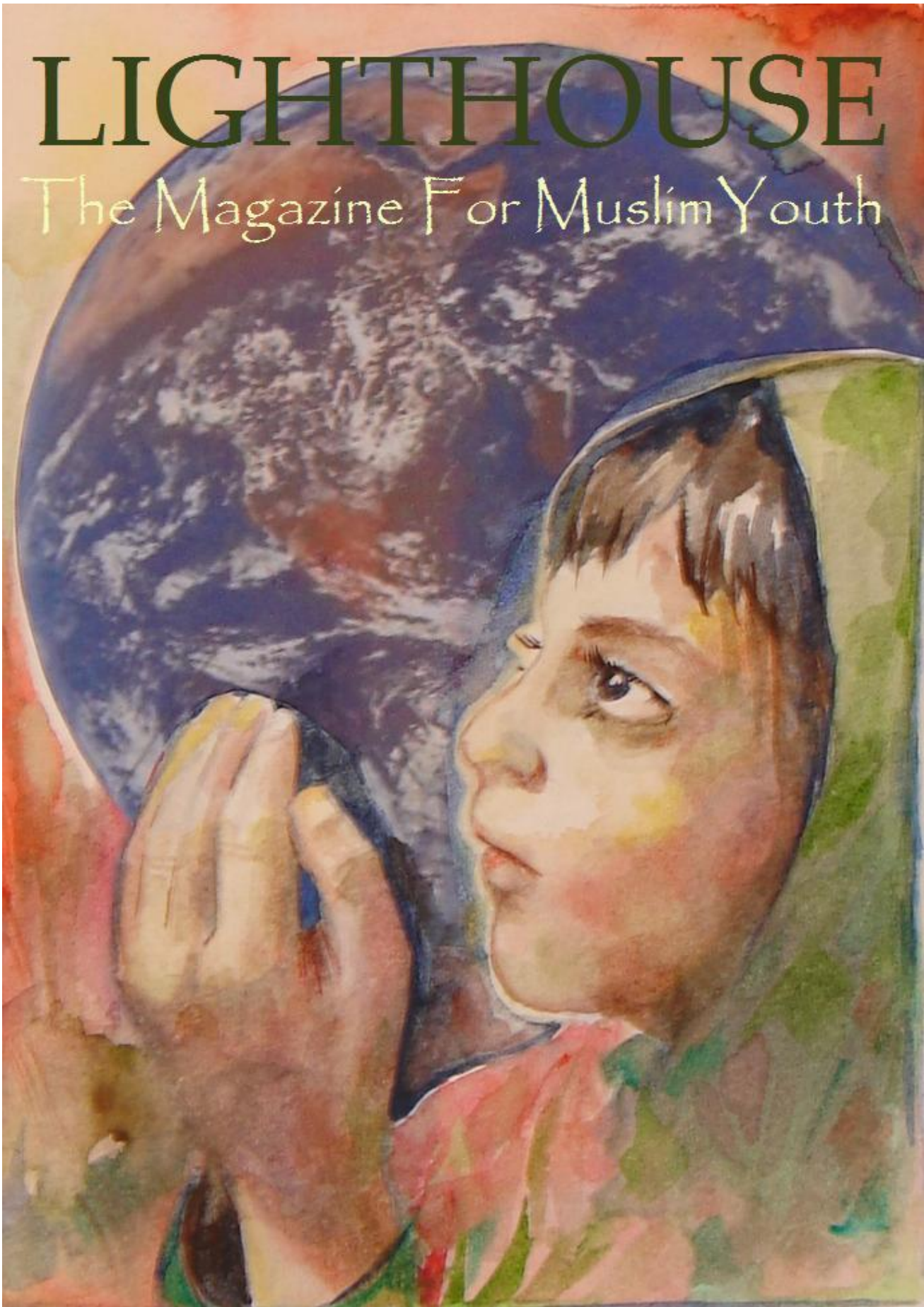


LIGHTHOUSE

The Magazine For Muslim Youth



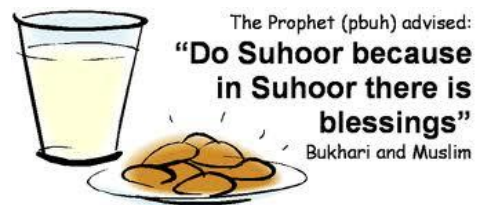
Ramadan: A special month is here

The sky is dark but I hear sounds, much before the sun peeks through the windows. I smell toast and tea, eggs and waffles, breakfast smells, before the sun is up. I creep downstairs and peek through the banister. Mama is flipping something on the stove. She's making pancakes! I run to her and snuggle in her dressing gown. She smiles at me and rubs my head.

