



PARADISE

A Monthly Publication of Huntsville Islamic Center

Jan-Feb 2003

EDITORIAL

Dhul Hijjah, a great month is upon our doors. We supplicate for our brothers and sisters going to Hajj, and remember among ourselves the great wisdoms of Hajj. Those wisdoms include: the realization of Taqwa (piety) and submission to Allah swt; the affirmation of Tawheed made clear in Talbiya (Hajj slogan); the reverence of Allah's symbols (rites) and sanctities; the cultivation upon good characteristics like discipline, chastity, suppressing anger, humbleness, and patience; the remembrance of the Last Day made clear through departing home and family and going through the journey and fatigue of Hajj; and finally, the deepening of brotherhood based on faith and Islamic unity.

We, not going to Hajj this year, try ourselves at this great time to accomplish those goals with dhikr, fasting, charity, sacrifice, and Eid prayer. We start by taking advantage of the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah insha Allah as "There are no days during which good deeds are more beloved by Allaah than these (ten) days." [al-Bukhaaree, at-Tirmidhee and others].

30 practical ways we can improve and enjoy our Salat as it was meant to be!

Today we have indeed come to treat the Prayer (Salah) as something insignificant in our lives. Very often we hear our elders say, "I will start praying when the time comes." Others, specially the younger Muslims, do not find much comfort, and joy in their Prayers. Due to our treatment of Prayer as a burden, our love and passion for the Prayer has vanished. Our hearts have become hardened, and we have become a depressed and defeated people. As a result, many are searching for 'cures and remedies' to the distress in our lives, through any means available, but are unable to find any because they have ignored the greatest medicine - Salah!

The Role of Salah in Changing our Lives

1. The whole purpose of Salah is to be ever conscious of Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of all things. Salah is indeed, one of the most comprehensive forms of Dhikr Remembrance). No wonder, Allah states in a hadith qudsi: "Out of all the ways through which My servant gets closer to Me, Salah is the dearest to Me." (Bukhari) It is unfortunate, therefore, that we do not always take full advantage of this

gift.

2. How can you improve the quality of your Salah? Remember, first and foremost, that as soon as you commence your Salah, Shaytan makes it his duty to fill your mind with anything and everything but thoughts of Allah. He tries ceaselessly to disengage your mind and heart from such remembrance. It is this state of absentmindedness that destroys the quality of your Prayer. The Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said: "God does not accept the Prayers of an individual until his heart

achieves in it what his body has achieved." [Al-Ghazali in Ihya-Uloom ad-Deen]

3. The ability to concentrate in Prayer may be improved by undertaking adequate psychological, mental and physical preparation before the Prayer and by utilising certain techniques during the Prayer.

4. This is not 'just a good thing' but an obligation on every Muslim male. According to the Prophet, if we knew the good in praying in jama'ah we would not miss it even if we had to crawl to the masjid!

"Every soul shall have a taste of death: in the end to Us you shall be brought back" (29:57).

We supplicate for brother Abdel Rasheed "May Allah forgive him, and have mercy on him".

Cont. >>

"Why Pray If I Don't Get Much Out of It?"

5. Avoid praying in a state in which you are mentally and physically fatigued.
6. Keep your mind free of worldly worries, evil thoughts, and ideas.
7. Plan what verses/duas you are going to recite.
8. If you do not understand Arabic learn the meaning of what you recite in your Prayer.
9. Remind yourself that engaging in Prayer offers you an opportunity to release yourself from the tensions of this world. The Prophet has said that in Prayer was placed the comfort of his eyes. Therefore cherish the opportunity to remove the burdens of this world from your shoulders.
10. Use your Prayer to remain focused on your mission in life, which is to bring your entire being to serve only Allah.
11. Use your Prayer as a source of strength, inspiration and enthusiasm for your life and activities.

