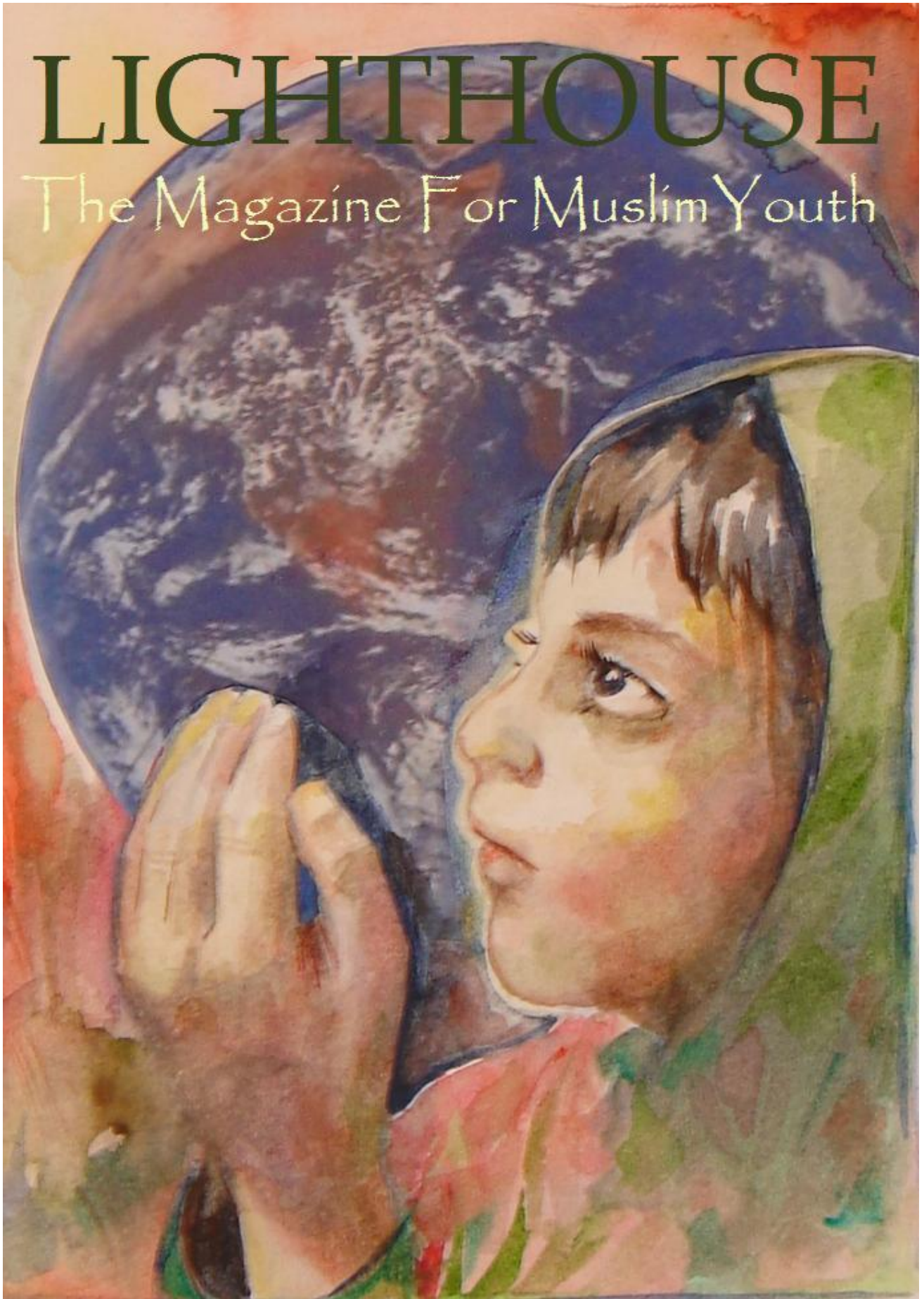


LIGHTHOUSE

The Magazine For Muslim Youth



VOLUME SEVENTEEN

“And they say: The Beneficent (Allah) has taken to Himself a son. Certainly you make a terrible assertion. The heavens may burst and the earth split open and the mountains fall down in pieces, that they ascribe a son to the Beneficent. And it is not worthy of the Beneficent that He should take to Himself a son.”

