The

Dawn





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HIJĀB - A Beautiful Liberation

The Our'an states:

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their father, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O you believers! Turn all toward Allah that you may attain bliss." 24:30-31

Clothing has two purposes from the Islāmic point of view: to cover the body and to beautify the appearance. However, the latter purpose is within certain guidelines since an ostentatious appearance is forbidden in line with the general rule of maintaining a non-indulgent lifestyle.

Thus it is *harám*, forbidden for women to wear transparent or tight-fitting clothes which reveal the body's shape. Likewise any form of make up or adornment, including perfume and excessive jewellery which attract attention to the female are scorned upon.

Islam gives the Muslim women a sanctuary in the form of Hijāb – it is a protection and liberation from the brutal exploitation of the female body. Yet this Islāmic code of dress had undergone a barrage of histrionic attacks in the non-religious media.

Gross exaggerations, grave misconceptions have formed the basis of numerous articles written by middle class Anglo-Saxon women claiming to represent the rights of woman kind and apparently unveiling the oppression of Hijāb.

They present Hijāb as a suppression of independence and self-determination. The more shallow articles which appear in the tabloid press talk of the tragedy of Eastern beauty wasted behind the veil!

Closer to their hearts is the tragedy for western economics that millions of Muslim women have escaped the consumer trap of wasting money trying to keep up with the latest trends and thus avoid lining the already bulging pockets of the cosmetics fashion industry.

Practising feminists (i.e. those women who know a bit more about feminism than the usual anti-male cliché) try desperately to un-shackle themselves from the degradation they face in a lust-ridden society, by wearing baggy clothes, little or no make-up/perfume and simple hair styles.



They loathe the high-heeled, mini skirt bombshell types, as they are slaves to the men that use and abuse them. But the dress code the feminist see as route to liberation – is it not uncannily similar to the Islāmic code described before? In fact it is closer to Hijāb than any of them would care to admit. If they bothered to study the philosophy behind Hijāb they would see that HIJĀB is the underlying principle that feminists are grasping towards.

The so-called liberated women desperately wish to break free from a society that not only exploits the beauty of the female form but profits from the insecurities of the not so attractive women.

Mass advertising drives these females to spend millions trying to achieve the looks of the glamorous models which they see display in magazines and plastered halfnaked over billboards. In the USA new heights of consumer madness have been reached with the cosmetic surgery industry expanding uncontrollably.

They have climbed to the pinnacle of absurdity whereby women have foreign substances ranging from silicon to collagen implanted into them and pay vast amounts of money to endure this ultimate trespass to the human body.

The Qur'an considers such alterations as inspired by Satan, who "will command them (his devotees) to change what Allah has created." 4:119

Every Muslim woman has an inalienable right to be respected by society. Feminists and other 'liberated' women are unable to reach this plane of dignity and self-respect because their attempts are born out of a feeble rebellion, whereas the Hijāb is the outward manifestation of the true imán (faith) that rests deep within. Without the acceptance of Islam, it is rendered meaningless, becomes worthless, a mere force of habit.

Both faith and Hijāb have to be present in order to augment and fortify each other. If both are in harmony then the result is an unalloyed beauty that emanates from the peace, confidence and contentment within and illuminates the person with an aura of grace, dignity and respect. Such a woman is a valued member of any society but is given a high place in an Islāmic one.

All Muslim men and women have a duty to conform to the dress code of Islam. In particular, those who wear Hijab should be a role model to present an example of Islamic nobility and good manners.

About Reading Qur'ān - Part I

by Dr. M. Naseem

Reading in human language means reading and understanding, in the same way as seeing means looking at an object and understanding what it is, it is a physical process. The sensory pathways carry an impression to the receiving centre in the brain, it is translated here and the motor pathways take the translation to the registering centre where it is recorded and so an understanding of the object looked at is made.

Hearing similarly means, listening to a sound and understanding the words that the sound represents. It is only the dead who may have a stare but they see nothing and only the deaf whom a sound may reach but they hear nothing.

It is intended to discuss the subject matter under the following heading viz

- a) The nature of the Qur'ān and its promise and
- b) The way it should be read.