"Ready for suhoor?"

My stomach growls and says I am ready. I wash up in the bathroom and take my seat at the table. Baba is already half through his plate of pancakes and eggs. The steam from his tea makes patterns in the air. He helps me cut my pancakes, his mouth full of food. Mama joins us with a plate of dates. I love dates. Mama cuts up some dates and makes a happy face on my pancake. My eyes feel tired but my mouth wants to eat. My head wants to sleep.

"More honey on my pancake, please".



"Allahu Akbar"

"Allahu Akbar"

I know what that means: Allah is Greater. It's the adhaan.

I gobble down the last of my pancake and wash it down with milk. Mama shovels a spoonful of egg in my mouth. I don't like eggs. I change the taste with another date. Baba takes it from me to remove the pit. He is already clearing away the dishes, drinking his last glass of water. Mama is putting the butter in the fridge, while finishing off her tea.

We all stand to pray. I feel like sleeping on the prayer mat. The warm food is like a lullaby in my stomach. Mama recites Surah Ikhlas because that's one Surah I've learned. Baba carries me to bed, tucks me in.

"Now remember, no breakfast for you. You're fasting."

I fall asleep as the first light of morning creeps through the curtains. I love suhoor. It's my favorite part of Ramadan. Oh, and Iftar too. Yaaaawwn ...

Recipe for a Happy and Blessed Eid

Two cups of whole wheat suhoor

Two cups of healthy Iftar

Two cups of heartfelt prayers

Add in as many good deeds as you can

Add a cup of family or friends

Mix well, till all ingredients blend together



(Chocolate chips cannot hurt)

No need to bake. Your soul can delight in this treat all year round and especially on Eid 😊

Fitrana

You've heard of Eid al Fitr, right?

The one after Hajj?

No, the one after Ramadan.

Yeah, that's right. I remember that one.

Good. So do you know what Fitrana means?

Yup, it is ... something to do with the Eid al Fitr.

Brilliant, but what?

Hmm ... I know ... its coming to me. I remember! My mom always makes this delicious halva on Eid and that must be it. It's really traditional. The Fitrana!

Sorry. It's not a halva.

Oh. Ummm, is it a special kind of date the blessed Prophet used to eat?



Nope.

Kebabs?

Nada.

Is it the name of a bakery?

Can you please stop reminding me of food? I'm fasting! Fitrana is not a kind of food.

Oh, ok. I get it.

So ... you don't know what it is.

I do know, at least I think I can figure it out. Must be something to do with Eid at Fitr...

You're on the right track ...

I knew I was ... Hmmm ... let me think. Is it just another cute name for Eid!!



Sorry, pal. Give up?

No! No way. Just give me a clue. I feel a little distracted today.

Sure. Fitrana is something you give.

Got it! Something you give... like Eid presents?

Yes.



I knew I knew it. I always do that. I like, buy presents for everyone I know. Once I had to go to school on Eid 'because I had this major test, I even gave cookies to the bus driver and hugged him. The guys thought it was funny. So that's it. Fitrana is Eid presents.

You are half right. It's a present, but for whom.

Anyone and everyone right?

Not exactly. Give up?

I am not giving up. Think of me as a human bulldog. Just give me one more clue.

The last one?

OK, the last one.

It's something you have to give before the Eid prayers, usually at the mosque.

Hmmm ... I have this figured out. It's not a parking fee, is it?

Nope.

This is not about school work is it?

No sir. Remember your last Eid salat at the mosque. As you walked in the door ...



Oh, I know it now! I got it. The name threw me off ... Yes, Fitrana is a donation we give to help the needy in our community, so they can have a good Eid too.

YES! Finally, you got it.

And the head of the family gives for every member of the family.

Righty-O.

I knew I would get it! I am like, way cool. I mean, Alhamdulillah.

So can you remind your parents about it?

I sure can ... but why?

Tomorrow is Eid al Fitr.

Oh yes! Can't believe that slipped my mind too. Thanks for reminding me and ...

And what?

Eid Mubarak! 😊



THE STORY OF PROPHET IBRAHIM

By Zaigham Khalil, Ohio, USA

Assalam Alaikum. I am going to tell you a story about Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) and Prophet Ismail (pbuh). One night Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) had a dream that was an order from Allah (SWT) that he had to sacrifice his son. When his son, Ismail heard this, he was ready to let his father do the sacrifice.