Since Muslims do not celebrate Christmas, the month of December can seem really long. It can be lonely to watch all the preparations and excitement that comes before Christmas. So what is a Muslim to do?

For starters we can realize that most of the excitement of Christmas is for things that have been made up by people in different countries. All the fancy displays,



stockings, the colourful advertisements and special sales, have been made so people buy the things that big companies have to sell. It is mostly about money and not about religion. Prophet Jesus himself did not speak of a Santa, or tell his followers to celebrate Christmas by buying Christmas trees and hanging stockings. In fact in the chapter “Mary” of the Holy Quran, it is

mentioned that fresh dates were growing on palm trees on the day Prophet Jesus was born, and that does not happen in the winter in Jerusalem. The 25th of December was the birth date of the sun god worshipped by ancient Greeks and Romans. When Christianity spread to those people, a festival for Christians was set up on the same date to replace their festival and attract more people.

We are fortunate that almost all of our wonderful Eid traditions are directly connected to our blessed Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He used henna and advised us to wear our best clothes on Eid. He ate something sweet before he left for the Eid prayers and he would recite *takbeers* (chanting praises of Allah) on the way. Sacrificing an animal and sharing the meat is also directly linked to him. He taught us to exchange gifts as it brought all people closer to one another.

It is also good to remember that while our Eid may seem small compared to all the events, decorations and celebrations that have become part of Christmas, simplicity is encouraged by Allah. **Allah wants us to be happy and celebrate our special occasions but He also wants us to remain within our limits of spending and remember and help those people who are in need of the basic things of life, like food, clean water and a home.**

The Quran tells us clearly that Allah has no wife and no son. A great thing about the Quran is that we are always given a reason for the things we are told. Allah



tells us that having a child is for humans, so they learn lessons of love and caring and a new generation takes the place of the old one. At first the parents take care of the child till he or she gets older. Then the child starts to help the parents and becomes a source of comfort for them. Allah is the Creator of parents and children but has no children Himself.

If we think with the brains Allah has given us we realize that Prophet Jesus could not have been a god in any way. He lived his life like any person, being first a helpless drooling baby and toddler and needing to eat and drink and use the bathroom just like everyone else. How could Prophet Jesus have been a god and had problems and suffering in his life, if he was the one other people prayed to for help? A god has to be powerful and invincible, not humble and helpless.

We might wonder if Allah would need or want a son. The answer is very clear. He has billions of people and angels who worship Him all the time, yet He even has no need of that worship. How can He need a human son? Our prayers to Allah help us grow stronger and closer to Allah; He does not need them in any way. He is Above any kind of need and it does not make any sense for Him to have a son. We do not need any sacrifice on a cross to know that Allah loves us and will forgive us. We already know that Allah loves us and He sent us many Prophets to teach us the best way to lead our lives. Allah promises to forgive our mistakes if we say we are sincerely sorry and make up for them.

All Allah wants is for us to be good and resist all bad things, so we let our spirits grow and come closer to Him. We can then help each other in this life and live joyfully forever in Heaven.

This week, take some time to look up Prophet Jesus in the Quran and read some of the verses connected to him. Discuss what you read and understand with your family and friends. Send us your thoughts and comments at zamustang@msn.com.

Does Islam teach us democracy?

What is democracy? **Democracy simply means that the people living in an area or a country have a right to choose the people who will rule (or govern) them.** It makes sense that the men and women who live in a country and pay taxes on everything they earn or buy, should be able to choose people who are fair, honest and wise, to rule the country. They also get to help to decide the laws; which laws are unfair and should be changed and which new laws need to be made to make the country safe and fair for everyone.

Our religion Islam is a very just religion, giving equality to all. If we truly follow what Allah tells us in the Quran then life would be good for everyone. Islam tells us to listen to everyone's opinion whether that person is poor, rich, young or old, with brown skin or pink cheeks; anybody. The principles it sets up to run a state are based on *shura* or **consultation**. **This means that one person cannot take control of all matters and do as he or she likes.** Many wise people should come together and discuss matters before a decision is made that affects the country.

