



THE ISLAMIC BULLETIN



Issue 2

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RAMADAN MUBARAK!! HAPPY RAMADAN!!

Sawm (fasting), the fourth pillar of Islam is another act of 'Ibadah (worship). All adult Muslims must fast from dawn to sunset every day of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar.

This means abstaining from eating, drinking, smoking and conjugal relations during the hours of fasting. Travelers and the sick can defer fasting during Ramadan and make up for it later.

Sawm develops self-control and helps us to overcome selfishness, greed, laziness and other faults. It is an annual training program to refresh us for carrying out our duties towards the Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer. Sawm gives us the feeling of hunger and thirst.

We experience for ourselves what it is like to have an empty stomach. This develops our feeling for the poor and hungry people.

Fasting teaches us to control the love of comfort. It also, helps us to keep our sexual desires within control. Hunger, comfort and sex are three factors which must be kept under control to behave as the Almighty's servants.

The month of Ramadan is a month of forgiveness, mercy and a means of avoiding the punishment of Hell. So Brothers and Sisters, let's keep our fast and increase our good deeds in this Blessed month of Ramadan.

The purpose of fasting is to make a Muslim able to control his passions, so that he becomes a person of good deeds and intentions. Anger, a common human weakness, can also be brought under control by fasting.

A Muslim is expected to keep away from all bad actions during his fast. He should not tell a lie, break a promise or do any deceitful act.

Ramadan was also the month in which the Qur'an was first revealed. There is a night in the month which is **"better than a thousand months"**(Quran 97:3). This night is called LAILATUL QADR (Night of Power).

According to Hadith, this night occurs during the last ten days of Ramadan (likely the odd-numbered nights). A night of great importance; we should worship as much as we can on this night.

At the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid ul Fitr, and offer special prayers and thank the Almighty for his blessings and mercy.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



On Sunday, February 17, 1991, Nidal received an invitation to speak about Islam at a church in Tulare, a town about 40 miles from Fresno.

The Gulf War was about a month old and public awareness of Islam was great. When Nidal came into town around 11 o'clock in the morning, he noticed that the whole town was covered with American flags and yellow ribbons, and later he learned that a lot of young men from Tulare had been sent to the Gulf.

Most of the congregation in this church were middle-aged and were curious to see Nidal dressed in Arabian dress.

After a few remarks, Nidal was introduced to the congregation. He started his talk by telling the meaning of the words, 'Islam' and 'Muslim'. He also explained the principles of Iman and Islam and then he let the congregation choose the topics they wanted to explore.

The first topic they chose was that of the place, rights, and duties of women in Islam. He explained that Islam put women in a situation where they were not to be used, abused, or humiliated unjustly. He explained that women are given their place in society to function best as mothers in the family unit.

The second topic was about the life of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and his lifestyle. Nidal explained about the life of the Prophet and his teaching. He mentioned the story of Omar (R.A.) when he opened Jerusalem.

The last topic was about the Gulf War. Here, Nidal explained about the history of Islam expansion.

At the end of Nidal's talk, he was asked to pray. He told everybody to raise their hands and asked The Almighty to give them guidance. Ameen!

The letter by Nidal was edited without changing the facts to accommodate space.

Assalamu Alaikum

Dear Editor,

I have been living here in San Francisco for two years now and I have found very few Islamic activities for the families. Unlike other major city mosques, the Islamic Center of S.F. does not have activities planned for families. I also do not see women involved very much in the Masjid. Is there a reason for this? I would love to find out how I can become involved with some other Muslim sisters to plan activities for our children.

Thank you!

Wa Alaikum Salam

NEED TO CONTACT US?

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Response:

Sumay al Saleh

Thank you for your letter. This is a very big concern of all Muslim families and is something that all of us need to work on. Presently we have a telephone number which will coordinate these activities, provide locations for prayers, answer questions, and provide literature about Islam both for Muslims as well as non-Muslims. The number to call is 415-552-8831.

Dear Editor,

I would like to congratulate you first for a wonderful start in your bulletin. I would like to suggest in your food section to provide recipes of different Islamic dishes, from members of different countries in the world.

Response:

M. Tuqan, Richmond

We will start a section with recipes. We request from everybody to please mail us some recipes, so that we can start this section in the next issue.

THE VIRTUES OF FASTING

COURSE OF CONDUCT DURING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN

Sighting of the Moon

When the Ramadan Moon is sighted, the following supplication should be recited, **"The Almighty is The Greatest: O Almighty! May this moon herald for us peace, faith, and safety; and let this moon rise as a moon for Islam and for peace. Also, bless us with the capability for tasks that are liked by You and please You. O moon, our Lord and thine Lord is The Almighty."** (Tirmizi, Ibn Haban).

The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle. The time difference between two consecutive new moons varies from 29 days and 6 hours to 29 days and 20 hours.

