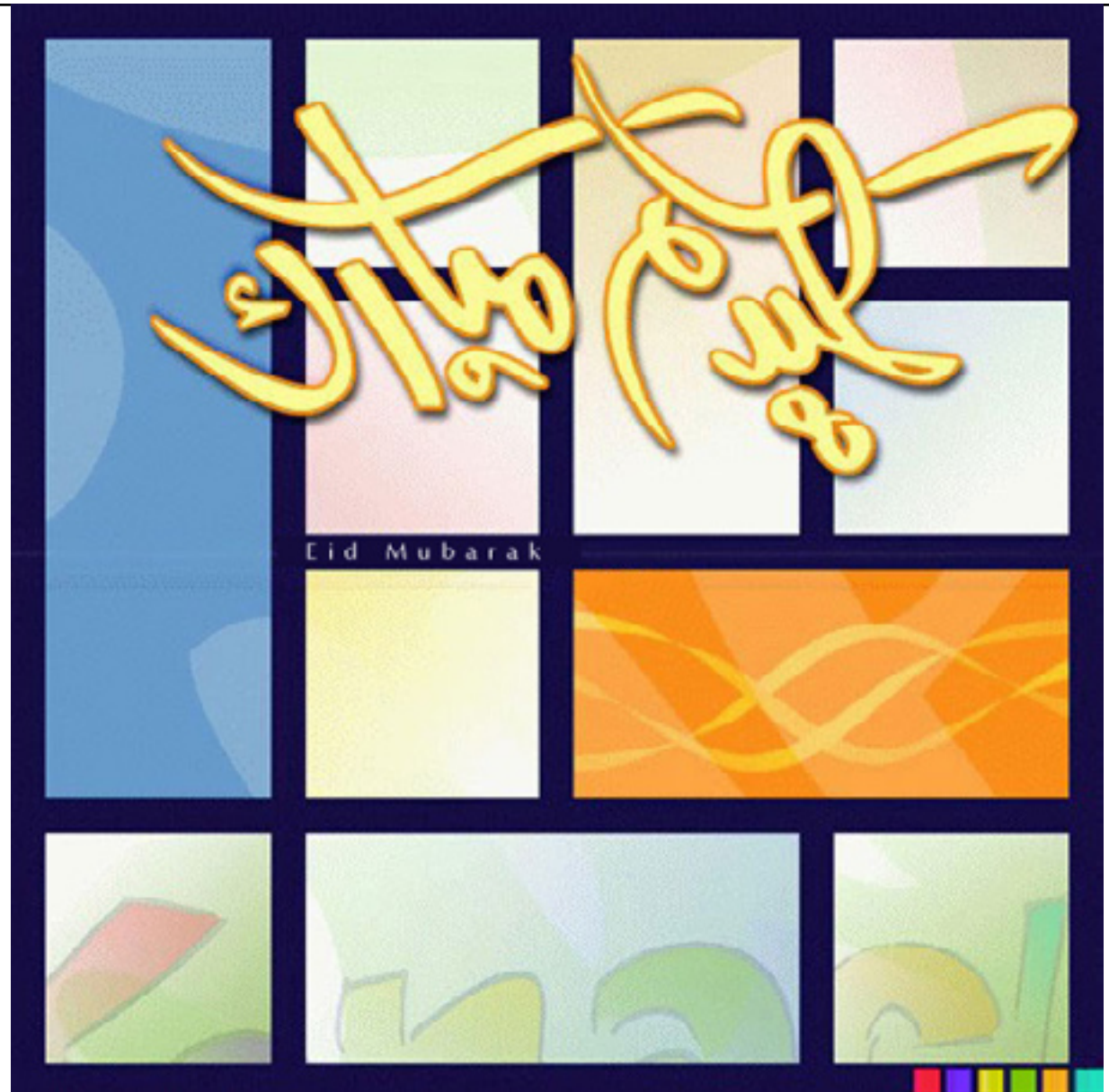
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