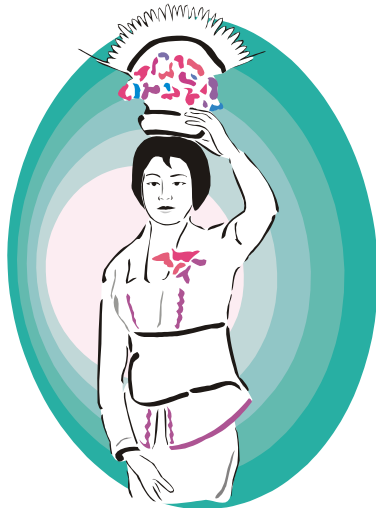
After the death of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) a group of wise followers elected Hazrat Abu Bakr to be the first Caliph (or leader). When Hazrat Abu Bakr made his first speech to the Muslims he



asked for them to obey him and help him as long as he was following the Quran and the example of Prophet Muhammad. He also told the Muslims that they should stop obeying him if he did something that was unjust and against the Quran.

This is an important principle of fair rule in Islam. We can elect someone to represent us but we should always remember that the rules of Allah are much higher than the rules of man. We should support our rulers, but if they make a rule that is wrong and cruel, we should not support it and speak up about it.

A very long time ago when Hazrat Umar was the second Caliph of the Islamic Kingdom in Medina, he decided that the gift called *mehr*, given to the wife at the time of marriage by the husband, should be decreased. But a woman in the audience challenged him and argued how he could decrease the *mehr* when there was a clear teaching in the Quran about it. **It is written in the Quran that even if the *mehr* is as big as a heap of gold it should be given to honour women.** Hazrat Umar took back his orders and said that the women of Medina had more understanding of Islam than himself.



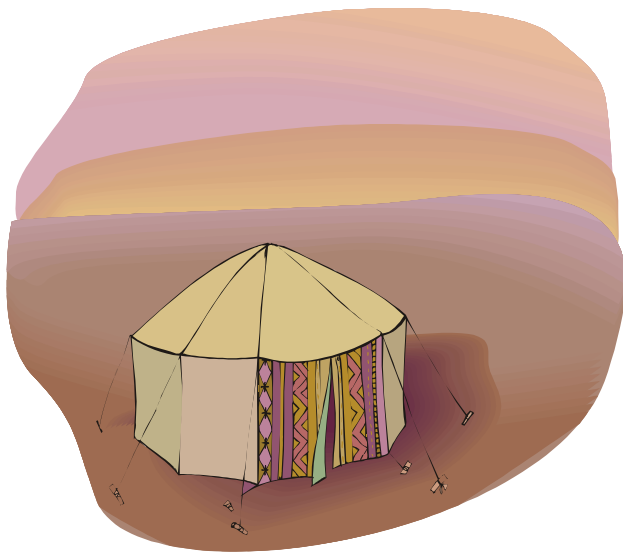
Although Hazrat Umar was the powerful Caliph of the time, he did not feel offended that an ordinary woman had publicly questioned and corrected him. In fact he was glad that people had a good understanding of Islam!

Now those are great examples to follow!

I wish I were going for Hajj.....

Sophia Islam from Chicago writes about her wishes for Hajj

I have always wanted to go for Hajj since my Uncle and Aunt did their Hajj two years ago. They told me all about their travels and showed me all their Ihram and stuff. I would like to go for Hajj when I am sixteen years old because by then I will be taller and I will be able to see over the heads of other people. I am nervous when I think of the crowds. I hope I don't get too squashed. I would like to go with my family and I would like to stay in a tent because then it would seem like camping. I think I should start learning



some Arabic because the sermon at Arafat is in Arabic and I won't be able to understand it. I hope I get to drink a lot of Zamzam water and bring some home with me for my friends, my teacher and my grandmother who is sick. She might get better after drinking the Zamzam. I know they only open up the Kaabah for presidents and other important people but I wish they would let me go inside too. I think

and i hope that performing Hajj will help me to be a better Muslim.