Nature of the Qur'an

About its nature the Qur'ān says "This is a clear statement for mankind, a Guidance and one that informs of the right and the wrong consequences of actions — it is for those who wish to walk in life with care"—3:137. So it is a statement, a Guidance and an information. It further says:

"O mankind! Indeed there has come to you a Guide towards the right choice and a Healing for what (disease) is hidden in the heart, a Guidance and a Blessing for the unbelievers" - 10:57

On the same subject it also says:

"In this has come to you the Truth and a pointer to the right choice and one that needs to be remembered – for those who believe" – 11:20

It further adds:

"Indeed there has come to you from God a Light and a Clear Book" – 5:15 It is in the nature of light that it dispels darkness, so in the present context it would mean that it is a Book that removes the shadows of doubt, confusion, conceit and deceit that lurk in the human mind. Having described the nature of the Qur'ān as a book of guidance, a determiner of the

right courses of action, a remedy for the illness of the heart and mind and a light to clean every mental haze it advises us as to how it should be read.

How it should be read

It says:

"Those to whom We have given the Book, read it as it aught to be read. These are the ones who believe in it. Those who ignore it are the ones who are the losers" – 2:121

The phrase "how it ought to be read" obviously indicates that the Qur'ān is not talking about ordinary reading but has its own Criteria which must be met before a reading becomes acceptable.

The Criteria it lays down are the following:

- 1) Using of intellect (Ta-uggul)
- 2) Exercising the ability to think
- 3) To consider its teaching and principles and apply these to the problems one may face (Ta-Faqquh)
- 4) Its knowledge and wisdom should be used to plan for the future with a clear objective in mind (Ta-Dubbur)

In brief it should be read intelligently, it should be read with thoughtfulness, it should be read to solve problems and it should be read to plan for the future.

About the first, namely using intellect in reading the Qur'ān, it says:

"We have revealed a book for reading which is very clear so that you may use your intellect" – 12:2

In other words its clarity is for the purpose of making it easy for a person to think. The

use of intellect and mind is so important that the Prophet (pbuh) is advised to say:

"There is only one thing I ask you, that you must think when you stand for God alone or in company. This (book) is not the ramblings of a mad person, he is a warner of the suffering that may otherwise follow".

- 34:46

The message is that whatever our circumstances we must always exercise our ability to think.

The Qur'an says:

"What is the matter with these people that they make no effort to understand what is being conveyed?"

- 1.78

It further says:

"Why do they not reflect on the Qur'an (with a view to plan for the

future) or have they locked up their minds?" – 47:24

To sum up, reading of the Qur'ān is not a ritual. The Qur'ān is a Book of Wisdom, of Guidance, it is a Book of Principle, and it is a Book that provides historical evidence. It should be read with intelligence, with thoughtfulness, for seeking help to solve problems, and for seeking guidance for planning for future.

If these Criteria are not fulfilled then just going through the Book is not acceptable to the Creator.

There is a dire warning to those who neglect this advice. They may end up in a state which is described as:

"Disgrace and humiliation were stamped on them and they incurred God's condemnation" – 2:61

Read **Part II** in next month's edition of **The Dawn Newsletter**, Insha'Allāh

The Position of Women in Islam

Selections from the Book of Divine Revelation - The Qur'an

Common origin of men and women



"O Mankind, be conscious of your Sustainer, who created you from a single entity and created it's mate from the same, and spread from these two, scattered countless men and women..." 4:1

"O Mankind, We created you from a male and a female and made you into tribes and families by which you refer to each other. Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most pious" 49:13

"They (women) are as a garment for you and you are as a garment for them..." 2:187

"...And women have rights similar to those against them (men) in a just manner although men have an advantage (in physical strength) over them..." 2:228

"Do not cherish in vain for what God has bestowed more abundantly on some of you than others. (Remember the law of God), Men shall benefit from what they work for and women shall benefit from what they earn (by their effort)" 4:32

"And treat them (women) kindly even if you dislike them. It may well be that you dislike something which God might yet make a source of abundant good (for you)." 4:19

ISLĀMIC NEW YEAR

The Islāmic New Year which begins on the 1st of Muharram will most likely pass unnoticed. Non-Muslims cannot be blamed in that respect; it is our attitude which is to bear the burden of it. Every nation has its own calendar and so do Muslims. But the Christians, who have dominated the world for the past few centuries, have introduced their calendar all over the world because of their political and financial dominance. Even today they compel all other nations to adopt the Christian-Gregorian calendar.