Prophet Ibrahim took his son to a valley near Makkah, which is now known as Mina, to perform the sacrifice. The Shaitan appeared and tried to make Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) change his mind about carrying out the task that Allah commanded him to do. Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) picked up a few small stones and threw them at the Shaitan. He then placed his son on the ground, and then he blindfolded himself so he could not see his son when he sacrificed him.

Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) was determined to carry out the Lord's command. As Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) took out his knife to sacrifice his son, Allah sent the angel Jibril down. Jibril gave Prophet Ibrahim a ram and told him, "Sacrifice this ram. Do not sacrifice Ismail." Allah's commandment for Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son was a test to see if he was going to obey his Lord. Allah (SWT) was very happy that Prophet Ibrahim was willing to do whatever He asked him to do, even if it meant sacrificing his precious son. Allah has asked the believers to observe this day as Eid-al-Adzha or the Feast of Sacrifice. On this annual occasion, Muslims sacrifice an animal in remembrance of the Prophet Ibrahim's complete trust in Allah (SWT). Likewise, believers should be willing to give up their money, their belongings, and even their lives for the cause of Islam, if required.

The Holy Quran says:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

(Qul inna salati wa nusukee wa mahyaya wa mamati lillahi rabbil Alameen)

"Say: My prayers and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

May Allah give us all the strength to carry this out in our lives (Ameen).

All about Allah

By Ali and Haady Khalil

Assalam Alaikum

We would like to talk to you about Allah (SWT).

Who is Allah?

Allah is our God.

There is only one God - and He is Allah.

Even though we refer to Him as He, He is not a He or a She because Allah is not a person.

Allah does not have any sons or daughters.

Allah is One.

Allah is the Creator - *Al Khaliq*. Allah is "He who creates

everything from nothing and creates all things with the knowledge of what will happen to them." He made us and the world. He has given us life and trees to give us oxygen to breathe. He has given us food and water. We should be very thankful to Allah (SWT) for everything He has given to us.

Allah (SWT) is our Helper. We must ask him for help when we are hurt, worried, or sad. It is Allah's will to send people to help us when we are in need.

Allah is *Ar-Rahman* and *Ar-Rahim* - He is Merciful and Most Kind. Allah is most loving and He forgives us when we say sorry to Him and ask for His forgiveness. Allah (SWT) wants us to be kind and forgiving to other people. We should always be willing to help others and give charity to those in need. When someone is not nice to us, we should try our best to forgive them.

Allah is watching us and hearing us every day and every moment of our lives. He is All-Knowing - He is *Al-Alim*. When we do good or bad He knows. He even knows what is in our hearts and minds. Allah is "*Malik-a-Youm-a-Deen*" -- He is the Master of the Day of Judgment. On the Day of Judgment only Allah will have the power to decide who is good enough to go to heaven and who deserves to be punished for doing evil.

We should remember Allah, thank Allah, and praise Him by saying our prayers five times a day.

In our prayers we repeatedly say the Surah Fatihah. This surah is a summary about Allah's greatness and how we should pray to Him for guidance. We would like to conclude our speech by reciting the meaning of this beautiful surah.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The Beneficent, the Merciful,

Master of the Day of Judgment,

You alone we worship. You alone we ask for help.

Guide us on the right path.

The path of those whom You have favored,

Not (the path) of those who earn Your anger, Nor of those who go astray.

Ameen.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِنَّا نَعْبُدُكَ وَإِنَّا نَسْتَعِينُكَ
إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

THE GREAT REFORMER

By Dr. Basharat Ahmad Sahib
Translated by Dr. Hamid Rahman

His Youth and devotion to Allah

From an early age, Hazrat Mirza loved his privacy. As a boy, he would take his lessons to an upstairs room to study alone. His hours of solitude were spent in remembering Allah; nothing else interested him. The driving force behind his love of education was the desire to enhance his understanding of Allah and to see how the knowledge could be profitably used in the service of Allah's creation and Islam. Physical desires often dominate a person's actions during youth, but in his case, the energy of youth only nurtured the seed of Allah's love that was growing in him. As childhood turned into adolescence, his interest in the service and love of God increased and his quest for knowledge of Quran intensified.

Marriage

Hazrat Mirza married when he was 19 years old. This marriage took place with great simplicity and had none of the extravagant ceremonies introduced later on. Two sons were born from this marriage. He maintained a caring, intimate relationship with his wife, but for him the Divine attraction was so strong that no worldly event could make a speck of difference in his spiritual striving. He continued to spend long hours in solitary devotion to Allah in the mosque or in the small room attached to it. Often his food was brought to him there.