EID-UL-ADHA

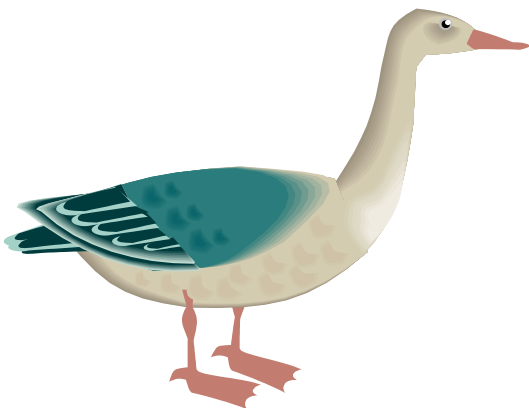
Inshaal Ahmad (age 13), Aylesbury, UK

On Eid-ul-Adha we offer Qurbani,
In the name of God Almighty.
Our aim should be to help the poor,
Allah will surely reward us with more.
Eid-ul-Adzha comes after the holy pilgrimage,
Muslims gather from every town and village.
The pilgrimage of Hajj has great fame,
The *Ihram* symbolizes that we're all the same.
Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam,
So today on every Muslim farm,
A sheep, goat or lamb will be sacrificed,
For the poor it will act as sort of a prize.
Read the Quran when in trouble or need
The message helps us if we pay heed,
Islam is under pressure in this day and age,
We must work together to rid this anti-Islam rage.
Brothers and sisters be kind to one another,
Eid-ul-Adzha is for us to pray and get together.
Eid is not just for taking a day off school or work,
Make the most of it, and EID MUBARAK.

Book Review of Three Good Deeds By Aafia Ahmad.

Author: Vivian Vande Velde.

This book is about a rambunctious boy named Howard. He taunts an old lady who everyone calls a witch. Well, she really is. And when Howard taunts her...WHAM, he



becomes a goose. Now Howard is introduced to the rough ways of geese that cower when he comes near and have ridiculous and long names. How will he do 3 good deeds to turn him back into a boy? Read this exciting book to find out. Also, if you

live in Minnesota and are a 3rd, 4th, or 5th grader, this is a Maud Hart Lovelace Award Nominee for the voting that's done by these grades in Minnesota.

Note: Good deeds were only counted when Howard was sincere.

Editor's note: Great review Aafia! We know that our actions depend upon our intentions. We have to have sincere intentions before we perform a good deed. The witch was very clever because she knew it was quite easy to pretend to be good and say and do things we don't mean. She wanted Howard to learn a lesson by actually learning to think more of others and be more kind and helpful. Excellent book! I enjoyed it very much.

Why was the old shoe so upset?

It had a hole in its sole (soul)!

A Warm Heart

The snow looked better from inside the window of Mrs. Kegler's fourth grade window. As soon as Asma stepped outside she felt as if she had forgotten to bundle up. She looked down to make sure she had everything on and she did. She pulled her new purple fleece hat down over her eyebrows and jerked the collar of her heavy jacket to cover her mouth. The biting wind stung her eyes and made them water. She blinked and turned herself around so the wind was at her back.

Some of the boys were playing football all bundled up like Eskimos. Many kids were on the playground climbing and swinging. Asma decided to join them because she felt she would feel better if she moved. It was then that a figure crouched by the doors of the school caught her eye. She ran over to see who it was. She recognized the worn and filthy blue jacket and almost turned away. *It's Sammy*, she thought.

Sammy Baker had been in her class for two years now. She did not have many friends and Asma did not know very much about her. She never raised her hand in class to answer questions. She was always quiet at sharing time. Most of the children groaned when Sammy had to be part of their group. Even though they knew she would do as she was told, she would also be no help and there were many things about her that made children turn away. Sammy's hair always looked rough and un-brushed. She had a smell about her that was not pleasant, as if she had not taken a bath for the longest time.



She almost turned away when she heard muffled sobs. She knelt down beside Sammy.

“Sammy, what’s up.....are you ok?”

Sammy looked up with red eyes and rubbed her grubby gloves over her face.

“Leave me alone” she mumbled and

turned to bury her face in her arms.

“Do you want me to call Mrs. Boyer?” asked Sammy.

“Go away” was the muffled reply.

Asma ran back to the playground feeling she had done her job. Her friends Susan and Maya were playing four square and she would join in. *Recess was too short to bother about other people who wouldn't even let her help* thought Asma as she joined her friends, but somehow her mind was stuck on Sammy. Her eyes kept wandering back to the tiny, huddled figure by the door. Suddenly she kicked the ball far away and called to her friends.

“Hey guys, listen up for a minute. I have a plan.”