▲ The Islāmic lunar dates are numerically more accurate than the Christian-Gregorian calendar

In spite of this, major countries and nations of the world still use their own calendars at least in their domestic affairs and celebrate their New Year with much fervour such as the Chinese, Hindus and Jews but it is sad that we, Muslims, do not care for our national identity in this respect. As every calendar has its significance for the nation who uses it, the Islāmic calendar has its own. By allowing the Islamic New Year to pass unnoticed and ignoring our calendar we are actually putting all of our magnificent history that changed the face of the earth behind our backs and tend to forget.

The Islāmic calendar was started during the caliphate of the second caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khatab (ra). Earlier the Muslims, as the Arabs of the Jahiliya, used the important events of their local history for the calendar purposes. As we know, the Prophet (pbuh) was born in the year of the elephant (i.e. the year Abrahah had invaded Makkah to destroy the Ka'aba). The months were lunar and the names of the months were Muharram, Safar and so on. Al-Qur'ān endorsed this lunar system and the Prophet (pbuh) endorsed the names of the months by his actions.

Umar (ra) was confronted with the problem of identifying some particular event whether it had happened in, say, Safar last year or a year before. He discussed the problem with the leaders of the Muslim community and suggested that they should start counting the year from some well known event and give it currency throughout the Muslim territories as a safeguard against any future misunderstandings. After lengthy discussions the migration of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from Makkah to Madinah was decided to be the beginning of the Islāmic calendar.

The choice of the event of the Hijra as the mark of the beginning of our calendar has a unique significance. It reminds a Muslim that his life and death is solely for Almighty Allah. His love for his relatives, his property and his homeland should be dominated by his love for Almighty Allah.

Hijra is one of the most important events in our history. The Prophet (pbuh) who was offered government of the city state of Makkah, wealth and any of the beautiful women of the city (in fact, all of the worldly charms that a person can dream of) refused these temptations and left his homeland for unseen territory to promote the cause of Daw'ah. No other event in the history of mankind is equal to this sacrifice and Umar Ibn Al-Khatab (ra) rightly made it a constant reminder for us every year.



But many Muslims, blinded by the material aspects of non-Muslim civilisation, have forgotten the hereafter and take part in Christian New Year celebrations with enthusiasm and yet let our own new year pass unnoticed. The beginning of the year should be an occasion to renew our zeal to follow the footsteps of our Prophet (pbuh) purifying ourselves and urging upon those in authority to establish Salah and Zakah through strict adherence to Qur'an and Sunnah as the Prophet had done immediately after the Hijra. It is the only way to regain our past majesty and to gain success in the hereafter.

'By allowing the Islamic New Year to pass unnoticed and ignoring our calendar we are actually putting all of our magnificent history that changed the face of the earth behind our backs...'

The meaning of the Islāmic months

1. Muharram

Means that which is harām (forbidden). In this month it is harám to go to war and fight.

2. Safar

Means empty. In this month, the Pagan Arabs would usually leave their respective villages and go to war.

3. Rabbi-ul-Awwal

Means the beginning of spring.



4. Rabbi-ul-Akhir

Means the end of spring.

5. Jamadil Awwal

Means the beginning of winter.

6. Jamadil Akhir

Means the end of winter.

7. Rajab

Means grandeur.

8. Sha'ban

Means separation.

9. Ramadhān

Means summer. It is a month of fasting, submission, purification and prayer. It is the month in which the Qur'ān was sent down to people.

10. Shawwal

Means the mating season.

11. Dhul-Qa'dah

Means the month of rest.



12. Dhul-Hijjah

Means the month of Hajj. During this month, Muslims from all over the world will perform the rites of Haij.

Please learn the names of these months and teach them to your children as well.