During the conjunction period, the moon is completely dark and not visible due to the overshadow from the earth, since it is in a straight line with the sun and the earth.

When the moon crosses this line, it is regarded as the birth of a new moon. The birth of the new moon can occur at any time of the day or the night.

The visibility of the new moon, however, depends upon a number of factors such as the angle of separation from the sun; the clarity and contrast in the atmosphere, etc.

As a general rule, the new moon should be between 22 to 30 hours at the time of the sunset, before it can become visible.

To obtain a definite answer, please contact the Islamic Center of San Francisco at the following phone numbers (415) 282-9039, (415) 641-9596 or one of the Board of Directors.

Ramadan

A Month of Prayer: Develop special interest for prayers during the holy month of Ramadan. Besides the obligatory prayers, make arrangements for optional prayers.

Recitation from the Holy Qur'an

Make special arrangements for the recitation of the Holy Qur'an during this holy month of Ramadan. It is related on the authority of Abdullah bin 'Amr that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:

"The fast and the Qur'an will, both plead on behalf of the bondsman (who will keep fast in the day and recite or listen attentively to the recital of the Quran in the night, standing in the presence of the Lord). The fast will say: 'My Lord! I had held him back from food, drink and sexual satisfaction. Accept my intercession for him today (and treat him with mercy and forgiveness).' And the Qur'an will say: 'I had held him back from taking rest and sleeping in the night. O God! Accept my intercession for him today (and treat him with mercy and forgiveness). The intercession of both the fast and the Qur'an will be accepted for the bondsman and he will be treated with exceptional kindness.'" -Baihaqi.

The Holy Qur'an and other Divine books were revealed during this month. Hadrat Ibrahim, (Prophet Abraham) (A.S.) was blessed with Divine Scriptures, Hadrat Dawood, (Prophet David) (A.S.) was awarded with the Zabur, Hadrat Isa (Prophet Jesus) (A.S.) received the Bible during this auspicious month.

Listen to the Qur'an during Tarawih

It was the practice of the Holy Prophet (saw) to listen to the whole text of the Holy Qur'an during this month.

Tarawih Prayers

Offer the Tarawih prayers with full devotion, concentration and interest. Do not rush through these prayers as a matter of routine, but offer the same with reverence as a regular Salat. Offer them, so that it may strengthen your relationship with The Almighty and the same may have good effect on your life. If The Almighty grants you the aptitude, make preparation for Tahajjud (late night) prayers also.

The Islamic Center of San Francisco will be conducting the Tarawih prayers under the auspices of Imam Ismail Ashraff. Approximately 1 1/4 Siharahs (parts) (Juz in Arabic) will be recited every night. The completion of the Qur'an will be, God-willing, on the 27th night of Ramadan. The Tarawih prayers will be conducted after the Isha Salat.

Help the Poor

Offer Sadaqah and alms to the poor. Attend to the needs of the infirm, the indigent, the widows and the orphans. Arrange for the Sahri and Iftar for the poor. The Holy Prophet (saw) has designated this month as the month of sympathy, largess, and charity. Sympathy means material and moral sympathy, politeness and consideration, and monetary help. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (R.A.A.) says

that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) was the most generous person among all the men, particularly during the month of Ramadhan, he (S. A. W.) used to be extraordinarily benevolent and generous when he met Gabriel.

And during this month Angel Gabriel used to visit him every night and recite the Holy Quran to him. At this time the normal generosity of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) used to be very much increased, faster than the rain bearing wind. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Laila-tul-Qadr (Night of Glory)

Arrange to offer as many Nafils as possible during the Lailat-ul-Qadr, and recite the Holy Qur'an as the importance of this night lies in the fact that it was on this very night that the Divine message descended.

The Holy Qur'an, in Surah Al-Qadr (The Night of Power) says: **"We have indeed revealed This (Message) In the Night of Power. And what do you know (about the significance and importance) of this night? The Glorious Night is better than a thousand months. On this night the angels and Jibrail (Gabriel) descended (embark upon their allotted mission) by the command of their Sustainer. That (Night) is all peace until the dawn."** (Qur'an 97:1-5)

I'tikaf in Ramadan

The tradition has it that the Holy Prophet (saw) observed I'tikaf (i.e. prayers in seclusion) during Ramadan, and therefore, we should follow the same practice. According to Hadrat Ayesha (ra), "When the last ten days of Ramadan arrived, the Holy Prophet (saw) used to awake as much as possible and offer prayers. He also made arrangements to wake up his wives and prayed with all devotion to The Almighty."

Zakat al-Fitr

Zakat al-Fitr should be given on behalf of adult, minor, male or female Muslims. It consists of a Sa'a (measure of about 2.5 kgs) of rice, wheat, dates or similar things of food or its equivalence in cash of \$3 dollars and 50 cents or \$4 dollars. Give it voluntarily and without any hesitation, on Eid-day, or a day or two before to enable the needy and the poor to arrange for their requirements so that they may celebrate and enjoy the Eid festivities along with the others.