Soon Sammy had joined them in a giggly game of toilet tag. It was still bitterly cold outside and Asma could feel her face getting numb. She was sure her nose was as red as a strawberry. But somehow she felt warmer. Her heart had this wonderful feeling inside it, almost like warm sunshine and she felt happy and tingly. Seeing that smile on Sammy's face made her realize that recess was short (and so was life, her Dad told her) but taking extra time to be kind, going out of the way to cheer someone up, was not too much to bother about, and always worth it.

What tastes great, but makes you cry when you bite it? Your tongue!

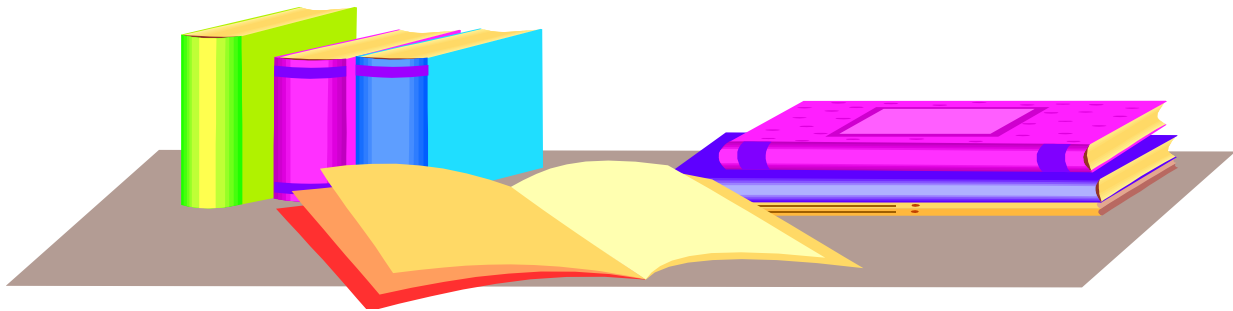
Where did the teeth go when they were hurt?

To the floss-pital!

How Islamic is that book you're reading?

By Aafia Ahmad.

It is easy to tell that some books are too violent and some are too lovey-dovey. They may also contain bad words or bad examples. There are ways to avoid these books. First of all, you should read the back cover. Some books don't even have writing on the back cover. If that's the case, other ways may be used. Hardcover books with jackets have the same thing on the front part where the book's jacket goes in the book. Yet if your book doesn't have any of that, read a few pages. I always do that or read the back cover. I always tell my mom how a book was



and if she should get more books like that from the library. Remember, Islamic books aren't limited to books about Islam and dua books. If we read about anything that is not forbidden by Allah, we are learning something, improving our vocabulary and understanding people and things in a better way. A good book can be a great teacher and friend, but we have to be careful. A

**bad book can give us bad ideas and misguide us
like a terrible friend!**

Raise your hands in prayer: The Thrill of Hajj

The cycle repeats, it is that time of year,
To the Ka'bah we go with a heart sincere.

Running from Safa to Marwa, the two peaks,
Baby Ishmael felt thirst from the intense heat.

Suddenly, a fountain gushed forth.
A great city called Makkah was born.

Around the Kaabah we circulate,
Every step, every prayer helps our fate.

Dates of all different kinds on display,
Take the water of Zamzam on your way.

And yes finally Eid -ul-Adha is here.
We give thanks with those near and dear

Remembering Abraham's obedience,
Ishmael's willingness to give sacrifice

Hajj must be performed once in a lifetime
Visit the Sacred Mosque and the Prophet's shrine

By **Bushra Ahmed, Hounslow England**

Why did the policeman hide under his blankets?

Because he was an under-cover cop.

What is the best time to find a new pet?

When it's raining cats and dogs!

Al Azhar University, Egypt



Learning about Islam can be great fun and the key to a rewarding career. If you chose religious studies as your main subject, there would be many excellent universities for you to study in. You might decide

to head to Al- Azhar University, which is a huge Islamic university located in Egypt. It was founded in 975 and is the world's second oldest surviving university in the world. **The university's mission includes the spread of Islamic religion and culture.** To this end, its Islamic scholars give their decisions on questions submitted to them from all over the Islamic world regarding proper conduct for Muslim individuals or societies. Al-Azhar trains many students of Islamic knowledge in the study of the Quran and Hadith. **The university was founded by the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt, and was named after the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad Fatimah Az-Zahraa` (Fatimah, the brilliant).** Since 1929, Al-Azhar has published a magazine (now monthly) whose mission is to publicize religious rules, subjects related to Islamic literature, and basic laws including sections on history, biographies, translated texts, and news concerning the Muslim world.