Diet

Hazrat Mirza's diet was extremely simple. He shared whatever food he received from his house with some orphans and needy children. He divided the food into four or five equal portions and gave a loaf of bread and some gravy to each child until just one loaf was left for him, and sometimes not even that. If all the bread had been distributed, he would be content with just sipping some gravy. The children who shared Hazrat Mirza's food always turned up for mealtimes, but if by chance someone did not show up, he would save a portion for the absent child. Each child thus knew that his meal would be waiting for him even if he were late.

Later in the afternoon, if Hazrat Mirza felt hungry, he would send for some roasted chickpeas from the market and snack on them. An occasional cup of tea concluded his simple diet.

Devotion

Hazrat Mirza was a lover of the Quran and the Sunnah (practice) of the Holy Prophet, and his devotions never exceeded the limits set by the Quran and Sunnah. Besides the compulsory five optional *Ishraq* (mid-Hazrat Mirza loved to pray night prayer). His keen during prayers that it had been transported out of particular he recited the great concentration and *Tahajjud* prayer and followed it with lengthy supplications.



daily prayers and the morning) prayer, the *Tahajjud* (late concentration was so appeared as if he this world. In *Surah Fatihah* with affection in the

In his younger days, Hazrat Mirza sometimes repeated prayers several times if he felt that his concentration had been lacking. Besides prayers his devotional acts included recitation of the Quran, the *Darood* (a prayer invoking blessings on the Holy Prophet) and *Istaghfaar* (prayer for protection from or forgiveness of sins). Hazrat Mirza was truly in love with the Quran and its recitation was forever on his lips, whether he was standing, sitting, or walking. He was so moved by it that often tears flowed uncontrollably from his eyes.

Hazrat Mirza considered the devotional acts of current-day Sufis and Muslim ascetics, that go beyond the limits set by the Quran and the Sunnah, as innovations. In fact, he considered such acts to be synonymous to a new Sharia (law). In this connection, Hazrat Mirza would frequently recite this verse:

Try to achieve righteousness, piety, and sincerity,
Strive for it but never exaggerate in any matter (the practice of Muhammad Mustafa).

Signs of Allah in Nature

By Dr. Ayesha Khan

This summer I went tide pool hunting. Do you know what that is? In some places, the beach doesn't have sand. The ocean just comes up to the rocks. In the rocks are little divots, or holes, and what happens is that when the tide is high, the divots get covered with ocean water. When the tide is low, the divots trap



seawater and sea creatures and create little pools. These pools are wonders of ocean life, and you can usually find sea anemones, hermit crabs, regular crabs, sea snails, and seaweed in them. Once in a while you can find something really cool, like an octopus or starfish or a sea urchin or a sea slug! Looking for creatures in these pools during low tide is

one of my favorite pastimes!

On the beach this summer, I was gazing into a pool and nothing too special was going on so I decided to pick up a boring old sea snail. Sea snails, you see, are nothing exciting at all. They are like a regular snail but they don't come out of their shell much. They are very slimy and their job is to huddle in their shell home and stick to the rock. They just stick there and don't even let you look at them. I was bored of looking at its shell and then I did something that wasn't very nice, but I was curious. I pulled the little sucker off. With a *shwomp!* sound I yanked its shell and it off the rock. I held it in my hand, kind of meanly satisfied, that now it had to come out of its shell and show itself. I watched the slimy little thing stick out its antenna and feel the air. Not feeling water, it snuck back into its shell! I kept holding it in my hand, knowing my patience was more than the little snail's. After a few minutes, it decided to try again. One antenna out, then another. Further and further, till its little slimy body was venturing out of its shell too. It was kind of sweeping back and forth, feeling for water, but not finding any. It was

really quite amazing the way the poor snail was willing to venture so far out of its comfort zone just to find the place it needed to go.

I suddenly felt really bad for traumatizing the snail. I brought it closer to the water and as soon as one little antenna felt the cool salty liquid, the entire snail's body did a 180 degree turn and nearly leapt out of my hand back into the water! It was so quick that it landed upside down on its shell! Poor snail, I thought, how is it going to turn the right way, it doesn't have any legs or muscles. Right before my eyes though, that little snail swung itself around, ran/oozed back to the rock and *shhlurp!* stuck back onto its home.

Wow! I thought. That little tiny snail knows exactly where it came from and where it's going. Allah gave it everything it needs to find its way. I suddenly thought of how Allah mentions the bee in the Quran:

"And thy Lord revealed to the bee: Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build" (16:68)

The Lord revealed to the bee! I suddenly got what that meant. Allah mentions in the Quran that He told bees how to make their hives and where to make them.