The Holy Prophet (saw) has highly recommended the Zakat al-Fitr so that it may expiate for the irregularities committed during Ramadan, and may help for the sustenance of the poor and the indigent. (Abu Daud)

Abbreviations Used:

PBUH; A.S.; S.A.W. - Peace be upon him

R.A.A.- The Almighty was pleased with him/them

R.A.- The Almighty was pleased with her

TREATMENT

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) also occasionally suggested various kinds of treatments to his companions when they fell ill.

There is a long list of medicines and treatments which the Prophet (S.A.W.) suggested from time to time to his companions. Some of the important medicines and treatments are given below.

ORAL MEDICINE

Honey

The Prophet (pbuh) recommended the use of honey for a great many illnesses.

Ibn Abbas reported God's Messenger as saying, "There is a remedy in three things and one of them is honey."

Abu Hurairah reported God's Messenger as saying, "If anyone licks honey three mornings every month, he will not be afflicted with any serious trouble."

Abdullah bin Masud reported God's Messenger as saying, "Make use of the two remedies - honey and the Qur'an."

Abu Said Al-Khudri said that a man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and told him that his brothers' bowels were loose, so God's Messenger told him to give him honey.

He did so and came back and said, "I gave it to him but it has only made his bowels more loose."

This he said three times, and when he came a fourth time and was told to give him honey he said, "I have done so, but it has only increased the looseness."

God's Messenger replied, "God has spoken the truth and your brother's bowels have lied." He then gave him honey and he recovered.

Recent research has shown that honey is useful to cure many diseases. It is especially effective for heart disease patients and for common colds. It also helps in blood and skin diseases and is very useful for the eyes. It can help in digestion.

Its ingredients show that it is a very useful medicine and can be useful in three ways: (a) as good nourishment; (b) as a preventive measure and (c) as a medicine for various kinds of diseases.

Its ingredients are: calcium, sulphur, phosphorous, iron, carbon, magnesium, sodium, potassium, chlorine and iodine.

Abu Hurairah reported God's Messenger (pbuh) as saying, "Nigella seed is a remedy for every disease but As-Sam (i.e. death)." Salama said that God's Messenger (pbuh) never had a wound or bleeding foot without ordering her to put henna on it."

S'ad told of hearing God's Messenger (pbuh) say, "He Who has a morning meal of seven ajwa dates (good quality Medinah dates) will not suffer harm that day through poison or magic."

A'isha reported God's Messenger (pbuh) as saying, "The ajwa dates of Al-Aliya (a village near Medinah) contain healing, and they are an antidote taken first thing in the morning."

FASTING (SIYAM)

Siyam is one of the main pillars of Islam. It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint." (Quran 2:183)

Based upon the Qur'an, it has been the consensus of Muslims throughout history that a Muslim who rejects the legitimacy of Siyam rejects Islam as well. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said about the significance of the month of Ramadan: "A great month, a blessed month, containing a night which is better than a thousand months. The Almighty has appointed the observance of fasting during it as an obligatory duty, and the passing of its nights in prayer as voluntary practice. If someone draws near to The Almighty during it with some good act, he will be like one who fulfills an obligatory duty in another month, and he who fulfills an obligatory duty in it will be like one who fulfills seventy obligatory duties in another month."

A quote from another Hadith states: "The month of Ramadan is the month of endurance and the reward for endurance is paradise. It is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from hell."

Significance of Ramadan

Like any other injunctions of Islam, the benefits of the Ramadan are not limited purely to either "spiritual" or "temporal" elements of life. In Islam, the spiritual, social, economic, political, and psychological all intermingle in a consistent and cohesive whole. For convenience of presentation, however, the significance of Siyam (fasting) is discussed under four sub-headings: social, physical, spiritual and psychological.

Social Elements

1) Fasting promotes the spirit of unity and belonging within the Muslim Ummah (Nation). Millions of Muslims all over the world fast during the same month following the same rules and observances.

2) Fasting promotes the spirit of human equality before The Almighty. All Muslims male and female, rich and poor, from all ethnic backgrounds go through the same experience of deprivation with no special privileges for any group or class.

3) Fasting promotes the spirit of charity and sympathy towards the poor and needy. A rich person may be able to "imagine" the suffering of the poor or "think" about hunger. This may explain, in part, why Ramadan is also known as the month of charity and generosity.