Muhammad Sayyid Tantawy is the current Imam of Al-Azhar University. He was one of the Muslim leaders who declared that the people who attacked the World Trade Centre on 9/11 could not be called Muslims because they had gone against many of the most important teachings of Islam. **Islam does not allow suicide, and it does not allow Muslims to kill innocent men, women, and children, who are not participating in any war.** At a conference in Indonesia he called upon all the religious leaders to stop those people, who teach others to be violent, from using their mosques.

Students who graduate from Al-Azhar have great prestige in the Muslim world. So keep it on your list of desirable colleges!

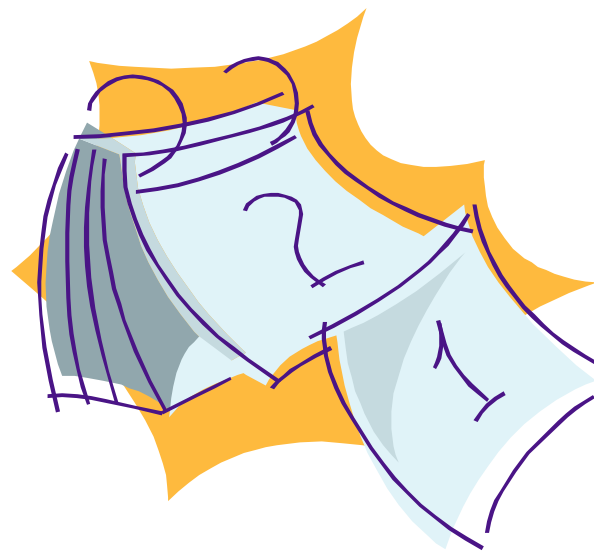
Happy New Year and Happy New Year

The Islamic New Year began on the 20th of December 2008 this year.

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar. It is one of the four months of the year in which fighting is prohibited. Since the Islamic calendar is lunar, **Muharram** moves from year to year when compared with the Gregorian (European) calendar. **Muharram** is so called because it was unlawful to fight during this month. It is held to be the most sacred of all the months, excluding Ramadan. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to fast on the ninth and tenth of Muharram or on the tenth and eleventh. It is wonderful to follow the example of our dear Prophet and try to fast on those days. Fasting can be tough for kids and so praying salat with extra care or offering some *nafal* salat and reading extra Quran can be an easier way to pray and remember Allah. **The tenth day of Muharram is called Yaumu-l 'Ashurah, meaning, 'the tenth day'**. This year it will be on the 7th of January Insha Allah.

According to many hadith of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the tenth of Muharram is an important day in the history of the world. It was the day when Prophet Adam was created, and when Prophet Noah was delivered from the flood and the day when Pharoah was drowned and Prophet Moses and his followers were saved from slavery.

In later history, the tenth of Muharram was the day when Hazrat Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and many of his followers were **martyred** (killed while fighting or working for a good cause) after facing the army of Yazid. Yazid was the Governor of Yemen and was cruel and unfair and many people wanted Imam Hussein to be the ruler instead as he was a true Muslim and would rule with justice. Imam Hussein chose to put himself and his family in danger and sacrifice his life while resisting the forces of evil. **His brave life teaches us to stand up for what is right even if we are faced with danger. Muslim super heroes like him are worth learning about.**



Ask Ayesha and she will answer your wild, weird or wacky questions:

Dear Ayesha, I was watching TV and I heard our new president Barack Obama speaking. He was saying it is possible to help people and change the world and we can do it. "Yes we can", he said. Does Islam say anything about us being able to change things to make the world a better place or is Allah the only one who can do that?"

