

THE MUSLIM WOMAN

The MUSLIM WOMAN

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THE EXECUTIVE

FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 1993 TO NOVEMBER 1995

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7. Editors

Dr. Zubeda Osman

Mrs. L. El-Droubie

8. Religious Advisor

Mrs. Gul Amin

IMPORTANT

Please note that from July onwards on our meetings will be held on the second **SATURDAY** of each month - that is, no longer on Sundays.

Time and venue as before: 1630 hours,
Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road,
London NW8 7RG.

EDITORIAL

Layla El-Droubie

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The News of the stampede in Makka overshadows the otherwise what should be a festive time of Eid al-Adha. For all of us who have loved ones in Saudi Arabia for the annual pilgrimage it is a time of uncertainty until we know whether they are safe and well or not. Our heartfelt sympathy to all those families and friends who lost their relatives and friends in Makka.

This incidence should make us think hard how often an individual undertakes this religious journey. The obligation of hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam, is prescribed for us 'once in a lifetime' if material wealth allows us to do so. In this day and age there are too many for whom the cost is no problem. At the same time the transport mode, ie air travel, is so easy compared to the overland route of only forty years ago or so. While it often took several months to reach Makka on foot the same distance can be done by air in just a few hours today. In other words, going on hajj has become so easy in every respect that too many Muslims undertake the journey several times.

The spiritual experience of hajj is so tremendous that one can forgive all those who wish to repeat it again. However, if any action by man becomes habitually it can often lead to reduction in meaning. It is a sad fact that many Muslims undertake this journey as a kind of 'annual holiday'.

It does not need a calculator to work it out that it is a physical impossibility for all Muslims of the world who satisfy the criteria of wealth and ability to converge on Makka at the same time. God in His wisdom has prescribed for us the pilgrimage 'once'. We must ask ourselves whether by performing hajj several times we are not disobeying His command. □

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAM

To think that there are still countries in the world where basic human rights are violated is a sad reflection on the state of mind of today's women and men. We are all guilty of this crime. We pay lip-service to some of the greatest offenders for our own ends. We must strive to remedy this deplorable situation.

The impact of pre-Islamic and early Islamic legal practice in one area of the Islamic penal law brought about that it is said Islam lacks a sensibility for human rights. The everyday practice of many Islamic societies emphasises this view. Added to this are that in most constitutions of Islamic countries the human rights are laid down in theory but in practice they are often violated.

The motto that "man is the measure of all things" has no place in Islam. The Qur'an traces the origin of all "rights" back to God. An international conference in Paris in 1981 stated that not less than twenty basic human rights are formulated in the Qur'an; for example

- **Human dignity:** "We have conferred dignity on the children of Adam". 17:70
- **Protection of human life:** "... if anyone slays a human being - unless it be (in punishment) for murder or for spreading corruption on earth - it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind." 5:32
- **Right of life, freedom and safety:** "... do good unto your parents; and do not kill your children for fear of poverty - (for) it is We who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them; and do not commit any shameful deeds, be they open or secret; and do not take any human being's life - (the life) which God has declared to be sacred - otherwise than in (the pursuit of) justice ..." 6:151
- **Protection of life and ensuring provision:** "Behold, it is provided for thee that thou shalt not hunger here or feel naked, and that thou shalt not thirst here or suffer from the heat of the sun." 20:118-119
- **Willful interference in the private sphere:** "... do not enter houses other than your own unless you have obtained permission and greeted their inmates. This is (enjoined upon you for your own good, so that you might bear (your mutual rights) in mind. Hence (even), if you find no one within (the house), do not enter it until you are given leave; and if you are told, "Turn back" then turn back ..." 24:27
- **Freedom of movement and the choice of residence:** "Go all over the earth and behold how (wondrously) He has created (man) in the first instance ..." 29:20
- **Right of asylum:** "... and he who forsakes the domain of evil for the sake of God shall find on earth many a lonely road, as well as life abundant." 4:100

Burden: "... we do not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear ..." 7:42; "... for all shall be judged according to their (conscious) deeds ..." 6:132

- **Right of possession and obligation by means of possession:** "... spend (in Our way) out of what We have granted you as sustenance ere there come a Day ..." 2:254

In the Tradition of the Prophet:

- **Prohibition of torture and cruel punishments:** "No one shall be chastised by fire." (Bukhari II, Oppression: Help your brother)

- **Work duty:** "The Prophet said: "God wishes that each one of you does the work to be done satisfactorily". Hadith

On a critical point it is to note that the Qur'anic verses and ahadith have been removed from their literary and historical contexts; it deals less with the formulating of universal human rights as with situative ethical challenges.