4) Fasting also promotes the Islamic form of sociability. Muslims are urged to invite others to break the fast with them at sunset, to gather for the Qur'anic study, prayer and visitations. This provides spiritual atmosphere and better chance for socialization in a brotherly and spiritual atmosphere. Hazrat Zaid bin Khalid Al-Juhani (R.A.A.) relates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: Anybody who offers meal for the breaking of the fast of another person earns the same merit as the one who was observing the fast without diminishing in any way the recompense of the fasting person. (Tirmizi and said this is sound and good). Hazrat Umm 'Ammarah Al-Ansaria (R.A.A.) relates that once the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) visited her when she placed some food before him. He (S.A.W.) asked her to eat also. Thereupon she said: I am fasting today. This He (S.A.W.) remarked when non-fasting persons eat before a fasting person the angels call for Allah's mercies upon him till they have finished or he said, till they have eaten to their satisfaction. (Tirmizi reported this and said it good). Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.A.) relates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: 'When any of you is asked to join in a meal, he should accept the invitation. And if he is fasting, he should pray for the host, and if he is not fasting he should join the host.' (Muslim)

Medical and Health Aspects

A great deal has been written about the medical and health benefits of fasting, both by Muslim and non-Muslim scientists. These benefits include the elimination of harmful fatty substances from the blood

stream, helping cure certain types of intestinal and stomach ailments and the removal of body tissues. Needless to say that some ailments may be aggravated by the fasting, in which case, the individual is exempted from fasting. For those who may be engaged in islamically (medically) undesirable habits such as overeating or smoking, the self control and discipline exercised in Ramadan provide an excellent beginning to "kick" these bad habits.

Spiritual and Moral Elements

1) Fasting above all is an act of obedience and submission to the Almighty. This submission and commitment is based upon the love of The Almighty and the earnest effort to gain His pleasure and to avoid His displeasure. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.A.) says that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "The Almighty and Master of Honor says: All other actions of a person are for himself, except the case of his fasting which is exclusively for Me and I shall pay (recompense) for him for the same. The fast is a shield (against vice and the fire of Hell)." Therefore when anyone of you is fasting he should abstain from loose talk and avoid verbosity and noisy exchange of words. If somebody starts abusing him or picks up a quarrel with him, he should tell him that, 'I am observing a fast.' By The Almighty in whose hands is the life of Muhammad (S.A.W.), the breath of the mouth of one who is fasting is more pleasant in the sight of The Almighty than the fragrance of musk. A fasting person gets two kinds of pleasure: firstly he feels pleasure when he breaks his fast, and secondly he will be joyful by virtue of his fast, when he meets his Lord. (Bukhari and Muslim) This is the wording of Bukhari.

Another version of Bukhari adds: The Almighty says: The fasting person abstains from food, drink and from satisfying his passion simply for My sake; as such a fast is undertaken for My sake, I shall grant him the recompense for this. Other virtuous deeds (done in the month of Ramadhan) are rewarded ten times.

Imam Muslim's version says: A man's good acts are recompensed many times, from ten times to seven hundred times. Allah the exalted says: But a fast is an exception because it is undertaken simply for My sake, (i.e. there is no limit for its recompenses.) I, Alone, shall bestow the reward for it. (The person who observes a fast) gives up his food, drink and sensual desires for my sake. For a fasting person there are two pleasures - firstly; joy when he breaks his fast and secondly another joy when he meets his Lord. His breath is more pleasant in the sight of Allah than the fragrance of musk.

2) Fasting is an act of acknowledgment of The Almighty as The Only Master and The Sustainer of the Universe. It is only through His bounties that we derive our existence and our sustenance.

3) Fasting is an act of atonement for our errors and mistakes. Hazrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri (R.A.A.) says that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: When a person fasts for a day, for the sake of The Almighty, then The Almighty drives away the Hell from him to a distance of seventy years of traveling. (Bukhari and Muslim)

4) Fasting trains the believer in sincerity; unlike other acts of 'worship', it is entirely based on self-restraint.

Psychological Elements

1) It enhances the feelings of inner peace, contentment, and optimism. These feelings result from the realization of The Almighty's pleasure.

2) It teaches patience and perseverance and enhances the feeling of moral accomplishment. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.A.) related that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: If a person does not refrain from lying and indecent activities, Allah does not want that he should abstain from eating and drinking. (Bukhari)

Note: The idea behind this tradition is that backbiting, lying and indecent activities while fasting lessen the recompense of the fast and decrease its radiance. Therefore one should shun these things while fasting.

3) Voluntary deprivation of the lawful appetite leads one to appreciate the bounties of The Almighty which are usually taken for granted (until they are missed!)

4) For a complete month every year, Muslims go through a different and exciting experience which breaks the normal routine of life. Not only can this be refreshing, it also teaches the person to adapt to varying conditions and circumstances in his/her life.



Q: 1. In what month was the Qur'an sent down?

Q: 2. Who is the father of Jesus (pbuh)?

Q: 3. How old was the Prophet (pbuh) when the Qur'an was first revealed to him?

Q: 4. If you were at home and it was time for Prayer, but the food was brought, should you pray or eat?

A: In the Holy month of Ramadan.

A: Jesus (A.S.) has no father, because The Almighty created him like He created Adam (A.S.) without a father.