Community & Mosque News

FREE Community Classes

The mosque is currently working with MCET (Midland Community Education & Training) and in partnership with South Birmingham College to provide various courses for members of the public. If you would like to enrol onto one of the following courses, wish to complete an application form or require further information, please contact Muhammad Ali in the mosque's Main Office or call: (0121) 440 5355.

- ESOL English for students of other languages
- Islāmic Studies
- Arabic Language Studies
- Urdu Language Studies
- IT (Computing)
- First Aid

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Eid Celebrations

Over 15,000 worshippers attended the mosque for Eid services on 1st February. Eid prayers and festivities at the mosque were featured in various local media outlets. The **Asian Leader** newspaper (Midlands Edition) currently has a whole page about Eid at the mosque.

The **Evening Mail** and **BBC Birmingham** also featured galleries and news of our Eid celebrations. To see more, visit:

www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham/faith

Lessons in Qur'ān
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in English

Birmingham Central Mosque

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ENVIRONMENTAL

BCM now has a <u>paper-recycling</u> bin in its car park provided by **Kappa**. The **community** is welcome to use the bin to help maintain the **beauty** of God's earth, Insha'Alláh.

All paper & cardboard is welcome but no paper soiled with food or any other waste please.

Birmingham Central Mosque



Marriage Bureau & Introductions

Every Monday – 2pm-4pm (Mr A. Q. Lodhi – **0121 446 4157** – Office, Mondays only) At all other times: **07870 450 347** marriage@centralmosque.org.uk

Family Support Service & Counselling Clinic

Every Tuesday – 4pm-6pm (Dr. Saeeda & Sister Saba) familysupport@centralmosque.org.uk

In case of any changes to services, please call to check first.

Jummah (Friday) Prayers

Urdu Sermon: 12.30pm English Sermon: 12.50pm

Arabic Sermon & Main Congregation: 1.15pm

Facilities: BCM has a Main Prayer Hall, a Day Centre (Community Hall) and a School Hall available for hire for public use. We also facilitate for wedding gatherings and funeral prayer services.

Visits: To book an educational or community visit and tour of the mosque, please call or write to our office to make the necessary arrangements. Individual visits are also welcome.

The Dawn

The Dawn is distributed free in many city mosques on the last Friday of every month. It is also sent to other religious and educational institutions, libraries, hospitals and prisons. However, any individual wishing to receive a copy regularly for a year by post is requested to complete this form and return it with a donation, a minimum of £10, to the mosque at the address below.

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"We've marched together for Afghanistan. We've marched together for Palestine and Iraq. On the day of the European elections on 10 June let's march together to the ballot box to protect our civil and economic rights here as well as for others abroad."