This doesn't mean blueprints or and gave them a GPS means that He gave the bee the to make hives and snail, the bee knows its home and knows



that he made some instructions for them to find their way. It created the bee and instincts to know how honey. Just like the where to go to make how to get to where it

needs to go. Why would Allah talk about such a tiny creature in the Quran? Well, just like he gave the bee and the snail the knowledge of what it needs to survive and how to get there, he gave us the same knowledge!

For human beings though, things are a little more complicated. Allah provides for our physical being by giving us our minds and hands to figure out how to make a home for ourselves and get food to eat. All this is pretty amazing if you think

about it. On top of that though, He also provides for our spiritual being to find its way home—to a state of peace and goodness near Allah. He has given us all a conscience, the little voice in our head that tells us what the right thing to do is; and He has given us the Quran and our parents and other sources to help guide us in becoming close to Him. It's just that sometimes, we find ourselves in a weird position—like in someone else's hands, or like on our backs or stuck in a place we really don't want to be! Sometimes, you don't even know how you got there—maybe you made some bad choices or did some things you aren't proud of. Maybe, someone else was mean and led you the wrong way and now you're twisted up, feeling bad, nowhere near where you want to be and you think you will never get back to the right way. Deep down, though, we all have this secret strength, this hidden power, which will let us flip ourselves to the right way and get back to where we need to be, on the right path to being a good person. And when this secret strength is weak, we have a secret weapon! We can pray to Allah to help us be strong enough to get to where we need to be, and We can pray to Him to forgive us for making wrong decisions.

Allah is our home base. We need to get near Him and He has provided us all sorts of ways to do so. No matter where we end up, we should never give up on trying to get back to our home!

Put it to practice: We are all very lucky to have a home with Allah and have a home to live in. Many people do not have a home to live in though and they don't always have food to eat either. This Ramadan, try to think of a way you can help someone else get food or shelter. Try volunteering or come up with a unique way of your own and write to tell us about it at zainib74@gmail.com!



Write a spiritual diary in Ramadan

Write what?

About hunger, about fear,

About overcoming it

About bad habits, about anger,

About changing them,

About Allah, about you,

Take the story further

About loneliness, about tears,

Channel them into prayers

About hopes, about dreams,

Keep them burning bright

Light up the world,

Light upon Lights



What can we do to clarify the misconceptions about Sharia law?

By Aafia Ahmad

To tell you the truth, I did not know what Sharia law was until a few days ago when I read articles about it on soundvision.com and islamicity.com

I found out that I was living according to Sharia law without even knowing it because Sharia law is not something mysterious or dangerous. It is just another name to the way of life that our religion Islam teaches us. We can say we are following Sharia law when we are praying and fasting and following other requirements of Islam. Being a Muslim means that we are ones who submit to the guidance of Allah and try to lead our lives in accordance with His will. That means that in all matters big or small, we try to get our guidance and our direction from the Holy Book of Allah. In plain and simple words this is also called following Sharia law.

Unfortunately this simple word has been used by the media and those against Islam to mean something quite different. The word Sharia frightens and confuses many people. They take it to mean that the rules and punishments of Islam are enforced, like they were in Afghanistan under the brutal Taliban rule. Nothing could be further than the truth. Islam declares that there is no compulsion in religion, so

how could Islam impose a whole way of life on people? Many states in America have banned the use of Sharia law in any way and many more are planning to place such a ban. This simply indicates how unaware they are about even the basics of Islam.

Insha Allah events like this will inspire us to become more active in trying to show the world how beautiful and perfect our religion of Islam is. We can only do this if we have knowledge of our own religion and if our faith is strong. How can we defend our own faith if we are not sure about what we believe? True belief comes from knowledge and understanding, as well as sincere and regular prayers to Allah.

So what can we do individually? We do not need to become scholars to explain to other people what the words Sharia means. We simply need to be aware and ready to speak out when clarification is needed. This may be in the form of a discussion with the kids in our school or neighborhood. We could write letters to the editor of our local newspaper. Sound vision.com has written pamphlets explaining Sharia law and we can donate money to help them spread the truth. We can help the Lahore Ahmadiyya society plan their next convention explaining Sharia law. There are many things that we can do. By the



grace of Allah, the Sharia law is easy to practice in America because freedom and justice are available to us by the grace of Almighty Allah. May Allah help us to be grateful for the blessings we already have wherever we live and may we all work to remove the misunderstandings about Islam.

Lighthouse Magazine wishes
its readers a blessed
Ramadzan and a joyous Eid.

Please send us your ideas,
stories, feedback, articles,
jokes, poems at
zainib74@gmail.com