A: The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) was forty years old when the Qur'an was first revealed to him.

A: Eat first and then pray. If the food is next to you, you would be thinking about it and not concentrate correctly.



THE STORY OF RUKAYA (R.A.)

Name and Genealogy

According to a famous tradition, she was the second daughter of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). She was born in the 33rd Hijra before Apostleship.

Marriage

She was first married to Abu Lahab's son ('Utba) which was held before Apostleship.

The Holy Prophet's third daughter, Umm-Kalthum was married to 'Aitaba Abu Lahab's second son.

Embracement of Islam

When The Almighty chose Muhammad (S.A.W.) as His Prophet and he proclaimed Islam, Abu Lahab called his sons and said to them: Should you not forsake Muhammad's daughters, I would never come near you. Both the sons obeyed their father and the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) married Hadrat Rukaya (R.A.) to Hadrat 'Uthman (R.A.A.).

General Events

Hadrat 'Uthman (R.A.A.) migrated to Syria in the 5th year of Apostleshood. When she returned, the people of Mecca were thirsty for their blood more than ever. So she had to migrate for the second time.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) could not know their whereabouts for long. In the meantime, a woman informed him that she had seen both of them. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) prayed for them and said: After Ibrahim (Abraham) and Lot, Hadrat 'Uthman is the first to migrate with his wife.

This time she stayed in Abyssinia for a long time. When she knew that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) was going to migrate to Medina, a few men including Hadrat 'Uthman and Hadrat Rukaya came to Mecca and migrated to Medina with the permission from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). They stayed in Hadrat Hasan's brother, Aus bin Thabit's house.

Death

In the 2nd Hijra, the year in which the battle of Badr was fought, painful boils covered her body. When the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) set out for fighting, he left Hadrat 'Uthman to look after her. On conveyed the glad tidings of victory, Hadrat Rukaya died.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), being busy in fighting, could not participate in her Janaza (burial). Hadrat 'Umar stood up for flogging, but the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) held his hand and said: 'There is no harm in weeping, but raising much hue and cry and wailing loudly is strictly prohibited, being the doings of Satan.'

The chief of the women, Hadrat Fatima was also present and continued weeping beside the grave. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) wiped her tears with the border of a cloth.

Children

During her stay in Abyssinia, a son was born to her whose name was 'Abdullah. Hadrat 'Uthman's Kunhya, Abu Abdullah was after his name. He lived for six years. Once a cock pecked at his face due to which he died. This event occurred in Jamadi Al-Awwal, the 4th Hijra. There was no issue to her, after the birth of 'Abdullah.

THE PROPHET SHETH

Sheth (pbuh) was the third son of the Prophet Adam (pbuh). When Prophet Sheth (pbuh) was born, his father, the Prophet Adam (pbuh), had attained the age of 130 years. The Almighty conferred upon him the honor of Prophethood after Adam (pbuh).

It is said that The Almighty revealed to him fifty small portions of the Scripture. When Prophet Adam (pbuh) was on death bed, he appointed Sheth (pbuh) as his successor and advised his descendants to follow him and live peacefully in perfect harmony. He tried to guide his followers on the right path, but some of them were strayed by the Satan. They began to worship Satan's self-made portrait.

Prophet Sheth (pbuh) passed away at the age of 912 years. Anush, his son, won a remarkable position after him. In the fourth century there existed in Egypt a sect of gnostic, calling themselves Sethians. They regarded Sheth as a divine emanation.

THE PROPHET IDRIS (ENOCH)

As a result of the efforts of the Prophet Sheth (pbuh) some people began to believe in The Almighty. As the time passed by, they shifted their attention towards the worshipping the statue of their prophet. They became polytheists, religious- and faithless. They adopted indecent ways of life. Under such circumstances, The Almighty sent the Prophet Idris (pbuh) for the reformation and guidance of those who had gone astray. The Holy Qur'an mentions him in the following verse: **"Commemorate Idris in the Book, verily he was a man of truth and a Prophet and We raised him to a lofty station."** (Qur'an 19:56)

Preaching and Opposition

The Prophet Idris (pbuh) preached monotheism. He directed his people to abandon idol-worship. He emphasized them not to be captivated by the love for wealth and property. He advised them to abstain from drinking wine and other intoxicants. Only a few men paid heed to his teachings but the majority of the people opposed him bitterly. Prophet Idris (pbuh) did not lose heart and continued preaching with unshakable constancy. He is appreciated for his firm faith and forbearance in the following verses of the Holy Qur'an: **"All (Isma'il, Zhul-Kill and Idris) were men of constancy and patience. We admitted them into Our Mercy, for they were of the righteous ones."** (Qur'an 21:85-86)

Migration to Egypt

Inspire of the untiring efforts the Prophet Idris (pbuh) could not attain considerable success and felt disgusted with the indifferent attitude of the public. He was directed to migrate to Egypt and settle on the banks of the river Nile.