Whatever 'human rights' means to us, it is a subject we all have to concern ourselves and act upon it for the betterment of mankind. May God guide us onto the right path. □

اعمل لدنياك كاتك تعيش ابدا
واعمل لآخرتك كاتك تموت غدا

**Work for this world as though you will live
forever, and prepare for the Hereafter as
though you are dying tomorrow.**

APPEAL

NEW PREMISES

Please donate generously for the Madina House Project. We hope (insha-Allah) to raise at least £300,000 to buy a new home for children in need. The present house is inadequate for the needs of the youngsters.

Cheques should be made payable to:

"The Muslim Women's Association (UK)"
please send it either to:

The Muslim Women's Association
63 Coombe Lane, London SW20 0BD

OR

The National Westminster Bank
Royal Garden Branch, Kensington High Street, London W8 5EQ.
(Acc. no. 25941364; Sort Number 50-30-10)
May Allah reward you. Amin.

Health Talk

EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION

After many years of campaigning, the position reached in Britain is that most people know about, and have positive attitudes to, the health benefits of exercise. However, they don't engage in it! Society at large does little to encourage and much to discourage exercise. The latest (1987) national figures for various exercise activities confirm this.

Prospects today are brighter. The National Fitness survey, which was reported in 1992, stimulated public and professional interest in exercise. The growing concern of general practitioners and primary health care teams about health promotion and disease prevention should lead to efforts to increase the motivation of their patients, with advice, guidance and support.

The main potential for disease prevention induced by exercise is on CHD (Coronary Heart Disease) and, for this, aerobic exercise of sufficient intensity to produce cardiovascular training is recommended. This exercise needs to be vigorous for the individual, as indicated by sweating and hard breathing, but not necessarily so intense as to produce breathlessness and distress. If the pulse rate is counted immediately after stopping exercise is should reach 60-80% of the maximum heart rate (calculated as 210 minus the age of the individual in years).

Exercise should be sustained without a break for 20 minutes or more; and taken at least twice a week. Preliminary "warm up" including stretching of large muscle groups, and a final cool-down of milder exercise, should be routine.

Such a regimen has to be approached gradually and, increased slowly, the build up should be more gradual in middle age than in younger people until it becomes habitual. Realistic increasing targets can be set and self-monitored. Over-enthusiasm can lead to strain and injury and since sporadic vigorous exercise in the otherwise sedentary is particularly associated with cardiac emergencies, patients should be so warned. If the exercise programme is interrupted or any reason, it is important to restart at a lower level than previously reached and to gradually increase output.

How does exercise reduce the risk of CHD?

Adequate aerobic exercise is readily perceived as being compatible with good health and it can be affirmed that many physiological parameters, including coronary risk factors, are improved by it. This is seen in long-term control of the overweight, in improved lipid profiles (reductions in VLDL, LDL and triglycerides and increases in HDL cholesterol), in enhanced insulin sensitivity, and lower blood sugar levels, and in benefits to blood clotting parameters.

Amongst the civil servants, those who reported vigorous aerobic exercise also reported less hypertension. The incidence of hypertension was similarly reduced

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Juniors's Corner

THE MEANING OF MORALITY

The dictionary defines morality as meaning "the right or wrong of an action; a set of rules of conduct based on the principle of right conduct rather than on law or custom." First we note that the words 'right', 'wrong', 'bad' and 'evil' are terms denoting value judgments, while terms like 'charity', 'humility', 'truthfulness', and 'justice' are descriptive terms, designating a particular attitude or mode of behaviour. Whether a particular attitude or action - for example, modesty - is considered good or bad depends upon the criterion by which human actions are to be judged. In Islam, this criterion is Qu'ran and Sunnah. However, in the final analysis actions are judged by God according to the intentions behind them. No matter how apparently beneficial an act may be, if the doer does not believe in God and is not striving to obey and to please Him by acting within the framework of His laws, the act has been done for some reason other than for the sake of God and its true worth.

Personal Character

The quality of a society depends upon the quality of the individuals who are its members. Among the teachings of Islam, great emphasis is laid on God-consciousness, which is an approximate translation of the word *taqwa*. *Taqwa* refers to an attitude of mind, the awareness of God and consciousness of one's responsibility to Him. As such, it is mentioned in the Qur'an as being the foundation of a Muslim's character.