Salma Yaqoob - Chair, Birmingham Stop the War Coalition

Information line: **07989 521295**

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PRAYER TIMETABLE

"Indeed prayers are enjoined on believers at a stated time." - Al-Quran 4:103

March 2004 | Muharram/ Safar 1425 AH



March Muharram		Fajr		Sunrise	Zawál	Dhuhr			Sunset	Maghrib Isha		ha	
Date	Day	Lunar Date	Start	Jamāt			Start	Start	Jamāt		Adhán	Start	Jamāt
1	Mon	9	5.11	6.00	6.51	12.20	12.25	3.52	4.30	5.49	5.52	7.29	8.00
2	Tues	10	5.08	11 11	6.48	" "	" "	3.54	" "	5.51	5.54	7.31	" "
3	Wed	11	5.06	0.00	6.46	" "	11 11	3.55	0.00	5.53	5.56	7.33	0.00
4	Thurs	12	5.04	" "	6.44	12.19	12.24	3.57	" "	5.55	5.58	7.35	** **
5	Fri	13	5.02	" "	6.42	" "	" "	3.59	" "	5.57	6.00	7.37	" "
6	Sat	14	4.59	" "	6.39	" "	" "	4.00	" "	5.59	6.02	7.39	" "
7	Sun	15	4.57	0.00	6.37	** **	" "	4.02	0.00	6.00	6.03	7.40	0.00
8	Mon	16	4.55	5.45	6.35	12.18	12.23	4.03	4.45	6.02	6.05	7.42	8.15
9	Tues	17	4.53	0.0	6.33	" "	11 11	4.05	0.0	6.04	6.07	7.44	
10	Wed	18	4.50	" "	6.30	" "	" "	4.06	" "	6.06	6.09	7.46	" "
11	Thurs	19	4.48		6.28	" "	" "	4.08		6.08	6.11	7.48	
12	Fri	20	4.46	" "	6.26	12.17	12.22	4.09	" "	6.09	6.12	7.49	" "
13	Sat	21	4.43		6.23	" "	" "	4.11		6.11	6.14	7.51	
14	Sun	22	4.41	" "	6.21	" "	" "	4.12	" "	6.13	6.16	7.53	" "
15	Mon	23	4.39	5.30	6.19	** **	** **	4.14	5.00	6.15	6.18	7.55	8.30
16	Tues	24	4.36	" "	6.16	12.16	12.21	4.15	" "	6.16	6.19	7.56	" "
17	Wed	25	4.34		6.14	" "	11 11	5.17		6.18	6.21	7.58	" "
18	Thurs	26	4.32	" "	6.12	" "	" "	4.18	" "	6.20	6.23	8.00	" "
19	Fri	27	4.29	" "	6.09	12.15	12.20	4.20	" "	6.22	6.25	8.02	" "
20	Sat	28	4.27	" "	6.07	" "	" "	4.21	" "	6.24	6.27	8.04	" "
21	Sun	29	4.25		6.05	" "	" "	4.22		6.25	6.28	8.05	" "
22	Mon	Safar	4.22	5.15	6.02	12.14	" "	4.24	5.15	6.27	6.30	8.07	" "
23	Tues	2	4.20		6.00	" "	12.19	4.25		6.29	6.32	8.09	" "
24	Wed	3	4.17	" "	5.57	" "	" "	4.27	" "	6.31	6.34	8.11	" "
25	Thurs	4	4.15		5.55	12.13	" "	4.28		6.32	6.35	8.12	" "
26	Fri	5	4.13	" "	5.53	" "	12.18	4.29	" "	6.34	6.37	8.14	" "
27	Sat	6	4.10		5.50	" "	" "	4.31		6.36	6.39	8.16	" "
◆ BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGINS SUNDAY 28th MARCH 2004 - CLOCKS GO 1 HOUR FORWARD ◆													
28	Sun	7	5.08	6.00	6.48	1.12	1.17	5.32	6.15	7.38	7.41	9.01	9.30
29	Mon	8	5.06		6.46	" "	" "	5.33		7.39	7.42	9.02	" "
30	Tues	9	5.04	" "	6.44	" "	" "	5.34	" "	7.41	7.44	9.03	" "
31	Wed	10	5.01	" "	6.41	" "	" "	5.36	" "	7.42	7.45	9.04	

Daily Dhuhr & Jumm'ah (Friday) Congregation at 1.15pm

(Urdu sermon begins at 12.30pm | English sermon begins at 12.45pm | Main Arabic Khutba is at 1.15pm)

The Asr prayer time given above is according to Mithl-Thani, Mithl-Awwal starts 45 minutes before Mithl-Thani

PRAYER TIMES IN OTHER CITIES WITH RESPECT TO BIRMINGHAM

CITY	FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ESHA
BRADFORD	minus 1	minus 1	minus 3	plus 3	plus 2
GLASGOW	plus 6	plus 6	plus 11	plus 5	plus 5
CARDIFF	plus 8	plus 10	plus 1	plus 5	plus 4
LIVERPOOL	plus 4	plus 4	plus 2	plus 8	plus 7
LONDON	minus 6	minus 7	minus 4	minus 4	minus 14
LUTON	minus 6	minus 5	minus 4	minus 3	plus 1
NEWCASTLE	minus 2	minus 1	minus 7	minus 4	minus 14
MIDDLESBOROUGH	minus 4	minus 3	minus 1	plus 2	minus 0
MANCHESTER	plus 1	plus 2	minus1	minus 1	plus 0