He preached the religion of The Almighty among the various tribes and admonished them to be good and civilized. Consequently, he brought a remarkable change in the moral and social life of the people.

Some sayings of the Prophet Idris (pbuh):

Do not feel jealous of the prosperity of others.

He who has unlimited desires is deprived of the wealth of contentment.

One should be sincere in the acts of devotion.

It is an act of grave sin to take false oaths.

Patience is a key to victory.

He who controls his passions is fortunate. Only a good act will be a living intercessor before The Almighty on the Day of Judgment.

One who is desirous of attaining perfection in knowledge; should have no concern with immoral acts.

The Learned Prophet

Prophet Idris (pbuh) was born 100 years after the death of the Prophet Adam (pbuh). He was the first man who learnt to write.

It is said that thirty portions of The Almighty's Sacred Scriptures were revealed to him. He was the inventor of the science of the Astronomy and the Arithmetic.

Death Event

Prophet Idris (pbuh) passed away at the age of 365 years. Mutwaslah was one of his distinguished sons who made his mark.

ISLAMIC DIETARY LAWS

DIETARY REGULATIONS

These verses of the Quran draw man's attention to his own self and invite him carefully and seriously to study his body and soul and the nature and their mutual relationship.

"Surely, he will find in it strong evidence of the existence of God, and that God has not created him and other things of this world without any purpose." (Quran 3:191) It is therefore necessary to keep the physical body very healthy so that other things (i.e. spirit and soul) may also remain healthy and so help him in the service of both, his material and spiritual attainment. Diet has therefore played an important role in Islamic medicine. Islam has prohibited certain foods because of their ill effects and allowed all other pure, good and clean things.

"O Muhammad! Ask them who has forbidden the decent and clean things that God has produced for His servants and (who has forbidden) the good and pure things of life granted by Him. Say; All these things are for the believers in this world but on the Day of Resurrection, these shall be exclusively for them. Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who know." (Quran 7:32)

And in Surah Al-Baqara, we read,

"O Believers! Eat of the good and pure things that We have provided for you and be grateful to God, if you are true worshippers of God." (Quran 2:172)

Then people in general are advised to eat good and pure things and not to indulge in impure, bad and harmful things, following their open enemy, the Devil.

"O People! Eat of what is lawful and good on earth and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil One, for he is your open enemy." (Quran 2:168)

It may here be pointed out that the word 'pure' has been qualified with the word 'lawful' so that impure things may not be made lawful merely because they have not been included in the list of prohibitions. As regards the criterion for judging whether a thing is pure or not, it should be noticed that all those things are pure which are not unclean according to any principle of Islamic Law, or which are not offensive to good taste or have not universally been regarded as repugnant by cultured people.

After stating this general principle with regard to permissible foods, the Qur'an specifies the prohibited foods in these words, **"He has only forbidden you dead meat and blood and swine flesh, and that (food) over which the name of other than God has been invoked; but if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limit, then truly God is Forgiving, Merciful."** (Quran 16:115 & 2:173)

These four things are absolutely forbidden in Islam for reasons best known to God. However, research in these things has shown that some of them are injurious to human health (as dead meat; blood and swine flesh) and some are harmful to moral health as well (as flesh of swine) and still others to spiritual health (as food over which the name of any other than God has been invoked). This list of prohibited foods also includes the following,

"That which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow,, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless you are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); and (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows. This is impiety." (Quran 5:4)

Alcohol is also prohibited because its harmfulness is greater than its benefits. (Quran 2:219)

"O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, idols, and raffles, are only a filthy work of Satan; turn aside from them so that you may prosper. Satan only wants to stir up enmity and jealousy among you by means of intoxicants and gambling, and to hinder you from remembering God, and from praying. So will you not then abstain?" (Quran 5:90-91)

The physical, moral, social and spiritual evils of intoxicants and gambling are clearly referred to in the above verse of the Qur'an.

TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET (SAW)

ON EATING AND DRINKING

From Salman (raa): The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) said: "The blessing of food is (received by) washing (the hands) before and washing (the hands) after (taking) it." (Tirmidhi)

Aisha (ra) said that The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) said: "When anyone of you eats, he should invoke the name of Almighty, The Exalted. If he forgets to invoke the name of The Almighty, at the beginning, he should say (when he does remember): "In the name of The Almighty, in its beginning and its end." (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (raa) said that The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh), when he finished his meal, used to say: "Praise be to The Almighty, who gave us to eat and to drink and made us Muslims." (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

Umar Abu bin Salama (raa) said: "I was under the care of The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) and my hand used to pick at random in the dish, so The Almighty's Messenger said to me: 'Invoke the name of The Almighty and eat with your right (hand) and eat what is near you.'" (Bukhari, Muslim)

From Abu Huraira (raa): "The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) never found fault with food. If he liked something, he ate it, but if he disliked it, he (just) abstained from it. (Bukhari, Muslim)