"The most honourable among you in the sight of God is the one who is most God-conscious". Q:49:13

In the teachings of Islam, great emphasis is placed on humility, modesty, control of passions and desires, truthfulness, integrity, patience and steadfastness. We are enjoined to fulfil all our promises and contracts, to keep all trusts, to meet our engagements, and to repay our debts.

Often one learns more by doing something than just by reading. Therefore, why not write short essays on the following and send it to us for correction. The best two essays will be published in future editions of this 'Journal'. Don't forget to add your age next to your name.

1. In our relationships with others, what are (1) the qualities and behaviour which God has enjoined and (2) those which He has forbidden?
2. List some important personal characteristics of a Muslim, as mentioned in Qur'an and Sunnah.
3. We often hear the phrase, "You can do anything you want as long as it doesn't hurt anyone". In your opinion, does this correspond to the morality of Islam? Give your reasons.

Dr M M Siddiqui, USA.

POETRY

THE GOLD COINS FROM THE ENCOUNTER AT KAYLAH

"How noble is that yellow one, whose yellowness is pure,
Which traverses the regions, whose journeying is afar.
Told abroad are its name and repute; its lines are set as the secret sign of wealth;
Its march is coupled with the success of endeavours;
Its bright look is loved by mankind
As though its ore had been molten of their hearts.
By its aid whoever has gotten it in his purse assails boldly,
Though kindred be perished, or tardy to help.
O, charming are its purity and brightness;
How many a ruler is there whose rule has been perfected by it!
How many a sumptuous one is there whose grief, but for it, would be endless.
How many a host of cares has one charge of it put to flight.
How many a full moon (one in his power & glory) has a sum of it brought down.
How many a one burning with rage, whose coal is flaming,
Has it been secretly whispered to, and then his anger has softened.
How many a prisoner, whom his kin had yielded,
Has it delivered, so that his gladness has been unmingled.
Now by the Truth of the Lord whose creation brought it forth,
Where it not for His fear, I should say that its power was supreme!"

* * *

"Ruin on it for deceit and insincerity,
The yellow one with two faces (the coin) like a hypocrite!
It shows forth with two qualities to the eye of him that looks at it,
The adornment of the loved one, the colour of the lover.
Affection for it, think they who judge truly,
Tempt men to commit that which shall anger their Maker.
But for it no thief's right hand were cut off;
Nor would the niggard shrink from hospitality to the night-farer;
Nor would the delayed claimant mourn the delay of him that withholds;
Nor would men call to God from the envious who casts at them.
Moreover, the worst quality that it possesses
Is that it helps thee not in straits
Save from fleeing from thee like a runaway slave.
Well done he who casts it away from a hill-top,
And who, when it whispers to him with the whispering of a lover,
Says to it in the words of the truth-speaking, the veracious,
I HAVE NO MIND FOR INTIMACY WITH YOU - BEGONE!"

The Assemblies of al-Hariri, retold by Amina Shah, the Octagon Press, London (1980). □

KITCHEN TALK

POTATO GRATIN

CHANTAL BOURNISSEN

(easy, inexpensive, serves 4)

Ingredients:

butter to grease the dish
600 g potatoes, cooked in their skins, peeled and thinly sliced
salt and pepper
1 large leek, cut into rings
1 small red pepper, seeded and diced
for the liquid filling:
200 ml cream
2 eggs
2 tbsp mixed herbs, chopped (parsley, marjoram, thyme)
salt, pepper, nutmeg
topping:
100 g Swiss Gruyère cheese, grated

Method:

- Place half of the potato slices in a butter greased dish and adjust the seasoning
- Sprinkle over the leek, cover with the remaining potato slices, and season
- Scatter the diced red pepper over the top
- Beat together all the ingredients for the liquid filling and pour over the vegetables
- Bake in a pre-heated oven at 220°C (425° F) for 15-20 minutes
- Sprinkle with the cheese, then brown in the oven for a further 8-10 minutes.

BLACKCURRANT SORBET

Ingredients:

1/2 pint water
1/2 lb fresh or frozen blackcurrants
1 teaspoonful lemon juice
2 egg whites

Method:

- Place the water in a saucepan with the sugar. Bring to the boil and boil gently for 10 mins. Cool.
- Meanwhile stew the blackcurrants in the minimum of water for 10 mins., then sieve and make pulp up to 1 pint with water, if necessary. Cool.
- Mix together the sugar syrup, lemon juice and fruit pulp. Pour into ice tray and freeze in the refrigerator set at coldest, until nearly firm, for about 1 hour.
- Whisk egg whites till stiff but not dry.
- Turn frozen fruit mixture into a chilled bowl, break down with a fork, and fold in the egg whites.
- Return to the ice tray and freeze until firm but still of a slightly soft texture. Spoon into serving dishes. □

- Refreshments on the day
- Helpers: to acquire and collect goods in advance, to publicise the event, to set up the stalls on the day, to clean up afterwards; also stallholders and stewards are needed.