Dear Curious about change,

I really like the question you asked because it helps us understand some very important things about our religion. Of course everything happens with the permission of Allah. But Allah has told us that the way to accomplish things is to strive hard and work towards them. In fact, Allah has told us that if we work toward something, He will even meet us halfway and make the accomplishment easier. Of course this only applies to things worth pursuing. If you try hard to gain knowledge, to help people, to become a better person, to make our world a better place, then Allah rewards your efforts by making the task easier for you. But how do you know if you've worked hard enough? Well maybe we should check in the Instruction Book (the what?). **Yes, it's true, Allah gave us an instruction book for life, He even calls it The Guide; it is probably known better to you as the Quran.** The Quran really contains answers to ALL the important questions in life and how to make, "yes we can" actually come true is right there in it too! I found it in Chapter 79, **Those That Yearn**. It's a little hard to decipher but the Quran can be like that sometimes. I'll try to explain it after I tell you the exact



By those yearning vehemently!

And those going forth cheerfully!

And those running swiftly!

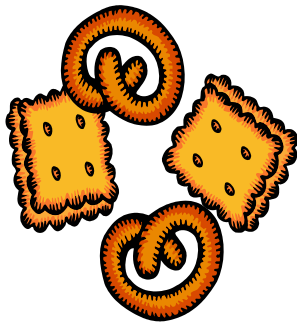
And those that are foremost going ahead!

words: ***And those regulating the Affair!***

In these five lines, Allah tells us the five rules to achieve success in what we want to do. I told you, it might need some decoding, so hold on to your hats! Here we go!

Step 1 “By those yearning vehemently”

“Those yearning vehemently” mean those people who want something really, really bad. Have you ever wanted anything really, really bad? It becomes all you can think of! You can’t get your mind off of it! Well, that is actually the first step to accomplishing a difficult task. **You have to want it really bad and focus and concentrate on it. Don’t let other things distract you or take you away from what you are working to accomplish.** For example, you might decide to bake cookies for some people at the homeless shelter on Saturday. It is a good deed and something you believe you can get done. But then your best friend invites you over to watch movies with on Saturday! Oh no! What should you do? You want to accomplish your goal, and know you should, but you really

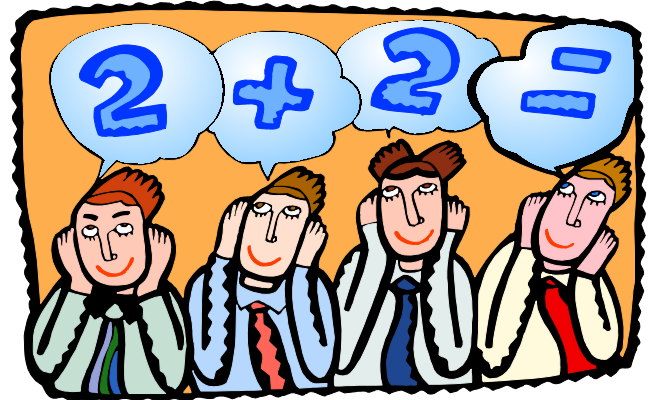


want to hang out with your friend too! Well, if you concentrate on what you want to accomplish, you won’t get distracted by the movie marathon. So you tell your friend you are already doing something on Saturday and find out it’s no problem because you can come over on Sunday instead! Crises avoided!

Step 2 “And those going forth cheerfully”

Ok. Here is the next ground breaking step. You actually have to *enjoy* your task!

But how can someone enjoy math homework? I mean, come on, please! Could there be anything worse? Well, here is the deal. If you actually concentrate on your work (step 1) and don’t get distracted, and you put effort into it, you’ll see that the task becomes easier for you. And when it is easy, it doesn’t seem like such a burden. It’s only miserable if you think of it as a burden that you *have* to do. Think about it

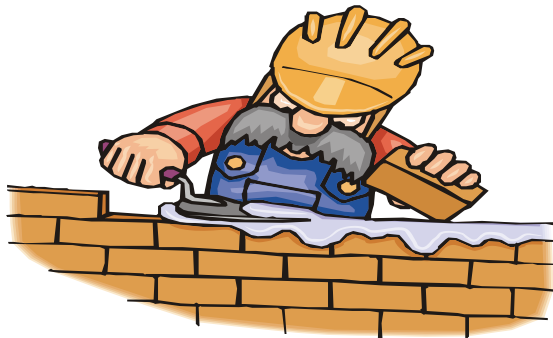


this way; when you start a new chapter in your math book, let’s say long division, you think you’ll never get it! It’s so hard and booooring. If you get distracted, watch TV instead of working on understanding your math by doing your

homework, come test time, you're miserable! It sucks and you don't understand any of it! But if instead you do your homework, you come out of your test all smiles! Because it was so easy! No problem. It was even fun! So there it is—go forth cheerfully. Put in the time and effort and you'll see your hard task is easy and fun!