From ba Ka'b bin Malik, from his father: "The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) used to eat with three fingers, and he licked his hand before he wiped it." (Muslim)

From Anas (raa): "When The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) ate food, he used to lick his three fingers and he said: 'When one of you drops a morsel, he should remove the dirt from it and eat it, and should not leave it for the Satan.' And he ordered us to wipe the bowl. He said: 'You do not know in which (part) of your food is the 'Baraka' (Blessing)." (Muslim)

From Ali Abbas (raa): "I heard The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) say, 'The believer is not he who eats his fill while his neighbor is hungry.'" (Bukhari, Muslim)

From Abu Huraira (raa): "The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) said: 'Food for two is sufficient for three, and the food for three is sufficient for four.'" (Bukhari, Muslim)

From Umar (raa): The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) said: "Eat together, and do not separate, for the blessing is in the company." (ar Maja)

From Ja'far bin Muhammed, from his father: Abu Karima al-Mikdad arma Ma'dikarib (raa) said that he heard The Almighty's Messenger (pbuh) say: "No man fills a vessel which is worse than his stomach. Sufficient for the son of Adam are a few mouthfuls to keep his back upright, but if it has to be more, then let one third (be left) for his breathing." (Tirmidhi)

Hazrat Zaid bin Sabit (R.A.A.) says, "Once we ate 'Sahri (breakfast before dawn during Ramadhan) with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and then stood up for the morning salat. He was asked as to what was the interval between the two. He said: 'The time required for the recital of fifty verses (Of the Holy Quran). (Bukhari and Muslim)

Hazrat alad 'Umar (R.A.A.) relates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) had two Muezzins (Callers for prayers). One was Hazrat Bilal (R.A.A.) and the other was Hazrat ar Ume Maktum (R.A.A.) The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: 'Bilal (R.A.A.) calls the Azan (a bit earlier) when it is still night. Therefore, continue eating and drinking till Ibn Umm Maktum (R.A.A.) calls it.' He said there was in fact only a brief interval between the two when one descended and the other ascended (the high platform). (Bukhari and Muslim)

Hazrat 'Amr bin Al-Aas (R.A.A.) says that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "The only distinguishing factor between our fasting and that of the other people of the Book is Sahri (i.e. Christians and Jews who do not eat pre-dawn breakfast)." (Muslim)

Hazrat Jabir (R.A.A.) relates that he heard the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) says: "If a person takes the name of The Almighty when he enters his house and when he eats, Satan tells his companions: 'Let us go. There is no room for you to pass the night in this house without calling the name of The Almighty.' Satan says to his companions: 'You have at least secured lodging.' Then if he does not remember The Almighty at the time of eating also, Satan says: 'You have secured both lodging and food.'" (Muslim)

Hazrat Huzaifah (R.A.A.) says: Whenever we had the chance to be present with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) while eating, we would not start. On one such occasion when we were with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) a girl came in rushing, as if she was very hungry, and wanted to eat, but the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) caught hold of her hand. Then a villager came in and he too rushed for the food as if he was starving, but the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) held his hand too, and said: 'Satan treats that food lawful for himself on which the name of The Almighty has not been pronounced. He brought this girl in order to make this food lawful for himself through her, but I seized his hand also. Now by The Almighty in whose hand's is my life, I have Satan's hand in my grip also along with their hands.' Then he pronounced the name of The Almighty and started eating. (Muslim)

Hazrat Ayesha (R.A.) says that (once) the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) was eating in the company of six of his companions when a villager joined them and ate up the food in two morsels. On seeing this, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) remarked: 'If he had taken the name of The Almighty, the same would have sufficed for all of you.' (Bukhari and Muslim)

Hazrat Abu Mus'ud Badri (R.A.A.) says: (Once) a man prepared some food specially for the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). Four other persons had been invited along with him. But an extra person, who had not been invited, also accompanied them. On arriving at the door of the host's house, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said to the host: 'This man has accompanied us. If you like may be permitted, otherwise he will return. The host replied: 'O Messenger, (I will not turn him back), I invite him'. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Hazrat Wahshi bin Harb (R.A.A.) relates that some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said to him: "O Messenger (S.A.W.), we eat but don't get satisfied. He said: 'May be you eat individually.' They said: 'Yes, Sir.' He told them: 'Eat together and recite the name of The Almighty. The food will be blessed for you.'" (Abu Daud)

WHY I EMBRACED ISLAM

YUSUF ISLAM (FORMERLY KNOWN AS CAT STEVENS - BRITISH POP SUPERSTAR)

Yusuf Islam, formerly known as Cat Stevens, a world renowned British pop singer embraced Islam in 1973. Here is an excerpt of the interview with him.

Q: How did you come to know about Islam?