ii. Physical Preparation

12. Fulfill all your personal needs before you commence your Prayer, for e.g., thirst, hunger and calls of nature.
13. Pray in a pure physical state. Perform your wudu with care and perfection.
14. Although the whole earth is a masjid or a place of worship, choose a place that is clean.
15. Pray in an environment free of noise and one where there is no distraction.
16. Adorn yourself with clean and respectable clothes.

iii. Performing Your Prayer

17. Assess your mental readiness for Prayer before its commencement, during the various postures, after each raka and ultimately at the end.
18. Pray with humility both in your mental state and in your physical manner. Pray with hope and awe.
19. Remind yourself continually that you are talking to the most important 'One' in your life - your Creator and Sustainer. He is in front of you. You are facing Him and you are involved in a dialogue with Him.
20. Commence your Prayer by seeking Allah's help and protection from the influences of Shaytan.
21. Lower your gaze while praying and do not allow the physical environment to distract you. Anas related that the Prophet said: "My dear son, be sure to avoid being distracted during Prayer, for, to greater concentration and awareness.
22. Adopt a whispering technique in your recitation in order to remain focused on what you are saying, and not distract others.
23. As you recite the Quran, translate it into your own language so that your attention is held. As you ponder upon the meaning and implications of the words, insha-Allah, all worldly thoughts will disappear.
24. On each occasion that you recite the Sifat or attributes of Allah in ruku and sajda, consider how indebted you are and how grateful you should be to Allah and express your true emotions.
25. Utilize the occasion of sajda to make additional dua to Allah. The Prophet said: "A servant is nearest to his Lord when he is in sajda, so increase your supplication when in sajda." (Muslim.)
26. Make your Prayer of moderate duration so that you do not become physically and mentally tired but be aware that while in Prayer you must take your time praying.
27. Give due regard to the proper performance of all the physical postures. Do not 'peck like a crow' when doing rukus and sajdas as every posture in Salah, even the rests, are important.
28. Pray as if it is your last Prayer. The Messenger of God said: When you stand up to pray, perform your prayer as if it were your last...' (Ahmad)
29. Performing your prayer in a satisfactory manner should lead to a radical change in the way you lead your daily life. Salah must be as the Quran states: Surely, Salah prevents indecency and evil [al-Ankabut 29: 45.] Your improved and more disciplined life will in turn help the quality of your Prayer to increase even more. The two should continuously reinforce each other.
30. Remember, Salah is an obligation. Whether your heart is attentive or not, it must be performed. You cannot give up Prayer because to you it appears useless. There is punishment for a Prayer not performed satisfactorily. It will be a witness against you rather than a witness for you on the Day of Judgment. Don't give up the obligation but try to infuse it with the purpose it seeks to serve - remembrance of Allah. It is important to remember the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "If a man performs two rakas of Salah without the distraction of any worldly thought, all his previous sins will be forgiven." (Bukhari.)

“The Fiqh of Marriage in Islam”

Marriage in Islam is an important institution that has deep effects on society. It is a bond containing rights and duties that each person, male or female, should preserve, protect and fulfill. Both the husband and wife, have certain rights & duties. There are a number of verses in the Qur'an, which relate to marriage. These verses can give us a basic understanding of what Allah intended for us in this area. All women and men are descended from the same original human being. This blood connection is related to the rights and obligations between men and women. The affection, which Allah has created in the hearts of the two spouses, is one of His great signs for the people of understanding. Such people can look at this aspect of Allah's creation and be reminded of the greatness of Allah's work and power and the magnificent mercy Allah has placed in His creation. Allah says, **“And among His signs are that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may attain calm unto them and He placed between you affection and compassion. Surely in that are signs for a people who reflect.”** According to this, the relationship between husband and wife should be one of affection, compassion and mutual understanding. If a husband & wife do not find this in their marriage, then they must look to their Islam and the completeness of their *uboodiya* (complete worship) to Allah, the Most High. When each person focuses on the completeness of their Islam and carefully strives to maintain their obligations toward the other, rather than focusing on each other's faults or shortcomings, insha allah, the affection, compassion and great calm or peace of home life will be found.