Step 3 “And those running swiftly”

That's right. The next step is not just something you have to *do*. It's something that happens as a result of step one and two. You concentrated on your task, gave it your focus, put in the effort to make it easy, and now—tada! It is not only easy and fun, it happens quickly and efficiently. **Whenever we work on a big project, it is slow in the beginning. But if we brush aside all the barriers in the way and continue to work quickly and efficiently to the best of our ability, we get to the point (especially toward the end) that it all comes together.** And it seemed like it happened all of a sudden! Have you ever seen a house or building being built near



your home? In the beginning, you kind of wonder what they're doing. You see tractors, and dirt, and people going back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. But nothing seems to be happening. Months pass by and there is nothing that even looks like a building! Then one day, all of a sudden, there it is! A beautiful new building that seems like it appeared overnight! Well that

beautiful building is the product of a lot of hard work, a lot of concentration, focus, and effort. And in the end, it just all came together! Well it came together because the more the builders worked on it, the better and faster they got. Things came more easily and they worked more quickly and efficiently. And that is what happens if you do step one and two!

Step 4 “And those foremost in going ahead”

Who are the foremost in going ahead? Well, **they are the leaders of our communities. These are the people that are the best at what they do.** And you too can become a leader if you work hard at something, put in the effort, work quickly and with focus, you will become the best. And when you are the best, you become the one who shows other people how to accomplish their tasks too. And when you teach other people how to work to get something done, you are all working together toward that task. For example, if you become an expert cookie baker and

show your friend how to bake cookies too, the two of you together will bake double the amount of cookies! You are both working toward the same task and it will get done more quickly and easily because there are two of you, not just one! Well, that is how communities work too. You may start as just one person, but if you get a job done well, you show other people how to do it too. Pretty soon, the whole community is working towards getting the job done. *Then something that seemed almost impossible, like healing the planet, creating jobs, helping the poor, becomes really easy because we are all working at it together.*

Step 5 “And those regulating the affair”

What does that mean? Well, regulating an affair means you are the one who decides (regulates) the way things are and how they get done (the affair). Basically, when you work towards change, you eventually get to decide the way things are because your hard work has resulted in transforming, or changing your society to be a better place. Then other people, in other societies, look toward your example to see how to change their society as well.

The best example of this is the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Islamic Empire in the early days. The people to whom the Holy Prophet brought the Quran were the most backward, mean, cruel dirty people ever! The Prophet started preaching Islam when Allah revealed it to him and started first with making sure he contained all those good characteristics Allah wants us to work toward. His personality was full of goodness and so were his deeds. **In everything he did, the Prophet worked toward making the world a better place and affecting people in a positive way.** This was easy for the Prophet and he did it cheerfully because he had spent so much of his life concentrating on being a good person and focusing on doing the right thing.



He was such an example of a good Muslim that he showed other people how to become good Muslims as well. At first, these people were just his family and close friends. His wife, Khadija and friend Abu Bakr were among the first to accept Islam. Islam began to spread and as more people became Muslim, there were more people to help spread the beautiful Guide to life (the Quran) by carrying the message to faraway lands. **Pretty soon, the Islamic Empire grew very big and they were the leaders in art, culture, knowledge, science, and leading a good life. Other societies started looking to their example to see how they should behave too.** The

Muslims were the “regulators” of the “affair”. They were the example of how we should act and how societies should be. If we work hard, we can be a shining example too.

So let’s summarize.

If we want to say “**Yes we can**” to any good action, no matter how big, we have to.....

Step 1—concentrate and focus on what you want to get accomplished.

Step 2—have a positive attitude and put in the effort to make things easy.

Step 3—work quickly and efficiently and don’t lose heart because things seem slow at first.

Step 4—become good enough to show other people how to work toward the goal.

Step 5—be a shining example to other people.



Did you enjoy this issue of Lighthouse Magazine? Write to us and let us know at zamustang@msn.com.

Have a blessed New Year!