A: I first came to know about Islam through my elder brother David. Five years he traveled to Jerusalem, and among the many Holy places, he visited Al-Aqsa. He had never been inside a mosque in his life before.

The atmosphere was so different from that of the Christian churches and Jewish temples that he had to ask himself, "Why is this religion (Islam) such a big secret?"

He was struck by the behavior of the Muslims and their peaceful form of worship.

As soon as he returned to England, he bought a copy of the Holy

Qur'an and gave it to me, because he knew I needed guidance.

Q: What impressed you most when you read the Holy Qur'an?

A: It was the timeless nature of the message. The words all seemed strangely familiar yet so unlike anything I had ever read before; they were so simple, so clear. Up to this point the purpose of life had always remained an immense mystery to me. I had always believed that there was a master design to it all, but who was the unseen Artist?

I had tried many spiritual paths without much satisfaction. I was like a boat without a direction, but when I read the Qur'an it was as if it was for it, and it for me. For over a year and a half I read and read. During that time I never met any Muslim.

I was completely engulfed in the message of the Holy Qur'an. I knew that soon I would have to either submit myself fully, or continue traveling my own way making music. It was the hardest move of my life.

One day, I met someone who told me about a new mosque which had just opened in London; the time had come for me to accept my religion.

I started to walk to the Mosque on a Friday in winter 1977. After the Jum'a (Friday) prayers, I approached the Imam and told him I wanted to embrace Islam. That was the first contact I had with the Muslim community.

Q: Now that you are Muslim, what are your impressions of Muslims?

A: I think a lot of Muslims have lost their way; they have not really studied the Qur'an itself. It is the essence of knowledge and contains true guidance for those who are ready to understand it. I believe there is only one real Islam: Surrender to The Almighty and obey His Messenger. That to me is the safe road to Paradise.

We must distinguish the true from the false by increasing our knowledge and staying close to the company who are traveling the right path. It seems The Almighty has preserved the treasure of knowledge by scattering numerous keys throughout the world.

We Muslims only have to come together in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of what Islam really is. All Muslims believe in One God, One Quran and One Muhammed (pbuh), after that it is up to the individual, whichever path he or she wishes to choose.

In the end, each soul will be responsible for its own deeds.

Q: How difficult was it to suddenly stop and give up many things that you have been doing?

A: It was not difficult because I knew deep down it was right to give up those vices which were in reality destroying me, like drinking, smoking, usury, etc. Yet the hardest thing was to separate myself from my old friends. I couldn't understand why they didn't all grasp the message of Islam.

I tried to hold on for as long as I could without cutting myself off, but there came a point when I decided that for the sake of my religion, I had to draw the line between my past and Islam.

There were many tests, for instance, when I was among non-Muslims, I used to have to say "excuse me" and quietly leave to perform my Salat (Prayers). I didn't use to tell them where I was going, so it must have looked a little strange.

Then one day, I decided to make it known that I was going to perform my prayers. Immediately everybody accepted it and respected it and respected me for it.

When you stand up and do your duty The Almighty makes it easy for you, after that I never had much problem.

Q: The pop world in this day and age has a very large following, even among the Muslims, what is your opinion about this?

A: Unfortunately, today people are seduced into buying things through their lower desires. Record, films, tapes, magazines, most of them designed to make money.

Listening to pop music is like dreaming: it's a temporary release for the soul. People who follow this kind of music are generally yearning for union with "reality". Music provides them with short-term relief an escape from this merciless system we call "modern life".

Q: So what do you intend to do now as a career?

A: I am really literally only working for The Almighty. He sustains me and He has arranged it so that I can do this. I want to instrumental in establishing Islam in Britain by whatever means or in whatever capacity I can.

Q: What do you think of Da'wah activities among non-Muslims in Britain?

A: We should be careful not to follow the example of the Christians in this matter. It is a big responsibility for all of us. The message of Islam should not be spread by word of mouth alone.

To begin with, you must make sure that your actions are correct and then give the good news simply and clearly: "Say, He is The Almighty, The One." Don't try and convey the complete message of Islam at once.

The Qur'an is the embodiment of the teaching which The Almighty has sent a perfection of man, so you can't just use it as a mouthpiece, you must put it into practice: that means say little but do much more.

Always remember, it is only The Almighty, Who can guide a person to Islam.

"It will be wrong to judge Islam in the light of the behavior of some bad Muslims who are always shown on the media. It is like judging a car as a bad one if the driver of the car is drunk and he bangs it with the wall. Islam guides all human beings in the daily life-in its spiritual, mental, and physical dimensions. But we must find the sources of these instructions: The Qur'an and the example of the Prophet. Then we can see the ideal of Islam." --YUSUF ISLAM



LIST OF PUBLISHERS

Listed below are some of the major publishers and distributors for the Islamic publications, including the Holy Qur'an: (Some of these organizations are non-profit organizations and the revenues generated are applied towards Islamic Community Projects.)

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