Allah and His Prophet (saw) have stressed on the man the need for kindness and good treatment. Allah said in the Qur'an, **“And interact with your wives in a good manner for if you feel dislike for them, it may well be that you dislike something in which Allah places much good {4:19}.** On this same subject, the Prophet (saw) said: **“The best of you is the one who is best toward his family (i.e., wife) and I am the best of you toward my family.”** *At-Tirmidhi & others (sahih)* One of the main temptations for the woman in marriage is disobedience and disrespect toward her husband. Islam stresses on her to control this aspect of her personality, just as it stresses on the man to avoid cruelty and lack of compassion. Allah said: **“Men are in authority over women with that with which Allah as preferred some of you over others and with that which they spend of their wealth. So the righteous [women] are devoutly obedient and guard in their husband's absence that which Allah would have them guard. {4:24}** Of course, this obedience is only in that which is not disobedient to Allah

An Islamic household is arranged in the same way as the Muslim Ummah as a whole. There is an *Amir* who is in charge and has final authority as well as final responsibility over the household just as the *Khalifa* has over the Ummah as a whole. The *Khalifa* is required to consult with the people of knowledge before taking important decisions. After this consultation, he is not bound by their opinions however. Rather, he is commanded to take what he sees as the best and most correct decision, even though it may not be the favored opinion among those with whom he consulted. Likewise, with the Muslim husband. His wife is his fellow adult in the household. He is encouraged to consult with her in decisions in which she may have some constructive input to offer. Like the *Khalifa*, he is not bound by any of her opinions and is required to always strive to take the Islamically correct course of action. Young children are not part of the "*shuraa*" of the father, particularly in issues of upbringing and discipline. Mothers and fathers must work together on these issues with final authority and decision-making belonging to the father. It is easy to find examples of families today suffering great discord when the correct relationship between husband and wife is not maintained or when one of them puts the children above the other. The Muslim father has been ordered by Allah to do everything in his power to protect his wife and children from the fire. This is his responsibility and his authority - even if it goes against their opinions. Allah said: **“O you who believe, guard yourselves and your family members from a fire whose fuel is people and stones. Over it are ferocious and powerful angels. They do not disobey any of Allah's orders and do whatever they are told” {At-Tahreem:6}** The previous evidences illustrate the make-up of the correct Islamic marriage. It is one in which there is affection and compassion between the spouses. It is one in which both spouses love Allah more than all else. It is one in which the husband is kind and generous toward his wife and in which the wife is obedient and respectful toward her husband. They should each find repose and peace in each other's company. Indeed, marriage is an act of worship and "Half of One's Religion. Prophet Muhammad emphasizes its importance when he said, **“Whoever marries has completed half of his faith. So let him beware of Allah regarding the other half.”** The Holy Qur'an, and the Sunnah of the Prophet is full of advice of what brings about a successful marriage. Only when we look to this guidance and strive to adhere to it, can we ever hope to be “truly” successful in our family life.

HIC Activities

Friday Night Study Circles: 7:00 p.m. -8:30 p.m.

Two study circles for brothers and sisters.

Sunday Study Circle: 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Study circle for brothers and sisters.

Prayer Times at the Masjid

Fajr:	6:00 a.m.
Duhur:	12:15 p.m.
Asr:	3:15 p.m.
Maghrib:	Sunset
Isha:	7:30 p.m.
Jumu'a (Friday):	12:30 p.m.

Eid Mubarak

Eid will be, insha Allah, on Tuesday February 11, 2003

Eid Prayer will be held at 8:30 a.m.

Fasting the Day of Arafah

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was asked about fasting the day of Arafah, he said :**"It expiates for the sins of the previous year and of the coming year."**



Congratulations



To brother Fuad for successfully defending his Ph.D.

ISLAMIC ACADEMY OF HUNTSVILLE "EAT & TREAT" FUNDRAISING DINNER

DATE: 23rd February 2003

TIME: 5:00pm

GUEST SPEAKER:

Abdalla Idris Ali

Open to the public- All Welcome!!

Tickets Prices are: \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children

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