Remember, the bazaar will only be as successful as you make it!

Required

For the increasing paper-work load at Madina House due to the Social Services requirement we are in urgent need of a basic computer with printer. An old computer in good working condition or cash towards buying a new one would be greatly appreciated. Enquiries: Mrs Khanam Hassan, 63 Coombe Road, London, SW20 0BD, Tel: 081-946 1052.



Continued from page 6

among the vigorous sports players of the Harvard alumni. The inference is that the rise of blood pressure in middle-age, typical of "Western" populations, is reduced by chronic exercise. Furthermore, clinical trials suggest that both moderate and vigorous aerobic exercise can produce significant, although modest, reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure levels in mild and moderate hypertensives.

Theoretically, it is feasible that heavy recreational work could produce undesirable rises in blood pressure from static effort. It may be advisable therefore to caution hypertensives against such work, though no direct data are available.

Of interest in terms of CHD aetiology, is the indication that exercise has to be habitual and ongoing to be beneficial - a history of vigorous aerobic exercise in the past affords no protection if it is not continued and currently maintained. This focuses attention on the acute phase of the CHD event - on thrombosis and vascular obstruction, acute ischaemia or dysrhythmia - as the main mechanism whereby exercise exerts its protective effect, rather than on the chronic slow build up of coronary atherosclerosis. Studies of the effects of exercise on thrombogenesis and electrical stability are therefore required to confirm this impression.

An alternative explanation for this observation is that protection is related to higher cardio-respiratory fitness, since it is well established that physical fitness is rapidly lost with the cessation of exercise.

Conditions which may necessitate modification of exercise activities:

Chest pains, high blood pressure, heart disease
Chest trouble (such as asthma or bronchitis)
Back trouble, slipped disk
Joint pains or arthritis
Diabetes

Recovery from illness or operation.

Remember - a healthy person is both sound in mind and body. ☐

Article supplied by Dr. Z. Osman.

MWA BUSINESS - June 1994

MWA Business - May Khadija Knight

The May meeting was opened with a recitation from the Qur'an by Mrs Sharifa Sherif.

Apologies were received from Mrs Gul Amin who was on Hajj.

The new committee members were welcomed and given an introduction to their duties: treasurer: Mrs Ghaniyat Hoodless; secretary: Ms Khadijah Knight; assistant secretary: Mrs Shafqat Ghaffar. Stationary was then distributed to assist them with their work.

The meeting was addressed by an Imam from the Islamic Cultural Centre, Professor Muhammad al-Mussafi who spoke about the misunderstanding which exists in the West in regard to Muslim attitudes to women. He cited many Qur'anic references which demonstrated the equality of women, the benefits of good wives, the husband's duty, and inheritance.

This raised many issues for discussion including counselling of marriage partners, the need for confidentiality, the need for support for Muslim families in these times. The UN Year of the Family was commended as worthy of note and a reminder to us all to help families in difficulties and under stress.

Thanks were given to Mrs Sharifa Sherif for her work as religious adviser. It is no longer possible for her to attend every meeting but she will continue to give the MWA her full support.

The next meeting will be held on Sunday the 12th June 1994 at 4.30 pm at the Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG. At 5.30 pm the meeting (in room 3) will be addressed by Dr. Syed M. Darsh.

* * *

Dr Darsh is chairman of the Sharia Council, and of Muslim Aid. He is a former Imam of the Regent's Park Mosque. He has kindly agreed to give his time on this particular occasion. We should make a special effort to attend in large numbers, and on time. (Khanam Hassan)

Important

Please note that from July onwards on our meetings will be held on the first Saturday of each month - that is, no longer on Sundays. Time and venue as before: 1630 hours, Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG.

Advance Notice

Our yearly bazaar will be held in July. Please submit your ideas and offers of help at this month's meeting or inform our President, Mrs Khanam Hassan, by post or telephone. The following is required:

- Goods for the various stalls

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The Muslim Woman

Front Cover Picture

A flowering prunus tree against a blue background. An element of fantasy is introduced with the large tulips springing from the base of the trunk. Iznik, Turkey.

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